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IF JESUS CAME

Would you have to change your clothes
before you let Him in?
Or hide some magazines,
and put the Bible where they'd been?

Would you hide your worldly music
and put some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in,
or would you rush about?

And I wonder ... if the Savior spent
a day or two with you,
Would you go right on doing
the things you always do?

Would you go right on saying
the things you always say?
And would life for you continue
as it does from day to day?

Would you take Jesus with you
everywhere you go?
Or would you maybe change your plans
for just a day or so?

Would you be glad to have Him
stay forever on and on?
Or would you sigh with great relief
when He at last was gone?

It might be interesting to know
the things that you would do,
If Jesus came in person
to spend some time with you.

—Selected



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

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

ACTS 2:38

Is FAITH necessary for salvation?

YES! *"...Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"*
(Hebrews 11:6).

Is FAITH ALONE sufficient for salvation?

NO! *"...Even the demons BELIEVE — and tremble! But do you want to know, O FOOLISH MAN, that faith without works is dead?"*

... You see then that a man is justified by works, and NOT BY FAITH ONLY.

... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:19,20,24,26).

**Are we saved by OUR OWN
WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS?**

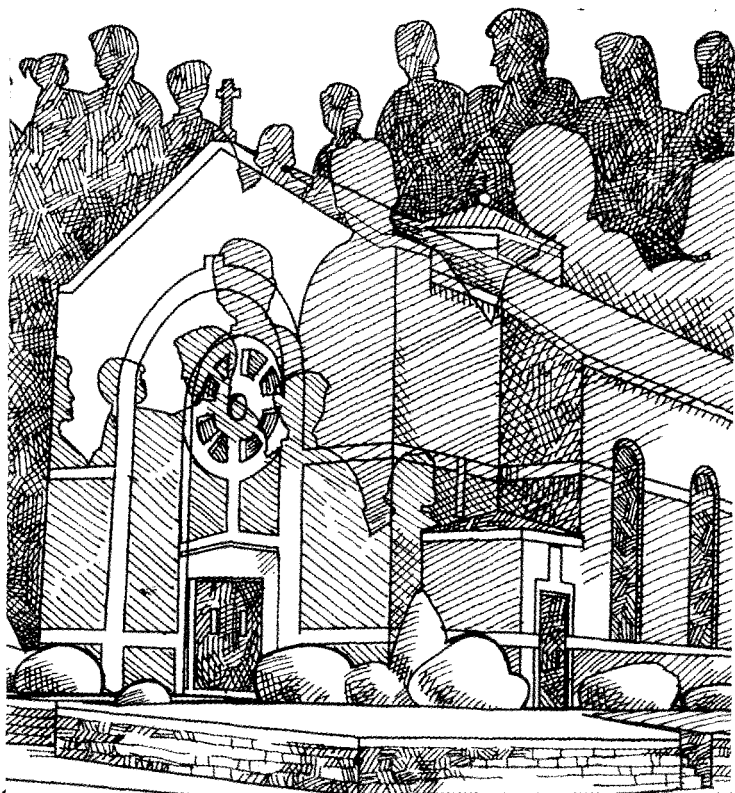
NO! *"...knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified BY FAITH IN CHRIST and NOT by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified"*
(Galatians 2:16).

SO THEN, WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

SUBMIT TO GOD IN OBEDIENT FAITH:

"For you are all sons of God THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS. For as many of you as were BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26,27).

Are you a part of the glorious church of Christ, which He built on the sure foundation that He is the only begotten Son of God? All who obey Him are members of His one spiritual family.

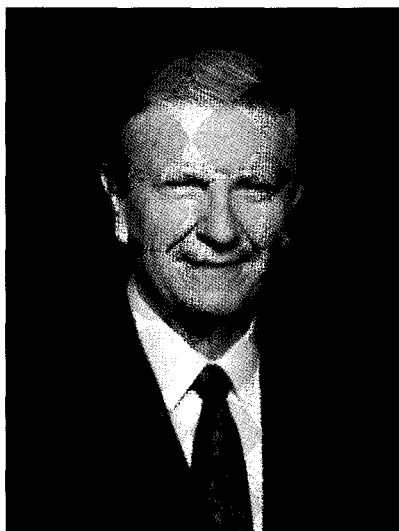


The church, the body of Christ.

"Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

"And Simon answered and said, 'You are THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.'"

"...on this rock I will build MY CHURCH..."
(Matthew 16:13-18; 1 Corinthians 3:11).



MORE TEACHING MAY BE NEEDED

J. C. Choate
Editor-in-Chief

There was a time when, if a person responded to the Lord's invitation, the main concern was for the confession of Christ to be taken and then for baptism to follow (Romans 10:10; Acts 2:38). In some cases, that practice has continued to this day. But with the passing of time, many things have changed. With more worldliness, and with less knowledge of the Lord's word, those who express a desire to obey God's will may need additional teaching.

Again, in past years when the preacher had completed his sermon, he would extend the Lord's invitation by giving the plan of salvation and pointing out what the erring Christian needed to do to be forgiven of his sins. He might approach this in a number of ways, but in the end he would explain that it was necessary for one to hear the gospel (Romans 10:17), to have faith in God and in Jesus as being the Son of God (Hebrews 11:6), to repent or to turn away from his sins (Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3), to confess with the mouth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32,33), and to be baptized to be saved or to have the remission of his sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16). The preacher would then explain that on doing these things, the Lord would save one and add that soul to His church (Acts 2:47).

The preacher would also encourage the erring Christian to repent of his sins, to confess his faults, and to ask the Lord and the brethren to forgive him (James 5:16). By these actions, the penitent person was restored to his former relationship to God and the church, and was acknowledged as being a faithful Christian.

Today, however, many of our preachers evidently believe that all of those hearing their sermons know what the Lord expects of them to become a Christian, or what they must do to return and to be restored to the Lord and His church. So, in concluding their sermons they extend the invitation of Christ by saying, "If you have any need, please come while we stand and sing." Now there may be those present who have never heard definitive lessons on the gospel before, and there may be others who have heard numerous sermons on numerous subjects, but have as yet no real understanding of what they must do to be saved initially. They may have the *desire to be saved*, and so they make their move based on desire rather than knowledge. When a person in such a case responds and is immersed without being fully taught what he must do to obey the Lord, then how can the preacher or anyone else — including the one who responded to the invitation — be sure that such a person has obeyed the Lord? Was he taught enough that he was *choosing* to come out of the world and to know that he was becoming a member of the Lord's distinctive body called *the church of Christ*? Was he taught enough to *count the cost*, realizing what sins were in his life and what it would mean to *repent of them*?

There are many men and women who have been married more than one time. Some may have had a scriptural reason for divorce and re-marriage (Matthew 19:9), but the majority are living in adultery. The members of the local congregation may be aware of some of these situations, but they may not know about the marriage relationship of others. In any case, the preacher, or whoever is dealing with the individual or the couple who requests baptism, needs to ask if they have been married more than once, and what their marriage status is at the time. It may be that the baptism would need to be delayed until there could be further study. If such a situation takes place at a public assembly, the explanation should be made that under the circumstances more study is needed before proceeding with baptism. Even then, it may be that the individual might not be willing to repent or to give up his adulterous relationship (or whatever the sinful practice might be), in order to obey God.

With many young people living together outside of marriage, it would also be wise to ask any of them who respond to the invitation what their marriage situation is, if they are married, if they are living with someone outside of marriage, if they are willing to repent or give up their sins, to obey the Lord.

Of course there would probably be those who would reason that if someone requests baptism, we have no right to question them; we must simply baptize them. But if they have not been taught properly, or if they are

unwilling to repent, how can they obey the Lord? How can baptism be true baptism if it has not been preceded by true repentance? Would it not be wrong for us to proceed to immerse them when we know that they are not really ready to obey the gospel? If we do immerse them before they are ready — before they have counted the cost of being a child of God and have made the commitment to pay that cost — we will end up with a lot of untaught people, and a lot of adulterers and immoral people being on the role as members of the church when, in reality, the Lord has not saved them or added them to His family. In all probability there are already numerous people in this situation.

With the world as it is today, we might be surprised how little knowledge most people have of God's will, of the realization of sin, of what is right and what is wrong. We also might be surprised how little is taught in many pulpits and Bible classes on marriage, divorce and re-marriage, on the sin of a man and woman living together outside of marriage, of homosexuality, of abortion, and many other wrongs. In such cases, some who do respond to the gospel may not be at all aware of their need to repent of these sins.

Of course we cannot know the hearts and motives of those who express a desire to obey the Lord. But in cases where it is obvious that an individual is living in sin, it is wise and necessary to be as sure as possible that that person understands what is required in repentance, and is willing to give up their sinful living to obey Jesus.

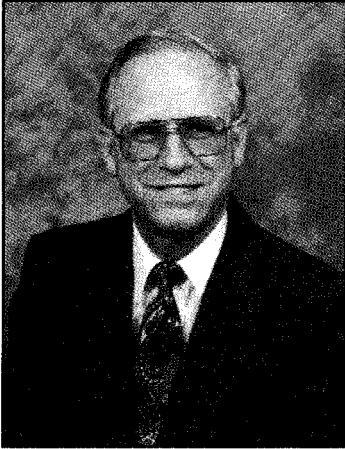
We realize that sin creates many hurting situations, and that correcting those problems can also bring pain. Sometimes there is the desire in the soft hearts of Christians to want to whitewash everything, to erase the command to repent, to declare all sin as “under God's grace”. But we must never forget three things:

◆ **God has a standard of righteousness.** His requirement is that we come up to meet His standard, rather than that He compromise to our level of sin and worldliness, just so that He can count us among His number.

◆ When Jesus told the young ruler to sell all he had and give it to the poor and follow Him, He didn't run after him calling, “Ok, just half will do, or ...” Even though the Scriptures say He loved him, He let the man walk away. When the disciples objected to His strict rules concerning marriage in Matthew 19, He didn't say, “You're right. We need to be at least as gracious as Moses was....” No, He simply said, “Some can accept it and some cannot.” And **He left His high standard intact**, for the purpose of protecting the precious institution of marriage by the strictest penalties for sin.

◆ **We, as humans, have no authority to compromise what God has set as His standard.**





“GOD SAID IT...THAT SETTLES IT”

Byron Nichols

I'm sorry that I don't know who deserves the credit for having first stated this, but someone made the declaration, **“God said it, I believe it, and that settles it.”** To those who accept the deity of God and believe Him to be the creator of the universe, etc., these words comprise a

wonderful statement of faith and commitment. I'm thankful that this affirmation of trust in God has been passed on so that many can benefit from it.

It may well be that this emphatic assertion was originally intended strictly as a personal statement of belief, and nothing else. Believing this to very likely be the case, surely these words serve to encourage all believers in God to likewise remain firm in their individual conviction that God is all that the Bible declares Him to be, and that God only has to say a thing for it to be so. We can say, right along with that one who first uttered these words, that our faith doesn't depend on the faith of others; ours is a very personal and singular conviction. Since our God has shown Himself to be faithful in all things, we can confidently place our eternal destiny in His hands. May every child of God both declare and demonstrate consistently this degree of trust in God and subjection to Him.

While still being fully persuaded of the significance of the statement, I would like to take you with me on a detour from the original wording. As it stands, the statement is indeed powerful, but I would like for us to consider the power and truthfulness of an abbreviated form of it. I believe that there is a great need for us to accept the validity of the statement even without the middle part, “I believe it”. Without intending to be the least bit flippant or frivolous, let it be said that in one very real sense of the word, it doesn't matter whether I believe it or not — if God said it, that settles it! With this truth in mind, and with the middle part of the statement having been omitted, let's consider this revised version of the statement.

“God said it, and that settles it.” Sometimes folks want to talk about “core beliefs”. I would nominate this shortened statement as qualifying as a core belief if ever there was such a thing. Whether *we believe* what God has said has absolutely no bearing on His authority, His sovereignty, or power. Our belief of what He has said is pertinent and important only in terms of our individual salvation from sin. God is not in any way dependent upon our endorsement in order for His statements to be valid. He needs no character witnesses. He needs no eye-witnesses. He needs no votes. The Lord is undoubtedly pleased to have whatever support is made available to Him, but neither the presence nor lack of it is relevant with regard to His greatness and authority. He will remain in charge whether we salute Him or not.

There are some necessary prerequisites for being able to acknowledge and subscribe to the truth that if God said it, that settles it:

- **Humility.** We cannot abide by this truth without first humbling ourselves as Jesus instructed in the Beatitudes, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit...*” (Matthew 5:3).
- **Submissive attitude.** Our humility must be so deep that it leads us to a willingness to say with Samuel of old, “*Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears*” (1 Samuel 3:9,10).
- **Recognition of God’s sovereignty and power.** David acknowledged before the congregation of Israel the utter supremacy and power of God. To the Lord he said, “*Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all*” (1 Chronicles 29:10-12).
- **Gratitude.** A sincere gratitude will make many things much easier, including being submissive. A lack of deep gratitude makes such activity impossible.
- **Desire to reciprocate His love.** Love extended by God to us can never really be repaid, but we most surely can and must demonstrate our loving gratitude by our desire and determination to accept whatever He says as being true, and right, and for our eternal welfare.

The only way that we can truly honor God, and thus to ultimately be saved, is by sincerely adopting and adhering to the proposition, **“God said it, and that settles it!”** †

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Could you be offended by a person like Jesus? To know Him would seem impossibly inconsistent with being offended by Him. Yet the ancient Jews did find Him offen-

whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:24). For fear of material loss, many were offended. The world

Offended in Christ

David Pharr

sive — so much so that they crucified Him. Isaiah had prophesied that He would be a rock of offense. But Jesus said, *"Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me"* (Matthew 11:6).

One of the things about Jesus which offended men was that **He stressed the spiritual above the material.** He urged the laying up of treasures in heaven rather than on earth, and asked: *"What is a man profited, if he shall gain the*



GOD

places temporal prosperity above spirituality. Like the rich young ruler, many will turn away from the Savior before giving up their riches (Mark 10:21ff).

Another way in which our Lord offended people was that **He contradicted popular religion**. He struck at their traditions and charged: *"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* (Matthew 15:7-9).

It is a popular notion that a preacher ought to "just preach Christ and leave other people's religion alone." But Jesus did not leave other people's religion alone. He struck at their false doctrines and condemned their traditions. Especially did He rebuke their "clergy". They were offended by His words on religion, and the same words offend many today.

Another way the Master was offensive was in **His exaltation of the lowly and simple**. There was an obvious lack of pomp in His life. He was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. *"For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message*

preached to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:23-31). The supposed wisdom and self-exaltation of men find it hard to accept the meek and lowly Jesus.

The cross, therefore, stands as the most offensive thing of all. Paul speaks of the *"offense of the cross"* in Galatians 5:11. The event of Calvary strikes at the pride of life. It is difficult for men to swallow that a man like Jesus of Nazareth had to die for them; or, if He had to die that it had to be with the shameful cruelty of the cross. Yes, professed believers may talk about the cross and may sing about the cross, but too few have bowed to the meaning of it. Not many are ready to say, *"I am crucified with Christ"* and to live their lives in total surrender to Him.

Human nature has changed little through the centuries. The life and teachings of Jesus have offended people in every generation. Even now there are multitudes who rebel when they hear the stress He gives to the spiritual above the material, or when He contradicts popular religious views, or when in Him is seen the exaltation of that which is humble and lowly. But remember His promise: *"Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."* †

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

GOD

He Lives

Jimmy Jividen

Three days after His crucifixion Jesus rose again, never more to die. He conquered death and the devil in His resurrection and delivered man from the fear of death. Inspired writers expressed His victorious resurrection thus:

He led captive a host of captives...(Ephesians 4:8).

He has the keys of death and Hades...(Revelation 1:18).

He was declared with power to be the Son of God ...(Romans 1:8).

No longer does death hold us in bondage. Jesus has shattered the darkness of the black hole of death with the light of His marvelous resurrection. Having conquered the devil, He now rules as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is risen.

God sent His son, They called Him Jesus,
He came to love, heal and forgive;
He lived and died to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.

Because He lives I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living just because He lives.

In memory, we see the **dying Jesus** as a Savior upon the cross where He bore our sins and gave His life that we might live. But **in reality**, He is a **living Jesus** as the Lord upon the throne of God, our triumphant, victorious King of kings! We serve a living Lord! †

Jimmy Jividen is a writer and preacher living in Abilene, Texas, USA.

Faith smells the fragrance when as yet there is no rose.

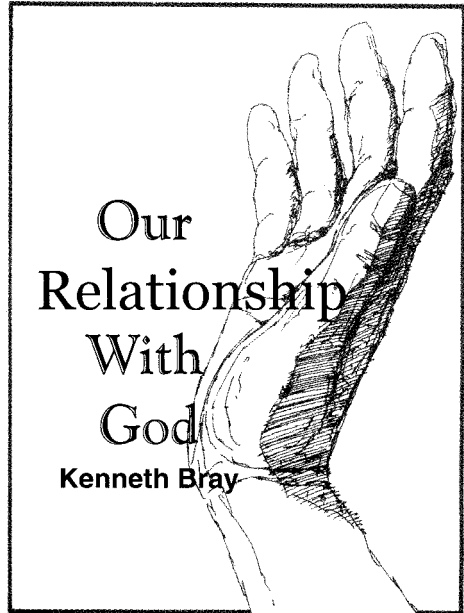
— Maryana Hood

It is a great tragedy for one to go through life with the wrong concept of God. This leads to unbelief, hostility, or indifference. On the other hand, the greatest blessing that one can experience is that of having a proper understanding of God. This leads to a happy and harmonious relationship with Him and His world. Therefore, it is very important that we understand three basic factors concerning God so that we might have the proper relationship with Him.

The Existence of God Prompts Faith

The first thing that one must understand about God is that He exists. To provide us with the needed information about His existence, God has created a beautiful and orderly world which, in the fact of its own existence, declares His reality (Psalm 19:1). Furthermore, in His Word, the Bible, God is described so clearly that anyone of average intelligence is able to draw the conclusion that He does exist.

This affirmation of the existence of God is known as faith, which involves trust, acceptance, and confidence. Without this trust in the reality of God, it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6).



Our faith, therefore, must be fortified, strengthened, exercised, and fed. Upon this faith all the other virtues are based (2 Peter 1:5-7).

The Authority of God Prompts Obedience

As one learns about the existence of God, he is immediately impressed with the power or the authority of God. God is the creator of the universe, the regulator of human affairs, and the final judge of all who have lived (Acts 17:22-31).

When any honest, sincere, thinking person realizes the greatness of God, then the obvious reaction will be submission and obedi-

GOD

ence to His will and authority. For our own good God has revealed a plan of living which involves two things: first, **what we must do to attain the right relationship with Him**, and, second, **what we must do to maintain that harmonious relationship**.

All of this involves our obedience to His revealed will. Regarding this salvation Jesus said: *"Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 7:21).

The Nature of God Prompts Love

One of the most comprehensive descriptions of the nature of God is found in this beloved passage: *"God is love"* (1 John 4:8). It is true that God has a severe side and will punish the wicked (Romans 11:22), yet we need to keep in mind the love, compassion, and grace that so clearly depict His nature.

Since God first loved us, we then should love Him in return (1 John 4:19). This love means that we think of Him constantly

throughout the day, that we take Him into our plans, that we joyfully serve Him, and that we allow Him to comfort and strengthen us in our difficulties.

Conclusion

Faith, obedience, and love blend to form the foundation of the Christian life. When these three qualities are present, the result will be a strong spiritual life. But remember, **all of these qualities are prompted by our correct understanding of God**. We gain that understanding through the revelation He has made of Himself through His creation and through His inspired word. †

Kenneth Bray works with the Findlay Church of Christ in Sparta, Tennessee, USA.

...Thought of You...

When I saw the beauty of Your sky so blue
I looked again and thought of You.

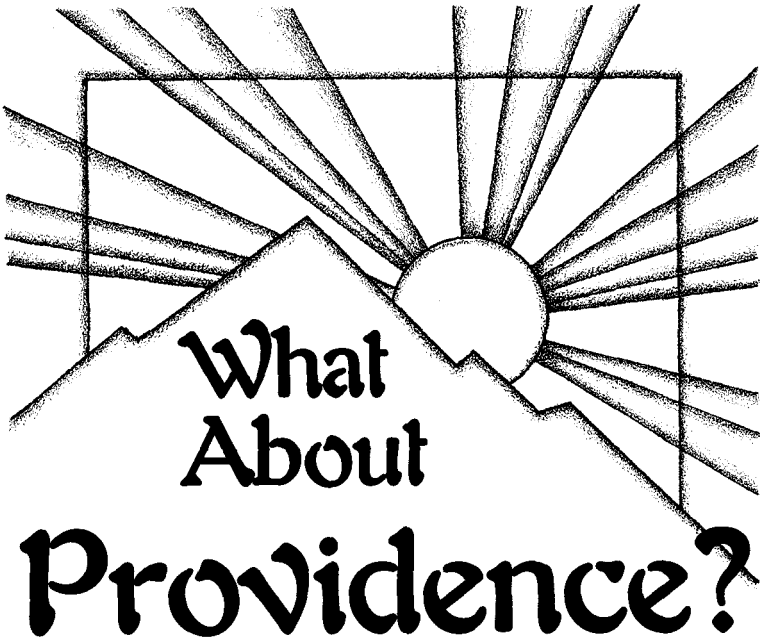
When I saw the power of lives made new
I looked again and thought of You.

When I saw the glory of Your word so true
I looked again and thought of You.

When I saw the truth in all You do
I looked again and thought of You.

When I saw the love in my rescue
I looked again and thought of You.

— Terry Hodson



What About Providence?

J. A. Thornton

As a rule, all of us believe in the providence of God in varying degrees. God works through natural law, so acts of providence are hard to identify. I think of the following in the beginning of my life.

I was born on August 12, 1920 at Walnut, Mississippi, at home, where there was no electricity or running water in the house and not a dozen automobiles in the town. I was more than two months premature, weighing only two pounds. The doctor took one look at me and

said, "He's too little to live," and handed me to a black lady my father had hired to stay with my mother.

My mother said she made a vow to God that if He would help me live, she would do all in her power to make a preacher out of me. Though it was August, Mother's helper had them build a fire, and she kept me close to that warmth — I guess that was my "incubator" — all day and all night. Her vigilance was continued for days, until I was out of danger. This surely was God's provi-

dential tool to save my life. I am thankful that my father had found someone who knew what to do.

What is the possibility of such a small “preemy” surviving under those primitive circumstances? I have lived in consciousness of my mother’s vow the past 80 years. I have preached more than twenty-two thousand times. God’s providence has been with me and He has been so good to me. In my 80th year I preached 167 times and I am so thankful that God has blessed me with strength and the opportunity to work. He has been with me, through all of the challenges, through all of the years.

How can we, as Christians, be sure God is with us? We can know because that is what He says again and again in His word! Jesus has promised not to leave His people: *“...I am with you always, even to the end of the age”* (Matthew 28:20). *“Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son”* (2 John 9). The promise of God is, *“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”* (Hebrews 13:5,6). *“What shall we say then to these things, If God be for us, who can be against us?”* (Romans 8:31).

We cannot always identify the particular and special work of providence, but we should remember the words of Mordecai to Esther: *“Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”* (Esther 4:14). God has certainly promised to be with those who love and obey Him, making all things work together for our good (Romans 8:28). His tools are natural means, turned to His purposes — people, events, governments, all the interactive parts that make up life — and this is providence. I hope that you depend on His providential care as I do! †

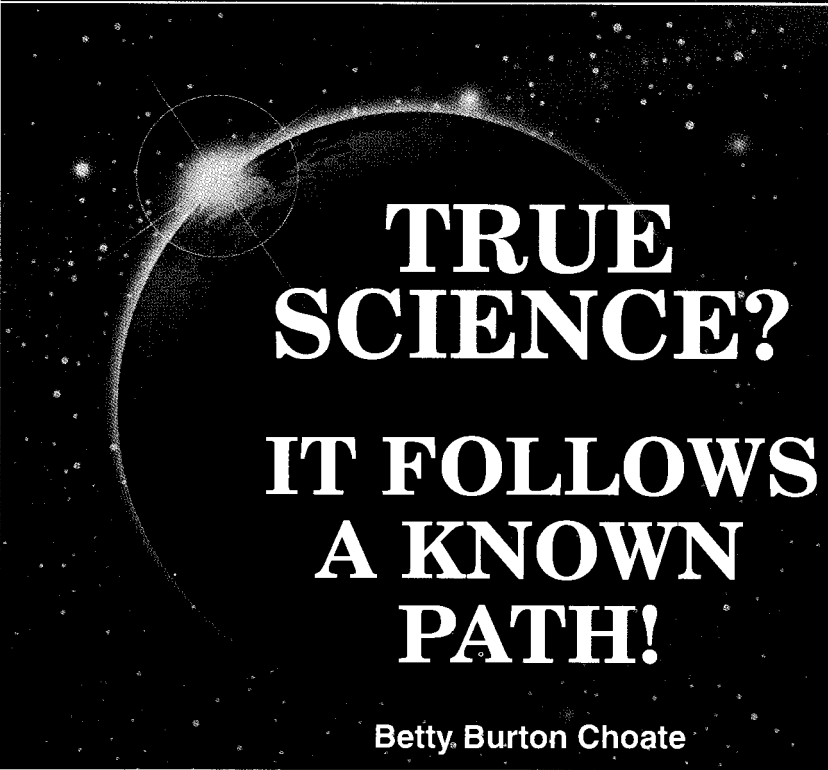
J.A. Thornton works with the church in Booneville, Mississippi, USA.

Courage or Foolishness?

It takes a lot of courage
To put things in God’s hands.
To give ourselves completely —
Our lives, our hopes, our plans.

To follow where he leads us
And make his will our own —
But all it takes is foolishness
To go the way alone!

— Unknown



TRUE SCIENCE? IT FOLLOWS A KNOWN PATH!

Betty Burton Choate

It is a law of science that *all effects had to have a cause*; that *whatever exists had to be brought into existence, somehow*. The Second Law of Thermodynamics insists that all things which now exist had to have a beginning; and the study of physical things says overwhelmingly that there can be no design without a designer. Every miniscule, complicated cell of this humongous and involved universe declares an underlying intelligence.

Whether or not scientists identify that 'intelligence' and 'force' as 'God', the majority will admit that Something or Someone, through Some Process, is the cause behind all that exists.

Those who believe the Biblical record call that Creator 'God'. We accept His description of creation, given in Genesis, when He spoke all things into existence, in a mature state: (1) adult humans, able to multiply and fill the earth; (2) a mature and

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interdependent plant and animal world, also able to “*bring forth after its kind, bearing seed within itself*”.

(3) ‘Light’ reaching the earth from the first day; and from the fourth day light from the sun and moon and stars bathing the earth in its life-sustaining warmth, which meant that all the universe also was created ‘mature’, with the light waves having already reached the earth, as though they had traveled light years of time and space.

With the completion of the work on Day 6, all the myriad parts of creation had to be there, interactive, interdependent, and mature. Life could not have existed without air and water, plants could not have grown without light and pollination, and animal and human life could not have existed without plant life. Six days for creation were exactly right — long enough for an orderly creation, but not such a lengthy time that any part suffered for the lack of the vital things that had not yet been brought into existence!

Science has told us many things about the earth, space, our sun, the stars, even the entire universe. Though simple visual observation would lead us to conclude that the earth itself is the center of the universe, extremely intelligent scientists have figured and calculated — and *they tell us* — that the earth is actually a miniscule planet in a huge galaxy of 200 billion stars, six tril-

lion miles in diameter, called the Milky Way. *They say* that the sun which *seems* to rise and set is actually 93 million miles away, a huge burning mass of gases. And *they declare* that our earth — a ball, 24,000 miles in circumference — circles the sun, spinning at the rate of 1000 miles an hour at the equator, hurling around in our orbit at 10,000 miles an hour, and is part of a galaxy which is flying through space at perhaps millions of miles an hour — yet we feel no movement at all!

We look into the sky and with the naked eye we can see 2000 to 4000 stars. However, with the telescopes available to astronomers today — and with the ability to hear and measure sound waves — stars and galaxies at a distance of hundreds of millions of light years have been reported by scientists! Some have figured that the universe is at least *30 billion light years across!* How can such distances even be conceived by the human mind?!

Of course, scientists are human, and humans are often proved wrong in their calculations and conclusions. None of these figures may be anywhere near actuality. Certainly, in calculations of the age of the earth, the conclusion of scientists, *intent on proving evolution*, are wrong because they have failed to take into account the fact that God’s word says that everything was creat-

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ed mature, with the appearance of age that would be required in anything full grown.

So we would be wise to *hear* what they have to say, but to be *slow to accept every 'fact' and 'figure' at face value*, because these change with alarming frequency. The age of the universe itself, according to the conclusions of evolutionary scientists, has *doubled* every few years. And somehow those numbers just don't *add up*.

But scientists *have* learned many things. And if these aforementioned wonderful and astounding discoveries are true, then the scientists who solved the puzzles are brilliant. Through their studies, amazing facts have been revealed concerning the hugeness of the universe, as well as the infinitesimal smallness of the universe within each cell.

My mind is overwhelmed with what has been learned. It can hardly follow such intelligence. It could never have conceived of these astounding realities, and certainly could not have studied them out and explained *what* is working and *how* it is working.

But have you thought of this?

What are scientists doing? With their tremendous intelligence *they are describing for us the wonders of God's thinking!*

That's right! We who are Christians know that the bottom line

of all that science learns is **God**. The measureless expanse of the universe was conceived in the mind of God! The furthest, brightest star was brought into existence by His Word!

True science is simply a study of the works of the mind and creative powers of God! Whatever is learned, God was already there, knowing that fact, doing that thing, understanding not only what is being done but *how*, with *what*, and *why*. While the most intelligent of men are only groping on the beginning edge of discovery and understanding of scientific *truths* — wondrous though that edge may be — God was there all along, having accomplished the making of that thing, knowing all of its facets, and watching man's groping efforts, much as a parent watches a small child's efforts to sit and crawl and walk.

We look back over the past century and marvel at the giant leaps of knowledge made by searchers of true science. And building on this body of accumulated knowledge, we anticipate with excitement the opening of even greater doors of understanding in the years that lie ahead. The more we learn about the wonder of our world, the more we should ask with David, "*Who is this God, that He is mindful of me?*" †

Betty Burton Choate is Layout Editor of *The Voice of Truth International* and lives in Winona, Mississippi, USA.

David and Evolution

Hugo McCord



David appreciated what God had done for him before he was born:

"You created the organs inside of me, and you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I am fearfully and marvelously made! Your works are wonderful! That I know so well! My bodily form was not hidden from you, being made privately in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw me as an embryo, and in your book all its parts were written, and even the time ordained for me before day one" (Psalm 139:13-16).

One wonders about the meaning of the phrase "*in the depths of the earth*" in verse 15 until one notices that the same preposition "*in*" (be, in Hebrew) in verse 13 precedes "*my mother's womb*". Somehow the two phrases are synonyms. But still one wonders how such a strange phrase "*in the depths of the earth*" could refer to a womb. One commentator says the phrase points to "*the remotest recesses of the womb*" (Leslie), while another says that it is a "*poetical description of the darkness of the womb*" (Cohen). But the context clearly shows that the "*in*" location can be nothing other than David's mother's womb.

How David was formed in the womb got the best of him emotionally:
"I am fearfully and marvelously made! Your works are wonderful! That I

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know so well" (v. 14). By the inspiration of the Spirit (2 Samuel 23:2) David knew that God had formed his '*bodily form*' and '*embryo*' in his mother's womb, and that "*all of its parts were written in God's book before day one*" of David's life (vs. 15,16).

But the details of what God had written about David's unborn condition were not revealed in David's time. 3000 years later, when I read what doctors have learned about an unborn child, I am just as much overcome emotionally as was David.

What is called 'the DNA code', planted in each unborn child, determines gender, skin pigment, eye color, hair color, body size, and even finger prints. The criminal, John Dillinger, tried to burn away his fingerprints with acid to deceive the FBI, but unsuccessfully. No two embryos and no two fingerprints are alike.

Physically, every unborn child is a composite of 64 chemicals compounded and coordinated to be ready to serve in varied body systems: skeletal, muscular, nervous, respiratory, circulatory, digestive, eliminative, and reproductive. The skeletal system has 230 moving parts. Motor and sensory nerves have five functions: optic, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and gustatory.

Not only was David overcome emotionally by his meager but astonishing knowledge of the embryo, but so was another David — David Hume, thousands of years later. A physician, a Dr. Galen, had been converted from infidelity by what he had discovered in the human body, and his words so shocked David Hume that he wrote: "The bones he [Dr. Galen] calculates to be 284" with above 40 "distinct purposes."

"Astonishment arises," wrote this latter David, "when one concentrates on the skin, ligaments, and vessels, and the 600 muscles each intelligently placed and adjusted for above 6000 intentions." Then the brain! Hume was so moved by Galen's description that the skeptic himself exclaimed, "Who can doubt of a Super Intelligence?" (**Hume Selections**, Charles W. Hendell, Jr., editor; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955, pp. 385-386). One feels sorry for Hume. After coming so close to being a believer, he relapsed into doubt.

The tiny hands of an embryo (after three months, a fetus) are so fashioned that they can play an organ, paint a picture, or perform delicate surgical operations. After the third week the beating of the embryo's heart can be felt. What an instrument! It beats a hundred thousand times a day! It is equipped to pump 5 quarts of blood a minute, 75 gallons in an hour, 70 barrels a day, 18 million barrels in 70 years!

David's tiny form in his mother's womb had what would become an

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outer, middle, and inner hearing organ with a keyboard of 1500 keys. The average piano has 58. A brochure from the office of a hearing specialist, Dr. John Shea, quotes words from David's son: "*The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both*" (Proverbs 20:12).

"The eye is of no use at the time it is formed. It is an optical instrument made in a dungeon" (William Paley, **Natural Theology**, Boston: Gould, Kendall & Lincoln, 1838, p. 147). But what is made in blackness suddenly has a purpose in the light: an optical nerve, a retina, lens, pupil, iris, and cornea. Then moisture is needed "to keep the eye moist and clean [which qualities are necessary for its brightness and its use]" (William Paley). And behold! a tear gland is in place!

"[A] wash is constantly supplied by a secretion for the purpose; and the superfluous brine is conveyed through a perforation in the bone as large as a goose-quill; or, more properly speaking, along two capillary tubes, one from either eyelid, which enter a duct, lodged in a canal passing through the bone. When once the fluid has entered the nose, it spreads itself upon the inside of the nostril, and is evaporated by the current of warm air which, in the course of respiration, is continually passing over it. Can any

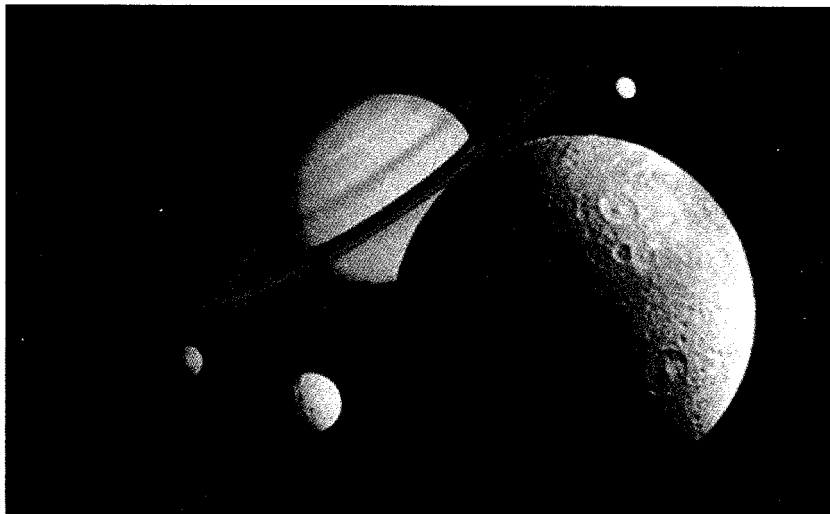
pipe or distillery be more mechanical than this is? It is easily perceived that the eye must want moisture; but can the want of the eye generate the gland which produces the tear, or bore the hole by which it is discharged — a hole through the bone?" (William Paley, in Irwin H. Linton's, **A Lawyer Examines the Bible**, Boston: W.A. Wilde Co., 1943, p. 119).

To the question, "Can mindless evolution produce the tear gland?", the Psalmist replies with a question: "*He that formed the eye, can he not see?*" (Psalm 94:9).

The skeptical David Hume was fair to write: "Anatomize the eye; survey its structure and contrivance; and tell me, from your own feeling, if the idea of a contriver does not immediately flow in upon you with a force like that of sensation. The most obvious conclusion surely is in favour of design" (**Hume Selections**, *ibid.*, p. 316).

The Psalmist David's conclusion "in favor of design" he expressed in a tribute to his Maker: "*How precious are your thoughts for me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I count them they are more than the grains of sand. When I awake, you will be nearby*" (Psalm 139:17,18). †

Hugo McCord, gospel preacher and college teacher of Vancouver, Washington, USA, recently passed away.



Something New!

Stan Mitchell

"Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades? Can you loose the chords of Orion? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons, or lead out the bear with its cubs? Do you know the law of the heavens? Can you set up God's dominion over the earth?" (Job 38:31-33).

Recently the American Astronomical Society announced some startling discoveries (Time Magazine, January 22, 2001, page 51). The first was a pair of planets that whirl around their sun in a neighboring solar system in perfect lockstep. "Nobody," says Geoffrey Marcy of the University of California, Berkeley, "has ever seen

such a configuration."

The second discovery is a planet in the solar system, Serpens, that is **17 times as large as Jupiter!** Astronomers don't know how this gargantuan planet remains in orbit. "Seeing a planet this huge is a bit frightening," was the comment of one scientist.

What's frightening is how little astronomers know about planets. Apparently they have assumed that other solar systems would be much like our own. They can assume no longer. "Each new find seemed stranger than the last." Says Princeton's Scott Tremaine. "Not a

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single prediction for what we'd find in other systems turned out to be correct." He explains that "when your classification schemes start breaking down, you know you're learning something exciting."

For about a hundred years science has taken on a role historically reserved for deity. Science has become omniscient; it is all-seeing, all-wise, and will solve all problems. The introduction, "Science says...", has become a mantra of orthodoxy. Anyone who questions science is metaphorically "burned at the stake", and, like ancient book-burning ceremonies, the contrary views of preachers and believers in God have been banned from schools and from public debate.

Which brings me to the article above. It strikes me that **in reality**

scientists don't know much at all.

They are constantly being surprised by their findings, *whether it be in the heavens, the human body, or in their examinations of early man*. It is time that scientists demonstrated a little humility. They are following a long paper trail, leading they know not where, and are only beginning to discern the thoughts of the Creator. Every few years or so they have to announce a *mea culpa*, and tell us they are reevaluating everything.

Long, long ago, the Creator queried Job regarding the nature of the universe. In reality, humans have learned very little since that interrogation. †

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

Then the Lord answered Job... *"Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me"* (Job 38:1-3).

The chapters of Job 38, 39, 40, and 41 are God's challenges to Job.

Then Job answered the Lord and said: "I know that you can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.

"You asked, *'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?'*

"Therefore **I have uttered what I did not understand**, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

"Listen, please, and let me speak. You said, *'I will question you, and you shall answer me.'*

"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but **now my eye sees You**. Therefore, **I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes**" (Job 42:1-6).

Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the book of Acts, chapter Twenty-one, NKJV.

1. Through what places did Paul and his companions pass on the way to Jerusalem? (Vs. 1,3,7,8,15).
2. In Tyre, what did Paul do? (V. 4).
3. Describe Paul's (and his companions') leave-taking from the church at Tyre (V.5).
4. At Caesarea, to whose house did they go? (V. 8).
5. According to verse 9, what was notable about Philip?
6. However, it was not through these girls that a prophecy was made concerning Paul, but through whom? (V. 10).
7. Agabus warned, "*Thus says the _____, 'So shall the _____ at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and _____ him into the hands of the _____'*" (V. 11).
8. When Paul's companions responded by weeping and begging him not to go to Jerusalem, what did he answer? (V. 13).
9. After greeting James and all the elders of the Jerusalem church, what did Paul do? (Vs. 18,19).
10. In Jerusalem, what was the situation in the church? (V. 20).
11. Had Gentile Christians been required to do this? (Vs. 25).
12. According to Hebrews 8:13, when the new covenant (the law of Christ) was given, it made the first covenant (the law of Moses) obsolete. What does this verse say about this situation?
13. As Paul was going through purification rites in the temple, who caught hold of him? (Vs. 26-28).
14. What tool did God use providentially to save Paul's life?(Vs. 30-32).
15. What misunderstanding did the commander have of Paul's identity? (V. 38).
16. Having been given permission to speak to the crowd, what did Paul do? (V. 40).

[See inside of back cover for answers.]

The Apple of Your Eye

Maxie B. Boren

The expression “*apple of the eye*”, or similar wording, is Biblical, found some five times in Scripture (Deuteronomy 32:10; Psalm 17:8; Lamentations 2:18; Zechariah 2:8; and Proverbs 7:2). The latter passage, from Proverbs, is the one we note in this article. “*Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of your eye*” (NKJV). In the context (note beginning with Proverbs 6:20 through the 7th chapter), this is instruction being given by a wise

and caring father to his son, in an effort to keep him from the sin of adultery and ultimate death (7:27).

I would like to make from Proverbs 7:2 what I believe is a reasonable application to ourselves. Let’s think of it as if God is speaking to us. Our Heavenly Father, not wanting us to commit adultery (physically or spiritually) and be lost in hell, admonishes us to keep His commandments so that we might live, and not die! He thus urges us to hold His law in high esteem, as the apple of our eye!

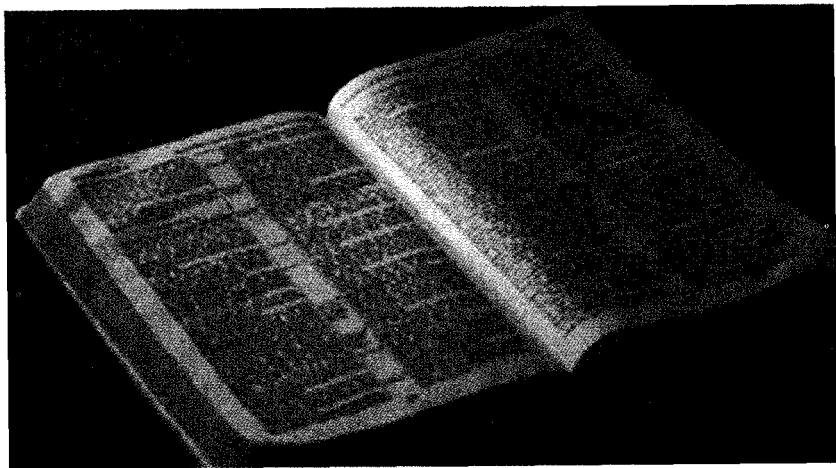
The wise child of God today is indeed the one who sincerely tries to obey the Father in all things, always cherishing His word as “the apple of his eye!”

O that we can say with the Psalmist, “*I have refrained my feet from evil, that I might keep thy word...How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth...Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*” (Psalm 119:101, 103, 105). †

Maxie B. Boren is the preacher for the Brown Trail Church of Christ in Bedford, Texas, USA.



THE WORD OF GOD



God's Word Summarized

This Book reveals
the mind of God,
the state of man,
the way of salvation,
the doom of sinners,
and the happiness of believers.

Its doctrines are holy,
its precepts are holy,
its histories are true,
and its decisions are immutable.

READ IT to be wise,
BELIEVE IT to be safe,
and PRACTICE IT to be holy.

It contains:
LIGHT to direct you,
FOOD to support you, and
COMFORT to cheer you.

THE WORD OF GOD

It is the traveler's map,
the pilgrim's staff,
the pilot's compass,
the soldier's sword,
and the Christian's character.

Here
Paradise is restored,
Heaven is opened,
and the gates of hell are disclosed.

CHRIST is its grand subject,
OUR GOOD is its design,
and the GLORY OF GOD is its end.

It should
fill the memory,
rule the heart,
and guide the feet.

Read it
slowly,
frequently,
and prayerfully.

It is
a mine of wealth,
a paradise of glory,
and a river of pleasure.

It is
given you in life,
will be opened at the Judgment,
and will be remembered forever.

It
involves the highest responsibility,
rewards the greatest labor,
and condemns all who trifle with its holy contents.

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Much battered and much maligned, truth remains knowable and definable and absolutely necessary. The frequent repetition of Jesus' statement ought not to detract from

its power and force,

"And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free"

(John 8:32). Further, Jesus prayed for His disciples that God would *"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth"* (John 17:17). Were that not enough, God Himself is described as He *"who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:4). Just how important is truth? The search for words sufficiently descriptive to express the degree of truth's importance seems futile.

As vital as truth is, it is well to remember that the Bible says truth

has a companion. *"Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man"* (Proverbs 3:3,4).

Kindness is to accompany truth always. This word, with its various renderings, is the very same word used to describe that characteristic of God in relationship to His cov-



Truth's Companion

David Deffenbaugh

enant people, Israel. As such, it is often translated "loving kindness" (NASB in Exodus 20:6; 34:6; Psalm 136).

On the basis of this Old Testament statement, then, we are readily reminded of the New Testament admonition, *"But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow*

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:15).

How shamefully tragic when the great gift of God, the truth of His Word, is severed from "lovingkindness," which the same God intended to be its constant companion.

"Kindness" does not necessitate **compromise**, it does not exclude **firmness**, and it does not require **convictionless toleration**, all of which are incompatible with *truth*. Kindness does require **consideration, fairness, assuming the best** (if any assumptions must be made), **not entertaining unproven accusations**; in short, kindness requires employing Jesus' so-called "**golden rule**" (Matthew 7:21).

Companionless truth is a travesty of God's will. Companionless truth is indefensible. As fervently as truth is sought, understood,

defended, and upheld, so ought also to be its companionship with kindness. †

David Deffenbaugh preaches for the South College church of Christ in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, USA.

If I...

*If I could go back and undo
Some wrongs I've done along the way,
And know the wounds that I have caused
Were healed of all the scars today.*

*If steps I've caused someone to take
By thoughtless ways in which I've trod
Have led to a confused estate,
Instead of simple trust in God.*

*If someone else still wanders on
Who followed my unsteady track,
And lost his way for lack of light
Because my lantern globe was black.*

*If I could gather up and bind
The wasted years that I have spent,
And treat them as they'd never been
Today I'd be much more content.*

*I'm pardoned from my undone past —
But even so the hurt is done,
For out there somewhere in the dark,
A soul is lost I might have won.*

— Richard M. "Pek" Gunn

The Gospel of Christ

Hans J. Dederscheck

The Gospel is God's good news. The basic message is that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3,4). God's Word, the gospel of salvation, contains the power of God, Christ's truth, to set sinners free, to reconcile the world with Himself, and to put faithful believers into life eternal. To Paul, it was a vital message. In all his writings he speaks about the Gospel. The Gospel is a happy, joyful, and righteous message from the heavenly Father to all human beings. The Gospel brings new life to sinners when they are born anew of water and Spirit (John 3:5).

Romans 1:16 refers to "power". God's Word, the Gospel, is power to change the life of a person. It brings hope and security, and shows a way of life. God is with us, and who can be against us! The Gospel carries people into life eternal. God changes the heart (mentality, world view, life style) of man and gives new life. All power is in Him. Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24).

The light of the glorious Gospel of Christ shines into the life of hopelessness, giving strength and joy even in times of hardship and

affliction. Such is the powerful Gospel of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). *"Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice"* (John 18:37). The Word of Christ makes man free from sin and fear (John 8:32).

"There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). Christ's teaching brings frustrated lives to a new life. God is rich in mercy. Through the Gospel we come into touch with this mercy (Ephesians 2:4-6). Christ is God's mercy and righteousness. Faith in the Son of God will change our life (2 Peter 1:3-11). Humans shall not neglect such a great salvation (Hebrews 2:1-10). Jesus said: *"If you love me, keep my commandments"* (John 14:15). Faith, repentance, and baptism are just the beginning of a new life in Christ (Hebrews 11:1,6; Romans 6; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:37). The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation; it is God's truth, Christ's way to reconcile sinners with God; it is righteousness, because the Gospel directs all men to Christ, and its gift to the obedient is life eternal. †

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

Where's



Mike Benson

Bible scholars and historians of all faiths agree on at least one issue: *Mechanical instruments of music were entirely absent from the worship of the New Testament church.* Consider their commentary:

- "All ancient Christian music was vocal" (Dr. Curt Sachs, Columbia University).
- "Both the Jews in their temple service and the Greeks in their idol worship were accustomed to singing with the accompaniment of instrumental music. The converts to Christianity must have been familiar with this mode of singing, but it is generally admitted that the primitive Christians employed no instrumental music in their religious worship ... Musical accompaniments were gradually introduced; but one can hardly be assigned to a period earlier than the fifth and sixth centuries. Organs were unknown in the church until the eighth or ninth century. Previous to this they had their place in the theater rather than in the church" (Lyman Coleman, Presbyterian).

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

- “Music in the church is as ancient as the apostles; but instrumental music is not” (Joseph Bingham, Church of England).
- “Only singing ... and no playing of instruments, was permitted in the early church” (Hugo Leichtentritt, *Music, History and Ideas*, 34).
- “That instrumental music was not practiced by primitive Christians ... is evident from church history” (*The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 852).
- “All our sources deal amply with vocal music of the church, but they chary with mention of any other manifestations of music art...” (Paul Henry Lang, *Music In Western Civilization*, 53).
- “...Respected scholars simply say that in the early church no instruments were used. They came in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries, too late to be authorized by inspiration in the Scriptures” (*The Shaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. II, 1702).
- “In the early or primitive church of the first six centuries there were no mechanical instruments. The music was quiet, simple, straight forward, and was meant to instruct, comfort, and encourage” (Dr. T. Ambross, head of the music department at Scarritt [Methodist College], *History of Sacred Music*).
- “Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law” (John Calvin, originator of Presbyterianism).
- “I have no objection to the organ in our chapels provided it is neither heard nor seen” (John Wesley, originator of Methodism).
- “There can be no doubt that originally the music of the divine service was everywhere entirely of a vocal nature” (Emil Nauman, *The History of Music*, Vol. 1, 177).
- “All music employed in their early services was vocal” (Frank Landon Humphreys, *Evolution of Church Music*, 42).
- “...I here declare that I never knew them [instruments of music] productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had reason to believe they were productive of much evil. 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 I here register my protest against

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

all such corruptions in the worship of that Infinite Spirit who requires His followers to worship Him in spirit and truth” (Adam Clarke, Methodist).

● “We have no real knowledge of the exact character of the music which formed a part of the religious devotion of the first Christian congregations. It was, however, purely vocal” (Dr. Frederic Louis Ritter, *History of Music from the Christian Era to the Present Time*, 28).

This is but a minute sampling of secular testimony on the music of the early church. It is abundantly clear that mechanical instruments of music were never used until centuries after the church’s establishment. Early Christians, who were guided by the inspired apostles, simply, yet reverently, lifted their collective voices in heartfelt song:

✱ “*And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives*” (Matthew 26:30).

✱ “*But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God*” (Acts 16:25).

✱ “*...For this reason I will confess You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name*” (Romans 15:9b).

✱ “*...I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding*” (1 Corinthians 14:15b).

✱ “*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).

✱ “*I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will sing praise to You*” (Hebrews 2:12).

✱ “*...Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms*” (James 5:13).

Brethren, if we seriously intend to follow God and the pattern He has set forth in the Scriptures, how can we employ a piano in our worship and do that which was never permitted in the New Testament assembly (1 Corinthians 4:6 ASV; John 4:24; 17:17; Revelation 22:18)? The Father has authorized the “fruit of the lips” and “melody in the heart” — nothing more (Colossians 3:17). †

Mike Benson works with the Oak Hill Church of Christ in Evansville, Indiana, USA. This article appeared on their web site, www.oakhillcoc.org.

Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

Romans 7:4-6

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

The law was a "schoolmaster" leading people to Christ, according to Galatians 3:24,25. After the death of Christ, God's people — all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles — have the privilege of coming to God through the veil of the flesh of His Son (Hebrews 10:19,20).

God's people now are described as being "married to Christ" (Ephesians 5:22-32). The Bridegroom is further identified as "Him who was raised from the dead". There is great purpose in this union of the church and Christ: that we should "bear fruit to God": personal spiritual fruit, in the sense of the transformation of our own lives, and "fruit" in the sense of bringing other souls into the family of God by sharing the Gospel (Romans 1:13).

"The law" in this context refers to the law given to Israel (Romans 3:2). According to Colossians 2:14, that law of Moses was taken out of the way, nailed to the cross of Christ. Therefore, "brethren", Christians, are dead to that law, through the sacrifice of the **literal body** of Christ, and also through being part of the **spiritual body** of Christ — the church, Colossians 1:18. Ezekiel 16 describes vividly and poignantly God's marriage to Israel. She wore His name, Isra-El. But her idolatry and unfaithfulness to Him caused God to "put her away", thus breaking the covenant relationship which had bound them together under the Law.

We have a glorious newness and freedom in Christ, that we are blessed to serve our **Father and God** according to a spiritual relationship — being born **anew of water and the Spirit** (John 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17) — and not according to physical birth under a law of commandments written in stone.

OUR INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SIN

J. Lee Roberts

The following examples teach that each individual is responsible for only *his own* violation of God's principles. Remember Adam made a choice to reject what God said and to follow Satan. No one else can sin exactly like Adam since man was chased out of Eden and cannot now eat of that same tree. *But when we follow Adam's rejection and rebellion against God's way, we also sin.* When we follow *Adam's example* in disobedience, we are **'in Adam'** and will die in our sins unless we turn in obedience to God.

On the other hand, *when we follow the example of Jesus in His submission and obedience to the Father's will we are 'in Christ'* and are made spiritually alive. **In Adam all die; in Christ all are made alive.** Death first appeared because of the sin of *one man*, Adam, but death continues because *every one sins!!* (Romans 3:22-4; 5:12; 6:4, 17, 23; 1 Corinthians 15:22).

And all these verses teach that great Bible principle: **We are guilty**

for only our own individual sins!!!

Deuteronomy 24:16 says, *"The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his OWN sin."* Throughout the Scriptures, the same truth is expressed: We are guilty only for what we chose to do ourselves, not for the sins of any others! Read these passages: 2 Kings 14:6; 2 Chronicles 25:4; Jeremiah 31:30. Hear what Ezekiel 18:20 warns: *"The soul that sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself."*

Therefore, we must examine **all** cases, such as the example of David in Psalm 51, remembering that children are *not* responsible before God for their parents or for the transgression of God's will by anyone else. Babies can not break God's laws! Jesus received children as they

SALVATION

were, and blessed them, saying that all must become as children to enter His kingdom! (Mark 10:14-16). Children are guilty of sin only when they are old enough to rebel and reject what God teaches.

On the other hand, even people in ignorance of God's laws in His word have **an inner concept of right and wrong**, and every accountable person without exception has sinned (Romans 2:12-16; 3:23). In the day of judgment we will all be judged, not according to what *others* have done, but according to what we have done *individually*, in having chosen to do what is good or what is evil in God's sight. "*So each of us shall give account of himself to God*" (Romans 14:12).

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

"He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day" (John 12:48)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). †

J. Lee Roberts works with the Greenlawn Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas, USA.

WHO ARE MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26-28).

Since the church of Christ is universal, having local groups scattered all over the world, then our brothers and sisters may be from any race or nationality. We are to be of one heart, without divisions caused by prejudices or beliefs. The apostle Paul, the writer of several books of the New Testament, said, "*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

As a Christian, I feel a spiritual bond to all who are part of the family of God in Christ.

NEXT: How Do I Worship God?

Is That Clear?

Doug Greenway

Verizon Wireless has an often-seen commercial on TV of a man wandering the earth, talking to some usually unknown person, and saying, “Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? Good!” Their diligence at signal strength is supposed to interest us in their phone service. I suppose to some degree it does.

Larry Morgan says that he’s reminded of the old days when somebody hung out the window, trying to turn the television antenna pole, hoping to clear up the “snow” on the 2 or 3 available black-and-white channels. He remembers the question asked: “Can you see it now?”

As kids, we had no crystal-driven walkie-talkies. It was two tin cans attached by a taut string. Soon we learned that one person ought to carry both cans, when on the run from the “enemy”. Otherwise, you might “clothesline” somebody and break your connection. There was also the possibility that you might strangle yourself or knock a tooth loose trying to talk on the run.

My mother wouldn’t often call me by my full name. When she did,

I was always in trouble! At the end of her sermonette, she’d pause with her hands on her hips and say, “**Is that clear?**” If I valued my life, I’d better say, “Yes”!

We had a President of the United States once upon a time who often said, “Let me make one thing perfectly clear.” Seldom was it just “one thing” and most of the time he wasn’t nearly as clear as mama was. Clarity is important!

Jesus said in Matthew 7:5 that to clearly see to help somebody else’s spiritual clarity — we need to “clear up” our own spiritual eyesight, first. Romans 1:20 says that there’s “clearly” enough proof that God exists. Heaven is pictured in Revelation 21 and 22 as “clear as crystal”.

May God help us to see clearly all the things that we need to see! Promoters, presidents and parents line up to vie for our attention. But, most importantly, let’s be diligent to clearly see what God would have us to **do, think, and be**. Everybody else can get in line after that.

Is that clear?



THE CHURCH

Have you ever wondered why there are so many different kinds of churches in the world today? Where did they all come from? Why do their teachings differ so? Why do they wear different names? Can they all be right? Can two churches that teach contradicting doctrines both be right? Logic tells us that when two things contradict, they both cannot be right — they both might be wrong, or one may be right and the other wrong — but they both cannot be right!

So what about all the different religions in the world today? Are they right or are they wrong?

First, we need to go to the authority on the subject. **What you think** and **what I think** actually **has no relevance** in the matter, but **what does the Bible say?** Peter declared, *“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God”* (1 Peter 4:11), and Paul announced, *“Let God be true, but every man a liar”* (Romans 3:4).

Jesus, who has **all authority** in Heaven and on earth, proclaimed, *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* (Matthew 16:18)



**How
Many
Churches
Did Jesus Build?**

Tom Moore

THE CHURCH

Our Lord did not say that He was going to build *a church* or *one of His churches*. He said, “I will build **My church**.” Those who know anything about the English language know that ‘church’ is *singular*, meaning **one**.

In a context talking about false religion and false worship, Jesus warned, “*Every plant which My Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up!*” (Matthew 15:13). Furthermore, Paul revealed that “*there is one body*” (Ephesians 4:4) and that “*now are they **many members**, yet but **one body**!*” (1 Corinthians 12:20).

Paul also tells us that the ‘body’ is the ‘church’. The apostle, by inspiration, writes, “*And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence*” (Colossians 1:18), “*And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all*” (Ephesians 1:22,23). A person who disagrees with this logic is disagreeing, not with me, but with the Almighty God. The Bible says it, and I believe it. Do you?

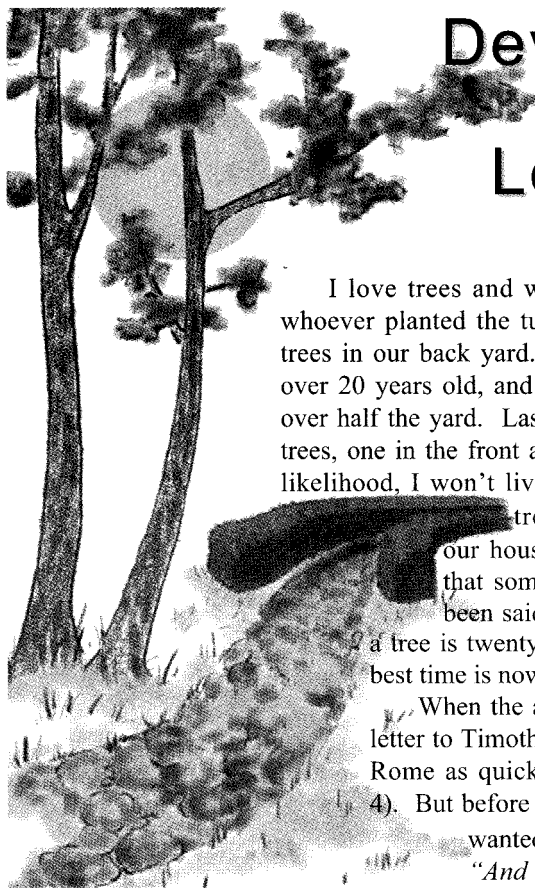
The oneness of the Lord’s church is also seen in the figure of a family. We read in the Bible that God is the Father, Christ is the elder

brother, and all the saved are “*the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together*” (Romans 8:16,17). **The Bible does not picture God as having several hundred different families, each conflicting with the other, each having its own distinct form of government, and each wearing different names!** To say that there is more than one church is the same as saying that God has *more than one family*. This would be **bigamy**. Man ought not cast such a horrible reflection on the Almighty.

Now if Jesus built only one church, where did all the denominations come from? The truth is, they were founded and built by man.

Since Jesus is the builder of only one church, that is the one of which I want to be a member. How about you? Would you choose to be a member of a man-made church, or the church that Jesus built, bought, and cleansed with His own blood? (Acts 20:28). Remember that all spiritual blessings are in the church that Jesus built (Ephesians 1:3). Now that is simple, it is clear, and all of us can understand it! Are you searching for that one church? †

Tom Moore works in Port Lavaca, Texas, USA.



Developing Church Leaders

Joe Bright

I love trees and will be forever grateful to whoever planted the tulip poplar and the redbud trees in our back yard. These two trees must be over 20 years old, and between them, they shade over half the yard. Last year I planted two maple trees, one in the front and one in the back. In all likelihood, I won't live to fully enjoy these two trees, but whoever lives in our house after us will be grateful that someone planted them. It has been said that the best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago, and the second best time is now.

When the apostle Paul wrote his final letter to Timothy, he asked him to come to Rome as quickly as possible (2 Timothy 4). But before Timothy left Ephesus, Paul wanted him to 'plant some trees'.

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2). Every Christian is a link between two generations. What we receive, we are to pass on.

Paul's epistles to Timothy are in some ways lists of qualifications. The qualifications for elders and for deacons are laid out in 1 Timothy 3. The qualifications for widows to be enrolled are laid out in 1 Timothy 5, and the qualification for leadership at all levels is laid out in 2 Timothy 2:2. Did you notice that only one quality is mentioned? Paul told Timothy to pass on what he had learned to 'reliable men', or to 'faithful men', as another version has it. This is the indispensable quality of leadership! Every church

THE CHURCH

longs for elders and deacons and teachers and servants who are reliable.

What kind of leadership preparation is going on in the congregation where you worship? Following are three things you might consider doing to help raise up future leadership where you are:

1. Pray — When Jesus looked out at the fields that were white unto harvest, He instructed His followers to pray. *"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest fields"* (Luke 10:2). God knows who the potential leaders are, and He is in the business of raising them up in every generation.

2. Encourage Potential Leadership — Words of encouragement are powerful and life-changing. Give detailed compliments to those who show promise, telling them what it is you see in them. You just might be planting a tree under whose shade a future generation will be refreshed.

3. Be Available — *You* may be the very one that God has been preparing for leadership! Gideon had an inferiority complex, but he

was the one God wanted! Moses thought he was a failure, but he was the choice of God! Isaiah thought he was too sinful, but God laid upon him the burden of leadership.

The best time to plant a leader is 20 years ago. The second best time is now. †

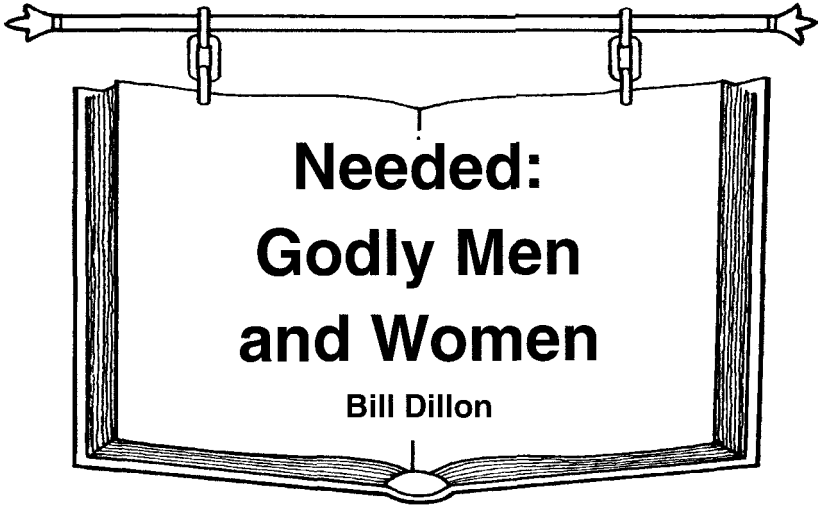
Joe Bright preaches for the Sunset Church of Christ in Springfield, Missouri, USA

The Day Our Lord Has Given

Yesterday is a reminder
of days both good and bad,
The trials that taught us lessons
and good times we have had.
The future still is waiting
as a dream awaits the night
To become a reality
before the morning light.

The past may bring us memories
to treasure through the years,
And the future keeps the dream alive
despite our doubts and fears.
But, oh, my friend, we have today
to live, and laugh, and cry . . .
A day our Lord has given
that soon will pass us by.

— Clay Harrison



The Great Wall of China is the world's longest fortification. It extends over 1500 miles, roughly following the southern border of the Mongolian plain. Its average height is 25 feet; it is wide enough (about 12 feet) for horsemen to ride along its top.

The Great Wall was originally designed to protect from external invasion. Within a few years, however, enemies entered the nation of China no less than three times. There was no damage or destruction of the wall or the gates on any occasion. Each time the enemy merely bribed the guards to gain easy access to whatever they wanted.

Today it is evident that if we have too few godly men to labor in the Lord's vineyard and offer leadership in all fields of activity, all our

hopes and aspirations will elude us. No one needs to sit on the fence of apathy, ill will, pride, or whatever, and just watch the Devil's minions take over and do as they wish. The church is too precious for that.

The clarion call today is for godly men and women to stand up and be counted; to work at their righteous goals; to bring their Christian influence to bear for good; and to transfer the rhetoric of fair play, integrity, zeal, and love into sound and solid actions that will make a difference as never before — **onward the church!** There is work for all of us to do. Let us not miss a single opportunity. †

Bill Dillon preaches for the Lord's church in Hickory Ridge, Arkansas, USA.

WORSHIP



SONGS OF ASCENT:

Of the 150 poetic masterpieces which make up the Psalms, some 15 (Psalms 120 to 134) are designated 'Songs of Ascents' or 'Pilgrim Songs' or 'Gradual Psalms'. The origin of these designations is not clear, but it is likely that these beautiful songs of praise were sung in the three annual festival processions as the worshippers **ascended** to Jerusalem to remember in a special way the God who had set them free from captivity, who had

Acceptable Music in Worship to God

Rex Banks

protected them in the wilderness, and who supplied their every need. Certainly ancient Israel approached the House of Jehovah with hymns of praise upon their lips. *"For I used to go along with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God, with the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival"* (Psalm 42:4).

Today as we study these fifteen precious products of inspiration, these "Songs of Ascent" help us see into the mind of the faithful Israelite as he approached his God in worship.

Firstly, he came in TRUST to God's house. He sang: *"My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth"* (121:2). Pagan 'gods' may falter but *"...He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep"* (v. 4).

Secondly, he came to worship with a HUMBLE HEART: *"O Lord, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; nor do I involve myself in great*

WORSHIP

matters or in things too difficult for me..." (131:1). Centuries later the half-brother of Jesus Christ would remind 'the twelve tribes': "*Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you*" (James 4:10).

Thirdly, the faithful man of Israel came to worship his God when "*...they said to me, Let us go to the house of the Lord*" (122:1). Let the Gentiles "*fashion a graven image*" and fall down before a lump of wood (Isaiah 44:9, 13ff); Israel came before "*the Lord... (her) Redeemer, ...who formed... (her) in the womb... the master of all things, stretching out the heavens, ...and spreading out the earth all alone*" (Isaiah 44:24).

Fourthly, the faithful worshipper came to Jerusalem in HOPE. He sang: "*O Israel, hope in the Lord; For with the Lord there is lovingkindness...*" (130:7). This hope was based upon a single fact: "*If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities... who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee...*" (v 3,4). 'Forgiveness' equals 'hope'! Israel could not be perfect, but she could be faithful, and her God had said: "*I even I, am the one who wipes your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins*" (Isaiah 43:25).

Finally, the Israelite worshipper came to the house of God extolling the excellency of brotherly UNITY: "*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity*" (133:1). Shema Israel declared: "*...the Lord is one*" (Deuteronomy 6:4). God's people were to be 'one' also. These, then, were the words on Israel's lips when she came to worship her God, singing the beautiful Songs of Ascent.

Brethren, when we truly understand what God in Christ did for us at Calvary, then that's how we will come together **to worship Jehovah: in TRUST, HUMILITY, JOY, HOPE, AND UNITY.** When we understand Calvary, we'll never wake up on Sunday morning-and moan: "My, how tiresome it is, (Malachi 1:13) all this 'worship' business!" Understand Calvary and we'll never again sit in worship thinking: "When will the (lesson) be over ... (c/f Amos 8:5) so that we can get on with the real business of life?!" Brethren, the *real business in life* is to glorify God (Isaiah 43:7), and when we come with humble trust to remember Jesus, God is indeed glorified!

What's in it for us? Hear again the Songs of Ascents "*How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord. Who walks in His ways. When you shall eat of the fruit of yours hands, you will be happy and it will be well with you*" (Psalm 128:1,2). †

Rex Banks is a preacher of the Gospel, working with the church in Hamilton, New Zealand.

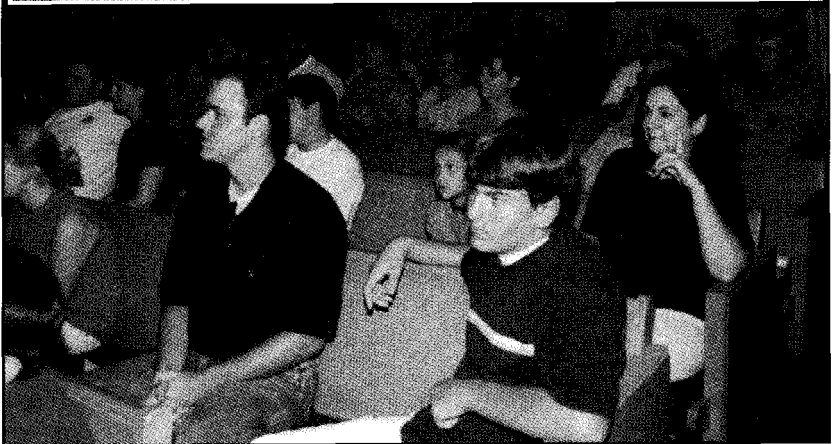
WORSHIP

To meditate means to plan mentally, to exercise the mind in contemplation, or to *think!* After the death of Moses, God had commanded Joshua: *"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it, day and night, so that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success"* (Joshua 1:8). Psalm 119 has been most appropriately entitled as the Psalm of Meditations on the Excellencies of the Word of God because, at least six times, (verses 15, 48, 78, 97, 99 & 148), the word 'meditation' appears in it.

According to Jesus, *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God"* (Luke 4:4). Food undigested will not do good to the body, and likewise the Word, not meditated upon, will do no good to the soul. Thus, **what digestion is for the body, meditation is for the soul.** Peter wrote, *"Desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby"* (1

Worship, Minus Meditation, Is Worthless!

Sunny David



WORSHIP

Peter 2:2). Christ exhorted, *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled"* (Matthew 5:6). To have the genuine desire, hunger and thirst, one must have good digestion.

Just as the 'Fast Food' culture is growing in the physical world, it

This is exactly what Christ meant when he said: *"These people draw near to me with their mouths, and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me."* (Matthew 15: 8). Notice, Christ said they were drawing near to Him, and with their lips they were honor-

Meditation is the bridge between learning and living.

is also growing in the spiritual realm! **Most times, people come for the Bible study or worship like we enter a fast food restaurant:** They want instant feeding, and to get out as soon as they get in!! Physically speaking, it is an established fact that fast food is responsible for causing obesity and other related diseases in most people today. Would not the same be true from the spiritual standpoint?

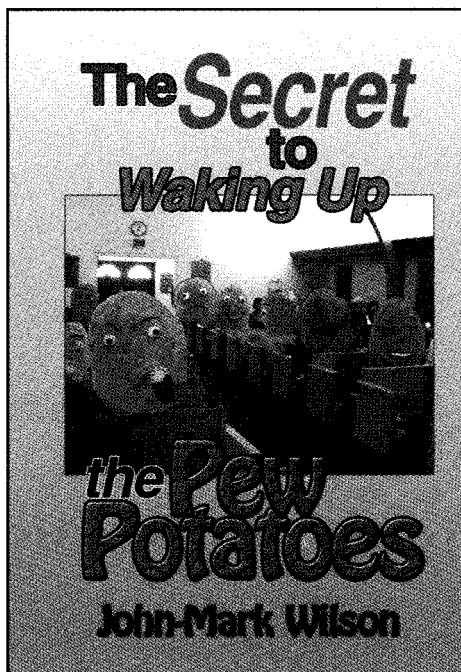
Oftentimes, people wonder why they are not growing or bearing fruit, as Christians. The reason is not far to seek. **Meditation is the bridge between learning and living.** Christianity is not the religion of rituals, like offering of flowers and foods, mass and rosary, candles or bowing to images. When we as Christians come together to worship God, we should view the worship from the spiritual standpoint of meditation and not ritualization. I am afraid the latter is too often true.

ing Him, but their heart was far from Him. What did He mean? He was actually saying that they were gathering together in His name *to perform a ritual*. What is a ritual? Ritual means: *the established form for a ceremony; the order of words prescribed for a religious ceremony; or any formal and customarily repeated act or series of acts*.

Worship, therefore, if not rendered with sincere and serious meditation, becomes a mere ritual. There ought to be a continuous, honest meditation throughout the period of worship, when we pray, and sing, and give, and partake of the Lord's Supper, and study from the book of God. Our hearts or minds, so to speak, must be focussed on the worship of God and not on the clock or anything else. †

Sunny David is editor of *The Bible Teacher*, a monthly magazine published in New Delhi, India. He also speaks on Hindi radio programs for the country.

Evacuating the Padded Pew



*How to Develop
Your "Recapturing
the Vision"
Program!*

Part Two: How to Discover What Talents Are Available

The first thing you need to do is make a current attendance list. Who are the Christians you will be working with? Hopefully, you have some type of system

for keeping up with people in your congregation. You may think your congregation is so small it hasn't needed an attendance list before. But, it's time for changes as you prepare for an increased crowd!

As you compile your list, write down the talents and abilities of each individual for use in the program. One of the things you need to emphasize to the church is that **no one is useless!** It doesn't matter if someone is as young as 10 or as old as 90, they can still take part in this program and effect great and powerful change in the life of the non-Christian.

After you make your list, ask the congregation if they would like to participate in helping the church to grow more rapidly. Tell them

CHURCH GROWTH

that if they can talk, use a telephone, or send out cards, they are needed by Christ in His church. In the next section, the combination of ways in which the program functions will be laid out, so prepare your mind for the flood of excitement and work that will soon be upon you.

I want to provide just a bit of encouragement before we enter this next section. Don't be overcome by discouragement when only a handful of people want to use their talents by helping in the program. A handful of people is all God needs to make this a success! At the church where I currently preach, 8 people were all that were interested in the beginning. With this small courageous group we combined the strength of God and grew from 39 to 94 in only 6 months.

Here is a suggested chart for recording names and talents.

Pew Potato Power Points

One of the things you need to emphasize is that nobody is useless! It doesn't matter if someone is as young as 10 or as old as 90, they can still effect great and powerful change in the life of the non-Christian!

Review Questions

1. Why is an attendance list important?

2. To be effective, what age must we be?

3. Why should one not be discouraged?

4. If one can talk, use a telephone or send cards, he can what?

(Chapter five 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.

Reason to Weep

Gary D. Durham

It is not a secret that, as far as numerical growth is concerned, the Lord's church has slowed considerably over the last few decades. Why? We all know that many possible answers to this question have been offered by concerned members, but the problem is still very much with us.

Something happened recently in our congregation which provided me with a very good dose of shock therapy and some much-needed insight into why church growth has ground to a virtual halt. When I mulled over in my mind what was reported to me, it was deeply disturbing. It gave me reason to weep.

I want you to picture for yourself a young child whose heart is tender and receptive to the Word of God. He enjoys coming to class and learning about the God of heaven. The Bible is filled with fascinating people and events which stir his thoughts. He is never absent from his class and is excited with every opportunity to learn more about Jesus.

Now, picture for yourself that same child listening to the elders, deacons or the preacher having to

beg members to fill empty teaching positions in the educational program of the congregation. Don't fool yourself into thinking that our children are not paying attention to what is being discussed by the older folks. Certainly, they are listening and learning from us.

I know for certain that this one particular boy has been listening. He understands all too well that many adults who have been Christians for -years are not willing to shoulder their share of the burden. They are always willing to let others get the job done while they stand around doing a whole lot of nothing. Just about now, you are probably thinking that I am being rather critical of members for not doing their part in our teaching program. You are absolutely correct! Let me tell you why I am very concerned about this sad situation.

The child approached his mother with a question which had been bothering him. He was well aware of the difficulty in getting a teacher for his class. With a disturbed look on his face he asked his mother, "Mommy, why doesn't anyone want to teach me?" He had taken the mat-

CHURCH GROWTH

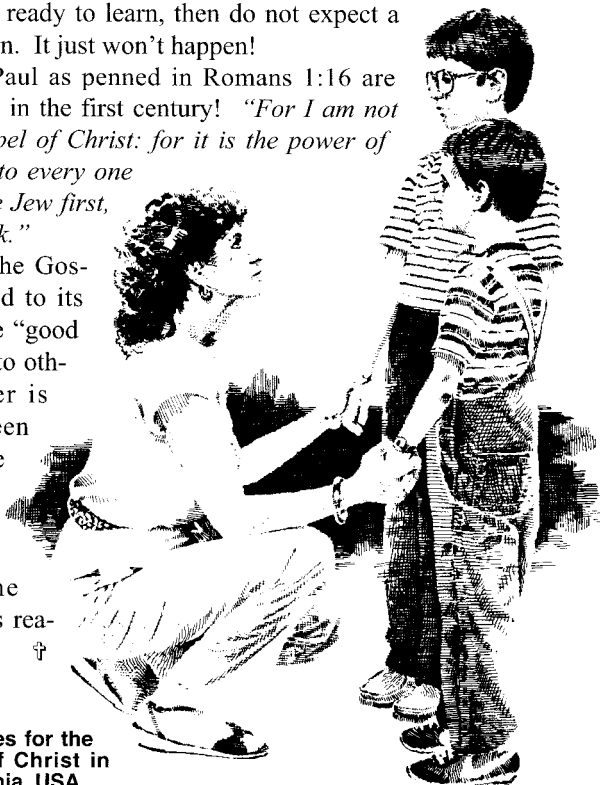
ter to heart and felt that it was all his fault. He was blaming himself for something which had nothing to do with him personally.

Why should any child ever be subjected to such cruel treatment from adults who refuse to teach and fill young minds with the life-giving word of God? Children want to learn, but where are the adults who are willing to help? This heartbreaking story gives us reason to weep; weep for all those who want to learn but have no one to teach them; weep for the ones who will end up letting the world defile their pure hearts because no one was there for them when their hearts were open to God's truth.

If you want to know why the church is not growing, then think about this story. It sheds a strong light on a weakness in the body of Christ. A congregation will be only as strong as its teaching program. If members are not willing to make an investment in time and effort to teach those who are ready to learn, then do not expect a growing congregation. It just won't happen!

The words of Paul as penned in Romans 1:16 are still as true today as in the first century! *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."*

The power-of the Gospel, however, is tied to its proclamation. If the "good news" is not taught to others, then its power is hidden away between the covers of the Bible. Souls will be lost because we failed to teach that which has the power to save. It is reason to weep. †



Gary Durham preaches for the Princeton Church of Christ in Princeton, West Virginia, USA.

Winning Souls with English Courses

Noble Goss

The State of Arkansas has experienced a growing influence in the Spanish population during recent years. The majority of Hispanics in our State arrive in search of work, many of them in the chicken processing industry, but also in almost all work sectors.

Seeing the presence of so many Hispanics in his small city of Batesville in northeastern Arkansas, brother **Leo Rainey** decided four years ago that these people needed many things: jobs, housing, clothing, food — but especially the gospel. With the help of a deacon, **Tommy Gunn**, his wife **Martha** and the support of his elders in the Harrison Street Church of Christ, brother Rainey, who had worked for forty years for the **Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service** as an organizer in various projects, began to teach English to Hispanics in April of 1999. His 'ESL' teaching program (acronym for 'English as a Second Language') is called 'Bridges' because of the brother's desire to build bridges between his own culture and those of others.

And he has succeeded very well in doing so.

A tireless worker for the Lord, brother Rainey saw that Hispanics had many needs. He helped them to look for housing, supplied them with food and clothing, assisted them with labor problems, arranged for transportation and document translation; in short, being almost a personal consul for them, besides inviting them to study English on Sunday afternoons. He recruited several people in the church with teaching abilities and sent them to training sessions in order to learn how to teach English according to the 'Laubach Method', and this small group began a ministry which was going to have unexpected results.

Brother Rainey also made contact with churches in his area and several brethren began to support the work monetarily. After the English classes, he often bought lunch for the students, always treating them as persons worthy of respect and honor, which is a key to his ministry. And most importantly,

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The new converts receiving certificates of baptism and Bibles. Marcial Alvarado (left) is the minister for the Spanish congregation.



Large numbers of children are taught each week. The teacher here is Yesenia Hernández, sister-in-law of Marcial. North Americans also teach these classes.

he invited them to Bible studies after his English classes.

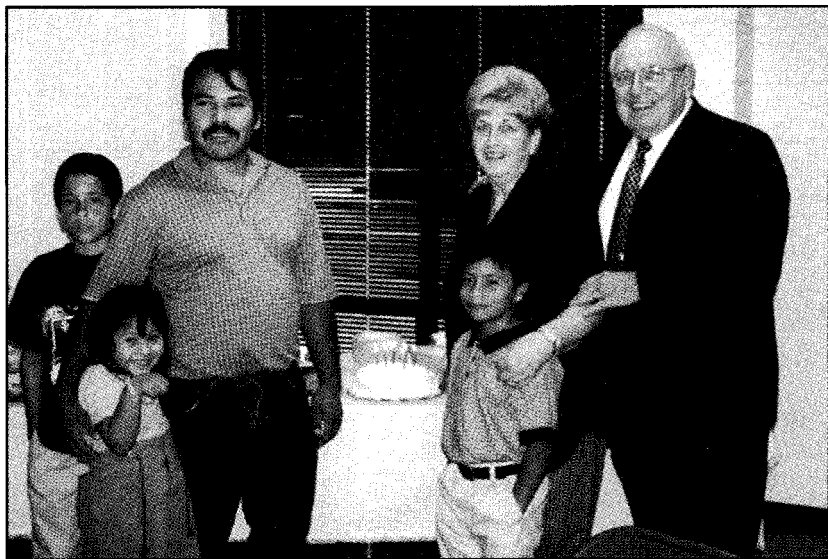
Knowing almost no Spanish, brother Rainey invited yours truly (a teacher of Spanish at Harding University) and later several Spanish students of Harding with the ability to preach, to come to Batesville to teach the Bible. Soon, the Bible studies were converted into afternoon worship services.

God has blessed this ministry tremendously. There has also developed a ministry for children, which includes Vietnamese

children. In more recent years, several brethren have donated computers so that students may also be able to learn English independently.

Since 1999, there have been 41 people baptized. Now the Spanish church has a dedicated preacher, Marcial Alvarado, whose wife Marisol has helped much with the children. On a recent Sunday, the attendance was

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Leo and Martha Rainey with their Hispanic friends.

between 70 and 80, half of whom were children. Worship is at 3:00 P.M. following the English classes at 2:00 P.M. Also, Thursday night services have been started and, in addition, the children attend Wednesday night services so that they can go to Bible classes with the American children where they can use more English.

God has multiplied conversions to the point that, in at least two cases, the men who were baptized have returned to Mexico to exert influence there. One of them helped to establish a children's ministry and afterward a church of Christ in San Jacinto, Mexico, and the other convert has influenced six members

of his family to become Christians. He now lives in Mexico, D.F.

Brother Rainey has supported the moving of the preacher training school for Hispanics, which was formerly located in Hope, Arkansas, to Little Rock, where there are many more Hispanics and more opportunities for employment. At present, an Hispanic member in Batesville, Germán García (converted in Green Forest in brother José Perales' work), wants to attend this school and is seeking funds.

In spite of brother Rainey's suffering an intensive heart attack recently and having a quadruple coronary bypass operation, the work is continuing, thanks to the leader-

CHURCH GROWTH

ship of brothers Gunn and Alvarado. Although not yet recovered, brother Rainey, who recently was able to return to English and Spanish services for the first time in several weeks in a wheel chair, continues to be advocate for programs similar to that which he developed with the help of God. He has given advice to 25 congregations in the United States desiring to start a similar work. This brother, who could just as well have retired long before 1999 when he began this work, has a very large heart and a love for


Hispanics (and for Vietnamese children also) which has been demonstrated in infinite acts of kindness for lost souls. In my opinion, this brother is a model of Christian service for all of us. May God help us to serve more, as he has done.

(For more information on this work: e-mail Noble Goss at: ngoss@harding.edu or Leo Rainey at: arktraveler@cox-internet.com) †

Noble Goss is a teacher of Spanish and German at Harding University, Searcy, Arkansas, USA.



Marcial baptizing Manuel Hernández. He and his wife were baptized, and he worships with the church of Christ in Mexico City. Six other members of his family have been converted to Christ.



How do you measure up?

Do you not know that the unrighteous
will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived.

Neither fornicators,

nor idolaters,

nor adulterers,

nor homosexuals,

nor sodomites,

nor thieves,

nor covetous,

nor drunkards,

nor revilers,

nor extortioners

will inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you.

But you were washed,

but you were justified

in the name of the Lord Jesus

and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11



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.

Persecution and Endurance

Dr. Hans Grimm

The story continues...

In 1400 an annihilating blow struck the congregation which was perhaps the oldest church in Germany — Strasbourg, in which according to tradition of the Alsatian Old Evangelicals there were said to have been New Testament Christians even from the time of Julian the Apostate. In a raid based on denunciation 32, 'Cornerers' — as the common folk here called the orthodox believers on account of their secret meetings in old corners and vaults — were arrested, submitted to torture and in their torture terribly mutilated.

The persecutors extorted from these victims the confession that their sole authority was not the church but the New Testament, which should be studied in the language of the country. They rejected all adoration of Mary and of the saints and all veneration of pictures or crucifixes; they disavowed the authority of the consecrations by priests and bishops along with the clergy's claim to the keys of salvation and heaven. Of feast days they kept only Good Friday, Easter, Whitsunday and the first day of the week. They called the baptism of children useless, since there could not yet be any belief in these little ones. Only the intercession of the commander of the knights of Saint John, who was favorable to them, and of the city clerk Johann von Blunstein saved the

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imprisoned ones from the funeral pile. They were banned from the city 'for eternal years' and disappeared in the loneliness of the valleys of the Vosges and Jura Mountains.

During the years of struggle and strife within the state church wherein rival popes vied for power and influence and the state church continued its persecutions against such men as Wycliffe and Hus and their many followers — during these years of shedding of blood and of terror, the churches of New Testament Christians also suffered unspeakably.

lic clergymen, such as occurred in Prague in the days of July, 1415.

For years and years the 'bloodhounds of the Lord', as the Dominican monks engaged in the service of the Inquisition proudly called themselves, endeavored to seek out the secret threads of association with which undoubtedly the scattered little congregations united with each other in some manner or other.

The brains of the Inquisitors believed they represented some rival church under a heretic pope in some secret central cathedral, so when the primitive itinerant Bishop Frederick

Reiser, born in Swabia, scion of a family that had for centuries given martyrs to the gospel.... close to his heart were the countless small assemblies which had been formed in the guild rooms of the weavers and the lodges of the stonemasons.

The little old congregation at Regensburg was ferreted out, its elder Grueneisen with three other members were executed after many tortures, as allies of the Hussites. The churches of Dresden, of Lausitz and of Uckermark fared similarly. On the Rhine, the Saxon nobleman Henry of Schlieben was burned at the stake as an alleged Hussite spy; even in North France small groups of primitive Christians were rooted out. The accusations against them ran "Hunt the Prague game out," referring to the murdering of Catho-

Reiser was treacherously arrested in Strasbourg, this picture seemed to be confirmed.

Reiser, born in Swabia, scion of a family that had for centuries given martyrs to the gospel, had tirelessly endeavored to effect and to blend together the Waldenses and the New Testament churches. He visited and preached for these many scattered groups of Central Europe, but close to his heart were the countless small assemblies which had been formed in the guild rooms of the weavers and the lodges of the stonemasons

CHURCH HISTORY

in the imperial cities of South Germany. With them he broke bread, among them he baptized and preached.

In Donauworth, Augsburg, Nuremberg, and Strausbourg he had the centers of his missionary work. When the Hussite storms broke loose he journeyed at once to Bohemia, determined to create there, where everything stood in ferment, an asylum for the persecuted comrades of the faith.

heavenly Father. For in Tabor the layman stood holding the same privileges and rights as the preacher, the knight stood beside the burgher and the peasant, having become *one* as a sign of the dawning time of redemption that knew no order of rank but only the paradise-like good fortune of brotherhood and equality.

Here the rigorous ruler, Procope, proclaimed that that only should be accepted in Bohemia which was expressly demanded in

Here the rigorous ruler, Procope, proclaimed that that only should be accepted in Bohemia which was expressly demanded in the Holy Scriptures.

The great army of the Hussites at Tabor was a swarming antheap of Bohemians of all shades of belief who agreed fully in only two points:

- ◆ The church of the Babylonian beast, the popish church, and her priests must be rooted out, just as the priests of Baal were rooted out by Elijah;

- ◆ and the chalice of the Lord must be taken away from the clergy and be given to all baptized believers.

The Roman church had created this great chasm between the clergy and the laity, and herein were many of the struggles between them and the Hussites. With the spiritual rebellion came a new time as to the equality of mankind before their

the Holy Scriptures. And so purgatory, veneration of the saints, transformation of the elements of the Lord's Supper, worship of relics, definite times of fasting, and all church festivals, oaths, capital punishment, and ecclesiastical rank, all were rejected and preaching should be done only in the language of the country and lay members also have full authority to preach. †

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

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

An Amazing Story

Hershel Dyer

Les McGalliard told of a woman who attended a certain congregation one Sunday and, when the invitation song was sung, came forward and asked to be baptized. The preacher, curious as to whether she understood the meaning of baptism, proceeded to question her. He was a little surprised to learn how well-taught she was, gladly took her confession, and baptized her into Christ.

According to her own story, this lady had gone to a garage sale. Looking over various objects, she came upon a box of religious filmstrips and the audio tapes which were with them. She bought them for \$3.00, took them home with her and watched all five. They were, as you may have surmised, the Jule Miller Filmstrips — used by so many of us to convert souls over many years now!

This amazing story is both wonderful and sad — wonderful because a lost soul learned the way of salvation through finding them — sad because some person, who should have been using them to

convert others, parted with them for a mere pittance!

This use of the filmstrips should revive some of us and awaken others to the power of these pictorial lessons. We still use the filmstrips from time to time, but the same lessons are also on video cassettes. These video tapes may be used with any television set which also has a video player. Whichever is used, the gospel truth in either is well presented. The case of this solitary woman, using them to teach herself, shows the power which they possess.

God, in His gracious providence, has given us this pictorial tool with which to communicate gospel truth to others. Let's be looking for souls whom we can teach.

"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:37,38). †

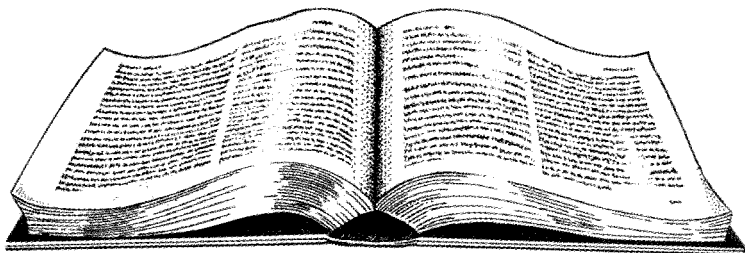
Hershel Dyer is a gospel preacher living in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.

The Christian should learn two things about his tongue —
how to hold it and how to use it.

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

“He told us that he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter, who will speak words to you by which you and all your house will be saved’” (Acts 11:13,14).

Will all men be saved, since Jesus died for all? No, not all will be saved. Why? One reason is that too few ever **hear** the message of salvation. Listen to the words of Paul to the Roman church. *“But how shall they call on Him in whom*



Words

By Which You Can Be Saved

Loy Mitchell

God wants all men to be saved. He does not want even one person to be lost. *“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness; He is patient toward you, not wanting any to be lost, but all to change their hearts”* (2 Peter 3:9). For this reason the Father sent His Son to die for the sins of mankind. *“God so loved the world that He gave His unique Son, in order that everyone who believes in Him might not perish, but may have eternal life”* (John 3:16).

they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without preaching?” (Romans 10:14).

Cornelius was a good man. *“He was a devout and God-fearing man, with all his family; he did many deeds of charity for the people, and prayed to God constantly”* (Acts 10:2). Yet this good man was told by the angel (God’s messenger) to send for Simon Peter, who would **speak words** by which Cornelius

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

and his house could be saved. God did not speak to Cornelius directly to tell him of Jesus Christ and the way of salvation. He arranged for the preacher, Simon Peter, to come to his home in Caesarea. Peter came. He preached about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The church of Jesus Christ believes we must preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The message must be brought to the lost. To this end we have Bible classes and preaching on Sundays and mid-week services. We conduct Bible studies in homes and teach with Bible correspondence lessons. Good magazines like *The Voice of Truth International* can be given to prospects. From time to time, we can invite preachers to come for special meetings and bring messages of God to the lost and the church. These are excellent opportunities for all to bring others to hear of the salvation found only in Christ.

It is our privilege as Christians to teach the lost! We can invite friends and relatives and neighbors to come to the assemblies of the church. We can arrange private Bible studies with those who are interested.

We must do all we can to let all the world know that God wants every soul to have salvation from sin.

Pray for these efforts! †

Loy Mitchell is the preacher for the Northside congregation in Topeka, Kansas, USA.

Barely Time for Me

I haven't time to teach right now,
I'm busy, can't you see!
You'll have to look for someone else —
I've barely time for me.

I'd like to help and fix that pie,
The family is bereaved;
But you'll have to talk to someone else —
I've barely time for me.

Our Meeting was a real disgrace,
No one came, you see;
I would have come myself, but then
I've barely time for me.

There's so much good I need to do;
Like Christ I'd like to be
But life is just so hectic, and
There's barely time for me.

Were Christ to come today, I fear
To think what He might see —
A hurried, harried gadabout
With "barely time for me".

Lord, help me rearrange my life
And put my eyes on Thee,
And then I'll find the time I need
To serve You faithfully.

— Dalton Key

PROVERBS 17:22



The Sri Lankan mother was pleased to have gotten her young son enrolled in a prestigious school. She was eager for him to make a positive impression.

The first day of school she dressed him in his new uniform and made sure he was “perfect”. To avoid any possibility that he might get dirty while she finished wrapping her sari, she put him in the bathroom and closed the door.

Ready to go herself, she opened the door. Her eyes traveled from his brightly polished shoes upward, noting that his clothes were still neat and clean — but his face was a shock! Above his cherubic smile, deeply dimpled cheeks, and mischievous eyes was a stunning bareness. His father’s razor had been too great a temptation to resist, and he had neatly shaved off both eyebrows!

While attending a marriage seminar on communication, Ned and his wife Nellie listened to the instructor declare, “It is essential that husbands and wives know the things that are important to each other.”

He addressed the men, “Can you describe your wife’s favorite flower?”

Ned leaned over, touched his wife’s arm gently and whispered, “Pillsbury All-Purpose, isn’t it?”

The rest of the story is not pleasant.



During a Girl Scouts’ first aid class the question was asked, “What would you do if a child swallowed a house key?”

One girl’s reply: “I’d climb in through the window.”



The apartment where we lived after we got married was so small that we stripped the paint from the walls to increase the space.



Cousin Clem complains a lot about his wife Minnie’s cooking. He told me, “With some wives, the

PROVERBS 17:22

call is ‘Come and get it,’ but with my wife, it’s ‘Try and eat it.’”



I was watching a documentary on television the other night. Apparently some scientists think they’ve found strange, ancient airstrips in South America. Recently this has been proven true because scientists have now found strange, ancient lost luggage there, too.



People sometimes make fun of the small town where I grew up. Some have said that our little town didn’t have any heavy industry, but that isn’t true — we had a 400 lb. Avon lady.



I read about a restaurant out in California with a sign that says: “Our Mexican food is so authentic we ask you not to drink the water.”



A father is a person who spends several thousand dollars on his daughter’s wedding, and then reads in the newspaper that he gave her away.

The advantage of exercising every day is that you die healthier.



A young boy came running into the house one lovely spring day and excitedly yelled, “Hey, Mom, come quick! Look! There’s peaches growing on the switch tree!”



The so-called experts say that walking is good for everyone, but I don’t believe it. My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was 60 years old. Now she’s 97, and we don’t know where she is.



Aunt Sally complains about having flabby thighs, but fortunately her stomach covers them.



(Bloopers from church bulletins)

“Don’t let worry kill you — let the church help.”

“Brother Jones spoke briefly, much to the delight of his audience.”

“Mr. & Mrs. Adams and Mr. & Mrs. Kelly request the honor of your presents at their children’s wedding.”

Unselfish Love

Dale Grissom

Agape is a Greek word denoting constant love and unselfish giving. "In respect of *agapao* as used of God, it expresses a deep and constant 'love' and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and fostering a reverential 'love' in them towards the Giver, and a practical 'love' towards those who are partakers of the same, and a desire to help others to seek the Giver" (**Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words**).

God is love, and He is the one from whom *agape* flows: "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16). God demonstrated His unselfish love for an unlovable world by sacrificing His Son.

In marriage, *agape* is a deliberate, lifelong commitment to one's mate, a commitment to give because of love and not because of what one expects to receive in return. It is evident from the number of divorces in the world today that *agape* is the missing ingredient in many marriages. We have been deluded in

our society to believe that love is an emotion, a state of "feeling" which we *uncontrollably* fall into and out of. This false impression produces excuses such as, "I do not love him anymore," and contributes to our high divorce rate.

Agape love is not a feeling of attraction, but rather is an affection which we learn through commitment, persistence, and experience in marriage, as well as life. The love that never fails (1 Corinthians 13:8) should help us to remain committed to the promises made on our wedding day, to love our mate "for better, for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and health, till death do us part." Through prayer and study we can expect God to help us develop *agape*.

Since *agape* love is a willful commitment to give, it must be followed by action. The more of it we give away, the more of it we will receive. Regardless of how little love we receive in our marriage, we will always have love because we gave it.

Lord, help us to put *agape* love to work in our lives. †

Dale Grissom works with the church of Christ in Dexter, Missouri, USA.

What Will Children Remember about Home?



Will they remember —

That their father and mother loved each other and were kind to each other?

That home was a happy place, respected and revered by the law of love?

That each child was treated fairly, deeply loved, and was required to obey both parents?

That home was a place where God was loved, respected and obeyed?

That Sunday was a happy day, looked forward to as a day when everyone went to Bible study and worship, without question?

That absolute truth abode there; no questioner, however young, was allowed to practice evasion of truth?

That the Bible was the law of God that settled everything, and that it was read and studied every day?

That although father and mother worked long and hard, they still took time to read the Bible and pray with their family?

That home was a place where friends and friendships were dear, but where truth and right were dearer?

These are things that make home a place of “precious memories”. In some cases the children may be grown and gone, and it may be too late to develop this rich storehouse for them. For others it is possible that the children’s remembrances of home may yet be changed — for the better, if parents are willing to make the necessary investment of self, love, and spirituality.

IS YOUR HOME AS GOD WOULD HAVE IT BE???

Steps to Take to Stay Married

Gary Grady



party and says they never had a fight is either lying, has lost their memory, or has had an incredibly boring marriage. 42% of the people who come to counselors come for marital problems. Marital conflict is almost universal (including the marriages of Bible heroes like Abraham, Jacob, Job, Samson).

Problems can arise from:

1. Faulty communication (the most common cause).
2. Defensive, self-centered attitudes.
3. Interpersonal tensions (sex, roles, religion, values, needs, money, in-laws, children, friends, boredom, etc.).

The difference between happy and unhappy marriages is not that happy couples never 'fight', nor is it the topics about which they fight. The difference is **how** they fight, and **how** they **handle** conflicts and problems. C. S. Lewis wrote that the only perfect marriages we 'see' are the ones at such a distance that we do not know much about them.

No marriage is invulnerable to conflict. Any couple that stands at their 50th wedding anniversary

There are five ways to respond to conflict. I will list them from the **worst** to the **best** (least effective to most effective). Even though there may be a place for each of them at some point in a relationship, cou-

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ples need to guard against the less-effective ways becoming the persistent pattern for them.

Withdraw — Physically or emotionally; to try to act like it did not happen; the silent treatment. This does nothing to help the conflict, but it leaves your individual needs unmet and the marriage's needs unmet. Unmet needs eventually kill.

Win — To enter the conflict with the aim of getting your way. When there is a *winner*, there is also a *loser*. You may get **your** needs met, but you will be trampling on the needs of your mate and your marriage.

Yield — To give in; to be a doormat; to always give up your rights and needs for the sake of the relationship or because you would rather not hassle about it.

The relationship's needs may be covered in this way, but your **own** needs will eventually starve to death, and you will either explode or have nothing left to give to the marriage. (The key difficulty here is in **always** yielding.)

Compromise — Neither of you gets exactly what you want right then, but both get **some** of what you need eventually. Give and take. Give in to your mate's needs or the marriage's needs with the expressed understanding that your needs will be met in another way or on another

occasion.

Resolve — To work through the conflict to the point that both of you feel good about it and it does not become negative baggage that will continue to be carried around in the marriage.

Now, how do you do the last one? Not only are the above ways listed from least effective to most effective, they are also listed from the easiest to the most difficult. People withdraw because it is the easiest thing to do. They do not resolve issues because it is the most difficult thing to do. Here are some guidelines to resolving problems, based on the assumption that both mates *want* to resolve them and are willing to work on it.

1. Mutually decide on an appropriate time — when both can give their full emotional and physical energy to it; when strong emotions have subsided.

2. Define what the problem is — make sure that both of you understand what it is you are really fighting about. Deal with only one problem per "session".

3. Define areas of agreement and disagreement — make sure you spend your time and effort on the things about which you actually disagree, after establishing where you agree.

4. Identify your own contribution to the problem. Focus on

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

yours, not your mate's, contribution.

5. State positively what behaviors on your part would probably help — express willingness to do those things.

6. Risk asking your mate's opinion — about specific behaviors he or she believes you can do that would help.

7. Listen to your mate's opinion.

8. Support and reinforce each other in your attempts at changed behavior.

In this process you need to watch your anger; you must speak directly and personally to your mate; you must be honest in your statements and questions; you must focus on your desired future expectations or positive changes (rather than what you **didn't** like in the past); you must share your request in a statement of preference instead of need ("I would appreciate it if you would..."; "It means a lot to me when you...").

Following are four early warning signs which would indicate that you might need some outside help (a counselor) in this process. A Christian counselor would share your values and recognize the spiritual help that is available.

Denial — a tendency to ignore, or explain away evidence of tension.

Avoidance — a decision to

avoid or postpone indefinitely any discussion of tense issues or concerns about the relationship.

Repetition — discussions which bring up issues repeatedly but never solve problems ("Here we go again!").

Detachment — a self-defensive attitude which says in words or in attitude, "I really don't care about solving the problem."

The key word at this point is **Cooperation**.

Key Bible passages are these:

Romans 14:19: "*Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.*"

1 Corinthians 7:3: "*Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.*"

Ephesians 5:28: "*So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.*"

1 Peter 3:1,2: "*Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.*"

Ephesians 5:33: "*...let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*" ✠

The Conquerors

**Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three,
One lived and died for self; one died for you and me.**

**The Greek died on a throne; the Jew died on a cross;
One's life a triumph seemed; the other but a loss.**

**One led vast armies forth; the other walked alone,
One shed a whole world's blood; the other gave His own.**

**One won the world in life and lost it all in death;
The other lost His life to win the whole world's faith.**

**Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three,
One died in Babylon, and one on Calvary.**

**One gained all for himself; and one Himself He gave.
One conquered every throne; the other every grave.**

**The one made himself God, the God made Himself
less. The one lived but to blast, the other but to bless.**

**When died the Greek, forever fell the throne of swords.
But Jesus died to live, forever Lord of lords.**

**Jesus and Alexander died at thirty-three,
The Greek made men slaves, the Jew made all men free.**

**One built a throne on blood; the other built on love.
The one was born of earth, the other from above.**

**One won all of the earth, to lose both earth and heaven.
The other gave up all, that all to Him be given.**

**The Greek forever died; the Jew forever lives.
He loses all who gets, and wins all things who gives.**

Charles Ross Weede

The Devastating Effects of Divorce

Wayne Jackson

The marriage principles found in the Bible have a purpose — they are designed for our benefit.

Through the prophet Malachi, Jehovah God said to ancient Israel: “*I hate divorce*” (Malachi 2:16). The Lord hates divorce because He loves people and divorce is devastating to humankind.

Man did not live one day upon this earth apart from the environment of a home. In fact, the very foundation of society is the home. Marriage is that divine union between a man and a woman who love one another, and who have welded their lives together “so long as they both shall live.” It is the cement that holds society together.

Moreover, it is this very societal cohesiveness that facilitates the spread of the redemptive gospel of Jesus Christ. When the family structure disintegrates, a significant factor in the growth of Christian faith is missing, and the gospel of God is hindered. Those who encourage capricious, unauthorized divorce undermine the cause for which the Savior died.

Divorce, generally speaking, is a tremendous evil. In fact, it is so bad that Jesus Christ allows it (together with a subsequent remarriage) on one basis only — that of fornication

ETHICS

(Matthew 5:32; 19:9). Subsequent unions following divorce — for all parties other than the innocent victim of a marriage breached by fornication — constitute adulterous relationships.

The divorce problem has reached alarming proportions. In 1970 there were 4.3 million divorced people in America. By 1994 that number had more than quadrupled to a staggering 17.4 million. According to the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, the fairly recent phenomenon of “no-fault” divorce has significantly accelerated the plague of American divorce. The United States now leads the world in marriage break-up.

In a recently published book **Why Marriage Matters: Reasons to Believe in Marriage in PostModern Society** (Pinion Press, 1997), author Glenn T. Stanton has compiled a massive amount of evidence which reveals the shocking effect that divorce is having in this country. This book is a survey of the most authoritative social science research published over the course of the last century. It demonstrates how first-time, life-long, monogamous marriage significantly improves the lives of adults, their children and the nation at large.

Consider some of the following factors:

- Alcoholism is much more likely to be a problem among those who have been divorced than those who have not. Those divorced only once have almost twice the rate of alcoholism as those who have never been divorced. Folks divorced more than once are almost three times as likely to have drinking problems.
- The suicide rate is almost three times higher among the divorced than among life-long spouses.
- The National Institute of Mental Health advises that the divorced are about four times as likely to have problems with depression as are the never-divorced.
- Studies have shown that the prevalence of suffering from any psychiatric disorder over a lifetime was significantly lower for those in stable marriages.
- Statistical data have revealed that children of divorced parents are much more likely to drop out of school than children from one-time-married couples.
- Children from broken homes are much more likely to have a difficult time obtaining and maintaining steady employment.

ETHICS

● The children of divorced parents are more likely to become “teen parents”, producing out-of-wedlock babies, than the children of life-long married parents.

● The offspring of divorced parents are twenty to thirty percent more likely to have health problems, or to be injury-prone than youngsters whose original parents are still together.

● The children of divorced parents are three times more likely to have emotional or behavioral problems than they will have if their bio-

logical parents stay together.

The evidence is all too clear. The Creator knew what He was doing when He gave strict regulations for the preservation of the original family. In view of this, Christian parents will make every effort possible to keep their marriages intact. Moreover, they will instruct their children in the concept of the permanency of marriage as designed by God. †

Wayne Jackson is a preacher of the gospel living in Stockton, California, USA. ChristianCourier.com is his web site.

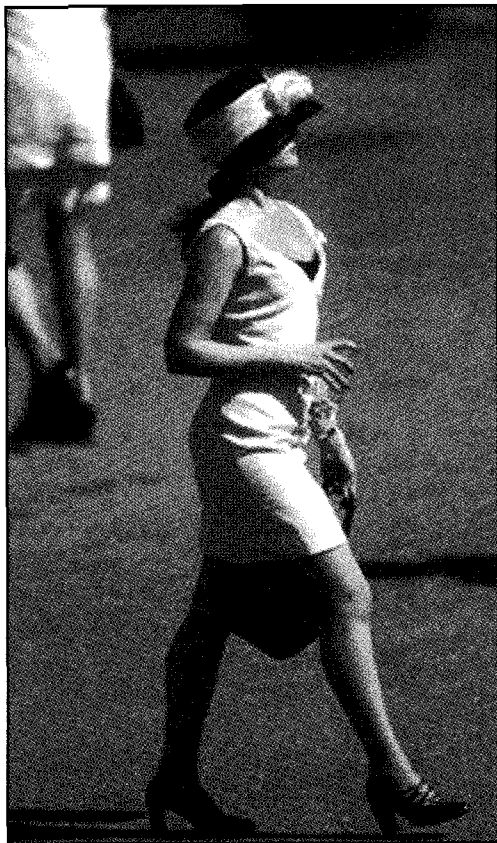


“Divorce Prevention”

It has been mentioned frequently that a marriage license, unlike most other licenses, is not granted on the basis of competence. A driver’s license implies that the recipient knows how to drive a car. A license to practice medicine means that the person has mastered knowledge about the body’s functioning and cures. Schools teach driver’s education, but they rarely give courses in marriage competence....

Building a good and lasting marriage is rarely easy. It is romantic for a couple to think that their love is strong enough to resist problems, but stable marriages more often build on persisting commitment, knowledge, sensitivity, interpersonal skills, and a willingness to live in accordance with biblical teaching.... The local congregation can help to ensure that good marriages are built, cared for, and repaired when there are signs of breakdown. Backed by prayer and the support of others, marriages can grow, broken relationships can be restored, and divorce can be prevented.

— Gary R. Collins



Clothing certainly does not determine character, for God looks on the heart not the appearance (1 Samuel 16:7). But, **one's character can and does determine the clothing one wears**. For some reason, however, some professed Christians seemingly give little thought to their attire even though there are a number of biblical principles relating to one's dress.

In the very first book of the Bible one can find reference to God's attitude toward public display of the human body. After the fall of Adam and Eve, they "*made themselves aprons*" (Genesis 3:7). But by way of a more substantial covering, God "*did make coats of skins and clothed them*" (Genesis 3:21). Obviously,

CHRISTIANS AND DRESS

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

Adam and Eve did not cover enough of themselves with the "aprons", and a **principle of modesty is introduced in the dawn of man's existence!**

Some would overdress to impress, but the Bible demands "modest apparel" (1 Timothy 2:9,10). The term *modest* is *kosmios*, which contains the idea of *orderly* or *decent*. A "kosmios" person, to the Greeks, had grace and dignity in all areas of life, including dress. The style of the world in the first centu-

ETHICS

ry tended to gaudiness, but Christians then (and thus, now) are not to be slaves to style, but to decency.

It is not uncommon in these lax times to see young people attending (especially) Sunday evening and Wednesday evening services in shorts. "Spaghetti" strap dresses are worn by young women, and the growing fad of wearing low-cut pants/skirts with short-cut tops — revealing a wide strip of flesh in between — is a shame to every daughter who does it and to every parent who is blind enough to allow it.

One's dress can provoke lust (Matthew 5:27,28). Most parents used to understand this and so teach their children, but with the decadent influence of all forms of media, coupled with peer pressure, even Christians are now seen in skimpy wear on beaches, and in sloppy and immodest clothes at worship. Too often the wardrobe of Christians is no different from the people of the world, being continually snatched from one extreme to another by whatever the latest fad happens to be.

Surely men and women must control their thoughts and their exhibitionist tendencies. One who *influences another to lust* is as guilty as the one who *lusts*. The Bible further teaches that one should avoid bringing shame on the

church, on the name of Christ, and on one's own self. "*Give none offense; neither to the Jews, nor the Gentiles, nor to the church of God*" (1 Corinthians 10:32). The church, i.e., all Christians, are responsible for teaching and for setting good examples. Members of the body of Christ must respect God, others, and themselves in all things, governed by the principle of love (Matthew 22:37-39).

On the other hand, Christians are forbidden to "judge" another's worthiness by his poverty of dress (James 2:1-9). Too often, those who are well-dressed are looked on as desirable candidates for teaching and conversion, while someone who is poorly dressed may be regarded as inconsequential — not worthy of even being noticed. God warns that "*If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.*"

The Bible also teaches personal cleanliness for Christians: "*...let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*" (2 Corinthians 7:1). The term *flesh* includes personal hygiene. One who loves his fellowman will not offend. During the hippie culture, American medical doctors were

reporting epidemics of scabies (itch). Such bodily filth is amazing in a supposedly enlightened culture.

A word of caution is needed here. Sometimes the newly baptized or visitors to the assembly who are not familiar with Bible principles of dress may dress inappropriately. A poor farmer was once baptized where I preached. He came to service that first Sunday dressed in his best — bib-overalls, a white shirt buttoned at the top, a dark sport coat, and field shoes. An unloving elder told the man that he was not dressed “properly”. The man never would come to services again and returned to the denomination to which he had previously belonged. Christians, while trying to improve their own lives, must be patient with the untaught.

The Bible teaches that God demands that the distinctions between males and females are to be maintained. There is a curious passage in Revelation that reads: “...and on their heads were as it were crowns of gold, and their faces were as the faces of **men** and they had hair as the hair of **women** (Revelation 9:7,8). Of course the language of the passage is figurative, but hermeneutical rules state that figurative speech must have some basis in the literal. God established distinctions between males and females and does not want

those distinctions to be blurred (Romans 1:26,27) The principle of male leadership involves a clear understanding of the differing roles of men and women (1 Corinthians 11:3). The “unisex” movement in America is an abomination before God, and clothing (including jewelry) is a hall-mark of the movement. Men need to be masculine. Women need to be feminine. Sound, sensible, decent judgment by Christians concerning appropriate dress for worship, work-place, recreation, and home is much needed in today’s “anything goes” culture.

The Bible condemns, in word and in principle, immodest public attire, show-off dress, and indecent, inappropriate clothing. Surely Christians can learn not to offend in what they decide to wear. Personal preferences as to *style* are matters of **liberty**. Preferences as to *decency* are matters of **faith**.

Too often the current attitude of Christians is that what they wear to worship and elsewhere doesn’t matter to God. As an example of the reverence God expects of those who come into His presence, I challenge you to read Exodus 19:10-13 and chapter 29, particularly vs. 40-43. Though God’s law for salvation has changed, His nature concerning the holiness of Himself has not. Humans had better be careful how we approach Him. †

ETHICS

In an age when many pride themselves on “liberation”, the idea that God should have any say in the matter of morals seems outdated. True standards of morality, however, are not derived from man and his ideas, but from God. He has the final word on these matters, and if we reject what He says, we reject Him.

Paul said that the commandments he taught were not from himself, but from the Lord. *“For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication”* (1 Thessalonians

4:2,3). The problem many have with this injunction against immorality is that they want to have their own way and to base the standard on their own desires. Just as in the Roman world, they **“changed**

the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” (Romans

1:25). That desire to worship the creature more than the Creator led to the vilest of sins (Romans 1:26-32).

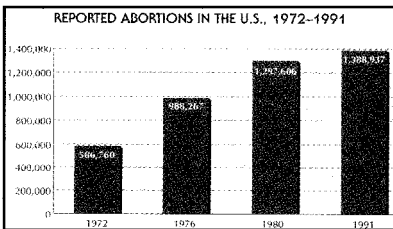
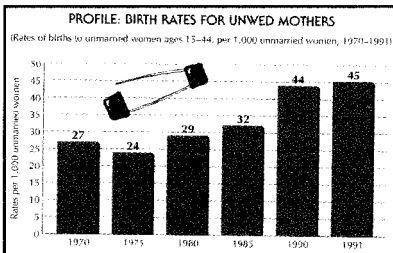
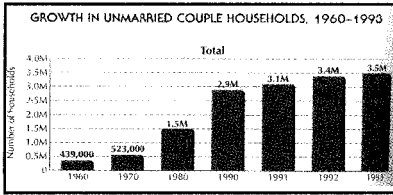
God’s Word is the standard we must follow (John 12:48). When Paul said that it was God’s will that *“ye should abstain from fornication,”* he used a word that has a broad meaning, including **premarital sex, adultery, homosexuality, prostitution, rape, and even lust.**

Sex is so powerful — and so damaging when used wrongly — that it must be controlled. In its prop-

er place in marriage, it is a wonderful thing. Outside of marriage, however, it creates havoc. *“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge”* (Hebrews 13:4).

Does
It
Really
Matter
to
God
What
I
Do
Sexually?

Bob Prichard



Charts from The Macmillan Visual Almanac. Note the parallel progression of immorality and its consequences.

Paul adds, *"That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of concupiscence [lustful passions], even as the Gentiles which know not God"* (1 Thessalonians 4:4,5). *"Possess his vessel"* is a polite way of saying that a man must maintain self-control, so that he does not follow the example of the pagan people around him. Their standards are much lower than God's standards. The

world is preoccupied with sex, even using risque situations, near-pornography, and nudity to sell just about every product imaginable. We cannot live like the world and be acceptable to God, however.

What we do with our bodies sexually has deep implications. Paul writes, *"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"* (1 Corinthians 6:15-20).

Maintaining sexual purity is a matter of the heart. Solomon said, *"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life"* (Proverbs 4:23). Jesus said, *"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart"* (Matthew 5:27,28). Yes, it matters greatly and eternally what we do sexually. †

How Is a Christian Different from the Non-Christian?

John Thiesen

After hearing from the apostle Paul of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, king Agrippa responded: *"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"* (Acts 26:28). We do not have a record of Agrippa ever becoming a Christian, but his statement brings up an important question: **"What does it mean to be a Christian?"**

Let's suppose that Agrippa had become a Christian. What changes would have taken place in his life? Furthermore, what changes are required today in order for a person to be a Christian?

In some ways, Christians are like most 'typical' or average people, so that they do not have to change *every* activity after their conversion. Many continue working on the same jobs, side by side with non-Christians. They operate the same kinds of businesses, have some of the same hobbies, go fishing, ski, camp out, quilt, sew, collect stamps and do woodworking, the same as many other people. They mow their lawns, plant flowers and vegetables, paint and listen

to music like their neighbors. In all these things, they are not different from other people who do not follow Christ.

Ways in Which Christians Are Different

However, Christians are different in one important respect: all that they do is done with an eye toward pleasing God. They do not divorce their faith in Christ from their daily activities. To them, being a Christian is a full-time way of life. **Christ is their life.** Along with Paul, they say: *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"* (Galatians 2:20). In every area of life, they include Christ.

✿ For example: **Being a Christian involves doing good to all men, both to fellow-Christians and to others.** *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them of the household of faith"* (Galatians

6:10). Christians are in the forefront in good works, giving to the needy, orphans, and widows. When their neighbors are in difficulty, they rush to assist them. This they do in the name of Christ, giving thanks to God through Him (Colossians 3:17).

✿ **Being a Christian is a way of working and being an employer.** He strives to *"provide things honest in the sight of all men"* (Romans 12:17). Christians make good employees because they always are looking out for the best interests of their employer, doing service to him as if doing it to Christ, being aware that their Lord is looking and that they must on the last day give an account to Him (Ephesians 6:5-8). If, on the other hand, a Christian is an employer, he deals with his employees with fairness and compassion, knowing that he has a Heavenly Master to whom he must also give an account one day (vs. 9).

✿ **Being a Christian is a way of playing (recreation).** From the time that he entered Christ, a Christian no longer involves himself in the riotous, ungodly lifestyle so common in the world around him. He does not participate in alcoholic drinking, drugs, riotous parties, and immoral behavior, nor does he entertain himself with unclean movies, videos, or pornographic web sites, even though his former

companions in these activities disapprove of the changes in his life (1 Peter 4:1-5). This is because he knows that *"because of these things, the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience"* (Ephesians 5:6).

✿ **Being a Christian is a way of worshipping God.** The Christian looks upon his body as a living sacrifice to the Lord (Romans 12:1). Therefore, he is in constant, daily contact with God in prayer and praise (1 Thessalonians 5:17,18; 1 Peter 2:9). A Christian does not have to be begged, cajoled, or shamed into attending the worship assemblies of the church. Quite the contrary, because his very purpose in life is to give glory to God and to serve His Son Jesus Christ, he welcomes every opportunity to assemble with fellow Christians to worship. He is a worshipper of God *"in spirit and in truth"* as are all true worshippers (John 4:24), obeying from his heart that form of worship commanded by God.

Truly, being a Christian is a way of life, touching every aspect of daily behavior and manifested in the way he treats others, works, does business, plays, and worships God through His Son Jesus Christ. †

John Thiesen is the editor and translator for the Spanish edition of *The Voice of Truth International*.

Indolence or Industry...

Which?

Joe C. Magee

Indolence and industry begin with the same three letters, and yet no two words could be more opposite. By definition indolence is: “inactive or relatively benign; a disposition to avoid exertion; slothful.” On the other hand industry is: “energetic, devoted to any activity or task; diligence.” There is an interesting parallel here involving human behavior. Two people may start life on an even plane and yet end their lives miles apart so far as moral and spiritual qualities are concerned. By using the two words indolence and industry as acrostics, an interesting study and valuable conclusion can be reached:

I
N
D
O-bstinate
L-azy
E-mbryonic
N-ebulous
C-alamitous
E-mpty

I
N
D
U-nblemished
S-piritual
T-actful
R-ealistic
Y-ielding

What makes the difference in these two walks of life? It all begins with the thoughts of the mind. Those thoughts that are centered on self-will result in **indolence**. Those that are centered on Christ and the principles set forth by the Holy Spirit will result in **industry**.

God designed and created man with the ability to succeed in life. Success, of course, is often misinterpreted and misrepresented. Real success is found in the right relationship with God, regardless of one's material, ethnic, or cultural situation. It is determined by how and what we hold in our hearts. The apostle Paul said it best: *“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you”* (Philippians 4:8,9). †

Joe C. Magee is a gospel preacher living in Shawnee, Oklahoma, USA.



Teaching About God in the Yard

Jeanette Jackson

There is always a variety of things going on in the back yard: entertaining, playing, or working — sowing, planting, hoeing, and grass cutting to make a place beautiful. There are also lots of things to see: the birds, frogs, lizards, snakes, chipmunks, squirrels, and even the little critters that bite us. Read about the creation in Genesis 1. We can learn a great lesson from the creation story in Genesis 1 about the sun, moon, stars, rain, sunrise, and

sunset. We can teach how God made the trees and the ways we need them. Think of the flowers and the joy they bring to us, especially to the sick, shut-ins, lonely, and bereaved. Isn't it wonderful to read the Bible and learn that all these are gifts from God?

We can put a swing or a rocking chair in the backyard and use these in which to sing songs and teach our children and grandchildren about God and Jesus, and

explain that God created the world and everything in it, even us. There is no more peaceful place for prayer, meditation, and Bible study than in our back yard.

The back yard can be a wonderful place for a cookout. We read in Luke 10 that Mary and Martha made preparations for the visit of Jesus. It might have been in the back yard. Women seem to see the need for preparation where many times a man doesn't. In this chapter, Jesus also told Martha that *"Mary hath chosen the good part."*

The Shunammite woman practiced hospitality in her home (2 Kings 4). The Bible says she and her husband *"made a little chamber with a bed, a table, a stool, table and candlestick"* for Elisha to use when he was passing through. Verse 8 tells us that *"she constrained him to eat bread and as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread."* We too can serve others in their work for God, and it doesn't take fancy foods or things to accomplish this — just a willing heart. In the earlier part of 2 Kings 4, there is another example of a woman who had great faith and did as the servant of God said. The entire chapter has so many lessons for all of us today.

In Acts 16:13-15 we read about Lydia and her conversion. Verse 15 states that *"she constrained us* (Paul

and Silas) *to visit if we judged her to be faithful to the Lord."* We then read in Acts 16:40 that *"Paul and Silas went out of the prison and entered into the house of Lydia and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed."* Love should always abide in our back yards: love for God, for family, for friends and neighbors, and even the little creatures God created for our enjoyment. In the love chapter, (1 Corinthians 13), we can also read about the importance of love.

In the back yard (and wherever we go), we should watch our conversation (1 Peter 1:15, 3:10; Hebrews 13:5; James 3:13), our attire (1 Timothy 2:9,10; 1 Peter 3:3,4), and behavior (1 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:10; Ephesians 4:15; Hebrews 13:18) because we also teach by our example. It will never help us in reaching out to others if our daily life isn't pleasing to God.

Friendships have started in the back yard. We build on our friendships by encouraging, uplifting, and supporting each other as we journey to heaven. *"Look on the fields, for they are white unto harvest"* (Luke 10:2). As was stated at the beginning, a lot can happen in our back yard. †

Jeanette Jackson is an elder's wife living in Adamsville, Alabama, USA.



Older and Wiser

Robert Ball

People often say, "I'm older and wiser," and I am confident that in many cases this statement is true. People who are older should be wiser than when they were younger. Older persons have the advantage of many years of experiences from which to learn and grow wiser. Unfortunately, it is not always the case that people do grow wiser with age. Therefore, when somebody says, "I'm older and wiser," the statement is not necessarily true, as much as we may wish it were.

If an individual hears, believes, and obeys the Gospel of Jesus Christ when he is young; if he then directs his life to faithfully worship and serve God; if he diligently studies God's Word in

order to determine how he should live, and then conducts himself according to what he learns, then that man is wise before he is old. Nevertheless, one would expect such a man to grow even wiser as he grows older.

I have been blessed in my life to have known many older people, and it is my opinion that most of them have been wise. I appreciate the wise counsel I have received from older people. I am sometimes alarmed that young people today, people under forty-five years of age, neither appreciate nor give proper respect to older people. From my childhood I was taught by my parents to respect people of age.

What does the Bible say our attitude should be toward older people? Consider Leviticus 19:32: "*You shall rise before the gray headed and*

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD." This verse not only enjoins respect for the aged, it shows a close connection between proper regard for the aged and reverence for God. The respect one has for older people tells a great deal about one's respect for God. Solomon said, *"The silver-haired head is a crown of glory..."* (Proverbs 16:31). Listen to wise older people and you will be amazed at their insight concerning the problems of life each of us faces.

dear old sister was twenty-four years old when World War I started?" For some reason that particular statistic spoke volumes to me about the changes our sister had witnessed during her lifetime. I know this: she was a lady who possessed great wisdom. Every time I visited her home I found her sitting in the same chair. There were lamp tables on each side of the chair and these tables were stacked with brotherhood papers which she read regularly. What thrilled me even more was the fact that her old, worn Bible was there, and invariably she

"The silver-haired head is a crown of glory..." (Proverbs 16:31).

I have heard persons over the age of sixty-five referred to as "the witness generation". I think that is an accurate description of this age group. It could be convincingly argued that this generation has seen more changes in the world in which they live than any generation in its history.

While preaching in North Carolina some years ago, I had several opportunities to converse with a wonderful sister in Christ who happened to be ninety-six years old. My wife and I were in our car on the way home one day, after visiting with this dear sister, and I said, "Honey, do you realize that that

would be reading it when I came. She had experienced a lifetime of joy and pain. She had also spent a lifetime studying God's Word and serving Him, I am convinced, to the best of her ability. What this woman had to say was worth hearing.

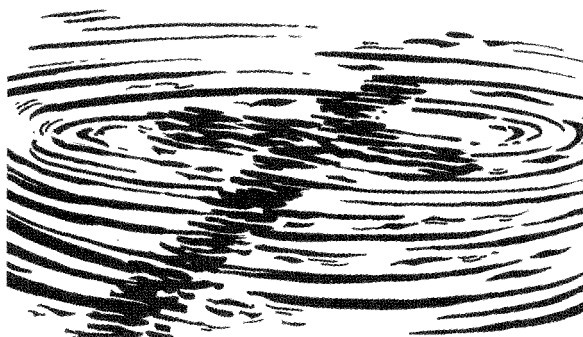
The next time you have an opportunity to sit and talk with an older person, let me suggest that you consider it a great privilege to learn something that just may be of help to you on your journey through life. †

Robert Ball is an evangelist with the Hialeah Church of Christ in Hialeah, Florida, USA.



Forgiveness

Glenn Colley



Perhaps the sweetest word in our mother tongue is the word “forgiveness”. People who are without it carry a weight of guilt draped around their shoulders that often causes depression, loss of energy, and loss of sleep.

When we feel guilty, we don’t just want someone to pat us on the back and say, “Relax, it will all blow over,” ... we want the remedy for guilt ... we want forgiveness.

When it comes to forgiveness from God, sometimes people become a little confused. Let me illustrate. If I wrong you and I

seek your forgiveness, what should I do? Well, I should go straight to you and ask for it. After all, forgiveness of my wrong will take place in *your mind*.

It’s the same with God. Sometimes people maintain that they are forgiven because they “feel forgiven”. Well, it’s good to “feel forgiven”, but God’s forgiveness doesn’t take place in *my heart* — it takes place in *God’s heart*.

If I am to have real forgiveness, then, I must go to Him. How do I do that? Acts 2:38, “*Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins.*” †

Glenn Colley is the preacher for the West Huntsville Church of Christ in Huntsville, Alabama, USA.

Why Don't We Know the Rest of It?

Jim Faughn

"... but encourage one another day after day. . ." Hebrews 3:13

The following words are very well known to most of us:

Now I lay me down to sleep;
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Some time ago, I learned a couple of things about this prayer/poem. According to a book I read, the author is Eugene Henry Pullen. I found it interesting to learn who is responsible for the thoughts that have been expressed probably millions of times. I also found it interesting to learn that there is a second stanza (or a second part) of the prayer. It contains these words:

Now I wake and see the light;
'Tis God who kept me through the night.
To Him I lift my voice and pray
That he will keep me through the day.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

I wonder why we do not know the second part as well as the first part? I wonder if it reflects an attitude that basically says, "God, during these upcoming hours when I feel as though I have no control, I'll trust You to care for me. On the other hand, when I am awake and feel in control, I can handle it fine without You. Thanks anyway."

Do we entrust our lives to our Father always, or just when we sense that we are facing something beyond our power and/or ability to control? Maybe the thoughts of David, as expressed in Psalm 18:1-3, should be our attitude twenty-four hours a day:

"I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised. So shall I be saved from mine enemies." †

More Like a Scorpion



Mike Hinton

Scorpions are far from being my favorite creature in God's creation. The nasty sting they carry on their tails is only the worst of their negative qualities. They certainly don't score very high in the 'cute and cuddly' department, even when they're babies being carried on their mother's back. And since I've been stung several times myself, I'm somewhat prejudiced against the species.

One day recently, as I was removing the brake drum from a truck differential housing (a favorite hiding place for scorpions), I noticed that one of the former inhabitants had left me a perfect, three dimensional likeness of itself. Scorpions have an exoskeleton that must be discarded and replaced as the creature grows. Often this outer shell is damaged in the process, but this particular one was perfectly preserved, leaving me an exact copy

of the scorpion in an aggressive attack position. I carefully removed it and brought it to my office for further study and contemplation.

My mind is always searching for suitable material to be used in Bible classes or sermons, and this seemed to have potential. It occurred to me that Christians would be better off in some ways if they learned to be more like a scorpion. The passage of scripture that leapt out at me as I considered possible applications was Romans 12:2, in which Paul wrote, "*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*"

When we are baptized into Christ, we come forth from the water a new person, cleansed from our former sins and ready to begin a new life in Christ. "Therefore we

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4) As a newborn babe in Christ we began to feed on the word of God, and to grow in faith and knowledge through our study. *"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby"* (1 Peter 2:2).

let things we perceive as insults or slights rob us of associations that could strengthen our faith, and we wear those scars and bruises like badges of honor on our shells.

What we need are more Christians, who, like scorpions, can from time to time shed that hardened and scarred outer shell, and leave it behind as they grow on toward maturity in Christ. It's true that a hardened shell provides some

When we take our eyes off of Christ and begin focusing on the weaknesses of our brethren, letting disputes and jealousies occupy our minds, that shell can begin to harden and we can't grow anymore.

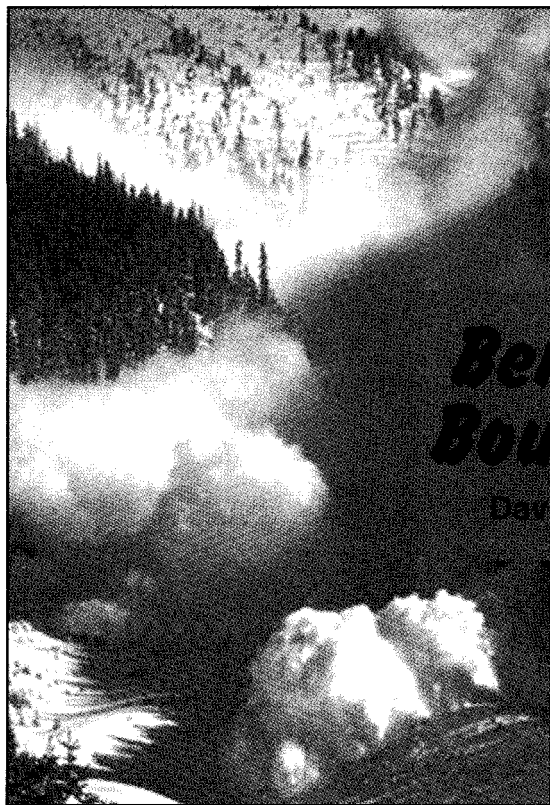
But very often Christians reach a point in their spiritual growth where they become constricted by worldly concerns or distractions in the church. For all practical purposes, they have the same problem as a young scorpion trying to grow past the confines of its exoskeleton.

When our faith in Christ and our zeal for the church are strong, we keep that outer shell pliable and we can grow without restriction. But when we take our eyes off of Christ and begin focusing on the weaknesses of our brethren, letting disputes and jealousies occupy our minds, that shell can begin to harden and we can't grow anymore. We

protection from those injuries to the heart that are an inevitable part of human relationships, but anything that restricts contact with fellow members of the body of Christ also restricts your contact with Christ!

If your 'exoskeleton' is constricting your growth in service to Christ and love for your brethren, then consider finding yourself a place of quiet and solitude, and in prayer to the Father ask Him to help you daily renew your faith, and leave that outgrown husk of spiritual immaturity behind. †

Mike Hinton lives and works in Snyder, Oklahoma, USA.



One winter a ski resort in Breckenridge, Colorado, posted signs warning skiers to keep off a certain slope. The signs, large and distinct, said, "**Danger! Out of Bounds!**"

Beneficial Boundaries

David A. Sargent

In spite of the warnings, however, several skiers went into the area. The result? An avalanche, one-half mile wide, buried four of the trespassers beneath tons of snow and

rock. This tragedy would have never happened if the warning signs had been heeded!

From this incident, we recognize that one benefit of boundaries is to protect us from harm.

Nevertheless, in our culture, boundaries are often hated because they are viewed as being too restrictive. It is believed that our freedom will be hampered if limitations are imposed on our lives. Opposition to boundaries is nowhere more evident than when it comes to boundaries that God has given in His Word.

Often, we fail to recognize that just as those signs were posted in Colorado for the *safety* and *benefit* of the skiers, following God's instructions also ensures that we are protected from harm. When God and His stan-

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dards are ignored, man digresses into all kinds of immorality and suffering, which ultimately result in judgment and condemnation (read Romans 1). When God's ways are followed, man's condition improves!

It is also important to recognize that God's purpose in giving His commands was not to *curb* our freedom, but rather to teach us the meaning of *real liberty*!

God's 'loving limits' actually *set us free to become the people God created us to be*. We're kind of like kites! The kite is attached to a string, which is held by a person standing on the ground. After the kite is airborne, one might be tempted to cut the string to allow the kite to fly higher. However, if the string is cut, the kite will NOT gain greater altitude. Instead, it will plummet to the ground. **A kite finds its freedom to fly within a boundary.** *So do we!*

God blesses those who are obedient to His will: Those who **believe in Jesus** (Acts 16:31), **repent of living by their OWN boundaries** (2 Corinthians 7:10), **confess that Jesus is God's Son** (Romans 10:9,10), **are baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins** (Acts 22:16), and **continue to walk within**

God's boundaries as a way of life (1 John 1:7), are blessed by God with the **abundant life** now (John 10:10) and **eternal life** to come (Romans 6:23).

Clear and beneficial boundaries have been set for us by our loving Creator, who sees what we *do not* and knows what we *cannot*!

Will YOU trust and submit to Him?

Have YOU obeyed the gospel? †

David A. Sargent, minister for the church of Christ at Creekwood, Mobile, Alabama, USA.

**There is a road that leads uphill,
Past streams and flowers fair,
Above the valley of yesterday
And past the bridge of care.
It is a long and winding road,
Where sun and shadows blend,
Where never a footstep falters
And every grief must end.**

**There is a road that leads uphill,
A million miles from pain,
Where heartache is a stranger
One never meets again.
Where golden dawn replaces night
To mark the journey's end,
Where Jesus waits beside the gate
To bid us enter in.**

— Grace E. Easley

Mothers Are Important

Donny Weimar

He lay there in her arms cooing. God put complete trust in her. There were millions of others who could have been chosen, but she was the one. The Father chose a woman to introduce the King of kings to the world. Mothers are a vital part of God's Kingdom.

"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, 'Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!'" (Luke 1:26, 28).

Jesus grew into a responsible pre-teen. It was unexpected when the boy turned up missing. Joseph and Mary looked frantically for him among all their relatives and traveling companions. They had traveled a whole day's journey from Jerusalem. How could this most responsible child be lost?

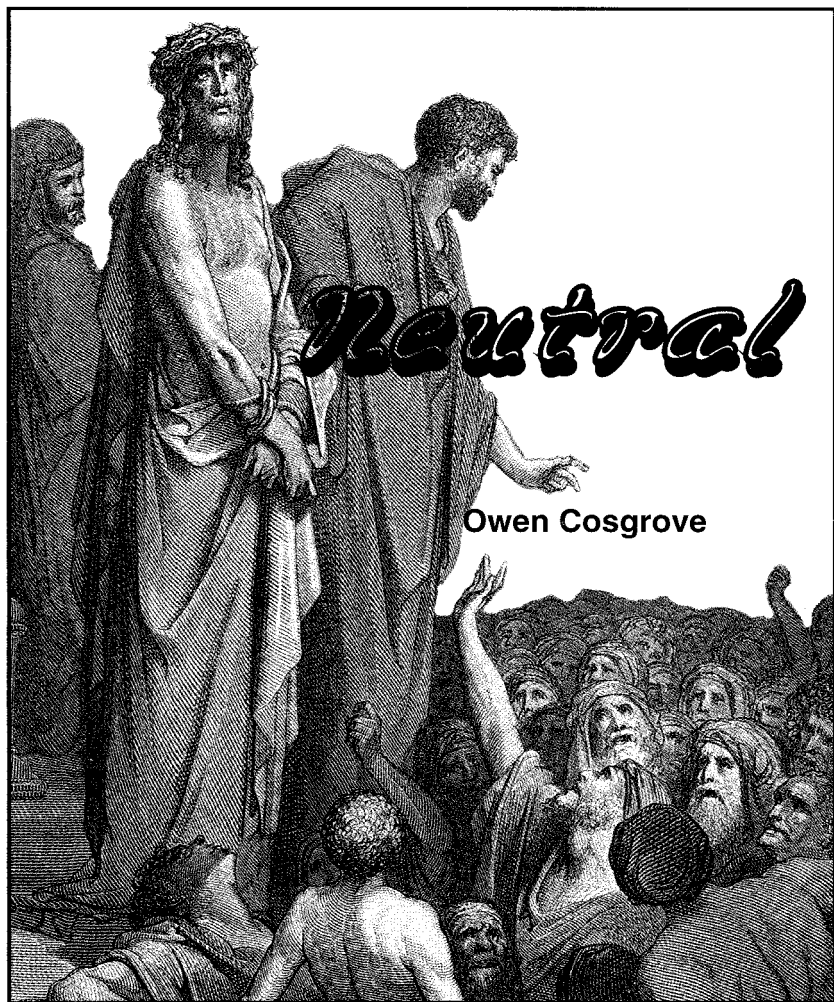
It was three days before they found him in the temple. *"Why did you seek Me?"* Jesus asked them, *"Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"* (Luke

2:49). Their parental instincts must have overridden their awareness that Mary had borne the Messiah, the perfect child. His higher responsibility was to do His Father's work.

She watched her Son grow into the Man of God. Mary was there when Jesus performed his first miracle. *"They have no wine,"* she prodded him (John 2:3). *"Whatever He says to you, do it,"* she charged the servants (John 2:5). The Lord miraculously turned about 180 gallons of water into wine that day. His new disciples were now convinced.

On the darkest day of death, Jesus' mother was near. In fact, three women, all named of Mary, were there (John 19:25). They stood weeping next to a beloved disciple. As they looked up at the Lord suffering in deepest agony on man's instrument of torture, sweet words came softly from his lips. *"Woman,"* said Jesus to his mother, *"behold thy son!"* Then to the disciple, *"Behold thy mother!"* God's Son loved his mother. The comfort of his last mortal hour was in knowing she would be cared for. Yes, mothers are important. †

Donny Weimar is a Gospel preacher.



Several years ago the Carl Mosser family was traveling in Oklahoma when a gunman commandeered their car and held them hostage for several days as he drove around over the countryside.

Their kidnapper had a strange eye that never quite closed, and the family could not tell when he was asleep. They were afraid for their lives, and so they were held hostage through the long and tedious ordeal.

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Finally they stopped at a little station/grocery store out in the country. Mr. Mosser saw his chance, and he grabbed his abductor and begged the station owner to call the sheriff. "Please," he cried, "Please call the law!"

The owner got his own gun and told them all to leave. "I do not want any trouble around here," he said. "Just all of you leave." The terrified family drove away with their captor. The next day the couple and their two children were found murdered. Their bodies had been thrown into an abandoned well.

Their killer finally was brought to trial and convicted. Later the state tried the station owner and convicted him for his failure to notify authorities and perhaps to save the family.

Most of the time we would like to be neutral, and often this is the wisest course to take. Shakespeare warned about jumping into other people's quarrels, and Solomon said that *"He that passeth by, and meddles with strife not belonging to him, is like one that takes a dog by the ears"* (Proverbs 26:17).

But there are times when being neutral can be criminal. The old saying is that silence is golden, but sometimes silence is just plain yellow.

Pontius Pilate wanted to be neutral. Oh, how he wanted to be neutral! He wanted to be the leader, but he did not want to show leadership. The Jewish leaders were bothering him with thinly veiled threats to report him to Caesar. The surging mob was calling for the release of Public Enemy Number One, Barabbas, while they clamored for the death of Jesus, a man in whom Pilate could find no fault. His wife begged him to have nothing to do with Christ's death. But politics prevailed. The leader *"washed his hands"* of the matter, *"and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified"* (Matthew 27:24).

Sometimes we just cannot be neutral and still be right with the Lord. God help us to have the courage to stand for truth and right. †

Owen Cosgrove preaches for the Northside church in Waxahachie, Texas, USA.

*To sin by silence when they should
protest makes cowards of men.
— Abraham Lincoln*

Who Am I?

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

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

1. **100** I was a descendant of the tribe of Levi (Exodus 4:14).
2. **90** According to God's prophecy, I became as a mouth to my brother, but he became as God to me (Exodus 4:16).
3. **80** My son's name was Eleazar, and his son's name was Phinehas (Exodus 6:25).
4. **70** My father married his father's sister (Exodus 6:20).
5. **60** Two of my sons offered profane fire in sacrifice to God and were stricken dead; I was told not to even grieve publically for them (Leviticus 10:1-7).
6. **50** Through God's use of my voice and hands, great miracles were done before a powerful king (Exodus 7-12).

7. **40** Another man and I upheld our leader's hands in our struggle to defeat the Amalekites (Exodus 17:12).

8. **30** I, along with my brother, two of my sons, and seventy of the elders of Israel, were allowed to see the glory of God in a very special way (Exodus 24:9,10).

9. **20** However, after that I failed miserably when for a short time I was the visible leader of my people (Exodus 32:1-6).

10. **10** On two other occasions, I failed in my role as leader (Numbers 12:1,2; 20:10-13). As a result God had me stripped of my distinctive clothing indicating my role of leadership, and I "was gathered to my people" on Mt. Hor (Numbers 20:22-28).



See answer on inside back cover.

My Score _____



His First Night Alone

Tim Hall

The young man had difficulty falling asleep that night. The place where he lay down to rest was in unfamiliar territory. Strange noises filled the darkness, and his imagination leaped at each sound. But there was something larger that filled him with sadness. His family was now far behind him, and it wasn't clear when he would see them again. One person who wasn't sorry to see him go was his twin brother. It was common knowledge that his brother wanted revenge, and this made the weary traveler even sadder.

Genesis 28 is where this story is told. Jacob was the young man on the run, fleeing from his brother, Esau, whom he had tricked into selling his birthright. Rebekah had advised her younger son to flee to Haran where her

COMFORT AND REASSURANCE

brother would take him in. Now Jacob felt the loneliness close in around him as the darkness of night fell. Jacob would learn, however, before the night was over that he wasn't really alone. God appeared to him in a dream, speaking words of encouragement: *"Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you"* (Genesis 28:15, NKJV).

That promise, combined with the vision of angels on a staircase leading up to heaven, gave Jacob the strength he needed. He now knew he was not alone after all.

There is the time in life when young adults must strike out from their homes, and they feel very much alone. Their sheltered years of living with Mom, Dad, or other loving adults is now history. Before them looms college or a job or marriage, with all the demands of independence. There was a time when independence looked so exciting! But that was before reality settled in. Now it is clear that independence means leaving the familiar behind, leaving the security of home behind. Sometimes being on your own means feeling so very alone.

If only heaven could be opened, and that same vision of angels could again be seen! If only we could hear the voice of God, just as Jacob

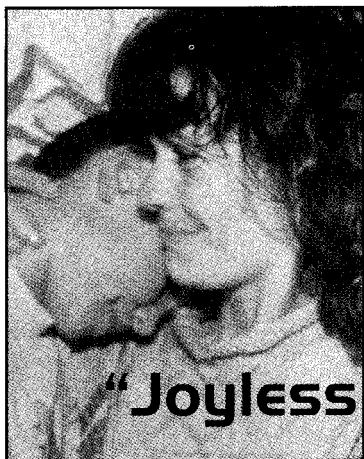
did that night! That would help us through the lonely time of adjustment to our new state of independence and responsibility. We would have courage, knowing that we are not really alone.

But Christian young people can have the same assurance that Jacob had. Before lying down amidst the unfamiliar sounds of a strange place, open your eyes to the written promises God has given every follower of His Son. Hebrews 13:5,6 is a good passage: *"Let your conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'"* And this is just one of many, many such promises of the Lord's presence and help in our daily lives.

This may be your first night alone. Or you may be feeling again the despair of being separated from the comforts of home and family. If you are a child of God, know that you are not actually alone. God is faithful to fulfill all of His promises, and He will never leave you nor forsake you.

Open your Bible; open your eyes. You'll sleep better tonight. ☩

Tim Hall is a preacher of the gospel who works with the Lord's church in Johnson City, Tennessee, USA.



He was in prison. The feel of cold steel and the incessant rattle of the chains was an endless reminder of freedom as a pleasant memory, but not a present reality. Moreover, a sword pierced his soul as certain factious brethren strove to intensify his afflictions. *"The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds"* (Philippians 1:16). However, though held tightly in the vise of adversi-

"Joyless Christianity?"

Frank Chesser

ty, Paul exhorted, *"Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice"* (Philippians 4:4).

For unbelievers, life is one unending tragedy. It is birthed in pain and ends in sorrow. Its joy is superficial and transient. It is void of meaning and hope. It is one long, dark journey that culminates in despair.

For the faithful child of God, life is not lived in the Eden of ecstasy. It is punctuated with disappointment, sorrow, pain, and suffering. However, every tear of adversity is coated with the soothing salve of joy.

"Joyless Christianity" is a contradiction of terms. The Christian life is marvelously wonderful. Joy permeates the soul upon realization that sins of yesterday are forever buried in the cemetery of the past. Walking in the light beautifies each present moment as the umbrella of blood divine shields the soul from every spot or stain. *"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin"* (Romans 4:8).

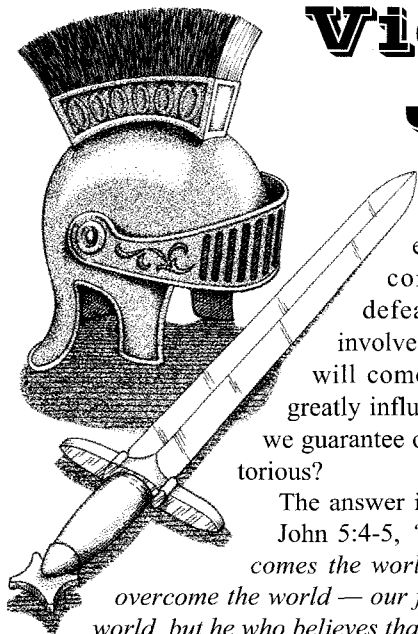
Provisions of grace and blood banish doubt, guilt, and anxiety. Each day is adorned with purpose and meaning. Even a cup of water offered in the name of Jesus receives notice from Him on high.

Life grows sweeter and more meaningful with each passing day. The hoary head quickens the anticipation of the joy that shall be on the morrow. A thousand lifetimes of suffering would seem nothing, with Heaven at the end of the way. How indescribably lovely is the joy of the Christian life! ✠

Frank Chesser preaches for the Panama Street congregation of the Lord's church in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.

Victory in Jesus

Wayne Barrier



Life is filled with decisions, events, and situations whose outcome can be called a victory or a defeat. Many in our world today are involved in war in which victory and defeat will come. Our emotions and feelings are greatly influenced by these outcomes. How can we guarantee ourselves that we will always be victorious?

The answer is found in the Bible. We read in 1 John 5:4-5, *"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."*

Or consider Romans 8:31, where Paul says, *"if God is with us, who can be against us,"* and Romans 8:37, *"we are more than conquerors."* Through Christ we can always enjoy the victories that matter. With God in control, some things don't matter. Sometimes defeat is not a loss. *"For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin"* (Romans 6:5-9). Paradoxically, when we "lose our life", as Jesus said, we gain it in Him. To deny ourselves, and to die in Him is neither defeat nor is it a loss. Instead, we are putting ourselves into position, in Him, to reach for victory.

In John 16:33 Jesus states, *"I have overcome the world."* Also in 1 John 4:4 we read, *"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."* Nothing can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:35).

We can have victory over worry and fear concerning the everyday

COMFORT AND REASSURANCE

needs of life. *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble"* (Matthew 6:25-34).

We can be free from anxiety: (Philippians 4:6,7). *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

We can be assured of the steady and powerful hand of God in everyday life, confident that *"...all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose"* (Romans 8:28).

Jesus promised to be with us always: *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them"* (Matthew 18:20, Hebrews 13:5,6).

We must work and use everything God gives us, as we learn in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30). Our best effort and energy must be used, but we must also realize that God is in control of the outcome. *"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son"*

(Revelation 21:7). As God's children, we shall be joint heirs with Christ, according to Romans 8:17: *"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."*

We have victory over the greatest fear — death. From 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 we learn that Christ conquered death for all. Paul says, *"Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* We are encouraged to *"be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."* The sting of death is gone for the Christian. Death has been swallowed up in the victory of Christ.

Through Him, also, we can look forward to eternal life and an eternal home in heaven (John 14:1-6). We must be **in Christ** to receive spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). We are all encouraged to be in Christ (Acts 2:36-42). We then can enjoy **victory in Christ**. That is the only place where true victory lies, and that is the only victory that really matters. †

Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, Alabama, USA, and is involved in taking the Gospel throughout the world.

Waiting Room Bible Study

What should be our attitude toward the word of God, as the authority in religious matters?


- ◆ That it is steadfast; that every _____ and _____ received a just reward, that there is _____ if we _____ our salvation. **Hebrews 2:2,3.**
- ◆ That it is through God's word that we gain _____ of God, through which _____ and _____ are multiplied to us. **2 Peter 1:2.**
- ◆ That it is through the information in God's word that we are enabled to give an answer concerning the reason for _____ that is in us. **1 Peter 3:15.**
- ◆ That it is the standard by which we _____ all _____, and are enabled to _____ what is good. **1 Thessalonians 5:21.**
- ◆ That it is the standard by which we are to _____ the _____, whether they are of God; because many _____ have gone out into the world. **1 John 4:1.**
- ◆ That it is the standard by which we are instructed to _____ ourselves, to _____ ourselves, whether of not we are 'in the faith'; God's word, and not our own thinking or preferences, is the authority, and we must conform to it. **2 Corinthians 13:5.**
- ◆ That we must respect the authority of Scripture, receiving _____ with all readiness, and _____ the Scriptures daily, to find out whether those things were so. **Acts 17:11.**

FROM THE HEART OF...

History of the Lord's Church in the Pacific Islands

Taking The Gospel to the Pacific Islands

"Go and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15



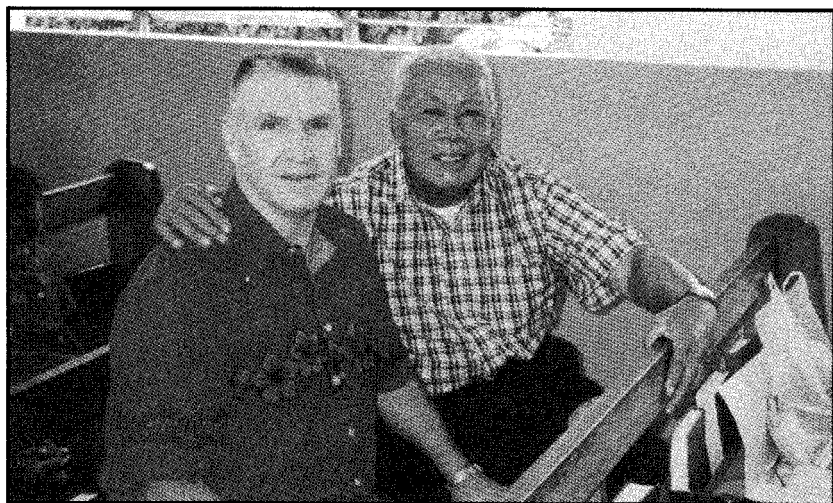
Robert and Mary Martin
30 years in the Pacific Islands

Robert H. Martin

The first known converts in the Pacific (where Robert & Mary Martin and the Pacific Islands Mission Team work under the oversight of the Forest Park congregation in Atlanta) took place in 1962 in Vatukoula, Fiji as a result of an ad put in the *Fiji Times* newspaper by a missionary on his way to New Zealand. George and Teresa Seeto were baptized by Ronald Coleman and Dan Jenkins, who had come to Fiji from New Zealand to follow up on Bible correspondence course students.

Bob Harp moved as a missionary to American Samoa about 1964 or 1965, and shortly after that the church was established in Nu'uuli. During the years the Harps lived in American Samoa, he also made trips to Nuki'alofa, Tonga, where his first convert was Paula Maama.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .



Robert Martin with George Seeto.

While our family lived in Fiji, I worked with some of the local brethren to submit all the required papers to the government, and had meetings with government officials, to get the church of Christ recognized. This continues to be a great blessing for the work in the Fiji Islands.

It was also during our first three years in Fiji that I realized that the gospel and the Lord's church had not been planted in most all the countries/territories of the Pacific, between Hawaii, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Australia, and Japan. I had a dream and a plan, and prayed about it for months before one of our elders (brother John Maner) came to Fiji to work with us for two weeks. When I shared my thoughts with him, he looked at me, smiled, and said, "Son, do you know how to eat an elephant?" I thought for a few minutes and said, "One bite at a time." John answered, "And that is how you will work this plan, with God's help."

We started to put the plan in motion while living and working in Fiji. First we took the gospel eastward to Western Samoa in July 1976, making our first convert that very month.

Next, we started the work in Leone, American Samoa, and then we began to target other countries. We went southeast to the Cook Islands, with Don Thornton and Luaao Soli from American Samoa, starting the Lord's church there in 1983. Then we went to the island of Niue and baptized the first people there in 1986. We went Northwest to the country of Kiribati in

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

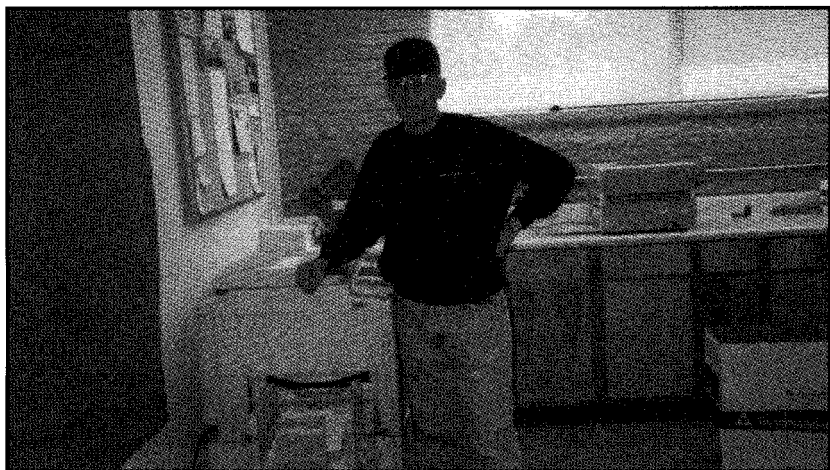
October 1982 and baptized the first three there in December 1983. Another open door was given to us by the Lord in the Marshall Island. In February 1988 we carried the gospel to that island atoll and baptized the first person in 1990.

We could see that the gospel was having a great impact in the Pacific Islands, but we were forced to think of two things: **(1)** Mary and I were getting older and we wanted this work to continue long after we were gone. **(2)** We need to form a “Pacific Islands Mission Team” to extend the borders of the Kingdom and to do the work more effectively and efficiently. We were in the States reporting to our supporting congregations and took the time to go to our elders with this plan. They were excited, and we started working to bring the plan into reality. First, we recruited Randy and Sharon English in 1989 and they have been diligent workers since that time. The Steve Vice family came on board in April 1994 and have remained fully committed to the work during these years. Terry Frizzell joined the team in 2003. All of these families are under the oversight of the Forest Park elders.

Our work now falls into eight main areas:

PRINTING WORK

We started printing literature in 1974 while living in Fiji. In the beginning we printed only for the congregations that we established and were working with in the Fiji Islands. As we started carrying the gospel to other



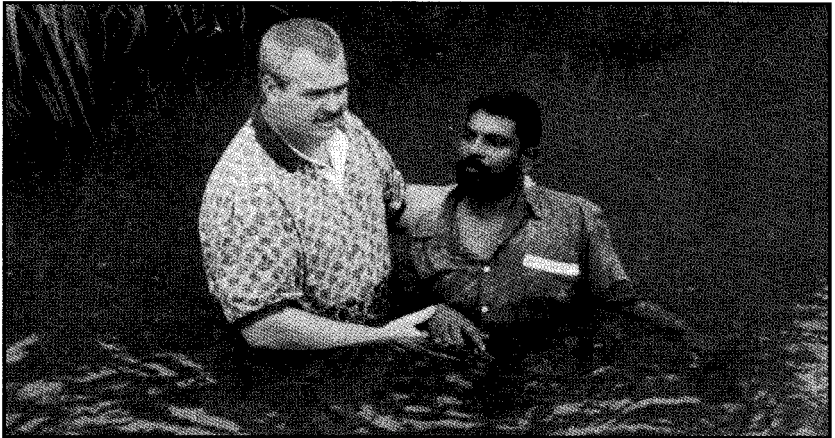
Printing work being done at the Forest Park building.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

countries, we enlarged the printing to cover the needs of the new brethren there. With the growth of the work in new areas, we saw the need to do printing on a much larger scale and to ship to brethren in many places. It seemed practical to do the printing, collation, binding, and shipping from Forest Park in Atlanta, Georgia, to all the countries in the Pacific where our team was working.

PRINTING BEING DONE AT FOREST PARK CHURCH BUILDING

While brother Randy English does the printing of his materials in American Samoa, the rest of our team uses Forest Park and the staff there. We have deacons, members, and secretaries who are involved in this good work for the Lord in the Pacific Islands. Thousands upon thousands of pieces of material are printed, including tracts, Bible correspondence courses, song books, soul winning materials, Bible study books, and text books for Pacific Islands Bible College. Many of the materials are printed in English, and others in some of the languages of the Pacific such as Fijian, Samoan, Tonga, Marshallese, and Gilbertese.



Teaching and baptizing many students.

We gave our Bible correspondence course work the name Pacific Islands Bible School (PIBS). As the demand grew and we got stateside congregations and teachers involved, it was best to do all the printing at the Forest Park congregation in Atlanta, Georgia. This work has grown tremendously over the years, and our team now has over five thousand students in the Pacific who are continually taught the gospel.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

WORKSHOPS FOR EDIFYING

We conducted our first workshop in Suva, Fiji in 1974, and for nine years we conducted an annual workshop for edifying and training. When we moved to American Samoa, we started another annual workshop, but also added other workshops for edifying and training the brethren. The annual workshops in Fiji and Samoan are now conducted by the national men. We concentrate primarily on workshops for training soul winners,



Workshops for edifying and training.

Bible school teachers, and preachers. Our mission team is also involved in conducting workshops in the specific areas where they work, and we do many each year throughout the Pacific. We use many volunteers from the States to teach and train Pacific Islanders.

CAMPAIGNS

We could see the great impact campaigns would have on the city, town, or village if conducted with good planning and Bible-preaching speakers. Now our mission team conducts many 'Campaigns for Christ' throughout the Pacific Islands with the help of many workers from the States. This results in souls being saved and congregations started.

RADIO WORK

We have been involved in radio programs for carrying the gospel to the masses since about 1977. We first began in Western Samoa, and the brethren there have added another program. We had a broadcast in the

FROM THE HEART OF . . .



Campaigns for Christ in the Pacific.

Cook Islands for some time, and soon Rocco Pierce will be starting a TV program there. We also had a free radio program in the Marshall Islands. The brethren in Tonga have had a program for many years. We have also had radio programs in Fiji and the Northern Mariana Islands. Now, to the exciting news: our co-worker, Randy English, has been able to secure licenses for an FM radio station in American Samoa! He has it up and running, and what an impact this will have on the work in American and Western Samoa!

STUDENTS TAKING PACIFIC ISLANDS BIBLE COLLEGE COURSES

In 1996 we started Pacific Islands Bible College (PIBC). The courses and instructors go to each island country where the Lord's church has been established and where our mission team works. Brethren are able to take courses in the classroom and by video. There are 12 classroom courses and 12 video courses. The main administrative office, storage facility, video studio, and editing and reproduction facility of Pacific Islands Bible College are housed within the Fairview congregation's building in Stockbridge, Georgia. We built the video studio, editing, and reproduction facility. We have a staff of ten Christians who give their time to do this work in Atlanta, Georgia.

Pacific Islands Bible College has grown to approximately 1,158 stu-

FROM THE HEART OF . . .



Students taking Pacific Islands Bible College Courses.

dents in eight years and is still growing. We use 26 instructors from the States who give two to three weeks of their time each year for classes. What are the results of Pacific Islands Bible College? (1) putting the Word of the Lord in the people's minds and hearts (Hebrews 8:10); (2) strengthening the disciples (Acts 14:21,22); and (3) equipping Christians as elders, deacons, preachers, teachers, and soulwinners (2 Timothy 2:2).

ESTABLISHING CHURCHES

Since 1973, with God's help, the help of local brethren, our mission team, and many short-term co-workers from the States, the Lord's church has been established in 15 countries/territories throughout the South Pacific, Central Pacific, and North Pacific Islands. Our job is not done; we still have before us the challenge of carrying the gospel and establishing the church in the last 5 countries in the Pacific region. This is a goal that is shared by our elders at the Forest Park congregation, our supporting congregations and our mission team: we will not stop until this job is completed!

THE GROWTH OF THE WORK

Today there are 168 congregations in 15 countries/territories, with approximately 2000 Christians. I would like to express my love and appreciation to all those faithful men who worked in the Pacific before I did, for

FROM THE HEART OF . . .



There are congregations like this one throughout the Pacific Islands.

all the other missionary families who have served or who are serving in the Pacific Islands work. Paul said it right when he wrote, "...we are ministers through whom ye believed..." (1 Corinthians 3:5,9). To this all I can say is, "To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Ephesians 3:21).

THE FUTURE OF THE WORK

The future of the work looks challenging and great! The Lord has blessed us with a faithful and diligent working mission team in the Steve Vice family (soon-to-be, the Joey Treat family) in the North Pacific, Terry Frizzell (soon-to-be, the Mark Landis family) in the Central Pacific, the Randy English family in the South Pacific, and the Robert Martin family throughout the Pacific Islands. Our goal is to carry the gospel and plant the Lord's church in the last Pacific Island countries/territories, to re-active the work and to make it more productive in the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tuvalu. We have added more full-time workers, such as Rocco Pierce and, soon-to-be, Stacy Ferguson. Our Mission Team is always using more short-term men in the work so that the most may be accomplished. The national brethren and churches continue to grow spiritually and numerically, and the future truly looks bright throughout the Pacific Islands. †

Sponsors Needed NOW!

We have 25 foreign editions in English of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL**, plus Spanish, Telugu, and a new Tamil-language edition. Each is directed to a country, or to a number of countries, with information pertaining to them and the church's program of work there. We send thousands of copies to those destinations free of charge and postage paid — but HOW CAN WE DO THAT? The only way is for brethren here in the States to use the magazine in bundle-quantities. Then instead of counting profit from sales or from advertisements (we have none), we put the proceeds into printing editions for places which otherwise could not have them.

For congregations that will order 500 copies or more, at \$1.00 per copy, plus postage, we will print a special edition for your local work, for a gospel meeting, for a campaign effort, for a mission effort, or for your missionary, with an imprint inside the front cover with the information you choose.

We also need volunteers to talk to congregations about using **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL**.

For \$25 a month, you can personally receive 35 copies of each issue — 35 copies to share with the precious souls you want to teach! And your sponsorship in this way pays for copies to be sent to foreign fields. Please sign up as a sponsor now!

(Return this form in an envelope, along with your check, to the following address, stating your wishes.)

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL
Box 11218
Springfield, MO 65808

Att. Byron Nichols

Dear Brethren:

☐ I want to subscribe to the quarterly magazine, **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL**. Enclosed is my check for \$12.00 for four issues, or \$20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume _____. ***My address is given below.***

☐ I want to order the complete set of volumes in print (43 issues) for the reduced price of \$104.00. ***My address is given below.***

☐ Please send special prices for WBS teachers and their students.

☐ I want to **MAKE A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION** of **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL**. Enclosed is my check for \$12.00 for four issues, or \$20.00 for eight issues, starting with Volume _____. ***The address is given below.***

☐ I want to send \$25.00 per month (or a multiple), for a box of 35 copies (or multiples) of each issue of the magazine as they are printed. Churches are also urged to use boxes in this way.

☐ 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 _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____



ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search — 43 (from page 26)

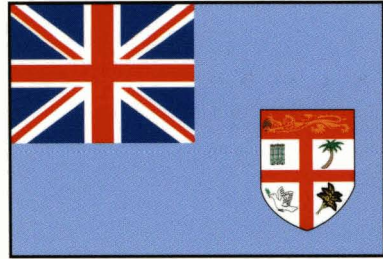
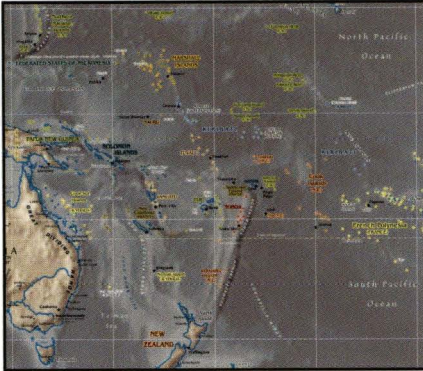
1. Cos, Rhodes, Patara, sighted Cyprus, sailed to Syria, Tyre (stayed 7 days), Ptolemais, Caesarea, Jerusalem.
2. He waited 7 days with the disciples, obviously, again, to be able to worship with them.
3. All the church, including wives and children, accompanied them to the city's edge where they knelt together and prayed.
4. To the house of Philip, one of the seven (in chapter 6) who had been especially appointed by the apostles.
5. That he had four daughters who prophesied.
6. A prophet named Agabus.
7. *Holy Spirit; deliver; Gentiles.*
8. *"What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."*
9. He told them in detail what God had done through him for the Gentiles..
10. The majority of Christians were also Jewish by nationality and heritage. They were zealous to keep the law of Moses along with the law of Christ.
11. No; only to keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood and things strangled, and from sexual immorality.
12. That there was a period of tolerance on God's part, allowing time for the allegiance to the old law to vanish in a full understanding of the truth.
13. Jews from Asia who had been seeking earnestly to kill him.
14. The commander of the Roman garrison.
15. That he was an Egyptian who had raised an insurrection.
16. He stood on the stairs and addressed them in the Hebrew language.



Aaron

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

The Pacific Islands



Government of Fiji Islands: Republic

Head of State:

President Ratu Josefa Iloilo

Head of Government:

Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen

Secular Facts:

Location: Group of many thousands of islands scattered across the Pacific Ocean from Hawaii and Papua New Guinea, to Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. The area is larger than any single land mass on the earth.

Land Mass: This area of the world is made up of 22 countries, 4,000 islands, and a land area of approximately 900,000 sq. kilometers. Many of the islands are independent countries, while some are territories of other countries. They lie East and West of the International Date Line, and North and South of the Equator.

Population: Approximately 6 million.

Language: English, and the national language of each country.

Religion: Roman Catholic and various denominational representations.

Ethnic Groups: Polynesians, Melane-sians, and Micronesians.

Economy: Agriculture, industries, and businesses.

Monetary Units: Many of the coun-tries have their own currency, but the U.S. dollar is used in a number of the islands.

The Church:

Congregations: Approximately 168 in 15 countries/territories, with about 2000 Christians.

History: The first known converts were George and Teresa Seeto, baptized in 1962 in Suva, Fiji Fiapati by Ronald Coleman and Dan Jenkins who had come to Fiji from New Zealand to follow up on Bible course students.

Doyle Wright and his family moved from New Zealand to Fiji and worked for three years. In August of 1973 Robert Martin and his family moved there and worked until January of 1982, starting congregations in Fiji Islands, Western Samoa, Vanatu, and the Solomon Islands.

The Martins then moved to American Samoa and started the congregation at Leone, another in Cook Islands, and converted people in Niue, Kiribati, and Marshall Islands. In 1993 the Martins moved to Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, and established the Lord's church there, as well as in Palau, Yap, and Chuuk.

On-going work includes the efforts of a mission team through radio, TV, campaign work, correspondence courses, printing, Pacific Islands Bible College, workshops, and the training of local men in leadership roles.