



Joy to All

J. Randal Matheny

*"Lord, no one wants to know," said I,
"Your holy will's ignored;
The worldly crowd keeps passing by,
They spurn your rich reward."*

*I went up on the hill to pout,
With tears that burned my eyes;
My failure led me then to doubt
That God was good and wise.*

*"My son, you're planting seeds," said He,
"The harvest lies ahead;
Don't trust what you alone can see,
My word must still be spread."*

*So down I went with faithful sight,
To speak and persevere;
The Lord of all the earth is right,
And he will make it clear.*

*For I may plant, another plow,
A third may reap the field;
But joy to all whose sweaty brow
Toiled in the harvest yield.*

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).

Please note: “HE”, “body”, “Church” — these three words are *singular*. There is *ONE SAVIOUR*. He has *ONE BODY*, which is *THE CHURCH*. Man — not God — has created the monstrosity of thousands of churches, with thousands of names and practices and doctrines.

Such a picture as is shown below, with the head — Jesus — and many different bodies — appears blasphemous to our eyes. How does it



look to God when humans have created their own churches and doctrines and ways of salvation, and then have tried to attach them to Christ?



When you visit an assembly of the church of Christ...

Singing. One of the unique things about churches of Christ is our a cappella singing. That simply means we sing without the accompaniment of musical instruments in our worship assemblies. We think you'll find the music both beautiful and meaningful. We hope you will join us as we glorify God with our voices, the instruments *He* created (Hebrews 2:12).

Communion. Each Sunday morning we remember Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, and celebrate our resulting free-

dom from sin by participating in the communion (the Lord's Supper). During this memorial, plates containing unleavened bread, symbolizing the body of Jesus sacrificed on the cross, are passed around. Each person participating will break off a piece of the bread and eat it, meditating on Jesus' death on his/her behalf. Trays, filled with cups of grape juice, symbolizing the blood of Jesus, are distributed. Participants drink the juice, continuing to think about the forgiveness God offers (Acts 20:7).

Sermon. A lesson is given from Scripture, with the intention of focussing the minds of the congregation on our worship of God and the life we are

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

STAFF:

Editor: Byron Nichols
Associate Editor: Jerry Bates
Associate Editor: Louis Rushmore
Layout Editor: Betty Burton Choate
Bonnie Rushmore
Typesetting: Gay Nichols
Computer Consultant: Bradley S. Choate

SPANISH EDITION:

Managing Editor: Rafael Barrantes

TELUGU EDITION:

Managing Editor, Translator: Joshua Gootam

TAMIL EDITION:

Managing Editor, Translator: P.R. Swamy

BRAILLE EDITION:

Managing Editor (India), Philemon Raja

Cost: **\$4.00** for single issues; **\$12.00** for four issues; **\$20.00** for eight issues. Please make checks payable to **World Evangelism Foundation**, and mail to **Byron Nichols, (Managing Editor) P.O. Box 11218, Springfield, MO 65808;** Telephone: **417-823-4918.**

Please send articles for publication and changes of address to **Byron Nichols** in Springfield, including both old and new addresses, so that our records can be corrected.

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL is published by **churches of Christ** as a non-profit effort.

World Evangelism, P.O. Box 72,
Winona, MS 38967, USA; Phone: 662-
283-1192; E-mail address:
Choate@WorldEvangelism.org.

STAFF WRITERS:

George Akpabli	Parker Henderson
Felix O. Aniamalu	Gordon Hogan
Rex Banks	Wayne Jackson
Wayne Barrier	Ancil Jenkins
Paula Bates	Jerry Jenkins
Roy Beasley	Jimmy Jividen
Mike Benson	John Kachelman, Jr.
Maxie B. Boren	Dayton Keesee
Ron Bryant	Dalton Key
Charles Burch	Michael L. King
Jack W. Carter	Mack Lyon
Ron Carter	Joe Magee
Frank Chesser	J. Randal Matheny
Betty Burton Choate	Cecil May, Jr.
Jeril Cline	Colin McKee
Glenn Colley	Jane McWhorter
Lance Cordle	Hollis Miller
Owen Cosgrove	Loy Mitchell
Bruce Daugherty	Stan Mitchell
Sunny David	Kevin L. Moore
Jerry L. Davidson	Bill Nicks
Hans Dederscheck	Don L. Norwood
David Deffenbaugh	Owen D. Olbricht
Clarence DeLoach, Jr.	Max Patterson
Bill Dillon	Marilyn Peeples
Bobby G. Dockery	Miles Peeples
Hershel Dyer	David Pharr
Earl Edwards	Neal Pollard
Demar Elam	Bonnie Rushmore
Raymond Elliott	Stanley Sayers
Reuben Emperado	David Tarbet
David Everson	J.A. Thornton
Royce Frederick	J.J. Turner
Albert Gardner	Ken Tyler
E. Claude Gardner	Don W. Walker
Joe D. Gray	Allen Webster
Gary C. Hampton	R.H. Tex Williams
Jack Harriman	

THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU

(ROMANS 16:16).



Worship Reflections

Byron Nichols, Editor

ry New Testament word for worship is *proskuneo*, a Greek term meaning to “kiss the hand or ground toward”. It is easy to see then that the idea is to bow down or to prostrate oneself. This leads to the understanding that worship is a special means by which we show our reverence and adoration to God. Temple had it right when he said, “To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.” Psalm 95:6-7 provides an excellent example of the action that springs forth from the heart of the true worshiper of God: “*Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.*”

Purpose of Worship

Worship is to be quite in con-

“Going to church” has been called one of our greatest “spectator sports”. Most honest observers would likely agree that this assessment of worship is not far from true. Thus, the idea being advanced is that worship in this present society is not something that we *do* as worshipers, but rather something that *is done for us* in our presence.

Definition of Worship

It quickly becomes essential that “worship” be defined. Our English word comes from the earlier word “worth-ship”. The idea inherent in this word is declaring or acknowledging the worth of the object of our worship. The prima-

trast with much of the rest of life. In our worship we are primarily to be givers, not getters. Our purpose should be to give our praise, love, and adoration to God. While we will undoubtedly be blessed spiritually by offering up our worship “*in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:23,24), that result is secondary to what we give to God in our worship. The design of biblical worship is give to the Lord what is pleasing to Him, not to seek pleasure for ourselves.

Worship Authority

It is absolutely imperative that everyone who wants to worship God realize the source of authority pertaining to what is acceptable or unacceptable in worship. The Bible leaves no doubt — God is the authority. From the very beginning of man’s existence, God has made it clear what He wants and does not want in man’s worship, and the will of man is never given a voice in the matter. In other words, we must never confuse the will of the majority with the will of God, especially in the matter of worship. The Bible is full of examples of men changing God’s rules for worship, and the results were disastrous for those who violated God’s authority. John 4:23,24,

referred to above, makes very clear the matter of authority: “*But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.*”

The very first family in the existence of mankind had a serious problem with the fact that God has all authority. Adam and Eve were disobedient in Eden, and were expelled from that paradise. Then their son Cain disobeyed God in the matter of acceptable sacrifices, resulting in his paying the penalty the rest of his life.

A quick review of Exodus 32 brings to our memory the awful deeds of God’s people while Moses was away from them receiving the law from God. They, too dared to change the worship of the Lord from what He had commanded, and the results were devastating.

Leviticus 10:1,2 tells us that Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, took it upon themselves to reject God’s authority and His will, and they substituted strange (profane) fire before the Lord. Such action



Are You a Parachute Packer?

**Jerry Bates,
Associate Editor**

Recently, I read a short story about Charles Plumb, a US Navy fighter pilot during the Vietnam conflict. After 75 combat missions, a missile destroyed his plane, and he

was forced to parachute into enemy hands. He spent six years in a communist prison, and now he lectures on the lessons he learned from that experience. One day, he and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, and a man came up to him and briefly recited to him his combat history. As you might imagine, Plumb was very surprised and asked how the man knew that. The man simply said, “I packed your parachute.” Obviously, Plumb was very grateful to him, because if this man had not properly done his job, Plumb would not have survived the plane crash. Normally, Plumb would have barely acknowledged this man. After all, Plumb was an important fighter pilot; the other man was a lowly sailor. However, now Plumb warmly greeted him and thankfully shook his hand, because his work had saved his life.

You might think this article is about Plumb, but in actuality, I want us to consider the one who packed the parachute. This man had spent many hours in the bowels of the ship carefully folding the silks of each chute, most of which were never used. I can imagine it would have been a boring, seemingly unimportant and largely useless task. However, if a pilot was forced to eject from a speeding jet, the result of such labor was no longer unimportant or useless, but suddenly it literally became a matter of life or death. This man received no medals or awards; his name will not be mentioned in the history books. Yet, his contribution to the war effort

ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL

was vital, especially to one person by the name of Plumb, who personally benefited from his work.

You might be a person who merely packs a parachute. In other words, you might consider your duty to be lowly and unimportant. You may think that you have little to contribute in a meaningful way to God and the work of His church. If that is true, I urge you to think again. The little, individual actions of each Christian as he/she lives his/her life largely determine what your neighbor thinks about the church and Christianity. The preacher may preach the greatest lessons and be the friendliest person possible, but if all a non-Christian sees is the hypocritical or indifferent attitudes of a Christian, then all the preacher does will come to naught.

When it comes to the work of the church, there are no unimportant tasks. It is true that some servants may receive more public honor or glory. It is certainly true that man considers some tasks more noteworthy than other tasks. Remember,

though, that you are serving God, not man. Jesus once said to his disciples, “*For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name; because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward*” (Mark 9:41). Christ promises us that even the very lowest service that is rendered will be rewarded, if done out of love and in His name. That makes every action very noteworthy, doesn’t it?

Paul realized that it does not matter who receives the glory or honor. The important point is that it gives glory and honor to God. For example, in Philippians 1:16, Paul stated that some men were preaching the Gospel out of envy and strife rather than love. They only wanted to add somehow to Paul’s affliction. Rather than Paul becoming upset, he rejoiced. He said in 1:18, “*Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.*” Who did the work or who received the honor was irrelevant. The only

Only One Job

Louis Rushmore, Associate Editor



Jesus Christ, through direct instructions first to eleven apostles, gave the church only one job to do — not two, not three — just one job to do (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:4-8). We call that one job the Great Commission, a notable expansion of the target audience characteristic of what we call the Limited Commission (to the house of Israel, Matthew 10:5,6). *“And he said unto them, Go ye into **all the world**, and preach the gospel to **every creature**”* (Mark 16:15, emphasis added).

Most cite a three-fold mission of the Lord’s church (i.e., **edification**, 1 Corinthians 14:12; **evangelism**, Matthew 28:19,20; **benevolence**, Galatians 6:10). Yet, forasmuch as the Lord’s church and the Christians who comprise it may have responsibilities that include edification and benevolence, it remains a fact that our Lord Jesus Christ gave the church only one job to do — to evangelize the world with the Gospel.

Christians (the church) have the responsibility (and privilege) to worship God in His own appointed way (John 4:23,24), but Christians and the church have only one job to do — to evangelize the world with the Gospel of Christ. Likewsie, Christians have responsibilities respecting Christian living (Titus 2:12) and Christian service (John 12:16; Hebrews 12:28), but Christians still have only one job — take the Gospel to the world. Parents have parental responsibilities toward their children (Ephesians 6:4; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15), but Christian parents still have only one job — to tell others about the saving Christ of the saving Gospel.

The Christian vocation is to evangelize the world with the Gospel. Evangelism is the lifeblood of the Lord’s church, without which the church

ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL

of Christ will not have a physical presence in any community tomorrow where the church of today fails to tell others about the Gospel. Don't the value of a single soul (Matthew 16:26) and the command given by our Lord to proclaim the Gospel (Mark 16:15; 2 Timothy 2:2) far outweigh many things on which Christians and churches spend an inordinate amount of time and money (e.g., buildings, entertainment, creature comforts)? Noting that several individual Christians and a number of churches of Christ have a keen interest in taking the Gospel to the billions of souls that inhabit planet earth, how interested are the churches of Christ overall in doing the only job that Jesus Christ left for

the church to do?

Jesus Christ has given Christians and the Lord's church only one job to do, that is, our sole (soul) vocation is evangelism. It's all about saving souls (Hebrews 10:39; James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:9); nothing on earth matters more than the salvation of souls. Christians and congregations that exhibit no or little interest in taking the Gospel to the lost, near and far, are in great jeopardy of missing the joyful eternity in heaven with God, since one's crown of life, in part, is dependent upon winning souls (Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19). No Christian or church (group of Christians) has fought a good fight, finished its course or kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7)

I Wish I Knew As Much About the Bible

Marilyn LaStrape

Some time ago I was concerned about the setting in one of my wedding rings. Therefore, I brought them to my dear sister and friend to look at, since she is an expert in jewelry. We laughed about the fact that nobody could "put anything past her" about a piece of jewelry. With all laughter gone, she then made the comment, "I wish I knew as much about the Bible as I know about jewelry."

In what area is your knowledge superior to your knowledge of God's Word? Why is that? David said, "*Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord! Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart! ... I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure*" (Psalm 119:1,2,162). Are we seeking God with our whole hearts so we can rejoice in our knowledge of His Word?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GOD

God of Our Fathers
Glover Shipp.....
 12

THE WORD OF GOD

Satan and Scripture
Cecil May
 Jr..... 15

We Must Have a Standard
Dalton Key
16

The Bible Must Be Preached
Jim Poland
17

EVIDENCES

There Is Life in the Seed
Raymond
 Elliott..... 21

Thinking Like Scientists
Think They Think Kyle
 Butt24

**The Old Testament in
 Archaeology**Rex
 Banks26

**The Wisdom of God's
 Creation**Betty Burton
 Choate28

SALVATION

Saved By:
Loy
 Mitchell..... 30

Importance of the Church
Owen D. Olbricht
31

His Wish

.....Da
 vid A. Sargent33

**Do We Love the Lord More .
 . ?**Wendell Winkler
35

THE CHURCH

**What Is My Responsibility to
 the Disfellowshipped?**
Hillcrest
 Elders

 .36

**What Is the Church of
 Christ?**Bill Dillon
38

**Lukewarm (The Condition I
 Fear Most)**Jack
 Harriman..... 39

**Scriptural Structure of the
 Church**W. Douglass
 Harris..... 40

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

The Greatest of These
Hollis Miller
42

The Thief On The Cross
J.C.
 Choate.....43

How Narrow is the Gate?
S. Kyaw Sein
46

WORSHIP

Kentucky Memories
Byron C. Laird
48

The Basket in the Collection

Tray	Sylvia Petty	49
What is Acceptable Worship?	Jimmy Young	51

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

Jesus, Philip, and Joe	Mike Benson	54
Why Did I Opt to Preach Full-Time?	Agapio V. Catamora... ..	56
What Can A Godly Woman Do For Christ? ..	Bonnie Rushmore ..	58
Search Out Who Is Worthy.....	Maxie B. Boren	60

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

The Narrow Path to Life	John Thiesen	61
Worry Is an Adult Sin	Hugo McCord	62
The Days Are Evil	Shan Jackson	63
Housework: Is It Important?	Marilyn M. Peeples	64
“Thy Speech Betrayeth Thee”	Grady Miller	67
Endurance	Jack W. Carter	68

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

Adolescent Elephants	John Gipson	70
Christian Fatherhood	Dwight Fuqua	71
More “Real” Men	Stan Mitchell.....	72

PROVERBS 17:22

Humor		74
-------------	--	----

HEY, YOU KIDS!

Reaching Out	PFC Alex Gibson	76
Sunday or “Funday”?	Chase Surrell	78

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

How To Grow Closer To God	Dale Grissom	79
Our Responsibility Toward Lost Souls	Jess W. Nutter	80

TEXTUAL STUDIES

“Come Boldly to the Throne of Grace”	Leon Cole	82
Acts (Written by Luke)	Ken Tyler	84
Analysis of First Corinthians 15:58	Randy Kea	86

BIBLE QUESTIONS

Some Very Important Questions	Basil Overton	88
-------------------------------------	---------------------	----

BIBLE CHARACTERS

Examples.....	Ardron Hinton	90
The Commendation Of Phebe	Vance Hutton	92
A Shade Tree Judge	Betty Tucker	94

FEATURES, POEMS AND FILLERS

Verse Search	Jerry Bates	19
--------------------	-------------------	----

God of our Fathers

(Genesis 3:1-6)

Glover Shipp

The God of our fathers is the same God worshiped since the dawn of human existence. He is the God worshiped by Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, all of the Old Testament prophets, Ezra, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, all of Christ's apostles and the early Christians. He is the God worshiped by those who followed in their footsteps and the God worshiped today all around the world in countless tongues and cultures. This is the God in whom we trust (as stamped on our American money), the God invoked in our founding documents and the God called upon at the opening sessions of the U.S. Supreme Court and Congress. This is the God to whom we cry when calamity hits us.

Just who is this God in whom we trust? Is He a kind of Santa Claus up in heaven, to dole out goodies to us? Is He a kind of broker, to protect our investments? Is He a doctor, to care for our every ache and pain? Is He a severe father, ready to punish? Just who is this God whom we worship and obey? The Bible gives us clear answers to this question. Consider some of His characteristics:

◆ **God is all-powerful (or omnipotent).**

God's power is seen in creation (Genesis 1-2; Jeremiah 51:15, Romans 1:20). Paul argues in Acts 17:22-31 that all humans should see that God created everything. In Romans 1:18-20 Paul says that those who do not believe in the eternal creative God have no excuse, because He has made His power clear to us.

The Book of Psalms declares God's power (Psalms 8; 19:1-6, 29; 62:11; 66:7; 147:5). To see the majesty of His creative power, all we need to do is seek out a location on the high plains, in the desert or mountains and just contemplate the night sky scrolled out above us, with the planets and thousands of visible stars looking down at us, as

GOD

if they were pinpoints in the canopy of heaven, letting God's light shine through to us. The universe grows larger each year, as astronomers probe out in the infinity that is space. We are certainly little potatoes in comparison to the vastness and complexity of space.

However, space is not all there is to the creative hand of God. I live in Oklahoma, where the four seasons are pronounced. Every spring our land bursts forth with Redbuds and other flowering trees and plants. Have you ever carefully examined a flower? We have a Clematis plant surrounding our mailbox. It has exquisite shades of white, pink, and violet. There are thousands of kinds of flowers, each unique in its own way and each with its own delicate or robust shades of blossom and fragrance.

Animal life is complex and extensive. The earth's mineral resources are nearly endless. The Lord placed all of this here to portray His creativity. I was standing one day on a catwalk near the Devil's Throat of mighty Iguacu Falls, at a point where Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil meet. Those of us there were being drenched by the spray and overwhelmed by the roar of the waters. A Brazilian gentleman near me asked, "How can one not believe in God, when He left such a calling card as this?" How indeed?

A writer in the **Pulpit Commentary**, Vol. 8, page 215, notes,

"To see law everywhere and God nowhere would be enough to crush us. To see God everywhere working by law inspires rest and joy: our "Father is at the helm."

◆ **God is all-knowing (omniscient).**

Hebrews 4:13 describes God's capacity to know all things: Nothing in all of creation is hidden from Him. Everything is revealed to Him, to whom we must give account of our lives and actions.

God has knowledge that no human can have (Mark 13:32). Despite many predictions about the end of time or the events leading up to it, no one can ever know when these things will occur. The countdown calendar is in the hands of the Lord exclusively. Are we in the end times? When someone recently guaranteed to me that we are in the end times

GOD

right now, my answer was that we have been in the end times ever since Christ was raised from the dead and returned to the Father. We are in the last age — the Christian age. Therefore, we should act as if today were the last moment before the end of the world. According to Jesus' warning in Matthew 24:36-44, since we do not have God's calendar in our hands, we need to be ready each day for the end of time. We are to beware of those who claim that some war, earthquake or other calamity is a sure sign that the end is coming; or those who claim to be a new prophet or Christ. Jesus says in Matthew 24:4-8 that, despite all of these traumas that plague our world, the end is not yet.

God's understanding is unsearchable (Isaiah 40:28). His ways are past finding out (Romans 10:33-36). No matter how much genius we expend in trying to understand God, He remains a mystery to us. The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than the greatest strength of any human (1 Corinthians 1:25).

◆ **God is everywhere (omnipresent).**

How can God be everywhere at once? Because He is God, this is not difficult at all. In Psalm 139:1-16, David reminds us that God knows us, perceives our thoughts, and is familiar with all our ways. (This sounds like national surveillance, but on a far more powerful level.) Wherever we go, the Lord is there. He knows us from conception. He knows when we will die. He knows our heartaches, frailties, and illnesses. In today's language, He is awesome!

Every characteristic of God is seen in Daniel 2:19-23, 27-38 — His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. God's power has provided for all of our physical and spiritual needs. Because He is God, He has every right to expect our submission and obedience (2 Peter 1:3,4, 8-11). It is a foolish person, indeed, who attempts to play games with God, to second-guess Him, or to attempt to elevate himself or herself to a godlike status. Our only safe and reasonable recourse is to bow to Him in submission and obedience. †

Glover Shipp is a preacher, teacher, missionary, elder of the church of Christ in Edmond, Oklahoma, USA.

Satan and Scripture

Cecil May Jr.

Satan can quote Scripture. Tempting Eve in the Garden of Eden, he misquoted God's words, saying, "*Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'*" (Genesis 3:1).

Tempting Jesus in the wilderness, he quoted Psalm 91:11,12, "*For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.*"

For Scripture to serve Satan's purposes, it must be twisted, misquoted, or misapplied. When Satan quoted God to Eve, he implied that God had restricted them more than He had. In quoting Psalm 91, Satan used Jesus' formula, "*It is written,*" and suggested Jesus jump off the Temple to present spectacular proof that He was approved of God. Jesus responded, "*Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test'*" (Matthew 4:7, quoting Deuteronomy 6:16). God will protect His own who trust Him, but putting oneself in deliberate danger is *testing* God, not *trusting* God. Satan misapplied the Scripture.

Many Scripture passages are still twisted to ungodly purposes.

Peter said, "*...and count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures*" (2 Peter 3:15,16).

"*The patience of our Lord*" that counts as salvation is the grace of God that enables sinners to be justified by faith. It has been "twisted" by those who "*pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ*" (Jude 4).

Scripture is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16). Jesus cited it as what God said (Matthew 19:4,5). Whatever it says is truth (John 17:17).

We who use Scripture, however, must handle it rightly (2 Timothy 2:15), in context, considering its grammar, word meanings, and historical setting. Scripture means what it says, not what it can be twisted by someone to seem to mean. †

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

WE MUST HAVE A STANDARD



Dalton Key

President John Quincy Adams once called both Houses of Congress together for a special meeting. He walked in carrying two bushel baskets. He said, “The bushel measure in my right hand came from South Carolina; the one in my left hand comes from the city of New York. One of these bushel measures contains sixty-eight cubic inches more than the other one.” He then walked up to a table and picked up two one-pound weights. He said, “This weight in my right hand came from Massachusetts; this other one came from Maine. One of them weighs nearly an ounce more than the other one.” He concluded, “Gentlemen, we need a standard measurement and a standard weight for the United States of America.” The establishment of the Bureau of Weights and Measures resulted from this visual demonstration.

We understand that there must be a set standard for weights and measures. However, there must also be a standard for matters of religion. Why is the religious world divided asunder by various beliefs and doctrines? The answer should be obvious. Most religious people are not content to use God’s standard, the Bible.

We must not measure ourselves religiously by our own opinions or conjectures. Neither should we strive to live up to the standards of manmade doctrines and creeds. We ought to be content with God’s standard, the Bible. The Bible is truth (John 17:17) and, as such, thoroughly furnishes us unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:17). Furthermore, the Bible contains all that “*pertain to life and godliness*” (2 Peter 1:3). Yes, we must have a standard! That standard is God’s Word. †

Dalton Key preaches for the 10th and Rockford church of Christ in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.

THE WORD OF GOD

We are admonished, as was Timothy, to be diligent, rightly dividing the Word of God. *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15). The word translated *“dividing”* means to cut straight, handle aright, to teach the truth directly and correctly.

and His kingdom; preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers” (2 Timothy 4:1-3).

The Bible Must Be Preached

Jim Poland

When someone tells us that we are doing things all wrong, don't just believe it. If we have been following the commands of Jesus and His apostles and prophets of the New Testament, if we are patterning our worship and service after the examples of the New Testament church, and if we are interpreting from necessary inference in the Scripture, then do not believe them! Give diligence to be approved of God! Rightly divide the Word.

The Holy Spirit, through the apostle, charges that the Word of God be preached! *“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing*

Peter was inspired to command that we speak as God would have us speak (1 Peter 4:11). To the church at Colosse, the Bible says, *“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him”* (Colossians 3:17).

This is vital because the living and the dead will one day be judged, and that according to God's Word (2 Timothy 4:1,2; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)!

The Bible must be fed into the human mind in order for one to have the faith that saves. The human mind has those main functions that influence one another, but yet are independent: Intellect,

THE WORD OF GOD

Emotions, and Will. The Bible must reach all these functions in order to enlighten, mature, save, make one free, make one wise, and purify the total person.

You cannot put garbage into the mind and expect anything but garbage out, unless it is processed as garbage and rejected.

God has given us the ability to go against our past experiences, to rise above what the world may throw at us. However, we must put God first intellectually, emotionally, and determinably. We must study the Bible to know intelligently, we

must adore it as God's will to guide our emotions, and we must determine to make His will our will.

The forces that are so popular and respected in the world are all battling for your mind and your heart, every minute of the day. You are the deciding factor in their success or failure, by your commitment to enshrine God's word in your heart. We cannot stay alive in Christ without daily Bible study to offset the onslaught of Satan! †

Jim Poland is a Gospel preacher working with the church of Christ in Bona, Missouri, USA.

When Did the Donkey Starve to Death?

Nisraddin Hoca lived in Asia about 700 years ago, and he had a donkey with a big appetite. He wondered if by gradually reducing the animal's food every day it might be possible to condition the animal to get along without any food at all.

This experiment was continued for several weeks, but a few days after all the food had stopped the donkey died. He commented, "What a pity that he should die just when he was getting accustomed to hunger."

That sounds ridiculous, but it is not much different from what many Christians do. They discontinue regular Bible study. Wednesday prayer meeting and Sunday night worship service become just like any other time of the week, and it is used for recreation. The Bible hour is just too early on Sunday. Sunday is the only day to rest, after all.

Finally, they quit attending all together. Someone says, "What happened all of a sudden?" It was not a sudden thing with them. They had been cutting down on their spiritual food for some time. They died just when they were getting accustomed to the hunger.

From the *Damascus Gospelizer*



Romans 5:1-11

Jerry Bates

1. By what are we justified? (v. 1)
2. What does it mean to be “justified”?
3. Through whom does peace with God come? (v. 1)
4. Through whom do we have “access” into the grace of God? (v. 2)
5. In what does Paul say we are to glory? Why? (v. 3)
6. What produces perseverance? (v. 3)
7. Why does hope not disappoint? (v. 5)
8. What was our condition at the time that God’s love was extended to us? (v. 6)
9. What did Paul mean when he said that “in due time” Christ died? (v. 6)
10. For whom will someone sometimes die? (v. 7)
11. When did Christ die for us? (v. 8)
12. What did Paul mean when he said that Christ’s death “demonstrates His own love toward us?” (v. 9)
13. Through what were we reconciled to God? (v. 10)
14. What does reconciliation mean?
15. According to Paul, by what are we saved? (v. 10)

(See inside of back cover for answers.)

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. (Romans 5:1-11, New King James Version)

This is one of the greatest passages in the Bible regarding the salvation that is offered through Jesus Christ. It clearly shows that it is only through the grace of God that anyone can ever hope to have salvation. No one is saved by his/her own goodness (3:10,23), but we are saved by the grace of God as demonstrated in the death of Jesus on the cross.

Christ died for us when we were enemies to God, that is, in a state of opposition to God and totally undeserving of His forgiveness. No man would even think of dying for his enemy, although a few might die for their friends. However, Christ died for His enemies, and He died in order that we might become His friends. This proves that God's love is far greater than even the greatest human love. We are saved by the blood of Jesus, and it is through faith in Him as we are buried in baptism into His death that we can contact His blood. Ten times in these eleven verses Paul points out that only through Jesus is reconciliation or salvation possible.

There Is Life in the Seed

Raymond Elliott

In the *Montgomery Advertiser*, dated Friday, June 13, 2008, there was an article about a date palm that had been growing since the year 2005. While this alone would not have been noteworthy, the real story was to be found in the fact that it was growing from a seed that was estimated to be 2,000 years old! “The little tree was sprouted in 2005 from a seed recovered from Masada, where rebelling Jews committed suicide rather than surrender to Roman attackers. Radiocarbon dating of seed fragments clinging to its roots, as well as other seeds found with it that didn’t sprout, indicate they were about 2,000 years old – the oldest seed known to have been sprouted and grown.” Dr. Sarah Sallon said she hopes there’s a chance to use it to restore the extinct Judean date palm, once prized not only for its fruit but also for medicinal uses.

This is an amazing story worthy of our sincere consideration. Think about it. A seed preserved in that

arid area of the world and planted 2,000 years later — and the same results occur: a tree, a date palm began to grow!

How can that be? Believers in the Genesis’ account of creation understand the natural law of propagation in the vegetative kingdom. Moses wrote in Genesis 1:11,12: “*Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind whose seed is in itself, on the earth,’ and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good*” (NKJV).

God placed life in the seed in order that it might produce after its kind. Time does not affect this law of reproduction in the vegetative kingdom. Regardless of how old the seed might be, if life is still present, the seed will germinate and

EVIDENCES

produce after its kind if it is placed in a suitable environment favorable for growth.

In Luke 8:4-15, Jesus presented a parable regarding a sower who went out to sow seed and the four different soils where the seed fell. When the seed fell in the good ground it produced “*some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty*” (Matthew 13:8).

In His interpretation of this parable, the Lord stated that “*The seed is the word of God*” (Luke 8:11). The law of producing after its kind regarding a seed is also true concerning the Word of God. When it is planted in a heart of integrity, it will produce after its kind; that is to say, when the Gospel of Jesus Christ is received into an honest heart and is believed and obeyed, it will produce a child of God, a Christian, nothing more and nothing less. Jesus said, “*The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life*” (John 6:63). The apostle Paul declared, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek*” (Romans 1:16).

The writer of the Book of Hebrews spoke of **the power of the Word of God** when he wrote, “*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-*

edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discern-er of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). James, in his epistle, wrote that “*the implanted word*” is “*able to save your souls*” (1:21). In 1 Peter 1:22,23, we read the following: “*Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth*” (ASV).

The power to produce and in the matter pertaining to converting a heart to Christ is found **in the seed** (Word of God) and **not in the sower**. The apostle Paul put it this way: “*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase*” (1 Corinthians 3:6,7).

Another matter that is essential to our understanding of the power of the seed (Word of God) to produce is this: It does not matter **when the seed** (Word of God) **is planted** in the soil (heart of man), it will produce after its kind. As in the story regarding the date palm, the Word of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will produce Christians in this century as

EVIDENCES

it did in the first century when it was first preached on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). As the Spirit enabled Peter, this apostle, along with the other eleven, preached the good news relative to the Christ who had been sent by the Father to die for the sins of mankind (John 3:16,17; Romans 5:8; He-breus 2:9). Peter's sermon dealt with the facts that Jesus Christ was crucified, rose from the dead, and that He ascended to His Father (Acts 2:22-33).

Many of the hearers were moved by this sermon and inquired of the apostles as to what they should do (Acts 2:36). They were instructed by Peter to "*Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (verse 38). About three thousand souls responded in a positive manner to these commands and were baptized that very day (verse 41). Luke records that the early disciples praised God and had favor with all the people. "*And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved*" (verse 47).

When the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached in its purity and simplicity, it will produce Christians today as it did two thousand years ago. There is no need to place a prefix or a suffix to the name

Christian. "Christian" was the name that was divinely given by the Lord to the early disciples (Acts 11:26). Christians collectively comprise the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is neither a sect nor a denomination; rather, it is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22,23). When individuals believe the facts of the Gospel and obey its commands, Jesus Christ saves them from their sins and adds them to His church.

It is only when the Word of God is mixed with the doctrines of men that the results are different from what the pure Gospel (seed) will produce. That is the main reason why there are thousands of denominational bodies today. If the pure Gospel was preached and if the same seed was planted in the hearts of men today, there would be only Christians and only one church. As children of God, we should be busy sowing the seed (Word of God) in the hearts of men and women so that they also could know the Savior and the joy of salvation. "*Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him*" (Psalm 126:5,6). †

Raymond Elliott preaches for the Lord's church in Prattville, Alabama, USA.

EVIDENCES

Thinking Like Scientists Think They Think

Kyle Butt

In the July 9, 2007 issue of *Newsweek*, science writer Sharon Begley penned a four-page section on “scientific” topics such as cloning, evolution, and the Big Bang. Near the end of the section, she wrote a brief article titled, “How to Think Like a Scientist.” Begley quotes Alan Leshner, the CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, as saying that one of the real problems today is that “people don’t understand what is and isn’t science” (2007b, 150[2]:65). Begley then proceeds to define scientific thinking for the reader. She states: “Explanations of large classes of phenomena must make testable predictions and be falsifiable. That is, there must be a way to make an observation that could disprove the explanation” (150[2]:65). Begley continues by

stating: “The requirement of falsifiability rules out supernatural explanations; you cannot disprove, for instance, the claim that God scattered fossils throughout rock strata... God may have done that, but we’ll never know and there is no way to disprove it. In that way, faith is fundamentally different from science” (150[2]:65).

Begley contends, as do many other “science” writers, that belief in a supernatural Creator falls outside the realm of science. Thus, science textbooks that wish to deal with scientific explanations must exclude any mention of a supernatural Creator. Begley is wrong in this regard. It is a false notion that what passes for modern science is testable (see Butt, 2005). More specifically, however, I would like to analyze Begley’s discussion of the Big

EVIDENCES

Bang as it relates to her claim of scientific falsifiability.

Near the beginning of her four-page section, Begley wrote a single-column post titled: “Glimpses of A Cosmic Creation”. In that article, she states: “It [the Big Bang-KB] occurred 13.7 billion years ago, an explosion that created all matter and energy... The universe expanded from a very hot, condensed ‘singularity’ — the likes of which can be found today in black holes” (2007a, 150[2]:62). Begley makes it sound like you could hop on a space shuttle, stop off at the nearest “black hole” and find a “singularity” (whatever that is supposed to be) that perfectly coincides with the beginning of our universe. In truth, however, such is an absolutely false idea. Evolutionary scientists themselves admit that the Big Bang theory is fraught with “testability peril”. Recently, Eric Lyons wrote an article titled: “The Big Fizzle: Admissions from an Evolutionary Astrophysicist” (2007). In that article, he documented several quotes from Dr. Peter Coles, professor of astrophysics at the

University of Nottingham. The gist of Dr. Coles’ sentiments are summed up in his statement: “Within just a few years inflation [the expansion of the universe after the Big Bang-KB] had become an indispensable part of cosmological theory... The only problem was that **there wasn’t a shred of evidence that inflation had actually happened**” (as quoted in Lyons, 2007, emp. added).

Begley’s attempt to present the Big Bang as a scientific theory that is testable and falsifiable manifests an inexcusably dishonest approach to legitimate science. Real scientific thinking means a person follows the evidence to any conclusion warranted by the data. The scientists of the past knew this — men such as Newton, Faraday, Von Braun, Pasteur, Carver, and a host of others. That is why their scientific minds were forced by the overwhelming evidence to conclude that a supernatural Creator exists. Thinking like a biased **evolutionist**, however, means throwing out such conclusions because, if they are allowed to be considered, evolution crumbles under their

EVIDENCES

The Old Testament in Archaeology

Rex Banks

Visits to Egypt?

Not long after Abraham's arrival in the land of Canaan "*there was a famine in the land . . . (and) Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land*" (Genesis 12:10). Now the account of Abraham's trip to Egypt used to be cited by many critics of the Bible as one example of the unreliability of the scriptural record. Allegedly, the writings of first century historians Steabo and Diodorus made it clear that Egyptians had not permitted strangers to enter their land at the time of Abraham's supposed visit. Moreover, proof of the unhistorical nature of the account was also to be found in the "anachronistic" reference to camels (Genesis 12:16 c.f. 30:43; 31:17,34; 32:7,15; 37:25), since it was argued that these animals were not domesticated until the first millennium B.C. Thanks to recent archaeological discoveries, it is now clear that these criticisms are not valid.

First, consider the evidence from Beni-Hasan, an Egyptian Middle Kingdom archaeological site on the eastern bank of the Nile. According to Britannica:



Paintings on the walls of the Beni-Hasan archaeological site, showing Semitic Bedouin merchants entering Egypt, during a time when archaeologists say Egypt had a "closed door" policy.

EVIDENCES

“The site is noted for its rock-cut tombs of the 11th and 12th-dynasty officials of the 16th Upper Egyptian (Oryx) nome, or province. Some of the 39 tombs are painted with scenes of daily life and important biographical texts. ... The tomb of one, Khnumhotep II, contains a scene showing Semitic Bedouin merchants in richly coloured garments entering Egypt.”

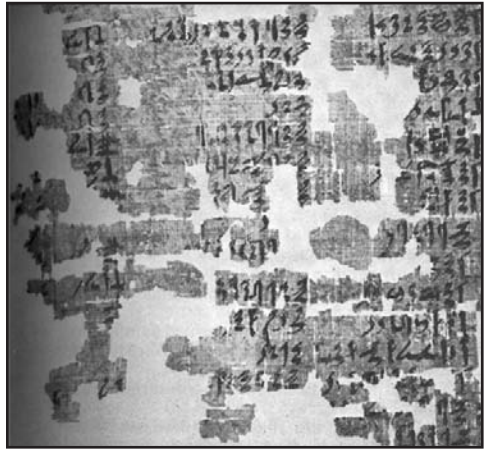
Clearly, evidence of this visit by Asiatic Semites to Egypt in the early second millennium B.C. completely destroys the critics' case that Abraham could not have made the trip to Egypt because of a closed-door policy. The camel argument has fared no better. Donald J. Wiseman tells us in his essay entitled “Archaeology and the Old Testament”:

“Camel bones from Mari c. 2500; representations on seals, plaques and figurines from Byblos, Babylonia, and Egypt; and references in Sumerian

and Babylonian texts show that the citing of camels in Abraham's time is no anachronism. At that time camels were ridden behind the hump and, with donkeys, were used as slow-moving beasts of burden, though their major domestication and use in war did not occur until c.1500-1250 B.C.” (The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 1).

These are but two indications among many that the patriarchal narratives are not pious frauds composed by propagandists at a late date and which betray their origins by their many anachronisms. Instead, all of the evidence suggests that they are sober accounts recorded by individuals who were thoroughly acquainted with the events and customs that they described. †

Rex Banks preaches and works in Hamilton, New Zealand. His web site is <http://www.angelfire.com/80s/rjdb/coc.html>. This excerpt is from Banks' book, *Archaeology and the Bible*.



The Brooklyn Papyrus, showing a list of slaves in Egypt, including Hebrews, during the time it is thought that Joseph was there.

EVIDENCES



Before God created movable life, He created the support system it would need. The entire universe, the whole world, is so integrated that all things work together with a delicate balancing act. Directly connected to the source of energy are the rooted, growing things. They are sustained by the earth, the air, water, and sunlight. Drawing from these vital elements, all plant life survives and thrives.

The other part of the integrated creation are those moveable parts: the living creatures that are mobile, powered, as it were, by “internal batteries” that are recharged through the ingestion of rooted plant life. Without the plant world, neither animal nor human life could continue to exist.

According to God's design, animals, by instinct, know the foods required to nourish their bodies. They know which plants to eat when they are sick. Within that growing world are all the vitamins, minerals, and medicines necessary to take care of their needs, under normal circumstances. In God's wisdom, He matched the placement of the various kinds of animals with the particular foods each one would require. The balance, when left alone, is right.

Man's needs were also provided for from the beginning of creation. Every food that was necessary for his well-being was created. All the nutrients, proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals — every vital thing was placed in the growing vegetation of the earth.

In order to guide man in his eating, God wrapped good food in packaging that would preserve its freshness, while attracting attention by its appealing appearance. He used bright colors, fragrance, and delicious taste. Within man, He placed appropriate receptors: we recognize appealing beauty, our mouths water from enticing fragrances, we relish foods that taste good.

EVIDENCES

Therefore, we eat, and our bodies are nourished. The batteries that allow us to move freely, without direct connection to the earth, are recharged by drawing from the plants that *are connected* to the power source!

However, God knew that with the advent of sin, disease would result. He made provision for the medicines our bodies would need to heal us from maladies that would plague us. Just as it is vital that we learn about the foods we need, it is critical that we learn about the medicines stored in ordinary plants. They are all around us, and they have been put here to sustain our health.

Especially on one occasion, I had a good lesson in these truths. Before leaving for India, I had diligently pulled one particular weed from my flower beds, trying to prevent its return next year from its millions of little seeds. To my amazement, in Delhi, almost the first thing I saw where we would be staying was my hated little weed, growing merrily in a small flower bed! “Well, there you are!” I said. “I wonder where else you’re growing?”

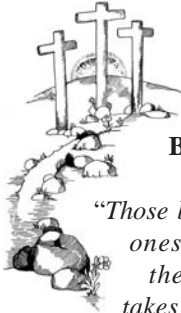
So, I began to look for my weed. I found it in Kakinada, in Bangalore, in Trivandrum, at Cape Cameron — sites in India, then in Sri Lanka, in Singapore, and finally when we reached Myanmar, my persistent little friend was growing quite contentedly. It was very much at home in all of those exotic places.

I showed the weed to Winsome, one of the Christians in Yangon, and she said, “This is medicinal. From it we make a tea, boiling the leaves, and it is good for Hepatitis B! But it is very bitter to drink.”

What an eye-opening piece of information! The weed that grew everywhere was quietly sustaining itself, not in brightness or beauty, but in persistence, being ever ready for humans who knew of its value to pick it and use it to cure a dreaded disease! God provides! Man needs only to learn the uses for the “weeds”.

Then, I thought: the things that we need in plenty every day are packaged in colorful, good-tasting, fragrant bundles, so that we will be enticed to eat enough to fill our body’s needs. Yet, too much medicine can kill us. So the medicines don’t come in appealing packages and they don’t taste good. I remembered some of the remarks my father and mother had made about the *terrible doses* their parents gave them of “home remedies” when they were children! I was just stunned by this new insight into God’s wisdom in planning every little detail of man’s support system. Even with medicinal plants He designed them so that there will be no danger of overdosing! How great is our God! †

Betty Burton Choate who lives in Winona, MS, is the widow of J.C. Choate, founder of *The Voice of Truth International*.



**HEARING AND
BELIEVING THE
MESSAGE**

“Those beside the path are ones who heard; then the devil comes and takes the message from their hearts, in order that they may not believe and be saved” (Luke 8:12).

**BELIEVEING AND
BEING IMMERSIED**

“He who believes and is immersed shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned” (Mark 16:16).

THE SON OF GOD

“God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:17).

GRACE THROUGH FAITH

“By grace you have been saved through faith, but this is not of yourselves! It is God’s gift” (Ephesians 2:8)

HOPE

“Now we are saved by hope; but hope that is not seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees?” (Romans 8:24).

THE GOSPEL

“Brothers, I make known to you the

Saved By:

Loy Mitchell

gospel which I proclaimed to you, which also you accepted, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold fast the certain message which I proclaimed to you, unless you have believed in vain. I gave to you — as the most important things — what I had also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; that He was buried; and that He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

**ENTERING THE
DOOR WHO IS CHRIST**

“I am the door. If anyone enters through Me, he will be safe, and go in and out and find pasture” (John 10:9).

BAPTISM

“There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21).

ENDURING TO THE END

“You will be hated by all men for My name’s sake. He who endures to the end, this one will be saved” (Matthew 10:22).

Are you saved?



Loy Mitchell, former missionary to Zimbabwe, now lives in Dyersburg, Tennessee, USA.



In a world where religious groups have wandered away from the beauty of the church as planned by God, many people have begun to think that the church is unimportant and irrelevant. This, however, is not true concerning the church Jesus built (Matthew 16:18). Its importance can be seen in various ways:

- The church must have been important to God, for it was included in His eternal planning. Its existence is *“according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Ephesians 3:11).
- The importance of the church is seen in the purpose that God eternally planned for it. God designed the church so that: (1) His *“wisdom might be made known to principalities and powers in the heavenly places”* (Ephesians 3:10,11); (2) He might have *“glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end”* (Ephesians 3:21; see also Matthew 5:16); (3) Its leaders can build up the members to become like Jesus (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians

SALVATION

4:11-13).

- The church is important because of Jesus' relationship to the church as its Builder (Matthew 16:18), Foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11), and Head (Ephesians 5:23). He structured the church, the household of God (1 Timothy 3:15), as prophesied by Isaiah, so that it is at the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills (Isaiah 2:2,3).
- The church's importance is seen in that it includes the elite of God (1 John 5:19), those who submit to Jesus (Ephesians 5:24). These are those who, because of their obedience to Jesus, have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into Jesus' kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13) in order to show forth the praises of God (1 Peter 2:9).
- The price Jesus paid for the church shows its importance. The significance of something can be seen in the value of what is paid for it. Jesus showed the importance He placed on the church by giving Himself for it (Ephesians 5:25) and purchasing it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Surely, Jesus would not have died for something that was not important to Him.
- The church is so important to Jesus that His love motivates Him to care for it and provide for its needs. He "*nourishes and cherishes*" the church (Ephesians 5:25,29). As a result, He is the Savior of His one body (Ephesians 1:22,23; 5:23) that He reconciles to the Father through His cross (Ephesians 2:16).
- The destiny of the church shows its importance. It is made up of those whose names are written in heaven (Hebrews 12:23). Because their names are in the Book of Life, they will enter the heavenly city (Revelation 21:27), while those whose names are not there will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15).

Conclusion

There is no institution on the face of the earth that is as important to God as is the church of Christ. The kingdoms and organizations on earth will all pass away, but the church that Jesus built will stand forever. It contains those who, because of their faith in Him, (John 8:24) have obeyed Him (Hebrews 5:9) by repenting (Acts 3:19), confessing (Romans 10:10), and

His Wish

David A. Sargent

Mary Ann Bird was born with multiple birth defects. She suffered not only from her physical impairments, but also from the emotional trauma of “being different” from others. Here is her story in her own words from her personal memoirs entitled, “The Whisper Test”.

I grew up knowing I was different, and I hated it. I was born with a cleft palate, and when I started school, my classmates made it clear to me how I looked to others: a little girl with a misshapen lip, crooked nose, lopsided teeth, and garbled speech.

When schoolmates asked, “What happened to your lip?” I’d tell them I’d fallen and cut it on a piece of glass. Somehow it seemed more acceptable to have suffered an accident than to have been born different. I was convinced that no one outside my family could love me.

There was, however, a teacher in the second grade that we all adored, Mrs. Leonard by name. She was short, round, happy — a sparkling lady.

Annually we had a hearing test. Mrs. Leonard gave the test to everyone in the class, and finally it was my turn. I knew from past years that as we stood against the door and covered one ear, the teacher sitting at her desk would whisper something, and we would have to repeat it back — things like “The sky is blue” or “Do you have new shoes?” I waited there for those words



SALVATION

that God must have put into her mouth, those seven words that changed my life. Mrs. Leonard said, in her whisper, “I wish you were MY little girl.”

Because of our sin, YOU and I are in a dreadful condition – not because we are different from others, for ALL of us share this common malady (Romans 3:23). The prophet Isaiah described our condition well: “*ALL of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags*” (Isaiah 64:6).


Yet, because of His GREAT love for us, God says to you and me, “I wish you were My child.” Further, because of His GREAT love for us, He has provided a way for us to be cleansed from our sins and “adopted” into His family. This provision came at a terrible price: the death of His Son, Jesus, on a cruel cross. “*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive... the adoption as sons*” (Galatians 4:4,5).

God redeems us and “adopts” us into His family when we, by faith in Christ (Acts 16:31), turn from our sins in repentance (2 Corinthians 7:9,10), confess Jesus before men (Romans 10:9,10), and are baptized (immersed) for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Then, as His “children”, we are instructed to follow in the steps of Jesus for the rest of our lives (1 John 1:7).

It doesn't matter how badly you have messed up your life. God's wish — His desire — is for YOU to become His child.

Your acceptance of His offer will change your life — forever! †

David A. Sargent



Instead of complaining about all the things we don't get that we want, why not be grateful that we don't get all the things we deserve?

Do We Love the Lord More . . . ?

Wendell Winkler

“So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs” (John 21:15).

Do We Love the Lord More than Our Kinsmen?

If we do, we will not let them keep us from obeying the Gospel. We will be willing to leave the religion they have accepted if it is proven wrong. We will not let them keep us from attending the services of the Lord’s church. Remember, Jesus said, *“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy, of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me”* (Matthew 10:37).

Do We Love the Lord More than Money?

If we do, we will not make the heaping of riches the chief object of our living. We will give liberally of our means to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). Remember, the Lord said, *“For the love of money is the root of all evil”* (1 Timothy 6:10).

Do We Love the Lord More than Pleasure?

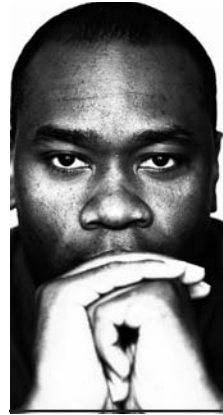
If we do, we will not engage in that which is forbidden, that which will hurt our influence for Christ. Remember, the Lord, in speaking of perilous times, said that men shall be *“lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God”* (2 Timothy 3:4).

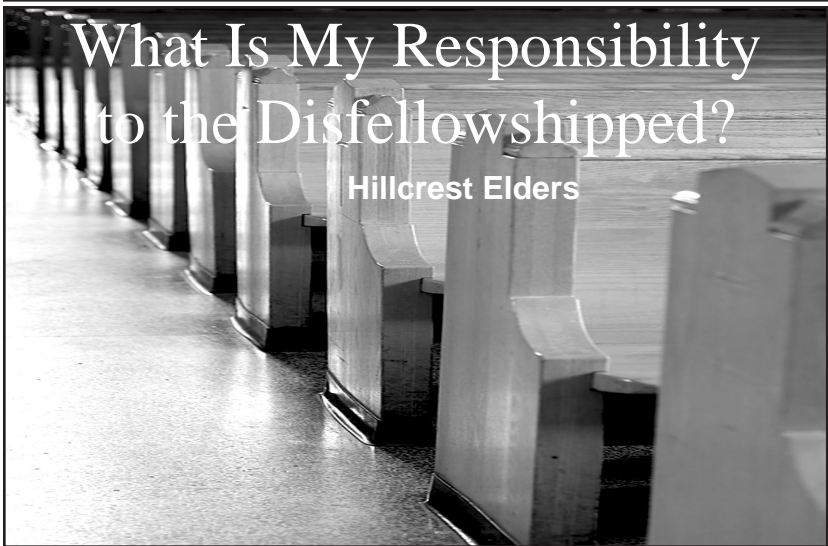
Do We Love the Lord More than the Praise of Men?

If we do, we will be willing to stand for the Lord and the right, though we must stand alone (2 Timothy 4:16,17). The chief rulers *“did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God”* (John 12:42,43).

The Lord should be the supreme object of our affection (Matthew 22:37). May we learn to sing, and mean it, *“More love to thee, O Christ, more love to Thee!”* †

Wendell Winkler, now deceased, was a writer and faithful Gospel preacher.





(Editor’s note: We commend the elders and members of the Hillcrest congregation in Neosho, Missouri for their desire to comply with biblical instruction on this very important matter. Hopefully the spiritual leadership exercised by these elders will prove beneficial to others.)

All too often when a congregation withdraws fellowship from a brother or sister we think: “Well, that’s over and done!” In light of Scripture, however, it’s not over — it is the start of a new responsibility for us. It’s not just another announcement made by the eldership. It is a call to action for us all (2 Corinthians 2:6). Fellowship involves partnership, participation, a

sharing of responsibilities and rewards, and approval. When fellowship is withdrawn, these things are taken away from the wayward Christian by the faithful.

This article is written because of rare circumstances. It is rare because many congregations no longer withdraw fellowship from those who “*walk disorderly, and not after the tradition*” received by inspiration (2 Thessalonians 3:6), and rare because when people are withdrawn from, they usually don’t continue to assemble with the saints. However, recently we have had three people in our worship assembly who were withdrawn from in the past. The question has come to the eldership: “How do we act

THE CHURCH

towards these people?” In studying the subject, the eldership would like for you to consider the following conclusions.

All too often when a congregation withdraws fellowship from a brother or sister we think:
“Well, that’s over and done!”

First of all, we do not forbid them to assemble with us, for the following reasons:

- They could be coming to repent of sin (2 Peter 3:9).
- They will hear the Gospel preached, and it is God’s power to save (Romans 1:16).
- They are not to be treated as enemies, but as brothers or sisters (2 Thessalonians 3:15).

Secondly, when they do assemble with us:

- We must not be rude or impolite to them (Matthew 7:12; Galatians 6:10).
- However, we leave no doubt concerning our biblical feelings toward their wayward life.
- Don’t encourage or congratulate sinful living (2 John 10,11).
- Admonish them to do the right thing (2 Thessalonians 3:14,15).
- We speak the truth, motivated by love (Ephesians 4:15; 1 Corinthians 13:2,3).
- We should not invite them to enjoy a fellowship meal with us (1 Corinthians 5:11).

It is our hope and prayer that those out of fellowship with God and His people (1 John 1:3) will someday return to God through repentance and prayer (Acts 8:22) and confession of sin (James 5:16). *“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness”* (Hebrews 12:11). This is God’s design, and it works (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

May God bless us with the *“unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* as we serve Him together! †

THE CHURCH

What Is the Church of Christ?

Bill Dillon

The church of the Bible cannot be any part of a denomination. It is neither Catholic nor Protestant. It is the spiritual body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever Christ is preached and men believe in Him, repent, and are baptized into Christ, Christians are made (Acts 2:36-40). Wherever and whenever believers are obedient to the Gospel of Christ, they become members of Christ's church.

Individuals then work with a local group of fellow Christians, and together they form a congregation of God's people. They are purely and simply Christians — nothing more, less, or else!

It is our task today to reproduce the New Testament order of things. We appeal for a restoration of the early church and the unity of all Christians.

The church of the Lord is the saved (Acts 2:47). The church (the body of Christ) is the appointed place for all the saved. In the days of the patriarch Noah, God put salvation in the ark

(Genesis 6:9). When the floodwaters came, all human life not on the ark of safety was lost (1 Peter 3:20,21). Eight precious souls were delivered while the rest of the ungodly and disobedient multitudes were destroyed. In the time of the Great Deluge, salvation was in the ark. Further, there was only one ark.

In the days of the lawgiver, Moses, God placed salvation under the blood of the Passover lamb. The Lord told the Israelites to put the blood of the sacrificial lamb on the doorposts and lintels of their houses. The Lord's assurance was, "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you*" (Exodus 12:13). During the long night that followed in Egypt, the death of the firstborn of each house took place where the blood was not found. God was clear in His meaning and true to His word in putting salvation or deliverance under the blood of the lamb.

In the New Testament age of Bible time, God has, as in the past, specified salvation in a cer-

THE CHURCH

Lukewarm (The Condition I Fear Most)

Jack Harriman

Of all the unacceptable conditions a church might fall into, lukewarmness, and ignorance thereof, frighten me most. Being lukewarm is making a half-hearted effort in God's cause. "*I know your works...*" (Revelation 3:15). What did He know about their works? That they were neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm. Tragically, they had no idea they were lukewarm. They were ignorant of their condition, and ignorant as to their ignorance. Theirs was a double deception.

Every church has its lukewarm members, but at Laodicea it seems that everyone was lukewarm – preachers, elders, Bible teachers, leading women, etc. There were a few at Sardis (a dead church) who were still alive, but no such thing is said about

Laodicea.

How in the world did such a thing happen? Why didn't the preacher and the elders see this condition developing and take corrective action? What were the Christians hearing from the pulpit? Where was the warning from the watchman on the wall? All of the Lord's warning systems failed. This short letter was the Lord's last-ditch-effort to save Laodicea.

The Lord's words to Laodicea are a message from Him to the so-called "pillars" in the church — the "movers and the shakers". They, for the most part, decide the work to be done and to what degree. They lead the church in the Lord's cause. They set the standard. The other members will not rise above

Scriptural Structure of the Church

W. Douglass Harris

By structure we do not refer to a material building, but to the organization in local congregations, which is the only structure authorized in the New Testament. In the universal sense, Christ is the head of the church, and there is no other structure in this sense.

New Testament Teaching and Authorization

Careful study of the New Testament regarding the structure of the church reveals that it is independent, autonomous congregations when scripturally organized with elders (overseers), deacons, and evangelists. The first mention of elders in the New Testament church was of those at Jerusalem (Acts 11:30). Paul addressed his Philippians letter to the “bishops and deacons” of the church (Philippians 1:1). The qualifications and responsibilities for the men to serve as elders and deacons are described in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-16. There are four different terms used in the New Testament which refer to



the same office: elder, bishop, overseer, and pastor. In every instance where they already existed in a congregation, they are mentioned in the plural.

In a fully organized, scriptural congregation, there are also deacons who assist and serve under the eldership. They have no oversight except that delegated to them by the elders. Their qualifications and responsibilities are located in the same passages stated above for the elders.

Work and Place of the Evangelist

Paul made it explicit in Titus 1:5 that evangelists' work is to set in order the things that are lacking in the congregations and appoint elders in every church. If a church is just beginning with new converts, time must be allowed for men to develop to serve in the capacity of elders and deacons. Other than evangelizing, this is the second most important work of evangelists. The evangelist must remember that he has no more oversight than any other faithful men in the congregation. “Evangelistic

THE CHURCH

oversight” is not sanctioned in the New Testament. Oversight resides in the eldership, not in one man or in one elder. True, the evangelist is an important and influential figure in the congregation, but his divinely-authorized work is to evangelize so as to encourage the growth of the congregation and to develop men who are spiritually and temperamentally qualified who can serve as elders and deacons. With the passing of reasonable time and with proper growth, elders and deacons should become qualified and appointed. No congregation is completely scripturally organized until such takes place. †

W. Douglass Harris

In His Steps

Dwell not in the valley of despair,
waste not another day.

Arm yourself with faith and prayer,
and then be on your way.

Yield not unto temptation
which leads the soul astray,
But focus on the light ahead
and walk the narrow way.

Your Guide shall always lead you
and shield you from harm’s way,
But you must follow in His steps
and listen and obey.

His strength shall never fail you
as you stop awhile to pray,
After trials and temptations
you will find a brighter day.

At the end of life’s great journey,
Heaven’s just a step away
For all who follow in His steps
and listen and obey.

— Clay Harrison

The Greatest of These

Hollis Miller

No person who is even casually familiar with the New Testament will deny that the word “love” runs through it like thread through a fine garment. Jesus informed His disciples that they would be known by the love they had for one another (John 13:35). The apostle Paul declared that of faith, hope, and love, love is the greatest (1 Corinthians 13:13).

It is indisputable that love is a cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith. Yet, in spite of this truth, love may be one of the least understood of all Christian truths. Is it pure sentimentalism in action? Is it always kind and gentle, or can it sometimes be forceful and straightforward? Does love ever offend, or does it always refrain from doing so?

In Matthew 15:1-9, Jesus had a confrontation with the Pharisees during which He spoke plainly to them, saying that they honored God with their lips, but not with their hearts. The disciples later came to Jesus and asked Him if He was aware that the Pharisees were

offended by what He had said. Part of Jesus’ reply was, “*Let them alone*”. It matters not that Jesus was the Son of God and we are mortal. Love is love whether it be divine or human. Paul instructed Timothy to reprove and rebuke (2 Timothy 4:2). However, how could Timothy love, and at the same time, reprove and rebuke? The answer is obvious — love does not exclude reproving and rebuking when either is needed.

It is human theory, and not biblical teaching, that has turned love into a kind of wishy-washy sentimentalism. “If you love me, you will accept me as I am.” NO! Love never accepts a wrongdoer as he/she is. On the contrary, love always seeks to persuade the wrongdoer to become a right-doer. Were it not so, Jesus would never have taught, for His every message is designed to improve us, not to leave us as we are. †

Hollis Miller is an evangelist living in Murray, Kentucky, USA.

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY



The Thief On The Cross

J.C. Choate

The scriptures clearly and repeatedly teach that one must be baptized in order to be forgiven. Christ himself said that one must **believe** and **be baptized** to be **saved** (Mark 16:16). Peter said that it is necessary to **repent** and **be baptized** to have **remission of sins** (Acts 2:38). In 1 Peter 3:21, Peter wrote by inspiration that **baptism saves**, just as Noah and his family were saved by water. We are also told in God's word that **baptism puts one into Christ** (Galatians 3:26,27) and **into the church** (1 Corinthians 12:13). The New Birth also involves baptism since one is born of **water** and of **the Spirit**

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

(John 3:5). In the light of all of these scriptures, *how could any one say that a person can be saved without baptism?* Yet, there are many who do just that!

Much of the denominational world teaches that the thief on the cross was saved without baptism. The record says, *“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise”* (Luke 23:39-43).

Although nothing is said about the thief having been baptized, yet he may very well have been baptized. We are told by Mark that *“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him **all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him** in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins”* (Mark 1:4,5).

One could therefore well conclude that the thief was baptized and then later got involved in the thievery that led to his crucifixion. This would not be the first or the last time that a person fell back into sin after repenting.

Consider further: This thief obviously knew quite a lot about Jesus, and had a great deal of faith! You ask how we can know these things? By his own words! There they were, the three of them, suffering the death of crucifixion. The disciples who had studied at Jesus’ feet for three years had abandoned Him in fear, their faith in Him badly shaken. Yet, what does the thief say? *“LORD!”* and he has enough understanding about the spiritual nature of Jesus’ kingdom that he begs, *“Remember me when you come into your kingdom!”* How did the thief know that Jesus’ death would not be His end, or that it would not prevent Him from becoming the King over His kingdom? Yes, the thief understood a great deal about our Lord. He was no stranger to His teachings, and most likely he had been baptized.

However, suppose he was not baptized. That doesn’t prove anything. It certainly doesn’t prove that one can be saved today without baptism. That thief lived in **another period of time** and **under a different law** than we live under today. At that time Christ was still alive and He certainly had the right and power to forgive the man and to promise to save him in the coming kingdom. With Jesus’ death on the cross, a new law was ushered in, the law of Christ, as revealed in the New Testament. We have been living under

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

that law since the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. We cannot go back to the law that was in force before the death of Christ and obey that law and expect to be saved. We cannot change laws to suit ourselves.

The fact is, **there is something wrong when we go to the Scripture and try to offset one command by claiming to follow another.** There is no such thing as the Lord telling us that we must obey certain commands to be saved, and then for us to look for a Scripture or an example of someone being saved without doing what the Lord has commanded, and for our “findings” to cancel the necessity of obeying Christ.

It was stated in the first part of this article that the Bible clearly teaches that one must be baptized to be saved. At the same time, it should be pointed out that nowhere does God’s Word say that “baptism only” saves. Neither does the Scripture teach that one can be saved by “faith only”, “repentance only”, or by “confessing Christ only”. Rather, the Word of God tells us in command, as well as by the examples

of conversion in the Book of Acts, that one must **hear** and **believe** the Gospel of Christ, **repent** of one’s sins, **confess** that Christ is the Son of God, and **be baptized** for the remission of sins. Read Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:10; and Mark 16:16.

No, we are not talking about “water salvation”, but *we are talking about the salvation that the Lord offers when we comply with the terms or conditions that He has laid down in order for us to be saved.* Christ is the Savior and He has every right to tell us what we must do if He is going to save us. We are not in position to tell Him what we will do or not do to be saved. It doesn’t matter **who** says we can be saved without being baptized, or **how many** may teach that one can be saved without being baptized; the fact is, **the Lord** says that *we must believe and be baptized to be saved.* He is the authority, and that settles it, once and for all! When we believe Him with all of our heart, we are going to do whatever He has asked us to do, and that without question or debate.

How Narrow Is the Gate?

S. Kyaw Sein

“The narrow gate” would be feasible for a sheep, but it is impossible for an elephant to pass through it. So, likewise, a person fattened and puffy and swollen with worldly riches will find “the narrow gate” too narrow for him to enter through it, but a thin, poor person would be able to enter through with ease. So also, a person who is carrying so many bundles of worldly materials will find “the narrow gate” im-possible to enter.

So, we find that “the narrow gate” is constant in its size. It does not make itself narrow to the fatty, bulky person nor widened for a thin person. God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34). The “narrow” or “wide” is not according

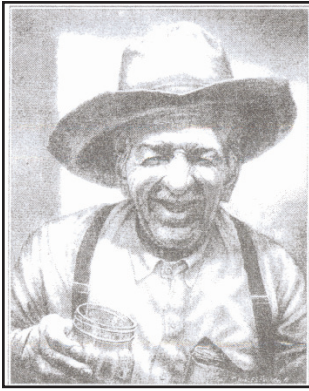
to the changeable size of the “gate” itself, but it depends on the person entering it. For a person to be able to enter “the narrow gate”, he must get rid of all worldly mindedness. In fact, he must leave his own effort

even (Ephesians 2:8; Titus 3:5; Romans 6:6, 11 [1-12]), the old man crucified.

We can picture a person who is heavy laden (Matthew 11:28) who needs to put away his load. A person of arrogant heart has a big load of

pride, but he must become like a little child who is fully dependent on parents (Matthew 18:2). Likewise, you must not depend on your own effort of any kind,

“...Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:”
Acts 10:34.



“An Old Farmer’s Advice”

- ◆ Your fences need to be horse-high, pig tight, and bull-strong.
- ◆ Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.
- ◆ A bumblebee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor.
- ◆ Words that soak into your ears are whispered ... not yelled.
- ◆ Meanness don’t jes’ happen overnight.
- ◆ Forgive your enemies. It messes up their heads.
- ◆ Do not corner something that you know is meaner than you.
- ◆ You cannot unsay a cruel word.
- ◆ Every path has a few puddles.
- ◆ When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty.
- ◆ The best sermons are lived, not preached.
- ◆ Most of the stuff people worry about ain’t never gonna happen, anyway.
- ◆ Don’t judge folks by their relatives.
- ◆ Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
- ◆ Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you’ll enjoy it a second time.
- ◆ Don’t interfere with somethin’ that ain’t botherin’ you none.
- ◆ If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin’.
- ◆ The biggest troublemaker you’ll probably ever have to deal with watches you from the mirror every mornin’.
- ◆ Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment.
- ◆ Lettin’ the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin’ it back in.
- ◆ If you get to thinkin’ you’re a person of influence, try orderin’ somebody else’s dog around.

Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply.
Speak kindly. **Leave the rest to God!**

WORSHIP



Byron C. Laird

There is a state shrine near Tompkinsville, Kentucky. Inside a wooden fence is a cemetery with markers telling from which county in Kentucky the e n t o m b e d Revolutionary War veterans came. Nearby is the grave of Hannah Boone, sister to the famous Daniel Boone.

A few yards away from the cemetery is the Old Mulkey Meeting House. Its walls are constructed of logs. The windows and doors are crude — just wooden shutters, hinged and hooked. The floors were hewn out with a wood adz. So were the wooden slabs that they used for pews. There are no backs to them — only the seats.

In just such a building many years ago, the great Alexander Campbell was preaching. As he began his concluding remarks, Raccoon John Smith turned to a companion and said something to



this effect: “Isn’t it a terrible waste, Brother Billy, to ride 30 miles to hear a man preach for 20 minutes?” His companion replied, “Surely you must be mistaken about the time. Look at your watch!” He did. Brother Campbell had been preaching for two hours!

Such was Campell’s ability to preach, and such was their interest in what was being preached. We need more Campbells in the pulpits and more Smiths in the pews! I think I shall never be a Campbell, but I shall try to be a Smith. †

Byron C. Laird is a preacher of the Gospel.

WORSHIP

The Basket in the Collection Tray

Sylvia Petty



“Momma, what is the basket for?” the little girl asked her mother one Sunday morning. “It’s for the children,” answered the mother. That answer satisfied

the little girl until some 60 years later the basket was gone.

What was the story of the basket that had always been in the collection plate at that con-

WORSHIP

gregation of the Lord's people? Every time the little girl attended worship in the little country church building in East Texas, the basket was there. Then, one Sunday it was gone. Her mother had passed on to eternity, as had her grandparents. Only one aunt remained who had the answer to "What is the basket for?" Why was it there? In no other assembly had she seen the basket — only in that little East Texas congregation where her parents and family generations before had worshipped.

The answer lay in the wisdom of a decision made by an elder of that little congregation in the early 1900's. In those days, "the orphan train children" came to live with members of that congregation, and an orphans' home was established in the area for those who were not taken in by families. But in the congregation, two sisters had a strong difference of opinion. One opinion was held that families should take orphans into their homes and raise them. Both sisters had done just that.

A second understanding of the Scripture, James 1:27, came about in the establishment of children's homes. Those organizing the homes asked for individuals and congregations to provide the funds for the children. One sister was very excited and quickly adopted the idea of the children's homes. One firmly

opposed it. Soon division began within the little congregation. The dilemma was brought to the attention of the elders.

The elders listened to the concern of the members. To the surprise of one of the elders, the division was rooted within his very own family; the two sisters were his own two daughters. His dark eyes focused as he firmly stated, "I will deal with this." He went home after the meeting, then returned to the elders with a solution, which was approved by the complete eldership.

The very next Sunday the little basket appeared in the collection plate. The elder announced to the congregation that there had been some concern about money being taken from the treasury to give to the establishment of a children's home. He further announced that from this day forward no money would be taken from the treasury, but any and all money deposited in the little basket in the middle of the collection plate would be directed to the support of the home for children.

From that day forward, the little basket was full to overflowing. More contribution was placed in the basket than had previously been allocated from the treasury. The treasury did not suffer, nor did the children who were in need. There was no more division; a wise elder-

WORSHIP

WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP?

Jimmy Young

True (genuine) worship in many places has become perverted in our day. Sadly, it often reflects the will of man rather than the will of God. For some, worship has become leader-centered and congregation-centered. In far too many cases, worship is “How Great We Are” rather than “How Great Thou Art.”

The New Testament teaches us clearly in regard to worship. Jesus said, *“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:23,24). The basic idea is that of praise, adoration, gratitude, homage, and admission of dependence. Acceptable worship requires courtesy and reverence to God. Thus, worship is God-centered, and in that God delights (Proverbs 15:8; 28:9).

We worship because we have a need to worship and because we have been made as worshipping

beings. It is for our good. However, we mainly worship God because He takes delight in it. It is part of God’s plan for man.

Acceptable worship begins with a proper relationship. Jesus spoke of the ONE we worship as “Father” (John 4:23). Only those who are His children are in a position to worship Him acceptably. It is a tragedy that so many try to worship God without ever having scripturally obeyed Him.

We well remember the Phari-sees who went through the motions of worship without ever really worshipping (Matthew 15:8,9). We, too, must establish a proper relationship with God.

Ecumenical congregations do a great disservice to people when they lead them to believe that they are in a proper relationship with God when, in reality, they have never obeyed the Gospel. Such people do not have a Father/child relationship with God. Anyone who lives in rebellion to God’s will cannot worship Him acceptably! We must live close to God daily. Our closeness to Him will

WORSHIP

bring us to worship Him acceptably.

If you do not enjoy worship, I would suggest that you examine your relationship with God, rather than criticizing the congregation or those leading in worship. A genuine love for, and closeness to, God will bring you to acceptably worship Him, and you will enjoy praising Him. Our love and devotion lie at the very heart of true worship.

Acceptable worship demands proper preparation. Jesus said that God is to be worshipped in spirit and truth (John 4:24). To worship in spirit means that our worship matches the one who is worshipped. God is a spirit; hence, we worship Him in spirit. It comes from the heart with the right attitude.

Anything worthwhile demands proper preparation. We take seriously our careers and other things that affect our lives. Surely, then, we see the need for proper preparation for entering into the presence of God. Before Moses met God on Sinai, the people prepared themselves for two days (Exodus 19:10,11). Can you think of any place in Scripture where a faithful man of God took lightly his entering the presence of God?

How does one prepare to worship God? Some spoil Sunday morning by what they do Saturday night. Often we are too tired. If there is sin in our lives, we must

forsake it and pray for forgiveness. The children of Israel washed their clothes (Exodus 19:10); we must wash our hearts (Hebrews 10:22). Our focus must be God. Worship will be meaningful only when we take time to center our attention on Him: sing, listen, and meditate on our worship to God.

Acceptable worship is rooted in obedience. Worship involves our response to truth (John 4:24; 17:17). We must accept the acts God has authorized, no more, no less (Matthew 18:18). The New Testament reveals a pattern to be followed. God speaks to us through Christ (Hebrews 1:1,2). Christ speaks to us through the apostles (John 17:8). They have spoken to us through the New Testament (2 Timothy 3:16,17). Acceptable and spiritual worship consists of: prayer, singing, giving, observance of the Lord's Supper, and proclamation of God's Word. All else comes from man and not from God.

Acceptable worship requires participation. Worship is active, not passive. God seeks worshippers, not spectators (John 4:23). Some come to services to be entertained; they want excitement; they crave emotional stimulation. To them, worship is a performance to be viewed and evaluated as some sports event.

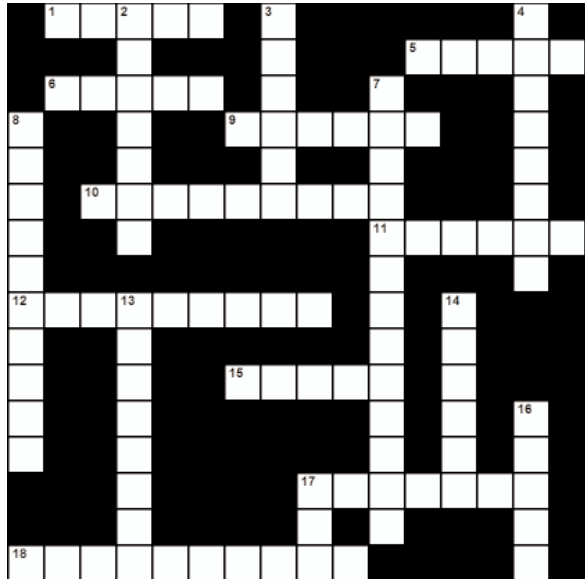
BIBLE FIND

Bonnie Rushmore

Bible Prayers

Across

1. Who prayed, "Forgive them; for they know not what they do"?
5. In Acts 12, for which imprisoned apostle is the church praying?
6. Who was singing and praying with Paul while they were in prison?
9. Who prayed for God to show him a sign with a fleece?
10. Whose prayers were "a memorial" before God"?
11. Which prophet prayed that it would not rain?
12. The prayer of what kind of person "avails much"?



15. In Exodus 15:24-25, what request did Moses make of God?
17. Who prayed for the people who were stoning him?
18. In what garden did Jesus pray before he was arrested?

Down

2. Who requested an understanding heart from God?
3. Who prayed to God three times a day, even though it was forbidden by the king?
4. Which king's hand was healed by the prayer of a prophet?
7. In Isaiah 56:7, what is God's house called?
8. Jesus instructed the disciples not to pray like what type of people?
13. Which king asked God to save the people from Assyria?
14. Which prophet prayed that the sun would go backwards ten degrees?
16. Who prayed for forgiveness while in the belly of a big fish?
17. For what did Hannah pray?

Jesus, Philip, and Joe

Mike Benson

He sat alone in the right hand corner of the front pew, just left of the pulpit. As I recall, he was a relatively short man. He wore thick, black-framed glasses and had a red, flat-top haircut. He had a broad smile. He always wore a dark suit to the worship assembly on the Lord's Day. He sang bass — I mean real deep bass. His loud voice would resonate throughout the auditorium during services. I learned to love singing bass largely because of Joe. He sang well, and it was obvious that he loved to lift his gift of praise to the Father.

Joe was my Wednesday night Bible class teacher one year. Always prepared. Very knowledgeable. Concerned about his students. Friendly. Supportive. Personally interested.

One of Joe's classes sticks out in my memory above all others. For some reason, the rest of my fellow students didn't make it to Bible study this particular night. So this evening, I was Joe's only pupil.



Other teachers might have been tempted to send me to another classroom, since I was the sole student. Not Joe. Like I said, he took a personal interest. To him Bible class wasn't just about imparting information; it was about making connections with people. Nobody had to "strong arm" Joe to teach the

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

Word; he did so gladly. Well, he sat down with me that night and talked to me about my soul — about my salvation. We didn't go through the Bible class workbook. We just talked about how to become a Christian, about what I needed to do to be saved, and why. A few days later, I put on Christ in baptism (Galatians 3:27). Much of the reason I did so was because of Joe Flannery and our little one-on-one Bible study that one Wednesday night at the Overlook church in Dayton, Ohio.

Observations:

1. **Jesus valued people as individuals.** He talked one-on-one with Zacchaeus (“...for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost”, Luke 19:10). He held a night study with the Pharisee, Nicodemus (“...unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”, John 3:3). He conversed with the Samaritan woman at the well (“...whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst”, John 4:14). It's not surprising that Jesus gave His attention to individuals like these; He knew the worth (cf Matthew

16:26; 10:29-31) of one soul.

2. **Like his Master, Philip knew the worth of one.** Remember Philip (Acts 8)? He left his work with many in Samaria (Acts 8:6,12) to speak to just one from Ethiopia (“...then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him”, Acts 8:26ff). It has been suggested by some that the eunuch made his way back home to Ethiopia, following his conversion and then, in turn, preached the Word to his fellow-countrymen and spread it throughout the region. I have no way of affirming or denying that proposition, but I do know that even if the eunuch lived and died the only Christian in Ethiopia, it was worth Philip's efforts.

3. **What if only one student came to your Bible class this week?** Like Jesus, would you give him your individual and undivided attention? Like Philip, would you get in your vehicle and drive a long distance, even if you knew only one person would be present to hear God's message? Like Joe, would you stay with him in class and talk to him about eternity and his soul, or

Why Did I Opt to Preach Full-Time?

Agapio V. Catamora

When many of my friends knew of my desire to quit my secular job in the city government of Butuan purposely to preach full-time, several of them wondered and kept on asking why I decided to leave my adequate salary with attractive benefits, allowances, and other perks thereof. Others expressed fears as to what will happen to my new lifestyle with my family in the ministry, knowing that only a handful of Christians are in our area.

It is true that it is really difficult for a family man like me to decide on giving up my secular job in this crucial time of economic crisis, and knowing that there are even those who left the Lord's ministry to work for a secular job. However, this evangelist, after weighing both sides and with countless hours of prayers and meditations, looking back on the government service for about 24 years, looks on the reverse side and thinks otherwise.

The reasons behind this concluding decision are anchored on the following facts:

1. Preaching part-time, which I did for the past 31 years after I left the Pentecostal group as an evangelist, has an incomparable result with that of a full-time worker.

2. Christ said, "*Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple*" (Luke 14:33). God assured His follower, "*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me'*" (Hebrews 13:5-6). David testified: "*I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread*" (Psalm 37:25).

3. It is an answer to Christ calling for more workers in the kingdom (Matthew 9:37,38), and teaching others "*shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee*" (1 Timothy 4:16), thereby making heaven happy "*over one sinner who repents*" (Luke 15:10).

4. Winning lost souls to Christ is a

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

wise act and is of greater value (Proverbs 11:30) and “*shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever*” (Daniel 12:3). Further, “*he that converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins*” (James 5:20).

5. It has been my commitment to preach full-time and devote the remaining years of my life in the Lord’s ministry after the merciful God healed my complicated ailment from which I almost died in the later part of 1992. My vow reminds me of the words of our Master, “*No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*” (Luke 9:62).

6. Like Moses, “*choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season*” (Hebrews 11:25), I am looking forward for that heavenly reward (Hebrews 11:26) that “*God has promised to those who love him*” (James 1:12). †

Agapio V. Catamora is a radio evangelist in Butuan City, Philippines.

Lovers Are Born of God

T. Pierce Brown

First John 4:7 says, “*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*” It is possible that some of the most liberal or radical commentators would use this passage to try to prove that homosexuals are acceptable with God, for they apparently love each other, but we have not seen that yet. It is practically impossible to conceive of an honest, sincere student of God’s Word who thinks this means that everyone who loves his wife or children, his friends, or the world is thereby made a child of God or proven to be one. The only other sensible alternative of which we can think is that He means that everyone who has the kind of love of which He is talking — the kind of love that causes a man to put God first and keep His commandments and to love the brotherhood with a sacrificial love (agape) — is a child of God, for no one loves in this way who is not a child of God. He is talking to and about children of God, not just anyone who loves anything or anybody.

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

What Can a Godly Woman Do for Christ?

Bonnie Rushmore

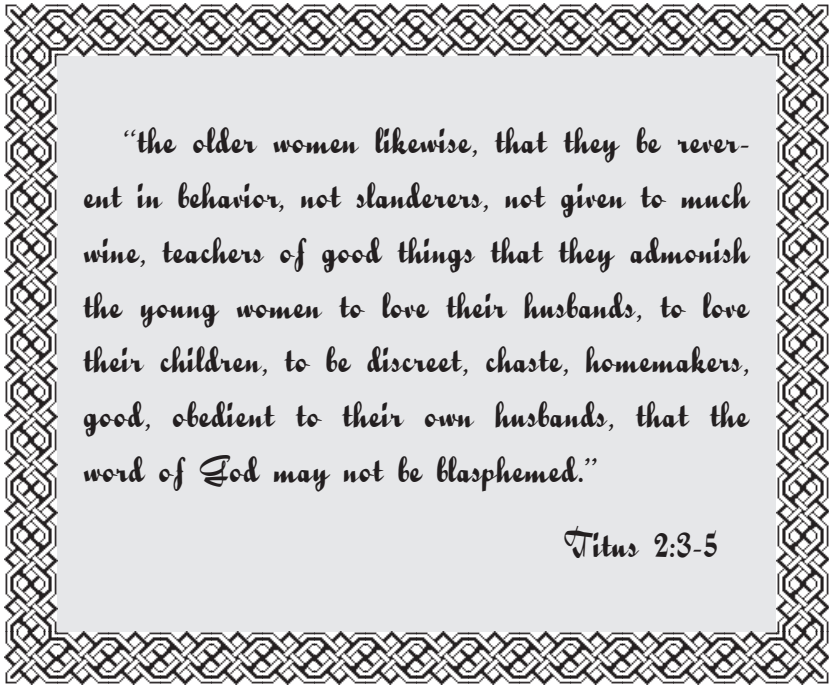
- ◆ The first and foremost work of a Christian woman, who has a family, is to rear and ground her children in the Word of God.
- ◆ Teach ladies' Bible classes.
- ◆ Teach children's Bible classes.
- ◆ Organize and maintain a resource room for teachers.
- ◆ Teach or host home Bible studies.
- ◆ Grade and mail Bible correspondence courses.
- ◆ Write biblically sound class material.
- ◆ Write Bible-based articles for Gospel magazines and bulletins.
- ◆ Research, type, or proofread for those who write.
- ◆ Design bulletin boards, which are a wonderful teaching tool.
- ◆ Prepare transparencies or PowerPoint slides for preachers or Bible class teachers.
- ◆ Visit the hospital, nursing home, shut-ins, new converts, young mothers and weak members.
- ◆ Serve as church secretary.
- ◆ Organize and maintain a pantry of food and clothing.
- ◆ Clean the church building, and decorate inside and outside with flowers and appropriate decorations.
- ◆ Wash and keep the baptismal garments in good repair and assist women who are baptized.
- ◆ Prepare communion.
- ◆ Show hospitality in our homes to traveling missionaries and preachers, those who need encouragement and non-Christians.
- ◆ Be a listening ear for those in need (howbeit, not a conduit for gossip).

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

- ◆ Encourage the elders, deacons, preachers and teachers in the good works they do.
- ◆ Help our husbands to become qualified to be elders or deacons. Remember to be a qualified elder, he must have a qualified wife (1 Timothy 3:1-11).

Faith, devotion, courage and a desire to learn God's Word will help us to grow. With growth we will begin to work for Christ. Benevolence, hospitality and teaching will be the visible result. I am sure you can add to this list. There is plenty of work for all. Find your talents, develop them and use them for Christ. Remember God has given us a role to fill. Willingly fill that role, yet be mindful of the restrictions God placed upon us, as women. When we are busy doing all we can, we will not have the time or the desire to object to those restrictions. †

Bonnie Rushmore is a staff writer and works with World Evangelism in Winona, Mississippi, USA.



“the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”

Titus 2:3-5

Search Out Who Is Worthy

Maxie B. Boren

In giving what is generally referred to as the “limited commission”, our Lord instructed His disciples to “search out who is worthy” in the cities and villages they would enter to preach. By “who is worthy”, it is obvious that Jesus had in mind those who would be receptive to the message as contrasted with those who would reject it. Read Matthew 10:11-14.

As it was in the days of Christ, so it is today — a lot of people are rebellious toward God and obstinate in their rejection of the Gospel. In essence, Jesus taught, “Don’t waste too much time with such people, but seek out the ones who will listen.”

It is clear that the apostle Paul practiced this instructive principle in his efforts to reach the lost with the truth. He preached fervently everywhere he went, and risked “life and limb” that people might have opportunity to hear the message. He didn’t waste time “beating his head against a brick wall”. Read Acts

13:44-46! When those Jews contradicted the truth Paul preach-ed, and blasphemed, Paul said to them, “*It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles*” (verse 46).

We need to think about this. Too often, so much time is spent on people who couldn’t care less. I know that every soul is precious, and it breaks our hearts to encounter someone who rejects truth, and we keep hoping and praying that maybe, just maybe, if we keep trying, they will listen. That is good and fine up to a point. Yet, we must remember

Watch your thoughts;
they become words.
Watch your words;
they become actions.
Watch your actions;
they become habits.
Watch your habits;
they become character.
Watch your character;
it becomes your destiny.

The Narrow Path to Life

John Thiesen

Jesus said, “*Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*” (Matthew 7:13,14).

Noah and His Family

Unfortunately, it has always been true of mankind, since the beginning of the world, that few are found walking in God’s path in any generation. For example, in Noah’s day, out of all the people in the world, only eight were saved from the flood. These were Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives. The rest of the world was destroyed in the water.

Lot and His Daughters

Later, because of the wickedness of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, God sent two angels in the form of men to Sodom to warn Lot and his family to get out. When Lot desperately tried to warn his sons-in-law, “*he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law*” (Genesis 19:14). As a result, out of all the people in the cities, only Lot and his two daughters escaped the fierce destruction of God when fire was poured out from heaven upon them.

Joshua and Caleb

After Moses sent 12 spies into

Canaan, only two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, believed God’s promise that He would give the land to Israel. The others were afraid of the fierce inhabitants in the land. The Israelites believed these cowards, and as a result, were forced to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until all that generation had died. Of the original population, only faithful Joshua and Caleb got to enter the Promised Land.

People Today

We today need to take note of these examples and believe God. Jesus said only a minority will be entering into eternal life. The majority are on the broad way and are headed toward eternal punishment. A great many are abundantly blessed by God with material wealth, yet only a few have forsaken their sins and become worshippers of this true God through His Son Jesus Christ. It has been said that “history repeats itself”. How sad that so many have not learned from the graphic lessons of the past, in order to prepare themselves to meet God. †

Before his death in 2006, John Thiesen was Editor of the Spanish edition of *The Voice of Truth International*.

Worry Is an Adult Sin

Hugo McCord

Youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22) do not typically cause older people to sin, but Satan besets older people with a special sin: worry.

The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus gives principles by which worry and anxiety may be eliminated. Those principles are recorded in a prayer written by Reinhold Neibuhr and adopted by Alcoholics Anonymous:

“Dear God, give us strength to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed. Give us courage to change the things that can and should be changed. And give us wisdom to distinguish one from the other.”

That which should and can be changed, change! Many of life’s problems are solved by work and application. Abraham’s large entourage, both human and animal, was badly in need of water in Palestine’s Negeb desert. Worry would not settle the problem, but hard work in well digging did.

That which you would change but cannot, make the best of it! Though hard work is the answer to many problems, it is not to others. Some things are beyond human exertion. Joseph did not want to be sold as a slave, bound in chains.

However, he refused to allow his unpleasant condition to make him grumble and whine. He determined he would make the best of a bad situation. Instead of settling into worry and a hopeless case of self-pity, he made himself a cheerful and efficient workman.

Naomi did not want to lose her husband and to bury her only two sons. These things she could not change, but she made the best of a bad situation. She started life again as a bereft widow, being a mother to Ruth, and before she died she had held Ruth’s baby in her arms.

Many memory gems help one to accept with contentment an unchangeable condition:

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee” (Isaiah 26:3).

“In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength” (Isaiah 30:15).

“The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever” (Isaiah 32:17). †

Before his death, Hugo McCord had been a long-time professor of Bible at Oklahoma Christian University in Edmond, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

THE DAYS ARE EVIL

Shan Jackson

In his letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul spoke of the need for serious thinking and equally serious living. He said, “*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise but understand what the will of the Lord is*” (Ephesians 5:15-17). The English word “circumspectly” means “in careful consideration of circumstances and potential consequences; to be prudent.” To live circumspectly means that we live with deliberate caution and carefulness. We should do this, Paul says, because “the days are evil”. Because we are surrounded by so many evil influences, we need to be all the more careful in the choices we make.

One of the more famous Greek philosophers is reported to have said, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” If we just go with the flow, living casually and not thinking about how we ought to live, the kind of life that results is really not worth living. As Christians, we have the benefit of God’s truth to help us understand what the truly good life would be. However, we

have to pay attention and be careful. We have to examine our lives often and make the decisions that are required to get on the right path and stay there. We simply cannot afford to drift along, living by default. We must live our lives with purpose. †

Shan Jackson preaches for the church of Christ in Port Lavaca, Texas, USA.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.

Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”

(2 Corinthians 5:13)

Housework: Is It Important?

Marilyn M. Peeples

Whoa! Wait a minute, dear Christian sister! Don't jump to the conclusion that I am going to suggest that all of us just forget about doing our housework. As much as I prefer lots of other things, housework is absolutely necessary to the smooth running of the family. No, dirty dishes are not fun to wash. Laundry is not exciting to sort, wash, dry, and put away. Mopping floors can be downright boring. There is no part of housework that one can honestly call the highlight of one's day. Yet, while performing these tasks, we truly should appreciate the opportunity to serve our families.

O.K. I heard that snicker! Just hold that sarcastic thought!

Perhaps at this time we need to turn to Proverbs 31 and read about the "virtuous woman". In verse 15, Solomon said: "*She also rises while it is yet night, And provides food for her household, And a portion for her maid-servants.*" In verse 27, he said:

"She watches over the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness." All of us would admit that this industrious woman most likely washed clothes and cleaned the house, as we must do.

Perhaps we should also read what Paul wrote in Titus 2:5: "...to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed." Being a "homemaker", a keeper at home, is commanded. This is not an option or a matter of choice for Christian wives and mothers.

Regarding the topic of responsibilities in the home, I'd like for us to study about two sisters who received Jesus into their house on several occasions. These incidents are recorded in Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1-46, and John 12:1-9. The two sisters, along with their brother, Lazarus, had the joy of visiting with Jesus, dining with our Lord, listening to the Savior, and being in the presence of the Messiah.

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

What a blessing and a privilege they were given by Almighty God!

Let's look closely at this occasion as recorded in Luke 10. The writer tells us: *"Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.'* And Jesus answered and said to her, *'Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her'"* (verses 38-42).

Some have speculated that Martha may have been the older of the two sisters. They reason that the fact that Martha felt the greater responsibility for the care of her guests is an indication that she was the elder. The Scriptures do not tell us. However, she does seem

to be the one shouldering the primary responsibility of entertaining, and she was taking her work very seriously.

As we study about this, we can visualize Martha, with our mind's eye, scurrying about the house. She sets the table. She prepares the meat and vegetables. She bakes the bread. She pours the drinks. She is intent on serving the important people who have come to her home.

Then — picture it — Martha glances into the main room where Jesus is talking. There is Mary, not helping with anything regarding the guests at all. She is seemingly oblivious to Martha's preparations, not noticing all the work yet to be done before the guests can eat. Mary is sitting at the Jesus' feet, listening raptly to every word (Luke 10:39b).

Martha must certainly have felt that Mary had absolutely no thoughts about helping her take care of the guests. Imagine the look on Martha's face — the hurt look, the pleading look, perhaps even the glare she gave Mary. Can't you just see the red-faced Martha whirl around toward Jesus, ready to register her com-

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

plaint and to request real action from Him in correcting Mary?

Let's look closely, *not* at what Jesus said at this time, but at what *He did not say*. He did not rebuke Martha for being concerned about the hospitality and the meal preparations. He did not tell her to forget about these and listen to Him. Jesus also did not rebuke her for the feelings she had (after all, Jesus knew her heart!). He knew Mary had left Martha to do it all. Jesus also did not rebuke Martha for her choice to serve, because of her consciousness of responsibility as a hostess, rather than choosing to listen to Him.

Rather, Jesus rebuked Martha because she had over-emphasized the material rather than the spiritual. This was the problem Jesus addressed. Martha had become so wrapped up in the physical needs around her that she resented her sister who had chosen the spiritual things. Do we often make the same poor judgment as Martha?

We, too, have responsibilities in both the spiritual and the material areas of our lives. Housework is certainly necessary. Its importance, however, cannot be compared with the responsibility to God and spiritual things — studying the Bible, visiting the sick, ministering to the needs of others, teaching the Gospel. When we manage our time

wisely, we can do the immediate (material) things as well as find time for the important (spiritual) things.

For us, it may never come down to having to choose between housework and spiritual things, on a daily basis. When we do have to make that choice, however, we must choose the good part, as Mary did. Housework will wait. Sometimes a missed opportunity to do God's will might not be given to us again.

What about the phone call you meant to make to a visitor to the church services? If you don't call, they may never attend again. What about the visit you failed to make to the hospital? The person may die, never knowing you cared. What about the card you meant to send to the sick? Will they get well, never having received the card you intended to mail, never knowing that you meant to express your thoughts and prayers on their behalf? Do you see how important it is to take advantage of our opportunities? Keep in mind that it is impossible to recall the specific opportunity once it has passed.

Let me urge you to never shirk your daily responsibilities around the house. When the opportunity presents itself, however, let me also urge you to choose the better part, the good part. Realizing what Jesus

“THY SPEECH BETRAYETH THEE”

Grady Miller

Inside, the palace of the High Priest, Jesus was subjected to the humiliation, scorn, and taunts of His enemies. Outside, Peter was accused of being a follower of Jesus. *“Thy speech betrayeth thee”*, so said those warming around the fire as they confronted Simon Peter on the night of our Lord’s trial. Although Peter’s accusers had primary reference to his Galilean accent, thinking it to be a dead giveaway of his association with Jesus (Matthew 26:73; cf. Mark 14:70), Peter immediately demonstrated by his speech — by cursing and swearing — that he was most certainly not a follower of Jesus.

Of course, there is a sense in which our speech betrays our character, our intentions, our attitudes, and our relationship to Jesus. The sweet and pure speech of the child of God reveals a heart in tune to the will of God. The low and base speech

of the world reveals something else. The encouraging, positive words of God’s children indicate an understanding that, above all else, their Father is ruler and sovereign of heaven and earth. The sniping, negative, caustic prattle of some reveals their utter lack of confidence in their brethren, themselves, and their God.

Some years ago, a woman pulled up in front of a preacher’s home, knocked on the door, and began to berate him in such a loud and vulgar manner that the whole neighborhood heard and no doubt blushed. As he broke off this one-sided conversation, he remarked that she talked just like her daddy. “You never knew my daddy!” she screamed. Yet, he did. Her speech had betrayed her (John 8:44).

If, before we spoke, we would only remember that people will judge our spirituality and commitment to the Lord by what

ENDURANCE

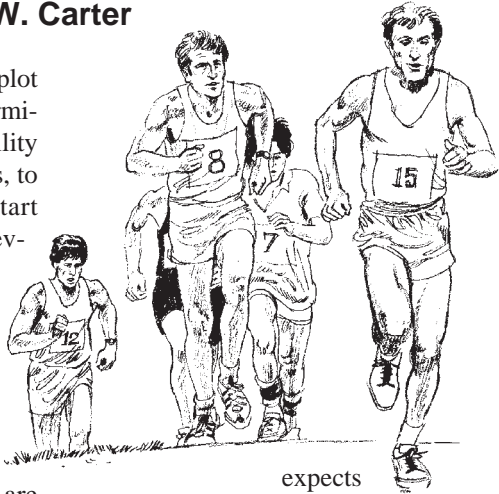
Jack W. Carter

The wisdom to carefully plot the course, the relentless determination to stay on track, the ability to adapt, to ward off the blows, to heal, to have the spunk to start again and to never stop believing that there is a finish line is the spiritual assignment of every Christian.

I have lost count of the number of Christian people I have known who have fallen somewhere along the way. The reasons for their falling are myriad and the result constant. However, to fall along the way is to fail, and unless there is enough of a spark to rise again, the failure is final.

Failing to reach a goal is something all of us do within the span of our lives, but to even imagine that we might fail to reach THE goal must be something our minds will not tolerate for a moment.

Every reason humanity has offered for spiritual failure is unacceptable to God. God



expects us to succeed — He has seen to it that every provision for our success has been supplied. Every trial, every blow, every obstacle, every insult, every confrontation with misdirection is absolutely invalid as an excuse for failure.

We entertain a lot of silly notions in our lifetime, but the notion that spiritual failure for any reason is justifiable has to be the most absurd notion of all.

“Blessed is the man who endures — when he has withstood the test he will receive the crown of life” (James 1:12).



5-MINUTE BIBLE STUDY

Get Ready, the Great One Is Coming

Paula Bates

Mark 1:2-8

It is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My _____ before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You." "The voice of one crying in the _____: 'Prepare the way of the _____; Make His paths straight.'"

_____ came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of _____ for the remission of _____.

Then all the land of _____, and those from _____, went out to him and were all _____ by him in the Jordan River, _____ their sins.

In verse seven John says:

"There comes One after me who is _____ than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose."

Verse 8 "I indeed baptized you with _____, but He will baptize you with the _____."



Baptized	Messenger
Confessing	Wilderness
Verse 7 mightier	Lord
Verse 8 water, Holy Spirit	Repentance
	Sins
	Judea
	Jerusalem

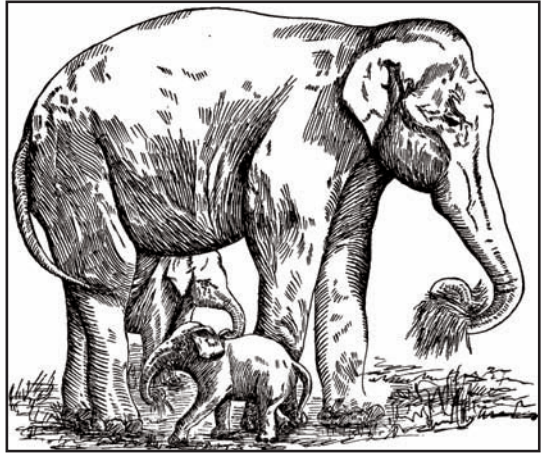
Adolescent Elephants

John Gipson

I was recently captivated by what I saw on television about adolescent elephants. Due to overcrowding, many of these teens were moved to another area. Little did those who ordered the transfer understand what would happen.

Gradually, these adolescents became unruly. They even formed teenage gangs, throwing branches and killing rhinoceroses. The managers of the reserve began taking pictures and developing a “rap sheet” on each offender. Because they had no correction facilities for these juvenile offenders, many of them had to be shot. Such a problem had never developed before.

Finally, those in charge decided these young bull elephants did not know how to behave as elephants. They needed role models and father figures — someone who could bring their testosterone under control. Some big bull elephants were shipped in and immediately the youngsters learned who was in con-



trol. They got whipped into shape in a hurry, and the killing of rhinoceroses ceased.

It's funny what a little adult supervision can do. If I were as wise as Solomon in observing the animal kingdom, I might come to some conclusion about the importance of male supervision and discipline when it comes to human adolescents. I might even be tempted to say, “*The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother*” (Proverbs 29:15). †

John Gipson works with the Windsong Church of Christ in Little Rock, Arkansas, U.S.A.

Christian Fatherhood

Dwight Fuqua

Manhood is under attack in our culture. We are confronted with extremes ranging from effeminacy to machismo. The mutilation of the male-female roles has left many with a sexual identity crisis. The role and responsibilities of the man in the home often go unfulfilled. Women often are forced into the male arena because husbands are lethargic. The male, dominant role (where the husband/father is head of the home) is decreasing.

Our social trends are a great challenge to Christian men — those who would be leaders of their homes. The husband is to be the head of the wife. *“For the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is savior of the body”* (Ephesians 5:23). Additionally, Christian men face the challenge of being godly fathers. *“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of*

the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). We need fathers like Abraham. The Lord said, *“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment”* (Genesis 18:19).

We need fathers who will do more than provide “stuff” for their children. While providing for them physically is important (1 Timothy 5:8), spiritual provision must be paramount. Many give their children everything to live with and little to live for! We need fathers to teach their children God’s Word (Deuteronomy 6:7). We need fathers to train their children in the way of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6). We need fathers to exhort, comfort, and charge their children (1 Thessalonians 2:11). We need fathers to correct their children (Proverbs 3:12) and keep them in subjection (1 Timothy 3:4).

“If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?”
Luke 11:11,12

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

MORE “REAL” MEN

Stan Mitchell

“And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them” (Mark 11:16).

Recently, I saw a bumper sticker that read: **“Real men love Jesus.”** The sentiment impressed me because there is such confusion over the role of men in society today.

Jesus was a real man. He possessed a moral strength that shames every “wanna-be” tough guy out there. So, what does a real man do?

- ✿ A real man is strong enough to protect his children, and gentle enough to hold them in his arms.
- ✿ A real man does honest work for honest pay.
- ✿ A real man will pray on his knees in the sight of his children.
- ✿ A real man will return good for evil at the work place, in the church, and at home.
- ✿ A real man will teach his son to be gentle, and his daughter to be strong.
- ✿ A real man respects the elderly.
- ✿ A real man doesn’t cheat his boss, his friends, or his wife.
- ✿ A real man brings his family to worship, and teaches his children God’s way.
- ✿ A real man forgives.
- ✿ A real man builds, whether it’s tables and walls, or the church. He knows that anyone can heap mockery and derision on another’s efforts; he will lend a helping hand.
- ✿ A real man listens to children.
- ✿ A real man will admit when he is wrong, and take responsibility.
- ✿ A real man learns humility; a weak man thinks he knows it all.
- ✿ A real man takes God at His word.
- ✿ And, most importantly, **a real man loves Jesus.** †

Stan Mitchell is a teacher at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, TN, USA.

A Spiritual Makeover

I went to the beauty parlor to
look for a spiritual makeover,
But the lady said, “What you
need I cannot offer.”

Then I went to a clothing
store to get refashioned,
and the lady said, “The latest
fashions are nice,
But what I have cannot suf-
fice.”

So then I went to a profes-
sional designer to get my spirit
restored.

The man said, “There have
been hordes
Wanting this but I knew
something was amiss
when you came, so listen to
this.

You want a makeover—a
specific one surely you must be
making fun.

You must know
That a nice pink bow,
Will not work at all.
Who you need is someone
who won’t fall
Down from a bridge if it
cracks,
But one who knows all the
facts.

Our heavenly Lord is the only

One
To call on with matters such
as this.

It is not your clothes or your
hair

Or a dress that needs
repaired.

It is your soul that needs
restored

To the Lord.

He will give you the grandest
makeover of all

In summer, winter, spring or
fall.

He’s the one to call,
So don’t hesitate;

You know you can’t wait.”

A spiritual makeover is a
requirement that we all need.
It will start with a good deed.

Then we shall be with our
Lord,

And walk with him who
holds the mighty sword
With the breastplate of right-
eousness,

And loving-kindness.

The Lord will give a spiritual
makeover for those in need
Who are like a dying spiritual
seed.

He will make you bloom
Through the sinful gloom.”

— **Sarah B. Smith**

PROVERBS 17:22



A woman truck driver decided to get a dog for protection. As she inspected a likely candidate, the trainer told her, “He doesn’t like men”. “Perfect”, she thought, and took the dog.

The next day two men in a parking lot approached her, and she watched to see how her canine bodyguard would react.

Sure enough — the trainer wasn’t kidding! As the men got closer, *the dog ran under the nearest car!*



My young grandson called the other day to wish me a happy

birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him, “Sixty-two.”

He thought for a moment, and then he asked, “Did you start at one?”



There’s just a whole lot of money that is tainted. ‘Taint yours and ‘taint mine.

A man was bragging at the company water cooler about his children’s world travels: one son was teaching in Bolivia, another was working in southern Italy, and his daughter was completing a year-long research project in India.



A co-worker’s quip, however, stopped him short. “What is it about you,” he asked, “that makes your kids want to get so far away?”



Why didn’t the mother



PROVERBS 17:22

potato want her daughter to marry the famous newscaster? Because he was a commontater.



It just seems that when you've seen one shopping center you've seen a mall.

You may not have given it much thought, but computers and people have something in common: the first sign of old age is loss of memory.

You should know that you are a lousy cook when your husband refers to the smoke detector as the oven timer.



Several women appeared in court, each accusing the others of causing the trouble they were having in the apartment building where they lived.

The women were arguing noisily even in the courtroom. The judge banged his gavel to

quiet them and said, "We are going to do this in an orderly manner. I can't listen to all of you at once, so I'll hear the oldest first."

The case was dismissed for lack of testimony.

A group of kindergarten students were being lead on a tour through a hospital, and this conversation between one of the little girls and an x-ray technician was overheard:

"Have you ever broken a bone?" he asked.



"Yes," the girl replied.

"Did it hurt?"

"No."

"Really? Which bone did you break?"

"My sister's arm."

A third grade class was doing some spelling drills. The teacher asked Tommy if he could spell "before." Tommy stood up and said, "Before" — b-e-p-h-o-r." The



HEY YOU KIDS



Have you ever been dealing with someone, maybe a friend, who just never seemed to get it right? I'm not talking about a clumsy person or even someone who was just dumb; no I'm talking about someone who will lie and try to cover it up, or who is always going back on promises, who seems to be always making the wrong choices. Have you wondered, "Why are these people that way?" I would like to take a look into that now and bring some interesting facts to light.

Have you seen the movie, "The Wizard of Oz"? You know that story with Dorothy and her little dog, the Tin Man, the Lion and Scarecrow, and

Reaching Out

PFC Alex Gibson

how they set off to see the Wizard to fix all their problems. However, along the way they meet the Wicked Witch of the West. This character is the root of a lot of trouble in Oz, and she does nothing but cause trouble for our heroes. With her green skin, evil laugh, and army of flying monkeys, she comes across as a person you'd not want to be with. But it is this very person I'd like to focus on. You see there is a background story to the Wicked Witch. It's told in the play "Wicked". In the play we learn that she was born from a lecherous affair, that all her life she was looked down on and shunned. Add to that, her opposite character — Glenda the good — was a friend of hers who was immensely popular. As the story develops, the Wicked Witch is an outcast who tries to help people, but her efforts backfire when others misunderstand. This causes her to be hated, and when she reaches a breaking point, she decides that if everyone says she's wicked then she'd best live up to the reputation. And, thus, the Wicked Witch was born.

HEY YOU KIDS

What's important to notice here is that not all the fault was actually hers. Alphabet (who became the wicked witch) was, from the beginning, a lonely girl whose life was full of hard breaks that shaped her into what she became. Knowing the background story changes your entire outlook on the cast of "The Wizard of Oz".

So what does this have to do with us as Christians? Think with me a minute. The bad kids you and I may know didn't usually start that way; in fact a lot of them were either raised in bad situations or were "loners" — outsiders, outcasts — as children and young people, and, like the witch, their circumstances warped them.

All of us have the need to be accepted and encouraged. The greatest source of our direction in life should come from God and His Word, but it's also important to have meaningful relationships with our peers. The entire point I'm making here is that, as Christians, we need to reach out to others so that they can see God's love through us.

This is not loving the popular and pleasant — not that there's anything wrong with that — but, instead, loving the outcasts, the same thing Christ did on earth. He went to eat with people who were lonely and broken, those the world had rejected. Why did Jesus pick these people?

Because they were the ones who needed Him.

As Christians, I encourage you to reach out to the people around you who are stand-offish or keep to themselves, the ones who don't seem to have many friends. And don't do it out of "charity" but out of a genuine desire to get to know them and to show them some interest. And if they should try to reject you at first, it's more than likely just because they're not used to people giving them attention, or they may think you're trying to make fun of them. But don't give up on people like that just because the world has. They desperately need love and attention in the shaping of their lives. I know this because I was in that boat for a long time, and were it not for some stubborn friends of mine I would not be the same person I am today.

It is a simple lesson I'm giving you, but it follows the command to 'love your neighbor as yourself', and to preach the Gospel, the good news, to every living thing. So get out there and just be a friend to those who are in need. Show them some Christian love, and before too long, they'll see a faint gleam of heaven to be sure. Now go get to it!

If you guys have any feedback, my email is zexI@hotmail.com †

Alex Gibson is currently in the US Army, stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

HEY YOU KIDS

Sunday or “Funday”?

Chase Surrell

I have good parents and I believe they did a good job raising me. Maybe they did not do everything perfectly, but they were still good parents. One thing they taught me was that Sunday was important, and it was the day to go worship God.

One year I made the all-stars baseball team. My dad was so proud of me and what I had accomplished. I remember the coach telling the team our first game would be on Sunday. Immediately, I was sad because I knew my father would not allow me to miss worship to go to a baseball game. No matter how much I pleaded with him, I was not allowed to miss church services.



Today, things are very different, relative to the Lord’s Day. Sunday has become to many people “Funday”. Sunday has been attacked by shopping. Businesses now stay open 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Sunday shopping appeals to the materialism that is found in our culture.

Secondly, Sunday has become a time for sports. For many years, professional sports games have been on Sundays. Now our children are playing ball in Little League games on Sunday.

Thirdly, we have become selfish with our Sundays. “I want to do what I want to do” is the thinking of many people. Instead of worshiping God on His day, people would rather sleep in, watch TV, go hunting or fishing or play golf.

Notice that all of this focuses on *self*.

I hope Sunday is important to us. The first day of the week should be honored by God’s children. After all, the apostles broke bread on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Also, the Lord’s people were told to give on the first day of the week (1Corinthians 16:1,2). The first day of the week was the day Christ arose from the dead and appeared to several individuals. Therefore, let us respect the Lord’s Day, for when we do this, we show respect for God and His son. †

Chase Surrell is the youth minister with the Christian Chapel Church of Christ in Amory, Mississippi, USA.

How to Grow Closer to God

Dale Grissom

I. Bible Study

- A. Study to show ourselves approved unto God (2 Timothy 2:15)
- B. God speaks to us through His Word
- C. Learn to obey God's commandments
- D. Come to know His love (John 3:16; Romans 8:35-39)
- E. Learn to respect God

II. Meditation

- A. Dismiss trivial things from our minds
- B. Concentrate on thinking about God
- C. God is love
- D. He has blessed us
- E. Think about His promises

III. Prayer

- A. Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- B. Pray unselfish prayers
- C. God is love

- D. He has blessed us
- E. Think about His promises

IV. Worship

- A. In song (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16)
- B. In prayer for one another (Matthew 5:44)
- C. Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7)
- D. Teaching and Bible study; go preach and teach (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16)
- E. Giving (1 Corinthians 16:2)



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

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD LOST SOULS

Romans 1:14-17

Jess W. Nutter

INTRODUCTION

1. Our five word title contains three words that are suspect in the world today.
 - A. "Responsibility." It's getting difficult to find one who wants it.
 - B. "Souls." A materialistic world denies man's dual nature.
 - C. "Lost." How can something non-existent be lost or saved?
 2. However, Jesus affirmed all three mean He asked, *"What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"* Matthew 16:26.
1. upon it. Matthew 16:26.
 2. The value God placed upon it. John 3:16; Romans 5:8.
 3. The price of our redemption. 1 Peter 1:18,19.
 4. Value your soul. Don't "lose" it!

II. WHO IS LOST?

1. The disobedient. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 1 Peter 4:17.
2. The unfaithful. Luke 9:62; 1 Corinthians 10:1-12; 2 Peter 2:20.
3. False teachers and all deceived by them. 2 Peter 2:1,2; Matthew 7:21-23.
4. The "Lukewarm" and indifferent. Revelation 3:16.

I. THE VALUE OF THE SOUL

1. The value Christ placed

III. RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD THE LOST

1. God has done his part.

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 2 Peter 3:9.

2. Paul felt he was “Debtor” to them. Romans 1:14.
3. The “Lost, themselves”, have a responsibility. Acts 2:40 (“Save yourselves” means “You must do all the Lord requires of you.”)

IV. THE CHRISTIAN’S RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD THE LOST

1. Preach the Gospel to them. Mark 16:15,16; Romans 1:15,16.
 - A. Publicly. Acts 20:20. (At worship service from pulpit, Radio, TV, Newspapers, magazines, etc.)
 - B. Privately. Acts 20:20. (From house to house, cottage meetings, tracts, inviting to services, etc.).



Steve Higginbotham

Warmer months are quickly approaching, and with the warm weather comes the challenge of modesty. I’m not going to lecture or give you my “opinion”. I don’t want to set your standards for you, and tell you what you can or cannot wear. All I want to do is ask you to read God’s Word and then answer a question.

First, God’s Word.

- Thou shalt not commit adultery (Exodus 20:14).
- Thou shalt not covet your neighbor’s wife (Exodus 20:17).
- Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has committed adultery in his heart (Matthew 5:28).
- Abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11).
- Flee youthful lust (2 Timothy 2:22).
- Possess your vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passionate lusts (1 Thessalonians 4:4,5).
- Women should dress in modest apparel, dress that professes one’s godliness (1 Timothy 2:9,10).
- Let us resolve not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way (Romans 14:13).

Now then, the question:

- Does the way you dress cause the opposite sex to think you are “chaste”, or does it cause them to think you want to be “chased”?

Honest self-evaluation, virtue and an unrelenting desire to be pleasing to God is all that is needed, and modesty will take care of itself. †

“Come Boldly to the Throne of Grace”

Leon Cole

The purpose of the Book of Hebrews was to encourage Jewish Christians not to revert to the Law of Moses, but to remain faithful to Christ. There are great spiritual blessings found in reading it as we see the superiority of Christ and His covenant over Moses and the old covenant.

At chapter 4, verse 16, a very timely admonition is given. We are urged to come “*boldly*” — not fearfully or hesitatingly, but to come “*boldly to the throne of grace*”.

There are at least four reasons why we need to come to that throne. **First, the Word of God convinces us of the need.** In this same fourth chapter and verse 12 it is said, “*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” God’s Word has the power to cut into a person. We become convinced of sin. We are encouraged by it to come to the throne of grace.

A second reason for coming to

this throne is found at verse 13 of chapter 4. “*And there is no creature hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*” All of our acts, thoughts, and motives are known to God. It is quite possible to deceive our companions. Most of us have been fooled by others. Trickery and deception are common, but nobody deceives God. For that reason, we should come to the throne of grace.

A third motivation to come to that throne is because of the priesthood of Christ. “*For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*” (Hebrews 4:15).

Few of us like to look inwardly and examine ourselves. When we honestly appraise ourselves, we must sadly admit we have fallen far short of what the Lord would have us to be. How comforting, then, it is to know that Christ understands! He was tempted in all points like as we are. He was hungry and thirsty. He knows what it is to carry a heavy

TEXTUAL STUDIES

burden. He has been tempted by the allure and glamour of the world, along with pride. He has walked the same road we walk. Others may criticize and find fault as we fail to meet the standard, but Jesus knows. He did not sin, but He understands, and that's an incentive to come to the throne.

At the throne we find two things: mercy and grace. Mercy points to our shortcomings; grace points toward our needs and gives us strength. Paul went to

that throne seeking relief from a "*thorn in the flesh*". He was informed, "*My grace is sufficient for you*". An old farmer prayed, "Lord, my load is heavier than I can carry. Either lift my load or strengthen my back." That's what happens when we approach the throne. He will either lift my load or strengthen my back. His grace is sufficient for me.

Across each of our pathways there lie trials, sorrows, unknown cares, and lurking temptations. However, by coming boldly to

Beyond This Vale of Tears

Beyond this vale of tears,
A land of beauty lies;
A place where doubts and fears
Will nevermore arise.
The grandeur now concealed,
The glory rich and rare;
Will one day be revealed,
His saints to share.

A vale now lies between,
That none can yet behold;
The beauty of that scene,
The streets of shining gold.
The tree of life grows there.
We'll rest beneath its shade;
The flowers blooming are rare,
Will never fade.

— Ollie Heath Ballou

TEXTUAL STUDIES

Acts (Written by Luke)

Ken Tyler

Introduction: The Book of Acts is an extremely important book because it gives us the beginning and history of the Lord's church from about 33 A.D. to 62 A.D.

Peter, who had been given the keys to open the church (Matthew 16:18,19), is the main character of the first twelve chapters, and Paul is the main character of chapters thirteen through twenty-eight.

Acts has rightly been called "the book of conversions" because we read of thousands obeying the Gospel of Christ. The book closes with Paul in prison at Rome, where he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. In Colossians 1:23, he said the Gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven. Truly these brethren "turned the world upside down" for Christ

(Acts 17:6).

The book records three missionary journeys of the apostle Paul. The first is in Acts 13:14; the second begins in Acts 15:36 and ends in 18:22; the third begins in 18:23 and ends in 21:12. Following is a list of the main events in each chapter of the Book of Acts.

1. The Ascension of Christ
2. The beginning of the church
3. The healing of the lame man
4. Peter and John are apprehended in Jerusalem
5. The first sin in the church — Ananias and Sapphira
6. The first problem in the church — seven special servants appointed (Stephen, Phillip, etc.)
7. The stoning of Stephen
8. The conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch
9. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus

TEXTUAL STUDIES

10. The conversion of Cornelius and his household (the first Gentiles)
11. The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch
12. Herod killed James, the brother of John
13. The beginning of first missionary journey
14. Elders appointed at Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch
15. The Jerusalem conference on circumcision
16. The conversion of the Philippian jailor and his household
17. Paul's famous sermon on Mars' Hill in Athens
18. The conversion of the Corinthians
19. The rebaptism of the twelve at Ephesus
20. The Lord's Supper on Sunday, the first day of the week
21. Paul is taken captive in Jerusalem
22. Paul's defense in Jerusalem
23. The conspiracy of more than

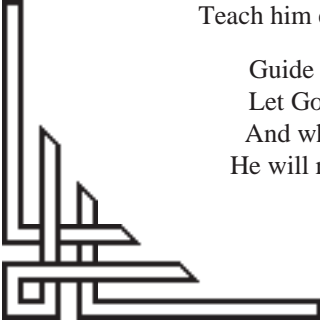


TEACH A LITTLE CHILD

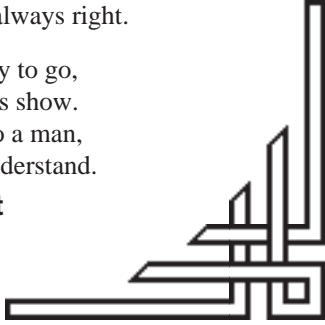


Take a little child's hand,
Lead him through God's land,
Teach him to love and not to hate,
Dear parents, don't wait too late.

Teach that little one to pray,
And to read the Bible every day.
Study with him day and night,
Teach him everything isn't always right.



Guide him in God's way to go,
Let God's light to others show.
And when he grows into a man,
He will remember and understand.



Edna Barnett

TEXTUAL STUDIES

Analysis of First Corinthians 15:58

Randy Kea

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).



The context:

This passage is the concluding statement and admonition of the great resurrection chapter (1 Corinthians 15). Based upon all of the profound truths concerning the resurrection of the dead, Paul exhorts the brethren at Corinth to be faithful.

“steadfast”

This word means “seated, settled, or fixed”. Faithful Christians stay the course. They are not hot one day and then cold the next. You can count on faithful Christians. They are constant in their behavior.

TEXTUAL STUDIES

“unmovable”

This word is found in Colossians 1:23, “be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.”

“always”

We are Christians everyday, not just on Sunday. We need to be faithful even when it is not convenient. We are Christians at all times and under all circumstances.

“abounding”

The word means to be “abundantly furnished” (Vine). We are to be “rich” in good works and “ready” unto every good work (Titus 3:1; 2 Timothy 6:18).

“the work of the Lord”

The Lord’s work should have priority in our lives. His kingdom should come first (Matthew 6:33). Jesus said, “*I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work*”

(John 9:4).

“ye know”

The Bible is a book of absolutes. There is no guesswork in the Scriptures. What we do for the Lord will not be in vain. If we stay faithful, no one can take our reward (John 10:27,28). We know that we *know* (1 John 2:3).

“in the Lord”

All faithful service to God today must be “in Christ”. No one can be faithful to God outside of Jesus. To be in Christ is to be in His church (Galatians 1:22; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22, 23).
†

Randy Kea is a Gospel preacher working with the church of Christ in Forest Park, Georgia, USA.

Without GOD, our week would be: Sinday, Mournday, Tearsday, Wasteday, Thirstday, Fightday & Shatterday.

Some Very Important Questions

Basil Overton

Asking questions can be a great learning device. Jesus, the Master Teacher, often asked questions. He did so to focus the attention of people on great truths.

Some Penetrating Questions

The following are questions for members of churches, which if one answers correctly, can be very helpful in his appraising properly his religious status or the condition of his soul. I plead with all who belong to a church to please study carefully the questions and the answers and observations regarding each. In the following questions, by “the church to which you belong,” I do not mean the congregation of which you are a member, but I mean the religious body of which the congregation of which you are a member is a part.

1. Does one have to be a member of the church to which you belong in order to receive the remission of or forgiveness of his sins? If you answer the foregoing “Yes”, and your answer is right, it follows that everyone will have to be in the church you are in to have the remission of his sins. For this reason, the answer of some to the question may be “No”.
2. Does one have to be a member of the church to which you belong in order to live the Christian life? If your answer to this question is “Yes”, and your answer is right, it follows that everyone who lives the Christian life will have to be in the church you are in. For this reason, the answer of some may be “No”.
3. Does one have to be in the church to which you belong to go to heaven? If your answer to this question is “Yes”, and you are right, it follows that all who go to heaven will have to be in the church you are in. For this reason, some may answer the question “No”.
4. What could one possibly want religiously more than (1) the remission of his sins, (2) to live the Christian life, and (3) to go to heaven after he dies? I do not think there is anything one could possibly want in addition to these. Do you? If there is something else one would want or could have religiously, what is it?
5. If your answer to questions 1, 2 and 3 above is “No”, and if your answer

BIBLE QUESTIONS

to question 4 is that there is nothing else one could want religiously than (1) remission of sins, (2) to live the Christian life, and (3) to go to heaven, then there is another very serious question you should ponder and that is, “Why are you in the church you are in?” If you can have (1) remission of sins, (2) live the Christian life, and (3) go to heaven after you die without having to be in the church you are in, why are you in that church?

If you were to try to get me to be in the church you are in, and tell me I did not have to be in it (1) to have remission of sins, (2) to live the Christian life, and (3) to go to heaven after I die, I do not believe you could persuade me to become a member of the church of which you are a member! Why should I be a member of it?

The Church in the New Testament

If one knew nothing about any kind of church, and if he did not know the Bible existed, and

then he found a Bible and read and followed it, to what church would he belong? In the Bible one learns that those who received the remission of sins through the power of the blood of Christ were added to something called the church in the New Testament.

According to the New Testament, those who were Christians were in the church we read about in that book. So, the New Testament teaches that those who lived the Christian life were those who were members of the church we read about in the New Testament. The New Testament also teaches that those who had the one hope — the hope of going to heaven — were those who were in the one body of Christ that the New Testament calls “the church”.

All one has to do to see that the foregoing truths are taught in the New Testament is to just read carefully the New Testament. Try it and see for yourself, if you have not done so. If one reads carefully the New Testament, he will see that it teaches that one has to be in the church he reads about in the New Testament in order (1) to have the remission of

EXAMPLES

Ardron Hinton

“Be an example of the believers in speech, in conduct, in life, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

An Example in Joppa

Dorcas: *“This woman was full of good deeds and charitable works which she did” (Acts 9:36).*

This disciple of Christ had a talent for sewing which she had used extensively for others. Her concern for those less fortunate, especially needy widows in the church, had not been limited to words. Physical evidence for her concern was abundant. She was one



whose departure from the land of the living was viewed as a great loss. She had set an example in life that would be felt even beyond her death. As her Master before her had done, Dorcas *“went about doing good”*. We should wish to be remembered the same way.

An Example in Caesarea

Cornelius: *“A devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave*

BIBLE CHARACTERS

alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always" (Acts 10:2).

This Roman army officer was not a likely prospect for such a description. As a man of authority in the army of a pagan empire, a low level of spirituality would have been less surprising than what we actually see. God chose Cornelius to be the first among Gentiles disciples of Christ because He found the man to be exceptional. We need to notice these favorable characteristics individually.

1. **Devout** — This describes a person who is properly reverent and respectful of God and of whatever God views as being holy.
2. **God-fearing** — This indicates an awareness of God's majesty and power, which causes a person to avoid displeasing or offending Him.
3. **Generous** — This word needs no special comment, but we should note that "alms" refers to gifts given to those who cannot return the favor.
4. **Prayerful** — Prayer, as the Bible teaches it, reflects personal faith, a sense of gratitude, an awareness of need, and a right attitude toward God.

Cornelius not only had such qualities personally, but also led his

household in this same noble direction. If we follow the example of Cornelius, we shall know exactly what God thinks of our attitudes and actions.

An Example in Antioch

Barnabas: "*They sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch*" (Acts 11:22).

This native of Cyprus was a man on a mission, a man who had proved himself to be both worthy and capable during earlier service in the Lord's church in Jerusalem. The report of this mission in Acts 11 shows us the worthy example Barnabas set. Verse 23 tells us that he "*encouraged them all*" to be determined in heart to be faithful.

In verses 24 and 25, we learn of his special role in preparing Paul to fulfill Christ's plan for him as the chosen apostle to the Gentiles. Verse 26 makes it evident that he was willing to invest his time and effort in the building up and the strengthening of the Antioch church. His influence and presence were a blessing to Antioch. This was no accident. Verse 24 describes Barnabas as "*a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith*". †

Ardron Hinton preaches for the Lord's church in Roosevelt, Oklahoma, USA.

BIBLE CHARACTERS

The Commendation Of Phebe

Vance Hutton

When the Book of Romans was being written, Paul had already traveled very much, but never to Rome. It is amazing how many people were at Rome that Paul knew. Somewhere along the way, Paul had met these folks. They were very special to him. He mentions several of these people in Romans 16. Think of folks who have been special to us or have been precious to the church as a whole. Paul mentions such people in this chapter.

One such person is going to Rome on some type of business as Romans 16 begins. Her name is Phebe. This woman is precious. She has been special to Paul. He commends her to the church at Rome. All congregations of God's people love visitors. The church at Rome is about to have a visitor. She will be a breath of fresh air; she will be an oasis in the desert. O what a blessing awaits the church at Rome! Her name meant "radiant as

the moon". She surely reflected the light of Christ to the world around her. Many think that possibly she was taking the letter of Romans to the church at Rome while she was there. If so, what a blessing this was to them and to all since! Please notice Paul's commendation of her (Romans 16:1,2).

1. PHEBE WAS A SISTER:

She was a Christian. Phebe was a member of God's family. She was a member of the Lord's church. The church is God's family (1 Timothy 3:15). She was possibly converted when Paul preached at Corinth in Acts 18:8 when many obeyed the Gospel. Cenchrea is nearby. All in this family (the church) are God's children (Galatians 3:26), and all God's children are brothers and sisters in Christ. She was part of a spiritual family where all are important and none are superior.

BIBLE CHARACTERS

2. PHEBE WAS A SERVANT: She was a servant in the sense that every Christian is a servant or a deacon. She was not a deaconess in the sense of holding an office in the church. Phebe served in the church at Cenchrea. A servant pleasing to God will be humble and faithful. Jesus humbled Himself as a servant (Philippians 2:6-8). Christ was faithful (Hebrews 3:6). Such servants are glad to do whatever needs doing in the church and are not desirous of praise. Are we anxious to do what we can (Mark 14:8) for the Lord's cause? Let us find our place and be servants like Phebe. The church needs servants.

3. PHEBE WAS A SAINT: We become saints like Phebe did when we obey the Gospel (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Christians are saints and members of the church of our Lord (1 Corinthians 1:2). There was a way that she should be received because

the members at Rome were saints and because Phebe was a saint. This dear saint had come out from among the world (2 Corinthians 6:17,18). There was a way of life for her that could be described as that of a saint. God's will is for us to be saints like Phebe (1 Thessalonians 4:3,4).

4. PHEBE WAS A SUCCOURER: Phebe was a special helper to Paul and to many others. She used her resources to help others. Think of the Good Samaritan or of Dorcas doing the same as Phebe. Our Lord was referred to as a succourer in Hebrews 2:14-18. Let us be willing to serve others in love (Galatians 5:13). Let us bear the burdens of others when possible and necessary (Galatians 6:2). Let us not grow weary in doing well (Galatians 6:9,10).

Here was a lady coming to a big, big city. Christians at Rome were to assist in whatever need

**THE CHURCH
NEEDS MORE
SERVANTS LIKE PHEBE!**

A Shade Tree Judge

Betty Tucker

The Israelites were God's chosen people, but they wavered in their conviction and faith. Over and over we read, "*The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord.*"

They would come back to God, and He would raise up a prophet, or a judge, or a king to lead them. For a while, they would be faithful, and then the cycle would repeat itself.

One such instance is recorded in Judges 4. Israel had once again fallen into apostasy. They were oppressed by Jabin, king of Canaan, for 120 years (verse 2).

This time, the Lord appointed a woman to save them. She was Deborah, and she already served as a judge in Israel (verse 4). She held court under the Palm of Deborah (verse 5). Deborah was also a prophetess. Only she and Samuel served in these dual capacities.

A Woman of Courage

We read in verse 6 that Deborah called Barak, commander of the forces of Israel, to give him instruc-



tions from the Lord. He was to take 10,000 men to Mt. Tabor to confront the mighty army of Jabin.

Thus, the plot was outlined that would bring about the conquest of the enemy. God promised to deliver Jabin to them (verse 7). This was no small task for the Israelites. Deborah's judgment seat was near Bethel, about 90 miles from Mt. Tabor ... a long Journey to be made either on foot or riding beasts of burden.

Barak, the seasoned warrior, agreed to the proposed plan only on

BIBLE CHARACTERS

condition that Deborah accompany them (verse 8). Some might think that Barak had little faith and was afraid to go without Deborah. However, he is listed among the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11:32.

The Israelite general knew that the people identified Deborah with God. He knew that their victory depended upon their obedience to God's plan. He needed Deborah's presence, her inspiring moral leadership to get the people on God's side.

Deborah did not falter in her answer. She said simply, "*I will surely go with you*" (verse 9). She told Barak that he would receive no honor for the battle, for Sisera, captain of the Canaanite forces, would be overcome by a woman (verse 9).

Divine Intervention

Sisera spread his 900 chariots of iron across the Valley of the River Kishon (verse 13). How imposing that must have looked to those men waiting on the hillside!

The Israelites were outnumbered, and their weapons were no match for the mighty chariots.

However, they had a superior position on the slopes of Mt. Tabor, and they had Deborah, Barak, and God on their side!

At Deborah's command, Barak and his small army rushed down the mountainside. Looking at Deborah and Barak's song of praise in chapter 5, we learn that God sent a fierce storm, and the River Kishon overflowed its banks. Sisera's heavy tanks bogged down and were useless. His entire army was destroyed ... all except Sisera.

The Velvet Glove

General Sisera fled to the tent of Jael (Judges 4:17). She was the wife of Heber, who had befriended Jabin's army. However, Jael did not share Heber's loyalties to Jabin.

She welcomed Sisera to her tent. The battle-weary soldier lay down to rest. Jael gave him some milk and covered him with a blanket (verse 19). When Sisera slept, Jael drove a tent peg through his temple and killed him (verse 21).

Deborah's prophesy that Sisera would fall at the hand of a woman became reality. When the battle was over and Sisera lay



How do you measure up?

“Behold, happy is the man
whom God corrects; There-
fore do not despise the
chastening of the Al-
mighty. For He bruises,
but He binds up; He
wounds, but His hands
make whole.”

Job 5:17-18

FROM THE HEART OF ...

World Evangelism



WHAT IS “WORLD EVANGELISM”?

Betty (J.C.) Choate

The Voice of Truth International came on the scene in 1993 without, actually, a proper introduction. Many of you who receive it may not know much or anything about its origins, its founder, its purpose, or its greater involvement in the task of “world evangelism”.

In past issues of the magazine, we’ve featured on the front cover and in the “From the Heart of...” article the existence and work of churches of Christ in numerous countries of the world. We’ve also featured various major works of churches of Christ, both in the US and abroad. Now, in this 60th issue, we are celebrating by telling our own story. I hope it will be an encouragement to our readers.

IT IS A SERVICE

Sometimes people have asked, “Who’s the head of “World Evangelism”? And we answer, “No one is the president or the head.” We are not an organization. We are not a “missionary society” in disguise. We are *a service*, offered by a team of brothers and sisters who pool their talents

FROM THE HEART OF ...

to accomplish what we can of what needs to be done.

Actually, in the office we have two sayings: **(1) Nobody is allowed to have any pride.** Whatever is written or done is open to suggestions and improvement by others of the team, so that the end product can be the best and most effective work we can do. This means that any article or layout design is read and re-read by other team members, and we — and our readers — benefit from the red suggestion/correction marks on the paper. We also discuss various aspects of the overall program of work, sharing ideas and reaching conclusions together on the best way to move forward.

The second saying is that we are all **“Executive Peons”!** An executive, as you know, is the important person who gets to do important things; a peon is the lowly person who does the most menial of tasks. In the same day I’ve written a check to pay for the printing of this magazine, and also had the honor of packaging magazines and hauling them to the post office — and cleaning the office bathroom and pulling weeds in the flower beds in front of the building. All of it is necessary work that somebody has to do.

So, you can see that, as a team, we believe in **working ... together ...** without **false pride.** That’s a good formula for success in any situation, and especially in the kingdom of God.

SO, WHO ARE WE?

We are a team of individuals, sponsoring elderships and churches, supporters in the States, and a host of men and churches overseas. Some of us live in Winona, MS, where the initial work originated. The team began in 1960 when **J.C. and I** left located preaching to begin raising funds to do mission work in Pakistan, and later in Sri Lanka and India. We made Winona our stateside home, and the program on this side of the world has grown along with the foreign work.

In 2007, **Jerry and Paula Bates** moved to Winona to carry part of the office load and to make needed visits with team members overseas. Later that fall, **Louis and Bonnie Rushmore** also joined us. They, too, divide their time between writing/printing/office responsibilities and teaching opportunities overseas.

The **Wayne Barrier family** of Florence, AL became a part of the team in the mid-80s, and their children have grown up and into their aspects of involvement. Wayne takes leadership in the Bible training schools overseas, and also in the **World Evangelism School of Missions**, a two-year course in the practicalities of preparation to be missionaries.

FROM THE HEART OF ...



L to R: Louis and Bonnie Rushmore, under the sponsorship of the Vermillion, Ohio church; Betty Choate, sponsored by the Liberty Church of Christ in Dennis, MS; Paula and Jerry Bates, overseen by the elders of the Strickland Church of Christ in Corinth, MS.



Janet and Wayne Barrier, under the sponsorship of the Double Springs, Alabama church of Christ, pictured here on a jungle trail in Myanmar (Burma).

FROM THE HEART OF ...



Byron and Gay Nichols,
*Editor of the English edi-
tion of The Voice of Truth
International.*



Rafael Barrantes, newly se-
lected Spanish Editor.
Top Right: **Joshua Gootam,**
Telugu Editor in India.



P.R. Swamy, Tamil
Editor in India.

In 1992, **Byron and Gay Nichols** of Springfield, MO, joined us. Byron serves as the Editor of the English edition of *The Voice of Truth International*. **Rafael Barrantes**, of Jackson, TN, is the Editor of the Spanish edition. **Joshua Gootam**, of Kakinada, edits the Telugu edition in Andhra Pradesh, India, and **P.R. Swamy**, of Bangalore, is Editor of the Tamil edition, also in India.

Eulene Ramsey and **Barbara Oliver** worked with us from 1994 until 2007, helping to achieve many goals in layout and printing. Eulene typeset numerous manuscripts, as well as doing the essential bookkeeping in the office. Barbara did layout work and was particularly helpful in the preparation of the Spanish issues of *The Voice of Truth International*.

And even though **Dennis and Sharon Larson**, of Cary, NC are involved in other things, we have to count them as part of the “team” because of their participation in the Bible training school in Myanmar, and Dennis’ expert help with computer programming to fit our specific needs. We are thankful, also, for the cooperative efforts of **Colin and Ellen McKee** (translation and printing for Indonesia), **Loy and Debra Mitchell** (longtime workers in Zimbabwe, and participant as one of the teachers in our mission training school), **James and Barbara Jones** (Restoration Radio Network) and **L.T. and Joanne Gurganus**, teachers in the Bible school in Myanmar, as well as in Ukraine and other places.

FROM THE HEART OF ...



In 1965 the elders of the Liberty Church of Christ in Dennis, MS accepted the responsibility of overseeing the Choates' work.

LEADERSHIP

Rather than working under a “board” and being categorized as a “missionary society”, each family is overseen by individual congregations. In 1965, the elders of the **Liberty Church of Christ in Dennis, MS** began sponsoring our work in India, and even though there have been changes in the eldership due to deaths, the Liberty church has stood behind us all of these years. Immediately following J.C.’s death in February of 2008, they sent word to all supporters that they would continue with the work. Their vision and dedication made the difference between the cessation of our “world evangelism” effort and its continuation. We thank God for the faithfulness of these men and of the congregation behind them. We are thankful, too, for the wonderful backing of the **Double Springs church** (Barriers), the **Strickland church** (Bates), and the **Vermillion church** (Rushmores). These brethren, with many supporters scattered over the country, are the enablers, making possible whatever is done.

SO, WHAT DO WE DO?

The words “world evangelism” identify our purpose. In all the facets of the work, we are striving to obey Jesus’ command to “*Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature*” (Mark 16:15).

THE USE OF MASS MEDIA

There is a great need for families to go to foreign fields, to make those

FROM THE HEART OF ...

places their home, and to devote their lives to longterm work. In the first phase of our efforts, we lived more than four years in Karachi, Pakistan, beginning the church there. Then we worked in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and moved from there in 1968 to New Delhi, India, establishing the church in those cities. Many others worked in other parts of India, making converts, and starting and maturing churches. Those years of living long-term on the field were happy and productive and vital to the success of the work currently being done. Men were converted then that have made today's program possible. The local churches throughout Asia have grown also, and matured, so that they are a great part of the outreach tool, no longer dependent solely on the energies of the foreign missionaries. In truth, mission work is a different task today than it was fifty years ago, because of mature churches and Christians through whom we may extend our outreach.

PRINTED MATERIALS

Gospel meetings and home studies are



*Sunny David, Hindi
radio speaker, New
Delhi*



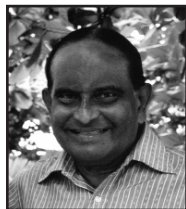
*One wall of the archives room in Winona, with a few
copies of books and magazines that have been
printed in the US and overseas.*

necessary to make converts, but we were convinced that mass media tools had to be used for general sowing of the seed of God's Word. From the beginning, J.C. got into the printing of Bible courses, monthly magazines, and study books. Many, many thousands of copies of these materials have been published and continue to be distributed free of charge in many countries of the world.

RADIO/LITERATURE/TV

In 1975, Radio Sri Lanka, the "Giant of Asia", opened its powerful shortwave radio station to reli-

FROM THE HEART OF ...



**Reggie
Gnasundaram,**
Colombo, Sri
Lanka



Pilemon Rajah,
Tamil, India, TV



B. Arjunan,
Tamil, India,
radio, TV



**Reuben
Emperado,**
Cebu,
Philippines,
radio

gious broadcasting. What a door of opportunity! Now, preachers of God's Word could go into homes all over India and into much of Asia by radio. Providentially, brother **Reggie Gnasundaram** was in Colombo, able to manage the contracts.

Because the church in India had more than ten years of growth, there were capable local preachers whom J.C. asked to be speakers on the programs. The attitude of some was, "Who? Us? *Christians*, being radio speakers? Only politicians and film stars are on the radio!"

However, they were eager to try; so a routine of recording was developed. They would come, turn by turn, to Delhi, and J.C. would record their lessons — long hours of tedious work, blended with fellowship and discussions about evangelism and opportunities in each place. This was also the time when decisions were made regarding the printing of monthly magazines, Bible courses and books being offered free of charge on the programs. **The combination of radio outreach, followed by literature, and then personal studies with those who wanted to be baptized, proved to be an effective method of evangelism.**

When the programs were begun, there was no money to pay for them; so J.C. spent three months in the States, raising funds; three months in India, dealing with the recording and



Joshua Gootam,
Telugu, India;
radio and TV



P.R. Swamy,
Tamil, India;
radio



S. Rajanayagam,
Tamil, India; TV



P.K. Varghese,
Malayalam,
India; radio, TV

FROM THE HEART OF ...

the literature; three months raising funds, and three months back in India with the recording. This was not the way we had planned to do our mission work — separated half of each year — but it became our life for the next twenty years, until our children were grown and I could accompany him wherever he went.

WORLD EVANGELISM BUILDING

In 1993, having totally outgrown our house as an office space, we asked brethren to help us build an 8,000 square foot, two-story building, to house the literature we were printing, as well as to provide the critically needed work space. Numerous brethren donated time to do the construction, among them, **Andy Akins**, **G.W. Tanner**, **Clyde Burton**, and **Clayton Malone**, as well as myself. What an exciting day it was when we could move in and use that space for the needs of the overall work, and especially for the writing



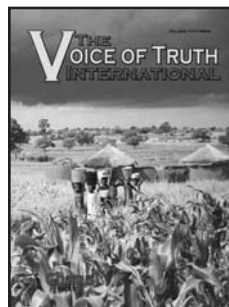
*Preparing boxes of **The Voice of Truth International** for mailing.*

and layout of books and literature for use in evangelism! In the subsequent fifteen years, many thousands of books have gone out to all parts of the world from 600 Devine Street.

FROM THE HEART OF ...

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

That same year we began to print *The Voice of Truth International*. J.C. was the Editor until his death, and then **Byron Nichols** was asked to serve in that capacity. A quarterly magazine, about 20,000 copies are used by brethren and congregations in the States. Their subscription money enables us to print and ship more than 20,000 copies of each issue to eighty foreign countries, free of charge. The letters we receive, particularly from brethren overseas, telling of their effective use of the magazine in their outreach and of their need for a continued supply, keep us working to enlarge its use among brethren everywhere.



Volume 59

We are thrilled that the Spanish edition of *The Voice of Truth International*, of which seven issues have been printed, is now in the process of being revived. Brother **Rafael Barrantes** is the Editor. In India, there is a Telugu edition (**Joshua Gootam**, Editor) and a Tamil edition (**P.R. Swamy**, Editor).

BIBLE TRAINING SCHOOLS

In the process of the travels back and forth, J.C. stopped in various countries to see the work and to be of help wherever he could. Literature was printed in **Sri Lanka**, in **Singapore**, in the **Philippines**, in **Indonesia**, in **East Malaysia**, and some in **Africa**. Radio programs were funded in the **Philippines** and in **Indonesia**, as well as numerous programs for **Africa** for several years. A close relationship was developed with **Reuben Emperado** in the **Philippines** and with **Thomas Koh** in **East Malaysia**.

By this time, **Wayne Barrier** was accompanying J.C. on some of his trips. They encouraged Reuben in his short-term preacher training schools, and Wayne found support for the construction of facilities in Cebu City for a long-term school. They also encouraged **Kyaw Sein**, **George Achard**, and the other Christians in Yangon, Myanmar to develop a spring and fall five-week training program for Christians and non-Christians throughout Burma. The first of these schools was conducted in 1997. Many students from areas off-limits to foreigners have been trained through these schools, and many have been converted, strengthening the church throughout **Myanmar**. A permanent facility has been built in Hmawbi, near Yangon, and other schools

FROM THE HEART OF ...



Men converted through the radio programs and in Bangalore for a training session.

have been begun in several other places in the country. Evangelism, through one of the Burmese preachers, is being done also in **Tibet** and mainland **China**.

P.R. Swamy conducts training sessions in **Bangalore** for the men with whom he works. **Vinay David** is in the process of starting a similar school in **New Delhi**. Plans are underway to have a secular/Bible school in **Colombo, Sri Lanka**, with **Harold and Lilani Thomas** taking the lead, following the death of brother **Reggie Gnanasundaram** in June of 2007.

Thomas Koh has seen rapid growth in the past year of the churches with which he is working, in areas around **Kuching, East Malaysia**. They have also begun a training school to better equip the men among the converts.

Coupled with the mass evangelism tools of radio, literature, and TV, these training schools are enabling local Christians to build stronger churches and to evangelize their own people.

WORLD EVANGELISM SCHOOL OF MISSIONS

For two years before J.C.'s death, **Wayne Barrier** took the lead bringing to fruition a mission training school for prospective American workers that had long been J.C.'s dream. The team met in Winona each month for two days, planning and developing the program. Numerous long-term missionary couples attended these meetings and had input in the curriculum. We are now in the first year of monthly classes for about a dozen students, giving training in practical preparation for missions: Personal Preparation; The Biblical Pattern for Work; World Religions; Sponsor/Supporters Relationships; Raising Funds; Reporting; Choosing a Field; etc.

FROM THE HEART OF ...



Gordon Hogan, teaching in one of the mission training sessions in Winona.

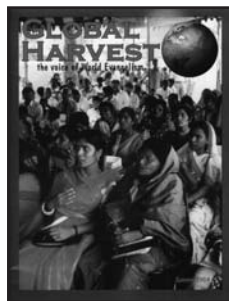
The two-day sessions are planned so that students may go on with their other work while attending. The course is designed to cover two years, and there is no charge for the classes. Housing and food are supplied for teachers and students.

In each session, the basic curriculum is covered by a team member, with a visiting long-term missionary also teaching

classes and discussing questions. The fellowship and the focus on the primary mission of the Lord's church are a great encouragement to everyone who participates.

GLOBAL HARVEST

In addition to seeing the need for a teaching magazine, particularly in third world countries where little literature is available, J.C. was convinced that the American church needed a mission news magazine to better acquaint it with it's Number One Job: evangelizing the world. To that end, *Global Harvest* was begun. However, the battle with cancer prevented the continuation of that dream. Now, Volume 2 has been prepared for the printer, and we pray that the response to it will enable us to make it a scheduled publication in the years to come.



*Volume 1 of
Global Harvest*

WORLD EVANGELISM AND GOSPEL GAZETTE WEBSITES

We have a WorldEvangelism.org website, with more information about the overall program and the folks involved in it. It is our intention to carry the issues of **The Voice of Truth International**, **Global Harvest**, and many of our study books on the website, as we have the time to prepare them for internet publication.

FROM THE HEART OF ...

We do have an online bookstore, and we encourage you to go there and see the books that are available. Our first goal in any publication is to print only biblically sound materials, written by faithful brethren.

Of great help to Bible students is Louis Rushmore's **Gospel Gazette Online**. For eleven years he has edited this online magazine. Thousands of articles are archived and can be searched for guidance and answers to most biblical questions. Foreign brethren who have access to a computer will find this site to be invaluable.



MAY MISSION RETREAT

Each year in May, we encourage missionaries and Christians interested in evangelism to gather with us at **Maywood Bible Camp** for three days of spiritual feasting. If you would like to be

on our list to receive information about this retreat, email us at wbarrier@HiWAAAY.net.

OTHER FUTURE WORK

Two other major projects are planned for future development: Graded literature, **“Into God’s World”**, for Bible class use; and a seminar/DVD program for training Christians to evangelize. Much help is needed in order to get these works underway. We are looking for volunteers. Please call us at 662-283-1192 to let us know what you can do.

THE DEATH OF J.C. CHOATE

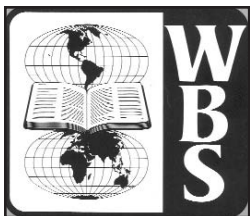
Most of you who read this would know that J.C. passed from this life on February 1, 2008, from colon cancer. To the end, his concern was for the future of the evangelistic work he loved and to which he had devoted his life. It is a source of spiritual joy to all of us that everything continues without interruption, and that the scope of the work itself is growing. Thank God!

YOU CAN HELP

As we said, this is a team effort. Perhaps you can help by arranging appointments with churches, or you may move to Winona, to become a part of the team or a student, preparing for future overseas work. Join us! †

THERE IS NO TIME FOR APATHY IN CHURCHES OF CHRIST!

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONSIDER THESE GOOD WORKS:
to subscribe, support, publicize, benefit from,
and take advantage of what our brethren
are doing to spread the message of Christ.



Are you looking for an opportunity to be a branch, bearing fruit to God? *World Bible School teachers* have that opportunity. Why not call the WBS office (512-345-8190) or email wbsinfo@wbschool.org for full information. Make your time count for souls!

GOSPEL BROADCASTING NETWORK

Support the satellite cable network being developed by churches of Christ for the preaching of the Gospel throughout the USA and ultimately to the world. Send your contribution to GBN, P. O. Box 23604, Chattanooga, TN 37422. Log on to WWW.GBNTV.ORG



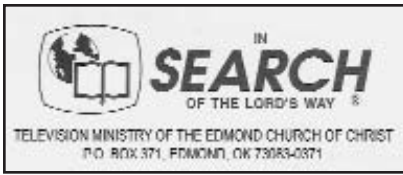
“Current Issues from a Distinctly Christian Point of View” — the theme of “Think” magazine. Phone: 866-313-6474;

email: mail@focuspress.org; Website: www.focuspress.org. Brad Harrub, Jim Palmer and Dewayne Bryant offer faith-building seminars.



For pennies per household you can spread the Gospel in your city through this

doctrinally-sound bi-monthly paper. It will even be personalized with the local church's address and news. Phone: 256-435-9356; email: info@jvillecoc.org; Website: www.HousetoHouse.com



SEARCH TV programs are on **76** broadcast TV stations, **41** broadcast radio stations, **192** cable systems, and **5** satellite systems (**Dish, GBN, American Life, DirecTV, and INSP**). Benefit from the

lessons, support the preaching of the Gospel. **Phone: 800-321-8633; email: search@searchtv.org; Website: www.searchtv.org.**



The oldest magazine in the brotherhood, Editor Neil Anderson has kept **The Gospel Advocate** true

to the biblical message, with attention to current issues and needs in the church. You will benefit greatly from its monthly infusion of truth. **Phone: 800-251-8446; Website: www.gospeladvocate.com**

Restoration Radio Network International, led by Roy Beasley, uses short-wave radio to reach people in English, French, Philippine dialects, Spanish and Arabic, with a well-organized **“Apollos Follow-Up Program”**. **Phone: 615 833-4771; Website: www.rrii.org.** Help reach the masses through radio.



Gospel Gazette Online is a monthly Gospel magazine on the Internet, begun by Louis and Bonnie Rushmore in 1999. Thousands of articles, written by faithful Christians, are archived and selectable through the onsite search engine. **GGO** is free to users throughout the world, and it is visited regularly even in parts of the world that remain virtually inaccessible to missionaries. (**www.gospelgazette.com**)



Apologetics Press has been the voice in churches of Christ for many years, speaking clearly, loudly, and biblically on subjects pertaining to **Creation/Evolution, the Godhead, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and many other vital questions of faith.** Dave Miller



has produced excellent DVDs on **The Silencing of God in America and The Quran.** **Phone: 800-234-8558; Website: www.ApologeticsPress.org.**

What Can You Do to Help Spread the Word?

For just a moment, put yourself in a village in Africa, or even in a large city in India, or in the jungles of South America. You are an immortal soul, living in a perishing body. How will you knowledgeably prepare for the judgment and eternity that awaits us all?

❖ Does the church of Christ exist in your community, so that you can hear the Gospel preached? For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.

❖ Is there a source for buying Bibles in your community? Though the Bible has been translated into most languages, villages seldom have bookstores. For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.

❖ If you have found the Truth and are a Christian, is there a bookstore from which you can order additional study materials? For most people in the world, the answer is “No”.

So you are born into an unbelieving home, you live according to the religion of your parents, you grow old, and you die, thrust into eternity to meet the God you never knew. What unspeakable tragedy! The scenario is LIFE for the majority of the people of the world.

Through mass media — radio programs, TV, and literature — we are doing all we can to bring God’s Word to people who have so little hope. Half of each issue of *The Voice of Truth International* is sent free of charge to churches and individuals who have few or no other study materials, to aid in their spiritual growth. We ask brethren to help us with \$35 a month, to cover the \$8,000 postage bill incurred with every issue. Will you please have mercy on these souls and help us share the saving Gospel with them?

To help with this particular need, please send your checks to

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL
Box 72, Winona, MS 38967



To speed up your announcement that you want to help,
call us at 662-283-1192 or send your E-Mail to

Choate@WorldEvangelism.org

Website: WorldEvangelism.org

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 (58 issues) for the reduced price of \$2.00 per copy. ***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. Or you may send one payment of \$300.00 per year for four issues. This will help us to send more copies to the mission fields.

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

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 . . .

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

Attn: Byron Nichols

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

Box 11218

Springfield, MO 65808

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

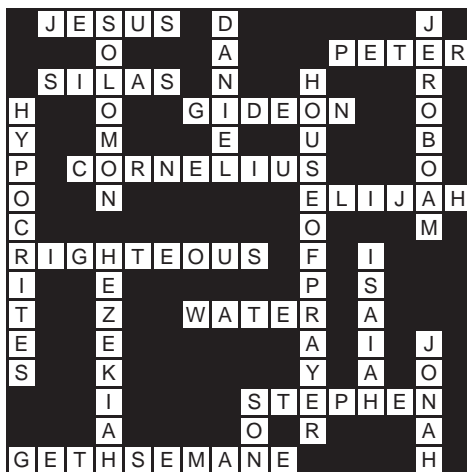


ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search (from page 19)

1. Faith.
2. Be pronounced righteous or not guilty.
3. Our Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Jesus Christ.
5. Tribulation. Tribulation produces perseverance or patience, which will further produce hope.
6. Because God's love has been "poured out in our hearts."
7. Helpless and lost in sin.
8. At the proper time or at just the right time, according to God's plan.
9. A righteous man.
10. When we were still sinners.
11. It proves his love for us.
12. Death of God's Son, Jesus.
13. Make friends again.
14. By the life of Jesus.

Bible Find (from page 53)



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

A SAMPLING OF DETAILS ABOUT THE WORK BEING DONE:

New Delhi

Workers - Sunny David, Francis David, Vinay David

Radio - Hindi language

Literature - Hindi - *Bible Teacher, One True Church of the Bible*, other books and pamphlets, English - *Bible Teacher, other books and pamphlets*

North India Institute of Biblical Studies

Batlagundu

Workers - Arjunan

Radio & TV - Tamil language

Literature - Tamil - monthly magazine, other books & pamphlets

India

Bangalore

Workers - P.R. Swamy, Vernon Douglass

Radio - Tamil language

Literature - Tamil - *The Voice of Truth International, One True Church of the Bible*, other books & pamphlets

Bangalore Institute of Biblical Studies

Kakinada

Workers - Joshua & Kabia Gootam

TV & Radio - Telugu language

Literature - Telugu - *The Voice of Truth International*, other books & pamphlets; Oriya Magazine (monthly)

Kangayam

Worker - Rajanayagam

TV & Radio - Tamil language

Literature - Tamil - monthly magazine, other books and pamphlets

Madurai

Worker - Philomen Rajah

TV - Tamil language

Literature - Tamil - *Gracious Word* monthly magazine, other books and pamphlets, Braille - *The Voice of Truth International*; Audio magazine

J.C. School of Evangelism

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Workers - Harold & Lilani Thomas

Radio - Contracts

Bible School - (plans underway)

Trivandrum

Workers - PK

Varghese

TV & Radio -

Malayalam language

Literature - Malayalam - monthly magazine, other book & pamphlets