

VOLUME FORTY-SIX

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL



The Gambia

I AM A SOLDIER

I am a soldier in the army of my God. Jesus is my commanding officer. The Bible is my code of conduct. I am a volunteer in this army, and I am enlisted for eternity. I will either retire in this army at the Lord's return or die in this army, but I will not get out, be talked out, or pushed out. **I am a soldier.**



I am a soldier. I am not a baby. I do not need to be pampered, petted, pumped up, picked up. **I am a soldier.**

No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me, or lure me. **I am a soldier.**

No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards, candy, or give me handouts. **I am a soldier.**

I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for, or catered to. I am committed. **I am a soldier.**

I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around. I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside. I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit. **I am a soldier.**

When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing. If I end up with nothing, I will still come out ahead. I will win!

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Timothy 2:3,4).

— Author Unknown

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

STAFF:

Editor-in-Chief: J.C. Choate

Managing Editor: Byron Nichols

Layout Editors: Betty Burton Choate
Barbara A. Oliver

Typesetting: Gay Nichols
Eulene Ramsey

Art Consultant: Steven B. Choate

Computer Consultant: Bradley S. Choate

Foreign Editions:

All-Africa
All-Asia
Australia
Brazil
Caribbean
Ghana
India
Kenya
Liberia
Malawi
Malaysia
Nepal
New Zealand
Nigeria

Northeast India
Pacific Islands
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Singapore
Sri Lanka
South Africa
Tanzania
Trinidad and Tobago
United Kingdom
Zimbabwe

SPANISH EDITION:

Managing Editor, Translator: John Thiesen

TELUGU EDITION:

Managing Editor, Translator: Joshua Gootam

TAMIL EDITION:

Managing Editor, Translator: P.R. Swamy

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.

STAFF WRITERS:

George Akpabli	Parker Henderson
Felix O. Aniamalu	Gordon Hogan
Robert Ball	Wayne Jackson
Rex Banks	Ancil Jenkins
Wayne Barrier	Jerry Jenkins
Roy Beasley	Jimmy Jividen
Mike Benson	Dayton Keesee
Maxie B. Boren	Dalton Key
T. Pierce Brown	Michael L. King
Ron Bryant	Mack Lyon
Charles Burch	Joe Magee
Jack W. Carter	J. Randal Matheny
Ron Carter	Cecil May, Jr.
Frank Chesser	Colin McKee
Betty Burton Choate	Jane McWhorter
Jeril Cline	Hollis Miller
Glenn Colley	Loy Mitchell
Owen Cosgrove	Stan Mitchell
Sunny David	Kevin L. Moore
Jerry L. Davidson	Peter Mostert
Hans Dederscheck	Bill Nicks
David Deffenbaugh	Don L. Norwood
Clarence DeLoach, Jr.	Owen D. Olbricht
Roger Dickson	Basil Overton
Bill Dillon	Frances Parr
Bobby G. Dockery	Max Patterson
Hershel Dyer	David Pharr
Earl Edwards	G.F. Raines
Demar Elam	David Riley
Reuben Emperado	Stanley Sayers
James Farris	Robert Swain
Allan E. Flaxman	David Tarbet
Royce Frederick	John Thiesen
Albert Gardner	J.A. Thornton
E. Claude Gardner	Betty Tucker
R. Gnanasundaram	Ken Tyler
Gary C. Hampton	Don W. Walker
Jack Harriman	R.H. Tex Williams

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

J.C. Choate (editor) P.O. Box 72, Winona, MS 38967, USA; Phone: 662-283-1192; Fax: 1-419-791-0505; E-mail address: Choate@WorldEvangelism.org.

THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU

(ROMANS 16:16).



What Must I Do to Be Saved?

Jesus' answer is:

"He who **believes** and **is baptized** will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

But some people question:

"What if the person is out in the desert someplace, where there is no water?"

By a happy coincidence, we have a Biblical example of such a case:

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.

Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?"

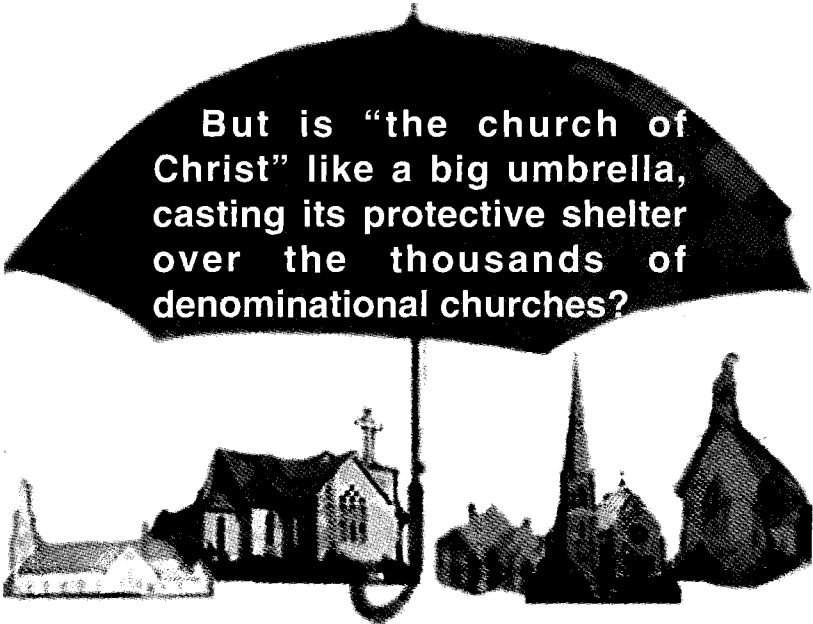
Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

*Even in a desert there is water
if a person really wants to obey God!*

**Jesus said, "...I will build *My church*"
(Matthew 16:18).**

**WHEN PEOPLE READ OF "THE CHURCH" IN THE
BIBLE, THEY THINK THIS INCLUDES ALL CHURCHES,
THAT TOGETHER THEY MAKE UP THE
"GREAT SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF CHRIST".**



**But is "the church of
Christ" like a big umbrella,
casting its protective shelter
over the thousands of
denominational churches?**

**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST WAS BEGUN IN JERUSALEM IN AD
33, BY CHRIST HIMSELF. IT WEARS THE NAME OF CHRIST,
TEACHES ONE GOSPEL, PRACTICES ONE WAY OF WORSHIP,
AND USES THE BIBLE ALONE AS ITS GUIDE.**

**THE THINGS THAT DISTINGUISH ONE DENOMINATION FROM
ANOTHER ARE THE DIFFERENT NAMES THEY WEAR, THE DIF-
FERENT GOSPELS THEY TEACH, THE DIFFERENT WAYS THEY
WORSHIP, AND THE DIFFERENT CREEDS THEY FOLLOW.**

**THESE SAME DIFFERENCES DISTINGUISH THEM FROM THE
CHURCH OF CHRIST. NO, THERE IS NO MAGIC UMBRELLA
THAT BLINDS GOD TO THE DIVISION OF DENOMINATIONALISM.**



WHERE ARE WE GOING?

J. C. Choate
Editor-in-Chief

If you have children, you must be concerned about what they are hearing and seeing through most of the TV channels and cable networks. The humanists and evolutionists of the world are making an all-out effort to push their agenda, the promotion of evolution and unbelief. They are constantly running popular programs about the earth and prehistoric animals, in which they talk with great surety about these things having existed hundreds of millions of years ago.

Secular schools, colleges, and universities are teaching the theory of evolution while refusing to allow the Biblical story of creation to be taught. Many colleges and university professors make fun of the Bible and intimidate Christians by saying that those who believe its “mythical stories” are ignorant and are living in an unenlightened past.

If you go to a National Park where the emphasis is on the canyons, rock formations, and wild life, the guide or the literature that is given out will tell of the millions of years that it took for those things to reach this point and for the animals to evolve from their primitive origins.

There is an all-out effort to take religion out of schools and public life. Those who are doing this are hiding behind the argument of keeping a separation of church and State. This is ridiculous. No one wants a state religion or state church, but we do want people who are dealing with the affairs of State to allow individuals, schools, and

those in government to recognize a Creator in practice and to promote moral principles. This has always been done in the past, and our people have been benefited as a result, but by taking these principles and rights away, our society is weakened and our country is left to suffer the consequences.

The last two years I was in High School I led the school in a daily devotional, reading a portion of scripture and leading a prayer each morning. There was no criticism of that practice, and no one was hurt by it. Rather, the school was made better because of an inclusion of a consciousness of God and of moral values. But such devotionals are totally banned now. Why? Because atheists and those who want to be rid of the Judaeo-Christian values objected. Are our schools better off because no mention of God is allowed now? No; they are much worse off. In this age of atheistic influence, they are hotbeds of drugs, immorality, violence, and indiscipline.

The political and judicial climate has reached the point where the general feeling is that **religious people should not be allowed any voice in who leads our country or in policies and laws that are made.** Everyone has “rights” except believers in Christ, and even though they are *the large majority in a democratic population*, they should not have any rights at all. In our recent presidential election the media was surprised and shocked to find that enough of the general public was concerned about the moral principles of our country that their vote made a major difference in the outcome of the election. They found that people were alarmed about drugs, abortion, same-sex marriage, homosexuality, stem-cell research, and so on, and that — surprisingly — they voted for the man who upheld their religious views.

Today we are faced with an overwhelming number who are having children out of wedlock and who are living together without marriage. TV programs are filled with violence and sex — to the point that even animal shows focus continually on mating and killing. All of this corruption in the media is done in the name of freedom of speech, but the only ones who seem to have freedom of speech are those who are using the freedom to misuse and abuse their privileges to the destruction of the country.

Our President and America are questioned and hated throughout the world. Why? Much of this animosity has been brought about by our own newspapers, international cable networks, books, television, and cinema productions finding fault, condemning, and questioning the honesty of our own government. In most countries, such people would be arrested and tried for treason.

In our own country — and through media voices heard around the world — members of congress, ultra-liberal people, and even former presidents speak of our President as though he is a liar and criminal. Where are the statesmen who should step forward to promote respect among our citizens and in the world?

Parents, keep a check on what your children are being taught in school and what they are seeing on TV. Even further, be sure that you are teaching them the Biblical origin of man and all things that exist. Many parents are concerned enough about the lack of morals and discipline that they have taken their children out of public schools to educate them at home. This is a sad but enlightening commentary on the state of our educational system. It has largely been taken over by humanists and is being used as a tool for atheism.

Brethren, we had better wake up to what is going on around us and throughout our country and the world. We are living in troubled times, in a culture that is becoming more ungodly and corrupt every day. It is time for us as Christians to take a stand for the Lord and His teaching in order to save our families and to do our utmost to reach those around us, bringing the message of the gospel to our own people and to the rest of the world.

If we are indifferent about these matters, more concerned about having a better job, getting more pay, having more material things, and enjoying the good life, we may wake up one of these days to find that it is too late to lift a hand in protest. Our nation will be lost, and we and our families will likely be lost along with it because of our indifference.

†



DO WE REALLY WANT JESUS TO BE OUR LORD?

Byron Nichols

I believe that the great majority of people realize that we are in need of a savior, one who can somehow free us from our guilt, and hopefully one who can also provide us with real hope for the future. Even without a great deal of diligent study of the Bible, many conclude that they

are ready to let Jesus Christ be their Savior.

This is wonderful, isn't it? Would to God that all people everywhere would be willing to let Jesus be their Savior. A fact that is frequently and easily overlooked, however, is that in order for Jesus to be our **Savior**, we must first make Him our **Lord**.

It thus becomes essential that we understand the term "Lord" as it is applied to Jesus in the New Testament. The Greek New Testament uses more than one word which is translated into English as "lord", but *kurios* is by far the most commonly used Greek word used with reference to Jesus. This word appears more than 600 times in the New Testament.

A look into the background and secular usage of the word *kurios* will be helpful in determining its significance when it is used with reference to Christ. This was the normal word of respect in addressing other people, much like the English word "sir". This same word was used with reference to an "owner", such as the owner of a vineyard. It was also used for our English word "master", identifying the master or owner, as opposed to a servant or slave (Matthew 6:24; Ephesians 6:5,9). This was the word used to designate the "head of a household". Furthermore, this was at times a legal term, identifying one as a "guardian", one who was responsible for providing help and protection to those in need of such.

Surely the picture is beginning to take on a rather definite form, allowing us to see that this word "lord" was a word of authority. This becomes

ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL

even more apparent as we see three additional uses of the word. Over time this word became the accepted title of the Roman Emperor; it was used more and more with the names of gods and goddesses; in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) *kurios* is used for the name of Jehovah, thus becoming in essence the name of God. It is said that it is used this way at least 150 times in the New Testament.

It appears that "Lord" became the great title for Jesus. The scholar W. E. Vine stated that, with only two exceptions, after Christ's resurrection there is no record of *kurios* ever being used again by believers in addressing anyone but God and Jesus.

With all of this background information in mind, when we refer to Jesus as Lord, or when we call Him Lord, we ought to mean that we acknowledge that we are His servants or slaves and that He is our Master, that He is the owner, the possessor of our life. We ought to think of Him as the Help of the helpless and the Guardian of those in need of protection. Calling Him Lord ought to mean that we accept Him as having authority over all our life, our thoughts, and our actions. In calling Him Lord we need to be thinking of Jesus as the King and Emperor to whom we owe and give

our homage, our allegiance, and our loyalty.

The question with which you and I must deal is this — "Does Jesus really mean all of this to us?" As was stated earlier, Jesus cannot be our Savior unless we are willing to make Him our Lord. Someone has stated, "If Christ is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all." What a sobering thought!

Lord is not a word to be used flippantly or irreverently. Notice the importance that Jesus attached to the word and its proper usage when He asked, "*And why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say*" (Luke 6:46)? Again, Jesus declared in Matthew 7:21, "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.*" Jesus thus makes it clear that if He is to become the Lord of our life we must treat Him as Lord, and not just address Him as Lord.

Jesus is Lord, whether we accept and acknowledge Him as such or not. We can either confess Him and make Him our Lord now in this life, or we can delay until it is too late to do anything but confess Him as Lord (Philippians 2:9-11). May we choose to make Him our Lord now, rather than wait and be forced to only acknowledge Him as Lord. †

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GOD

Don't Tell God What to Do	J. Randal Matheny	11
Apostolic Declarations...	Armando A. Alaniz	13
Jesus Was Born of a Virgin	Max Patterson	15

EVIDENCES

Asking Three Questions...	Maxie B. Boren	17
The Heavens Are Speaking	John Gipson	19
Scientist Denies Evolution	Greg Tidwell	20

THE WORD OF GOD

A Famine in the Land	Hugo McCord	21
Consequences of Going Back...	Albert Gardner	23
Studying and Growing...	George Akpabli	25

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

The Second Coming of Christ	Jimmy Young	28
Fundamental Truths for Motivating...	Wayne Barrier	30

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

How Does One Become a "Saint"?	Hoyt Hathcock	32
Dangers Confronting Us	Dwight Fuqua	33
Anyone for Truth?	David Deffenbaugh	35

SALVATION

Drifting Away	Rex Banks	37
You May Know	Bobby Key	39
There Is Only One Gospel...	Sunny David	40

THE CHURCH

A Salute-Free Zone	Bruce Tucker	42
Bible School	David Riley	44

CHURCH GROWTH

The Secret to Waking....	John-Mark Wilson	47
--------------------------	------------------------	----

CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

Souls!!!	Ken Tyler	50
Goals in Evangelism	Dale Grissom	51

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

Satan's Work to Destroy...	Charles Box	53
Be Careful Little Eyes	Kevin Cauley	57
Kidnapped by Perversion	Jack English	59
Rich and Dead	Marilyn Peoples	61
Remorse	Emmett Smith	63
The Goose Story		65

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

Marriage Is Honorable Dalton Key	66
Successful Parenting Jack Harriman	67
A Parent Prays	69

PROVERBS 17:22

Humor	70
-------------	----

WORSHIP

Is It Important How I Worship God? Aubrey Smith	72
Prayer Mike Johnson	75
I Will Not Listen Will Hanstein	76

COMFORT AND REASSURANCE

Why Tsunamis? Steven K. Guy	77
If Foundations Are Destroyed Cecil May, Jr.	79
Dealing with Discouragement David Pharr	81
When I Was a Child Barbara A. Oliver	83

BIBLE QUESTIONS

Questions Relating to the Holy Spirit E. Claude Gardner	84
What About the Sabbath? Randy Kea	85
What Does It Mean...? Grady Miller	87
How Do I Worship God?	88
Obeys the Gospel Mike Benson	89

BIBLE CHARACTERS

A Last Farewell Betty Tucker	92
One Man's Devotion to Truth Clarence DeLoach, Jr.	94

TEXTUAL STUDIES

For the Joy that Lay Before Him Wayne Jackson	95
Do You Discern the Lord's Body? Dayton Keesee	98

FEATURES, POEMS AND FILLERS

I Am a Soldier Author Unknown	Inside Front
Editorial: Where Are We Going? J.C. Choate	4
Editorial: Do We Really Want Jesus...? Byron Nichols	7
Quick Commentary	27
How Do You Measure Up?	36
Verse Search	46
Who Am I?	91

FROM THE HEART OF ...

The Gambia	Francis Fuah	100
	Isaac K. Daye	102

Don't Tell God What to Do

J. Randal Matheny



False teachers have gone out into the world saying that God has promised to give health and riches to Christians. They teach that God expects us to demand that He fulfill these promises.

But read the Bible carefully. **Never can a human being tell God what to do, how to do it, or when to do it.**

Ahaziah, king of Israel, lay sick on his bed. He sent messengers to find the prophet Elijah. God had said the prophets would guide the kings so they would know His will. Perhaps the king wanted to pressure Elijah to change his prophecy that he would die from his wounds.

The king sent a captain with 50 men to Elijah. When the captain

ordered the prophet to come down from the mountain where he was sitting, fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his men.

King Ahaziah sent another captain with 50 men to retrieve the prophet from his perch. The captain ordered Elijah, "*O man of God, this is the king's order: Come down quickly!*" (2 Kings 1:11, NRSV). The same happened again: the fire of God destroyed the men.

The king sent a third captain with his fifty. This time, however, the official fell on his knees before Elijah and asked him, "*O man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight*" (v. 13).

The angel of the Lord saw the

GOD

humility of this captain. Instead of ordering Elijah in the king's name, he asked for mercy. So the angel told Elijah to go with this third captain. But his prophecy that the king would die remained firm.

This episode shows that no one, not even a king, can manipulate God or His servants. **No one can order God to act or bless or change His mind.**

On the other hand, instead of *requiring something of God*, we must *give attention* to what God *requires of us* (see Micah 6:8).

Moses told the Israelites, "*And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?*" (Deuteronomy 10:12,13, ESV).

In the desert, the people of Israel were unhappy with the manna that God sent from heaven to feed them. They wanted more. "*They tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved*" (Psalm 78:18). God knew it for what it was: rebellion (v. 17). He gave them what they **insisted on having**, and more: meat, and with it, death in the desert.

When Jesus came to the earth, the Jews **demand**ed a miraculous

sign from heaven (1 Corinthians 1:22). But our Lord gave them none, except to point to the sky and mention, from the Old Testament, the sign of Jonah (Matthew 16:1-4).

Jesus taught us to ask in prayer to the Lord, to persevere in our requests, but never to demand anything of God. He taught humility, never arrogance. He gave us His own example of always submitting to the Father's will.

We are but stewards, entrusted with the treasure of the gospel. God requires that we be trustworthy in that work (1 Corinthians 4:2). We cannot even demand to know from God about our creation. "*But you are a mere man. So who are you to talk back to God? Scripture says, 'Can what is made say to the one who made it, 'Why did you make me like this?''*" (Romans 9:20, NIRV). If we should not even question how God has made us, how can we **order** Him to give us what we think we need?

Jesus never promised that God would make us rich or healthy. **Those who demand that God do so incur His wrath.**

Even if we ask humbly of God, we should be careful, for "*From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded*" (Luke 12:48). †

J. Randal Matheny is a missionary working in Brazil. He is the host for www.forthright.net.



Apostolic Declarations on the Deity of Christ

Armando A. Alaniz

The writers of the New Testament unanimously agree when writing on the nature of Jesus. Each one of them presents evidence of the perfect deity of the Lord. The thoughts which they give leave no doubt of the identical essence of Jesus with that of God. Undoubtedly, the apostles demonstrate by their experiences, the education of each one of them at the feet of the Master, and by their inspired words from the Holy Spirit that Jesus is very God. This purpose is clearly seen defined in almost all the pages of the New Testament. That which philosophy could not explain about the "logos", that which heresies could not explain about the nature of Jesus, the apostles define clearly in their epistles. Post-modernism,

like the gnosticism of the second century, tries to unite philosophical thought with the religious. It declares that Jesus is not God, but simply a spiritual superhuman. But what does the Bible say?

"The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2).

"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:18).

"I and my Father are one..."
"The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not;

GOD

but for blasphemy; and because that **thou, being a man, makest thyself God**" (John 10:30,33).

"And Thomas answered and said unto him, **My Lord and my God**" (John 20:28).

"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh **Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen**" (Romans 9:5).

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be **equal with God**" (Philippians 2:6).

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" (Colossians 1:16).

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory**" (1 Timothy 3:16).

"Who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person" (Hebrews 1:3).

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of **God and our Saviour Jesus Christ**" (1 Peter 1:1) †

Armando A. Alaniz is a teacher and academic dean in the Atlantic International Bible Institute in Miami, Florida, USA.

Don't Be Afraid to Fail

To win doesn't always mean to gain,

It is to accept challenges from life,

It is to try, even before defeats... to fight.

It is to persevere, though we may have detours.

To live without struggle is failure.

It is to leave all to "luck",

It is leaving things to "chance",

It is assuring defeat.

To win in life involves believing,

It is having faith put into action.

It is surmounting, going forward, growing.

It is continuing under adverse circumstances.

To be without goals is to be lost.

It is to be adrift, to run aground,

It is failure.

It is to live without meaning.

It is to go through life without power to gain.

If you want power to triumph in life,

You must from today take action,

Don't be afraid to lose in life,

Put your whole heart into what you do

And with God's Help

You will triumph.

— Joel Esparza

Jesus Was Born of a Virgin

Max Patterson

In Matthew 1:23, the New Testament tells us, "*Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son...*" It is just the simple fact that is stated. Mary had never been with a man, not even Joseph. She was pure and chaste, exactly what we would expect from one who was to be the mother of the Son of God.

The virgin birth is a wonderful miracle, a miracle that is incomprehensible to those who do not understand the power of God. After all, it is impossible for a woman to be with child without the aid of a man. This is simply the way it was designed by the Lord from the beginning. There has never been another virgin birth.

There are other statements in the Scripture that support the virgin birth. In Matthew 2:20, Matthew quotes the instructions of the angel to Joseph, after the death of Herod: "*Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Egypt.*" This carefully worded instruction acknowledges the fact that Mary was the mother of Jesus, but Joseph was not the father.

There are occasions in Scripture when Jesus is referred to as the son of Joseph (and Mary), but these were quotes of statements made by those who would naturally think He was the son of Joseph, or cases where Joseph and Mary were thought to be Jesus' parents in the normal, natural sense.

To say in Matthew 2:20 that Mary is the mother of Jesus (but not mention Joseph as the father) is completely consistent with the prophecies of the Old Testament (Isaiah 7:14), as well as those statements made in the New Testament concerning Jesus, that He would be born of a virgin (Matthew 1; Luke 1).

The complete harmony and integrated support of Scripture for Scripture, even in the smallest details, is an evidence of inspiration. In these bold and uncompromising statements we have Heaven's revelation about how the most remarkable man in all the Bible came to be upon the earth. †

Max Patterson lives in Neosho, Missouri, USA, and conducts seminars and classes in various parts of the country.

Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled

**Whenever I am troubled
And lost in deep despair,
I bundle up my heartaches
And go to God in prayer.**

**I tell Him that I'm weary
And grieved and hurting too,
That I'm crushed inside with burdens
And I don't know what to do.**

**But I know He stilled the tempest
And He calmed the angry sea,
And I know that He's my Father —
That He'll do the same for me...**

**So I hush the doubts and questions,
That would rob my soul of peace,
And I wait in quiet stillness
For my anxious fears to cease.**

**How precious just to know Him,
To worship at His feet,
How precious, too, His promises —
Eternal, rich, and sweet!**

**Author Unknown...
Modified and enlarged by
Betty Burton Choate**

Asking Three Questions Commencing with "Why?"

Maxie B. Boren

Why is it that many people will NOT accept the clear and insurmountable evidence of God's existence? After all, *"the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork"* (Psalm 19:1, NKJV) *"For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity..."* (Romans 1:20).

In every flower that blooms, in every bee that gathers nectar and makes honey, in every tree that grows, in every breeze that blows, in every bird that flies, in every star that shines, and in every baby that is born, there is evidence of God's existence! In every raindrop that falls, in every fish that swims, in every ear of corn, in every lion that roars, in every eagle that soars, in every ray of the sun, and in the moon that lights the night, there is proof of the Creator!

The human body alone, with its feet to walk, its hands to work, its ears to hear, its nose to smell, its lungs to breathe, its lips to speak, its eyes to see, and its brain to think is undeniable evidence of a Master Designer and Maker! Thus, the believer declares, *"I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made"* (Psalm 139:14). Yes indeed, the evidence is overwhelming!!! THERE IS A GOD!!!

Everything that exists connotes and denotes an all-powerful and infinitely intelligent, eternal Being the Bible calls God. *"In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1). *"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God"* (Psalm 90:2)! Thus, the apostle Paul urged the people to whom he spoke to turn from *"vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is..."* (Acts 14:15). But in spite of all the evidence, multitudes have *"refused to have God in their knowledge"* (Romans 1:28). For sure, *"the fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'"* (Psalm 14:1).

EVIDENCES

To be plain and forthright, I personally cannot imagine why anyone would choose to ignore and/or deny the evidence and disavow the existence of God! But nonetheless, *I believe the answer is “human pride and intellectualism.”* MANY people are so puffed-up with their inflated egos they just can’t bring themselves to accept One whose thoughts and ways are incalculably superior to their own! Read Isaiah 55:6-9 and THINK!

A second question, closely akin to the first, is this — **Why is it that millions readily embrace the God-less theory of organic evolution which has NOT and CANNOT be proven because IT IS FALSE, and at the same time deny the Biblical account of God’s creative genius and power, concerning which we are surrounded by tons of evidence? The answer is the same as above... “human pride and intellectualism.”** The apostle warned, *“Let no man deceive himself. If any man thinks that he is wise among you in this world, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God”* (1 Corinthians 3:18,19). What such people desperately need to do is *“Humble [themselves] under the mighty hand of God”* (1 Peter 5:6). Someday they will bow before God and confess to Him (Romans 14:11,12), but then it will be too late because at that time those *“that know not God”* and have not obeyed the gospel of Christ shall be banished into everlasting punishment (note 2 Thessalonians 1:8,9).

Lastly, **why has moral sensibility been abandoned by the Federal Judiciary in our country on the subject of abortion?** While Federal Law makes it a crime to destroy a sea turtle’s egg, or an eagle egg, yet the elite Jurists have determined that it is perfectly legal for human babies to be destroyed in the abortion clinic! The abortionists and the activist Judges that have promoted abortion try to salve their consciences by calling the unborn child an “embryo” or “fetus” but, believe me, that “dodge” will not “hold up” before God in judgment, and for certain a judgment day is coming (Acts 17:31)! Ironically, the United States House of Representatives just this past week passed legislation designed to make it criminal for anyone to do hurt to an unborn child in the mother’s womb, which is a step in the right direction. But still, in America today, the mother herself can walk into an abortion clinic and have a so-called doctor abort her baby legally! It is insane and reprehensible! What is the answer to the question, though? Well, *the answer must surely be tied into the two questions preceding, and their answers.* †

Maxie B. Boren is a gospel preacher in Bedford, Texas, USA.

The Heavens Are Speaking

John Gipson

Have you looked at the heavens lately — away from the city and the lights? Have you allowed looking to be transformed into considering? You might be shocked by the results.

According to Robert Strother, “On Christmas Day in 1642 a premature and woefully weak baby boy was born in a stone farmhouse in Lincolnshire, England. The two midwives at the delivery sadly predicted that the tiny infant would not live through the day. And so the baby lived 84 years, and the ‘poor little weak head’ that had to be supported by a special leather collar early in life proved to contain one of the finest scientific brains the world has ever known...His name was Isaac Newton.”

Newton was often at or near the bottom of his class in school, but by age 18 was proving himself a superior student, and an uncle obtained Isaac’s admission to Trinity College, Cambridge. When the Great Plague of 1665-66 broke out, Newton returned to his mother’s farm to “meditate”. He considered the heavens, wondered about the force that kept the moon in her orbit, and he worked out the laws of both motion and universal gravita-

tion by the time he was 24. He also invented a new mathematical system to prove his theories: calculus. In his book **Principia**, Newton spelled out the mechanics of our universe. He saw that every particle in the universe has a gravitational attraction for every other particle in proportion to the product of the masses of the particles and in inverse proportion to the square of their distances. Newton reasoned that this wonderful uniformity in the planetary system must “be allowed the effect of choice” by a Supreme Creator. Above the heavens he saw God.

Centuries before Newton, David proclaimed, “*The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world*” (Psalm 19:1-4).

Look up and see the glory of God! †

John Gipson works with the Windsong Church of Christ in Little Rock, Arkansas, USA.

Scientist Denies Evolution

Greg Tidwell

Michael J. Behe, associate professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, challenges the basic assumption of Darwinism in his recent work, **Darwin's Black Box**.

Behe's argument carries special weight in the academic community because his discussion avoids philosophy and theology. Empirically, he asserts that Darwin's theories on the origins of life are not adequate to explain the hard facts uncovered in the findings of modern biochemistry.

The book highlights the profound biochemical complexity of life, pointing to its original creation by an intelligent designer.

Behe presents as evidence a careful explanation of the intricate molecular processes which make vision, blood clotting, cellular transport, and disease fighting possible.

His point, made in each of these four areas, is that the underlying processes of biology are so complex that they could not have evolved. For the interplay of life to exist at all, each of the constituent parts has to exist simultaneously.

In Darwin's book, **The Origin of Species**, he made the statement, "If it could be demonstrated that

any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down."

Behe illustrates his conviction that the complicated systems in the human body do demolish Darwin's theory by comparing "irreducibly complex" systems to a mouse trap. The mouse trap is an effective tool, but it cannot work if even one part is removed or altered.

In like manner, "the 'simplest' self-sufficient, replicating cell has the capacity to produce thousands of different proteins and other molecules, at different times and under variable conditions...and each function requires the **interaction of numerous parts**" (page 46). No part of the cell is dispensable, and no part can work half-way: it is "irreducibly complex". These cells, which are like miniscule universes in their activity and complexity, answer Darwin's statement: **Evolution does not provide an adequate explanation for the origins of life.** †

Greg Tidwell preaches for the Fishinger and Kenny Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio, USA.



A FAMINE IN THE LAND

Hugo McCord

The time would come to ancient Israel when the people would crave a Bible lesson, but it would not be available. Bible classes are available today for all ages. May they be so appreciated and attended that the all-knowing Lord

will never take them away. But He was forced to do that in the 8th century B.C.: *"I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from*

THE WORD OF GOD

the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of Jehovah, and shall not find it" (Amos 8:11,12).

Prisoner-of-war Howard Rutledge, dying from starvation, thankful for a "bowl of sewer greens", found that "my hunger for spiritual food soon outdid my hunger for a steak" (*Christianity Today*). "Now I wanted to know about that part of me that will never die...I had completely neglected the spiritual dimension of my life" when I had lived in Tulsa. "Now I wanted to talk about God and Christ and the church. But in heartbreak solitary confinement there was... no Sunday-school teacher, no Bible, no hymn book, no community of believers to guide and sustain me.

"I tried desperately to recall snatches of Scripture, sermons, the gospel choruses from childhood, and the hymns we sang at church...I had not seen (during 18 years in a Tulsa Sunday School) the importance of memorizing verses from the Bible or learning gospel songs. Now, when I needed them, it was too late."

Just to think "about one memorized verse could have made a whole day bearable.

One portion of a verse I did remember was, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart.' How often I wished I had really worked to hide God's Word in my heart...All this talk of Scripture and hymns may seem boring to some, but it was the way we conquered our enemy and overcame the power of death around us."

What can we learn from Howard Rutledge? †

The Lord's church has suffered a great loss in the recent passing of Hugo McCord, a long-time professor of Bible at Oklahoma Christian University in Edmond, Oklahoma, USA.

Overcoming

**My life is but the weaving
Between my God and me;
I only choose the colors,
He weaveth steadily,
Sometimes He weaveth sorrow,
And I in foolish pride,
Forget He sees the upper
And I the under side.**

**Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly,
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why;
The dark threads are as needful
In the weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.**

Unknown

Consequences of Going Back to the Law

Albert Gardner

The Old Testament law was divine because it came from God through Moses, but even during that period the people were told to look for a new law. *"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah"* (Jeremiah 31:31). The first testament was not meant to be permanent.

The purpose of the law was to *"bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith"* (Galatians 3:24,25). It did its work well and ended at the cross (Colossians 2:14). The law separated Jews and Gentiles, so Jesus *"broke down this middle wall"* (Ephesians 2:14) and made it possible for us to



be one in Christ.

There has always been the danger of people going back to the law, but there are serious consequences for those who do. Circumcision was the issue which Paul discussed, because some were saying *"except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved"* (Acts 15:1). *"For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law; ye are fallen from grace"* (Galatians 5:3,4).

There are three main consequences if one goes back to the Old Testament to bind a part of it on people today.

First, we are debtors to do the whole law. The whole law includes

THE WORD OF GOD

killing animals for sacrifices, going to Jerusalem for major feast days, and the penalties for breaking the law. The *whole law* is not just the Ten Commandments. We cannot pick and choose what we like, but we must take all of it, or none.

Second, Christ is become of no effect to us. The law was taken away at the cross, and was no longer binding after that time. If one can return to the law and be justified by it, of what value was the cross? Jesus suffered and died in vain if we can be saved by the law that was taken away then.

Third, you are fallen from grace. No one could be justified by the law, and through its removal, a

way to be saved was opened up in the Gospel. We have the favor of God; we are saved by grace.

If one attempts to return to the law, he has fallen from grace. Gospel obedience brings salvation, which is another way of saying that one is saved by grace.

When the Gospel was first preached, the conditions of salvation were announced, and those who obeyed were saved by *grace*, not by the *law*. They had the favor of God, but would lose that favor if they chose to return to the law. †

Albert Gardner is a preacher of the church of Christ and lives in Marmaduke, Arkansas, USA.

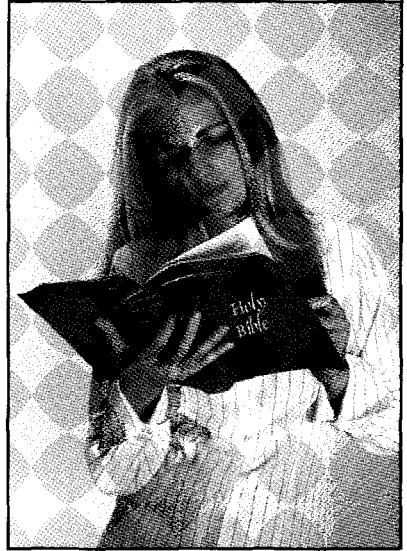
I May Never See Tomorrow

I may never see tomorrow, there's no written guarantee,
And things that happened yesterday belong to history.
I can't predict the future, nor can I change the past,
I have only present memories to cherish as my last.
I must use this moment wisely for it, too, will pass away
And be swallowed up forever as a part of yesterday.
I must exercise compassion, help the fallen to their feet,
Be a friend unto the friendless, and make their life complete.
Unkind things I do today may never be undone
And friendships that I fail to win may nevermore be won.
I may not have another chance on bended knees to pray,
So God be thanked, with humble heart, for giving me this day!

Selected

THE WORD OF GOD

The Bible says in John 3:16 that “*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.*” Proof of God’s love is that Jesus died that we might be saved from our sins. To enable us to be saved and to stay saved, God gave us the Bible which is His power unto our salvation (Romans 1:16). Without the Gospel, we would not know what to do to be saved from our sins. Man must obey the will of the Heavenly Father to inherit eternal life. In Matthew 7:21, Jesus warned, “*Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord,*



Studying and Growing in the Knowledge of the Lord

George Akpabli

Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” It is therefore essential that we **study** that we may **know** the **truth** which has the power to save us (See John 17:17 and John 8:32).

The Holy Scriptures admonish us for our own salvation in 2 Timothy 2:15 to **study** to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that have no need to be ashamed, because we are rightly dividing the word of truth. It is vital that we follow the example of the Christians in Berea, who during Bible times were not only excited with the teachings they received, but they also gave serious attention to the word, searching in the holy writings every day to see if the things they were being taught were so. This is important. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 also tells us that all things should be tested; so that we can keep what is good. If we fail to do this and we follow error, we will lose our salvation. Matthew 15:14 also says that if a blind man is guiding a blind man, the two will go fall into a ditch together. The responsibility is

THE WORD OF GOD

placed upon ourselves and not upon any other person.

The Holy Scriptures also admonish us in 2 Peter 3:18 to grow (be increased) in grace and in the **knowledge** of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We must diligently pursue knowledge of the will of God, and follow what He says to avoid destruction.

The urgent need to study the Scriptures is further demonstrated when we acknowledge that not everything taught in the name of religion is **true** and **right**. The Bible instructs us to believe not every spirit, but to test the spirits (teachers) whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world (1 John 4:1).

Read also the following passages:

(Proverbs 14:15) *"The simple believes every word, But the prudent considers well his steps."*

(Matthew 7:15-20) *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore*

by their fruits you will know them."

(Romans 16:18) *"For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple."*

(2 Peter 2:1) *"But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction."*

(1 Thessalonians 5:21) *"Test all things; hold fast what is good."*

The serious consequence for you and me is that our worship is described being in vain if it is not based on God's will as revealed in the New Testament but on the doctrines and commandments of men. Jesus stated this warning in Matthew 15:9: *"And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."*

Again in Matthew 15:13 Jesus said, *"Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted."*

Dear Reader, no matter what your religious belief, God's counsel is to study diligently, in order to grow in the knowledge of His Word. †

George Akpabli is Director of the Bible Training Center in Cotonou, Benin, West Africa.

Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

Matthew 19:3-12

3. The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

4 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'

7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

10 His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

11 But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given:

12 "For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

our present-day "No fault divorce"

By going back to "the beginning", Jesus made God's will concerning marriage applicable to all people of all time, unless He specifically allows an exception, as under the law of Moses.

Jesus states the one acceptable reason for divorce, and explicitly words the consequences in God's eyes when the law of marriage is disobeyed.

This is a hard law. Just as is common today, the disciples immediately objected to its strictness. All people, if allowed to decide for themselves, would ease these harsh restrictions. But Jesus did not. Knowing that most people who are living in an adulterous marriage will likely choose the marriage rather than obedience to God, still Jesus did not relent. His objective, obviously, was to protect marriage and the home through stringent law, because He knew that "no fault divorce" would create the critical family problems we have today.

Jesus' solution to the problem was not the acceptance of adulterous marriages, but the explanation that **some are eunuchs for their soul's sake.**



“The Second Coming of Christ”

Jimmy Young

Introduction: The second coming of Christ has always been a much debated subject. It need not be, for Scripture is very clear in teaching the return of Christ. Let us note some Biblical facts about the “second coming of Christ” that all must understand.

I. The Proof of His Return

- A. He promised to return (John 14:1-3).
- B. It has been proclaimed by the angels (Acts 1:11).
- C. It was preached by the apostles (1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 3:10).

II. His Purpose for Returning

- A. First, let us note why Christ is *not* returning:
 1. He is not returning to plead for the lost to be saved (Matthew 1:21).
 2. He is not returning to persuade the erring to repent (James 5:19,20).
 3. He is not returning to provide a “second” chance to be saved (2 Corinthians 6:2).

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

4. He is not returning to set up His kingdom (church) (1 Corinthians 15:24).
5. He is not returning to proclaim a new plan of salvation (Jude 3).
- B. Second, let us note why Christ *is* returning:
 1. He is coming to keep His promise (2 Peter 3:9).
 2. He is coming to take vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
 3. He is coming to receive His bride (Ephesians 5:27).

III. What Will Happen When Christ Returns

- A. The dead will be raised (John 5:28,29).
- B. God will destroy the earth and its elements (2 Peter 3:10-13).
- C. He will deliver up the kingdom (church) to the Father (1 Corinthians 5:24).
- D. He will pronounce (declare) judgment upon all (2 Corinthians 5:10).

IV. The Time of His Return

- A. His delay in coming is because of His desire that everyone have opportunity to be saved, not because He is lax about keeping His promise (2 Peter 3:8,9).
- B. Neither we, the angels nor even Christ know — only God knows (Matthew 24:36).
- C. There will be no signs (warnings) given (Matthew 24:42; 2 Peter 3:10).

V. Our Preparation for His Return

- A. We will have to apply the three L's.
 1. Listen to Him (Colossians 3:17; Mark 16:16).
 2. Love Him (John 14:15; Matthew 22:37).
 3. Live for Him (Matthew 16:24; Colossians 3:1,2).

Conclusion: It is a fact that Jesus is coming again; we do not know when. It is a fact that God through inspiration has given all we need to “know” and “do”. Are you ready for His return? †

Jimmy Young preaches for the Nettleton Church of Christ in Jonesboro, Arkansas, USA.

Fundamental Truths for Motivating Non-Believers

Wayne Barrier

I. Introduction

- A. What should an unbeliever be taught first, to encourage and motivate him to believe the Gospel?
- B. Teacher must be selective — not all of the Bible can be discussed in initial studies.
- C. Some fundamental truths can be emphasized.

II. Fundamentals to Teach First

- A. God is the Supreme Being
 1. God is all-powerful, all-wise, ever-present, and eternal.
 2. Evidence of God's existence is overwhelming (Psalm 19:1; 14:1).
 3. Man is made in God's image (Genesis 1:26).
 4. Man is subject to God's power and authority (Acts 17:28).
 5. God's love exceeds any other (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8).
- B. Christ is our Savior and God's Son
 1. History confirms that Christ lived.
 2. Scripture confirms His purpose on earth, His teachings, death, burial, and resurrection.
 3. Christ died to save us from our sins (Acts 4:12; Romans 5:9).
 4. The cross compels one to believe (John 3:14; John 12:32).
- C. Man has only two options for eternity.
 1. All must die (Revelation 2:10).
 2. Two options after death (Matthew 7:13,14; Luke 16:19-31).
 3. Heaven or Hell.
- D. God takes care of His children
 1. With us always (Matthew 18:20).
 2. Working to bring all things together for good (Romans 8:28).
 3. Answers prayer (Matthew 7:7-12; James 5:16).
 4. Blesses daily (Matthew 6:33).

CHARTS AND OUTLINES

E. Heavenly Hope

1. Superior to any place on earth.
2. Eternal.
3. Prepared for God's children (John 14:1-3).
4. Ultimate victory (2 Timothy 4:8).
5. Crown of life (Revelation 2:10).
6. Magnificent place of happiness and beauty (Revelation 21,22).
7. The prize of the faithful (Philippians 3:14).

III. Conclusion

- A. Why reject God, His promises, rewards, and heaven?
- B. What alternative is superior?

†

Wayne Barrier lives in Florence, Alabama, USA, and works with the World Evangelism team in taking the Gospel throughout the world.

Going Forever Where God Is the Light

When my Redeemer appears in the skies
I'll leave my earthly affections and rise,
Wearing a glorious garment of white,
Going forever where God is the light.

I'll sing the song of salvation that day
With Heaven's host in eternal array;
Wings sent from Heaven will give me my flight
Going forever where God is the light.

I'll live for aye in that city of gold,
Ever the splendor of God to behold,
Touched nevermore by the darkness of night,
Going forever where God is the light.

— Harry Presley

How Does One Become a "Saint"?

Hoyt Hathcock

In the New Testament, we read of "saints": *"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossee..."* (Colossians 1:2).

For the most prolific writer of the New Testament, the usage of "saint" relative to Christians was a common thing. He used the word not only in addressing the church at Colossee, but also regarding believers in Christ Jesus in the books of Philippians, Thessalonians and Philemon.

In Revelation the word "saint" is used 13 times, more than in any other book of the Bible, and it also takes on a deeper meaning. In this book, the word "saint" not only is applied to those who acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord of their lives but also they are described as the faithful and true witnesses for Jesus.

A "saint", then, is simply a Christian, a person who has a deep belief in Jesus Christ, who has been born into the Family through baptism, who lives in obedience to God's commands and in conformity to His will.

A true saint exhibits in his life-style and speech that He is a faithful

and dedicated follower of Jesus Christ. This means that the word "**holy**" is applicable to the saint of God. To be "holy" requires that one separate himself from evil and dedicate himself to God.

To be God's "**elect**" (1 Peter 1:2) there is the requirement to *"be ye holy in all manner of conversation.... be ye holy; for I am holy"* (1 Peter 1:15,16). The implication is that the Christian is separated from the world.

Hear Paul again when he wrote: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, **holy**, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God"* (Romans 1:1,2).

For the Christian ever to use the hackneyed statement, *"Well I ain 't no saint"* is the classic misnomer. †

Hoyt Hathcock preaches for the church of Christ in Detroit, Alabama, USA.

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

In each generation the church is confronted with dangers. Some are constant while others “seem” peculiar to the time or circumstance. What dangers do you see confronting us in this new millennium?

N.B. Hardeman, one of the spiritual giants of his generation, was asked what dangers he saw confronting the church. His reply was:

✱ **A lack of Bible knowledge and light regard for what it says.**

✱ **A tendency to make the church a social club for entertainment.**

✱ **A disposition to compromise the truth and to discourage sound preaching.**

✱ **A love for the praise of men more than the praise of God.**

I find Hardeman’s observations most interesting! Do we not face the same dangers today? Was Hardeman “predicting” what the church would face in the new millennium? No! He was talking about his own day! Brethren, these dangers are persistent. Their growth is causing problems in this age!



DANGERS CONFRONTING US

Dwight Fuqua

DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Who would deny that there is “**a lack of Bible knowledge**” in the church today? We desperately need to read (1 Timothy 4:13), study (2 Timothy 2:15) and meditate upon (1 Timothy 4:15) the word of God daily. That word is the spiritual food which sustains us (Matthew 4:4). Yet, research and casual observation indicate a famine of Bible knowledge in the church today. “*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*” (Hosea 4:6).

Is there “**a tendency to make the church a social club for entertainment**”? Yes! While we would never minimize the place of hospitality and fellowship, the church does not (should not) exist for the sake of “amusing” itself. Although many treat it as such, the church is not a glorified social club! It is the “called out” of God for divine service (1 Peter 2:5). As a body, we exist to **evangelize** and **edify**, not **entertain**. We exist to glorify God, not gratify *ourselves*.

Never in the history of the church has there been a greater temptation to

let down the banner and loose the reins! We live in the age of pretty, positive platitudes. Preachers are being told to “tone down”. There are many uncertain sounds.

But, brethren, we must know (John 8:32), **love** (2 Thessalonians 2:10), **continue in** (1 John 9-11) and **contend for** (Jude 3) *the truth of God!* Stand for the truth yourself (Ephesians 6:14) and encourage those who are “*speaking the truth in love*” (Ephesians 4:15).

Far too much emphasis is being placed today on “what people think.” Paul said, “*Do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be the servant of Christ*” (Galatians 1:10). Don’t misunderstand! We should not be crude or rude, uncaring or insensitive. We want to influence others for Christ. However, we strive not for the praises of men, but of God. Let us always ask, “Will the Lord be pleased?” (Micah 6:7). †

Dwight Fuqua preaches for the Findlay Church of Christ in Sparta, Tennessee, USA.



Anyone For Truth?

David Deffenbaugh

Our world has little regard for truth. Sad, but true. Actually much more than sad, it is *a tragedy* of immense proportions. Truth is very much the cornerstone of God's interaction with mankind, so as to affect their salvation. Speaking of Jesus, John wrote, "*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14). If Jesus is the very embodiment of truth, truth cannot be minimized without minimizing Jesus.

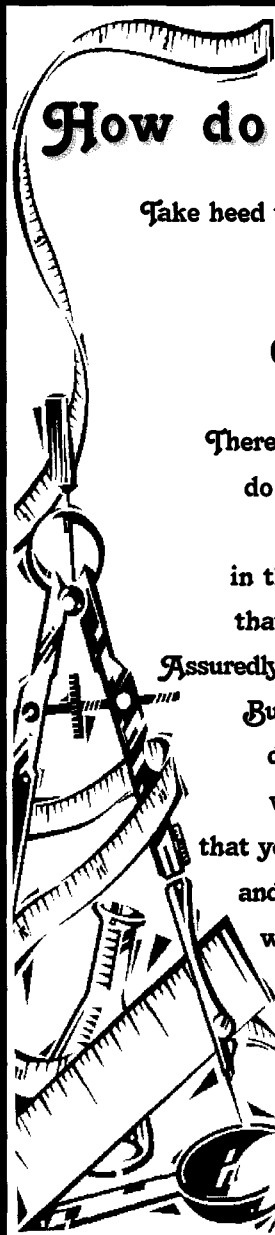
Still, popular efforts at religion very often provide *truth* little more than lip service. Of higher priority are *emotional experience* and *personal fulfillment*. The approach en vogue in modern religious circles is a "market driven" mentality. The way to attract people to "church" is to give them what they want. The "model" church most often emulated in this regard in America was started by surveying neighborhoods to find out what people wanted, and a church was devised to fit those criteria.

Yet, **it is to truth** that we are called. "*Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart*" (Proverbs 3:3). So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "*If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free*" (John 8:31,32).

One is compelled at some point to ask, "Why?" Why is truth so devalued? Why is truth of such little concern? One reason must certainly be the fact that truth is not easy. As Simon Weil has expressed, "Work is needed to express what is true; also to receive what is true. We can express and receive what is false, or at least what is superficial without any work" (quoted by A. J. Conyers, "Rescuing Tolerance" First Things, August/September 2001, p. 45). Unquestionably, ours is a world that wants the easy, the convenient, and the effortless. Such is not the nature of truth. Were it so, Pilate would not have had to ask regarding its identity (John 18:38). He would have already known. And if truth were easy, all men would be free (John 8:32).

One final admonition from the wise man, "*Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding*" (Proverbs 23:23). But be ready: not only is truth not easy; it's not cheap. †

David Deffenbaugh preaches the Gospel in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, USA.



How do you measure up?

Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds
before men,
to be seen by them.

Otherwise you have no reward
from your Father in heaven.

Therefore, when you do a charitable deed,
do not sound a trumpet before you
as the hypocrites do
in the synagogues and in the streets,
that they may have glory from men.

Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

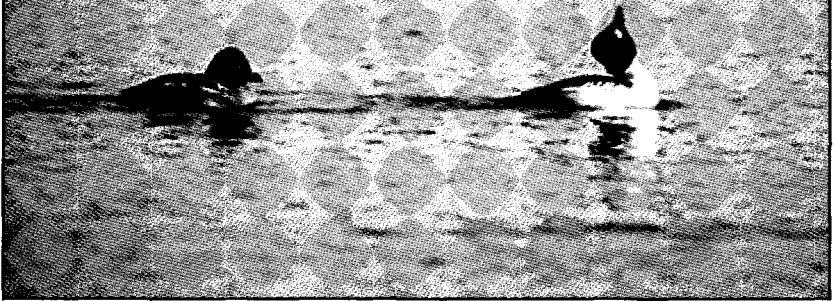
But when you do a charitable deed,
do not let your left hand know
what your right hand is doing,
that your charitable deed may be in secret;
and your Father who sees in secret
will Himself reward you openly.

Matthew 6:1-4



DRIFTING AWAY

Rex Banks



Several urgent warnings punctuate the Hebrews epistle: “*Don’t drift from the truth of the gospel*” (2:1-4); “*don’t fall away from the living God*” (3:7-19); “*don’t remain babes in Christ*” (5:11-14); “*don’t go on sinning willfully*” (10:26-31). I could not help but think of that first warning when I came across the words of C.S. Lewis recently:

“The safest road to hell is the gradual one – the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts. The long, dull, monotonous years of middle aged prosperity or adversity are excellent campaigning weather for the devil.”

We know that he’s right. How easily we drift from zealous commitment to complacent ritualism. We’re not quite sure when the change took place, but one day we realize that the fires of enthusiasm have flickered and died, leaving a few glowing embers behind. Words which once pierced our hearts like shafts no longer move us. We realize that at some point in time we gave up living as a “*new creation*” and contented ourselves with the patched-up old model. Bible study is no longer a delight but a duty; no longer an eager search for golden nuggets, but a dull, predictable routine. And the change was so subtle, the downward slope so gentle that we remained oblivious to those persistent currents even as they caused us to drift further and further away from our “*first love*”.

SALVATION

Of course we don't have to drift away from the truth of the Gospel during "long dull, monotonous years of prosperity or adversity"! Hebrews 2:1-4 is not a prediction, but a warning against drifting by "neglect" of the "great salvation" offered through Christ. (Hebrews 2:4).

Look at the word "neglect". It doesn't mean *rebellion* or hostile *rejection*; it quite simply means "to lack concern about" (key to Greek New Testament). We drift when we lack "concern about" the great salvation offered through Christ. Isn't it odd that we can fall into this trap of neglect when we have such great concern for our houses, our cars, our holiday plans, bank accounts and investments? Because we pay close attention to our valuable assets we notice a "leak" in our bank account long before it bleeds us dry.

That's the point of Hebrews 2:1; we simply must pay much closer attention to the truth of the Gospel! Job "*treasured the words of His mouth more than... (his) necessary food*" (23:12), but is not the full story of Jesus sweeter than anything Job ever heard? What newspaper, television program, or novel could have such earth-shattering importance in our lives, that the story of the cross goes neglected day after day?

Is there anyone, anywhere so

strong that he just has no need to be present when the saints encourage one another with "...*psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*" (Colossians 3:16)? Are we not in danger of drifting when the memorial feast is an inconvenient intrusion upon the weekend's activities, or when prayer, like a parachute, is used only in emergencies? Yes, that "gentle slope", that "gradual" extinction of the flame through neglect, is a far greater danger for most of us than the threat of some Christ-denying doctrine, or the appeal of some grave moral sin.

Significantly, the warning against neglect in Hebrews 2:1-4 is introduced with the words, "*For this reason (we must pay clear attention...)*" What reason? Chapter one tells us: "Look at the credentials of the messenger!" Christ is God's appointed "heir"; the One through whom God made the world; the very "radiance" of God's glory; the "exact representation" of God's nature; the One who upholds all things; the One who made purification for sins; the One who is seated (His work done) at the right hand of God (Hebrews 1:1-3). Given such a messenger, should we not all "*pay much closer attention to what we have heard lest we drift away from it*" (Hebrews 2:11)? †

Rex Banks works with the church in Hamilton, New Zealand.

You May Know

Bobby Key

In this world we have upheaval, turmoil, and insecurity. We need something permanent to hold to. The aged apostle was filled with assurance when he wrote, "*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the son of God*" (1 John 5:13). Yes, we may know that we have been saved from our sins, and thus will go to heaven when we die.

Faith gives assurance. Though our outward man perish, our inward man is renewed. Those in Christ have become a new creation and have been reconciled to God through Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:16; 5:17). We are convinced that when we obey the Gospel of Christ by faith, repentance, confession, and baptism, our past sins are forgiven. With that same assurance, we may feel confident that we remain in a saved condition.

"*Whosoever believeth* (a word denoting continuous action) *that Jesus is the Christ is born of God...*" (1 John 5:1). One must keep on believing, never making shipwreck of his faith (1 Timothy

1:19,20). One may be assured of his salvation by keeping the commandments of God. "*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments...but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him*" (1 John 2:3-5).

Salvation is assured when we practice righteousness. "*Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous*" (1 John 3:7). God makes men righteous by forgiving their sins, and men do righteousness by living in obedience to God's will (Acts 10:34,35).

Life is too brief and uncertain, eternity is too long, and the soul is too precious to live in doubt concerning salvation. Let us urge you to obey the will of the Lord and rely upon His promises. "*And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*" (1 John 2:25). At this point you can sing with great confidence, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine." †

Bobby Key has preached the Gospel for many years and lives in Miami, Oklahoma, USA.

There Is Only One Gospel for Salvation

Sunny David



There is only one Taj Mahal in the entire world, and it is in the country of India. How would you react if someone told you that he has been to Japan where he had gone to see the Taj Mahal?

The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians wrote: *“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel, which is not another, but there are some who trouble you and want to*

pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-8).

Paul’s marvelling was genuine, because there is only one gospel of Jesus Christ, there is only one way to be saved. But the Galatians were turning to a “different” gospel! Christ, in the beginning, had sent His disciples into all the world to preach the gospel — not **gospels**, (plural) as some erroneously refer to the first four books of the New Testament as “the Gospels” (plural). These books contain the message of *the gospel of Christ*, in which are *four accounts of the same one gospel*.

Christ has authorized only one formula for the people of the whole world to be saved from sin. That is, through obeying a “form” of the one Gospel — picturing the death of Christ in our repentance from sin, picturing the burial of Christ in our burial in the water of baptism, and picturing the resurrection of Christ in our coming out of that watery “grave”.

SALVATION

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you **the gospel** which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”* (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

The gospel of Christ — and not entertainment and musical concerts or healing services — is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16). Nowhere in the Bible were people ever told to pray the “sinners’ prayer”, or to “accept the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour to be saved from sins”.

There may be those who are called “Indians” in America, but the “native American Indians” are actually not real Indians, because they do not belong to the country of India. They are not native or inhabitants of the subcontinent of India. This should teach us that just calling ourselves something does not make it true. Many call themselves “Christian” or some type of Christian, even though they have never obeyed that one Gospel.

Christ, according to His

promise in Matthew 16:18, built His church. Those who are saved by His Gospel, He adds to His church (Acts 2:47). The members of the church of Christ are called Christians (Acts 11:26). All Christians are in the church of Christ. There are no Christians outside of the church of Christ, because our Lord never fails to add to His family those who are born into it (John 3:3-5).

According to the Bible, to be saved from sin one must believe in Christ, and repent of sin and wrong, confess Christ to be the Son of God, and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-39; Romans 10:10). Then, according to Acts 2:47, *“...the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”*

This is a simple plan of “singles”, not “plurals”. There is one Gospel, and the result of obeying a form of that one gospel is that we are added to the Lord’s one church. Have you obeyed that one Gospel? Has Christ added you to His one church?

Remember, *“There is a way that seems right to a man,”* according to the wise man in Proverbs 14:12, *“but its end is the way of **death.**”* God has authorised only one way to **life.** †

Sunny David preaches the gospel in New Delhi, India.

A Salute-Free Zone

Bruce Tucker

In the U.S. military, one of the first things that new recruits learn is that military etiquette requires soldiers to always salute those of higher rank. There are, however, some areas on military bases that are salute-free zones. In certain clearly designated areas, soldiers are permitted to relax, and salutes are not required. One of these salute-free zones is the central courtyard at the Pentagon. Military personnel of all ranks visit the courtyard during the lunch break. If the usual military rules about saluting were followed, a soldier would hardly be able to take a bite from his sandwich without having to stop and salute another officer strolling by. There are sensible reasons for the military to

observe salute-free zones.

Jesus said, "*Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth, for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters, for one is your master, even the Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant*" (Matthew 23:8:11). The leading Jews in Jesus' day coveted popular applause. Nothing so warmed their hearts as to hear the salute, "Rabbi!" (which means "teacher") or "Father!" More than just professional titles, these ostentatious greetings implied that others should always yield to the elitist scholars.



THE CHURCH

In contrast, Jesus declared His church was a salute-free zone. As one hymn puts it, "Render not to any other, what alone the Lord's should be."

Yes, there are those in the church who are called "teachers" (Acts 13:1; 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11). As well, Paul sometimes referred to himself as a "father" in the faith to Timothy (1 Timothy 1:2,18; 2 Timothy 1:2), but this referred only to the fact that Paul had preceded Timothy in the faith and that he had helped Timothy mature spiritually. Paul never assumed any authority that exceeded the apostleship given him by the Lord. Paul thought of himself figuratively as a "father" to many of the Corinthians (1 Corin-

thians 4:15), but only in the sense that he had been the one to bring them to Christ to experience the new birth.

So, in the Lord's church we do not honor men with grandiose titles. Among God's people, there are no "Right Reverends". While Christians are strong supporters of education, and a gospel teacher may have a higher earned degree, the words "Doctor of Divinity" are not heard every time a brother introduces him to an audience. Why not? Because at the gates of God's kingdom is posted a sign reading, "*All ye are brethren.*" †

Bruce Tucker preaches for the Rainbow Church of Christ in Gadsden, Alabama, USA.

... so we, who are many,
are one body in Christ,
and individually we are members
one of another.
Romans 12:5

Bible School

David Riley

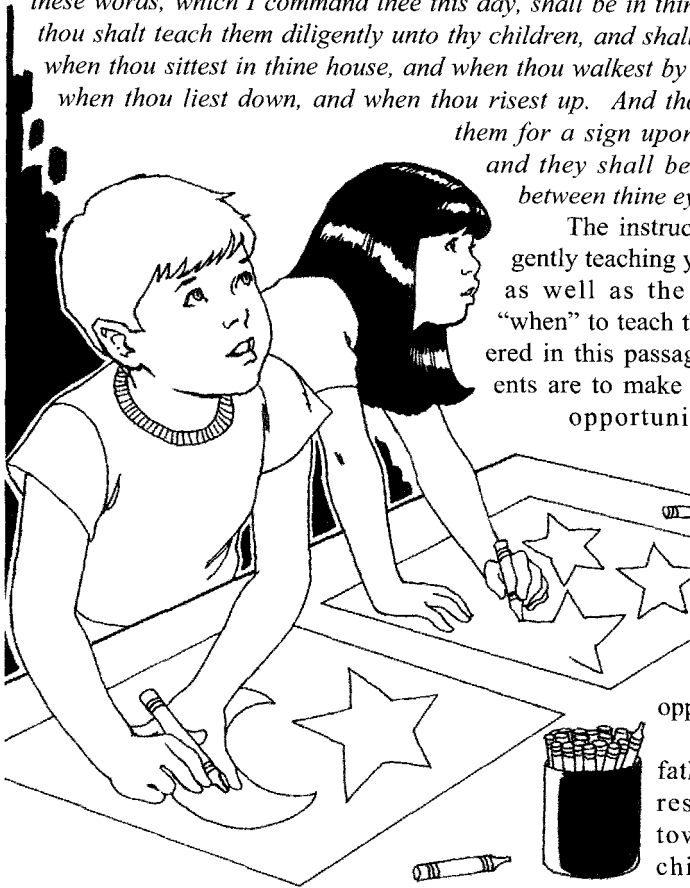
“Bible School” is not a Biblical term. In fact, the word “school” is found only once in Scripture, and this was not a Bible School (Acts 19:9). However, the concept is Biblical. The purpose and intent of Bible School is proper.

God, through Moses, told the Israelites in Deuteronomy 6:6-8, *“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.”*

The instruction for diligently teaching your children, as well as the “how” and “when” to teach them are covered in this passage. The parents are to make use of every opportunity to instill

God’s word into the hearts of their children. Bible School is just such an opportunity.

Paul told fathers of their responsibility toward their children in



THE CHURCH

Ephesians 6:4, “*Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*” The father has a responsibility to raise his children to know the teaching and encouragement of the Lord. This is exactly the purpose of Bible School.

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, told his apostles to “*Go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, ...*” (Matthew 28:19,20). Again, this is precisely the purpose of Bible School — to teach disciples of Christ the things to be observed and how to observe them!

So, Bible School has a purpose and that purpose is Biblical and right. It is right for our elders to instruct us to attend, and to be perfect attendees, of Bible School.

Now, if Bible School is to be an effective tool toward accomplishing its purpose for existing, there are some things we must be aware of:

1. Bible School is not a substitute for worship! Too many Christians are developing the opinion that it is either Bible School or worship. If they come for Bible School, they leave immediately following the Lord’s Supper. If they are going to stay for worship, then

they don’t come for Bible School.

But Bible School and worship are two entirely different things with entirely different purposes. If you attend only Bible School, you have not worshiped. And, if you attend only worship, you have not engaged in Bible School. Both have a purpose and both are right. But, one is not a substitute for the other.

2. Bible School can benefit you only if you attend.

3. Bible School can benefit you only if you attend every session. Can a person who attends only half the time, one-fourth the time, etc., benefit from *secular* school? No, and neither can a person properly benefit from Bible School if he/she is not perfect in attendance.

4. Bible School can benefit you only if you are on time for every session. Bible School is available for only about 1 1/2 hours each week. How much time is wasted when teachers are trying to get all the students on the same page because not all arrive at the same time?

My brethren, Bible School is right and scriptural. Our elders are right in requiring us to attend Bible School and to be perfect in attendance. They are simply doing the work the Holy Spirit has set them over (Acts 20:28). Now, let’s do our part and obey them (Hebrews 13:17). †

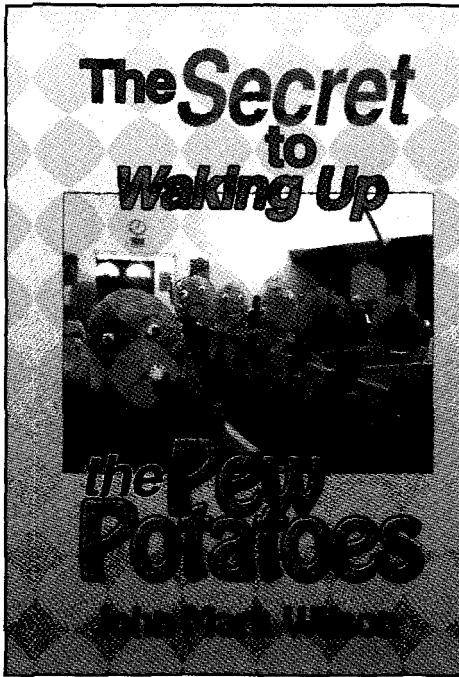
David Riley works with the Mars Hill congregation in Vilonia, Arkansas, USA.

Verse Search

Supply the missing information from the book of Acts, chapter twenty-four, NKJV.

1. Who came to Felix, the governor, to testify against Paul? (V. 1).
2. After a flattering introduction toward Felix, Tertullus made these charges against Paul: "For we have found this man a _____, a creator of _____ among all the _____ throughout the _____, and a _____ of the sect of the _____. He even tried to profane the _____, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our _____" (Vs. 5,6)
3. Who answered in Paul's defence? (V. 10).
4. How did Paul answer the charge of profaning the temple? (V. 12).
5. "But this I _____ to you, that according to _____ which they call a _____, so I _____ the _____ of my _____, believing all the things which are written in the _____ and the _____" (V. 14).
6. What hope did Paul say that he and his accusers had in common? (V. 15)
7. Because of that faith, what kind of life did Paul live? (V. 15).
8. Paul said that he had come to Jerusalem for what purpose? (V. 17).
9. Who had found Paul in the temple? (V. 18).
10. How did he describe his behavior when they found him? (V. 18).
11. What was the one statement Paul had cried out, for which he said he was being held prisoner? (V. 21).
12. "When Felix heard these things, having _____ of _____, he adjourned the proceedings..." (V. 22).
13. What did he say he would do? (V. 22).
14. What command did he make to the centurion? (V. 23).
15. When Felix came with his Jewish wife, Drusilla, Paul reasoned with him about what? (Vs. 24,25).
16. How did Felix respond? (V. 25).

[See inside of back cover for answers.]



Evacuating the Padded Pew

How to Develop Your “Recapturing the Vision” Program

Part Three: Growing Through Eight Easy Steps

Step Seven — *Multiply Your Children*

As wise congregations know, children are the church leaders of the future. It's because of this important fact that we must put in place an outreach toward gaining and training children from the community. Most congregations who have entered Pew Potato mode have only a handful, if even that, of young people. Don't be discouraged because there is little to work with in the beginning. It's true that growth comes quicker and easier as the number of children increases. But you need only a handful to get the snowball rolling. You can easily turn five children into fifty in just a few short months with the following plan.

Begin a Thursday evening puppet show! Film the show and if you can, place it on your local cable channel. In our community the

CHURCH GROWTH

Lions Club had its own channel, and airing our puppet show costs only \$50 per month. We filmed the show with a regular camcorder, making sure to film the children. On Saturday morning at 8:30 the show would air and the children were always excited to see themselves on TV.

The show should last for 15 to 30 minutes and have a biblical theme. Give the puppet show a name. The one I began was called *The Treehouse Bible Time*. Then, advertise in the paper, radio and local television. Do whatever it takes to let the public know when it's being filmed.

Your number of children will continue to grow each week. If your congregation doesn't have much money to advertise, place one-minute spots on your local radio station and then call your newspaper and ask them to drop by and do a story on your new Thursday puppet show for the community. They will be happy to carry that news item. Another way to let children in the community know is to walk up and down the streets and visit with any parents you can find. Let them know about the show and

ask if someone from the church can drop by and pick up their children on the next Thursday.

After the children have a wonderful time, tell them about the exciting Sunday school classes. Then, as you are dropping them off at home, walk up to the door and tell the parents what a great time their children had. Say something nice about the child and ask if he/she/they can be picked up Sunday morning for Sunday school. The children will probably be jumping up and down, saying, "Please, please, please"! This being the result, your youth group has just increased!

The building should not just sit empty during the week. Use it to build up the number of contacts for Christ. Other ideas for using the building in midweek include:

1. Mother's Day Out — This is one morning a week when a mother can drop off her child at the building for a couple of Bible classes, puppet shows, fellowship and games.

2. Day Camp — Provide a week where the youth come for

CHURCH GROWTH

eight hours each day and have Bible classes, games and a cook-out.

3. Community Honors —

Provide a meal or finger foods for new graduates of the local school. Community servants can also be honored, as well as local ball teams, etc.

Step Eight — *Feed the New Christians*

If you've ever seen a newborn baby, they come into the world screaming for MILK! New babes in Christ are no different. What is this milk? Joel 3:18 foretells of its coming, *"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk...and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord..."* The time came and the scripture revealed to man this wonderful milk. *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"* (1 Peter 2:2). The MILK is the WORD OF GOD!

On the day of the new Christian's birth, they need to immediately receive milk to start

them on their way, growing. This milk can take many different forms:

1. Video Series
2. Correspondence Studies
3. Home Bible Studies
4. Pamphlets
5. Tracts
6. Or other milky materials.

Remember that the ol' devil has just lost one of his children and he will be working overtime to try and get him back! Don't hand anyone back to him without a fight! Babes are weak and must be strengthened.

One thing that should not be overlooked is the family of the new convert. Someone should immediately begin to help the new Christian talk to his or her family about Christ. The babe is hungering and thirsting for righteousness. This enthusiasm should be used to try and reach those closest to the new babes. †

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

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

SOULS!!!

Ken Tyler

We must save souls! It is just that simple. We must quit placing so much emphasis on the things of this world and *start saving souls*. The only means God has for saving souls is the church. That means you and me. Have we forgotten?

Somehow we must have a revival of souls. We must change our way of thinking. We must sit down with people and beg them to consider the condition of their souls. We must write that letter or make that call and urge others to do something about the lostness of their souls.

What the church needs as we go into the twenty-first century is people who will do whatever it takes to preach the gospel to every creature. Don't say you can't do anything. There is plenty that all of us can do. *The key is our focus and then doing what we can*. There are souls we can all lead to Christ if we will just stay focused on souls and try harder.

We must pray. We must see our opportunities. We must be persistent. We must work. We must desire souls more than silver and gold. We must love heaven and hate hell.

I pray that we will take a close look at what we are doing and *get busy with spiritual things*. †

Ken Tyler works with the Lord's church in Arab, Alabama, USA.

GOALS IN EVANGELISM

Dale Grissom

Unless we set goals for ourselves in evangelism, it is highly unlikely that we will ever start a Bible study with anyone. We must set out to **win lost souls**, then work diligently to make it happen. We might initially set a goal of winning *one soul* to Christ, then when this is accomplished, our goal must become larger. We will want to win more souls as we continue to build on our initial goal.

One of the difficulties we face as soul-winners is growing weary in “well-doing”. Many Christians begin with much enthusiasm, but after a while they lose their desire to put in the time and energy that are necessary to win lost souls.

Soul-winners must possess a deep love in their hearts for the Lord and for lost souls. If we love God we will keep His commandments, and if we love the souls of mankind we will work very hard to bring them to Christ. There is no substitute for love.



CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

To be effective in our personal Bible studies, we need to go back to the way evangelism was carried out in the early church. Many of the conversions that took place in the Bible were on a one-to-one basis, or one person teaching a family. Consider Saul's conversion (Acts 9), the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8), the heathen jailer (Acts 16:25-34) and Lydia (Acts 16:14,15).

The apostle Paul spoke of preaching from house to house. *"You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, **and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ**"* (Acts 20:18-21).

When we get outside our church buildings and teach people the gospel of Christ on a personal basis, we are

evangelizing in a scriptural way.

Christ gave the great commission in Mark 16:15,16: *"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.'"*

The command to evangelize is also found in Matthew 28:19,20: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."*

Sometimes we emphasize our personal obedience to the Gospel, but we tend to ignore the command in the same verses to go out and evangelize. God's people are commanded to go forth and preach and teach the gospel. We must set goals for ourselves, and we must press on in winning souls for the Lord. †

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

Thoughts

"Preach the gospel at all times. Use words if necessary."

"A clear conscience makes a soft pillow."

"God answers knee mail."

"Wal-Mart isn't the only saving place!"



SATAN'S WORK TO DESTROY THE MORAL FABRIC OF SOCIETY

Charles Box

America is reeling as Satan works to destroy the moral fabric of society. A **disregard for God's absolute standard of morality** and an **acceptance of the humanistic philosophy** has led us down a path of moral ruin. We have "sown the wind" and now we are "reaping the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7).

Satan's diabolical work had led to a world filled with violence. The date of September 11, 2001 will live in infamy. But that day was only one small step as Satan had worked to destroy the moral fabric of both the United States of America and of the World.

Genesis 6:11-13 described the world of Noah's day as being "*filled with violence*". Twice in that brief text we read that man had become corrupt and the earth was "*filled with violence*". "*The earth also was corrupt*

before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.” Our eyes would have to be deliberately blinded to deny that Satan’s work to destroy the moral fabric of our society has led to a very violent world today.

It should not be surprising to us that there would be attacks “against” our Nation because there have been constant attacks “within” our Nation. These attacks have been attacks upon God and upon God-ordained morality. We seem to have forgotten that *“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people”* (Proverbs 14:34).



Moral fabric destroyed by other “gods”

Satan’s diabolical work to destroy the moral fabric of society has centered in directing people to other gods. The god of materialism, the god of pleasure, and the god of indifference

along with many other gods have been honored above the true and living God. Judges 5:8 says, *“They chose new gods; then there was war in the gates.”* These are days of pain and sorrow because anytime people choose new gods there will be awful days of treachery and disappointment.

God has said through Moses, *“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates”* (Deuteronomy 6:5-9). Israel of old, like the United States today, was not

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

content to worship and serve the one God; rather *“they chose new gods; then there was war in the gates.”*

“The Lord has been mindful of us” (Psalm 115:12). Our society is one in which people can work, live, prosper, and serve God. But, if and when we choose “new gods”, that path will lead to sure and certain ruin. At this present moment in history we may be well along that road because Satan has been so busy working to destroy the moral fabric of our Society.

If our nation is to be preserved, it will be because enough people believe in *“God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 15:6). The hope of our nation is *“in the name of God”* (1 Timothy 1:6); *“by the grace of God”* (Titus 2:11); *“to the glory of God”* (John 11:40); and *“in the presence of God”* (Psalm 68:8). All of our rights and blessings are the results of God’s good grace.



Moral fabric destroyed by attacking the fear of God

Satan’s diabolical work to destroy the moral fabric of society has centered in attacking the idea of the “fear of God” as a good and wholesome influence upon our lives. Modern religion

wants the emphasis placed solely on the love of God. In our society God is looked at more as a weak old man somewhere in the sky that no one has much respect for anymore. The expression “God-fearing” is not one that finds application in very many places in our society.

Godly fear is a wonderful motivation for developing a moral society. *“Wherefore since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire”* (Hebrews 12:28,29). Peter simply said *“Fear God.”* *“Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king”* (1 Peter 2:17). The fear of God has a purifying influence upon our lives and upon society. Psalm 19:9 says, *“The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous*



altogether.” The fear of God is a powerful incentive toward a more moral society.

Moral fabric destroyed by human philosophy

Satan’s diabolical work to destroy the moral fabric of society has centered in deceiving

us with human philosophy. These philosophies would cut us loose from every moral restraint that ever was. Atheists and humanists declare that no one has the right to say that the conduct of another person is wrong. However *God* recognizes certain things as right and wrong. His desire is that we reach a spiritual state of “*full age*” having our spiritual senses so exercised as to “*discern both good and evil*” (Hebrews 5:14).

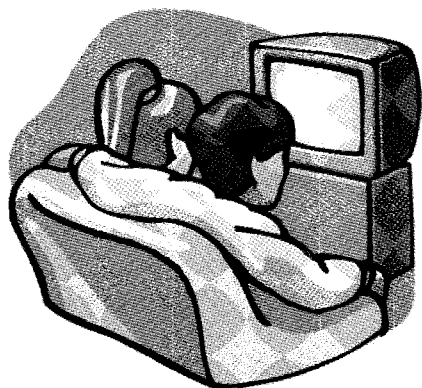
Morality is not whatever one defines it to be, according to his own judgment. Man has, of old, tried to run his own affairs. The result has always been disastrous. Jeremiah said, “*O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*” (Jeremiah 10:23). When man determines for himself (based on Satan’s work) what morality is, he soon loses moral consciousness.

This lack of moral consciousness causes all moral boundaries to be broken. Today we excuse fornication, homosexuality, adultery, lying, murder, rape, and all kinds of violent crimes. Our society is filled with humanistic and atheistic desires to overthrow every vestige of divine morality and of common sense. The result is that there is much to answer for on the day of judgment. Solomon wrote to young men saying, “*Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity*” (Ecclesiastes 11:9,10).

This advise should be heeded by all today!

†

Charles Box works with the Walnut Street Church of Christ in Greenville, Alabama, USA.



Be Careful Little Eyes

Kevin Cauley

Sometimes the most sublime truths can be stated in the simplest ways. We have a song that is often sung in our children's classes and vacation Bible schools: "Oh, be careful little eyes what you see." The song speaks about being careful about what we hear, say, do and where we go.

Certainly, it is a Biblical principle that we ought to abstain from the lusts of the world (1 John 2:15-17). One of those lusts is "*the lust of the eyes*". So, it comes as no surprise to Christians that a recent study done by the RAND Corporation shows that there is a strong connection between teens who watch and listen to sex and sexual talk on television and teens who choose to engage in sexual activity. The study, published in the September issue of *Pediatrics*, found that teens who watched and listened to sex and sexual situations on television were **twice** as likely to have sex within the next year as teens not exposed to such. To put it in real numbers, one out of every two teens who watch immoral programs on television will end up behaving that way.

Gospel preachers and Bible teachers have been sounding the warning regarding the dangers of television for years now. How is it that they have had advanced information on this subject, without the benefit of the RAND Corporation's study? Simply put, the Bible has told us plainly that *we are what we think*. Proverbs 4:23 says, "*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*"

If we allow evil into our heart through the influence of television, then we will allow evil into our life as well. Notice also Proverbs 23:7 "*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he*" We are what we think; if we allow evil things to permeate our thoughts, then our ways will be evil as well.

Finally, we note what Jesus said on this topic, *"But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man..."* (Matthew 15:18-20).

Now, if television can have such a significant effect on the lives of teens when it comes to sex, what about other matters? What about drinking alcohol? What about smoking or using tobacco? What about cursing and taking God's name in vain? What about lying and cheating to get ahead? What are the numbers on these moral questions that don't require a physical encounter with another person, but simply a thought, word, or careless action? My guess would be that the percentage is a lot higher.

When are we going to wake up and realize that we are destroying ourselves with our own devices? Television and movies have an enormous teaching power in our country. They ought to be used for good, not for evil. We saw how television could be used for evil at this past year's Superbowl half-time fiasco. Voices of good and decent folks around the country were heard in opposition to that filthy display.

But it isn't single events like

the Superbowl half-time show that move the hearts and minds of television viewers to practice what they see. It is the litany of daily barrages in the "soaps", "sit-coms" and evening "dramas" that affect us most. And as long as we allow the television networks to continue to promote such godless activities in our own living rooms, the more debased, degenerate and destroyed we will become as a people. Awake to righteousness (1 Corinthians 15:34)! †

Kevin Cauley works with the church of Christ in Berryville, Arkansas, USA.

Profanity

George Washington, first President of the United States, said, "The foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing is a vice so low that every person of sense and character detests and despises it."

Profanity is the attempt of a big mouth to express a midget-sized mind. It is someone's effort to establish their own authority at the expense of God's glory. A news service reported that Americans utter one billion curse words daily. If this is accurate, over 700,000 profane words are spoken each second.

"Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so" (James 3:10).

Kidnapped by Perversion

Jack English

A Christian friend of mine was recently fired from his job as a manager of a very popular national clothing store. The reason being given is because of his association through his sons with the Boy Scouts of America. Now why would this be a reason for terminating a long-term employee in a managerial position? The explanation was because of the National Boy Scouts organization's opposition to permitting homosexuals to serve as scout leaders. The popular clothing store for young people is very sympathetic to the homosexual agenda and is under pressure to disassociate from all those who are not, including employees and managers.

It still surprises many Christians to learn to what lengths "gay" activists will go to **push tolerance for the homosexual lifestyle while denying tolerance to those who oppose it**. Much of the real homosexual agenda remains buried in the homosexual subculture to which most Christians are seldom exposed. Yet prominent homosexual leaders and publications have voiced support for **pedophilia, incest, sadomasochism** and even **bestiality**. Gay activists routinely call for

legally binding "marriage" between homosexuals while at the same time ridiculing Biblical and traditional standards of fidelity.

The normalization of homosexuality in our culture is among the most profound moral issues of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Despite the fact that virtually all societies throughout history have condemned homosexuality, gay activists continue to make progress in convincing politicians, big corporations, and even some Christians to abandon efforts to resist their demands. I, for one, refuse to accept this perversion of God's creation of human beings and violation of God's law for humanity. Let God speak about human relationships:

"And Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:22-24).

"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it.

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion. Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants....

“For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that you do not commit any of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 18:22).

“For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting” (Romans 1:26,27).

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the

kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9,10).

A recent study released by the American Psychiatric Association says what many (and the Bible) have been saying all along: that homosexuals *can* change their sexual orientation. **God does not hate homosexuals, but He does hate the sin of homosexuality.** Like all sinful behaviors, repentance is a prerequisite to having a relationship with God and any hope of being saved (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). I recognize that there are physical, psychological and spiritual complexities for those leaving homosexuality. But everyone has a choice over his behavior and the empowering work of the Holy Spirit and the grace of Jesus enable even homosexuals to change.

I regret that my friend has lost his job because of the perverted and sinful agenda of others. But **I regret more the apathy that many Christians may be adopting toward a destructive and abominable sin which is kidnapping our culture.** †

Jack English works with the church of Christ in Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA.



Rich

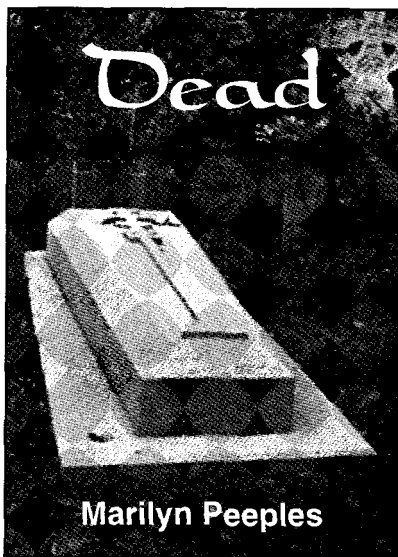
If I had only two requests I would ask God to grant me these two gifts: (1) I want to be **rich** and (2) I want to be **dead**.

You probably are thinking: "She's been breathing too many diesel fumes from the back of a bus!" Right???

Think with me a moment about what God really wants us to be. He wants us to be **rich**. In 1 Timothy 6:18, Paul wrote: "*Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share.*" See there — God really does want us to be rich — in **good works**.

This is not optional. It's required! Can't leave it out of our

and



Dead

Marilyn Peeples

DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

daily Christian life. And not just works — but **rich** in good works. Does this mean once we drop our offering in the collection plate on the first day of the week that the rest of the week we can concentrate on ourselves? Forget about others? Fail to minister? You know the answer! We are to go about our daily walk being rich in good works. Are you rich in good works? To please God, you must be! It is not optional!

we who died to sin live any longer in it?" Wow! No sin!

Is Paul saying that we will never sin? Of course not! We may stumble. Through weakness, fall. Yield to temptation. Sin may coax us. May threaten us. Yet we should strive to have no response to the temptation, except to shun it. Flee from it. A dead person does not respond to stimuli. If we are truly dead to sin, we will no longer live in the sphere of the influence of sin.

How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? (Romans 6:2).

What are good works? Read Matthew 25:34-46. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Give drink to the thirsty. Shelter a stranger. Visit the sick and the ones in prison. We must keep in mind that if we do not do these things, we will be told by Jesus at the judgment (v. 41) *"Depart from Me, you cursed..."* These were not liars, murderers, nor drunkards. These were ones who failed to minister to others in need. Don't fail! It's easy: do these things — be rich in good works.

My second request would be that God allow me to be **dead**. You're probably way ahead of me. Yes, I'm referring to being dead to sin. Paul told us in Romans 6:1,2, *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall*

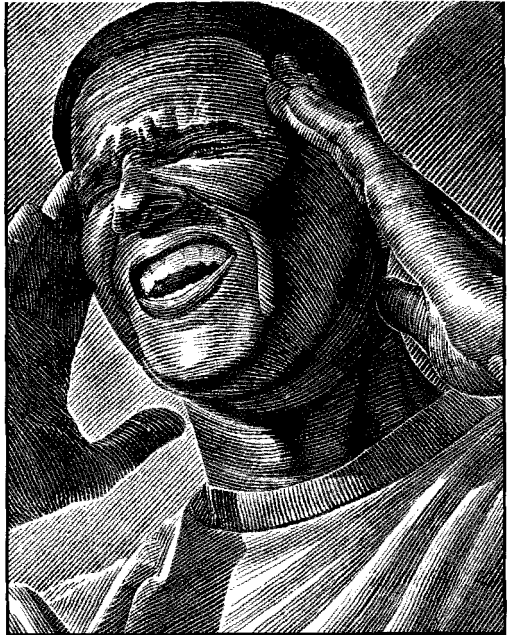
We will not respond to the power of sin.

When you think of gifts you would like to receive from others, I'd like to challenge you to consider asking God to make you **rich** and **dead**. This is the only way He will be pleased. We must seek every day to put God first, others second, and ourselves last. It is only in letting God be in control of our lives and in giving to others, that we can be truly happy and have the hope of heaven. We must seek to be a faithful, fruitful Christian. Daily look for opportunities to minister to others. Be unselfish. It's not the best life — it's the **only** life — *worth living.* †

Marilyn M. Peoples is a Christian writer, living in Jacksonville, Florida, USA.

In his second letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul wrote, “*For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death*” (2 Corinthians 7:10 ESV). The older translations used the word sorrow rather than grief, but grief is probably closer to the original meaning. Regardless, the passage teaches a very important lesson about how we deal with remorse.

The Corinthian brethren had been chastised by



Remorse

Emmett Smith

Paul in his first epistle, and the above passage was Paul’s comment on their reaction to his criticism. He was praising them for having repented and corrected the situation, and he attributed their positive response to “godly grief”. In contrast to the godly sort, however, Paul wrote that “worldly grief” produces death. What a contrast! *Having a godly world view does make a tremendous difference in one’s life.*

This difference can be illustrated in several ways. The example of Judas is often cited in discussions of this passage. He was *remorseful*, but apparently not with **godly** remorse. So he committed suicide. Of course, physical death is not the ultimate consequence Paul had in mind here. He was comparing opposite results, *salvation* versus *spiritual death*. And if the evil one can cause someone to despair of life itself then he can forestall that per-

son's repentance and salvation.

The latest U.S. statistics on suicide are sobering. Among them please note the following:

- ◆ Persons under age 25 made up 15% of all suicide victims in the year 2000.
- ◆ Between 1952 and 1995, the suicide rate for adolescents and young adults nearly tripled.
- ◆ Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people aged 15-19 years. These suicide deaths outnumber deaths from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, and chronic lung disease combined!

It could easily be argued that the tripling of the suicide rate among young people since the early 1950s correlates to the *increasingly secular nature of the government, schools and our society* in general. And this secularization is being pushed with a vengeance these days. How many more victims will be lost to the

despair brought on by worldly grief? Don't let yourself be one of them.

"And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you" (Psalm 9:10 ESV). †

Emmett Smith is the former president of Crowley's Ridge Christian College in Paragould, Arkansas, USA.

The following are statistical facts about the Danish family, a country with an advanced welfare state and advanced decline in family life. It is a useful study as an archetype of many developed countries.

- Fewer people are getting married and when they do marry it is later in life. 88 percent of 30-year old women were married in 1970. In 2002 the number was 47 percent.
- More and more people live together without getting married, but more than a third of all adults are not married and do not live in any other kind of relationship. They live alone.
- More of the marriages end in divorce. In 1975, 18 percent of all the marriages from 1950 had ended in divorce. In 2000, 37 percent of all the marriages from 1975 had ended in divorce.
- The families with children where both parents have full time jobs have increased from 50 percent in 1980 to 83 percent in 1998. In families without any children the number has only increased from 68 percent to 75 percent.
- The share of children between 0-6 years of age, who were in day nursery, day care or kindergarten was 7.3 percent in 1965. In 2000 the share was 76.6 percent.

From an article by Per Henrik Hansen, submitted by Mark McWhorter.

The Goose Story

Next fall, when you see Geese heading South for the Winter ... flying in V formation ... you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way.

As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in V formation the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range, than if each bird flew on its own.



When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing ... and another goose flies point.

It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs with people or with geese flying south.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are traveling on the thrust of another.

What do we say when we honk from behind?

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone ... and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front.

Finally ... and this is important ... when a goose gets sick, or is wounded by gunshots, and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies; and only then do they launch out on their own, or with other formations to catch up with their own group.

If we have as much sense as a goose we will stay in formation with those who are headed in the same way we are.

If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other like that.

"Marriage Is Honorable"

Dalton Key

The world has made a god of sex and a mockery of marriage. Jumping from partner to partner, from mate to mate, from bed to bed has become more rule than exception. "Free love", which in truth is neither free nor loving, is now running roughshod over the sacred vows of marriage.

But this flippant attitude toward marital commitment should not surprise us. The problem is by no means a new one. According to Gibbons, the renowned historian, the divorce problem was one of five leading causes behind the fall of ancient Rome. Seneca spoke of Roman women as married to be divorced and divorced to be married. Many of them, not unlike their modern prototypes, were said to have distinguished the years by the names and number of their husbands. It seems some things never change.

And yet we expect better of the church. The world may have "*eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin*" (2 Peter 2:14), but the church, as the bride of Christ, must remain pure and chaste (2 Corinthians 11:2). Our standards are not set by Hollywood, but by the Bible.

Current norms, morals, and

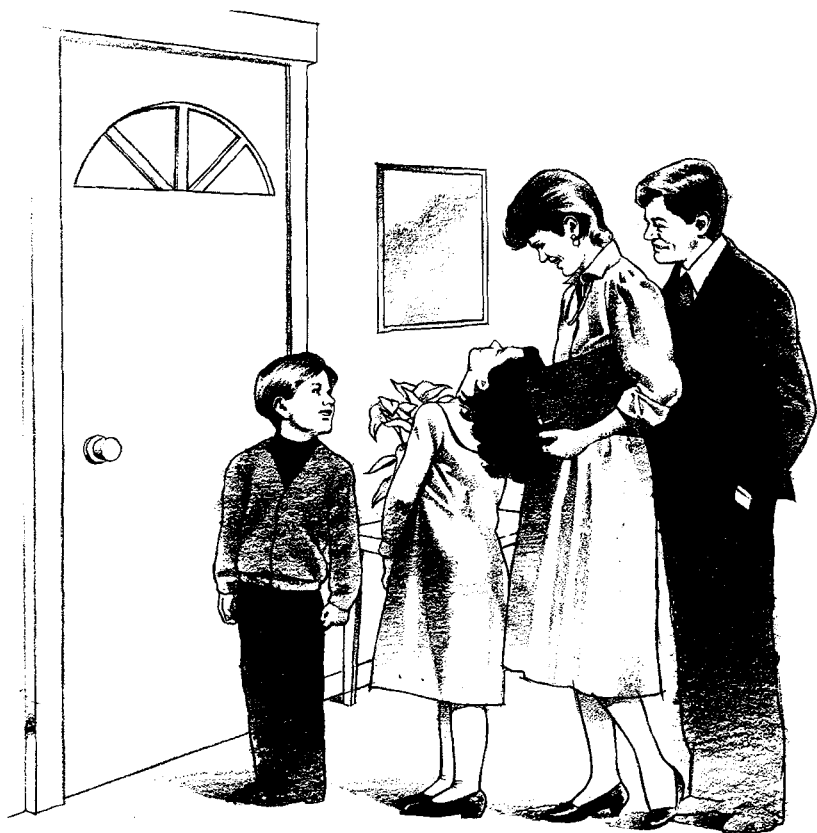
philosophies notwithstanding, God's decree for marriage remains constant: one man and one woman for life. Aside from the death of a spouse, or the unfaithfulness of a marriage partner, there are no exceptions. When all else fails, read the instructions: "*And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder*" (Matthew 19:4-6). †

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

"Too hard," you say? "What about this situation or that one? Give me another answer."

The disciples thought so, too. "Well, if that's the way it is, '...it is better not to marry.'"

Jesus — **the authority** — didn't back down. His answer: "All cannot accept this saying,..... He who is able to accept it, let him accept it" (Matthew 19:11,12).



Successful Parenting

Jack Harriman

By successful parenting, I mean “presenting to society a young adult who is prepared to be a useful citizen and can repeat in his or her own children what his or her parents did for him or her.”

Though the Bible does address the subject of successful parenting, it does not say a lot about it, and what it does say is rather generic. God knew that children would be coming into this world for thousands of years in

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

every conceivable society. So He gives these general instructions that can be applied in any age, place, and society. He expects all parents, whenever and wherever and whomsoever, to apply these principles to the rearing of their children, using also their instincts and common sense and the knowledge they learned from their parents, to be successful.

These five things I have learned from experience and observation:

- 1. Give your children a living example of the way they should go. Now this may not have a great influence on the child until he or she has reached adulthood. The song says, "There is a whole lot of my father in me" (mother too). But the mother and father may not show up in the child until adulthood.**
- 2. Give your children a trade or an education that will prepare them to earn a living for their family. Give them the ability or capability of making an honest and adequate living, and that is what they will do.**
- 3. Give your children a foundation for a faith that will sustain them for a lifetime. Teach them what you believe and why you believe it. Teach them to love the Lord, His Word, and His church. Train them in the practice of it as long as they are under your control.**
- 4. Give them a spouse that will help them accomplish all these things. We can teach them the importance of a good choice and the qualities they should look for in a spouse, and we can control, at least to some degree, their association practices. If you want to give a child the best possible chance of having a happy marriage, of being a successful parent, and of going to heaven when this life is over, then give that child a spouse who wants those things as much as he or she does.**
- 5. Give your children roots and traditions.**

May God bless and strengthen you in your parenting responsibilities. †

Jack Harriman is a gospel preacher living in Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA.

O, Master, make me a better parent!

* Teach me to understand my children, to listen patiently to what they have to say, and to answer all the questions kindly. Keep me from interrupting them, talking back to them, and contradicting them. Make me as courteous to them as I would have them be to me. Give me the courage to confess my sins against my children and ask their forgiveness, when I know that I have done them a wrong.

* May I not vainly hurt the feelings of my children. Forbid that I should laugh at their mistakes or resort to shame and ridicule as punishment, Let me not tempt my child to lie and steal. So guide me hour by hour that I may demonstrate by all I say and do that honesty produces happiness.

* Reduce, I pray, the meanness in me. May I cease to nag; and when I am out of sorts, help me to hold my tongue.

* Blind me to the little errors of my children and help me to see the good things that they do. Give me a ready heart for honest praise.

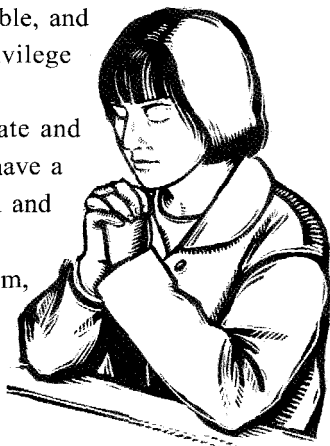
* Help me to grow up with my children, to treat them as would those of their own age; but let me not exact of them the judgment and conventions of adults. Allow me not to rob them of the opportunity to wait upon themselves, to think, to choose, and to make decisions.

* Forbid that I should ever punish them for my selfish satisfaction. May I grant them all their wishes that are reasonable, and have the courage always to withhold a privilege which I know will do them harm.

* Make me so fair and just, so considerate and companionable to my children that they will have a genuine esteem for me. Fit me to be loved and imitated.

With all thy gifts, O Lord, give me calm, poise, and self-control. In Jesus' name. Amen.

A Parent Prays Unknown





Just a few random thoughts and facts of deep significance:

It was recently discovered that research causes cancer in rats.

Despite the high cost of living, have you noticed how it remains so popular?

Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.

I often wonder just how much deeper the ocean would be without the sponges living in it.



I just got some skylights put in my apartment. I thought it was a great idea, but the people who live above me are furious.



I heard of one particular airline pilot who was especially skilled in

maintaining a sense of calm in the midst of calamity.

His plane was in the process of going down over the Atlantic Ocean. With the motor on one wing blazing, the pilot's calm voice came over the intercom:

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to have to ditch in the water. Those of you who can swim, please put on your swim vests found under your seats. For those of you who cannot swim, thank you for flying Overseas Airways."



Do you pay much attention to the wording of newspaper headlines? Give these a glance.

"Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Experts Say"

"Iraqi Head Seeks Arms"

"Plane Too Close to Ground, Crash Probe Told"

"Stolen Painting Found by Tree"

"Two Sisters Reunited After 18 Years in Checkout Counter"



Bob: "Has your baby called you 'Daddy' yet?"

Rob: "No, my wife isn't going to tell him who I am until he gets a little stronger."

PROVERBS 17:22

A saying in Texas:

Don't ask a man if he's from Texas. He'll tell you if he is, and if he isn't, don't embarrass him by asking him.



We had a barbershop quartet back home when I was growing up. They became known as "The Local Prison Quartet." That always seemed like a strange name to me. The men were not prisoners, and we didn't even have a prison in our town. I finally asked my mother one day why the quartet was known by that name. She said that it was because they sang behind a few bars and were always looking for the key.



Someone once asked Daniel Boone if he had ever been lost in his mountain travels. He replied, "Lost? No, but once I was a mite confused for about five days."



Sometimes the church announcements get a little mixed up, and occasionally even the preacher doesn't say everything just the way he intends to. For example, one

preacher concluded his sermon by extending the following invitation: "All those who feel the need may now come forward and commit their sins publicly."



A little boy walked down the beach, and as he did, he spied a matronly woman sitting under a beach umbrella on the sand. He walked up to her and asked, "Are you a Christian?" She said, "Yes." He then asked, "Do you read your Bible every day?" She nodded her head, "Yes." He followed with, "Do you pray often?" She again answered, "Yes." With that, he asked his final question, "Will you hold my quarter while I go swimming?"



It just may be that women are smarter than men. Women realize that – counting the cost of the boat, trailer, fuel, rod and reel, bait, and license – \$3,500 per pound for bass is really not that good a deal.



How long a minute is depends on what side of the bathroom door you're on.

Is It Important How I Worship God?

Aubrey Smith

Let's study your Bible...

Revelation 4:11 tells us that God created everything and is entitled to our worship. *"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things..."*

Now open your Bible and read Romans 11:36. *"For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever."* The Bible also reveals to us that we bring honor and glory to God only when we do His will, and when we do our best to be like Christ, (Romans 15:7 and 2 Corinthians 3:18).

Does it really matter how we worship? **Let's see what the Bible has to say.** Read John 8:31,32. Notice that Jesus said, *"If you abide in My word you are My disciples..."*

What is Jesus saying? Simply, the King of Kings is telling us that He has revealed to us what He wants us to do and how He expects us to act if we want to be saved. Jesus is telling us that we must study the Bible and follow the pat-

tern it describes. This simple truth applies to how we are saved, how we must live, and how we must worship. John 12:48 tell us: *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."* These are life and death statements. Jesus, the son of God, is plainly telling us that if we do not follow *all* the patterns that have been revealed to us in the New Testament, we cannot be His disciple. And, if we are not His, we will not spend eternity with Him in heaven.

I don't know about you, but I've already figured out that I'd rather live with Jesus in heaven than live with Satan in hell. If you've not yet decided where you'd prefer to spend eternity, please read the eighty words of terror spoken by a man who is in hell (Luke 16:19). This is the only record that we have of someone speaking to us directly from torment. He was in hell, he's still in hell, and he'll always be in hell. Think about that and you will

WORSHIP

quickly see how important it is that we study our Bible and apply its truths to our lives.

If you believe, as I do, that the Bible has revealed to us God's plan, let's see how God wants us to worship Him. We can find out by simply studying from the Bible.

Worshipping God is of first importance, and He wants our worship to be from our heart, not given as an obligation. Let's read John 4:24: "*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*" It's not altogether **where** we worship, but **how** we worship that is important to God. The truth of the matter is that we should have a worshipful attitude toward God all day, every day (Romans 12:1). Everything we do should be our attempt to honor Him. According to the passage we just read, our worship must be with sincere love, following the pattern given us in God's Word.

Let's take a look at the worship patterns in the Scriptures and as they are practiced each Sunday morning in Christian worship services.

First, Hebrews 10:25 reminds us that we are to **assemble together**. Those believers of old met on the first day of each week to eat the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7).

1. Learning God's ways:

Let's read Matthew 7:24-26:

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock... But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand."

Now read Romans 1:16 and 1 Thessalonians 5:21. Finally, Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*" Clearly, there is a way that we must learn if we want to be right with God. That's why first-century Christians were called followers of "The Way". That's what preaching is all about. In true worship, preaching declares God's truth clearly, adhering faithfully to His Word.

2. Praying: God does not want us to be wordy and He doesn't want us to be repetitious (Matthew 6:5-8). He listens to the attitudes of our hearts. Jesus taught His disciples to pray in Matthew 6:9-13. Now our prayers are to be offered through Christ (John 14:14). In James 5:13-18 you will find rich instructions concerning your prayer life. Study your Bible and you'll soon see that God has promised to hear and to respond to every Christian's prayer that is according to His will.

WORSHIP

3. Praising God in song. In the previous verse from James, please note he also advised us to sing praise to God. There is every indication that the first-century Christians were singing assemblies of God's children. Read Colossians 3:16. This may also surprise you, but one of the primary purposes of singing is *to teach*. Singing also admonishes and encourages Christians. Read Ephesians 5:19: "*Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*" The use of mechanical instruments such as pianos and organs were not accepted into church worship for over one thousand years. It is clear from both history and the Bible that the first-century Christians did not use any form of instrumental music in their worship to God.

4. Remembering Christ. The worship of the early church was really very simple. "*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (Acts 2:42). This important memorial is described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11: 23-25, and we are told in the eleventh chapter of 1 Corinthians, verse 28 that we are to examine ourselves as we partake of the feast.

Where did this practice begin?

The Bible tells us Jesus started this memorial feast at the Last Supper before His death. "*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.'*" And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, '*Drink ye all of it.*'" (Matthew 26:26,27). Also read Luke 22:17-20. This is all very clear to those who *want* to be guided by what the Bible teaches. When we go outside of the Scriptures and strive to guide ourselves, we've wandered into forbidden territories. "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.*" (1 Corinthians 11:26)

5. Cheerfully giving. "*On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come*" (1 Corinthians 16:2). Giving is dependent on the level of your prosperity. "*Let each man give according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver*" (2 Corinthians. 9:7).

May God bless us as we worship Him in spirit and truth, and may our fellowship always be in Christ Jesus. †

Aubrey Smith works with the Lord's church in Utopia, Texas, USA.

Prayer

Mike Johnson

Prayer is misunderstood, misused, misdirected, oversimplified, greatly exaggerated, underestimated, underappreciated, and overlooked. In other words, prayer is tough! And yet, for a Christian, prayer should be as natural as having a conversation with a parent. After all, God is our Father.

So, what makes prayer so difficult? Sometimes prayer is tough because of something in your life that keeps you from talking to your father out of guilt.

Sometimes prayer is tough because you don't know how to do it. Prayer is something that you must learn.

Prayer is tough for some people because they are not comfortable with their own parents and do not feel close to God as their Father. At other times, prayer is tough because we do not plan time to pray.

There are many verses of scripture that should encourage us in our prayer life. *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God"* (Philippians 4:6).

"Continue earnestly in prayer being vigilant in it with thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:21).

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray" (James 5:13).

We should work on developing a prayer life that is inspiring, powerful, fruitful, encouraging, specific, comfortable, natural, deep, simple, clear and consistent. This type of prayer life will strengthen our Christian life. †



Mike Johnson worships with the Richmond Church of Christ in Richmond, Kentucky, USA.

I WILL NOT LISTEN

Will Hanstein

The attitude of God toward worship and morality is different from the attitude most men have concerning those topics. Many today feel that as long as they attend worship once a week they have done enough to secure their place in heaven. They feel that God will overlook certain “minor” sins they engage in during the week. God, in their opinion, really only cares about their worship, and they feel that worship “buys” them a certain amount of freedom in not fully complying with God’s will.



Yet, according to Isaiah, God feels very differently. He writes, “*To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?*” says the Lord. *‘I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats’*” (Isaiah 1:11). According to Isaiah, God was not just *unaccepting* of the worship of the children of Israel; He *abhorred* it. Isaiah gives the result and the reason in verse 15. He says, “*When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood*”” (emphasis mine, WH). After reading the book of Isaiah, we see that the children of Israel had become grossly immoral, and therefore God refused to accept any worship they might try to offer.

Isaiah shows us that the way we live Monday through Saturday affects what occurs on Sunday. If we engage in sin, God will not accept our worship. The notion that God will overlook sin if we just “put in our time” on Sunday could not be further from the truth. He did not during Isaiah’s time, and He will not during our time either. Let us all strive to live godly lives during the week so that God will listen to what we have to say on Sunday. †



Why Tsunamis?

Steven K. Guy

The problem of evil — Why bad things happen to good people through no fault of their own — is Public Enemy Number One to a Christian's faith. We want to know, "Why, God?" The Bible book of James provides the following insights.

First, God is good and is the giver of good gifts. *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father..."* (James 1:17).

God gives us wisdom to understand. *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him"* (James 1:5).

God is holy and cannot be tempted to sin, nor does He tempt man to sin. *"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed"* (James 1:13,14).

However, God does *test* man to strengthen his character and to bring out his best. *"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,*

COMFORT AND REASSURANCE

knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (James 1:2-4).

So why is there evil in the world?

The problem of evil is not God's fault, but man's. "...each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (James 1:14,15,19,20).

God made everything perfect in the beginning (Genesis 1-2). Man was given one prohibition and warned that if he did eat of the forbidden fruit, he would die (spiritually and physically), Genesis 2-3. Man sinned. He broke God's law and heart (1 John 3:4), and he brought sin and death into the world. "...through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned..." (Romans 5:12).

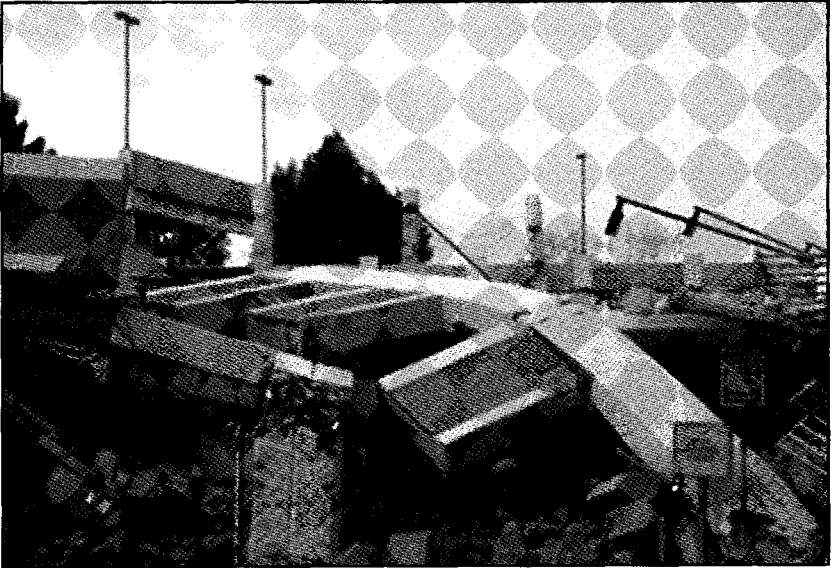
Today, all of mankind live in a fallen world full of pain, sorrow, disease, accidents, natural disasters, and death. Yet, God sent Jesus to save us, spiritually: "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God*

did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16,17). And He gave His word to instruct and comfort us. "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*" (2 Timothy 3:16,17; 1 Thessalonians 4:18).

Such natural disasters as tsunamis ought to remind us that **life is precious and uncertain** (James 4:13-17) and that we live in a fallen world. But we can be saved by obeying and living in Jesus. "*But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness*" (Romans 6:17,18; Acts 22:16; Revelation 2:10; James 1:18).

There is a certain end of the world and judgment coming, according to the prophecies in 2 Peter 3 and Revelation 20-21. **Are you ready?** The question is not "**Why, God, are there trials and death?**" but "*Why, man, don't you seek pardon and life today?*" †

Steven K. Guy works with the church of Christ in Booneville, Mississippi, USA.



If the Foundations Are Destroyed

Cecil May, Jr.

World crises come frequently. That has always been true.

The universal flood in Noah's day.

The confusion of human languages at Babel, resulting in the scattering of the people.

The destruction of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea.

The savage domination of the world by Assyria and later by Babylon.

The nearly successful invasion of Europe by Xerxes.

The capture of the world by Alexander.

The rise and fall of the Roman Empire.

The rise of Hitler and World War II.

9/11/01.

COMFORT AND REASSURANCE

Each time the world seems to fall apart, we tend to look anew at who we are and why we are here, and many cry out to God, even if often too late.

The Psalmist's question is still pertinent. So is his answer. *"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"* (Psalm 11:3).

The Psalmist's answer, first, is that the Lord is still with us and in control. *"The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes see, his eyelids test, the children of man. The Lord tests the righteous"* (Psalm 11:4,5).

Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain suffered calamity. Their foundations certainly disintegrated! Why was Sodom destroyed? One obvious reason is that virtually the whole city had turned to homosexual debauchery. They attempted homosexual rape of the angelic visitors to Lot and his family (Genesis 19). The city gave its name to that perversion. A later prophet said Sodom was destroyed because she *"had pride, excess of food and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty, and did an abomination before me"* (Ezekiel 16:49,50).

A more fundamental reason Sodom was destroyed, however, is that ten righteous people could not be found within her borders (Genesis 18:32). The righteous are

the saving and preserving salt of any people or civilization. When the Lord tests our nation or city, will he find righteous people? Will you be one? Will I?

The Psalmist answers his own question in the last verse of the Psalm. *"For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold His face"* (Psalm 11:7).

When the foundations are destroyed, what shall the righteous do?

Keep right on doing right. †

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

What if I say

The Bible is God's holy Law
Complete, inspired, without a
flaw—

But never read that precious
word

Never by its message stirred,
Nor ask His help along the
way,

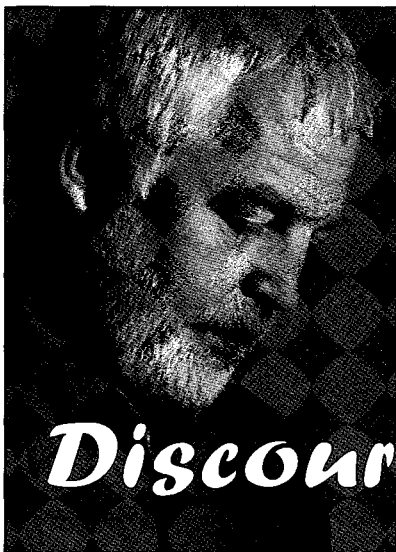
Does it matter what I say?

What if I go not there to seek
The truth of which I glibly
speak,

For guidance on this earthly
way—

Does it matter what I say?

— author unknown



The devil wants to get you out of the church, or at least to make you less committed. If he cannot get you involved in obvious sin, he may try to destroy you through discouragement.

It is not unusual for a Christian to have times of discouragement. It is not reasonable to think that every-

Dealing With Discouragement

David Pharr

thing can be going well all the time. Even the strongest Christian will have disappointments when the burdens of life are hard to bear. Though they may not let this show to others, but their discouragements are real, nonetheless.

Discouragements may be caused by problems which arise in the home, at school, with friends, etc. Christians are not immune from financial problems, family problems, career problems, and the many other problems that arise in human life. Even Christian couples sometimes have difficulties! Relatives do not always act as we would like. Sickness can be discouraging.

Discouragements also may come because of disappointments related to our service to Christ. Sometimes other members may appear to be hypocritical in their conduct. (Perhaps they, like you, are fighting against Satan's intrusions into their life, and maybe they even temporarily lost the battle.) Brothers and sisters may not do as we feel they should. Then there are disappointments that come in our efforts to lead others to Christ. It may happen that you have worked and prayed diligently to win someone you love, but thus far it appears your efforts have failed. This kind of discouragement can also be used by Satan to tempt you to give up.

Then there is the possibility of being disappointed with self. You may not have grown in knowledge as fast as you expected. Or you may have found it hard to deal with certain weaknesses. Of course you ought to be

COMFORT AND REASSURANCE

disappointed in yourself if your failures are because of sin. But even this should not be allowed to discourage you to the point of giving up. Instead you should ask for forgiveness and determine to never give up in your efforts to live for God.

There are precious promises to help us overcome discouragement. Read the following passages and remember these promises.

Romans 8:28. *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”* This does not say that all that happens will be good, but that God will cause everything to work out for good.

Philippians 4:6,7. *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”* This means that we should not be overcome with anxiety. Rather we should pray about our problems. God will give us peace to carry us through our troubles.

1 Corinthians 15:58. *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”* If we never give up we can

be sure our efforts will not be in vain.

Galatians 6:9. This tells us not to get tired of doing right, even when it seems hard. We may feel discouragements now, but *“in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”*

1 Corinthians 10:13. Though you may feel your burdens are especially heavy, remember that such things are common to mankind. Others also have burdens. But as Christians, we have this precious promise: *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*

The wonderful message of these verses is that we should never let ourselves be discouraged to the point that we give up our faithfulness to God. Instead we should do His will and trust Him to help us through it.

When you feel discouraged, tell God frankly how you feel. Then name the many things for which you are thankful. God loves you because of the decision you made to become His child and also because of the progress you have already made. He is pleased that you are still seeking to become better than you are. †

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

When I Was a Child

Barbara A. Oliver



When I was a child, my mother made me wear big white socks that she had worn until they were too stretched out for her. They were so big I had to put rubber bands around the tops to hold them up.

One day, on my way home from school, it started to rain, and those socks got so wet that the

rubber bands couldn't hold them up anymore. They sank down to my ankles in big, messy clumps. The other kids laughed at me, and I began to cry.

Out of nowhere, a big umbrella covered me over, and an arm fell across my shoulders. A soft voice comforted me, telling me that people had laughed at her before, and that I should not pay any attention to those kids. She said it didn't matter what I wore or what other people thought of me because of the way I looked. It only mattered whom I was inside.

I let the warmth of her words and touch soak into my weary young body. Too shy to look up, all I saw were dark legs at the top of her boots.

During times of heartache and trouble, I am reminded of another voice that comforts me: *"I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5b, NKJV). And I am reminded that part of my job here on earth is to be a comforter: *"Therefore, encourage one another, and build up one another ..."* (1 Thessalonians 5:11); *"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep"* (Romans 12:15); *"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor"* (Romans 12:10).

On rainy days, I remember the sweet, black teenager who took the time to love a little white kid with droopy socks and a broken heart. †

Barbara A. Oliver works with the World Evangelism team in Winona, Mississippi, USA.

Questions Relating to the Holy Spirit

E. Claude Gardner

1. Where does the Bible teach that Christians today are given the nine spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12?
2. If one of the gifts, such as tongues, is for today, then are not **all** the rest for today? If not, why not?
3. If spiritual gifts are practiced, what documentation and factual proof can be produced that they are being done? (Like raising Lazarus from the dead, who had been dead four days, John 11.)
4. If spiritual gifts are for today, then why is the Bible needed to guide and teach us? Does not the Word of God furnish us completely (2 Timothy 3:16,17)?
5. If the Holy Spirit influences or teaches anything differently from what He has already given in the Bible (2 Peter 1:21; John 16:13), then does this not cause Him to contradict Himself?
6. What has God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit told or promised one that has not been revealed in the Bible?
7. Is it possible for one to be mentally deceived and think that God or Christ has revealed Himself and spoken to one (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)?
8. If Christ appeared in person to one, why would He allow that person to reveal it and tell what was seen when He did not allow Paul to do so (2 Corinthians 12:1-4)?
9. How can one participate in, support, and encourage charismatic religions and churches that openly teach doctrines which contradict the Bible? Examples: That one is saved by faith only; baptism is not essential to being saved; open fellowship of all denominations; belief in many churches, and that one church is as good as another; acceptance and approval of people who have been sprinkled; lacking the plan of church government in the New Testament; worshipping with instruments of music; claiming the Holy Spirit causes people to do unusual and even immodest things — indecent dress, barking, jerking, laughing hysterically, swooning, etc? (See Matthew 15:9.) If they are in error on these doctrinal matters, could they not be in error on the question of charismatic gifts? †

E. Claude Gardner is President-Emeritus of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee, USA.

What About the Sabbath?

Randy Kea

Question #1 — What is the Sabbath?

The word *sabbath* means the “ceasing from work or activity.” In the Old Testament Law the word is used in connection with (1) the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29-31); (2) the Seventh Year (Leviticus 25:2-4); (3) the Fiftieth Year (Leviticus 25:8-11); (4) the Seventy Years of Judah’s bondage (2 Chronicles 36:21); and (5) the Seventh Day of the week. This study will focus on the Sabbath as the seventh day of the week.

Question #2 — To whom was the Sabbath given?

The sabbath law was given only to the Jews (Deuteronomy 5:1-3, 6-21). The command to keep the sabbath holy was never given to any other people.

Question #3 — When was the sabbath law given to the Jews?

Some might point to Genesis 2:1-3 to prove that the sabbath law was given at creation. However, Genesis 2 is a statement of fact, not a command. The sabbath was not given until the institution of the Old Law (the “Law of Moses”) to the Jews at Mt. Sinai (Nehemiah 9:13,14; Ezekiel 20:10-12).

Question #4 — Why was the sabbath given to the Jews?

It was given as a day of rest and a day of remembrance of the Jews’ deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 31:15-17; Deuteronomy 5:15). Also it was given as “a sign” between God and Israel (Exodus 31:13-17). This within itself indicates that it was exclusively a law for the Old Testament Jewish nation.

Question #5 — When did the sabbath end as a law to be observed by God’s people?

The Old Testament anticipated the end of the Old Law and of the Sabbath as a holy day (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hosea 2:11). The New Testament says that when Jesus died on the cross, the Old Law (of which the sabbath was part) was “nailed” to the cross and ended, giving way to the New Testament of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 8:5-13; Colossians 2:14-16; Hebrews 10:9,10; Hebrews 9:15-17; Ephesians 2:14-16; Galatians 3:19-28).

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements

BIBLE QUESTIONS

that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

*“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or **sabbaths**, which are **a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ**” (Colossians 2:14-17).*

Since the Old Law has been taken out of the way, we now live and serve under the New Testament of Christ. As Christians we assemble on the first day of the week (Sunday) to eat the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7), give of our means (1 Corinthians 16:1,2), and worship

God in spirit and truth (John 4:23,24).

Sometimes we hear someone talking about the “Christian Sabbath”. This is an unscriptural term. There is nothing “Christian” about the “sabbath”. It was a part of the Old Testament Judaism, not a part of New Testament Christianity.

No one today can take a Bible and scripturally condemn anyone for not “observing the Sabbath” (Colossians 2:16). Let us always *“rightly divide the word of Truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15). †

Randy Kea is the preacher for the Forest Park congregation in Forest Park, Georgia, USA.

A re-reading of the Sabbath Law for those who believe it is the law for today. — and a question: Do you keep it, according to these commands?

“Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.

‘You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.

‘Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.

‘It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.’” (Exodus 31:13-17).

What Does It Mean to Receive Christ?

Grady Miller

Have you ever sat and listened to someone try to explain his position on a certain matter and suddenly realize that he wasn't really saying anything at all? While he may go on and on with his explanation, the words mean nothing. One fellow might understand him to have said the complete opposite of what another listener heard. Although we sometimes joke that politicians are masters of this art, we should recognize that all of us are guilty of occasionally using words and phrases that, upon reflection and examination, mean little or nothing at all.

One expression that is quite popular today is the exhortation to "receive Christ" for salvation. This is unquestionably the key phrase in modern-day evangelism. At the end of a broadcast or revival service the audience is invariably encouraged to "receive Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior". In view of the widespread usage of this phrase, it might be good for us to take a moment and examine the meaning behind these words.

Many people are shocked to discover that nowhere in all the Bible is a sinner told to receive Christ for salvation. Why not? It

just may be because if the sinner was told to "receive Christ" he *still* would not know what to do in order to be saved! **What do you do** when you *receive* Christ? **How** does one *receive* Christ? **In what way** can we *receive* Christ today? The expression "receive Christ", in and of itself, tells us nothing at all.

Of course, we must "receive" Jesus in some way if we are going to be saved. The Bible records that some disciples did receive Him in a spiritual sense (Colossians 2:6; John 1:12). Thus, we do not question *whether* we should receive Him, but *how* we are to receive Him. The world desperately needs to know just what to do in order to receive Jesus as Savior.

You should know that **the message concerning the Christ** has been revealed unto the world, and that **you receive Christ when you receive that message — the Gospel — and obey it**. Paul summarized that message for the saints in Corinth (1 Corinthians 15); he declared that *they had received the Gospel* he had preached unto them and that *they were standing in it*, or were *being faithful to its demands*. In verse two he assured the Corinthians that **they**

BIBLE QUESTIONS

were saved by their obedient reception of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Christians in Corinth received Christ *when they received and obeyed His Gospel.*

Another example of believers receiving Jesus is found in Acts 2. There, on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, Peter preached a powerful sermon that centered on Jesus of Nazareth as Lord and Christ (verses 22,36). In verse 41 we read that all those who "*gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*"

One may receive Jesus as his Savior today *by responding to the gospel invitation just as first century disciples did in Corinth and Jerusalem:*

- * Place your faith and trust in Jesus (John 8:24).
- * Repent and turn away from your sins (Acts 17:31).
- * Confess Jesus to be the Son of God (Romans 10:10).
- * Be buried with Him in baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and arise to walk as a new creature (Romans 6:4).

This is how we receive Jesus, not by some "magic" formula of words devised by men. †

Grady Miller preaches the Gospel of Christ in Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA.

HOW DO I WORSHIP GOD?

I learn about Him.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (1 Timothy 3:16,17).

Christians who lived during the first century met each first day of each week (Sunday) to worship God. Part of their worship time was spent reading the Scriptures and learning about God from those inspired writings. They tell us of the mind and nature of God our Father, about Jesus who is our elder Brother, about the eternal glory of God and how to please Him.

A small word picture of worship in the early church is recorded in Acts 20:7: *"...on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his speech until midnight."*

NEXT: *I sing praises to Him.*



Obey the Gospel

Mike Benson

QUESTION: I've heard you say that a person must 'obey the gospel' in order to be saved. Could you please explain what you mean by this? How does a person go about obeying the Gospel?

ANSWER: I appreciate this thoughtful Bible question. Please study the following:

1. The gospel is defined as the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. *"Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures"* (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

2. An individual obeys the gospel when he obeys a **FORM of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.** *“But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness”* (Romans 6:17,18).

Baptism is a form of the death, burial, and resurrection. *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”* (Romans 6:3,4).

3. **Those who fail to obey the gospel will be eternally lost.** *“And to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power”* (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Romans 10:16; 1 Peter 4:17; cf. Matthew 7:21-23; Hebrews 5:8,9). †

Mike Benson is a preacher of the gospel in Evansville, Indiana, USA.

DECEIVED

A man is **DECEIVED** if he is a hearer and not a doer of the word (James 1:22).

A man is **DECEIVED** if he says he has no sin (1 John 1:8).

A man is **DECEIVED** when he thinks himself to be something when he is nothing (Galatians 6:3).

A man is **DECEIVED** when he thinks himself to be wise with the wisdom of the world (1 Corinthians 3:18).

A man is **DECEIVED** by seeming to be religious when an unbridled tongue reveals his true condition (James 1:26).

A man is **DECEIVED** if he thinks he will sow and not reap what he sows (Galatians 6:7).

A man is **DECEIVED** if he thinks the unrighteous will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9).

A man is **DECEIVED** if he thinks he can be saved without obeying the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

A man is **DECEIVED** if he thinks he can deceive God (Luke 9:47).

— Fulton County Gospel News

Who Am I?

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

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

1. **100** I was the son of Beeri (1:1)
2. **90** I was one of the prophets to the northern kingdom of Israel (1:4).
3. **80** Jeroboam II was king during my time, about 786-726 B.C. (1:1).
4. **70** I was instructed by God to take a wife of "harlotry" (1:2).
5. **60** My marriage would be used by God to illustrate the terrible unfaithfulness of Israel (1:2).



6. **50** My first child was named Jezreel, as a warning of the trouble God would bring on Israel (1:4,5).

7. **40** My third child was named Lo Ammi, as a warning of God's declaration that Israel was no longer His people, and He was no longer their God (1:9).

8. **30** Looking forward to "spiritual Israel" — the church — God told me that His people would be as the sand of the sea (1:10).

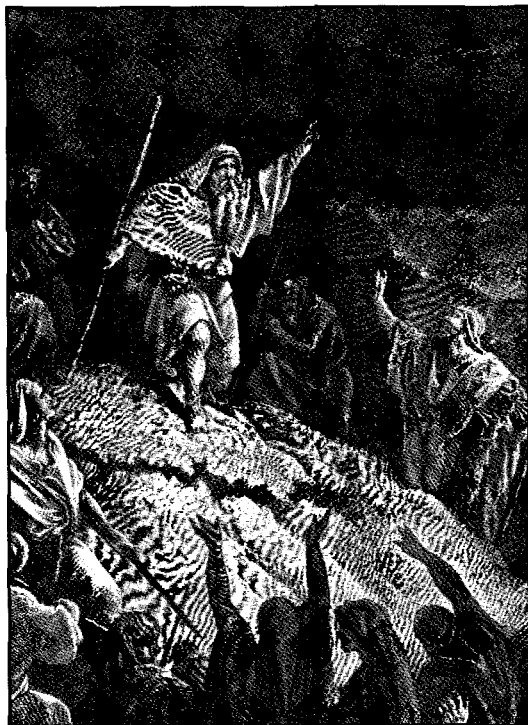
9. **20** The reason for Israel's idolatry was given through me in a classic and ever-true statement: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"* (4:6).

10. **10** In God's message to me, He painted a sad and poignant picture of His gentle care for Israel, describing His care for them as that of a physical father, *"I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arms...I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love...I stooped and fed them"* (11:3,4).

My Score _____

See answer on inside back cover.

BIBLE CHARACTERS



The Book of Deuteronomy is Moses' farewell address to the children of Israel. He stood on Mt. Pisgah and looked back on his earthly life and ahead to his heavenly abode.

This grand old man wished to remind the Israelites of what God had done for them and what they must do to serve Him when they reached Canaan.

Forty years ago, the new nation of God had been only 11 days' journey from the promised land (1:2); but they were afraid and rebelled against the Lord. So, He took them on a path that

wound around and turned back upon itself, where they suffered untold hardships in their wilderness wanderings for forty years because of their lack of faith.

A Last Farewell

Betty Tucker

Of all the people of that generation who had started that journey, only Caleb and Joshua now remained, rewarded for their faith and good report.

Moses, at 120 years of age, recounts their history. He knows that he cannot go into the promised land, but that another will lead them (Numbers 20:12). How heavy must have been his heart, to not be allowed to enjoy that

BIBLE CHARACTERS

sweet land of milk and honey because in a weak moment he had failed to give God credit for bringing water from the rock at Meribah!

We continue reading the book of Deuteronomy, recalling Moses' last words to the people.

Looking Up

He says that there are certain laws which they must obey (12:1). He further instructs them to be holy, for God is holy. God has chosen them, and He will protect them, if they love and obey Him (14:1).

God wants the Israelites to separate themselves from evil (chapter 14). They should show charity to their fellowmen (chapter 15). In Chapter 16, he tells them how to worship. In chapter 18, He tells them of the new prophet, Jesus, who is coming, and instructs them that they are to love and follow His teaching.

Looking Out

Beginning in chapter 27, Moses gives the people solemn warnings. He first speaks of the blessings they will receive if they obey God, but then he graphically details the results of disobedience: Misfortune will follow them in everything they undertake. They will suffer when they refuse to obey God. *"Cursed shall you be in the city...in the country...when you come in...when you go out"* (28:16-19). *"The Lord will send on you cursings, confu-*

sion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do" (28:20). Through the rest of the chapter, Moses reminds the people of the various ills that will befall them if they disobey.

At the end, Moses speaks to Joshua who has been with him throughout the wilderness wanderings. Joshua is now 80 years old, and Moses passes the staff of leadership to him (31:7,8).

A Glimpse Into Canaan

God told Moses to go to Mt. Nebo, to view the land of promise, and He tells him that he will die there (32:49,50). In obedience, this man who had faithfully led the murmuring people for 40 years climbed to the top of Mt. Nebo.

We wonder — what were his feelings as he looked over into that blessed land? We hear no word of complaint as God made the pronouncement, *"I will give it to your descendants. I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there"* (34:4).

The next verse states simply, *"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab...."* God was the undertaker at Moses' funeral, for *"...He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor: but no one knows his grave to this day."* †

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

One Man's Devotion To Truth

Clarence DeLoach, Jr.

Isaiah said, *"No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth..."* (Isaiah 59:4). It is obvious that he had in mind a time when very little premium was placed upon truth. He might have been describing an occasion like that in 1 Kings 22. Ahab, king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, conspired together to go up and take Ramoth-Gilead in Syria. When Jehoshaphat asked Ahab to *"inquire of the Lord whether they should go up,"* Ahab immediately called upon his 400 "yes men" to rubber-stamp what he wanted to do.

But the king of Judah asked if there was another prophet that they might call on. Ahab assured him that there was one other, but, he said, *"I hate him because he never prophesies good concerning me."* So, Micaiah was sent for. In effect, he was told to line up and encourage the king to go to battle.

But Micaiah said, *"As the Lord lives, whatever the Lord says to me, that I will speak"* (1 Kings 22:14). Here is one man's devotion to truth! It mattered not what Ahab wanted to hear! It mattered not what 400 preachers said! Micaiah was devoted to the Word of God!

What was Micaiah's reward for telling the truth? He was slapped in the face, put in prison, and fed nothing but bread and water. So, one is not always rewarded for being honest.

Solomon said, *"Buy the truth and sell it not"* (Proverbs 23:23). Micaiah would not "sell out" the truth. It would have been so convenient just to go along with the majority.

Let Micaiah's example inspire us to be so devoted to truth that whatever the Lord says, that will we believe, speak, and live. Only the truth can make us free (John 8:32).

Micaiah said that Ahab's military campaign was doomed to disaster and that if he went up against Ramoth, he would lose his life. Ahab paid no attention, but disguised himself and went into battle. God's arrow found Ahab and struck him between the joints of his armor. The Word of God prevailed. It always does!

Let us as Christians seek to "set truth back on her feet" by knowing, believing, telling, and living the truth. †

Clarence DeLoach, Jr. works with the Walnut Street Church of Christ in Dickson, Tennessee, USA.

For the Joy That Lay Before Him

Wayne Jackson

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

The 11th chapter of Hebrews is said to be God's "hall of faith". Thrillingly, it chronicles a variety of marvelous examples of Old Testament faithful obedience, which are intended to encourage us in our Christian lives. With reference to this matter, the author declares:

"Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the author and finisher of the faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1,2).

There are so many rich truths here tucked away that it is scarcely possible to consider them all in a brief article. Let us, though, mention a few matters.

1. The heroes of the Old Testament are said to represent a great cloud of "witnesses" which, almost stadium-like, surrounds us. This does not affirm, as some believe, that our deceased spiritual kinsmen literally are looking down, observing our present activity (Ecclesiastes 9:5,6). Rather, it merely suggests that their abiding examples of faithful endurance are like a cheering crowd, urging us toward victory.

2. Like the ancient runner who was compelled to shed every hindrance, the child of God is to lay aside every hindrance and distraction, especially "the sin" which so easily besets (encompasses). The definite article seems to suggest a certain sin. While some would see this "besetting sin" as any weakness to which one might be especially vulnerable (e.g., drunkenness or temper), the expres-

TEXTUAL STUDIES

sion more likely denotes the sin of unbelief. Earlier the writer had emphasized: *“Take heed, brothers, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God”* (Hebrews 3:12).

3. The inspired writer urges that we are to keep running (the verb is a present tense form, denoting continuous activity) the race that is before us. As we run, we are to be *“looking unto Jesus”*. “Looking” reflects a present tense participle form, and the original term suggests *“turning the eyes away from other things”* and fixing them on something else. Obtaining the goal of heaven requires the utmost concentration; a haphazard disposition is not conducive to eternal salvation.

4. Christ is said to be the “author and finisher of the faith.” But “the faith” is more precise. Here the expression denotes the fact that Jesus is the source (the originator) and consummate of “the faith,” i.e., the gospel system (cf Galatians 1:23; 1 Timothy 5:8; Jude 3). No person has a right, therefore, to add to, subtract from, or to modify the New Testament body of doctrine. Let innovators who repudiate what they call “pattern theology” be admonished.

5. The most enigmatic portion of this verse is the affirmation

that Christ endured the cross “for the joy” that lay before him. A key word is the preposition “for”. The Greek word is *“anti”*, which has several possible meanings. It commonly connotes *“instead of”*. This would suggest that Jesus chose to come to earth and endure the agonies of Calvary instead of continuing in His pre-incarnate heavenly state. It would emphasize the great sacrifice He made (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:9).

On the other hand, *“anti”* can mean *“in exchange for”*, in the sense of “to obtain”. If this is the significance of the term here, then the meaning would be that the Lord willingly endured the shame of the cross in anticipation of the joy of effecting redemption for Adam’s fallen family. This view is probably more consistent with the context, inasmuch as Jesus is portrayed as the model for the saints who long for the prize which is yet in their future.

Can we fathom the depth of love that Jesus Christ had for lost humanity? The horrors of Golgotha paled into insignificance when the Savior contemplated the refreshing salvation that would be available for all who choose to obey him (Hebrews 5:9). This is absolutely astounding. How utterly selfish our own level of dedication appears by comparison.

TEXTUAL STUDIES

6. **On account of His incomparable love, Christ “endured” the cross.** The word is interesting. The idea suggested is to “bear up under”. It hints of the magnificent courage of the Lord as He hung suspended from the cross for six hours.

7. **Additionally, the inspired writer affirms that the Savior “despised” the “shame” connected with the cross.** It was not the prospect of physical death that so repelled the Lord. Rather, it was the association of the cross with sin. His holy soul recoiled at the idea of being involved with the shame of man’s rebellion against God.

8. **Finally, as Christ won the victory (having sat down on the throne — the perfect tense emphasizing the permanence of His accomplishment), so also shall the faithful.** Observe, too, that

Jesus has achieved the “throne” already; it is not a future hope, as alleged by millennialists.

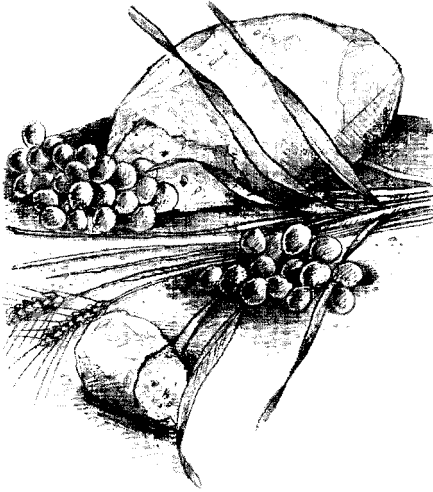
This passage thus sets forth the wonderful example of Christ. May we ever follow in His path. †

Wayne Jackson is the editor of *Christian Courier* and lives in Stockton, California, USA.



**WE ARE SURROUNDED
BY SUCH A GREAT CLOUD
OF WITNESSES....**

HEBREWS 12:1



Do You Discern the Lord's Body?

Dayton Keesee

“For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body” (1 Corinthians 11:29).

Paul affirms that the Lord’s people can eat and drink judgment or condemnation on themselves if they “*discern not the body*” (1 Corinthians 11:29 AS). What does that mean?

Defining the Term

The term *discern* (Gk. *Diakrino*) means “...to make a distinction, to prefer, yield to him the preference or honor...making for yourselves a selection” (J.H. Thayer). It is truly fitting that we make a distinction between the body of Christ and all other bodies that have ever lived on the earth.

Christ’s Unique Body

Note the following ten ways that Christ’s body is unique:

1. How it was made. All other bodies are conceived by man and woman. The angel told Mary: “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God*” (Luke 1:35 NAS). He alone was made of woman (Galatians 4:4).

TEXTUAL STUDIES

2. His body was the only responsible soul that lived and never sinned (1 Peter 2:21; Romans 3:23).
3. He is the only one who “*bore our sins in His body on the cross*” (1 Peter 2:24).
4. Though He died, yet His body did not “*decay*” (Acts 2:27, 31), fulfilling prophecy and being affirmed by Peter.
5. His resurrected body ascended into heaven to “*appear before the face of God for us*” (Luke 24:51; Hebrews 9:24).
6. His body is seated on the throne, at God’s right hand (Acts 2:34,35; Revelation 3:21). No other body ever occupied that position.
7. His body is “*alive forevermore*” (Revelation 1:18). While Lazarus may have been resurrected from the dead (John 11:43f), he could not say what Jesus did in Revelation 1:18!
8. His body is our example (1 Peter 2:21; Acts 4:12). While we usually think of His footsteps as a standard by which we are to live today, in this context remember where His body went! He is our example to prove that where His body went we can go (John 14:6; 17:24; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).
9. His body is our sacrifice (1 Peter 1:18-21; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15; Isaiah 53:4-6,10,11).
10. His body now reigns as “*King of kings and Lord of lords*” (read carefully Revelation 19:11-16).

Meditate on this. Ten truths turned into triumph! No other body can claim one, much less, all ten of these unique characteristics! Have you discerned — made a distinction — in these ten ways as to the honored position of King Jesus?

The Price Paid For Neglect

While Paul stated that only one may have been guilty of drunkenness relative to the Lord’s Supper at Corinth (11:21), he charged that *many among you* are: “*weak*” (not able); “*sickly*” (not active); “*sleep*” (not alert - v 30). How many “*for this cause*” (a failure to properly discern His majestic deeds done in the body) falter and fail in worship and work?

Note that this context also teaches that if we do properly discern His body, we can move from weakness to strength, from being sickly to healthy, and from being asleep to alert service for the Savior. Think on these things the next time you reach to break the bread and drink the fruit of the vine. †

Dayton Keesee is an evangelist living in Midwest City, Oklahoma, USA.

The Lord's Church in The Gambia



Brief History

Francis Fuah

The church of Christ was established in The Gambia in the year 1974. The first missionary was sponsored by Roseville Church of Christ in Michigan. Land was acquired in 1977, and a massive residential structure was built. There were two residential flats, an auditorium with a seating capacity of 150 people, also there were six single rooms built on each side of the land for a proposed Bible college. This massive structure caused a lot of quarrels between the missionary and the local congregation, because of misunderstanding as to the purpose of the building. The local congregation wanted a church building but the missionary thought otherwise.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

After some arguments, the missionary told the church that the money came from America and he could use it as he wanted. This message did not go down well with the brethren and, as a result, the church almost collapsed.

In 1981 there was a coup attempt in The Gambia. As a result, the men who were serving at that time as missionaries left the country. A local Christian brother, Francis Fuah, was engaged to stay in the compound and take care of the place. In 1982 the first missionary came back and decided to sell the property, but there was no buyer. Hence he rented it to W.E.C. Mission, except two class rooms where the caretaker lived.

By 1985 the church had grown from three members in 1981, to seventeen members. A missionary was sent to appraise the work and give his recommendations. He stayed for some time and returned later with an elder from Roseville and the place was sold.

All this time none of the members knew who owned the property. After the building was sold, we were given a period of two years to continue worshipping in the hall, after which the new landlord drove the church out of what was once her property.

Church Properties

In 1990 we bought our own land, with a broken down structure. We renovated the structure and moved in. At that time the membership had grown to fifty-two. A second land was purchased at London Corner and a church building constructed there, followed by a nursery block for the Living Children Academy.

The Living Children Academy, operated by the church of Christ, now has a total of 88 pupils, mostly Muslim. This is one way the church is demonstrating the love of Christ to the Muslims in The Gambia.

A third property was bought at old Jeshwang for a proposed multi-purpose building that will serve as a primary school, church office and assembly hall, as well as a place of worship. The estimated cost of this multi-purpose building is about \$60,000. The building is being funded largely by the Alabaster Church of Christ in Alabama, the church that came to the rescue of The Gambia church in her difficult days when the missionaries pulled out.

A fourth land was purchased at old Yumдум in the year 2002, measuring 40mX40m for future development. A small church had already been established in the village, and we hope this land will be used to accommodate her and an orphanage.

Also in our future development plan is a missionary and guest house for Christian workers and missionaries who wish to visit The Gambia. †

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Evangelism/Edification Work

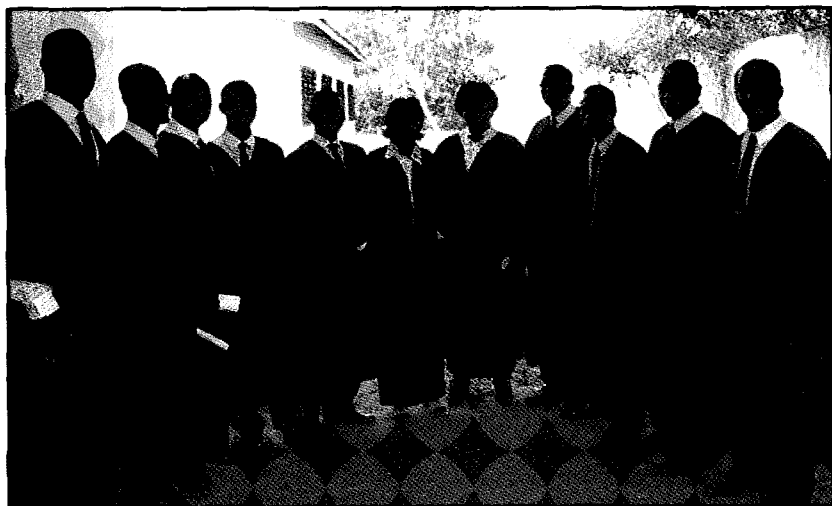
Isaac K. Daye, evangelist

The great commission of our Lord lays upon every faithful Christian the responsibility to reach out to the lost, hence as a church we have not left any stone unturned in executing that command. Among our strategies to reach the lost in The Gambia are radio broadcasts, tract distributions, house-to-house evangelism, public preaching, training, and Bible correspondence courses.

Training

Over the last six years, 68 students have gone through a nine-month intensive Bible training at our School of Religious Studies. Many of these students came from denominational churches and some have been converted and now serve as New Testament Christians and ministers in the church. Our last graduation was held December 4, 2004, when seventeen students graduated in a colorful ceremony.

The school offers nine courses, meets only on Saturdays, and runs from 10am to 4pm. It is staffed by three instructors: evangelist Alex Ofori, evangelist Pierre Mendy and evangelist Isaac K. Daye.



Graduation class from the School of Religious Studies

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Our current session commenced on March 1, 2005 with 15 students enrolled. This is our largest intake of students. We encourage members to attend the school for their spiritual growth.

Tracts Distributions

Tracts distribution forms part of our outreach strategy, and last year the evangelism ministry took time each Thursday during the first and second quarter of the year to share tracts at the Westfield junction to passers-by. Several hundreds of tracts were handed out on the streets. Despite the many discouragements involved in the distribution of tracts, we shall continue to reach out to the responsive using this method of evangelism.

Radio Broadcast: Search

So far, our weekly radio broadcast, “**Search**”, is our most far-reaching method for spreading the gospel in The Gambia. Each Saturday on Radio West Coast 95.3 FM from 9 to 9:30 AM, Isaac K. Daye brings a message from God’s word. This has become one of Gambia’s foremost Christian programs, sharing the message of salvation with several thousands of listeners, including Muslims and non-Muslims. “**Search**” first went on the air in



Students set up a table for the distribution of tracts.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

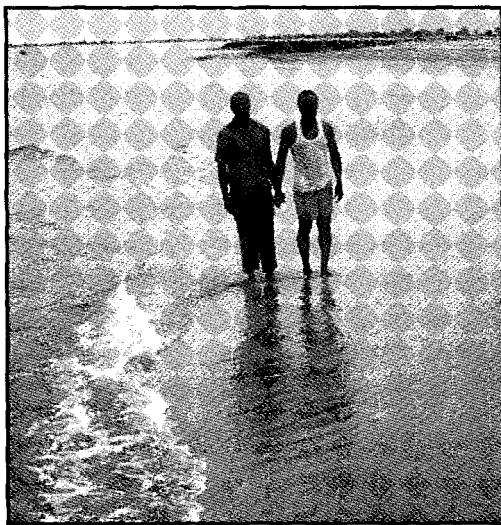
May 1999 and has continued week after week since that time. The church is well known throughout the country because of the popularity of these broadcasts, and the far-reaching effects of the program give members a sense of pride. Many have visited the assemblies in response to the broadcasts and some have been baptized. Judging from letters and phone calls received over the years, offering encouragement from the listening public, we can rightly conclude that through this program the church is playing a very key role in the life of this nation.

**“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world,
and loses his soul?”**

The above question was asked by our Lord Jesus Christ. Upon close consideration, I noticed that the two words “profit” and “lose”, are business terms. Asking why the Lord chose those words brought me to the logical and Biblical conclusion that it is because life is a business and Jesus wants us to approach life as such.

Thus I decided to use the above quotation as a sermon entitled “Life Is a Business”. One man, Joe Coker, followed the directions given in my broadcast to locate the church. He came and worshiped with us and gave his testimony: He is a Catholic, finding his way out of Catholicism. He has been listening to my preaching on the radio and the particular message on “Life Is a Business” moved him to come forward to confess that he was lost without Christ. He said that he wanted to make profit of his life by giving himself over to Christ by becoming a Christian.

His statement brought shouts of “Praise the Lord!” and clapping of hands. A brother turned to me and said, “Brother Daye, are we clapping in worship now?” I replied, “What should we



The baptism of Joe Coker.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

do when a soul is won and there is joy in heaven? When a soul is won and some clap for joy, there is nothing sinful about that. Therefore we should not judge those who clapped for their joy over this wonderful testimony given by a lost soul who wished to make his life profitable by accepting Christ." Added to the joy of this precious soul giving his life to Christ was the enrollment of 10 new WBS students.

Bible Correspondence Courses

Our Bible correspondence ministry dates back six years. Since that time we have enrolled over 6,000 students. About 400 of these are actively studying with their teachers in the USA. The bulk of our WBS students are in Sierra Leone, where our present enrollment stands at 5,500. Combining all that we did in out-reach last year, 22 souls were baptized into Christ.

The good and gracious Lord added three precious souls into His church at Kanifing. One resulted from hearing our radio message on West Coast Radio. After hearing a program, Martha Wollow decided to pay us a visit, and right after the service she approached me and asked how she could become a member of the church. I said to myself, "That is not the right question." So I enrolled her into World Bible School and gave her a complete set of the study materials provided by Sister Norma Sterling of the Alkire Road Church of Christ. Two weeks later, after completing her lessons, she called me and said she wanted to submit them for postage. I asked her to bring them to my office where I asked her about things she had learned. She narrated that as a Catholic, she learned in the lessons that sprinkling is wrong, which she received as an infant, and that in order to be saved she needed to believe and be baptize. That answered the question I had expected her to ask when she met me on that first Sunday. So without hesitation we took her to the water and baptized her.

School Programe

Currently, work continues on a multi-purpose building to serve as the home of a junior high school. The edifice is estimated to cost over \$60,000, with about 30% of work having been accomplished. Upon completion, the school will be able to accommodate up to 300 students who will undergo various academic studies.

With the rapid growth of our nursery school, which caters to the education of mostly Muslim children, and our intention to commence our primary school next September, we approached a local bank for advice on getting a loan to complete the portion of our multi-purpose building under construc-



Children and teachers in the nursery school.

tion. At an interest of 38% the debt would be too high, so we have had to back off that plan. However, we are trusting our God to make an open door.

Over the last few weeks the churches of Christ in The Gambia have been rendering communal labor to cut down on the building costs. We have up to July to complete phase one, in order to get government approval and registration.

The Passion of the Christ

The Passion of the Christ. The Jews saw it as a stumbling block, the Greeks said it was foolishness, and God says it is His power to save. But Muslims say it is a lie. Our task in The Gambia is not only to preach the passion of Christ but to live it so that the unbelievers will believe that Christ's suffering and death were for the purpose of saving them.

In light of this, the church has been showing the movie, "The Passion of the Christ", on the streets wherever we are allowed as a way of getting people to change from the lies their religious leaders have told them, to believe the truth and be saved.

The turn-out has been very great. Normally it is not easy to get the opportunity to sit down for a long time to discuss Biblical issues with a fol-

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

lower of Islam, but the screening of “The Passion of the Christ” has been keeping many people standing, watching, for the entire duration of the film. Some will shout in anger and some will beat their chests in disbelief, while others will just walk away.

With all the gospel meetings we have been holding in The Gambia, nothing has held the attention of the general public as much as the street screening of “The Passion of the Christ”. Though none have come out to confess their faith, we believe that by showing the film, a seed is being sown in the hearts of the viewers. We pray that we can continue to water with more messages on our weekly World Radio broadcast, World Bible School courses and practical Christian living. Wherever the soil in the hearts is good, our God will give the increase.

One member of the Muslim Taliban was converted last year, and we give God the glory. Our new brother has enrolled to attend our part-time Bible school this year.

Post War Gospel Meeting in Liberia

The first day of the gospel meeting brought hundreds of members and non-members together in the heart of Monrovia, and preaching one of my favorite sermons “Life Is Business” brought a great revival among the saints, plus seven baptisms.

The second day saw four souls redeemed and many restorations and redication of weak and fallen members.

Many came forward in response to the invitation and gave testimony of how the revival and messages preached impacted their lives and vowed to live a changed life. Some even shed tears openly as they came forward to accept Christ as Lord. I have long been holding gospel meeting, but what happened in Monrovia was wonderful and powerful and the churches asked that we should do this again often. It was agreed that come November 2005, this great revival will be repeated, by God’s grace.

By the third day I had lost my voice and could hardly speak, yet the Lord enabled me to preach, and the saints and sinners alike saw the power of God in the proclamation of His word. Added to the 11 souls saved at the gospel meeting were two WBS students and a sister who gave her life at the central Monrovia church when Ron and I worshiped with them.

History was made when the Smythe Road Church of Christ, the largest congregation in Liberia, ordained four men as elders, becoming the second congregation in Liberia to ordain elders.

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

1000 new WBS students were recruited. This may sound like good news, but it is not till we can make available 1000 each of the WBS series at our office in Monrovia for distribution to the new students. What is good about telling a hungry man that I can feed you and do not? After recruiting these students, we promised to provide the lessons, the bread of life but... As I left Monrovia, we could not meet the demands of those who returned their Introductory lessons.

The war has destroyed Liberia's infrastructures. The postal system is badly damaged, leaving us with the option of local grading as the most effective means of using WBS in Liberia till things improve some time in the future. Our WBS office has the space to hold as many thousands of lessons as can be shipped into Liberia, and the manpower to recruit, distribute and follow-up on students. Please if you wish to supply lessons for use in Liberia, kindly let me hear from you soon.

I thank our Lord who made it possible for our office to be equipped with a computer, a PA system, a generator, more chairs and a bigger table and a larger sign on the office wall.

I was joined in Liberia by brother Ron Pottberg of WBS Cedar Park, Dr. Augustine Tawaih, Director of the Ghana Bible college, and brother Arthur David of Liberia. All served as resource persons for this great revival that took place in post-war Liberia.

Brethren, if I have any thing to add to this report it is that the saints in Liberia are crying for your support, visits and partnership in taking Liberia for Christ before false teachers take Liberia for Satan.

Mission to Mauritania

Traditionally when we have visitors from the US or abroad to fellowship or labor with us in The Gambia, our first action after fasting and praying is to draw up an itinerary. Brother Dan McVey was aware of this before his recent visit to The Gambia and Senegal. He wrote and said that the focus of his trip would be on *prayers* and *intercessions* for a breakthrough into the thick walls of Islam to take us to Mauritania, one of Islam's most closed nations.

When brother McVey arrived in Dakar, Senegal, we left for the border town of Rosso, about 270 miles from Dakar. The Lord led us safely after a six-hour drive. Upon our arrival the driver took us to the local police for screening, after which we went to a local hotel where we spent the night engaging in a new concept of evangelism — intercessory evangelism — that is, talking to God to reach out to the Muslim world, as our human

FROM THE HEART OF . . .

efforts of reaching them are achieving very little response.

Normally, in soul winning we go out and tell people about Jesus, but on this trip the approach was to spend time with God asking Him by His Spirit and power to touch the hearts and lives of the millions of Muslims whose eyes have been blinded with the falsehood of Islam.

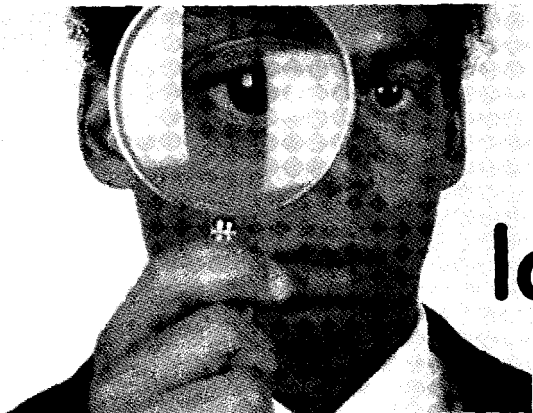
Our attempt to enter Muaritania was turned down when the immigration officer saw that we were all “pastors”. Since the law forbids the preaching of the gospel in Mauritania, he would not allow us to enter for even an hour. We still give glory to God that the Senegal River which separates Mauritania and Senegal — and the immigration office’s refusal to allow us entry — could not stop us from praying and fasting over the land.

On our way back to Dakar, we decided to spend a day in St. Louise, to offer more prayers for Senegal and all Muslim nations that have closed not only their doors but their hearts to the gospel. And, lo and behold, the Lord brought us into contact with a Muslim who carries a copy of the Bible and a note book filled with notes he has been taking as he reads his Bible!

This Muslim man said he has been studying the Bible for the last six years. He went on to explain to us his understanding of the book of Romans and said that “Islam is a religion of law-keeping and seeks to dispense salvation by works, which is impossible.” I asked why, with all that he has learned from the Bible, he still holds on to Islam? He said it is **a matter of survival**. We wished him well and took his name and address and asked brother Arnold to keep in close contact with him as he is not far from the kingdom. Please be praying for him and others who are searching for God among so much error.



Isaac and Fatu Daye



**Are
you
looking
for
some-
thing?**

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 write to wbsinfo@wbschool.org for full information. Make your time count for souls!

Are you looking for a Bible correspondence course that will teach you the word of God in an honest and easy-to-understand way? Many have learned how to be saved and to live with the expectation of an eternal home with God through World Bible School courses. Write for yours today. It is free for any who want to learn.

**World Bible School
P.O. Box 2169
Cedar Park, Texas 78630-2169 USA**

We Are Calling for Your Help Now!!!

It is Urgent!!!

Brethren, are you listening? We are getting many calls from our brethren in Africa for **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL**. There is a battle going on there now between believers in Christ and non-believers. Unless we answer their calls and provide them with Christian literature those pleas for study materials will eventually cease.

But it costs money to print and send these magazines and other materials. What can we do? Will we turn a deaf ear to these requests? Christians are ready to tell everyone that we stand for Bible teaching only, but not so many of us are willing to invest even a small amount of money each month to send those truths to people who need them. Let's not be hypocrites. Let's rise up together and do something while we can.

With our editions in English, Spanish, Telugu and Tamil (in India), we are printing around 55,000 to 65,000 copies of this quarterly magazine, but our goal is to reach 100,000 copies of each issue (we wish it could be a million copies or more!). With that volume they will cost only 50 cents a copy. Our printer will package and address them for \$3.00 per bag, and then the postage for 35 copies in an M-Bag is \$11.00. This means that we can print and ship one box of 35 copies to a foreign address for approximately \$35.00, providing literature for 35 people (plus the ten others who will read each copy, making a total of 350!) Can you as a congregation or an individual afford \$35.00 a month to help us provide **one box each month** or **12 boxes a year** to those who are pleading with us to send them? We are waiting for your response.

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

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 (46 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.)

THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

Box 11218

Springfield, MO 65808

Att. Byron Nichols

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

Verse Search — 46 (from page)

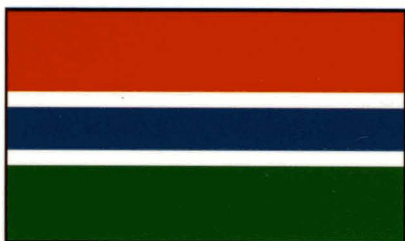
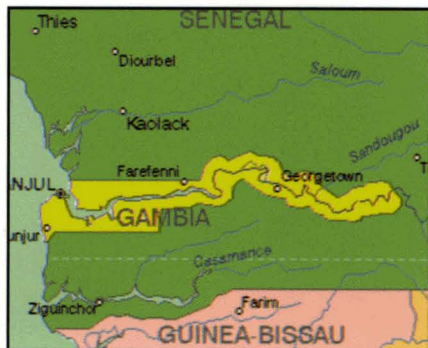
1. Ananias the high priest and an orator named Tertullus.
2. "...plague; dissenting; Jews; world; ring-leader; Nazarenes. temple; law."
3. Paul, himself.
4. That they had not found him disputing with people in the temple or inciting crowds, nor had he done these things in the synagogues.
5. "confess; the way; sect; worship; God; fathers; law; prophets."
6. The hope of the resurrection of the dead.
7. One of a good conscience toward God and men.
8. To bring alms and offerings to his people.
9. Some Jews from Asia.
10. He had been purified according to Jewish ritual, and he was not with a multitude of people, nor was he creating a disturbance.
11. He declared that he was being judged for his statement concerning the resurrection of the dead.
12. "more accurate knowledge; the Way"
13. He would make a decision when Lysias the commander came down.
14. To keep Paul, but to let him have his liberty, and not to forbid his friends to visit him and to provide for his needs.
15. Righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come.
16. He said that he would call for him when he had a more convenient time..



Hosea

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

The Gambia



Government of The Gambia: Republic

Head of State and Government:

Yahya Jammeh

Secular Facts:

Location: The southern tip of Africa, on the Atlantic coast, surrounded on three sides by Senegal.

Land Mass: 4,363 sq. miles. Capital: Banjul, 372,000.

Population: 1,546,848.

Language: English, Mandinka, Fula, Wolof, Jola and Serahuli.

Education: Free, ages 7-13; literacy, 40%.

Religion: Muslim, 90%; Protestant, 9%.

Ethnic Groups: Mandinka, 42%; Fula, 18%; Wolof, 16%; Jola, 10%; Serahuli, 9%.

Economy: Industries: peanuts, fish, tourism, beverages, agriculture, machinery, woodworking; Chief Crops: peanuts, millet, sorghum, rice, corn, sesame, cassava. The labor force is 75% agriculture.

Life expectancy: 52.8, male; 756.9, female; Infant mortality, 73.5 per 1,000 live births.

Communications: TV sets, 3 per 1,000; Radios, 394 per 1,000; Telephone lines, 38,400; Newspaper, 1.7 per 1,000; Internet users, 25,000.

Transportation: 6,400 cars; 3,500 commercial vehicles; airport.

Monetary Units: Dalasi.

The Church:

Congregations: Approximately 250 Christians in 3 churches.

History: The Gambia is a predominantly Muslim country. Missionaries first came in the 1970's and began the church, but the growth was slow and hampered by problems during the first 20 years.

What was left of the one church that had been established was entrusted in the care of a local Christian, Francis Fuaah, in 1980 when the missionaries left. There were three faithful Christians. By 1985 the number had grown to seventeen.

Isaac K. Daye and his family began working with the small church in 1996. Using a weekly radio program, sponsored by *World Radio*, and *World Bible School* correspondence courses, two new congregations have been established, and the number of Christians has grown to 250. Tracts and other literature are also used in evangelism.

The church also operates a nursery school as a means of outreach to families in the area. Construction is underway on a multi-purpose building for the enlargement of the school and for use as a place of worship.

Front Cover: The invitation hymn and responses to it, in a Gospel meeting.