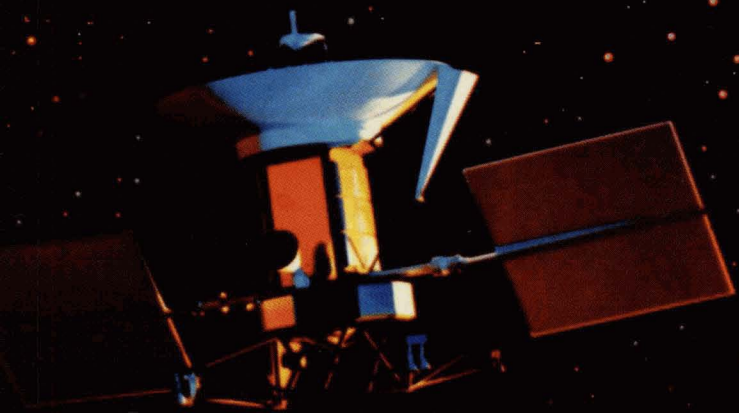


VOLUME FORTY-EIGHT

# V THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL



## A Son's Prayer for His Mother

Dear God,

Bless Mother in her walk today.

Give her the ability to see not just the beauty of Your flowers.... but your work and beauty in the garden of life.

Be with her in her loneliness.

Remind her when she despairs that it is your world and you've promised to make all things new and right.

For every negative, two positives I ask you to reveal to her.

Remind her of not just the sorrow she has known, but the multitude of JOY You've blessed each of us with.

Help her to not suffer the pains and frailties of old age.

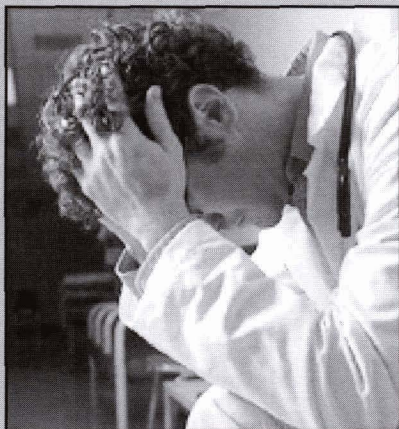
Renew her with a sense of your purpose for her in this world.

Remind her of the love of those who are privileged to have a relationship with her.

Strengthen her in her daily walk with You until You call her home.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

— Curtis Burton



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**Managing Editor:** Byron Nichols  
**Layout Editors:** Betty Burton Choate  
Barbara A. Oliver  
Michal B. Swain  
**Typesetting:** Gay Nichols  
Eulene Ramsey  
**Art Consultant:** J. Robert Swain  
**Computer Consultant:** Bradley S. Choate  
**Circulation to:**

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All-Asia	Pacific Islands
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Caribbean	Singapore
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India	South Africa
Kenya	Tanzania
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## Foreign Editions:

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**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.

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Felix O. Aniamalu	Gordon Hogan
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**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. Web site: www.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 ask in shock:**

"What if the person dies before he is baptized?"

Don't you believe he will be saved anyway?"

**But answer these suppositions:**

What if the person dies just before he *confesses* his faith in Christ? Will he be saved anyway?

**Jesus said:**

"Therefore whoever **confesses** Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32,33).

But what if the person dies just before he has learned that he must *repent* of his sins? Will he be saved anyway?

**Jesus said:**

"I tell you, no; but unless you **repent** you will all likewise perish.

But what if the person dies just before anyone teaches him, so that he can *believe* in Christ? Will he be saved anyway?

**Where is the line drawn? Jesus drew it in the long ago, and we cannot change what He has said.**

## **Jesus promised:**

**"I will build My church,  
and the gates of Hades  
shall not prevail against it"**

**(Matthew 16:18b)**

## **Jesus prayed:**

**"I do not pray for these alone,  
but also for those who will believe in Me  
through their word;**

**that they all may be ONE,  
as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You;  
that they also may be one in Us,  
that the world may believe  
that You sent Me"**

**(John 17:20,21).**

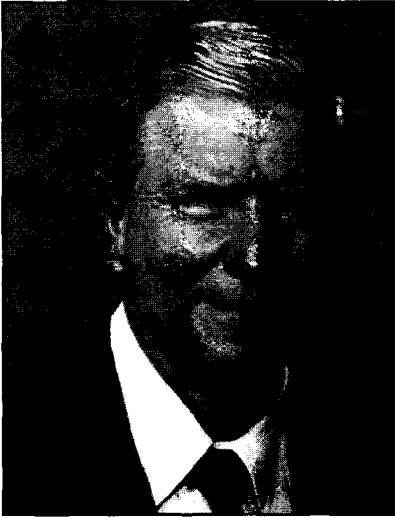
**Jesus promised to build ONE CHURCH;  
He prayed for UNITY among believers.**

**How many DIFFERENT churches  
with DIFFERENT doctrines  
can you name?**

**Is this what JESUS wants?**

## THE LORD'S INVITATION

J. C. Choate  
Editor-in-Chief



In studying God's word with someone, or in preaching the gospel to a group of people, whether large or small, it is always thrilling to be able to give the Lord's invitation to obey the Gospel. We as God's people cannot save anyone, but we can tell lost souls what the

Lord has said that one must do to be saved, and then we can encourage them to respond to His will, that they might have their sins washed away and be added to the church for which Christ died.

Christ, Himself, said to the Apostles, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (Mark 16:15,16). The Gospel — meaning the "good news" — is based on the fact of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. The *commands* of the Gospel mean that we *obey* a form of that Gospel, dying to sin, being buried in the waters of baptism, and being resurrected to walk a new life (Romans 6:3,4,17,18).

The Lord Himself first gave the invitation by saying, "*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light*" (Matthew 11:28-30).

As you go through the book of Acts, you will read of at least 11 cases of conversion. In every case the Gospel was preached and those present — whether one or thousands — were told to obey the

same commands in order that they might be saved and added to the Lord's church. No one was saved by obeying *only one command*, but all had to obey *all the commands of the Gospel*. Every command was important and none could be ignored. There was a purpose behind the giving of each one. For instance, how can a person obey Christ without believing in Him? But if one actually **believes** in Jesus, he would be compelled to do all that Jesus would want him to do, beginning with **turning away from the sin** in his life (Luke 13:2; Acts 2:38). Our Lord further stated that we must **confess** (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32,33; Acts 8:36,37) before others our faith in Him as the Son of God, if we want Him to confess us before the Father. And finally, He said that those going out and preaching the Gospel must tell people to be **baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for the forgiveness of sins**. He was not saying that there is any miraculous or healing element in the water itself, but that one's sins are washed away when he contacts the blood of the cross in the waters of baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3,4).

Throughout more than fifty years of preaching, I have always closed my lessons by extending the Lord's invitation, taking the time to explain to the audience what one must do to be saved and urging those in need of salvation to respond to the Gospel. However, in recent years I have noticed that many preachers either close their lessons with a prayer or a statement that if any in the audience have needs they should make them known. When such an invitation is extended, what does it accomplish, and what does it mean? To what end will it eventually lead?

Passing over the invitation, with its explanation of what one must do to be saved or what the erring Christian must do to reconcile himself with God, is a practice growing probably out of the thinking that everyone present knows these things. It is also a move away from the "traditional".

But what dangers lie in this practice? We have children and young people who are not hearing these truths on a regular basis, and therefore, the foundational message of the Gospel is not becoming a part of their spiritual thinking. We may also have visitors in the assembly who do not know what the Scriptures teach concerning sal-

vation. Suppose they are moved to a response by the lesson, and they have been told only, “Let your needs be known”. With the typical denominational background, and with no definitive information being given as to how one obeys God for forgiveness of sins, they may come with the thought that they were saved by their “experience” in the past, and so they need only seek recognition as a member in that particular congregation. We have seen this accepted, and the result becomes “open membership”. **No questions are asked, no teaching is done, and a soul is allowed to drift toward eternity, so close to a knowledge of the saving Gospel, yet still lost.** Why? Because the elders and preacher who should have been teaching what Jesus and the Apostles taught have silenced the message.

“Tradition” is neither good nor bad, on its own. There is no prescribed pattern in the Scriptures for offering the invitation to salvation, but invariably, when preaching was done in the first century, people were told what they must do to be saved, and some of the audience responded in obedience. To make that message known today is not “tradition” — it is Gospel. And we who are a part of the Lord’s church still live under His commission: *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”* (Mark 16:15,16). We are in no position of authority to override what He has commanded us to do. It is not up to us to decide that the message of the Gospel has been given enough, that everyone knows it already, or that it is a worn-out tradition.

What is our role? It is the same as Paul’s: *“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for **necessity** is laid upon me; yea, **woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!**”* (1 Corinthians 9:16). Our responsibility is to patiently, clearly, and definitively make known to hearers that Jesus died for them, was buried and was resurrected, in order that they might die to their sins, be buried with Him in the waters of baptism, and be resurrected to newness of life. All of the “social gospel” that might be preached, all of the entertaining messages that an eloquent speaker might give are useless unless the Gospel itself is presented in such a way that hearts are convicted and brought to Christ.

Whose invitation are you giving? or not giving?

†





# OPEN OUR EYES, LORD

**Byron Nichols**  
**Managing Editor**

The Word of God is just so full of things that are imminently pertinent and important for our personal application that we cannot possibly commit them all to memory. It becomes quite evident that we need periodic reminders that confront us again and again with these inspired messages that can provide substantial assistance to us on our daily journey through life.

God, in His matchless wisdom, dictated that throughout the Old Testament period His people were to be given regular reminders of His promises to them, of His love and concern for them, and of their responsibilities. Throughout the New Testament we see a continuation of His emphasis of our need to be reminded of our blessings and responsibilities, and His inspired spokesmen call attention to specific commands and principles, repeating them again and again.

One of the means that God has commanded to be used in the church to combat our forgetfulness of His will for us is the use of congregational singing. Paul, in Colossians 3:16, wrote that we are to *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."* Thus, if our singing is as it is intended to be, it will (among other things) serve to assist us in teaching, admonishing, reminding, and helping each other.

We need to greatly appreciate the marvelous ability that only a few people possess to write the great songs that help us to worship God acceptably. Many of our songs are the result of the influence of specific portions of Scripture that stirred the heart and soul of the songwriter to the extent that he or she felt a great need to express his or her emotions and thoughts in

## ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL

verse and music. One such verse in the Old Testament is found in Psalm 119:18, where the psalmist beseeches the Heavenly Father, “*Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law.*” I don’t know the history of the writing of this song, but I am confident that this verse served as the inspiration for Clara H. Scott way back in 1895 when she wrote both the words and the music to the wonderful song, “Open My Eyes, That I May See.” Ms. Scott was undoubtedly sensitive to the significance of the words from the psalm as she wrote:

Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;  
Place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp, and set me free.  
Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see:  
Open my eyes, illumine me, Savior divine!

Open my ears, that I may hear voices of truth Thou sendest clear;  
And while the wavenotes fall on my ear, ev’rything else will disappear.  
Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see:  
Open my ears, illumine me, Savior divine!

Open my mouth, and let me bear gladly the warm truth ev’rywhere;  
Open my heart, and let me prepare love with Thy children thus to share.  
Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see:  
Open my heart, illumine me, Savior divine!

These heartfelt expressions ought to comprise our daily prayer, that the Lord would indeed open our eyes, our ears, and our heart to the truth of His Law.

It is my assumption that this same verse of Scripture provided the impetus for Robert Cull’s writing of the short, but very touching song, “Open Our Eyes, Lord.”

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,  
To reach out and touch Him, and say that we love Him.  
Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen,  
Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.

May we all be more attentive to the reminders that can keep our focus on Jesus, who can lead us from earth to heaven. †

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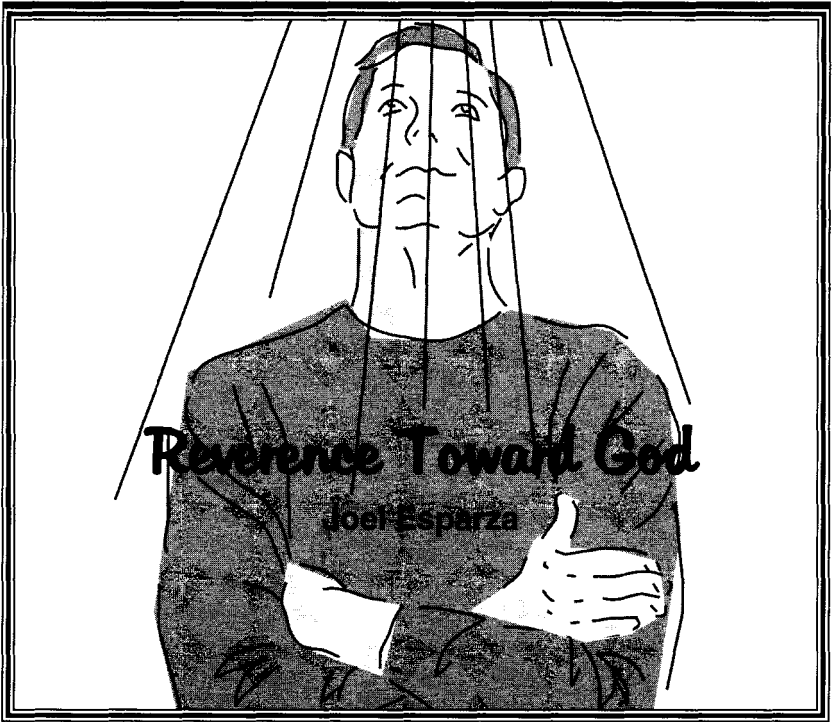
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## GOD



One of the most important things that we must learn as Christians is reverence toward God. Another word synonymous with reverence is respect, but respect as a characteristic of our culture is being lost, little by little. Children no longer honor their elders as was done formerly. There is little regard for authority; and even respect for God has been replaced in many hearts by a casual “old man in the sky” attitude that borders on blasphemy. How can we know that we are not keeping proper respect toward God?

We are not reverencing God when:

☞ We are visiting one another during the preaching. We are not respecting the things of God when we are chewing gum, eating popcorn, drinking soft drinks, etc. The house of prayer should not be confused with a theatre or a movie house. The word of God says: *“But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him”* (Habakkuk 2:20).

☞ It is a lack of respect to speak when another person is speaking. If

## GOD

the preacher is teaching a message and you are talking, you are demonstrating little respect or consideration. When you are yawning in a loud voice, you are showing irreverence. When you take off your shoes, when you are sleeping, when you go in and out making such noise that you distract others, you are not showing proper respect toward fellow-worshippers or reverence toward God. You are irreverent when, instead of taking your child outside to calm or discipline him, you correct him where you are, causing him to cry. Such distractions interfere with the ability of the congregation to worship in spirit and in truth.

☞ But the most serious mistake of all is when you are irreverent toward God, Himself. It is sad to see sometimes, while we are passing out the Lord's Supper, some people are eating candy or drinking soft drinks. We are almost repeating what was done in the church at Corinth. We could say along with the apostle Paul: *"What? Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not"* (1 Corinthians 11:22).

It is necessary for us to learn, when we are gathering together as a church, that our purpose is to honor and glorify God. We ought, therefore, to practice the greatest reverence possible. Neither you nor I meet with the intention of having a social visit. We want to please God, and He requires that we learn to love and respect Him. Let's remember the words of the writer of the letter to the Hebrews. *"For our God is a consuming fire"* (Hebrews 12:29).

Therefore, *"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil"* (Ecclesiastes 5:1). †

Joel Esparza is a preacher of the gospel in Cookeville, Tennessee, USA.

**Spirituality is not the opposite of Christian service and good works. It is the source of it. People who have their minds set on things that are above will bear fruit and increase. Their work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope will shine.**



As a part of his stern rebuke of Israel, the prophet Amos drew the people's attention to a series of natural calamities — famine (4:6), drought (4:7,8), pestilence (4:9), plague and war (4:10). What the people may have thought were mere coincidences, the prophet said were messages from God. After each calamity was mentioned, God said, "*Yet you have not returned to Me.*"

While it is true that some things seem to just happen in the natural course of life's events (Ecclesiastes 9:11; Genesis 8:22), it is also true that "*the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men*" (Daniel 4:25). God is still very much active in the affairs of His world (Romans 8:28) and we bear witness to our belief in such activi-

## Natural Calamities and God

Eddie Parrish

ty every time we pray (James 5:16-18). Here is my question for your consideration: is it not *possible* that God still providentially uses natural calamities in an attempt to get the attention of rebellious people?

The nature of providence is such that *we cannot pinpoint with absolute certainty where God was active in the chain of providential events* (note Paul's use of the word "perhaps" in Philemon 15). We affirm the fact of God's providence because the Bible (a God-inspired, trustworthy document)

reveals the reality of it. Yet, it would be going beyond our human knowledge to claim that all natural calamities are a specific message from God for a specific group of people. On the other hand, should we not at least leave open the possibility that God — as He has clearly done in the past — may be trying to turn the hearts of a rebellious people back to Him? Should we not use occasions of calamity as an opportunity to take inventory of our spiritual lives (2 Corinthians 13:5)?

After the Twin Towers fell in New York on 9-11-01, some suggested that God might have been trying to get our attention. We'll never know whether or not that was true this side of eternity. But I'm willing to affirm the possibility of it based on passages like Amos 4:6-11.

When the towers fell, for a few days America seemed to have been turning back in God's direction. Yet the sad part is that the brief turn was much like that of God's people centuries ago — *"Your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, and like the early dew it goes away"* (Hosea 6:4).

Brethren, let's learn from the past and not repeat its fatal mistakes. †

**Eddie Parrish preaches for the Brown Trail Church of Christ in Bedford, Texas, USA.**

## How Do I Worship God? I PRAY TO HIM.

Just as children go to their physical parents to ask for the things they need, and to thank them for their love and care, God's children naturally want to talk to Him. We are taught, *"Pray without ceasing"* (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This means that throughout the day the Christian should have his thoughts attuned to God and to open communication with Him.

The last evening Jesus was with His followers, before His crucifixion, they sang a hymn together (Matthew 26:30), and time was spent in prayer. (Matthew 26:26,36). In the public assembly of Christians, prayer is part of our worship of God. *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God"* (Philippians 4:6).

When thankfulness is part of our prayer, faith is *strengthened by the reminder of what God has done for us in the past.*

**NEXT: I Remember the Death of His Son.**



# Christ Is Lord

**Reuben S. Emperado**

The Lordship of Jesus Christ is the central theme of all the New Testament writers. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, angels announced to the shepherds, *“for today in the city of David there has been born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord”* (Luke 2:11). The disciples addressed Jesus as Lord. Jesus accepted this title as fitting to Him (John 13:13; Luke 6:46). On the day of Pentecost, Peter declared that Jesus is *“Lord and Christ”* (Acts 2:22-38). On another occasion, Peter proclaimed to the household of Cornelius that Jesus Christ is *“Lord of all”* (Acts 10:35,36). In the book of Romans, Paul wrote, *“For this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living”* (Romans 14:9). In his epistle to the Christians in Corinth, Paul said: *“No one can say, Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit”* (1 Corinthians 12:3). In his second epistle, Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”* (2 Corinthians 3:17,18). Finally, after Jesus resurrected from the grave, God the Father exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:5-10).

## **Jesus’ Lordship is plainly taught in the Bible**

1. The angel called Him Lord at His birth — Luke 2:11.
2. He is the Lord from Heaven — 1 Corinthians 15:47.
3. He is the Lord of Glory — 1 Corinthians 2:8.
4. The Father called Him Lord and God — Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:8-10.
5. He is the Lord of lords — Revelations 17:14; 19:16.
6. He is the Lord of all — Acts 10:36; Romans 10:12.
7. Jesus is the Lord even of the Sabbath — Mark 2:28.
8. The disciples called Him Lord — John 13:13; 6:68,69; Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21,22.

## GOD

9. Jesus is the Lord of creation — as the creator — 1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 1:8-11; Colossians 1:15-17; John 1:1-3.
10. He is Lord of the living and the dead — Romans 14:9; 2 Timothy 1:10.
11. He is the only Sovereign Lord — Jude 4 (NIV, RSV, NASB, Phillips Translation).
12. He is the Lord of our Righteousness — Jeremiah 23:6; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Philippians 3:9.
13. He is the Lord of David — Matthew 22:43-45; Psalm 110:1.
14. He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings — Revelation 19:13.

The word “Lord” in our English Bibles of the Old Testament is a translation of two Hebrew words: **YHWH** and **ADONAI**. The four-letter-word **YHWH** was the sacred name of God, which was later rendered in many Bible translations as **Jehovah**. The word **Adonai** that is consistently translated Lord, is the equivalent of the Greek word **Kurios**. In the New Testament the word **Lord** is applied both to the Father and Jesus Christ without any distinction. Several times, New Testament writers, in reference to Jesus Christ, use words applied to God alone in the Old Testament. This tells one important thing: that all the New Testament writers recognized the fact that Jesus is God.

In the Old Testament, Lordship always meant ownership and reverence (Malachi 1:6). Paul said that we are servants to whom we obey (Romans 6:16-18). Obedience is the primary concept of **Lordship** (Luke 6:46; Matthew 7:21,22). William Barclay has these words concerning the Lordship of Christ.

“The great title by which Jesus came to be known in the early Church was *kurios*, Lord, which has an illuminating history.

- i) It began by meaning master or owner.
- ii) It became the official title of the Roman Emperors.
- iii) It became the title of the heathen gods.
- iv) It was the word by which the Hebrew Jehovah was translated in the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures.

So, then, when Jesus was called **kurios**, Lord, it meant that he was the Master and the Owner of all life; he was the King of kings; he was the Lord in a way in which the heathen gods and the dumb idols could never be; he was nothing less than divine.” (Wm. Barclay, Commentary on Philippians 2).

## Christ's Lordship Was Affirmed on the Day of Pentecost

Peter proclaimed Jesus as Lord on the day of Pentecost: *"Now therefore the whole nation of Israel must know beyond the shadow of a doubt that this Jesus, whom you crucified, God has declared to be both Lord and Christ"* (Acts 2:36, Phillips Modern Translation).

Jesus was *"made both Lord and Christ."* When Peter stated that Jesus was made both Lord and Christ, he was saying that Jesus is now exalted at the right hand of the Father. In his sermon, Peter showed how king David called Jesus Christ his Lord (Psalm 110:1).

In the Bible we gather these following precious truths concerning the extent and magnitude of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus is the Lord **of creation**. As the creator of all things He is the Lord of all. He has preeminence in all things (1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:15-17).
2. Jesus is the Lord **of redemption**. As our Redeemer He is our Lord. He is the Lord of our lives. He is the Lord of our righteousness (Acts 2:36; 10:35,36).
3. Jesus is Lord **Jehovah God** (Isaiah 40:1-3; Matthew 3:3). After Thomas saw the risen Lord, he declared, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).
4. Jesus is the **victorious Lord** who conquered Satan for us. He has conquered sin and death, and He has obtained for us our eternal redemption (Romans 14:9).

The Scriptures abundantly and unmistakably demonstrate the Lordship of Jesus in the Universe. Jude said: *"For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord"* (Jude 4- ff).

**The most important question is, Is Jesus my Lord?**



Reuben S. Emperado is a Gospel preacher, teacher, and radio speaker in Cebu City, Philippines.

The good news is not that Jesus lived and died  
but that He died and lives!

# *The Existence of God*

Hugo McCord

*"Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars" (Isaiah 40:26, NASB). "Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew?" (Job 38:28).*

The clearest of all reasons for the existence of deity is the fact that every effect must have a cause, which fact logically leads back to an uncaused cause. Plato cited three reasons for belief in "the Gods", but the one listed "in the first place" was the very existence of "the earth and the sun and the stars and the universe". The "Gods", said he, "produce the sun, moon, and the stars" (Laws, Book 10, p. 453).

Joseph Addison (1672-1719), adapting Psalm 19, followed Plato's reasoning that the existence of the planetary bodies points to a maker of those bodies:

The spacious firmament on high,  
With all the blue ethereal sky,  
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,  
Their great Original proclaim.  
The unwearied sun, from day to day,  
Does his Creator's power display,  
And publishes to every land  
The work of an Almighty hand.

America's astronauts, Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin, on July 20, 1969, collected 48.5 pounds of rocks from the moon's surface,

and brought them back to the earth. An analysis shows the presence of 16 earth elements in those lunar rocks, the principal ones being titanium, silicon, aluminum, iron, magnesium, calcium, sodium, and potassium. Reason says that those stones had a maker, for of nothing, nothing is made (ex nihilo, nihil fit).

The evidence obtained by the astronauts does not testify how or why the moon-maker came to be in existence. But unless one assumes an infinity of makers, one must say that somewhere along the line there was a maker who was not made. One's reason calls for an unmade maker, but if the maker was unmade he must be eternal. And, if he did not receive his ability to be a maker, he must be independent, self-contained. It appears, therefore, that the very existence of the moon certifies an independent, eternal maker.

What is true about the moon's maker is true about the universe's maker: *"His unseen things from the creation of the world, his eternal power and divine nature, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made"* (Romans 1:20). †

**Hugo McCord, now deceased, preached the Gospel for many years.**

## EVIDENCES

Can we prove the existence of God? We cannot to the man who will not accept evidence. But to the person who will not accept evidence, we cannot even prove that he has a mind! You cannot *see* your mind, not touch it or taste or smell or hear it. Therefore, you do not have a mind! This would be the way some would reason as far as the questions of God and religion are concerned. But we know we have a mind because we have evidence.

What is the evidence that there is a God?

We believe in God because it is more reasonable than atheism, the only other alternative. Atheism cannot be proved. To prove that there is no God, a person would have to be equal to God Himself. He would have to know everything, else how could he **know** that the only thing that he does not know is that there is a God? He would have to be every place, else the very place he is not, God might be.

The existence of God is more reasonable than atheism because God is eternal. **Something is, therefore something has always been.** *Something cannot come from*

*nothing.* There are two things in existence — mind and matter. Mind is superior to matter. Since this is true, then mind or intelligence existed before matter. The universe is proof of this because it is too orderly to have been formed by the process of an accident.

### Why We Believe in God

J.A. Thornton

Did the electric system of our city have a maker? Did the telephone system have a maker? In the human

body we have a nervous system more intricately complicated than any electrical system man has devised. Can it be an accident? There must have been an intelligence behind it.

It is more reasonable to believe in God than in atheism. *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1). With this statement of fact, we can explain the entire universe without another assumption. This is not true of atheism. We must believe in **God or atheism** — there is no other alternative. If God is, then the Bible is His word telling us where we came from and where we are going. We must follow it and be judged by it someday. †

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

# ONCE AN ATHEIST, NOW A BELIEVER

**Owen D. Olbricht**

Atheists — those who believe there is no God — have sometimes become believers in the existence of God. C.S. Lewis was an atheist who, because of the evidence, became a believer in God, as also did John Clayton who now has a program, “Does God Exist?” which includes a magazine and lecture series by that name.

## **Dr. Anthony Flew**

Dr. Anthony G. Flew of England’s University of Reading was not only an atheist, but he was so convinced that God did not exist that he desired to convince others of his viewpoint. For most of his adult life he held to this belief, being willing to defend it in public debates. September 20-23, 1976 in a debate with Thomas B. Warren, a member of the church of Christ, he denied the existence of God. This public debate took place at, what at that time was the North Texas State University in Denton, Texas.

This past year, December 9, 2004, Dr. Flew made known to the Associated Press that he had come to believe in a Creator. His change of conviction has presented a challenge to atheists within the scientific community.

Dr. Flew stated that he changed his attitude because, through his own scientific and scholarly research, he came to realize that science points to an intelligent designer of the universe.

## **Basis of Change**

The following quotation is from an article by Dr. Jack Evans which appeared in the *Gospel Advocate*, March 2005, p. 26, 27:

The AP says that Flew, now 81 years of age, admits that evidence from DNA research convinces him that the genetic structure of biological life is too complex to have evolved entirely on its own. He says further that the Darwinian theory explains a lot, but that it cannot account for how life began. He adds that if his admirers and fellow atheists are upset with his about-face, then, “That’s too bad. My whole life has been guided by the principle of Plato’s Socrates: ‘Follow the evidence, wherever it leads’.”

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And he points out that his evidence has led him to belief in an infinitely divine mind behind Creation.

Scientific research convinced Dr. Flew that there is adequate evidence in the universe to conclude that the universe itself exists because of a Creator, a superior mind and power that caused it.

### Conclusion

The Bible is correct when it states, "*The fool has said in his heart, there is no God*" (Psalm 14:1).

*"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse..."* (Romans 1:20).

When the evidence is considered with an open mind, as the Scriptures affirm, only a fool will conclude that there is no God. †

Owen D. Olbricht preaches the Gospel in Sherwood, Arkansas, USA.

## Simply Understanding

There was no gymnasium on our college campus, so we played basketball in a nearby public school. The janitor, an old man with white hair, would wait patiently until we finished playing. Invariably, he sat there reading his Bible.

One day I went up to him and inquired, "What are you reading?"

The man did not simply reply, "The Bible". Instead, he answered, "The Book of Revelation."

With a bit of surprise, I asked, "The Book of Revelation? Do you understand it?"

"Oh, yes," the man answered, "I understand it."

"You understand the Book of Revelation? What does it mean?"

Very quietly, that old janitor answered, "It means that Jesus is going to win."

— Selected

# How Do You Preach to Such a Society?

Jim Poland

We live in a very mixed and pluralistic society, a world with little use for any authority or authority figure. There are many religious bodies with conflicting doctrines that claim Jesus Christ as their Savior. Every major city in our country, and many smaller ones, has temples and mosques from which the teachings of Islam and pagan Eastern religions flow out to permeate our culture and society.

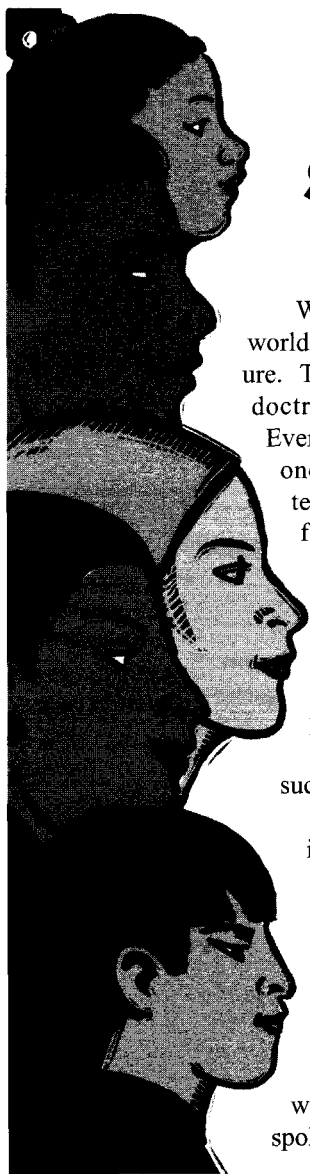
The humanistic philosophy of life has gained control of government, education, media, and entertainment. Humanistic beliefs and valuing systems have found their way into the hearts and lives and worship of the vast majority of people (even some in the church of Christ).

What and how do you preach to and teach such a people in such an environment?

There was a man in Scripture who was raised in a society and home that had many philosophies to sort through as we do today. His name was Timothy.

Timothy lived in a culture which had the local Lycaonian cult at its native base. It was overlaid with Greek/Roman gods in practice. Jupiter (or Zeus in Greek) was the patron god of the city of Lystra, and Mercury (or Hermes) was his spokesman = (sun-god and his spokesman).

Timothy was born and reared in a mixed home,





## THE WORD OF GOD

religiously and racially speaking. His father was a Greek and his mother, Eunice, was Jewish, as was also his grandmother Lois. Though perhaps his father's influence may be seen in that Timothy had not been circumcised, it was his grandmother and mother who influenced his faith. They taught him the Old Testament well (Acts 14:6-21; 2 Timothy 1:5)!

Timothy was brought up in this mixed colony made Roman by Augustus Caesar. It was, therefore, a center of education and worldly enlightenment, with a Roman garrison. But they had no Jewish synagogue.

Timothy may very well have heard about one Jesus of Nazareth, who had claimed to be the Messiah, the Christ, and how He had been crucified at the beloved city, Jerusalem.

Then one day the apostle Paul came to his city, with Barnabas. Paul healed a man who had been crippled from birth and had never walked (Acts 4:11)! It created such an excitement that the natives thought the gods Zeus and Hermes had come to earth in the likeness of men. There was a great reaction as a result. The people brought oxen and garlands to the city gates to sacrifice them to Barnabas (as Zeus) and Paul (as Hermes). But when they emphatically refused to be

worshipped, the fickle crowd grew ugly after the Jews from Antioch and Iconium came and persuaded the mob to stone Paul. Dragging him outside the city, they left him for dead, but Paul miraculously got up and went to Derbe.

Timothy heard Paul's preaching and was obedient to the Gospel, being baptized. Later, Paul took the young disciple with him and he became a preacher for Christ at Ephesus (Acts 16).

What would a preacher in such a society and culture teach? Would he try to compromise with all the different popular philosophies and religions and trends?

NO! Timothy was told to preach the Word of God when it was popular and when it was not, to convince, rebuke, speak against evil, not falling into the frivolous questions and philosophies and psychology of the day. There is a standard from God and an organization of the church from God. The Old Testament faith was to be foundational. But Timothy was to live a holy righteous example and to preach the New Testament Word from the Holy Spirit-inspired Scripture (2 Timothy 3:14- 4:5)!

Dare we do anything different?  
God forbid! †

**Jim Poland preaches for the church of Christ at Bona, Missouri, USA.**

## THE WORD OF GOD

It is God's Word. We have it because *"men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God"* (2 Peter 1:21).

It is truth that reveals the mind of God. Jesus said, *"Thy word is truth"* (John 17:17).

It is the source of faith in Jesus Christ. John gave his purpose for writing his gospel as, *"...these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"* (John 20:31).

It is the standard of right and wrong. It is by the practice of the Word that we have our *"...senses trained to discern good and evil"* (Hebrews 5:14).

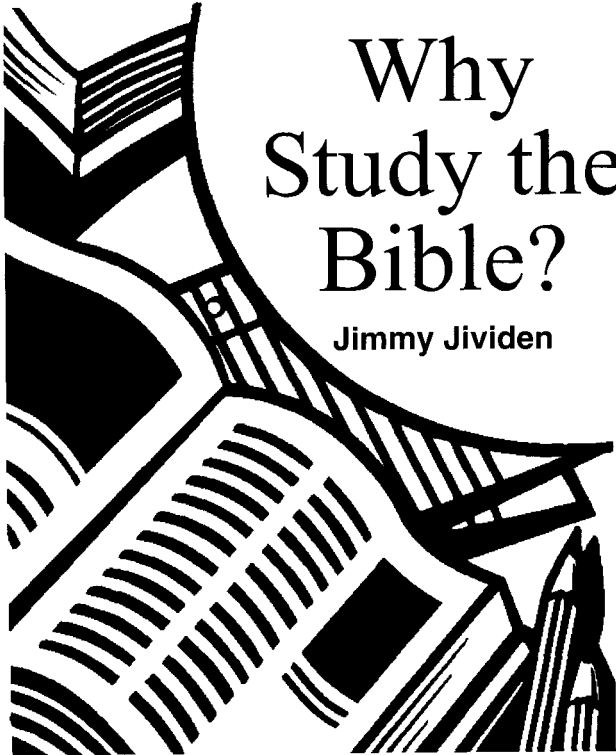
It is nourishment to bring spiritual growth. Peter admonished, *"Long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation"* (1 Peter 2:2).

It is a sufficient guide for daily living. It provides everything a man

needs to make him *"adequately equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16).

It gives us hope. No matter how desperate our situation or how dark the future appears, through perseverance and encouragement of the Scriptures we *"... have hope"* (Romans 15:4). †

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



# Why Study the Bible?

**Jimmy Jividen**

# Verse Search

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

1. When Paul was questioned by King Agrippa, what did he say about his upbringing and early life? (Vs. 1-5).
2. For what was Paul being judged? (V. 6).
3. Did the entire nation of the Jews live with the same expectation and hope that Paul held in his heart? (V. 7).
4. What question did Paul ask Agrippa? (V. 8).
5. What did Paul say he had thought he should do in the past? (V. 9).
6. How had he fought against Christianity? (Vs. 10,11).
7. As Paul was traveling to the city of Damascus to imprison Christians there, what happened to him on the road? (Vs. 12,13).
8. What did the voice from heaven say to Paul?(V. 14).
9. Saul (Paul) had been persecuting Christians. Jesus' statement that Saul had been persecuting HIM shows what connection between Him and His people?
10. Jesus said He would send Saul on what mission? (Vs. 17,18).
11. In response to the heavenly vision, what did Paul preach to the Jews as well as to the Gentiles? (V. 20).
12. For these reasons, what had the Jews done? (V. 21).
13. Moses and the prophets had said the same thing that Paul had preached: *"that the \_\_\_\_\_ would \_\_\_\_\_, that He would be the first to \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_, and would proclaim \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ people and to the \_\_\_\_\_."* (V. 23).
14. How did Festus respond to what Paul was saying? (V. 24).
15. When Paul denied that he was mad and asked King Agrippa if he believed the words of the prophets, what did Agrippa answer? (Vs. 27,28).
16. What did King Agrippa decide concerning Paul's guilt? (Vs. 31,32).

**[See inside of back cover for answers.]**



## Jesus Christ, the Eternal Sacrifice

Betty Burton Choate

### Why Is Baptism So Important?

Looking at the act of baptism, one might ask, "Why is baptism important? Is it only a ritual? and if it is a ritual, as it seems to be, why would God require us to submit to it before we are counted as His children?"

These questions are worthy of our consideration, and understanding their answers will help to put into perspective this crucial point of doctrine.

It is true that there were many rituals under the Old Testament law, rituals imposed to help form an obedient life-pattern among God's people. It is also true that the New Testament law strikes to the core of truth and reality, requiring dedicated hearts and lives rather than the per-

formance of ritualistic acts. So why does Mark 16:16 say that "... *he who believes and is baptized will be saved....*"?

Why is such importance given to a seeming ritual?

The answer lies in the event for which baptism is the emulation. The binding point of Christ's commitment to man was His taking of our sins as He suffered death on the cross. Before that hour, He was free; but from that time the binding with mankind was made. All of eternity, for the Godhead and for the creation of God's hands, was affected and altered by what happened during those moments on the cross.

We don't have to *die physically* in making our commitment to God,

but there must be that point in our lives which separates *before* and *after*. God has devised this way, so that as we emulate through baptism the commitment of Christ in His death, we are testifying anew to the world that He died for us and that we are giving ourselves to Him.

Clearly, baptism is far more than a ritual. As our *mental commitment* through repentance and the surrender of our will to God is our

are two beings who would be lord over mankind: God and Satan. God desires our eternal salvation; Satan desires to separate us from God. God has made forgiveness possible through the death of His Son and through our response to His death. Hearing that truth, believing it, turning from a life of sin, and confessing before others our faith in Christ are parts of that response, but the culminating act, the act that

**Does a change of heart, in the sinner, mean that he is forgiven by God? Does God require that he do more?**

answer to *Gethsemane*, so *baptism* is our answer to *Calvary*. And just as there could be no *salvation* possible for the entirety of mankind without the cross, there can be no *appropriation* of salvation to the individual soul without the death of the 'old man' and the birth of the 'new creature' through baptism.

The Scriptures teach this truth very clearly. Yet, it is the one point over which most people stumble. Most denominational doctrines deny the importance of baptism; most preachers teach that baptism has nothing to do with salvation. Why has this confusion developed and why is there a denial of a very clear doctrine of Scripture?

### **God and Satan war for man's soul**

The answer is obvious. There

translates us from the kingdom of the world into the kingdom of His Son is baptism.

Satan doesn't care how much truth we accept, as long as it is not enough to save us. It doesn't matter to him that people believe in God, or that they love Him, or that they follow His moral laws. But the critical point to Satan is to prevent people from being born into God's Family. By clouding the understanding of the new birth as it involves baptism, he can keep good, well-intentioned people in his own kingdom. This is why he has concentrated so much of his effort on the distortion of this one truth. †

**Betty Burton Choate is the author of the study, *Jesus Christ the Eternal Sacrifice*. This lesson, and the following six lessons by sister Choate, will be taken from that book.**

# Has Man Outgrown the Gospel?

Allen Webster

Times are changing. The new soon becomes old; the modern becomes ancient; the technological breakthrough becomes yesterday's history; the popular becomes lost in the latest; and the up-to-date is soon out-of-date.

## **Eternal truth never changes.**

It reads the same today as yesterday and as it will tomorrow. It is "*once for all delivered to the saints*" (Jude 3). Those who would change God's truth become "*accursed*" (Galatians 1:6-9) and find that it will meet them in judgment unchanged and as their judge (Revelation 20:12).

Modern man feels he has outgrown the ancient Gospel. He thinks an absolute standard is obsolete. Exaltation of self and sensuality replace the idea of sin and spiritual death. Man ridicules blood and the need for forgiveness. He scoffs at the virgin birth, sinless life, sacrificial death, and the miraculous resurrection of Christ. He regards these as myths of a bygone era.

**Has Man Outgrown the Gospel?** Never! The only way man can outgrow the gospel is to conquer sin. He has not. The statement, "*All have sinned and come*

*short of the glory of God*" was true in Paul's day and is true today. Sin is still the transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4), which can include violating one's conscience (Romans 14:23), omitting a duty (James 4:17), and lawlessness (1 John 3:4). God, not man, determines what is sinful; sin will not change. Men may call sin by another name or they may ban the Word, but that will not alter the fact that it exists. Forgiveness is still the most basic spiritual need humanity has (Romans 3:23; 6:23). The only way a person can be forgiven is through the Gospel — the blood of Christ (Romans 1:16).

**Has Man Outgrown the Gospel?** Never! The gospel is the power to overcome temptation (Ephesians 6:17), and man needs its power, because temptation is still with us. Mankind has not conquered carnal desires. He still gives in to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). He cannot overcome without the power of the written word (Hebrews 4:12).

**Has Man Outgrown the Gospel?** Never! The devil is still

*“as a roaring lion”* walking about *“seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Peter 5:8). Man is still in danger; therefore, he needs the unchanged Gospel, for it is God’s great power to save. When humans can defeat Satan without the truth, then they will no longer need the truth. But they cannot. No one is strong enough to conquer the Evil One without an *“it is written”* as his shield (Matthew 4:1-11).

**Has Man Outgrown the Gospel?** Never! The soul of man needs food. If man could invent a substitute for “soul food”, he would not need the gospel, but he has not. Peter stated that the soul feeds on the *“sincere milk of the word”* (1 Peter 2:2), and Paul wrote that he could progress to eat *“strong meat”* from the hand of God (Hebrews 5:12-14). The gospel fills those who *“hunger and thirst after righteousness”* (Matthew 5:6).

**Has Man Outgrown the Gospel?** Never! Man still needs a map to heaven. Many try to invent their own roadway to heaven, but these maps will only get one lost. If we follow the road of “faith only” or the lane of “direct operation of the Holy Spirit” or the path of “once saved always saved”, we are traveling a

broad way that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13,14). Only Christ and His Gospel can lead one to heaven (John 14:6). As the song says, “I must needs go home by the way of the cross; there’s no other way but this.”

Jesus plainly stated the conditions by which men can reach much-needed salvation. A sinner must believe in Christ (Mark 16:16), decide to change his sinful life (repent) (Luke 13:5), confess the sweet name of Christ (Romans 10:9-,10), and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4). We can choose to heed these scriptures or ignore them, to read them or reject them, to respect them or ridicule them, but they will not go away. The same ancient gospel is the cure for all the spiritual ills of men! Why not obey today? †

### **1 Peter 4:1**

**Arm yourselves with the mind of Christ,  
Put on the whole armor of God.  
Love Him to whom your souls are spliced,  
Be aware of His grace, don't nod.**

**Keep alert to the daily gifts of grace,  
And live life in the spirit.  
With Jesus in your heart, lips and face,  
Eternal life inherit.**

— Michael Duffett

# Obedience Is Not Just Law-Keeping

Colin McKee

One may follow laws and precepts and not be pleasing to God if he doesn't do it from the heart (Romans 6:17). But can one be pleasing to God if he doesn't follow His statutes and commandments? Does obedience to commands negate grace? Does obedience to commands negate godly attitudes? Most assuredly not. Even under the Old Testament law, obedience was required, but notice that even then:

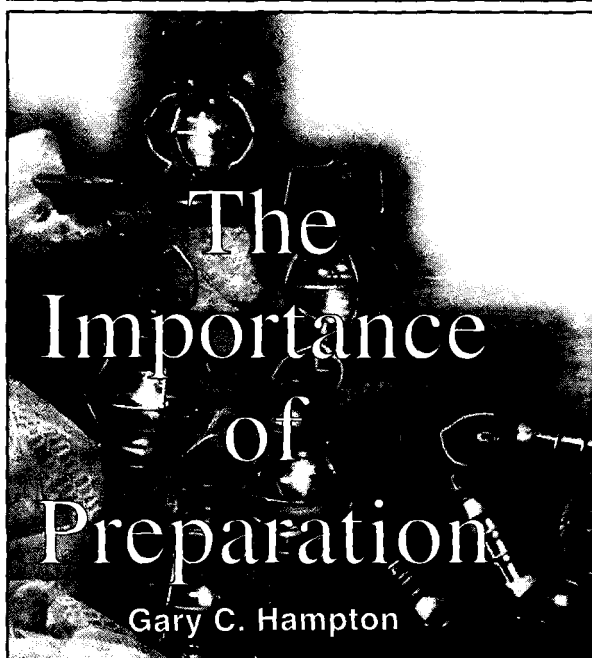
- Obedience did not exclude or eliminate love (Deuteronomy 6:5,7; 11:1).
- Obedience was righteousness (Deuteronomy 6:24,25).
- Obedience did not negate mercy or grace, but rather insured it (Deuteronomy 5:10; 7:9).
- Obedience did not exclude dependence on God (Deuteronomy 8:3).
- Obedience did not exclude sincerity (Deuteronomy 10:12).

Thus one is saved by grace through faith when he acts upon the precepts of the Lord and, from the heart, obeys His commands. *"...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). Grace, therefore, does not exclude baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) or any other of the Master's commands. **It is through obedience that one appropriates the grace of God.** †

Colin McKee preaches for the church in Cleveland, Alabama, USA.

**A half-hearted follower cannot render  
whole-hearted and acceptable service to Christ.**





got up and started trimming their wicks. Those with extra oil refilled their lamps, but the others' lights were going out. While they went to get oil, the groom came and only the five who properly prepared got to go to the wedding (Matthew 25:1-13).

Jesus said these ten represented the church at the time of His coming. There will be those who watched for Him, but will not

Years ago, ten close friends of a certain man looked forward with great excitement to his wedding day. They planned to meet him on the road and go with him to help celebrate. No one knew exactly when he would pass by, so they gathered by the roadside to wait.

Half of them made preparations for a long wait by bringing extra oil to burn in their lamps. The other five brought only the oil that was in their lamps. The groom was so long in coming that they all fell asleep. When he was near, someone announced his arrival. Everyone

be ready. To be ready when He comes, we must not only long to see Him, but stay in a constant state of preparedness. The Lord said, *"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."*

Are you a friend of Christ who knows He is coming for His bride? Do you hope to go to the feast? Search the Scriptures and continue in the practice of them to be Christ's true disciple (John 8:29-31). †

**Gary C. Hampton preaches for the Jefferson Avenue Church of Christ in Cookeville, Tennessee, USA.**

# "Good News" — A Forgotten Expression

Michael L. King

Today's society is plagued by an onslaught of bad news brought on by terrorism, natural calamities, and the infiltration of sin. It leaves mankind, even Christians, languishing and restless. If we are not careful, a gloomy outlook on life can be acquired, accompanied by a negative, pessimistic disposition regarding life, people, and Christianity. There must be some counteraction for the many bad elements of this life, for the creation or restoration of joy and hope in the hearts of men. God created and offered the possibilities for continuous renewal within us (Colossians 3:10; Romans 12:2). The Bible is replete with passages that produce the positives of life and become the "wind beneath our wings". We can truly live *in* the world, yet not be *of* the world in regard to the leavening affect of society's negative thinking.

It is good news indeed that Jesus died on the cross so that we can receive salvation! Mankind was dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1) prior to Christ breathing His last breath on the cross. God demonstrated His great love by sending His Son while we were yet powerless (Romans 5:8). He "*made us alive*" (Ephesians 2:4) and "*forgave us all our*

*sins*" (Colossians 2:13). We can become participants in the righteousness of God because He made "*him who had no sin to be sin for us*" (2 Corinthians 5:21). No better news can be learned or broadcast than that men, who were alienated from God because of His sins (Isaiah 59:2), and who were "*far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ*" (Colossians 2:13).

Robert Coleman tells in his book, **Written in Blood**, the story of a little boy whose sister needed a blood transfusion. He previously had the same disease and recovered, making him an ideal donor. When asked if he would give his blood to his sister Mary, he hesitated with lower lip quivering, smiled, and said, "Sure, for my sister." The siblings were laid beside each other and needles were placed into their arms. As the blood began to be transferred from Johnny's body to Mary's, Johnny broke the silence by asking, "Doctor, when do I die?" He had made his decision to give blood to his sister thinking that he would have to give up his life to do so. What a great decision! The cause for the quivering lip and brief hesitation became apparent. We have a precious loving Savior in

## SALVATION

Jesus who voluntarily died for us, giving life purpose and meaning.

Knowing these things, the Bible assures us of salvation while we are living our lives. The words of Jesus give us reason to be optimistic. He said, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word, and believes him who sent me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death to life"* (John 5:24). John wrote to those *"who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life"* (1 John 5:13).

We can **know** that we are in a saved relationship with God. We can know, if we have given our lives to Jesus Christ by believing in Him, repenting of our sins, confessing Him to others, and being baptized for the remission of sins. That assurance is accentuated as we live a faithful and godly life by walking in the light (Revelation 2:10; 1 John 1:6-9).

The word "know" comes from the Greek "eidete; perfect tense; here and now present certainty." Our confidence is not based upon future hope alone, but acceptance of God's promises enumerated in the Bible concerning *the present*.

A final exciting piece of good news to warm the hearts of all believers is that one day Jesus is coming back to take us to heaven! The beautiful passage from John 14:1-4 delights the hearts of the

faithful. Too long we have used it to eulogize the dead. This is a message *for the living*, to spark confidence and anticipation of better things to come! Jesus is *"preparing a place for us"* so that we can be taken back with Him.

Through the centuries, explorers, pioneers, and dreamers have traipsed off looking for land, gold, and opportunity, with the promise to return for their loved ones. Disappointment and rejection too often followed those promises. The explorers became prey to the elements, accidents, failure, freedom from responsibility, and newfound loves and relationships.

The Bible promises that Christ will not treat us in such a manner. *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17). Every day our souls should be filled with good news, especially good news from the Bible. For fullness and happiness, think on these things! †

**Michael L. King preaches for the Lakeside Church of Christ in Orange Park, Florida, USA.**

# “Christian Baptism”

Sunny David

The term “Born Again Christian” as used by some, denotes the idea that a *Christian* is the one who is born again; or that he is a special kind of Christian. According to the Bible, a Christian is not born again, *but one must be born again* to become a Christian (John 3:3,5). A Christian is simply a Christian, a follower of Christ (Acts 11:26).

Likewise, there are some who use the term “Christian baptism”. We do read in the Bible about baptism, and what baptism is, its purpose, and who should be baptized. But the term “Christian baptism” is not even once mentioned in the Bible. It makes it sound like a Christian needs baptism! Baptism is not for a Christian, but to *become* a Christian. Baptism is *not* a Christian sacrament or rite marked by ritual use of water for admitting the recipient to the Christian community, as a dictionary would describe.

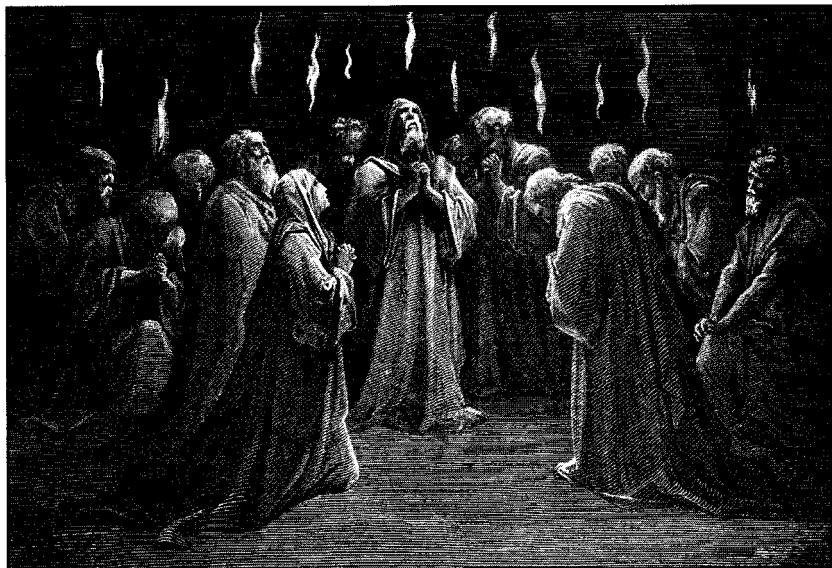
A Christian is a saved person; saved from sin. One who after believing in Christ is baptized to be saved, thus becoming a Christian, a member of the church of Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:47).

According to the Bible, people wanted to become Christians, they were always exhorted to believe in Christ and repent of sins and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. We read about a large gathering of people, who after hearing the gospel of Christ and believing in Him had asked the apostles of Christ, “*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” They were immediately told by an apostle to, “*Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 2:37,38).

Saul, whom we know today as the apostle Paul, was exhorted in these words: “*And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord*” (Acts 22:16). He was not a Christian before he was baptized. He was baptized to wash away his sins and thus to become a Christian. He was not required to receive Christian baptism. But he needed, as do all, to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins or to wash away his sins. According to Ephesians 4:5, there is only one baptism, and this one baptism of the Bible is not for the Christian, but for those who want to become Christians. †

**Sunny David works with the church of Christ in New Delhi, India, editing the monthly magazine, *The Bible Teacher*, and preaching over nationwide radio.**

## THE CHURCH



# THE POSITION OF THE APOSTLES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

**W. Douglass Harris**

For many people, today, the unique position of the apostles of Christ has never been understood. As a result, they claim powers and promises that were given to the apostles only.

The work of the apostles in life was special and temporary, yet through the New Testament revelation which they gave us, they will live as long as time shall last. When Christ ascended, He endowed them with special powers and gifts to the attaining of the unity of the faith (complete revelation). See Ephesians 4:8-14; Jude 3. This means that they were "first" in rank of authority, or His ambassadors, which we cannot be (1 Corinthians 12:28-30; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20). We want to note some other things that were true of them which are not applicable to us.

1. **The apostles were specially chosen and directly called** (Acts 1:21-26; Romans 1:4; John 15:16). No one is directly called today, but called indirectly by the Gospel, if called at all (2 Thessalonians 2:14). This

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means that there are no inspired apostles living today, or men called directly. If preachers are directly called today, why are the Sunday school teachers not called? What inspired the preacher at eleven o'clock, but did not inspire the teachers at ten o'clock?

2. **They were witnesses of Jesus, following His resurrection** (Acts 2:33; 1:21-26). Christ appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus to qualify him as a witness (Acts 26:16-20). Paul affirmed that he saw Jesus after His resurrection (1 Corinthians 9:1,2). We cannot be witnesses, because we have not seen Jesus since His resurrection, but we must believe the testimony of the witnesses, the apostles (Acts 1:8). Please check the context of Acts 1:8, noting the pronouns and their antecedents. To make "witnesses" refer to all Christians violates a simple rule of grammar.
3. **They were guided by inspiration of the Holy Spirit** (John 14:26; 16:13). The promises of inspiration in chapters 14, 15, and 16 of John's gospel were made to the apostles only. Luke 22:14, Mark 14:17, and Matthew 26:20 all show that the apostles were the only ones present on that occasion. They were promised another Comforter at that time who would be with them after Jesus ascended (John 14:26; 16:7-16). The Holy Spirit was a Comforter to them in a sense that He has never been to any others (John 14:26; 15:26,27; Matthew 10:19,20). By the powers of the Holy Spirit, the apostles were endowed with miraculous powers and were enabled to reveal and confirm what we have in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 12:12; Mark 16:14-20; Hebrews 2:3, 4). That revelation is complete and carries its own confirmation (2 Timothy 3:16,17; Jude 3). It is an inconsistency when those today who claim direct guidance of the Holy Spirit have to study and use notes in their sermons. The apostles did not have to do that. To the contrary, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they wrote the message of the New Testament, confirming it with miracles (Acts 16:20). Their work is finished and complete. There is no longer any need for further revelation or for further confirmation by miraculous signs (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:16,17; Jude 3).

**Conclusion:** Whatever is bound or prohibited by Christ's apostles in the New Testament is as binding as if Christ had done it in person (1 Corinthians 14:37). †

**W. Douglass Harris, now deceased, was a faithful Gospel preacher throughout his life.**

# What Is Right with the Church?

Joe C. Magee

*“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfast in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayer” (Acts 2: 41-42).*

Critics both within and without the church are often heard to enumerate what is wrong with the church. As long as there are people upon this earth there will be imperfections, even in the church. But those imperfections come from failures on the part of individuals, and not a failure in the pattern set before us in the New Testament. One should ask the question, “What is **right** with the church?” Then one should go to the pattern for the answer.

What was right with the church which was founded upon the Christ who died for us, and founded upon the teachings of the apostles as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit?

**1) They continued.** This was not a “flash in the pan” fad that overtook the passions and reasoning of men. It permeated their lives. It changed their priorities. They were never the same again.

**2) They were steadfast.** Even when persecutions came, they held to the faith with undying tenacity. They could not even keep quiet: *“Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word”* (Acts 8: 4).

**3) They held to the apostles’ doctrine.** They recognized the inspiration of the apostles as coming from God. There was no doubt in their minds what they should believe and do.

**4) They enjoyed a common bond of fellowship.** Joy filled every soul until none considered himself above another.

**5) They remembered their Lord’s suffering and death** in the memorial of His body and blood given for them. In this they found comfort and communion with Jesus and with one another.

**6) They saw the value of life** filled with prayer and thanksgiving. They did not forget who they were and to Whom they belonged.

## THE CHURCH

Addressing themselves to God through Jesus Christ gave them strength and hope in the midst of an uncertain future.

If these things were right for the first century church, they are right for the church of this century, and for all time to come. Why dwell upon what is **wrong** with the church? Follow the pattern of first century Christianity, and all the ills in us and among us will be automatically corrected. †

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

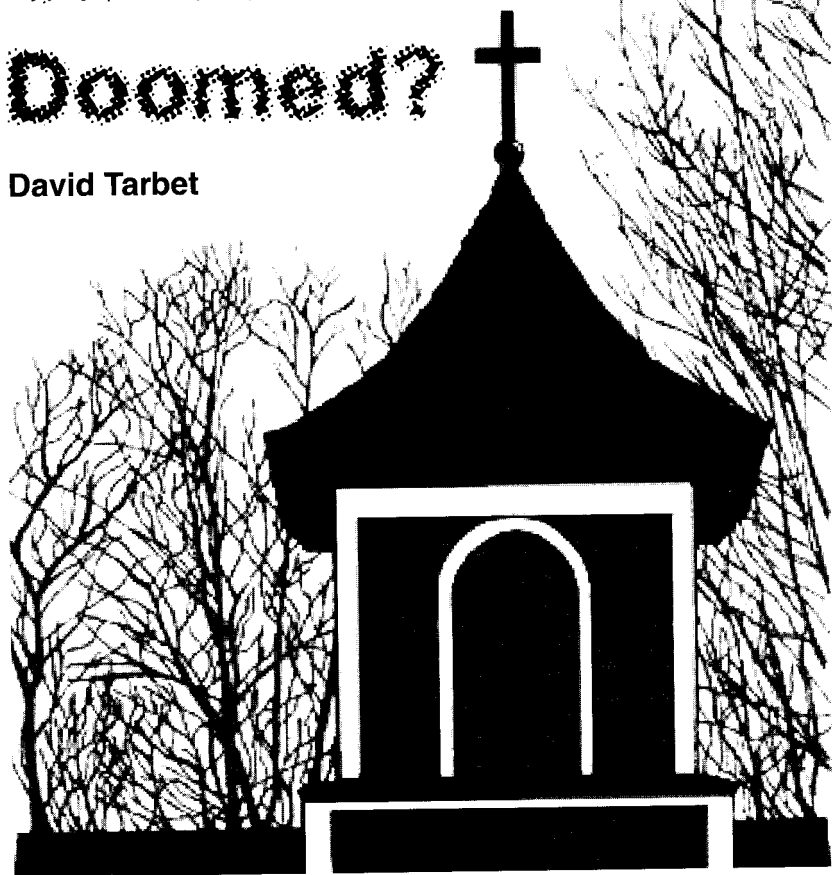
### Rules for Improving the Church

1. Tell yourself over and over that since you are not perfect, you would not fit into a church made up of perfect members, if one existed.
2. Instead of picking out the worldly members to point to, pick out the sincere, dedicated, spiritual members and thank God for them. You will find what you seek.
3. If you are old, treat the young with the consideration you desired as a young person. If you are young, treat adults with the respect you will want when you mature.
4. When you are tempted to criticize others, be sure to pray earnestly for them first. This may not totally change them, but it will do wonders for your attitude.
5. When you see a work being neglected, instead of being critical, offer to help.
6. Never, never blame others for your own failures. Every individual can be fruitful in spite of the bad examples and discouraging attitudes of others if he is determined to be.
7. Remind yourself every day that the only way you can improve the world or the church is to begin with self.
8. Consciously look for the good qualities in every brother and sister in Christ. When you think of a brother or sister, make a quick mental note of the good points each possesses.
9. Constantly strive to increase your circle of associates in the church. Try to do something good for each.
10. Every church has problems. Constantly ask yourself, "Am I a part of the problem or part of the solution?"



# Are Conservative Churches Doomed?

David Tarbet



## THE CHURCH

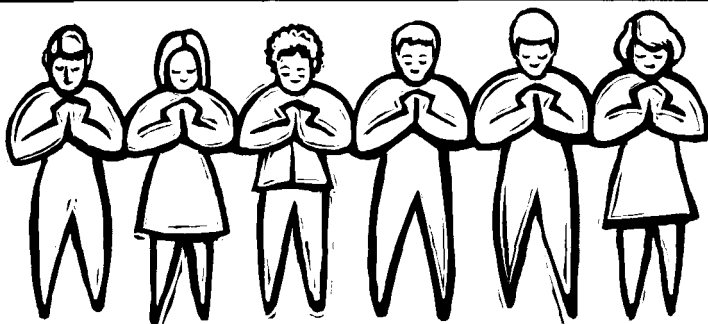
Some of the left-wing “progressives” would have us believe that conservative churches are fated for extinction — that a church cannot be a growing church and a conservative church at the same time. They affirm that churches with the brightest prospects for impacting the nation are on the cutting edge of innovation and change, de-emphasizing doctrinal soundness and advocating a “new hermeneutic” which considers the Bible to be a “love letter” rather than a “pattern” for living, worship, and faith. But is this necessarily so? The facts speak otherwise.

Churches which have given up serious, in-depth Bible preaching are not growing, unless it be by “swapping members” with other churches. And even with that, most of the liberal churches are smaller now than they were 20 years ago when their pulpits and Bible classrooms were affirming the distinctive message of God’s one Book, one Savior, and one Church. Significant evangelism arises only in churches that emphasize the seriousness of sin, God’s plan of redemption, the necessity of obedient faith, and the consequence of failing to respond to the Gospel — eternal condemnation in hell. The “ecumenical” appeal, with its “fellowship-with-everybody-and-offend-nobody” approach, carries the seeds of its own demise.

People *want* to hear the Gospel proclaimed. Some of America’s most watched denominational television programs are those in which preachers spell out what the Bible teaches loud and clear — even though they throw in some denominational errors along with it. Congregations of the Lord’s church whose pulpits emphasize duty to God are finding that truth-seekers are coming to listen, to learn, to respond, and to obey.

The key to growth includes taking on the challenge of active service through many good works, without compromising the Gospel. Let churches look for ways to involve the members in meaningful Christian activities, exciting challenges for sharing the Gospel, practical ways to help the poor, while at the same time instilling vital reasons for faith in God and loyalty to His divine truth. Conservative churches hold the best promise for influencing society because they get beyond the superficiality of emotional hype and dare to address the most important issues: Who are the people of God? What do they believe? Why do they believe it? and, What needs to be done to reconcile the world to God? †

**David Tarbet preaches for the White Rock congregation in Dallas, Texas, USA.**



## Spontaneous Reaction or Cultivated Response?

**Ronald D. Bryant**

The spontaneous is typically to be appreciated. The vast majority of us are comfortable with appropriate actions. A greeting that is natural and spontaneous is warmer than a programmed greeting. A reaction — be it a groan, a laugh, or applause — that is an automatic response is regarded more favorably than one that is staged or solicited.

I do not know how you could go about controlling the spontaneous reactions of other folks. I think that is more of an “inside job”. I am aware that certain types of responses are cultivated by folks. People decide in advance how they are going to respond to a statement or an event. Some decide how they want others to respond and they program, request, or solicit the

desired response.

Applause is not a modern phenomenon. It has long been the reaction — the expected reaction — to a performance. Loud and continuous applause heartens the performer. (It also incites the audience). The field of entertainment has long been characterized by clapping of the hands, whistling, cheering, and a few other natural, if not altogether spontaneous, responses.

It was not so long ago that in general, applause (spontaneous or otherwise) was regarded as unacceptable in religious meetings. Across the broad spectrum of religious groups, those events that produced applause were not in the context of worship.

Historically the clapping of

## WORSHIP

hands in religious meetings was at first gradually accepted, then broadly accepted, by those whose religion is guided more by the emotional and the subjective than by prayerful reflection and careful study of objective truth.

Why? First, the natural was given status, and then the spontaneous gave way to programmed response. More and more, the events of worship took on the atmosphere of entertainment, and the “performers” came to be viewed as deserving applause. The atmosphere of excitement became dominant. In time, the clapping of hands came to be touted as “an acceptable way to show approval”. It is viewed as a form of audience participation that excites and shows approval, and as one of the desired products in a market-oriented world. Some are even known to urge their congregants to “give God a hand”.

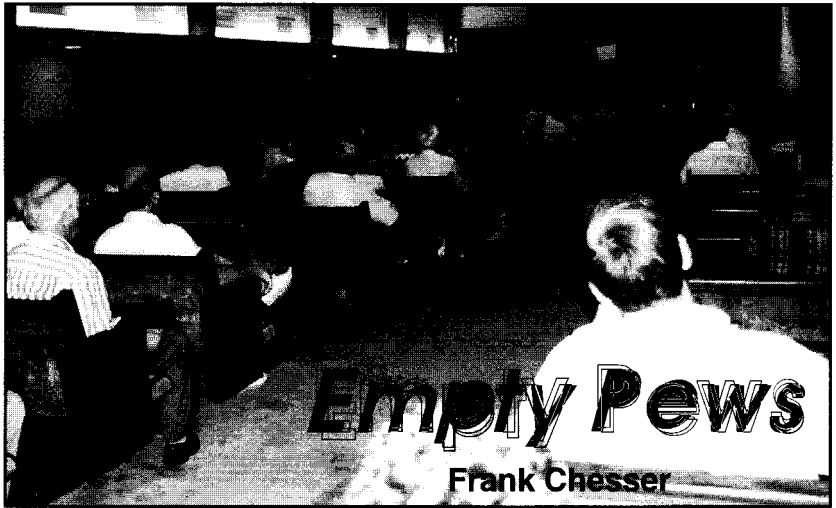
Yet, there are some vital questions to consider: First, what is the nature of our relationship to God and to worship? What is the nature of worship? Prayer? Praise? The preaching of the Word? What rightful place can be found for applause (or other natural responses that show approval) when we come to the Lord’s Supper? Do any of the matters of truth need our approval by applause, an amen, or any other spontaneous device? Legitimate

emotion and excitement are appropriate, but is the hyping of excitement appropriate?

It is respectfully suggested that all of us would do well to prayerfully dwell upon the matter of our response to God and our participation in worship. We would do well to cultivate a habit of reverence and holy joy, of gladness of heart and thanksgiving. It is observed that too few of us give adequate thought to “bowing the knee toward God”. Too infrequently do we tremble at His Word or humble ourselves before Him. Lamentably, we are often too busy thinking in terms of what *we* like and what *we* appreciate, even in the context of a worship assembly, an activity that by its very nature demands that we be completely given to seeking His face, His will, and His glory.

We would do well to carefully examine the prospect of drawing nigh to God, of bowing before Him in adoration, of praising Him for His goodness toward us, and of seeking ways to encourage others to do the same. We would do well to remember that worship is a high and holy event, and that true worship is what God desires. We would do well to cultivate a reverential and noble view of worship and service. †

**Ronald D. Bryant preaches for the church of Christ in Hollister, Missouri, USA.**



Neglect in assembling for worship and study is one of the most prevalent sins in the church today. Check almost any church bulletin and you will note a forty to fifty percent decrease in attendance from Sunday morning to Wednesday night. Why? A few are absent due to age and physical infirmity. However, the majority evidently had rather relax, recreate and be entertained by the Hollywood set.

**The empty pew is a display of the Laodicean spirit.** The "Sunday morning only" crowd is characterized by lukewarm devotion. Their thimble-size capacity for spirituality is quickly filled. Their commitment to things divine is exhausted in one hour per week. Like Israel of old, they view the worship assembly with a spirit of boredom, declaring,

*"What a weariness it is" (Malachi 1:13) They view themselves as glowing with spiritual health while God regards them as "wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17).*

**The empty pew is an expression of contempt for the blood of Christ.** It points an accusing finger toward the spiritually tepid member who has exchanged the cross for a Lazy Boy recliner and a television program. Golgotha has completely lost its meaning to once-redeemed souls whose spiritual thirst can be quenched in a weekly hour of worship. In contrast, the devoted Christian will develop the attitude of the sister who declared, "I can hardly wait for Sundays and Wednesday nights!"

The assemblies of the church

## WORSHIP

for worship and study are marvelously wonderful occasions. They edify, strengthen and encourage. Something is tragically wrong with the Christian who can neglect them without compunction of conscience or a sense of loss.

God still speaks clearly through the voice of the writer of Hebrews, concerning our attitudes toward the assembly:

*“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

*“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries”* (Hebrews 10:24-27). †

Frank Chesser preaches for the Panama Street Church of Christ in Montgomery, Alabama, USA.

### **Do We Apply The Same Standards?**

Do you apply the same standards of faithfulness to your Christian activities that you expect from other areas of your life?

- ◆ If your car starts occasionally, is it reliable?
- ◆ If your lawn mower runs about half the time, do you say, “Oh, well, no one expects perfection”?
- ◆ If your water heater provides an icy-cold shower every now and then, are you satisfied that *some* of the showers are warm?
- ◆ If you miss a couple of loan payments every year, does the bank say, “Ten out of twelve isn’t bad”?
- ◆ **If you fail to worship God one or two Sundays a month, do you expect to be called a faithful Christian?**

We require faithfulness and reliability from things and other people. Doesn’t God expect the same of us? The problem is that in our religious activities we see ourselves as volunteers rather than duty-bound. For volunteers, almost anything seems acceptable. For a bondservant who is duty-bound, faithfulness is expected and required (Matthew 25:21).

Editor's Note:

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



## Persecution and Endurance

Dr. Hans Grimm

The story continues, and **let the words be a warning to those today who have lost their sense of spiritual direction and would compromise God's truth...**

Little by little the churches of Christ in Europe ceased to exist. Whatever remnants of them had been left by the bloody era of persecution from 1525 to 1575 perished in the disorders of the Thirty Years War.

Many of the churches joined themselves to the halfway tolerated peaceful groups of baptizing Mennonites and Familiarists, others joined the remaining followers of Schwenkenfeld in Lower Silesia. In the year 1688 there were some 1,000 faithful believers scattered in the remote hamlets of the Vosges Mountains, and of the Tunsrueck, in the estates along the Rhone River, on some islands of the Frisian coast, in the swamps and marshes of East Prussia, in the sawmills of Bearn and Foix in the foothills of the Pyrenees, in the Witosch Plateau of Bulgaria, on the Zab valley in Kurdistan, and in Northern Armenia. More than 5,000 settled among the deported Russian schismatics in the Cossack region

## CHURCH HISTORY

along the Kuban and Terek and in the steppes of Siberia.

What the dark centuries of the blood-covered torture racks and the reeking funeral piles had not been able to bring about, namely, the complete destruction of the churches of the Lord, was accomplished by the centuries of tolerance, with the domination of enlightened absolutism beginning with the rules of Emperor Joseph and King Frederick.

Emerging out of the night of catacomb-like existence, many of the members could not see their way clearly any longer in the sun of the light of freedom of belief. They did not prevent their children from intermarrying with Mennonites, Amish, or Baptists, since these, after all, practiced baptism of adults upon profession of faith. They sympathized with other groups of previously persecuted believers who likewise professed to represent Bible groups and truths, such as the Inspiration-Groups and New Baptists, radical Pietists and Quakers.

The spirit of the Evangelical Alliance, that spirit that conceded to everyone membership in "the church of his choice" and granted the same rights to the legalistic-Mosaic Seventh Day Adventists as it did to the almost antinomistic Pregizerianers, to the unbending Calvinists who quaked in their thoughts of the "inner sin" along with the Armenian Methodists who defended mankind's freedom of will, to the Lutherans who consented to the sacrament of sprinkling children along with the Baptists who affirmed that only believers should be baptized — this shifting spirit of toleration of all divergent beliefs undermined the surviving churches.

The descendants of martyrs became lukewarm and many fell away. When the First World War broke out there were only three small churches of 20 families or less which professed the apostolic order of their lives and baptism for the remission of sins.

### SEED IN GOOD SOIL

The seed of the blood of the martyred churches had not been sowed in vain, however. God's Word did not return again void. In all the Occident the survivors of the centuries of persecutions, without knowing it, gave the decisive impulse to mighty movements of awakening. In England the remnants of the Leollard Christian churches, the Seekers, exerted a decisive influence upon the Puritans and Quakers; in Holland fugitive English Puritans found their way through the influence of



## CHURCH HISTORY

Mennonite and Old Evangelic groups to the Congregational and Baptist movements. In Central Europe much of the essence of the old churches trickled into the fundamental teaching and constitutional systems of the Moravian Herrnhuters.

Nevertheless, only in a few churches, and numerically very small churches, was shown more evidently the survival of the New Testament pre-reformation wealth of thought: among the Sandimianians of Scotland, for example; or the Kollegianten in Holland; or the Dunkards of Northwestern Germany, who later were to establish flourishing churches on the other side of the Atlantic.

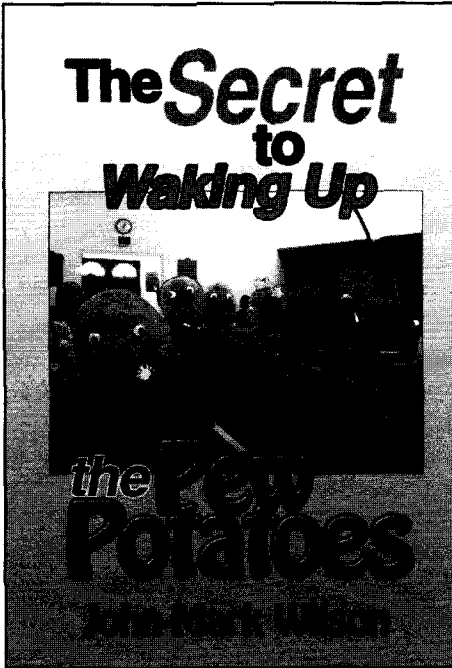
But in that very epoch when seemingly among these few struggling groups left in Europe and Asia the flame of apostolic faith was about to be put out, there arose on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, wholly independent of the churches of Europe and without the Europeans knowing about it, the great "Restoration Movement", calling for a return to the apostolic faith and practice.

Their efforts were not directed to a continuation or even remaking of old customs and traditions but a finding of the purity of the New Testament church and a restoration of that. Coming to their own decisions quite independently of each other, the Methodist O'Kelly, the Baptist Abner Jones, the Presbyterian Barton Stone, and the two free church theologians, the Campbells father and son, just immigrated from Ireland, were to put aside all humanly devised creeds, dogmas and catechisms, and to build the church of the New Covenant on the Cornerstone, which is the Christ.

Their message found far and wide a responsive echo in the hearts of thousands. God added to the churches not only countless individuals, but also hundreds of young preachers, yes, entire congregations abandoned the prisons of their separate churches and joined themselves to the movement of New Testament Christianity. In a few years there were hundreds of these churches on the American continent. †

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

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



## How to Meet Contacts and Increase Attendance

### Pew Potato Prospects

There are numerous opportunities one can take advantage of in locating receptive people. God opens doors everywhere, so keep your eyes wide open. I will be mentioning a few ways in this chapter to get you started. If you take some time and write down the public

activities going on in your community, even more will come to light!

### The Funeral Visitation

A funeral is a time when families are thinking about eternity and searching for comfort. This provides a great opportunity for showing Christian love and giving invitations for worship. You should carry cards listing your name, phone number, church building address and worship times. Give this to each member of the family privately and tell them, "If you need prayers or anything at all, just give me a call, anytime, day or night."

Monitor the death notices. When you find a person with no church affiliation listed, you have found an excellent prospect in his or her family.

### **Families of the Terminally Ill**

Anytime someone within a family is terminally ill, questions regarding eternity become a high priority. Not only is the person who is ill trying to deal with the situation, but also the family needs a lot of prayers and guidance. This provides an opportunity to pray with the family and provide emotional support. If this is done on an extended basis, the family will realize that you are sincere in your love for them. This being the case, you have a better chance of leading them to Christ.

### **Christian Alternatives for Community Youth**

Most communities have various activities available for young people to participate in. These things, along with school, take up much of a young person's time. As a congregation, activities should be planned that the community youth will enjoy and participate in. When this is done correctly, the Lord's church can be introduced and promoted at each gathering.

### **Church Welcome Baskets for New Parents**

Whenever someone has a new baby, the whole family is excited about the new changes. The congregation should always acknowledge the birth by sending a "New Baby Welcome Basket" with various items the mother would need. Along with diapers, wipes and burp cloths, include an invitation to the Lord's church. Be sure to mention everything that pertains to new young families.

### **Go to Community Events and School Productions**

If you know of a family that doesn't worship anywhere but has children in school, attend their plays, ball games etc., and sit by the parents. Cheer for their child. This will help open up the parents' heart to you. You can give an invitation to services or set up a Bible study, etc.

Always attend community parades, county fairs, Police benefit

dinners and Fire-fighter dinners. This will keep the community aware that the congregation is alive and well.

If your town has a local community center, eat there at least once a week. You can make many great contacts for Bible studies. Also, if you have a local café or coffee shop where regulars always gather, mingle in and make new friends.

### **Take on a Leadership Role in the Community**

If you want people to recognize you and learn of the church, you can join a civic group. Through your example and guidance, the congregation will get credit by the business leaders of the community.

### **Discover the Benefits of Mass Media**

Start a radio program. You can begin a short broadcast about "Searching the Scriptures" and reach out into the whole community every day. One-minute spots can be added to direct your listeners to the local church of Christ!

### **Here Is a List of Possible Prospects**

1. Someone going through a tragedy
2. Major illness
3. Death of a close friend or loved one
4. Marital problems
5. Separation
6. Divorce
7. Non-Christian relatives
8. The "new" poor
9. New baby
10. New retiree
11. New to the community
12. Job change
13. Financial status change
14. Newly-weds
15. Wife beginning or quitting work
16. College graduates
17. Children leaving home
18. Military personnel
19. Non-Christian mates
20. Hospital visitation
21. Non-Christian friends
22. College campus
23. High school graduates
24. Rest homes
25. Campaign for Christ
26. Neighbors

## Other Prospects Not Listed

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## Pew Potato Power Points

There are numerous opportunities one can take advantage of in locating receptive people. God opens doors everywhere, so keep your eyes wide open.

### Review Questions

1. What are some of the ways to find prospects?

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2. What are some community groups available?

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3. Do you know of any children you can cheer for at ballgames?  
If not, will you discover some?

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4. Why are grieving people more apt to listen?

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5. If someone is hurting, what is one thing you can do for them?

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(Chapter six 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.**

# YOUR Turn

Ron Carter

The congregation with which I work is a very small one, struggling to recover from some unfortunate events in the past year. During the past several months, we have had a number of visitors; some had recently moved into the area. We, of course, made follow-up phone calls to express our appreciation for their visit and that we hoped they would consider becoming part of our church family. Included in this discussion was reference to our obvious need for help. Unfortunately, not one of these families has chosen us as their church home. Naturally this has given us reason to reflect on the possible causes for their decision. I believe I know why.

The majority of people today want everything to be already *in place*, giving little thought about how it all happened. No matter which congregation we attend, very few of us had much to do with the hard work that took place in the early years, going through the struggles involved. As the old adage goes, “Most of us are warming ourselves by fires we didn’t build.” Please know that I am not criticizing anyone for wanting to be part of an effective, thriving congregation.

To be honest, I am one of those people. What is a matter of concern is when we don’t do anything to add fuel to the fire.

I fear that too many people want to be part of a congregation that **provides what they want**. *Few are looking for a place to serve.*

Parents want their children to be part of a flourishing youth group already in place. They know what they want and that is what motivates them in their search for a “church home”. Of course, the ideal would be when a family moves into town that they would search for a group where they are **needed**, where they actually can **serve**.

But the groups that need help are usually small in number, each member working hard to get the basic necessities done. In such a congregation, the youth group may be small or perhaps non-existent, but **being a part of such a church does give the entire family opportunities that might not be available in larger congregations** — to **serve** rather than just being served, to develop instead of simply **passively participating in worship**.

With few exceptions, people over age 50 typically have memories of being part of a small, strug-

## CHURCH GROWTH

gling group. In some cases, they remember when the man who may have led the singing would also help to serve the Lord's Supper, or lead the closing prayer. In spite of the hard work involved, I believe most of these people would agree that there is also a good feeling from these memories in what was accomplished. It was also a time when **their teenage son learned to lead singing** simply because of necessity. The **daughters** also learned to help, by being **involved in Bible classes** for younger children. Typically, younger parents have no frame of reference for these memories. There are exceptions, of course, but not many.

If you are one of those who has little understanding of how things get done, of what happens behind the scenes in a congregation, **it's your turn now**. If you are not involved in such things as providing effective Bible classes, evangelism, or even in what it takes to have a clean, comfortable place to worship, etc., **it's your turn**.

Possibly we all need to be reminded of what Jesus said about our service. "*But the neatest among you shall be your servant*" (Matthew 23:11). In addition to finding a doctrinally sound congregation, where we can worship God in spirit and in truth, we also need to look for a place to serve. Of course, this

will require a willingness to do more than sit in a church building on Sundays and Wednesdays singing, "I Want To Be A Worker For The Lord."

One of the obstacles for many people is that they have convinced themselves they don't have time to be involved in the Lord's work — they are just too busy. What about you? If someone were to ask you what you are doing for the Lord, what would you say? Would there be a need to find someone to do the work you were doing if you were gone?

Some will attempt to alleviate the guilt feelings that come from being idle by giving a larger financial contribution. But deep down inside, even this token effort does not do much to ease the discomfort in their conscience. I would never presume to tell anyone **what** they ought to be doing. But I will say they should be doing **something**. **YOU** ought to be doing something. If you are not involved, you are missing out on the most important effects of living Christianity in this world.

Many people are struggling to find peace of mind, searching for something that will give them the encouragement they need. Typically, they are the ones who do little more than attend the assemblies.

The mistake they make is in

their concentration on their own needs. For example, when people come to me and ask, "How can I be happy?" my answer is always the same. I tell them, "By not asking that question in the first place." If we truly want to know the secret to happiness — which is no secret at all — then we will be willing to step outside of our own little world, into the lives of other people, to find someone who needs us, to find a place to serve. This is why Jesus was quoted in Acts 20:35, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*" In other words, that is where the blessings are, in reaching out our hand to give rather than to receive.

No matter who you are, there are *people* who need you; there is a *congregation* that needs you. Even more important, the Lord needs you. Paul had this to say about that: "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord*" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

And by the way, if you are moving to Colorado Springs, I know a congregation, a group of people, who can really use your help. We need you, but more importantly, **you need to be needed.** †

**Ron Carter is editor of *The Rocky Mountain Christian* newspaper in Broomfield, Colorado, USA.**

### THE CHURCH CAN THRIVE IN 2005

The church can thrive in 2005  
With elders whose allegiance is to God,  
Who lovingly tend the flock over which they have been made overseers,  
Leading them down paths of righteousness that true saints must trod.

The church can thrive in 2005  
With deacons who roll up their sleeves and take care of business,  
Who eagerly and humbly serve others' needs,  
Following the example of the ministering Lord Jesus.

The church can thrive in 2005  
With preachers preaching the gospel, not in part but in whole;  
Who being constrained by the love of Christ  
Teach men of the great price paid for their soul.

The church can thrive in 2005  
With holy aged women of meek and quiet spirits adorned,  
Who teach the younger women to keep their homes and love their families,  
Setting examples too virtuous to be ignored.

The church can thrive in 2005  
With young people who forget not their Creator,  
Who flee fleshly lusts which war against the soul,  
To live pure lives thus having no regrets later.

The church can thrive in 2005  
With each member desiring to grow in the knowledge of the Lord,  
Who add to their faith the Christian graces  
So that they might be fruitful and worship in one accord.

— TIM WILDER



# *What Is Evangelism?*

**Ted Knight**

## **Evangelism Is Not...**

Arrogantly arguing with a friend, trying to prove that he is wrong and you are right.

Building a place for fun, food, and fellowship while neglecting to mention Jesus Christ to others.

Compromising the truth in order to enjoy the favor of the denominational world and increase our numbers with unconverted people.

Providing for our own comforts and pleasures while ignoring the needs of a world that is lost in sin.

Hoarding up money for a rainy day while billions of people never hear the Gospel.

## **Evangelism Is...**

A saved sinner lovingly and patiently teaching a lost sinner what to do to be saved.

One who has found spiritual food and is now sharing that food with those who are spiritually starved.

A faithful child of God gently leading a fallen child of God back into the fold.

Lifting our eyes upon the white fields and doing everything that we can to bring in a bountiful harvest for the Master.

Using every means that is scriptural and expedient to effectively save others.

Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and those in prison, turning the other cheek, praying for our enemies, blessing those who fight against us, and refusing to quit in order to save ourselves and others.

## **Are You An Evangelist?**



**Ted Knight is an evangelist whose home is in Conway, Arkansas, USA, but who preaches across America and in other lands, particularly Romania.**

# Think Globally, Act Locally

Tom Steed



The environmental movement and the church have some things in common. They want to save the world from pollution; we want to save the world from sin. Both are global problems. The frustration is that saving the entire world is a problem of immense proportions. We may become completely overwhelmed by the dimension of the problem.

The environmental movement has the slogan, "Think Globally, Act Locally." One may want to save the world from pollution but be unable to effect global changes. The only choice is to do what can be done on an individual level. If everyone does his or her part, individual actions will amount to a global change.

As Christians, we want to see the world converted to Jesus Christ. The only way we can change the world is to change individuals. If we want the world to follow Christ, we must help individuals to follow Him. Our children, our friends, our family, and our neighbors must be influenced one by one. If we encourage those around us to

become followers of Christ and encourage them to grow in that commitment, we will eventually affect the world for Christ.

We may influence the world by sending missionaries and messages around the world, but it will be a tragedy if those right around us are lost. The best missionaries are those who are also concerned about saving the lost at home.

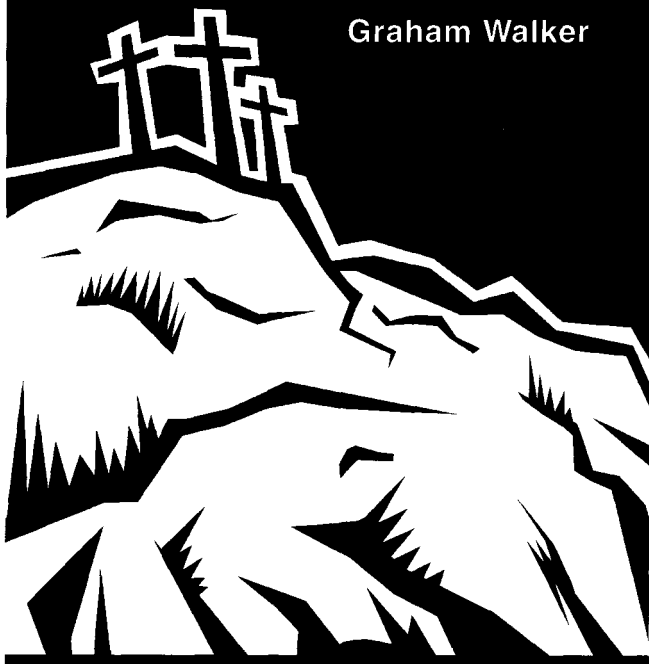
We want the world to know the kindness and love of Jesus Christ. Certainly we can send funds to areas that are devastated by flood and famine, but we must show acts of kindness on an individual basis.

I want the world to follow Christ, don't you? The only way to save the entire world is to influence people one at a time. †

**Tom Steed works with the Lord's church in Carbondale, Illinois, USA.**

# Road to the Cross

Graham Walker



The roads that lead people to the cross can be many and varied. There are men and women recorded in the Bible who made Christ their quest and who came from such different socio-economic backgrounds that it is hard to imagine a more non-discriminatory nature and power than that of the cross. We

caused tribulation to the early church, such as Paul (Acts 26:9ff); from heathens, like Cornelius of Acts 10, to the Hebrews in the book of the same name.

The road that leads to the cross does not involve the same background for all. As the above examples illustrate, God is not One who

see this from the poverty-ridden lame beggar in Acts 3 to the riches of Joseph of Arimathea in Matthew 27; from one who had little knowledge, such as the Philippian jailer in Acts 16, to one whose knowledge was intense, such as Nicodemus in John 3; from people of extreme tribulation in the church at Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11) to people who

## CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

shows partiality toward those He wishes to save (Acts 10:34; Galatians 2:6), for He desires that all men be saved; He does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9).

Sometimes when we approach people in regard to the saving Gospel power, it is hard to erase the doubt that this person will respond positively. For example, one may be hesitant about walking up the drive of a palatial-looking property because of the preconceived expectation of a refusal, based on the rich beauty of the grounds: *they have it all, and therefore they are hardly going to see the benefit of God in their lives*. Should this ever happen, think of Joseph of Arimathea. He was rich, yet he sought the Lord and obeyed, even though his life was endangered as a consequence (cf. John 19:38).

Or maybe someone from the opposite end of the spectrum causes you to be reticent because you perceive that their rough attitude signals an unwillingness to change. Should this ever be the case, think of the Philippian jailer who threw the evangelists Paul and Silas into the inner prison. Jailers were no different then than they are perceived now; that is, they are not mamby-pamby type people. The Gospel, when allowed to be given first light, will prevail and save the soul (James 1:21).

No doubt you have your own story to tell of how the road to salvation seemed against all the odds. Before you came to the cross, you probably never gave it any credence — at least I can say that is how it was for me. Yet later, after sitting down and honestly analyzing the circumstances, it was obvious how tender the heart can become and how God, not men, can affect that heart through the message in His word. For instance, although none of Hitler's henchmen were converted (at least not to my knowledge), it has been said that some of these men were loving fathers who doted on their children. This is hard to imagine, considering the atrocities performed at their whim, yet not surprising when one considers the emotions that the Creator designed man to have. The same emotion that drives a seemingly hardened man to love his child will also cause him to follow the Gospel, should the opportunity to learn present itself.

So, before we begin to judge a book by its cover, remember that God "*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*" (1 Timothy 2:4), and you could be just the one to show that unlikely person the road to the cross of salvation. †

**Graham Walker works with the church of Christ in Palmerston North, New Zealand.**



# How do you measure up?

The LORD is my light and my salvation; .....

The LORD is the strength of my life;

Of whom shall I be afraid? .....

One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek:

That I may dwell in the house of the LORD

All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD,

And to inquire in His temple.

For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His

pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle

He shall hide me;

He shall set me high upon a rock.....

I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice!

Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

When You said, "Seek My face,"

My heart said to You,

"Your face, LORD, I will seek."

Do not hide Your face from me; .....

Do not leave me nor forsake me,

O God of my salvation.....

I would have lost heart, unless I had believed

That I would see the goodness of the LORD

In the land of the living.

Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage,

And He shall strengthen your heart;

Wait, I say, on the LORD!

Psalm 27



# The Soul Sniper

**Victorino Martínez**

*“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (Ephesians 6:16).*

In October of 2002, the attention of the news media of all America was fixed on the city of Washington D.C., specifically on that person who had appeared from anonymity to assassinate several people. This serial killer had characteristics which disconcerted the experts in human behavior. Over a radius of 100 miles, no one was safe; people were living in fear of

being attacked at any moment by this mysterious person.

His strategy was peculiar: he hid himself so as not to be seen easily, and slipped away cleverly after committing his misdeed. The weapon which he used was long range and very powerful. His anonymity was indisputable, although on one occasion he called himself “god”.

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

His victims ranged from mature adults to school-age children. As for race, he had no particular predilection. His time of attack puzzled the keenest detectives in the police force, because sometimes he attacked in the morning, at other times in the evening, at midnight, or at any hour when he felt like it.

In the face of the imminent danger, various solutions were proposed to trap the assassin. But before this could happen, the people in Washington had to take some security measures. Some of the things they had to do: always be ready, avoid being taken off guard, stay in at night, and avoid being in isolated places.

I am bringing to memory these relevant facts because the Word of God warns Christians that we are in constant danger of being attacked by the enemy of our souls. The sniper of souls is always ready for battle. He waits for the perfect time, the opportune moment. He selects his victim and launches his attack, an attack which is sometimes fatal. The apostle Paul tells us that our struggle is not against flesh and blood. If you are a true Christian, you have probably been a victim of this sniper at one time or another. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 2:11 that, in order not to be taken advantage of by Satan, we should not be ignorant of his devices.

Satan's attacks will be rapid and precise, but he will also try to remain anonymous. He is pleased to know that, when he hurls fiery darts at you, you think the darts are an attack by your wife, your children, your neighbor, fellow worker, brother, or sister, etc.

It was thought that the sniper in Washington was using a powerful weapon. But let me tell you that Satan uses "fiery darts", which, although they may not kill instantly, damage our spiritual life, especially when we are not properly wearing the armor of God. In 1 Corinthians 11:30 we are told: *"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."*

Some of the darts that Satan throws at Christians are the following: "The immobilizing dart". With this one, the Christian stops his growth and work in the church. He becomes a spectator rather than a player. He does not look at things from the viewpoint of God. His visual capacity is very short. Having forgotten his purification from old sins, he becomes inactive. Immediately afterwards, there is hurled at him the "discouragement dart" with which he enters into a state of drowsiness and inactivity, which infects others. His words and attitudes are negative. With this dart, the victim begins a slow death.

If the Christian resists dying,

then Satan hurls a broadside of darts, the darts of cowardice, criticism, resentment, anger, wrath, quarrels, jealousies, shouting, reproaches, etc., then last of all, death. In this state, the Christian abandons the race of faith and turns against God. The apostle John speaks to us of a sin unto death from which there is no turning back.

What can we do to *avoid* the attack of the soul sniper? **Nothing!** But I intend to **evade** it. Certainly we cannot avoid being attacked by Satan. What we can do is be ready and prepared to face the spiritual battle. Fortunately, God has provided us with invincible armor, capable of resisting all darts of the wicked. This armor protects us from head to foot. Every vital member of our being is covered, and we are provided with a shield and a two-edged

sword. In addition, Paul tells us that the arms of our spiritual warfare are powerful to destroy fortifications and to bring into submission every thought in rebellion against our Christ.

Lamentably, we always have brethren who are crossing the valley of death. Some resist the attacks, but others are wounded and others are already asleep. Let us pray for them, and let us be strong, growing in the work of the Lord, knowing that our effort has a great recompense. Let us always be wearing the armor of God as described in Ephesians 6, and we shall come out victorious before the onslaught of "the soul sniper". May God bless us. †

**Victorino Martínez is a preacher of the gospel living in Rogers, Arkansas, USA.**

## Consider

All the water in the world, however hard it tried,  
Could never, never sink a ship unless it got inside.

All the evil in the world, the blackest kind of sin  
Can never hurt you one least bit unless you let it in!!

— Bulletin Digest



# More Benefits of Grace

## Miles Peeples

In Ephesians 1:6,7, we read the following: *“to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”*

We are accepted in the beloved, and the beloved is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. God accepts us *in* and *through* the Lord Jesus Christ. To be accepted carries with it the idea of being highly favored, the idea of being honored with great blessings. Consequently, in Jesus Christ we are privileged to be highly favored by God and are the recipients of His wonderful blessings. Also, because we are accepted in Jesus Christ, we are permitted to go before our holy and righteous God in prayer, with His promise that He will hear us and answer according to His will. Apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, we are not accepted by God, and we are without hope in this old sinful world.

In verse 7, we are introduced to the promise of redemption. That concept is filled with rich hues of meaning, and it provides a picture of a glorious deliverance. The word

“redemption” means a releasing effected by payment of a ransom price.

In the first century world, when the New Testament was written, the buying and selling of slaves was a common practice. In the context of the slave trade of that era, if someone bought a slave and then set him or her free, it was said that he had “redeemed” the slave. Therefore, the act of redeeming a slave was known as redemption. The price paid for the slave before setting him or her free was called the ransom price or the redemption price.

The Lord Jesus through the apostle Paul uses this picturesque term (i.e., redemption) to describe the Christian’s deliverance from the guilt and punishment of sin. In John 8:34,35, Jesus said, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.”* And again, the inspired apostle Paul asked this question: *“Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness?”* (Romans

6:16). Without Jesus Christ, man is pictured as shackled to sin and held captive by the devil. When we enter into union with Christ at the time of our baptism into Him for the remission of sins, we are set free from the guilt and punishment of sin (Romans 6:17,18).

In Christ we have been redeemed and restored to true liberty. What was the purchase price for our redemption? In 1 Peter 1:18,19, the Bible says, "*Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a Lamb without blemish and without spot.*" We have been redeemed (set free) by the blood of Jesus that He shed on that old rugged cross. The ransom price? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

The Bible teaches that each individual, after he reaches the age of accountability, is guilty of sin. "*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23). Again the Bible says, "*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves*

*and the truth is not in us*" (1 John 1:8). About 600 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, the prophet Isaiah said, "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all*" (Isaiah 53:6). These passages, and many more as well, tell us that we are sinners. We are guilty of transgressing God's law.

The good news is that in Jesus Christ we have the forgiveness of sins. Only in Him can we find redemption and the joyful release from a guilty conscience. Forgiveness can be ours: but it can be enjoyed only in Christ. †

Miles Peeples works with the Chaffee Road Church of Christ in Jacksonville, Florida, USA.

**The Extravagance of  
God**

**More sky than man can see,  
More seas than he can sail,  
More sun than he can bear to watch,  
More stars than he can scale.  
More breath than he can breathe,  
More yield than he can sow,  
More grace than he can comprehend,  
More love than he can know.**

**— Ralph W. Seager**

allow Satan a way into your life he will soon take over (1 Peter 5:8).

**Staying away from bad things is not enough.** I find it very sad that someone took the time to get all the “bad things” out of the house but left it empty. They swept and cleaned it. They took pride in having regained possession of the house. But they didn’t fill it with anything! All the effort to get out the “bad things” was not enough to protect it and keep it safe. When the spirit returned and found the house empty and unprotected, it returned with even more spirits and moved in again. This time Satan would make sure that the evil spirits would not be expelled. The situation was worse than before because the owner gave the spirits an opportunity. Second Timothy 3:13 talks of evil men growing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. When you leave room for evil in your life, Satan will fill it! Romans 12:21 tells us not to be “...  
*overcome by evil, but overcome evil*  
” Make sure that there is  
house.

“*and the devil left him.*” In fact, James 4:7 tells us that we can do the same thing. “*Submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*” What a wonderful thing to know that we have the power and love of God willing to protect us from such a powerful adversary! It is our submitting to God that makes Satan flee. Filling our house with godliness leaves no room for Satan. Satan delights in Christians who look like they are walking with God but are so far from Him spiritually that they are unprotected by His power. They are empty houses. There is no difference between these Christians and the Pharisees that Jesus dealt with in this story.

As we strive to be *in* this world but not *of* this world, let us be vigilant to fill our lives with true godliness. Let us not be like the Pharisees who thought that *looking* the part of godly people was enough. Ephesians 4:27 warns us not to give the devil a foothold in our lives. Let’s sweep and clean our house and then fill it with God’s wonderful blessings! †

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

believing Jesus was a teacher from God and the Son of David (Matthew 12:23). In their fear and deception, the Pharisees accused Jesus of conducting His miracles through the power of Beelzebub, the ruler of demons. Jesus told this parable in response to these accusations and to throw light on the condition of people who were calling themselves religious on the outside but were not, inwardly.

The Pharisees dressed appropriately, worshiped at the right times, in the right way and, in their eyes, had lives that were rich and full. Jesus saw them as hollow and empty. They were so busy sweeping and putting their houses in order that they could not be filled by the amazement of a miracle from God just because it was performed on the Sabbath! Jesus warns them in this parable that Satan will consume them if they do not change.

**Someone is going to live in your house!** Luke 16:13 tells us that we cannot serve two masters.

approaches to get inside your house, and when he is successful in weak-entire your relationship with God. When Satan enters your house, they would have been blocked from entering. of godliness, they would have been

yourself with Satan by default if you are not following Jesus, even if you are trying to be a good person! In this story, due to some carelessness or unfortunate event, a demon had taken over the house. I'm sure that the builder and owner never intended for this to happen.

**Satan's power is influencing man to turn from God.** James 1:13 states that, "*each one is tempted (by Satan) when he is drawn away (from where he needs to be) by his own desires and enticed.*" According to commentaries, most Middle Eastern cultures considered deserts and wild places as being haunted by evil spirits. When the spirit could not find a dwelling place in the desert, it returned to the dwelling that accepted it the first time. Those listening to Jesus would have known this. If Satan's objective is to pull us away from God, then he and his demons must be where they can influence us the most. Satan is not stupid or lazy. He will

# Anger Is a Choice

Salvador B. Cariaga

Life is full of conflicts, frustrations, and disappointments. This makes it very easy for us to be angry all the time. Our media and society are not much help either. Every time you read the newspapers, turn on the TV, or watch a movie, there's hardly anything showing without violent conflicts. Murder, robbery, and rape are becoming too common. Last week we read about a seven year-old boy (in the Philippines) who shot his baby-sitter for changing TV channels. The program he was watching was "ROBOCOP". The police observed that the boy had a lot of anger bottled up inside.

While our young ones are getting an overdose of anger at an early age, our society badly needs to take a close look at itself. The Bible offers wisdom and solutions to this problem.

1. The Bible says, "*Be angry but do not sin in your anger.*" In other words, don't let it overcome you. Control yourself. Don't let anger control you.

2. The Bible says, "*Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.*" "Don't let anger linger in your heart" is what the verse means. Get over anger quickly, before it gets all over you.

3. The Bible says to forgive. "*Forgive as I have forgiven you,*" says Jesus Christ. Let go of your anger. Willingly bear the hurt, pay the price — that's forgiveness.

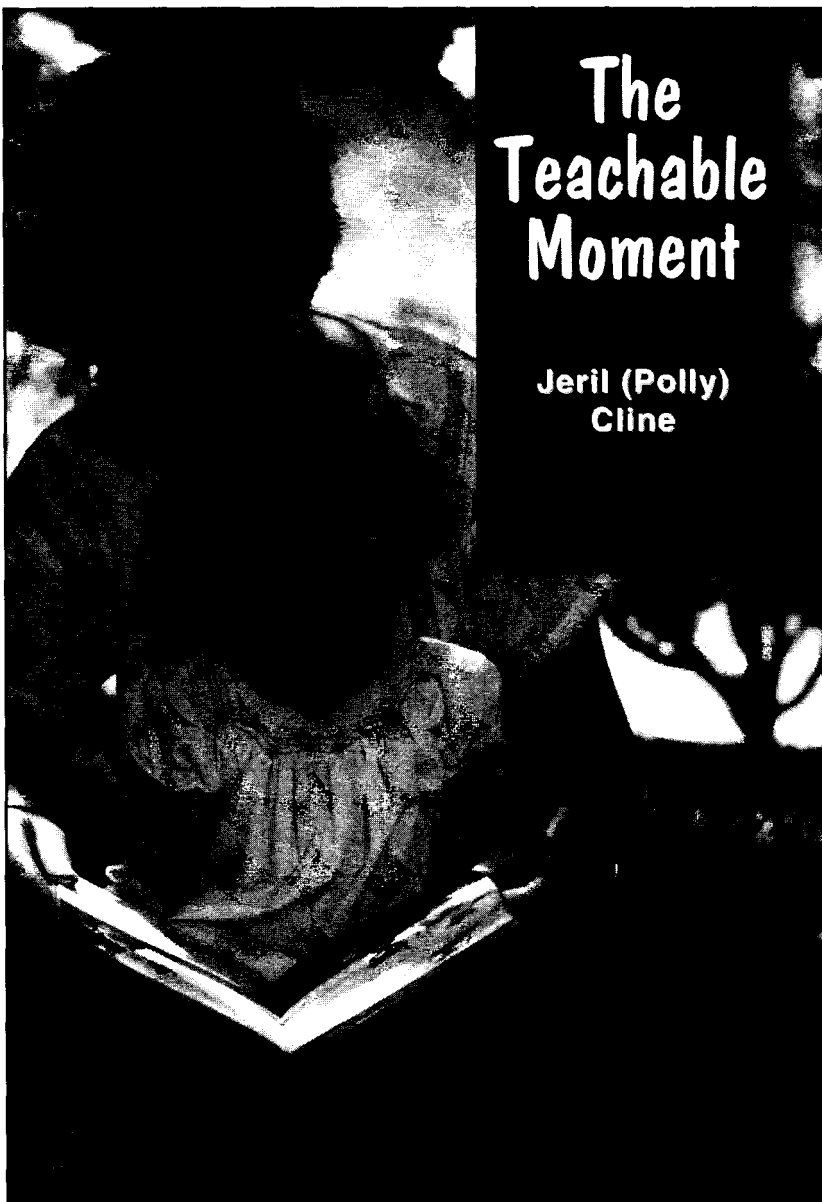
Listed below are more verses in the Bible that you can check for yourself and learn what God has to say about anger. To be angry or not to be angry is a choice you have to make. Choose right!

Mark Twain said, "Forgiveness is the fragrance the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it."

(Scriptures: Ephesians 5:26-32, Romans 12:9-21; Proverbs 14:29, 19:11; Matthew 6:14, Mark 3:28; 1 John 1:9; Mark 11:25; Luke 17:4; Colossians 3:13; James 5:16; 1 Corinthians 13) †

Salvador B. Cariaga is a gospel preacher in Cebu City, Philippines.

TRUST IS GETTING YOU INTO TROUBLE, WISDOM KEEPS YOU THERE.



# The Teachable Moment

Jeril (Polly)  
Cline

He started the National Outdoor Leadership School in Lander, Wyoming, to “train leaders capable of conducting all-round wilderness programs in a safe and rewarding manner.” The Wind River Range of Wyoming, with its 2,000 square miles of lakes, glaciers, mountains, and forests, became the classroom.

In his book, **The Wilderness Handbook**, Paul Petzoldt goes on to explain, “Our teaching method is demonstrated under realistic conditions followed by action. To teach mountaineering, we climb mountains; to teach fishing, we catch trout; to teach river crossing, we cross wild rivers; to teach conservation, we practice conservation ... we cannot make students experts ... but we do provide them with adequate skills, judgment, and understanding to produce capable, safe outdoor leaders with a superior standard of excellence.”

We are in training. Our teacher is the Lord Himself. The goal of our training is that we become like the teacher.

*“A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher”* (Luke 6:40).

Our classroom is the real world, where we must of necessity experience realistic conditions. Our teacher has demonstrated how to successfully pass the course ... and

not just barely, but overwhelmingly so! (Colossians 2:15).

Now we *“overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us”* (Romans 8:37). We are able to endure this training because we know He loves us and will not allow more than we are able to bear in each lesson (1 Corinthians 10:13).

While the Lord was here, God literally became the private tutor of His followers. *“And with many such parables He was speaking the word to them as they were able to hear it; and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples”* (Mark 4:33,34 — emphasis added).

Jesus understood the teachable moment. He knew that you don’t teach mountain climbing at the beach, or fishing while crossing the desert. No, the lesson must be suited to the pupil, appropriate to the situation.

Jesus constantly began where people were, in an effort to bring them to where they were not, but where God wanted them to be. Whether it was the lily of the field, or a man sowing seed, or a coin bearing Caesar’s image, the lesson fit the pupil. And if received, understood, and believed (fully persuaded), the pupil was never the same again (John 17:8).

So we have come to understand

that to have real fellowship with our teacher, we must abide in His teachings and walk in the same manner as He walked (1 John 2:5,6).

Just as He teaches us according to our ability to hear/heed it, so we are encouraged to become teachers of those God gives to us, understanding their teachable moment.

But first, like Ezra, we must set our heart to study our teacher's words and to practice them. Then we may credibly teach (Ezra 7:10).

**What** do we teach? We teach the words of that one whom we have come to love with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our might (Deuteronomy 6:5).

**Whom** do we teach? We diligently teach Him who is on our heart to our sons and our daughters (Deuteronomy 6:6,7).

**How** do we teach? We teach naturally, when we sit in our homes, or when we walk along the street, or when we lie down upon our bed

(verse 7).

**Where** do we teach? We teach in a private non-structured and informal setting (verse 7).

And we teach when we are in the public forum (verse 9).

We have learned from the Teacher so well that what is internalized, in our heart, has become externalized, bound upon our hand and written upon our forehead (verse 8).

Our training has become evident. The invisible has become visible and is now clearly seen in both our words and deeds (verse 8).

In a world of compromise and confusion, the superior standard of excellence which breeds confidence within the Lord's pupil still amazes and staggers the imagination of men's hearts. And they still take notice that we "*have been with Jesus*" (Acts 4:13). †

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

## I'd Rather Be a Bible Teacher

**I'd rather be a Bible teacher than anything I could be.  
And mingle with the boys and girls as their love inspires me.  
I'd rather hear the excitement when the children's voices ring;  
Than travel all around the world and visit kings and queens.  
I'd rather hug their tearful faces with worried anxious eyes;  
Than be president of these great states and mingle with the wise.  
I'd rather be a Bible teacher than anything I know.  
Planting the seed of God's word and helping it to grow.**





# Don't Worry

Francis David

While Jesus was talking to the people on the mountainside, He taught many things which are full of great treasure. He said, "Do not worry." "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his

*stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry...*" (Matthew 6:25-31).

In these verses, our Lord is trying to teach us that we should not worry over or put our trust in material things. Sometimes we are so

busy thinking about physical things that we forget that there is a God in heaven who cares for us. We must put our trust in God and seek His kingdom and His righteousness, for He has promised that all these other things will be given to us (Matthew 6:33). God has made us, and He will provide the ways and means to sustain us. We must remember, however, that anxiety will only make things worse for us.

Paul writes to the Christians at Philippi: *“Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice”* (Philippians 4:4). The problem with us is that we tend to think only about the bad parts of life. We worry about trials, sorrows, and unhappiness. We think about our lack and forget to think about the blessings. Some get sick because of too much anxiety. Some are actually killing themselves emotionally, because they are worried about many things. You must avoid this kind of worry! You can do it by realizing that you have a heavenly Father who cares for you.

If we really want to be happy, we must come to God and ask for His help. Meditate on things which are spiritual and eternal and, as Paul innumerates, true, noble, just, pure, lovely, things of good report, *“if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things”* (Philippians 4:8). In

verse 6, Paul says, *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God.”* Rejoice and be glad, because if you worry, it will only hinder your spiritual growth.

Are you worried? Are you anxious about many things? I would suggest to you that you leave worrying and cast your burden on the Lord. As Peter says, *“casting all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you”* (1 Peter 5:7).

We sing a song which tells us that Jesus is our true friend. Accept His help. *“What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.”* *“Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged. Take it to the Lord in prayer.”*

If you are not a friend of Jesus, you can become one today by believing in Him, confessing Him as the Son of God, repenting of your sinful life, and then by being baptized into His death, to be raised from the water of baptism to a new life. You will be added to the church by Jesus, Himself. Then you can cast all your worries upon Him. Won't you do it today? †

**Francis David is a Gospel preacher in New Delhi, India.**

# In a World of Changing Morals, the Bible Never Changes

Daniel Whitworth

In an age where there are so many changes taking place in such a short amount of time, isn't it comforting to know that God's word never changes (Hebrews 13:8; John. 12:48)! All around us we see changes in values, ethics, morals and education. Even in the Lord's church, we now hear those who are demanding for our culture a more "relevant" message from God. I am greatly alarmed at those who want to change the word of God to fit their own sinful lifestyles.

No longer is an adulterous relationship considered sinful. Many just call it an "affair", with no sense of guilt or wrong-doing attached to the behavior. But the Bible teaches that adultery *is* sin (Matthew 19:9). In spite of God's clear message, there are those in the church today willing to fellowship the unrepentant in such a relationship.

Many would say that our young people are just "fooling around" or "sowing their wild oats", but the Bible calls an immoral relationship fornication and says that we are to flee this sin (1 Corinthians 6:18).

When one chooses an "alternate

lifestyle", many say that we must be tolerant. But the Bible teaches that God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of homosexual practices.

Mixed swimming and immodest dress have become so common in the church these days that one wonders if God's people have forgotten what 1 Timothy 2:9,10 says about dressing modestly: *"...in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works."*

Pornography and filth on television, videos, movies and the internet are not just problems faced by unbelievers. Sadly, they are a staggering problem among many who call themselves Christians. I hate to complain about the quality of TV programming these days, but every time I use the remote control, the garbage disposal turns on! Does most of what we watch pass the test of Philippians 4:8? *"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true,*

*whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things.”*

The church is the “called out” of the world. We are to be different, holy, set apart. We are to be the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world”, but in far too many cases, today’s church member, if arrested and charged with being a Christian, would be let go for lack of evidence.

I challenge you who call yourselves Christians not to change with the times, but remain pure in speech, holy in life, modest in dress, and faithful to the word of God. While times and cultures change, aren’t you

thankful that God and His Word remain constant and true? †

**Daniel Whitworth, now deceased, preached the Gospel in Baldwyn, Mississippi, USA.**

## Revelation

**There is a famine in the land,  
But not of food and drink;  
A lack of knowledge is at hand,**

**Men do not want to think  
Of what the Bible has to say,  
They plan for God to wink**

**At ignorance, and let them play  
At being right; they have no  
plan,  
They have no hope, no time to  
pray.**

**Unless they read the Word,  
how can  
They know what God’s  
prepared for Man?**

**— Florence Stone Reeh**

I am absolutely appalled at the attire of some church members. Is this my age showing or is there a problem developing? When I was growing up, I recall so vividly my mother every Saturday night getting our clothes ready for Sunday. It was

Make no mistake about it: shorts, tank tops, T-shirts advertising beer, rock groups, and beer taverns send a message about the wearer. Most respectable eating places have a sign, "No shirt, no shoes, no service." Are we approaching the day

# Does It Matter How We Dress When We Come to Worship?

Jerry Jenkins and Mack Lyon

the one day of the week that we would "look our very best". We were going to worship God! Now I see young and old coming to worship this same God in clothing that would not meet our local school code.

Physiologists have known for a long time that dress does have influence on behavior. Slouchy dress creates slouchy work in school. This has led some high schools, colleges, universities and even some work places to insist that their students/employees dress as though they were serious about their work. I am not suggesting that every man wear a white shirt and tie. I am saying that the importance of worship should cause us to want to give some special attention to our appearance.

when such signs would be appropriate for the house of worship?

What has happened to the human race? Have we no self-respect? People appear in public everywhere unbathed, unwashed, uncombed, unshaven, untrimmed, unshod, even undressed, and generally unkempt with no apparent shame at all! Is there nothing inappropriate? Or immodest? One might expect this absence of standard from those who walk after the flesh, but who would have ever dreamed that Christians who are led by godly principles would be so much like the world? Even elders' and deacons' children come to services with seemingly little regard for the example that church leaders' families should set.

## ETHICS

The Bible tells us that “...*The Lord sees not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart*” (1 Samuel 16:7). Are we going to misuse and abuse this Scripture so badly that we endorse a state of decadence? It is true that God does not have a dress code for worship! However, a true spirit of awe, reverence and worship dictates that Christians going to the assembly would not dress as Christians going to some sporting event — and even going to a sporting event, Christians should not dress in the immodest apparel of the world.

I encourage every Christian here to have a “*poor and contrite spirit*” (Isaiah 66:2). Let us have the attitude spoken of by the writer of Hebrews, “...*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). I encourage our young ladies to wear dresses and skirts that are not so short when they are sitting that nothing is left to the imagination. I encourage our young ladies and young men to be modest in their dress when coming to worship or when coming to work for God. If your parents are unthoughtful, please take the initiative to do right. If your parents are too old to remember what “lust” is, you dress in such a manner that you

will never be a contributing factor to another’s lustful eye.

No! God does not have a dress code for worship and work! Of course He does not. He assumes that the humble worshiper’s *heart* will dictate proper attire and behavior. A true spirit of awe, reverence and worship dictates propriety in dress and demeanor. God does not command us to kneel or stand, or bow our heads when we pray, but doing these things manifests a humbleness of heart that honors and respects the sovereign God whom we praise and petition. So does proper dress.

[Addendum: Everyone knows that the attire one wears on or for any given occasion is a reflection of one’s attitude toward that occasion. Consider how people generally dress for a wedding or a funeral service. If I have a respectful attitude toward these occasions, it will be reflected in my attire. The same is true with regard to worship. Those who wear shorts to worship, or immodest clothing, or attire more suitable for a sporting event or concert clearly show that their attitude toward the worship of God is not one of reverence and godly fear. Think on these things. †

**Jerry Jenkins and Mack Lyon are preachers of the Gospel. Article reprinted from “The Key Word”, Jimmy Ferguson.**

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## PROVERBS 17:22

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My friend Charlie says that his wife is not much of a housekeeper. He says that her idea of housework is to sweep the room with a glance.



Little Bobby was spending the weekend with his grandmother after a particularly trying week in kindergarten. His grandmother decided to take him to the park on Saturday morning. It had been snowing all night and everything was beautiful.

His grandmother remarked, "doesn't it look like an artist painted this scenery? Did you know God painted this just for you?"

Bobby said, "Yes, God did it and he did it left handed."

This confused his grandmother a bit, and she asked him, "What makes you say God did this with his left hand?"

"Well," said Bobby, "we learned at Sunday School last week that Jesus sits on God's right hand!"



Some serious questions for your serious contemplation:

- When cheese gets its picture taken, what does it say?
- Why are a "wise man" and a "wise guy" opposites?
- What hair color do they put on the drivers licenses of bald men?
- Do Lipton Tea employees take coffee breaks?
- Have you ever wondered how deep oceans would be if sponges didn't live there?



Two women were discussing their up-coming class reunion. There was uncertainty about one member. One woman had heard that he had passed away, but the other one wasn't sure.

"Shall we list him with the deceased class members?" asked the skeptic.

"What if we're wrong?" asked the other.

"But I'm sure I saw an article in the newspaper about his death," replied the first one.

The second one then asked,

## PROVERBS 17:22

“What if we put him on the list and then he shows up at the dinner?”

The other one responded, “Well, we could always give him the prize for coming the longest distance.”



Joe: “Moe, you really look down in the dumps. What’s wrong with you?”

Moe: “I believe the end is near for me, and my days are drawing to a close.”

Joe: “Why do you say that? You’re only 35 years old, and you’re in perfect health.”

Moe: “That doesn’t matter. I bought one of those lifetime fountain pens, and it just broke.”



Some profound observations:

- Age is a very high price to pay for maturity.
- Bills travel through the mail at twice the speed of checks.
- No husband has ever been shot while doing the dishes.
- A balanced diet is a cookie in each hand.
- Middle age is when broadness of the mind and narrowness of the waist change places.

A few words of advice:

- Be true to your teeth and they won’t be false to you.
- (Not quite biblical) “If thine enemy offends thee, give his child a drum.”



One of life’s more unpleasant realizations is that perhaps all that gray hair is not really premature after all.



A detailed study was made of graduates from the last five years, and it revealed that five out of four have trouble with fractions.



A fellow was overheard telling a friend, “I don’t want you to think that I went to school with any inferior students, but the last student in my graduating class of 1977 finally graduated this past May.”



Some sound advice:

- On a Sears hairdryer — “Do not use while sleeping..”
- On a bar of Dial soap — “Directions: Use like regular soap.”



# Fathers, Do It Right

**Dale Grissom**

*“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”* (Ephesians 6:1-4).

Let us focus for a moment on the admonition to fathers in verse four. Men, God has entrusted us with a tremendous responsibility as leaders of our homes, one we should never take lightly. We must strive to instill a loving, Christ-like spirit in our children, both by our example and by our teaching.

Conversely, we should be careful about teasing our children, for excessive teasing creates a fighting spirit in a child. Many immature fathers encourage their children, especially their sons, to fight and “stand up for themselves”. They may even laugh when they use profanity.

Some parents push their children into sports, perhaps wanting them to excel in an area where the parents themselves had been unsuccessful. And how many times have

you heard a parent tell his child that he is mean? A child who h e a r s

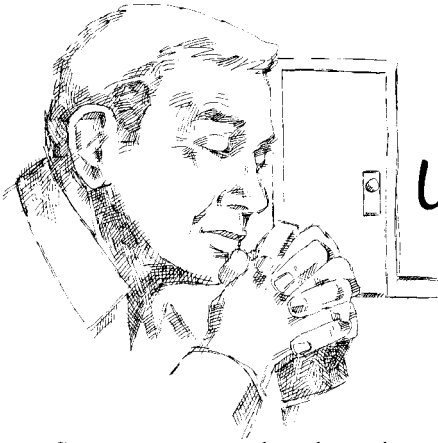
such a statement often enough will soon begin to believe it.

Let us always be mindful of the treasure God has blessed us with in our children. Though He did not give us a how-to-raise-children manual that deals with every personality and every situation, He did provide a great pattern Book. He tells us to love our children, and to set the right example for them by showing our love for one another. We are to treat them with respect, and teach them by word and example to deal respectfully with others. Above all, our children must see in our lives a true love for the Father and must see that we live before Him a humble, obedient life.

May God bless you with a family that will always be a joy to you, and may you all know heaven as your eternal home. †

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





# A Most Unforgettable Character

**Charles Pugh III**

Some may remember the articles in *Reader's Digest* which were published some years ago under the title "The Most Unforgettable Character I Ever Met." I would like to use the thought to tell you about a most unforgettable person in my life.

This unforgettable character was a man. He was a good man. As a boy, I can remember how big he seemed to me. He was a big man in ways I never fully realized until I got older. I cannot remember this unforgettable man ever using profanity. He was a hard worker, conscientious, and honest. He cared about people. I have known him to sit up with people nearly all night long talking with them about a problem in their life. One year he even took part of his daily lunch hour and knocked on one door each day in order to tell the people in his

town about Christ and His church.

This unforgettable man loved the Bible. He humbly shared with me a year before his death that, for nearly twenty-five years, he had missed only two days of daily Bible reading. He was an elder in the Lord's church. Hardly a student graduated from his fifth-grade Bible class without obeying the blessed Gospel of Christ. His hands were calloused from hard work, but his heart was tender.

This unforgettable man was a wonderful Christian gentleman. I want to be like him. I want my son to be like him. I want my daughters to have men in their lives like him. I shall never forget him. I called him "Dad". †

**Charles Pugh III preaches for the Bridge Street Church of Christ in New Martinsville, West Virginia, USA.**

# The Love of Marriage

Glenn Colley

I recently was provided with some statistics regarding out-of-wedlock births. The percentage for the general population was embarrassingly high, but the percentage for some particular segments of our society was absolutely appalling! This means that especially among some elements of our society, marriage is out of style and few people bother to practice wedlock. Such, of course, is a consequence of abandoning God. Paul said of some in his day, *"They did not like to retain God in their knowledge"* (Romans 1:28). God started marriage; it was His plan.

But what happens to a society when we abandon the morality of marriage? And since these children are being born into families who don't practice marriage, what will prevent the statistics from growing? These are lingering questions.



You and I must always be strong advocates of godly, happy marriage. Can anyone doubt that committed, faithful marriage is the best way to achieve happiness, fulfillment, security, and good parenting? No other system comes close. Marriage is God's way, and He loves good marriage.

*"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully"* (1 Timothy 5:14).

*"Marriage is honorable in all,*

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

*and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4).*

*“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord” (Proverbs 18:22).*

Furthermore, attaching love to marriage is from God. Men did not always choose their women because they loved them, nor did they necessarily intend to love them. Through the Word of God we understand that love and commitment are the root of real marriage, and that we really don't love a mate to whom we are not truly committed.

*“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself” (Ephesians 5:28).*

*“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children” (Titus 2:4).*

Take a look at how some wives were obtained during the Old Testament times: **(1) According to the Levirate law**, a man must marry his brother's widow (Genesis 38:8,11). This obligation would have more to do with family duty than with love. **(2) It was common for parents to choose mates for their children** (Genesis 21:21; Genesis 24). **(3) Some wives were obtained by purchase** (Genesis 29:20). **(4) One might avoid courting all together** and simply

kidnap his wife (Judges 21:21-23).

**(5) A wife could be given by a king** as a gift or as a reward for valor (1 Samuel 17:25; Judges 1:12). **(6) Kings were powerful enough to simply take a woman as wife** by an edict (Esther 2:2-4, 8-14). **(7) Wives were sometimes given to men in trade** for their work or service (2 Samuel 3:14).

Much preferred is the practice most common today, and the very best of all is for two Christians to meet, begin to love one another, marry, and remain faithful to one another until death parts them.

The sanctity of marriage and the home is under major attack by the modern world, but don't despair. God's way has never shown brighter than when surrounded by so much darkness. Speak up for Biblical family values! Teach our youth what is right and good. Be committed to your home and marriage in such a way that God will be pleased with you.

I wish I could say to all who are having their babies out of wedlock, “God is not trying to hurt us with His laws of life-long commitment and marriage. He's showing us how to be truly happy. Stop hurting yourselves, and live for Christ instead.” †

**Glenn Colley is the preacher for the West Huntsville church in Huntsville, Alabama, USA.**

# Who Am I?

Can you identify me? Read each clue and think carefully. If you guess my name after the first clue, give yourself a score of 100 points. If you know who I am only after the fifth clue, your score is 60, etc. When you are sure of my identity, look up the passages of scripture following each clue to verify the facts from God's word.

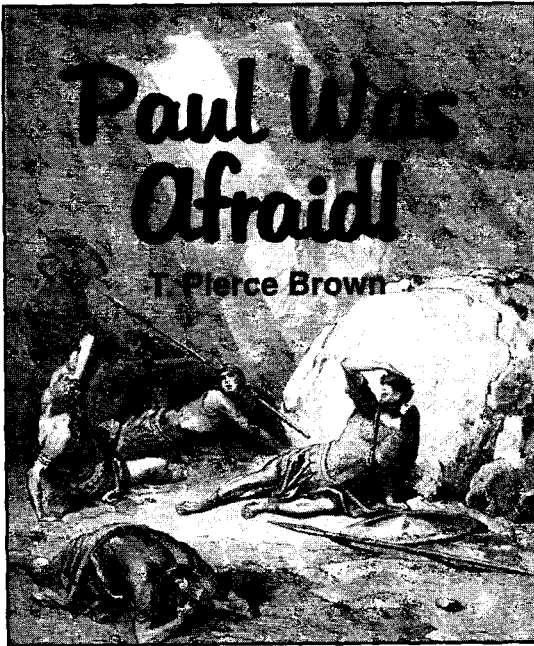
1. **100** I was the son of Asa (2 Chronicles 17:1).
2. **90** I was the fourth king of Judah, preceded by Rehoboam, Abijah, and Asa (2 Chronicles 11-17).
3. **80** Both my father and I were godly, destroying the places of idol worship and trying to turn the people back to God (14:3; 17:3,6).
4. **70** In the third year of my reign, I sent Levites throughout Judah to teach all the people the law of God from His book (17:7-9).



5. **60** I sent judges throughout the land with the instructions: *"Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes"* (19:6,7).
6. **50** When Judah was invaded by Moab and Ammon, I depended on God (20:1-9).
7. **40** I prayed, *"O our God...we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You"* (20:12).
8. **30** I reigned for 25 years (20:31).
9. **20** My firstborn son, Jehoram reigned after my death (21:1).
10. **10** Even though I was a godly king, *"Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for as yet the people had not directed their hearts to the God of their fathers"* (20:33).

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

*See answer on inside back cover.*



We usually think of Paul as being the peerless apostle as well as the fearless apostle. However, a more careful reading of Paul's statements will reveal something that may be even more significant. In 1 Corinthians 2:3 Paul admits, "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." We wonder what caused him to fear. It seems possible that he feared for his brethren as 2 Corinthians 11:3 puts it, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." A similar thought

is found in 2 Corinthians 12:20: "For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults." It may be supposed that when he said in 1 Corinthians 9:27, "But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (ASV), that he was

afraid lest he should fall away and be lost. That seems doubtful, in view of 2 Timothy 1:12: "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

However, it seems apparent that Paul, though he trusted in the Lord that all things would be worked for his good, still had fears. In Acts 27:24 we find, "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." It is interesting that the expression "fear not" in the original language

means to “stop fearing”. What sort of fear this was, we do not know. Our opinion is that it was not a kind of abject terror, or the kind of fear that one would have if he lost his courage and was afraid to die. Paul had already said in Acts 21:13, *“What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”* So, he was not afraid to die. When God spoke to him in Acts 27:24, it may well be that Paul was afraid they would be shipwrecked and many people would die. This kind of fear is different from the kind of fear that indicates a lack of faith. If we should hear a person say, “I am going to bring in the clothes, for I am afraid it is going to rain,” we would recognize that it is not the same as a person saying, “I am afraid of rain.”

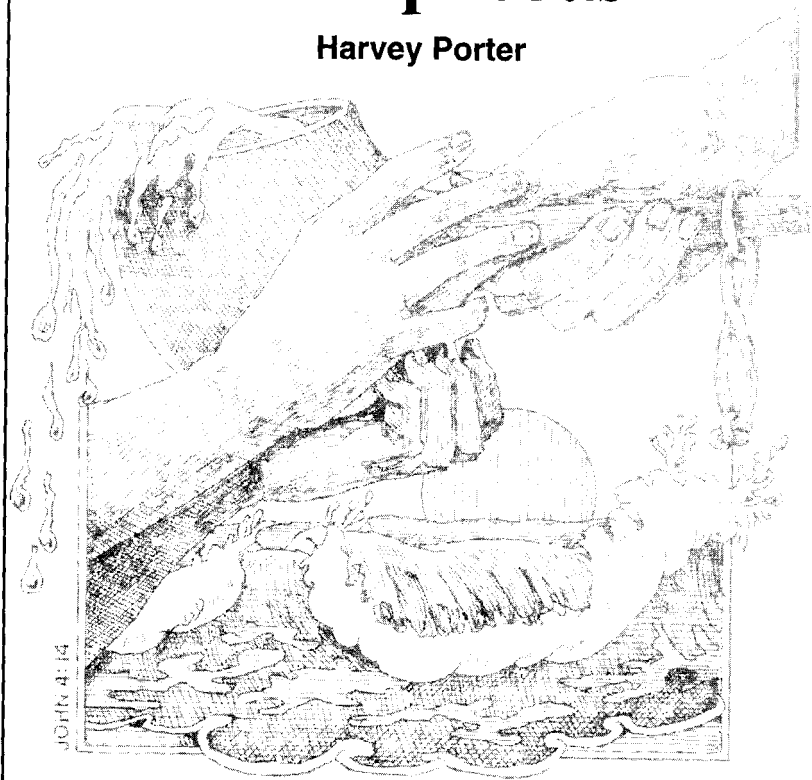
However, my primary point in this article is to emphasize that, although God told Paul to stop fearing in this instance, there are many things that we may fear without needing to assume that it would be displeasing to God. The second point is that it is sometimes assumed that a man who is afraid is a coward, or has no courage. That is not the case. Courage is not lack of fear but the willingness to proceed with what one thinks is the proper course *in spite of fear*. It

appears that the word “fear” as used in the Bible is very similar to our use of it. A doctor may say, “I’m afraid he will not live through the night.” That does not mean the same thing as if a person were to say, “I am afraid to die”. I may say, “I’m afraid I am going to die before I accomplish a certain task.” That does not mean that I am afraid to die, or that I fear death. It would probably be better to express the former thought by saying, “I expect I am going to die,” but it seems possible that some of the references in the Bible about fear are very similar, and have reference more to a feeling of anxiety or a sorrow for an impending event than it does to a feeling of terror, or what we commonly call fear. When Paul says in 2 Timothy 1:7, *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,”* he is emphasizing that we are to trust God completely. We may still have some kinds of fear of some things without necessarily displeasing God. The reference to the “fearful” in Revelation 21:8 that will have their part in the lake of fire is a different word and indicates cowardliness and unwillingness to stand up for truth. Paul’s fear was never of this kind. †

**T. Pierce Brown lives and preaches in Cookeville, Tennessee, USA.**

# We Need More Like Onesiphorus

Harvey Porter



*“May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me — may the Lord grant him to find mercy from*

*the Lord on that Day — and you will know all the service he rendered at Ephesus” (2 Timothy 1:16-18).*

“Onesiphorus” means “profit bringer” in Greek. He was a dear friend of Paul’s and is mentioned twice in this last of all of Paul’s



## BIBLE CHARACTERS

epistles. We learn several things about him that would be profitable for each of us to possess in order that we too might be "profit bringers".

**He was loyal.** Paul was greatly disappointed that "...all who are in Asia turned away from me, and among them Phygelus and Hermogenes" (2 Timothy 1:15). But Onesiphorus did not turn away. One of the great needs for the people of the Lord today is loyalty. Loyalty to the church, to the Word, to the Lord, is hard to find in the lives of many today.

"For he often refreshed me," Paul wrote. All of us like to see people come into our lives who "often refresh" us. We all see enough who complain, gripe, and talk down the church and life. Determine to be like this good saint and spend some time refreshing the hearts and lives of others.

Onesiphorus was not ashamed of Paul's chains. Are we ashamed of the church, of Jesus, of Christianity? Many are! Many do not stand up to defend or to be counted with those who are suffering for the Lord. There are "fair weather friends" in all walks of life.

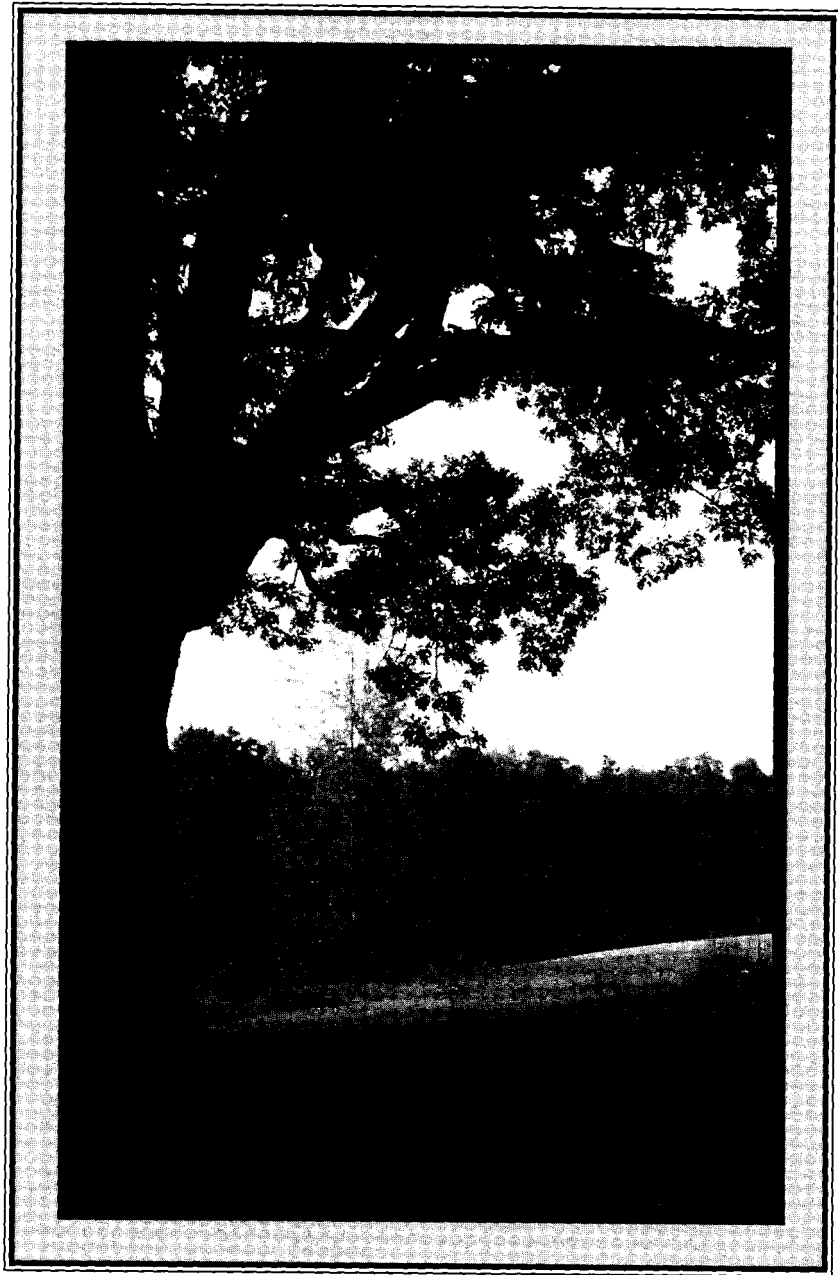
"He searched for me eagerly and found me." Many give up too soon in the work of the Lord. Every good work require time and effort. Some Christians salve the conscience by saying, "Well, I tried." But did you try hard enough? Let us not be guilty of giving up too soon. "Be thou faithful unto death..." (Revelation 2:10).

"You well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus." It is still true today. There are those in any congregation who are known as the workers. They come to all the services, they prepare food, they visit, they teach classes, they do personal work, they send cards, they encourage, they are busy with the Lord's work as much as their own. For them, Jesus comes first!

Paul prayed, "May the Lord grant him to find mercy...on that Day." Few of us would think that the Lord would deny mercy on the Judgment Day to a person like this. Let us, too, seek to be in the company of Onesiphorus to receive riches of mercy on that great day! †

**Before his death, Harvey Porter preached for many years in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA.**

**You cannot please God if your heart is fundamentally earthbound.**



## The Oak Tree

A mighty wind blew night and day.  
It stole the oak tree's leaves away,  
Then snapped its boughs and pulled its bark  
Until the oak was tired and stark.  
But still the oak tree held its ground  
While other trees fell all around.

The weary wind gave up and spoke,  
"How can you still be standing, Oak?"  
The oak tree said, "I know that you  
Can break each branch of mine in two,  
Carry every leaf away,  
Shake my limbs, and make me sway,  
But I have roots stretched in the earth,  
Growing stronger since my birth.  
You'll never touch them, for you see,  
They are the deepest part of me.  
Until today I wasn't sure  
Of just how much I could endure,  
But now I've found, with thanks to you,  
I'm stronger than I ever knew."

— Author Unknown

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.  
(Philippians 4:13)

# Making Known the Mystery

Max Patterson

*"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,  
and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,  
for instruction in righteousness" (1 Timothy 3:16).*

## Introduction

- A. Paul said that one of his purposes was *"to make known the mystery of the gospel"* (Ephesians 6:19).
  - B. Ephesians 3:3,4 *"How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery;"* and *"Whereby, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."*
  - C. The mystery is about Christ, the church, the gospel, salvation, etc.
  - D. Had this not been revealed in Christ, we could have never discovered it.
- I. Six Aspects of the Process of Making Known the Mystery of Godliness:**
- A. **First, God was manifested in the flesh** (the Messiah had long been promised — now a reality).
    - 1. Notice, it was God manifested in the flesh.
    - 2. **John 1:1-18 explains this in detail:**
      - a. **Verse one** tells us that Christ is the very essence of God.
        - 1) Was the Word — This verb form shows that He is the uncreated, eternal one.
        - 2) With God — Shows the communion and fellowship the two had.
        - 3) Was God — Shows that He is the very essence, the express image.
      - b. **Verse three** tells us of His relationship to this physical world.
        - 1) He created it.
        - 2) He is the active agent by which all things came into existence (cf. Revelation 4:11, *"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou*

## CHARTS AND OUTLINES

*hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”)*

- c. **Verse four** shows Christ's relationship to the moral world.
    - 1) He is the light and life of it.
    - 2) Life in all its fullness and completeness was in Him (cf. Ephesians 1:3).
  - d. **Verse five** shows Christ's relationship to darkness.
    - 1) He challenged it and was its victor.
    - 2) The darkness comprehended (overcame) not the light.
  - e. **Verses 10-12** show Christ's relation to humanity.
    - 1) He was in the world, but it did not recognize Him.
    - 2) It still doesn't! (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:21f).
  - f. **Verse fourteen** shows Christ's relationship to the Father.
    - 1) He was deity in the flesh.
    - 2) We beheld His glory (cf. John 20:30,31).
  - g. **Verse fourteen** also shows Christ's relationship to grace.
    - 1) We have received it (vs. 16).
    - 2) Paul expressed it like this: Titus 2:11-14.
- B. Second, He was justified in the Spirit.**
- 1. It was in His spiritual life and character that He was justified.
    - a. There is no article before "Spirit" in this verse.
    - b. 1 Peter 2:22, "*Who did not sin, neither was guile (deceit) found in his mouth.*"
  - 2. If God came to earth, we would expect certain things:
    - a. We would expect His life to be sinless.
      - 1) The people of Jesus' day tried to find fault.
      - 2) Not the slightest shadow could be found on His moral character.
      - 3) There never lived a more harmless being. He injured, and took advantage of, nobody. No improper word or immoral action.
      - 4) Pilate said, "*I find no fault in him.*"
      - 5) The Roman centurion admitted, "*truly this was the son of God.*"
      - 6) The thief on the cross asked to be remembered.
      - 7) Judas confessed that He had betrayed innocent blood. Can there be any doubt that He was sinless?

## CHARTS AND OUTLINES

- b. We would expect Him to be holy.
    - 1) Jesus possessed a genuine holiness, a deep spiritual prayer life.
    - 2) His speech was clean, chaste, honorable.
    - 3) His attitude toward God was one of deep respect, trust, reverence.
  - c. We would expect His words to be the greatest words ever spoken.
    - 1) Greatest ever spoken. Greatest ever written. Greatest literature.
    - 2) Used in more music, art, quoted more, read more, translated more....
  - d. We would expect Him to exert a profound power over human personality.
    - 1) Think of the impact on men: whether questioned by clever theologians, besought by stricken sinners, examined by stupid disciples, or a Roman Governor.
    - 2) He asked men to follow Him and they did.
  - e. We would expect Him to manifest the love of God.
- C. **Third, He was seen of angels.**
- 1. This may mean He showed Himself, or appeared to, or did His work in the presence of angels.
  - 2. These angels:
    - a. Announced His coming. Gabriel announced to Mary (Luke 1:26ff).
    - b. Were present when He was born (Luke 2).
    - c. Were present at His resurrection, and at His ascension (Acts 1:10,11; Matthew 28:2; Luke 20:12).
    - d. And it is said that they will be with Him when He comes again (2 Thessalonians 1:7f).
- D. **Fourth, He preached to the Gentiles (nations).**
- 1. The Gospel of Jesus is for all (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19).
  - 2. The book of Acts is a book about people who gave all, including their own lives to make the message known.
- E. **Fifth, He was believed on in the world.**
- 1. This belief was so strong that we sometimes say the early Christians out-lived and out-died the pagans among them (Colossians 3:17; Hebrews 5:9; Matthew 7:21).

## CHARTS AND OUTLINES

2. In the book of Acts, when the Gospel was preached, almost always some were convinced.
  - a. 3,000 on Pentecost.
  - b. 5,000 in Acts 4:4.
  - c. Samaria believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 8:12).
  - d. The Ethiopian Eunuch was converted when Philip preached to Him Jesus (Acts 8:35f).
  - e. Lydia, and also the Jailor, were converted in Acts 16.
- F. Not only was He believed on in the world, but when His work was finished, **sixth, He was received up in glory.**
  1. The angels escorted Him to the throne of God.
  2. He was received and crowned King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

### Conclusion:

- A. Because of the progression of the things we have studied, we can also receive a crown of glory (2 Timothy 4:7,8 "*Henceforth, there is laid up for me....*")
- B. It is a crown of glory, reserved in heaven, for you (Matthew 11:28-30).

— From the book of sermons entitled *Capsules*. †

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

### URGENT NEEDS IN THE CHURCH

1. More open hearts and fewer open mouths.
2. More knocking on doors and less knocking on each other.
3. More sound hearts and fewer soreheads.
4. More seed slinging and less mud slinging.
5. More sacrifice of self and less sacrifice of others.
6. More concern for the "what" of teaching and less concern for the "who" of the teacher.
7. More concern over direction than speed.
8. More profit from the problems of yesterday and less blindness to the pitfalls of tomorrow.
9. More desire to promote restoration and less desire to promote personal recognition.



# Help! I'm Tempted!

Clyde H. Slimp

**Introduction:**

- A. *"My help comes from the Lord."*
- B. There are no shortcuts! Microwave popcorn, brown-n-serve rolls, instant potatoes, drive-through visitation at funeral homes, electronic banking — but there are no shortcuts to developing a faith that will prepare you for **temptation!**



## CHARTS AND OUTLINES

### **I. The truth about the Liar**

- A. You are way ahead of most people if you even believe there is a Devil who is a liar.
- B. The Bible tells us the truth about the liar. The Devil:
  - 1. Is a murderer (John 8:44).
  - 2. Is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44).
  - 3. Is at work now in this world (Ephesians 2:1-3).
  - 4. Is a persistent opportunist (Luke 4:13).
  - 5. Is a deadly enemy (1 Peter 5:8).
  - 6. Can be successfully resisted (1 Peter 5:9; James 4:7; 1 John 4:4).

### **II. The truth about the Lure**

- A. Satan will lie about the lure: he will whisper that there will be no catch, no tradeoff, no downside.
- B. The truth about the lure is that it has a hook attached to it.

### **III. The truth about the Luster**

- A. Think about the results of getting what it is you think you want. Look beyond the luster and see the lies.
- B. Whatever the sin, whatever the shine and luster it holds, we need to know the shine will fade and all that is in the world that can tempt us is ultimately doomed. We can be doomed right along with the world or we can follow God (1 John 2:15-17).

### **IV. The truth about the Lord**

- A. He overcame temptation — Hebrews 4:15. He has overcome and has conquered our enemy!
- B. He is faithful and will help us overcome it too.

### **Conclusion:**

- A. What does God's word say about temptation? Jesus said that we should pray that God will lead us away from it. Matthew 6:13 says, "*And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*" He said that we should pray to have strength to overcome our weak flesh. No temptation will be too strong for us and there is a way out of every temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- B. The Lord points us to the family He has provided for our strengthening (James 5:16; Galatians 6:1,2).
- C. He is faithful when we need forgiveness (1 John 1:8,9). †

**Clyde H. Slimp preaches for the Robinson & Center church of Christ in Conway, Arkansas, USA.**

# Quick Commentary on Crucial Verses

**Matthew 3:1,2**  
**Matthew 4:17**  
**Acts 28:23**  
**Acts 28:30,31**  
**Acts 8:12**

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matthew 3:1,2).

...Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17).

So when they had appointed him [Paul] a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening (Acts 28:23).

Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him (Acts 28:30,31).

But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized (Acts 8:12).

Throughout the New Testament, we read of the **kingdom of God**, the **kingdom of heaven**, the **church**, the **body of Christ**, and other descriptive terminology of the **family** Jesus came into the world to begin. **He gave Himself for the church** (Ephesians 5:25), **shedding His blood to purchase it** (Acts 20:28).

The city often heard today is, "PREACH JESUS. Don't preach THE CHURCH! I don't want organized religion!"

But the passages in this study show that John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the apostles, and others of the first century came with a basic two-point lesson: **the kingdom AND Jesus Christ!**

We cannot minimize the importance of the church without minimizing the value placed on it by our Lord Himself. No human has that right or authority. In the first century, when the kingdom of God was preached, along with the truths concerning the name of Jesus Christ, people responded by being baptized into Christ. We must be true to that message today, not adding to it or refusing to preach its importance.

# What Moses Learned at the Burning Bush

John Thiesen

***“And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed” (Exodus 3:2).***

While Moses was tending his father-in-law’s sheep near the mountain of God at Horeb, he saw a burning bush that was not being consumed by the fire. Moses approached the bush to see more closely this strange phenomenon. To his surprise, out of the bush came the voice of the Angel of the Lord, instructing him to return to Egypt to bring the children of Israel to the land that God had promised to Abraham to give to his descendants, hundreds of years before.

In his conversation with the Angel of God, Moses learned a great deal about the nature of God Himself. Let us sit at the feet of the Angel with Moses and hear what he heard about our awesome Creator.

## **Moses Learned of God’s Holiness**

As Moses was turning aside to examine the bush, God warned him, *“Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place*

*whereon thou standest is holy ground”* (Exodus 3:5). From this Moses learned that God is exceedingly holy and must not be approached lightly. Moses had to “sanctify” himself (make himself holy) by removing his shoes. This expressed reverence to God.

Today, we must also approach God with reverence. The apostle Peter tells Christians, *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts”* (1 Peter 3:15). Recalling Moses’ experiences with God in the wilderness, the Hebrews writer exhorts us today: *“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).

When we approach God in worship and prayer, He does not tell us to take off our shoes but to put out of our minds all trivial and everyday concerns, centering our thoughts and hearts on our holy God and His

Son Jesus Christ, for we are on holy ground.

### Moses Learned of God's Eternal Nature

When Moses asked what God's name was, the reply came from the bush, "*I AM THAT I AM; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you*" (Exodus 3:14). In this startling reply, God was teaching both His oneness ("I") and His eternal existence ("Am"). He is the eternal, absolute, unchanging God who is always there, without beginning or end, but always present and self-existent. He says of Himself, "*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty*" (Revelation 1:8).

### A Merciful and Faithful God

In explaining to Moses why He had appeared to him, God said, "*I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows... And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians*" (Exodus 3:7,8). God here revealed that He is an emotional God. He feels compassion for His people and wants to deliver them from their sorrow.

Now, in sending Moses to Egypt to take His people to Canaan,

God was also displaying His faithfulness to His promises, because He had promised Abraham to give that land to his seed. If you and I are of His people today, we can have complete confidence that He will fulfill His promises to raise us from the dead and give us a glorious new body and eternal life in a heavenly land where there will be no more pain or death (Revelation 21:4).

From the burning bush, Moses carried these important lessons to the nation of Israel. He demonstrated the great power of this eternal God in Egypt through the signs, miracles, and wonders God performed by him. By smiting Egypt with plagues and destroying its army in the Red Sea, Moses further showed the "I AM" to be a God of judgment against all who oppose Him.

Certainly, at the burning bush, we today also learn a great deal about the nature of this one and true living God. †

**John Thiesen is a Spanish translator for *The Voice of Truth International* and also preaches for the church of Christ at Buffalo, Missouri, USA.**

#### For Consideration:

Who was "the Angel of the Lord"? Was He a created angel? After verse 3, how was He identified? How did He identify Himself? Exodus 3:5-21

# Romans 1 — Then and Now

E. Claude Gardner

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

The apostle to the Gentiles tells the sordid and unsavory conduct of the Gentile world, and in particular, he describes it in a letter to the Romans. To those brethren Paul enumerates many sins of the heathen which show they are in need of righteousness. He wrote as recorded in Romans 1:18-32.

This clear warning as to eternity is relevant because Paul condemns numerous sins of which the Gentiles were guilty. His message was not an abstract treatise, but was an appropriate response to their manner of life.

Historians have researched the way of life in Rome, as well as in the empire. The Roman Empire, the fourth kingdom prophesied in Daniel 2, was far-flung and dominated the known world. It covered Egypt, North Africa, territory in the Middle East, and a large portion of Europe. While visiting in Germany

and England, I saw ruins of Roman settlements. Historians place the beginning of Rome in 754 B.C. In the first century A. D. it was acknowledged as the capitol of the world, with a population in the city of one million. The empire came to its final end in 476 A. D.

What was the first century Rome like when the church flourished? It was governed by ruthless Caesars. One of these was Augustus, a sensual dictator for 41 years. He married twice and had sinful conduct with prostitutes and with wives of his political friends.

Beginning with the reign of Julius Caesar, the dole was begun to the public. Most of the land had been taken by rich senators and knights, and a high percentage of the people were reduced to slavery. They became destitute, and therefore the government had to feed them daily wheat rations.

## TEXTUAL STUDIES

Cruelty was rampant. Throwing men and women to beasts in a sports arena brought thrills to the people. Included were Christians who were fed to the animals. Infants who were female, sick, or unwanted, were thrown into the village heap. Such was the barbaric cruelty practiced throughout the world.

Augustus began festivals to honor gods. Chariot races drew crowds of 200,000. Also, there were wild beast matches. Gladiator fighting was both popular and inhumane. "In a single season, Augustus financed spectacles that saw as many as 10,000 gladiators fighting — and many dying. He built a lake for battle involving 30 ships and 3,000 combatants. In his wild-beast shows 3,500 animals perished, including elephants and rhinoceroses" (*U.S. News and World Report*, p. 43, January 8, 2001).

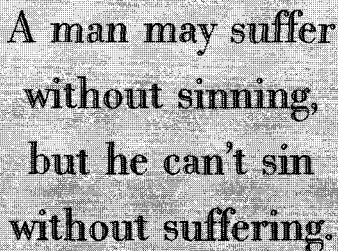
To the credit of some of the Caesars, they promoted Pax Romana (peace and law), which resulted in extensive road building and a communication system. This was beneficial in spreading the Gospel. Truly Jesus came "*in the fullness of time*" Galatians 4:4. The Gospel was preached to the Roman world during the first century (Colossians 1:23).

Because of corruption within itself, the Roman Empire fell in the

fifth century. In various countries today there are many parallels to those of the early centuries, and therefore, a serious warning is sounded, lest our nations face a similar downfall.

Here are some of the sins of the Gentiles listed in Romans 1 which are either practiced or acceptable to many today: homosexuality (verses 24,26,27); atheism (verse 28); fornication (verse 29); murder — abortion (verse 29); idolatry (verse 23-25); disobedient to parents (verse 30). Paul says that practicing any of the grave sins in chapter one will have the consequence of eternal punishment... "*...who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them*" (verse 32). †

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



A man may suffer  
without sinning,  
but he can't sin  
without suffering.

# GOSPEL BROADCASTING NETWORK



Barry Gilreath, Sr., Executive Director

J.C. Choate writes: Three years ago we carried a front page article in our report-paper, **World Evangelism**, entitled “**A Grand Idea Whose Time Has Come!**” We were encouraging the church to work together to develop its own 24/7 satellite network with world-wide coverage. In the first issue of **Global Harvest**, Summer 2004, we continued to push for the same goal. We are thrilled to learn that the **Highland Church of Christ in Dalton, Georgia** is well along the road to launching the **GOSPEL BROADCASTING NETWORK**, which is to begin telecasting on November 26, 2005.

Paul told the young preacher, Timothy that God “...*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:3,4). Earlier, the great apostle had written: “...*whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?*” (Romans 10:13,14).

Currently, the world's population is over six billion; and, with 245 new souls being born each minute, the number is expected to double by 2040. Every minute, 105 people die, most of them having never

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

heard, having never believed, and eternally lost. Considering the Lord's desire that all men be saved, and His great charge to "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,*" how can there ever be enough preachers, enough time, to reach the billions of souls passing through life, each one unique and precious in the sight of God?

### One answer is the **GOSPEL BROADCASTING NETWORK.**

Proposed and planned by the elders of the **Highland Church of Christ, in Dalton, Georgia**, GBN is now in production. Soon, television viewers in the United States and other sections of the Western Hemisphere who receive programming via satellite dish and cable will have access to sound Gospel preaching and teaching around the clock.

In some areas brethren are threatened by **liberalism or radicalism**. Easily accessible Gospel television programming may help strengthen them to withstand and to remain firmly planted in the old paths. There

are areas where the church is practically non-existent and brethren are struggling to survive. Sound programming which may be viewed, possibly videotaped for reuse, may assist them in their evangelistic efforts, and may bring them the edification of faithful preaching and teaching, along with the encouragement of congregational voices with whom they may share in singing joyful praises to God.

The GBN management team, collectively, bring many years of experience to their responsibilities, along with training and qualifications for their specific roles. Common to all is the desire to "*Preach the word!*" (2 Timothy 4:2), to "*Hold fast the pattern of sound words*" (2 Timothy 1: 13), and to "*...preach the gospel to every creature.*"



**Barry Gilreath, Sr.**



The primary thrust of the network will be three-fold: (1) to establish in viewers of all ages a strong belief in the existence of God, through a heavy concentration of Christian evidences; (2) to promote the conviction that God has revealed Himself and His will to man through the Bible; (3) to encourage the proper response to God's word: obedience to the plan of salvation and adherence to the New Testament pattern of worship, work, and Christian living.

## DISTINCTIVE PREACHING

**Gary McDade**

(Evangelist, Getwell Church of Christ, Memphis, TN, and co-speaker,  
**The Spiritual Sword Television Ministry.**)

It is time to capture the air waves with the distinctive preaching of Christ and His church. It doesn't take much viewing of current religious television programming to summarize the content of most of the programs available. If it is not idle talk about the secret return of Christ in the so-called "rapture", then it likely is a guarantee of health and wealth for those who send "seed faith" money into the bulging coffers controlled by the charlatans. Therefore, the crying need exists for the distinctive preaching the New Testament urges, because "*it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe*" (1 Corinthians 1:21).

From near the most sensitive chord of his heart originated the words Paul tearfully spoke to the Ephesian elders: "*But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*" (Acts 20:24-27).

Many have dreamed of preaching by television to a lost and dying world — preaching the whole counsel of God, in its pristine purity and power, thus, turning this mass medium into an enormous tool for good.

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Millions weekly, through a kind providence, hear the Gospel preached on television programs faithful to the word of God: **Preaching the Gospel, In Search of the Lord's Way, Truth for the World**, and **The Spiritual Sword Television Ministry**, among others.

While the masses of humanity are **not yet being reached**, most areas of this country hear only one or two thirty-minute programs **once a week**. In addition to what is currently being done, imagine the great good that could be achieved with a 24-hour-a-day television channel exclusively **operated by churches of Christ** and **overseen by a faithful eldership!**

The populace has not had access to Biblically distinctive preaching in anything even remotely approaching that quantity. Bible preaching is vastly different from that to which the world has grown accustomed. For example, some of our own brethren have now "grown up in the church" and have never heard a sermon uniquely devoted to a vital subject like marriage, divorce, and remarriage. In a world ever eager for popularity, how much more the tendency exists to ignore such challenging Bible doctrines.

The response to the Gospel of Christ is not determined by the design of men, expert in targeting a certain market, socio-economic strata, or segment that will bring the greatest benefit or satisfaction to them, but *by the wisdom of God*. His powerful word reaches into honest and good hearts, germinates, and produces good fruit in abundance.

The message of the gospel is not purely and plainly preached today in the overwhelming majority of television programming. GBN will take the distinctive preaching and teaching of the Bible into the homes and hearts of multiplied millions who have never before heard anything like it. It also will assist all of those Christians and congregations of the Lord's people who are supporting it with their prayers, their person, and their purse, to fulfill the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ: ***"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"*** (Mark 16:15,16).

It is time to capture the air waves with the distinctive preaching of Christ and his church.

Will you be one of 7000 who will support this work on a monthly basis and bring the Gospel to the far corners of the earth?

You are also urged to think in terms of supporting **Gospel Broadcasting Network** through its **Charitable Income and Endowment Plan**. For more information, call **Gary McDade** at **901-233-5597**.

## PROGRAMMING PLANNED FOR GBN

No longer a "dream" but a scheduled project, the Gospel Broadcasting Network will provide an outlet for the major sound television programs of our brotherhood to have access to coverage that, otherwise, would cost many thousands of dollars annually to purchase. Also, programming of high quality and sound content on the air in local areas will have opportunity for over-night nationwide expansion. Viewers will have access to new network programming, such as:

On the Lord's Day: **the Sunday worship of various congregations**, with explanation of the elements of worship, so the non-member viewer may understand the pattern and practice of New Testament Christianity.

**Good News Today.** A daily week-day magazine-format program, featuring special guests and segments, such as "**Tom's Pastime Porch**" (with Tom Holland) and "**Making the Most of a Minute**" (with Glenn Colley).

**Digger Doug's Underground.** A children's program teaching Christian evidences and featuring Digger Doug, Iguana Don, Singing Sycamore, and their friends.

**Focus on Faith.** Hosted by Glenn Colley and featuring outstanding speakers on the subject of the faith which saves.

**Fabric of Family.** Hosted by Lonnie Smith, licensed family counselor, and Matt Amos, Christian educator, discussing issues concerning the family from a Biblical perspective.

**The Devotional Hour.** Beautiful a capella singing, scripture reading, and videos of God's creation, to begin and end the day with the heart focused on the Creator and His unsurpassed love.

FROM THE HEART OF. . .

## LAUNCH DATE

**Gospel Broadcasting Network will sign on at 00:00 EST, November 26, 2005, “Thanksgiving” weekend (Friday midnight).** Those who have private large dish receivers or small Ku dishes fixed on the GBN coordinates will be able to receive the network immediately upon its launch. GBN, also, will be available through many cable providers. Subscribers may **contact their local cable provider** to see if the network will be carried and, if so, at what location on the dial—or, to **request that the cable system carry the network.** Upon launch, **viewers in the US, Canada, part of Central America, and the Caribbean may pick up the GBN signal; and the network will be streamed continually on the worldwide web at [www.gbntv.org](http://www.gbntv.org).**

If we remain true to the word, we believe God will continue to bless our efforts. If He is for us, who can be against us? With Him, with your prayers and support, **WE'RE READY TO GO!** †

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## LET'S DO IT!

### J.C. Choate

It is the goal of the elders of the Highland Church of Christ, Dalton, GA, overseers of this monumental work, to expand the coverage of **Gospel Broadcasting Network**, as funds are available and as the network can be further developed, **to reach the entire world** with the message of Jesus Christ. This is the work of the church — the work we have been left in the world to do.

The entire body of faithful Christians should get behind this effort and support it with dollars, words of encouragement, words of publicity, talents, and certainly with our prayers. Through such a magnificent program, the Lord's church can once more evangelize the world and change history for the better!

The Dalton elders have laid out a plan for funding the further development of **Gospel Broadcasting Network**. They are asking **7000 Christians to give \$25 a month**. Surely that sum is not beyond the means of the average Christian. More than that would be spent on

FROM THE HEART OF. . .

a dinner out, or going to a movie with the family, or buying a couple of CDs or DVDs. Surely our comforts and entertainment are not more important to us than our obedience to our Lord. Surely every Christian who reads this report will rush to tell brother Gilreath, "I want to be one of the 7000!" We are personally giving for 4 of those 7000 each month — but, to date, only 22 individuals and 18 congregations in Mississippi have signed on, and about a 1000 throughout the entire country. Surely word of the goal and the need has just not gotten around to the entire church yet. Surely, *now that you know*, you will be eager to help.

The address is **Gospel Broadcasting Network, P.O. Box 23604, Chattanooga, Tn 37422**. The phone number is 1-866-525-4677. The web site is [www.gbntv.org](http://www.gbntv.org).

And to our readers in the rest of the world, we ask that you be praying for this effort, that soon it will be possible for people in your country to see these telecasts of the Gospel. Write to the elders of the Highland church and encourage them in their vision for the lost souls of the world. Let them know that you are waiting expectantly for the day when **Gospel Broadcasting Network** will fill screens throughout the whole world! God help us all to reach that goal. JCC

**I WANT TO BE ONE OF THE \*7,000!**

(7,000 x \$25/month = \$2,100,000 required by GBN annually):

Please send your contribution to GBN, P. O. Box 23604, Chattanooga, TN 37422.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Member of what congregation? \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of contribution: \_\_\_\_\_ | | Onetime | | Monthly | | Annually

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

GBN, A WORK OF HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST, 901 CHESTER STREET, DALTON, GA 30721  
CALL (423) 893-7807; TOLL FREE: 1-866-525-GOSPEL • VISIT US ONLINE: [www.gbntv.org](http://www.gbntv.org) • E-MAIL: [office@gbntv.org](mailto:office@gbntv.org)

## FROM THE HEART OF. . .

### — C-BAND COORDINATES —

**SATELLITE:** Intelsat Americas 13 @ 121 degrees west

**POLARITY:** Vertical Transponder 20

Symbol Rate & FEC is 29.27 3/4 combined

Feed Type: Digicipher II

Receivers (any of the following): DSR 4402X, 4500X,  
4520X, 4400MD, or MPS (no IRTs)

VCT, Virtual Channels and Authorization (if needed)  
available by contacting OlympuSAT.

### —KU-BAND COORDINATES —

**Satellite:** AMC-6 Location: 72 degrees west

**Transponder 23** Polarity: Vertical

Downlink Frequency: 12143.75

L-Band Frequency: 1393.75

Symbol Rate: 02573 FEC 3/4 QPSK

Those interested in obtaining one of the Ku-band systems for their home, church building, etc., may call toll-free: (800) 259-9006, for information and ordering. The price of the system is \$250, plus shipping (credit cards accepted). The Ku-band coordinates are included with the system components and installation directions. The customer may choose to hire a local professional installer. This system meets FCC requirements as a small dish to comply with housing subdivision covenants. The test signal is now in transmission.

### —ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING AND SPEAKERS —

**Bible Talk**—with Don McWhorter

**Biblical Viewpoints**—with Clayton Winters and Eddie Craft

**Dayspring**—with James Segars

**Devotional Hour**—an hour of beautiful scenery, a cappella singing, and scripture reading to bring a period of encouragement and edification to your day

**Digger Doug's Underground**—Christian evidences for children, featuring Digger Doug, Iguana Don, and their friends

**The End of Time**—hosted by Don Blackwell, with various speakers presenting Biblical truth about the second coming and exposing popular premillennial error

## FROM THE HEART OF. . .

- Fabric of Family**—hosted by Jim Dearman, with regular panelists, Matt Amos and Barry Gilreath, Jr., presenting lessons of interest to families
- Focus on Faith**—hosted by Glenn Colley, featuring a variety of speakers with powerful faith-building lessons from God's word
- Fundamentals of Christianity**—with Gary Colley
- GBN Guest Book**—twenty-minute interviews with members of the church whose lives have interesting or unusual aspects
- GBN In-Depth Bible Studies**—full courses in Bible and Bible-related subjects, presented in cooperation with World Video Bible School
- GBN Q & A**—hosted by David Wade, with a panel of preachers answering Bible questions of interest to the GBN viewing audience
- Give Me the Bible**—another excellent question and answer program, hosted by Dan Manuel, with a panel of preachers
- God's Kingdom**—a personal work series. As some young people prepare for an overseas visit to castles and kingdoms of the past, they discover God's kingdom, the present kingdom that will never be destroyed.
- Good News Today**—Monday through Saturday magazine program, featuring commentary on current issues and events from the Christian perspective
- Gospel of Christ**—with Ben Bailey and Timothy Sparks
- Happy Today**—thirty minutes of scenery and songs to brighten the day of our little ones and to remind them that God loves them
- In Search of the Lord's Way**—brotherhood standard, featuring Mack Lyon
- Issues Facing the Church**—hosted by Jimmy Ferguson, with guests discussing such topics as worldliness, immorality, and abortion
- Know Your Bible**—with Billy Lambert
- The Living Word**—with Jerry Jenkins
- Message from Heaven**—with John Shannon, Sr.
- On the Lord's Day**—the worship hour of the Forest Hill Church of Christ and others, with explanation for the non-Christian of the various elements of New Testament worship
- On the Rock**—a series of specials involving young people in discussion of topics important to them—"rock-solid truth for teens."
- Preaching the Gospel**—brotherhood standard, featuring James Watkins
- Restoration Tour**—"Retracing the Steps"—an interesting and informative journey through Restoration history, highlighting important characters and events
- Rightly Dividing the Word**—hosted by Jimmy Ferguson, Mike Hixson, and Scott Ferguson
- And many others ...



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Cedar Park, Texas 78630-2169 USA**



# **We Are Calling for Your Help Now!!! It is Urgent!!!**

**“I am a Christian, preaching and teaching the word of God to others. I have one of your books here, entitled BIBLE THEMES, which I have read for almost 6 times. I have no other book to read apart from the Bible. Please, I kindly request for more books that you may have at the moment — even second-hand books I will appreciate very much. Martin Mazzai (from Zambia)”**

Brethren, are you listening? We are getting many calls from our brethren in Africa and Asia, begging for **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** and other books. Those people are starved for Christian literature. Will we hear them or will we deny them the spiritual food they crave? It is up to you.

With our editions in English, Spanish, (Telugu and Tamil in India), we are printing around 70,000 copies of this quarterly magazine, but our goal is to reach 100,000 copies of each issue (we wish it could be a million 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. If you send \$35.00 a month, covering the cost of 12 boxes a year or 3 per quarter — 420 magazines — you will be enabling 420 X 10 people to read 112 pages of Gospel message in a year. That's 4200 people you can be instrumental in teaching with this small contribution and small effort on your part! Think of the good that would do! Surely, most individuals and congregations can spare that much for the spreading of the Gospel.

***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](mailto:Choate@WorldEvangelism.org)

[Web site: WorldEvangelism.org](http://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 (47 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 \_\_\_\_\_



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## ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

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### *Verse Search* — 48 (from page 25)

1. "...that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."
2. "...for the hope of the promise made by God to the Fathers."
3. Yes.
4. "Why should it be thought incredible to you that God raises the dead?"
5. That he should do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
6. He had persecuted Christians to the death, causing them to be shut up in prisons, forcing them to blaspheme Christ, following them even to foreign cities.
7. A bright light suddenly shown from heaven.
8. *Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.*"
9. *That they are one, to the point that harm done to one is also against the other.*
10. To teach the Gentiles, so that they could receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance along with all others who have faith in Christ.
11. "...that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance."
12. They had seized him in the temple and tried to kill him.
13. *Christ; suffer; rise; dead; light; Jewish; Gentiles.*
14. That Paul must be crazy, caused by his higher education.
15. "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."
16. That he had done nothing worthy of chains or of death.



Jehoshaphat

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

