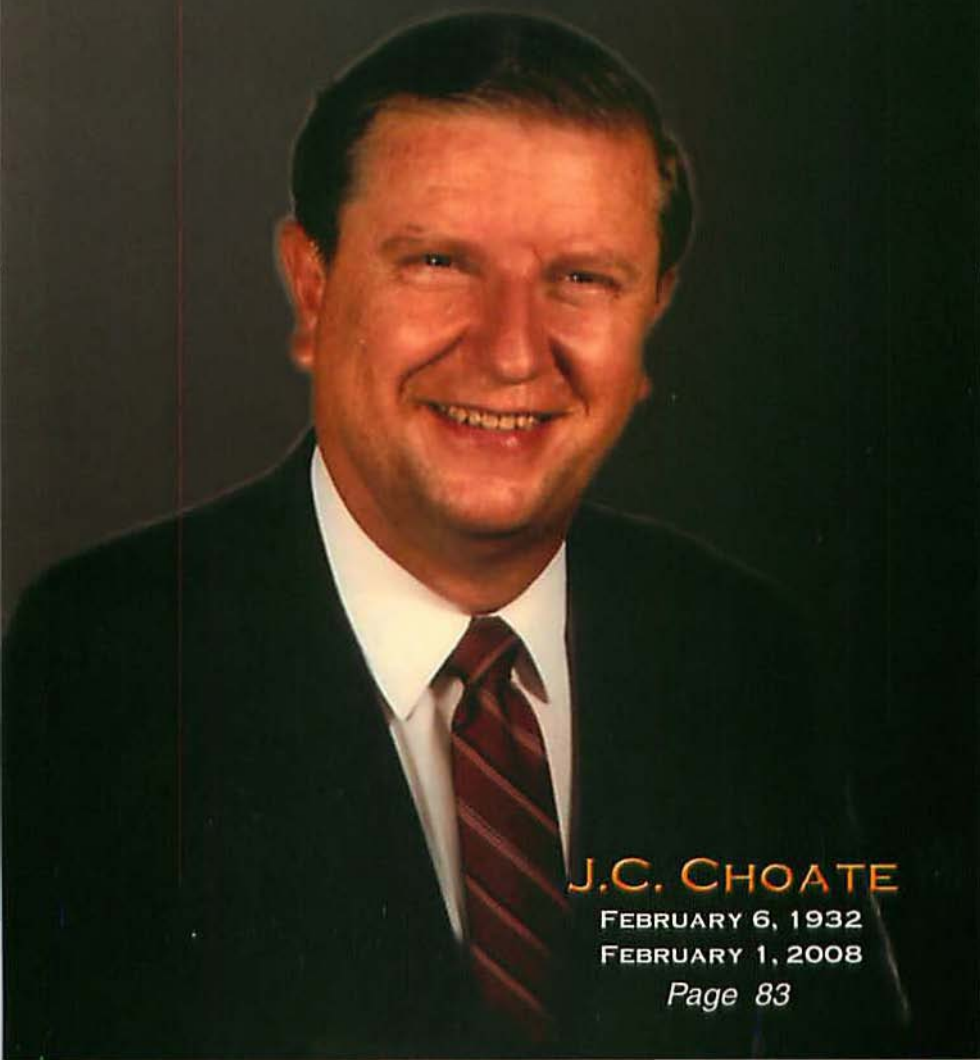


VOLUME FIFTY SEVEN

# V THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL



**J.C. CHOATE**

FEBRUARY 6, 1932

FEBRUARY 1, 2008

*Page 83*

# You Are

Betty Burton Choate

Let no one say my skies are gray,  
Or the winds are wild and cold.  
You are the blue of my summer day,  
My sun that is warm and gold.

Let no one say my earth is dry,  
My blossoms parched and brown.  
You are the clouds of hope in my sky,  
My rain that comes pouring down.

Let no one say my life is bleak,  
That my days are sad and long.  
You are the tears of joy on my cheek,  
My happiness and my song.

Let no one say when the days are done  
That the journey was all in vain.  
Yours was the vision leading us on,  
Mine, the eternal gain.

*(For J.C., on his 64th birthday)*

**J.C. CHOATE, founder and publisher of The Voice of Truth International, passed from this earthly life into that immortal existence on February 1, 2008. Volume 57 has been prepared as a special issue in his memory, containing articles he had written through the years on various subjects. The poems were written by his wife of 52 years, Betty. It is with love and respect that this magazine is dedicated to him and to the continuation of the work he loved.**



# THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL

## STAFF:

**Editor-in-Chief:** J.C. Choate  
**Managing Editor:** Byron Nichols  
**Layout Editor:** Betty Burton Choate  
**Associate Editors:** Louis Rushmore  
Jerry Bates  
**Typesetting:** Gay Nichols  
Eulene Ramsey  
**Computer Consultant:** Bradley S. Choate

## SPANISH EDITION:

**Managing Editor:**

## TELUGU EDITION:

**Managing Editor, Translator:**  
Joshua Gootam

## TAMIL EDITION:

**Managing Editor, Translator:** P.R. Swamy

## BRILLE EDITION (ENGLISH):

**Managing Editor (India),** Philemon Rajah

## STAFF WRITERS:

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

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

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

**THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** is published by **J.C. Choate Publications for churches of Christ** as a non-profit effort.

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

**THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU**

(ROMANS 16:16).



## **CHANGING DIRECTIONS**

**J. C. Choate**  
**Editor-in-Chief**

Sometimes, in business or any endeavor, it is advisable to assess matters to see how things are going. It may even be better to stop what one is doing and to go in another direction. The wise do this. The foolish never seem to learn.

Spiritually, it is always thrilling when anyone in sin decides to obey the Gospel to be saved. We are equally thankful to God when an

erring Christian makes up his mind that he is going to return to the Lord. In both cases the individuals were headed in the wrong direction. They were therefore lost for all eternity. It was only when they changed directions to follow Christ that they were forgiven of their sins.

How do we know there is a Creator, that Christ is the Son of God and the Savior of the world? How do we know about the Gospel and what one must do to be saved? How do we know about the Lord's church, who established it, who is its Head, who is the Savior, that there is but one, that it wears the Lord's name, and that when the Lord saves us He adds us to that church? How do we know about worship, what is acceptable and what is unacceptable? How do we know the kind of life the Lord wants us to live, of the hope of heaven, and of the warning of hell?

We know all of these things when we read and study God's Word (2 Timothy 3:16,17). It is so simple and easy to understand, to believe, and to obey, in order that we may be saved and live the Christian life. When we follow that path, we are following Christ, and we are heading in the direction of heaven.

Looking at the current situation with the church, we must all admit that we are living in perilous times. Paul could see in his day that the elements were there for a falling away from the truth (2 Timothy 3:1). Any number

of things could have caused the apostasy. The Christians were living in hard times, with persecution running rampant. The setting was right for elders to join forces — even sincerely trying to better understand the truth — but in the process, to lead groups of brethren away from the Lord's way. History has a tendency to repeat itself again and again. Isn't this same thing happening today? Aren't we in the middle of another apostasy?

Brethren are getting too involved in the world, with emphasis on materialism. Husbands and wives are working long hours, with no time for spiritual matters, no time to study God's Word, no time for the family. We have a weak pulpit in the churches, and no concern for evangelism. Too many Christians and leaders in the church are reading and listening to denominational men, getting too involved with the religious world, and now instead of following the Lord's way — believing that His way is the only way, that He has but one Gospel, one church, one way to worship, one way to live — some brethren are deciding to compromise and to join the denominations in their concepts of the church, union, and worship. These brethren are changing directions. They have decided to follow the lead of the religious world in general, turning away from the biblical truths they once espoused and defended.

But if the Lord's way leads to heaven, where will these brethren go? If they had been following the Lord, but have now changed directions, where will this new way take them? Not to heaven, you can be sure.

All of this reminds us again of the many statements in the Scriptures, warning that we are not to love the world (1 John 2:15-17), that we are not to be deceived (Galatians 6:7,8; 1 John 3:7,8), that we are to take heed lest we fall (1 Corinthians 10:12), that we must seek first the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 6:33), that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4), that we must do the will of the Lord (Matthew 7:21), and we must be faithful unto death to receive a crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

Some may say that this change that is taking place is simply a reaction to brethren who have been too negative about the religious world, that there are too many hypocrites in the church, that we don't have enough love. "Change Advocates" point out that our religious friends love the Lord too, that they may not be right on every point but that neither are we, that the grace of God will cover the sins of sincere people, that surely the Lord will not damn all of the religious world, just because they may not see things as we do on every point.

It is true that none of us can be saved without the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8,9), and that even after we do all the Lord asks of us, it will

still require the grace of God to see us through. But, at the same time, we must keep in mind that all of God's grace cannot take us to heaven if we have never been born into His family through scriptural baptism and if we refuse or fail to comply with His will to be what He wants us to be.

Regardless of all of man's logic, the fact still remains that the Lord has a way, He has revealed that way, and we cannot follow His way and man's way at the same time. Neither are we helping matters to join the enemy. It was religious people who crucified the Lord, it is religious people today who are causing all of the division, who refuse to obey the Lord as they seek to put their ways before His way.

Now, are these the kind of people we want to join? Do we want to wear their man-made names and titles, worship with them and believe and practice the things they teach that are in opposition to what the Lord has said? If so, we have changed directions, and our new direction is not in the way of the Lord and heaven, but it is taking us away from Him, sending us in the direction of eternal destruction (Proverbs 14:12).

My brothers and sisters in Christ, I can tell you the direction I am going. It is the same direction I have been taking for all of the years of my spiritual life. I believe in the Lord and His way and I am not ashamed of it. Christ died that I might be saved, and that is good news. When I obeyed the Lord, He saved me and added me to His church. Christ loved the church and I love the church, my brothers and sisters in Christ. But how can I love the Lord and His way, how can I follow Christ, how can I be saved, and how can I go to heaven if I refuse to do and be what the Lord wants and if I join His enemies, if I have fellowship with man-made churches and if I worship with those who meet in the names of men and do things that are contrary to His will? My brothers and sisters in Christ, I cannot be acceptable to the Lord unless I do what He asks and remain faithful to Him — and neither can you.

You can change directions if you want to, but I intend to stay with Christ and His way. I am saddened to see both old and young, and even whole congregations, deciding to go in another direction, away from the Lord, and to cease to be faithful to Him. But that doesn't mean that I have to join them, and neither do you have to become a part of their error. Numbers — even large numbers — do not make something right. Wrong is never right. Christ says that the majority are on the broad way, and only a few are on the narrow way (Matthew 7:13,14). That was true in His day, in the day of Paul and the other apostles, and it is true now. The Lord's straight and narrow way is the one and only way that leads to Heaven. †

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

**NOTE:** In this special commemorative issue, all articles have been written by J.C. Choate, Publisher and Editor of the Voice of Truth International since its beginning in 1993. J.C. passed from this life on February 1, 2008. The poems in this issue are by Betty Burton Choate, his wife for 52 years.

### **GOD**

God and His Creation .....	7
Who Is Jesus Christ? .....	9
Don't Blame God .....	11

### **THE WORD OF GOD**

Introduction to the Bible .....	15
Rightly Dividing the Word .....	17

### **THE CHURCH**

What Is the Church? .....	20
The Community Church .....	23

### **WORSHIP**

What Does the Bible Say about Worship? .....	27
What Kind of Music Does God Want in Worship? .....	30

### **SALVATION**

What Does the Bible Say about Salvation? .....	32
--	----

### **DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY**

Be Not Deceived .....	35
The Sinner's Prayer .....	38
Women Preachers .....	41

### **CHURCH GROWTH**

The Blessing of Persecution .....	44
Evangelism Is the Answer .....	47

### **CHURCH HISTORY**

Majority or Minority? .....	49
An Amazing Story .....	53

## **CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION**

The Power of Evangelism .....	56
The Army of God .....	57

## **DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING**

How Do We Deal With Our Enemies? .....	60
The Responsibility of Stewardship .....	63
We Need a Revival! .....	67

## **ETHICS**

Casual Dress .....	68
--------------------	----

## **THE CHRISTIAN HOME**

Setting Priorities .....	71
Marriage .....	74
Divorce .....	75
Where Would We Be if We Had Not Become Christians? .....	76

## **FEATURES, POEMS AND FILLERS**

You Are .....	0
Editorial: Changing Directions ..... J.C. Choate .....	2
I Wonder .....	14
Gold Dust Glow .....	26
In the Strength of God .....	34
God Is Working .....	66
Glory .....	78
Aloneness .....	79
I Reach Out to Find Your Hand .....	81
If You Could See Where I Have Gone .... Author Unknown .....	106
A Wonderful Dream .....	108
When the Story Is Told .....	113

## **FROM THE HEART OF . . .**

J.C. Choate, Teacher of the Gospel of Christ A Brief Biography .....	83
<b>Children's Statements</b>	
Sheila .....	91
Darla .....	91
Steve .....	92
Brad .....	93
<b>Statements by American and Foreign Co-workers</b> .....	94



## God and His Creation

### Genesis 1 and 2

The Bible begins, "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1). Neither here, nor anywhere in the Bible, is the attempt made to prove that God exists or that He created all things. This is assumed to be an already accepted fact. Should this be so strange since man is supposed to be an intelligent being with the knowledge that for each thing that exists there had to be some higher power behind it? That Power is God.

Genesis gives an account of how things came into existence and the order in which they were created. In reality, it was not necessary for us to be told details concerning the creation of the earth, or animal life and human life, in order for us to know that there is a God. In fact, there are many things that we do not have to know about the creation to be convinced that it was all the Lord's doing. Read Genesis 1 and 2 for the full story. This is the only true record that we have, telling what really happened.

There are many reasons why one should believe in God. In the first place, nature itself is a testimony to the fact that there is a God. Just look around you. You see that which God brought into existence and that which is perpetuated by the law of nature which God set in order.



## GOD

Perhaps you will reason that since you cannot see God with the naked eye, you will not believe He exists. You can see His work, though. I cannot see your brain but I believe you have a brain by that which you do. When I look at my watch I can't see its maker but I believe it had one. As surely as things exist, it is that sure that *someone* had to make them, whether you ever see that person or not.

God is the brain and the life behind the entire universe's existence. Look at the beautiful flowers, the heavens, a newborn baby. With so much evidence and testimony, how can you help but believe in an eternal, all-powerful Being? David said, "*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork*" (Psalm 19:1).

There is a God because the Bible teaches that He is. It tells us that He is a Spirit, that He is powerful, that He is all-seeing, all knowing, and that He is from everlasting to everlasting.

God *is* because that is the only logical conclusion one can reach. To say that there is no God is but to say that an impossible thing happened: that everything came into existence from nothing, without any cause, and without a Creator. That would be as sensible as pointing to a house and saying that it was not built but suddenly one day it just

appeared, without building materials or a builder; it just happened.

How can one point to evolution as being the answer when all living things have been the same for hundreds and thousands of years? Not long ago I visited the Cairo Museum and saw on display some mummified monkeys, dogs, etc. When they lived 5000 years ago they were just monkeys and dogs, even as there are monkeys and dogs now. According to the theory espoused by many, some monkeys should *all along* be evolving into man, or there should be no such thing as monkeys today since all should have already evolved to a higher plane. Then what about man? Has he reached the most perfected state or is he eventually to evolve into something greater and better? But this is foolishness.

As you can see, the wise thing is to accept the facts of the case and quit relying on theories whose sole purpose is to deny God. David proclaimed that only a fool would say there is no God (Psalm 14:1).

The God of heaven is the same God that James describes as the giver of all blessings (James 1:17); John said that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). So every way you turn there is the Lord, His work, His blessing, and His mercy being bestowed upon men. Truly, He lives. †

# Who Is Jesus Christ?

A few people in the world today might never have heard the name, Jesus Christ. Most have. Yet many who have heard of Him are confused and do not know who He really is. Millions believe in Him, but millions more do not. *Who is Jesus Christ?*

**Jesus Christ existed with God in the beginning.** Hebrews 1:3 describes Him as being the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person. John 1:1, calling Him "the Word", says that He was *with* God in the beginning, and that *He was God*. *This means that He is one of the Persons of the Godhead, along with God and the Holy Spirit.* God is described as being eternal, having no beginning and no end, so the same is true of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 63:16). He is said to be the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8), the beginning of the creation of God (not that He was created by God, but that He was involved in initiating the creation of all things) (Revelation 3:14), the First and the Last (Revelation 22:13).

**Jesus Christ was the Creator of all things.** In Genesis 1:1, we read that *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* The Hebrew word for God is the plural form, which includes the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit. In Genesis 1:26 God said, *"Let us make man in our image...."* Paul further explained in Colossians 1:16,17, speaking of Jesus Christ, *"All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."*

**Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary through the power of God, having no earthly father.** His unique birth was prophesied many centuries before by the prophet Isaiah: *"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."* In Matthew 1:20,21 it was said *"... that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."* From these verses we can see that Jesus was born miraculously, that He was more than just a man.

**Jesus Christ was the Son of God,** having emptied Himself of the rights and powers inherent in the Godhead as the Word, and subjecting Himself to God as Father, becoming a brother to humans by His physical

## GOD

birth (Philippians 2:3-8). He came into the world to save man from his sins. We read in John 3:16,17, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son ... that the world through Him might be saved."* Christ Himself said, *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10).

**Jesus Christ performed miracles to prove that He was the Son of God.** John wrote concerning His miracles, *"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples ... these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ..."* (John 20:30,31).

**Jesus Christ died on the cross so that all who believe in Him might be saved and have the hope of eternal life.** We read the words of the apostle Paul, *"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you ... that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures"* (1 Corinthians 1:1-4).

**Jesus Christ promised to save the obedient in His family, which he called "My church"** (Matthew 16:18). He died for this body of people, and all those who are washed in His blood are saved and added to His church. It is called His

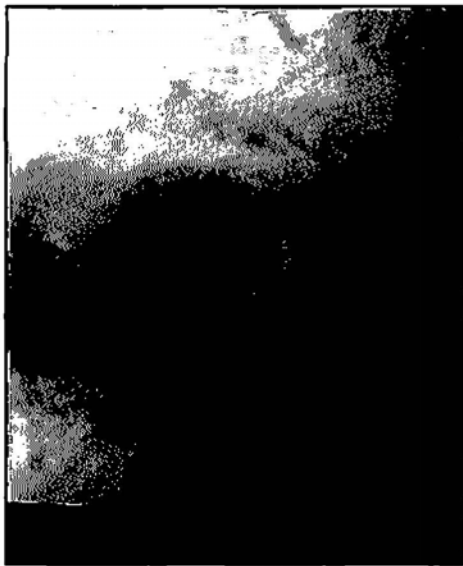
body, of which He is the Head. It is also described as His bride, wearing His name. (Ephesians 5:23,25; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 3:15; Acts 4:12).

**Jesus Christ is the second person in the Godhead (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit)** (Matthew 28:19,20). There is one God, one Lord (Christ), and one Spirit (the Holy Spirit) (Ephesians 4:1-6). Because of His willingness to die for the sins of the world, Christ has been given all authority in heaven and on the earth (Matthew 28:18). He is presently sitting at the right hand of the Father, reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15). One day He will come again to take His people, the church, to heaven where they will dwell forevermore.

Jesus promised, *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ... I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also"* (John 14:1-3).

Do you believe in Christ? He warned in John 8:24, *"...if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."*

If we do believe in Him, we will obey Him (Mark 16:16), if we love Him we will obey Him (John 14:15) and will remain faithful to Him until death (Revelation 2:10). †



While I was attending college, a tornado struck a community nearby and two or three people were killed. Someone said that the reason the tornado swept through that area was because of the sinful living of those particular people. Someone else said that if God was punishing the people because of their sins, why didn't He hit some place like New York City? The same could be said about cities, large and small, all over the world.

Of course the point is, God is not directly sending torna-

## Don't Blame God

dos, fires, floods, snowstorms, earthquakes, tsunamis, or other such things on the people of the world because of their wicked living. If He were using nature in such ways today, the world itself would have been destroyed a long time ago because it is filled with sin and sinners.

However, when tragic events take place, such as the recent tsunami in the Indian Ocean in which thousands and thousands of people were killed, survivors who have lost family members and loved ones usually ask, "Why? Why, God, did You send such a terrible thing upon us?" The same question was asked when four hurricanes hit Florida in the USA a few years back, and when hurricane Katrina destroyed New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. That question has also been asked repeatedly when earthquakes have devastated areas of Turkey, Iran, India, and other countries, causing the deaths of thousands when their small mud houses collapsed on them. Similar earthquakes have hit Japan and China, and people there wondered, "Why? Why me?" No doubt that same question is asked by those who suffer mud slides annually in

## God

California and floods in many other parts of the USA.

But tragic events of nature are continually happening around the world. Scientists explain: Mud slides occur *naturally* when rain weakens the structure of a mountain, releasing a muddy torrent on whatever may be in its path.

Hurricanes and cyclones sweep over an area when the conflicting energy of high and low air pressure, combined with hot and cool air masses, create rapid spiraling movement of the air over the ocean.

Tornadoes form when warm humid air meets cold dry air in a twisting effect over land, spinning at speeds of 80 to 150 miles an hour.

Earthquakes are caused by the shifting of tectonic plates along fault lines under the earth's surface. This crashing movement can turn whole villages into rubble in a matter of seconds.

Volcanoes are the result of a build-up of heat and pressure in the hot, molten rock deep underground along tectonic plate lines. Magma finally breaks through the surface, spewing gas, steam, ash, and/or molten lava from the rupture. If the earthquake or the volcanic eruption occurs in the ocean, a seismic sea wave — a tsunami — may occur. This natural result of massive movements in the earth can create waves as much as 35 to 200 feet higher

than normal, crushing and mangling everything in their path.

These terrible, catastrophic events are the effects of what we call the "laws of nature". When natural conditions come together in predictable, specified ways, we can expect one of these powerful, destructive results — not as a direct act of God but because the earth's conditions demand it.

On the other hand, while nature itself is responsible for these tragedies, man is responsible for grievous things that come about as a result of wars, terrorism, robberies, killings, the misuse of drugs, hunger, polluted water, poverty, poor eating habits, etc.

However and whatever brings about hurt, pain, suffering, and death, never let the thought cross your mind, or say to yourself and to others, that God is doing this to me. Listen, God created you and all human beings, and He loves you. He doesn't want to kill you. He doesn't want to hurt you or to cause you and your loved ones to suffer. He even gave His son to die for you so you can be saved in this world and in the world to come. John 3:16 says plainly, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to con-*

*demn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."*

Perhaps you have lost a wife, a husband, children, and other family members in some tragic natural calamity. This is heartbreaking, and we grieve for you in your loss, but be thankful that you have survived. Don't try to put the blame on others, and don't blame God, but be thankful that you are still living, and that there are many in your country and around the world who are making great efforts to help you and others to rebuild your life. Be thankful that good can come out of tragedy, and that you can know the love of God and of caring humans in the midst of all the pain.

Although you can see God's creation all around you, as a testimony that God lives, get yourself a Bible and read and study it to learn more about God and about His Son, Jesus Christ. Look for His words of love and reassurance. Learn to say with the Psalmist David (Psalm 23): *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul ...."*

Turning to God's word to allow Him to talk to you, you will learn of the Lord's sacrifice for you, and of what He would have you to do to be saved. He wants you to hear the good news of His Son, Jesus Christ,

to believe it, to turn away from your sins, and to be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins. When you do these things, with a sincere heart of submission to God, He will save you and add you to His church, His spiritual family. Then as you live the Christian life and remain faithful to him, you will be prepared to go to heaven when you die. In that new spiritual world, you will live with God and the redeemed forevermore. There will be no pain there, no sorrow, no sickness, and no death. *"...We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless"* (2 Peter 3:13,14).

*"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.' Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'"* (Revelation 21:3-5).

That is the kind of God we believe in and serve. He lives, and we live because of Him. †

# I Wonder

Betty Burton Choate

Sometimes

In my longing for a soul,

In my impatience

For Your work to be done,

I cry

Deep hurting tears.

It's been such a long time since He died ...

So many souls have died

Untold

Since then.

I wonder,

Do You ever

— watching us —

Cry

Deep hurting tears

Because we're so slow

And unconcerned?

And because

— Oh God —

It would be so hard to limit

The greatness of Your power

To the size of tools

So slow

And unconcerned?

Thank You, Father

For letting me cry some of Your tears

For You ...



## INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

The word Bible literally means "the book". It is the greatest book in all the world and it is the world's bestseller, year after year.

The Bible is divided into two main sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. Old Testament has reference to the old law that was given to God's people through the man, Moses, in the long ago. Naturally, the New Testament is the latter law or will that was given to replace the Law of Moses.

The Bible is composed of sixty-six books. The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament are grouped into five categories.

- ❶ **First, there are five books of Law, which are also called the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.**
- ❷ **Next, there are twelve books of the history of the Israelite people: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.**
- ❸ **Then come five books of poetry: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.**
- ❹ **The remaining seventeen books are composed of prophecy, but even these may be divided into two distinct sections:**
- ❺ **First, we have the Major Prophets with five books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel.**
- ❻ **Second, there are the Minor Prophets with twelve books: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.**

In the New Testament we also have the books broken down into divisions or sections:

- ❶ **The first four books are biography, the Life of Christ: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.**
- ❷ **There is one book of history: the Acts of the Apostles.**
- ❸ **Next come twenty-one books of letters, epistles dealing with Christian living: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude.**
- ❹ **And finally there is one book of prophecy: Revelation.**

## THE WORD OF GOD

Even though the Bible had about 40 authors, and even though it was written over a period of more than 1500 years, nevertheless, there is complete harmony and unity throughout. It is one over-all story divided into 66 sections. It never contradicts itself. One writer does not pen one thing, and another write just the opposite. This is one proof of its inspiration by God, for what other book can boast of such a record?

The Bible is the only book that gives the story of the beginning of things, of man's creation, of the purpose of his existence, and where he shall eventually go. This great volume not only tells of the good traits in man's character, but also points out the bad side, even concerning the heroes in its pages. This, too, is evidence of God's inspiration of the message, for where is the man who would write openly of his own failings?

Through this book we may learn of the past, know what is expected of us in the present, and be able to look into the future. The many prophecies contained in it have been fulfilled. The many promises have been thus far kept. Could there be any question that it will stand the future tests as well?

God Himself speaks through the words of the Bible. In its pages He has revealed His Son and His will for man. He tells of the beginning of the church and of its growth. It assures victory to all who will obey its precepts.

In speaking of the Bible in the long ago, the apostle Paul said, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (2 Timothy 3:16,17). Thus, the message in these sixty-six books was given to the writers through God's Holy Spirit, as He directed them concerning what to write. The Apostle Peter affirmed, "... *holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*" Being inspired of God, it is the message from God, and therefore it completely informs man of how he is to live in preparation for eternity.

Christ spoke of the Scripture as truth, and only the truth can make one free (John 8:32; 17:17). Peter said that we are to speak only as the oracles of God, that is, in harmony with the teachings of the Bible (1 Peter 4:11). Again, Paul wrote that we are to study the Word, and Christ adds that the Scriptures are to be searched (2 Timothy 2:15; John 5:39). And last, but not least, we are warned not to add to or subtract from the Word (Revelation 22:18,19).

Yes, the Bible is the greatest and grandest book in the world. It can bless you if you will obey it or it will curse you if you neglect it or oppose it. Study its contents, respect it, love it, and obey it, and it will prove to be a blessing to you, both in this life and in the world to come. †



## Rightly Dividing the Word

Many become confused when they read the Bible because they may open it to any book, chapter, and verse, and think that the Lord is personally speaking to them. In doing this, they may conclude that God would want them to build an ark, offer animal sacrifices, or go to Jerusalem once a year to worship. Others are convinced that they are to worship on the Sabbath Day, give tithes of their income, and keep the "Ten Commandments". Of course, their problem is that they are not *rightly dividing the Word*.

## THE WORD OF GOD

The Apostle Paul said, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15). If one is to know God's will, it is a *must* to study His Word, but one may study the Bible and still be confused and not know what to do. As Paul said, the key is to *rightly divide the Word*. But what does he mean?

We must realize that the Bible was written over a period of about fifteen hundred years! Surely, not all of it was written and directed to you and me — and it was not. So, let's look into this matter of "rightly dividing".

To begin with, the word "Bible" means "the Book" or "the book of books". The Bible actually consists of 66 separate books, grouped into two major divisions, the "Old Testament" and the "New Testament". There are 39 books in the Old Testament, covering two major periods of time. The first period is called the "Patriarchal Age", beginning with Adam and Eve and continuing to the time of Moses, about twenty-five hundred years. During this period of time God spoke directly to the fathers of the households of those who were obedient to Him. There was no written law from God. The history of this "age" is to be found in the book of Genesis.

The second period is called the "Mosaic" or "Mosaical Age". It covers some 1500 years, dating from Moses to the death of Christ. This was the time in which God's people — the nation of Israel, the descendants of Abraham — were governed by the written law that God gave through Moses. The reason for choosing those people, and for giving the law itself, was to prepare the stage for the birth of the Son of God.

The third and final period of time is called the "Christian Age", dating from the death of Christ and the beginning of His spiritual family, the church, as recorded in the second chapter of the book of Acts. This age will continue until His return, when time will end and He will receive the church into that eternal world which He has gone to prepare (John 14:1-3).

Now it's obvious that we didn't live in the Patriarchal Age, or under the Law of Moses that ended with the death of Christ. Only one period of time, or age, remains — the Christian Age, under the Law of Christ — so that is the age in which we live, and the law which we must keep.

Since we are not living in the Patriarchal Period or during the Mosaical Age, those laws do not apply to us! Isn't that logical? Of course it is. So, we read the Old Testament for its example and history, and we learn much that is valuable to us (Romans 15:4). But God does not expect us to obey those laws.

To this point, we have "rightly divided the Word". Now, since we live in the Christian Age, it is logical that we are expected to obey the law of Christ.

## THE WORD OF GOD

We don't have to worry about offering animal sacrifices or building an ark — those were commands to other people in other times! But our responsibility is to the Law of Christ *only*! Isn't that simple?

A series of logical questions will help us to rightly divide the New Testament. **First**, who is the speaker? Is it God, Satan, some Bible character, or some other person? **Second**, to whom is he speaking? To the unbeliever, to Christians, to people in general, or to some specific person? **Third**, when was it spoken? Did it apply only to the situation of the infant church (as in the case of the use of miracles to confirm the spoken word), or to all of the Christian Age? **Fourth**, why was it spoken? Was God wanting to reveal some specific truth or guidelines, for a particular age or situation or person?

Surely by now you are beginning to discover if God is speaking to you through His word, or if the message is to someone else. Answering these questions should enable you to know what God wants you to do, how to do it, and when to do it.

To help you in your study, you can get a Bible Dictionary to define words, a Bible Concordance to list more — or even all — of the verses on the subject you are studying; you can get commentaries and other books and materials that discuss the subjects and Scriptures under consideration.

Now, when you read and study the Bible, keeping all of these things in mind, you will find it much easier to understand God's Word. As you study, you must be prayerful that you will hunger for **the truth**, and that you will accept that truth as you learn it, no matter what it costs you.

Another thing to keep in mind is that Satan and his workers will put all kinds of stumbling blocks in the way, to blind you, to deceive you, to make you think it is too difficult to learn God's will. Don't allow him to do that! He will try to have you believe that everyone reads the Bible differently, and whatever you "believe" is all right. But 2 Peter 1:20 says that we cannot have a "private" interpretation of Scripture. Rightly divided and understood, its message is the same for everyone.

In the Bible, our Lord has revealed Himself to the world, telling of His coming, of His life, and of His death, burial, and resurrection. The Gospel is the good news of salvation for those who will believe in God, repent of their sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and are baptized. The New Testament tells of the church, the spiritual body of Christ and how the Lord saves those who obey the Gospel (Mark 16:16) and adds them to His church (Acts 2:47).

May God help us to read and study His Word, rightly dividing it, so we can know His will and obey it, so that we might have the hope of eternal life. †

## THE CHURCH



# What Is the Church?

We know that there are many “churches” in the world. All claim to be of God, naturally. And yet there are some strange ideas concerning what the church actually is. Many define it as a building where the people come together for worship. Others think of it as being a denomination. Still others would say the church is made up of all the denominations as a spiritual body of people, ignoring the many differences in names and doctrines.

If we want to understand what the church really is, we need to go back to the New Testament for our answer. The word “church” comes from the Greek word “ekklesia”, which means “the called out”. The idea is that the Lord calls people out of the world, into one group or body, and that they become His people. They are called by the Gospel, to believe that Jesus died for them, that He was buried, and that on the third day He was resurrected from the grave (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Christ had said that the Gospel should be taken into all the world, and that those who believed it and would be bap-

## THE CHURCH

tized would be saved from their sins (Mark 16:15,16). The Lord Himself adds those who are being saved to the church (Acts 2:47).

Before His death, Christ promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18). It was first established in the city of Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles and they preached the good news of Christ to the great crowd that had gathered. This was on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, approximately 33 A.D.

The apostles, having received the promised power of the Holy Spirit, were guided to tell the people about Christ, how He had lived among men doing good, but that they had taken Him and with wicked hands they had crucified the very Son of God! God, though, had not left Him in the grave but raised Him up, and Jesus had returned to heaven to reign at the right hand of the Father. At the end of this sermon, many were convinced and cried out, asking what they should do. They were told that they should repent of their sins and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. They would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38,40), and the Lord would add to the church those who were being saved.

This is the first mention in the Scriptures of the church as being in existence, and of people being added to the church. As we continue to read through the book of Acts, we see that the Gospel was preached again and again in that area, in the neighboring countries, and that it spread from there to reach the world.

Christ established only one church (Ephesians 4:4) and that church, being made up of the saved, exists even now throughout the world. It also exists locally in the form of congregations (Romans 16:16), but all of them together make up the one church, the church of Christ.

✳ Christ is the authority, or head, over His church. *"And He is the head of the body, the church ... that in all things He may have the preeminence"* (Colossians 1:18).

✳ Christ is the Savior of His church, because the redemption price He paid for it was His life's blood. *"For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body"* (Ephesians 5:23).

✳ Christ is the foundation on which His church is built. *"... no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"* (1 Corinthians 2:11).

✳ Christ's name is worn by His church, because it is called His bride.



## THE CHURCH

*"The churches of Christ greet you"* (Romans 16:16; Ephesians 5:25-32). Its members, individually are called by His name, "Christian", Christ-like. *"... the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch"* (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16).

✻ Christ has promised that He will come back one day to receive His church and to deliver it up to the Father: *"... That He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish"* (Ephesians 5:27). *"Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father ..."* (1 Corinthians 15:24).

While in this world, Christ prayed for the unity of His people, His church, as they would exist in the world through the coming ages. He prayed that they would worship together in spirit and truth, remembering Him in the communion supper each first day of the week (John 4:24; Acts 20:7).

To help humans understand more fully what the church is, in the Scriptures the Holy Spirit likened it to several things.

✻ It is called the "body" of Christ; that is, the **spiritual body** of Christ. Thinking of our human bodies and heads, we can see the parallel and can understand how we are to work together with Christ, as He (the Head) directs His body (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:4).

✻ The church is pictured as the "house" of God (1 Timothy 3:15), that is, the **spiritual household** or **family** that belongs to God.

✻ The church is compared to the **sheepfold** for sheep, the place of safety, with Jesus being the Good Shepherd who died to save His sheep (John 10:1-18).

✻ Another likeness is given, with Jesus being called the vine and Christians identified as branches that are to bear fruit to God (John 15:1-11).

The church is not a denomination or a group of denominations. Neither is it the Catholic Church or any other man-made institution. It is not a church building. Rather, it is the family of God that has been called out of the world. It is the saved, the spiritual body of Christ on earth, the church for which He died.

Are you a member of the church of Christ, the one true church of the Bible, the one and only church bought by Jesus' blood, the one that He will return for one day? If not, we pray that you will obey God and become a part of this glorious church. †

# The Community Church



When I was growing up there were community churches in rural areas. They came about as a result of various denominational people living in those small communities in which there were not enough of any of those groups to form their own churches. Therefore, they joined together to establish a "community" church, built a meeting house, selected a preacher, and tolerated each other's beliefs.

The church of Christ, however, has never been a part of those community churches because we believe that the Lord has but one church, that Christ died for it, and that when we obey the Gospel He saves us and adds us to His church. We, therefore, could never compromise these beliefs and join sectarian churches to form a community church.

However, more recently we have seen a phenomenon taking place. Suddenly, some have pulled away from established congregations of the

## THE CHURCH

Lord's church to form what they call a community church. The appeal in such situations is that the identification with "the church of Christ" is dropped, and fundamental biblical doctrines are no longer obeyed.

Why, though, would any Christian be a party to such a practice? Is it scriptural? Is it the Lord's will? What will be the result?

Those who are involved in such organizations say that there is so much prejudice against the Lord's church that whenever people realize that they are dealing with "the church of Christ", they immediately run. They say that they do not even have the opportunity to teach them and to influence them for Christ.

True, there is a lot of prejudice against the church, and many don't want to have anything to do with the Lord's people, but hasn't that always been true, both in the Old Testament period and in New Testament times? Though the Gospel was preached to every creature in the first century, the church in its purest form was not "the majority" in the religious world, and many Christians died for their faith. If there was enough prejudice against Christians that they were being killed for what they were teaching, can we think that they were a "popular" group and that they were looked on in their com-

munities with great favor?

No. Christians were not popular. Christ and His teachings were rejected by the majority. Christ Himself was crucified. Except for John, all of the apostles suffered martyrdom. The church as a whole suffered waves of persecution, and eventually the majority fell away, resulting in the apostate church — the Catholic Church — out of which has come all of the denominational churches. In spite of the apostasy, the Lord's church continued on as a minority group and continues to exist around the world, with the assurance of Christ that it will live eternally.

The fact is, the truth has never been popular. The majority has always opposed righteousness and the narrowness of The Way, as Christ gave it to us in the New Testament. Even the majority of religious leaders opposed Him, to the point that they brought about His betrayal and death. As you read His words, you find Him personally opposing false teaching, warning His listeners about those who would claim to be the Christ. The apostles and writers of the New Testament warned brethren not to be deceived by false teachers. They consistently exalted the Lord, His church, and His name. If we follow their example, can we do any less or any differently?

## THE CHURCH

The fact is, those brethren who have established community churches have rejected the Lord and His church. They are now ashamed to wear His name, and they will move further and further away from His teachings. Why? Because it is the straitness of His doctrine that the world rejects. It is that straitness that they have compromised, and the world will continue to demand more and more compromises in order to be accepted until ultimately there will be no difference between those apostate brethren and the religious world around them. In fact, those they are trying to "please" may actually cling to a more strict line of doctrine than they themselves.

You can't be a Christian if you are not actually a Christian, or if you are ashamed of being a Christian and want to keep your relationship hidden. Neither can a church be the Lord's church if it is not His in doctrine and practice, or if it is ashamed of having to admit to being "the church of Christ", or if it will not wear His name.

Besides — if you are trying to reach people for Christ through the concept of being an "acceptable" community church (though actually, in heart, you are still "the church of Christ", but somewhat under cover), when are you going to remove your disguise and let them know that, in

fact, you are the church of Christ? If you start out as a community church, won't you have to continue to be that kind of church in order to hold onto the ones you have "won" through your presentation? Or if you finally admit that actually you were the church of Christ all along, won't you be accused of hypocrisy?

My brethren, let's quit playing games and quit pretending to be something we are not. Either we are the Lord's people, or we are not. But we can't be His people if we don't even wear His name. Jesus Himself was the one who said that if we deny Him before men, He will deny us before His Father (Matthew 10:32,33).

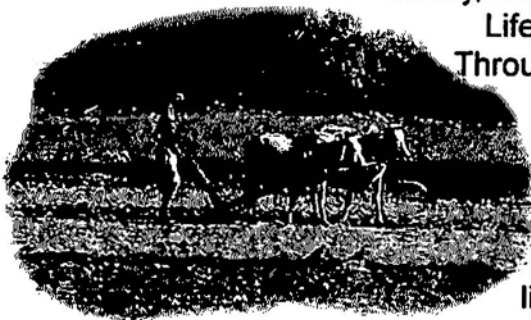
How wonderful it is to be a Christian and a faithful member of the church of Christ! If we can't win people to Christ by being what He has taught us to be, we have no authority to reduce or compromise His standards in order that the world will flock to Him. Remember — we are nothing but paltry humans. Who are we to decide that our judgments and decisions are better than His?

Jesus said that people must count the cost and be willing to come on His terms if they expect to be saved eternally (Luke 14:26-33). He loved the rich young ruler, but He did not change what He required, even though it broke His heart to see him walk away. †

## Gold Dust Glow

Slowly, ceaselessly  
The train rolls on  
Through gold dust glow of evening sun.  
Cool, now, the horizon  
As twilight comes  
And draws night's curtains  
To a close.

Men plod home  
Across the new-plowed fields,  
Their bullocks  
Caked with dust and sweaty,  
Tired, ready for the rest.



Slowly, ceaselessly  
Life rolls on  
Through evening sun,  
Cool, now,  
on the horizon  
As night  
comes  
And draws  
life's curtains  
To a close.

We plod home  
Across the fields,  
Weary with our work,  
Backs bent and minds worn,  
Ready for the rest in gold dust glow,  
Plodding  
To the long home of the soul.



# What Does the Bible Say About . . . Worship?

(Please consider the question, read the Scripture, and check your answer.)

### 1. What is worship?

*"All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name" (Psalm 86:9); "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker" (Psalm 95:6); "All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name" (Psalm 66:4).*

- Following a set of rules.
- Going to mass.
- Praising and glorifying God.

### 2. How are we to worship?

**Christ said,** *"God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).*

- To sincerely worship according to the Scriptures.
- According to conscience.
- Sincerely, to the best of one's knowledge.

## WORSHIP

### 3. Who are we to worship?

**Jehovah God said,** *"I am the Lord thy God .... Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God ..."* (Exodus 20:2-5).

- God.
- Leaders of the church.
- Images, idols.

### 4. How do most people worship God?

*"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* (Matthew 15:9).

- As the Bible teaches, in spirit and in truth.
- According to their consciences.
- According to the doctrines and commandments of men.

### 5. On which day of the week are Christians to worship?

*"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight"* (Acts 20:7).

- Thursday.
- The Sabbath day.
- The first day of the week.

### 6. Who is to worship God?

*"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"* (Acts 2:41,42).

- Baptized believers; that is, all Christians.
- Only those who are most religious.
- All people.

### 7. Where are they to worship?

*"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Matthew 18:20).



## WORSHIP

- In meeting houses, halls, homes, etc.
- Only in cathedrals.
- In buildings dedicated for worship.

### 8. What are the acts of worship?

*"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"* (Acts 2:42);

*"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"* (Ephesians 5:19);

*"Study to shew thyself approved unto God ..."* (2 Timothy 2:15);

*"Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come"* (1 Corinthians 16:2).

- To sing, pray, study, partake of the Lord's Supper, and to give a portion of one's earnings.
- Whatever the local church decides to do.
- There should be burning of candles and incense, along with counting the rosary.

### 9. Does God approve of mechanical music (guitars, pianos, cymbals, etc.) in worship?

*"... singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"* (Colossians 3:16);

*"... I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also"* (1 Corinthians 14:15).

- Vocal music (singing) is the only music God has authorized in the New Testament in worship.
- God allows all kinds of mechanical instruments.
- It doesn't matter how we praise God, as long as we are sincere.

### 10. How should Christians partake of the Lord's Supper?

*"... whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself..."* (1 Corinthians 11:26-29).

- Sincerely, searching one's own conscience.
- Abstain, for fear of offending God.
- All Christians are worthy.

**Are you a Christian? Where do you worship? How do you worship?  
It does make a difference.**



# What Kind of Music Does GOD Want in Worship?

We humans are a strange lot. We like to do what *we* want to do, and *in the way we want to do it*. Even in spiritual matters, humans seem to be not much concerned about *what God wants!*

Through the years I have asked many believers in Christ why they use mechanical music in worship, since it is nowhere authorized in the New Testament. They always answer that it is because *they like it!* I have asked them if they can worship God acceptably without using a mechanical musical instrument, and they always admit that they can. This would mean that they believe God will accept their worship with mechanical music or without it.

But, consider this question. Do you know of any other part of worship that is optional? Is it equally acceptable to God if we pray or if we don't? If we study His Word or if we read the newspaper?—If we partake of the Lord's Supper or if we omit that? If we give of our salary for the work of the church, or if we keep all that we earn for ourselves?

Surely, if we know what the Bible teaches on these matters, we know that the Lord has not left any part of His worship to our own choosing. He has clearly stated in His Word what He wants us to do as we come into His presence. Jesus Himself specified in John 4:24 that those who worship God must worship Him in *spirit* — with the right attitude and heart — and in *truth* — according to the specifications in His Word. Nothing is left to our own choosing about such an important matter.

You would think that any believer in Christ, and especially those who really want to please the Lord, would think only in terms of doing what God has specified He wants His people to do. *Why should we prefer, instead, to please ourselves?* How can we possibly think that God is happy with us if we put our own desires before His?

Many varied musical instruments were in use in pagan systems of worship, as well as in a limited way in Jewish worship (only outside the Temple itself), at the time Christ began His church. To have continued the practice with which the entire population was already familiar would have seemed the natural thing to do. Is that what we find when we turn to the New Testament for instructions about how we are to worship God, as His family?

## WORSHIP

- ✿ *"And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives"* (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26).
- ✿ *"But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them"* (Acts 16:26).
- ✿ *"For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name"* (Romans 15:9).
- ✿ *"...I will sing with the spirit and I will also sing with the understanding"* (1 Corinthians 14:15).
- ✿ *"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"* (Ephesians 5:19).
- ✿ *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"* (Colossians 3:16).
- ✿ *"I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will sing praise to you "* (Hebrews 2:12).
- ✿ *"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name"* (Hebrews 13:15).
- ✿ *"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing hymns"* (James 5:13).

These are the Scriptures that identify the kind of music God wants in worship in the assembly of the church. To add a mechanical instrument would be an addition to God's Word, which we are strictly forbidden to do, according to Revelation 22:18,19.

There are logical reasons why God did not include a mechanical instrument in His worship:

- ◆ He wanted the praise of His creation — our vocal chords — not instruments we have created.
- ◆ We can sing anywhere, any time, under any circumstances. If a mechanical instrument were required for our worship to be acceptable, there would be many instances in which worship would not be possible.
- ◆ Each Christian must do each thing required for worship. Not all own an instrument; not all know how to play.
- ◆ If each Christian were singing and playing an instrument, the noise would drown out the teaching of the words (Ephesians 5:19).

Let us seek to please God in our worship, not ourselves.



What Does the Bible Say About . . .

# Salvation?

(Please consider the question, read the Scripture, and check your answer.)

## 1. What is the Gospel?

*"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried and that he rose the third day according to the scriptures"* (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

- Salvation.
- Belief in Christ.
- The good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

## 2. What must one do to be saved?

*"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:16).

- Have faith only.
- Pray for forgiveness.
- Believe in Christ and be baptized.

## 3. How does faith come?

*"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17).

- By seeing a vision.
- By hearing the Word of God.
- As a result of the Lord personally speaking to one.

## 4. What is repentance?

A father asked his son to go and work in his vineyard. *"He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went"* (Matthew 21:29). Repentance, then, is a change of mind, turning and going in another direction. Paul explained it in this way: *"Let him that stole steal no more: but*

## SALVATION

*rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to them that needeth*" (Ephesians 4:28).

- Confessing one's sins.
- Asking the Lord for forgiveness.
- Turning from one's sins.

### 5. What is the confession one is to make?

When the man from Ethiopia wanted to be baptized, he was asked if he believed with all his heart, *"And he answered and, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"* (Acts 8:37). Then Philip baptized him. The confession is to be made with the mouth before men (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32).

- That "I believe that God, for Christ's sake, has pardoned my sins."
- That Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
- That the penitent believer has already been saved.

### 6. Is baptism necessary?

*"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 3:21). *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"* (Romans 6:3). *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body ..."* (1 Corinthians 12:13). The body, here, is the church (Colossians 1:18).

- Baptism is a sign of salvation.
- Baptism is not necessary.
- When one believes in Christ with all his heart, he is ready to be baptized, in order to be saved and to enter Christ and His church.

### 7. What is baptism?

*"Buried with him by baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the grave"* (Colossians 2:12). *"And commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him"* (Acts 8:38).

- A burial in water.
- Sprinkling or pouring of water.
- A symbolic gesture.

**Will you believe in the Lord, repent of your sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized for the remission of your sins, that you might enter Christ and His church?**



## **In the Strength of God**

**Gently in His arms He held you  
When you came in your distress,  
Groaning heart cried, "Abba, Father,"  
And He held you to His breast.**



**All your emptiness surrendered,  
Doors of faith were opened wide,  
Sweet, sweet love filled every crevice,  
In His peace your anguish died.**

**Like the phoenix of the legend,  
From the ash was born new life,  
And you rose to meet the morrow  
In the strength which God supplied.**



## Be Not Deceived

From time immemorial, Satan has used religion as an avenue of deception. He changed God's words to deceive Adam and Eve in the Garden, and he changes God's words today, accompanied by lying signs and wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9), to deceive the masses. Be wary and be forewarned.

The Lord's Word warns again and again that we be not deceived. To be deceived means that one has been misled, lied to, that he has been taught and has accepted false doctrine. Since we have the Scriptures to read and study, you wouldn't think that a person could easily be deceived, but he can be.

Jesus said, "*Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many*" (Matthew 24:4,5). Just imagine people today being deceived by impostors claiming to be the Christ or the Messiah! We would not think that intelligent people would fall for such lies, but many do.

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Paul warned, "*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God*" (1 Corinthians 6:9,10). "*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners*" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Writing to the Galatians, Paul said, "*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting*" (Galatians 6:7,8).

The Ephesians were warned, "*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*" (Ephesians 4:14). "*Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience*" (5:6).

Paul reminded the Thessalonians, "*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition*" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). He wrote to Timothy, "*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived*" (2 Timothy 3:13).

James wrote, "*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*" (James 1:22). Then John was inspired to write, "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*" (1 John 1:8).

From these passages of Scripture, and others that could be given, we learn that it is possible to be deceived, misled, and for a person finally to be eternally lost because of deception.

✻ **One can deceive himself.** He can want to do something, or to believe something, so much that he convinces himself it is right, whether it is or not. Many centuries ago the prophet Obadiah wrote in verse 3, "*The pride of your heart has deceived you.*"



## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

❖ **One can allow himself to be deceived by others**, as Paul warned in Romans 16:17,18: *"...note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them, for they who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple."* Perhaps the listener has so much confidence in a preacher or teacher that he convinces himself he is being taught the truth, even though it contradicts what the Bible says.

❖ **One may be deceived by a popular false doctrine**. Often the error goes back for many years, and it has been so widely taught and believed that it seems more true than the Word of God itself, which it actually contradicts. The warning of Paul in Romans 16:18, concerning the *"smooth words and flattering speeches which deceive the hearts of the simple"* should keep all on their guard.

❖ **One may be deceived by following the majority**. A man may reason that it would not be possible for so many to be wrong, but he forgets what Jesus said in Matthew 7:13,14: *"...wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it."*

There are so many ways to be deceived when it comes to the plan God has made for our salvation, the church, acceptable worship, the kind of life He wants us to live, the certainty of the return of Christ and the judgment that will follow, and even eternity itself. Man-made teachings are generally accepted as **truth**, while the actual truths as revealed in the Scriptures may be rejected as error — simply because so many have heard men's lies more than they have heard God's truths! We plead with one and all to follow only God's Word in matters of the soul.

It is a sad fact that many "good" people tell themselves that God will overlook their failure to obey Him, on the grounds that they **did not know** what the Bible taught. They have **deceived themselves**. God has not promised to save us on the basis of ignorance but on the basis of faith and obedience. †



## The Sinner's Prayer

Many of the preachers of our day have promoted what they call "The Sinner's Prayer". At the close of their sermons they invite those who are not saved to come forward. Those who do so are then asked to repeat after them a prayer that goes something like this: "Father in heaven, I come before you as a sinner believing that your Son, Jesus, died on the cross to save me from my sins. I ask you now to forgive me of my sins and accept me as your child. In the name of Christ I ask this. Amen." The preacher then announces that those who said the sinner's prayer have been forgiven of their sins and are now children of God.

There is just one thing wrong with the procedure I have described: the Scriptures nowhere talk about "the sinner's prayer", and the Lord has not promised to save anyone from his sins through the process of saying such a prayer. This is a prayer — and a doctrine — that has originated with man alone, and those who say such a prayer are deceived into thinking that they have been saved. They are not only *not* saved, but because they have been

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

*deceived* into thinking they are saved, they themselves remain lost and they influence others to follow their example in saying the same prayer and thereby remaining in their lost condition as well.

Read through the book of Acts and study carefully the 11 accounts of conversion that are given there. Is there even one situation where the sinner was asked to say "The Sinner's Prayer"? You will not find such a thing mentioned in a single case!

Let us look, together, at some of these conversion accounts. On the first Pentecost (a Jewish feast day that brought Jews together in Jerusalem from all over the world) after the resurrection of Jesus, the apostles were in Jerusalem, awaiting the promised coming of the power of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). After receiving that power, they began to preach to the audience in their own languages, evidence that God was working through the apostles. They explained that the prophecies of the Old Testament were being fulfilled, that Christ had lived among men, doing good, that with wicked hands He had been crucified, that He had been resurrected from the grave, and that He had returned to the Father in heaven to sit down at the right hand of God, to be King of kings and Lord of lords.

Many of the listeners were cut to the heart, becoming believers in Jesus as the Christ. They asked, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*"

Now what did Peter and the apostles tell them? "Just believe and you are saved!" or "Repeat after us 'The Sinner's Prayer'?" No, we don't read such answers! What does Scripture say? It says, "*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*" (Acts 2:38). We read further, "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls*" (Acts 2:41). Finally, we read, "*And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*" (Acts 2:47).

Now you will notice that nothing was said about prayer until **after** they had been baptized! Then as **children of God**, the Scripture says that "*they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (Acts 2:42).

Before these people became children of God **they were not in a relationship with God, so they could not properly pray!** In other words, God was not their Father and they were not His children! But after they had **obeyed** the Lord, and had been **born anew** through a penitent heart in the waters of baptism, then they could pray, and they did pray, as we have just noticed.

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

Now, consider another case of conversion. This time we have Philip meeting a man from Ethiopia in the desert. The Ethiopian had been all the way to Jerusalem to worship and, on his way home, riding in a chariot, he was reading from Isaiah 53. When Philip asked if he understood what he was reading, the Ethiopian invited Philip to teach him. As Philip explained the Scripture to him, teaching him about Jesus, the record says, *"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest, And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing"* (Acts 8:36-39). You will note that nothing was said about prayer. Why? Because this man was not a child of God. First, he needed to obey the Lord that he might be saved, putting him in a relationship where he could pray to God as His son.

In John 9 we have the story of a man who had been blind from birth and how Jesus miraculously gave him his sight. Later, this same man said, *"Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth"* (John 9:31). In other words, this Scripture is plainly stating, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that **prayer does not save one** or make him a child of God, but rather one becomes a Christian by doing the will of God. Do you remember that Saul was praying for three days and nights, a penitent man crying for forgiveness, but when Ananias came to him he did not tell him to simply continue praying. No! He said, *"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).

In the conversions in the book of Acts, we have seen what one must do to be saved. In John 8:42-47 Jesus spoke of those whose father was the devil. If a sinner could be saved through prayer only, what advantage would a child of God have over a sinner, in being able to pray to his Father? None, of course. There is no place for "The Sinner's Prayer" in *becoming* a child of God. One must *first* become God's child, by being born into His family, *before* he can pray and expect God to hear him.

Christ said that one must **believe and be baptized to be saved** (Mark 16:16). When the sinner obeys these commands from the heart, he experiences the new birth, and he now has the right to pray, "Our Father ...." †



## *Women Preachers*

In our day, more and more women are becoming preachers. Many of the pulpits are now being filled by them, and they are often seen on TV programs. In a time in which the women's lib movement is in full swing, the idea of "women preachers" fits right in with the idea of women taking the lead in many or all fields that were formerly reserved for men.

The question here, however, is not a matter of men suppressing women and forbidding them to preach, not allowing them to enter a field of work where men have previously played a dominant role, but does **the Lord**, Himself, authorize women to take the lead in doing this kind of public work in the church today?

When we look at the public ministry of Jesus, we find Him choosing 12 individuals to serve as His apostles. Who were these apostles? *They were all men!* Later, when Judas betrayed Christ and another was selected to take his place, even though there were faithful women among His disciples, still it was *a man* that was chosen (Acts 1:26). Further, when one was appointed by God

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

“out of due season” to become an apostle to the Gentiles, Paul — *a man* — was the selection.

After the church had been established and had begun to grow and spread throughout the world, there was a need for leaders in each congregation. According to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, those Christians who were qualified were to be appointed as Elders and Deacons. In both cases they were to be *men*, not women. In reply to those who believe that women can also serve as Elders, someone said that, based on the requirements listed in the Scriptures, he did not know how a woman could be the husband of one wife!

After the Lord’s death, burial, and resurrection, He appeared before the apostles — *all men* — and commanded them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15,16). Also, read Matthew 28:19,20.

Coming over to Acts 2, we are told that those same Apostles — *all men* — were in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ and they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, and began to preach to the great crowd of people that gathered there. As a result, many believed and asked what else they should do. Peter told them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. About 3,000 gladly received the word and were baptized, and the Lord added the saved to His church. Read Acts 2.

Later, seven good *men* with an honest report and full of the Holy Spirit were appointed to help the apostles. These served the church in much the same way that deacons later served under the oversight of elders.

Reading through the book of Acts, you will note that it was always *the men* who publicly preached the Gospel and took the lead in other public work. The overwhelming conclusion, then, is that the Lord chose *men* to preach and to be responsible for the welfare and development of the church. Throughout the New Testament, such leadership was given to men. We must respect God’s wisdom in doing that.

But is it only by the emphasis on the work of men that we would conclude that women are not to be public leaders in the church of Christ? No, the Scriptures very clearly say by inspiration, “*Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression*” (1 Timothy 2:14). The reason given in this passage shows that the prohibition was not a *cultural thing* but a law made by God’s direction.

## DOCTRINE TO LIVE BY

*"Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says" (1 Corinthians 14:34).*

In the Old Testament, God spoke to *the fathers by the prophets — all men*. He used *men* to write the Scriptures; *men* were the kings and priests, and with only one exception (Deborah), *men were the judges*. Why was there one woman judge? Because in all Israel, there was no man with the courage to lead the people! That fact should set off alarms in the ears of men who would relinquish their God-given responsibilities today. God created men to lead and women to be the helpers. We have no authority to change His order of leadership (1 Corinthians 11:8,9). But when men fail to fill the role God has assigned to them, we find problems. Adam failed to lead Eve properly, because he was there when she ate of the forbidden fruit. Abram failed when he allowed Sara to influence him to father a child by Hagar.

When women left the home to take up work in the outside world, the home began to hurt. With the passing of time, many women have taken on the work of men, while their own work — for which they were especially designed by God — was neglected. In too many cases, now, men are not carrying their own responsibilities; they abandon their wives and families, and live for themselves. With this change in roles, the home, the church, and the world are in trouble. It is critical that we go back to God's plan, and that men assume their role as leaders, and that women devote themselves to their homes, families, and husbands, and to their own sphere of work in spiritual matters.

Does the woman, then, have responsibility and work to do in the Lord's church? We read of Priscilla, with her husband, teaching Apollos privately (Acts 18:26). The church often met in the homes of women (Romans 16). Women provided help and support in the preaching of the Gospel. In segregated classes in the church, as well as privately, women are to teach other women and children (Titus 2:3-5). This would have been the case among women of the first century when, as in Acts 2:17 the promise was made that the sons and daughters in the church would prophesy by the Spirit's inspiration, and also when Phillip's daughters were described as having the special gift of prophecy (Acts 21:9). Then, as now, women would have made up approximately half of the membership of the church, and many of their needs would be met by other Christian women. Above that, they were entrusted with the most important work of all — keeping the home and children (1 Timothy 5:14). God bless them as they obey! †

## THE BLESSING OF PERSECUTION

Persecution is a form of oppression, opposition, rejection, and punishment. It is directed against those who may be in the minority in their beliefs and practices, and is intended to hurt, frighten, discourage and destroy them. It is not something you want but something you may have to tolerate. The Bible has some surprising things to say about persecution: One, that it will come to the godly and, two, that it will be a blessing! How contradictory to what we would assume!

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you*" (Matthew 5:10-12).

Jesus said that many of the prophets were killed, and the writer of the book of Hebrews spoke of the faithful of God and of the many things they suffered for Him. He said,

*Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of the aliens.*

*Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:*

*They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented (Of whom the world was not worthy:), they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect (Hebrews 11:33-40).*



## CHURCH GROWTH

Even though Christ lived a perfect life and went about doing good, still there were those who opposed Him, even the *religious leaders* of His day. This resulted in Him being betrayed, given a false trial, being abused and mistreated, and finally being crucified upon a Roman cross (Matthew 27,28).

After the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection, and His return to the Father in Heaven, the apostles gathered in Jerusalem as instructed by the Christ Himself (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). They received the power of the Holy Spirit and preached the Gospel to the masses that were gathered there on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4; Acts 2:38). As a result, some 3,000 obeyed the Lord and were added to the church (Acts 2:41,47).

It didn't take long for the religious leaders of the day, and the political powers, to take note of the apostles' work and the growth of the church. They responded with threats, having Peter and John beaten, and then put them in prison. The Lord was with them, however, and they continued to preach Christ, and the church continued to grow. (Read Acts 3 and 4). Stephen was martyred for the Lord (Acts 7), and by the time we get to Acts 8 we read about a man by the name of Saul who took the lead in persecuting God's people. As bad as this was, it only increased the spreading of the Gospel. We read that even though the disciples were scattered abroad, they went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4).

So we see that the persecution itself helped the gospel to spread rapidly to all mankind. This does not mean that the apostles and the disciples purposely said or did things to provoke the enemy to react as they did. They were not looking for trouble, or wanting to suffer and to die. Neither were they trying to force Christianity on their neighbors. Rather, their desire was to do good only and to live at peace with their fellow-man. Those who chose not to follow Christ, however, struck back with a viscousness that was unbelievable. They did everything they could to wipe out Christianity, but the the persecution only caused them to be more determined to follow Him and to spread His message.

What about today? There is some persecution in different parts of the world. There are nations that do not allow freedom of religion. There are powers that do all they can to slow Christianity down or to give it a bad name. There are numerous other forms of persecution and opposition. Yet, in spite of that, generally we live in a world where we

## CHURCH GROWTH

can easily move about and preach Christ. The greater enemies of Christianity today are materialism, worldliness, and even ourselves because we are not doing enough to spread the Lord's cause.

We may be assured, however, that when we believe in God enough, and when we go throughout the world preaching, and converting, and doing good works, then that will get attention. And if we do enough of that in any one country — even in our own country — there will be opposition. That opposition will take many forms, and it can certainly become violent.

Some, today, in churches of Christ, reason that if people have hard feelings toward us, and reject us and what we are teaching, it must be because we are not being loving and diplomatic in our method of teaching. Certainly, we must teach from the outpouring of spiritual love in our hearts, but that does not guarantee that we won't create opposition by the very message we bring to the world. How do I know? Because by inspiration, Paul wrote that *all who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution* (2 Timothy 3:12). For further proof that, no matter how lovingly we teach we will have opposition, we need only to look at the first century. Jesus was crucified; the apostles were killed. The Holy Spirit Himself guided them in all that they *said*, and *how* they said it — yet they were rejected and they died because of their message.

Today, when we do the Lord's will, and we teach enough, baptize enough, start enough new congregations, that will automatically bring opposition, no matter how lovingly we do our work.

What will be the result of persecution? If we will remain faithful to God, and be determined to continue to do the work He has given us to do, then it will result in strengthening the church, evangelizing the world, converting more souls to Christ than ever before, and changing the world for good for generations to come. With persecution, the news media will help to spread the Word. Our activities will be in the newspapers, on the radios, and TVs of the world. This will result in people coming to know of Christ and His church who would never have known, otherwise. And those who are doing the persecuting will, themselves, be helping to spread Christianity instead of wiping it out.

*"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid ... for the Lord your God, He is the one who goes with you"* (Deuteronomy 31:6). †

# Evangelism Is the Answer!

Evangelism requires preaching the Gospel, converting souls from sin, and spreading salvation. This is how Christ lived, what He taught, and what His followers practiced. The full message of the Gospel was preached for the first time in approximately A.D. 33, and within less than 30 years it had been taken to all the world. What a story!

Jesus was always on the move during His personal ministry. He went to the villages and to the cities. He spoke to the multitudes and to individuals. He used physical acts to teach spiritual lessons. No man ever spoke with greater authority or showed the power of God more clearly in His mighty works. Truly, He was the Son of God.

Calling twelve men, known as apostles, Jesus taught them and trained them to carry on His work after His death, burial, and resurrection. Some of His final words were,

*"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen"* (Matthew 28:19,20).

Just before returning to the Father, He said to the apostles, *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"* (Acts 1:8).

Turning to Acts 2, we read of Jews coming from all over the world to celebrate Pentecost, a Jewish feast day. This was not by accident. The Lord planned it this way. With the apostles receiving the power of the Holy Spirit to guide them into all the Truth, from this very first day the good news began to be taken to peoples of many nations of the world. Some 3,000 who heard the message, believed it, repented of their sins, were gladly baptized, and the Lord added those that should be saved to His church.

However, this was just the beginning. The Gospel was preached again and again in Jerusalem and throughout Judaea, then in Samaria, and on to other surrounding nations. As a result, within less than 30 years the Gospel had been taken into all the world (Colossians 1:23).

## CHURCH GROWTH

There were fewer people back then, but there were many obstacles. They had the Gospel, but *they did not have the written Word*. They did not have the methods of transportation and communication we take for granted in our age. Travel was slow and dangerous, over land or by sea, yet they went. Communication was primarily by word of mouth, yet Paul commended the church in Rome with the words, "... *your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world*" (Romans 1:8). In spite of every limitation, early Christians did the work God gave them to do, and *the world was forever changed*.

Morals and values came to be set by a higher standard because of the influence of God's Word. A study of what was acceptable among "civilized" people in the first century compared to the early twentieth century would reveal just how much impact Christianity has had in reshaping the world. Sadly, in the last fifty years tremendous ground has been lost because we have allowed atheistic humanism to forge ahead in its acceptance. Abortion, rampant divorce, homosexual acceptance, immorality, indecency, violence, disrespect of parents and authority, foul language and other types of shameless behavior have

mushroomed as the influence of Christianity has diminished and humanism has filled the void.

Yet, today we have the same Gospel to take to the world. We have the same command of Christ. What does that commission mean to you and me? Do we take it personally? Do we intend to obey it?

So far, most individual Christians and most congregations have done very little about our Lord's command. The direct result is that we are faced with many problems, both outside and inside the church. How can we expect to please God when we fail to do what He has asked us to do?

Will we never learn? Do we feel comfortable with the world today with all of its evil, ungodliness, materialism, and outright unbelief? As conditions grow worse through the influence of sin, will Christians not also suffer grave consequences? Even many of the problems in our personal lives and in the church itself are the result of our failure to give ourselves to the Lord and to do the work He has asked us to do.

**How can we turn this tragedy around?** By simply repenting and becoming serious about world evangelism. *Evangelism* is the answer. **Today! Right now!** †

# MAJORITY OR MINORITY?

People like big things, large numbers, majority rule. They like big churches, meeting houses, hospitals, and schools. Because the church of our Lord is small in comparison to many denominations, people often point out that the religious groups around them have all of these big things, but the church of Christ doesn't. It is as though size determines whether a thing is right or wrong, but this logic is not biblical. Of course large numbers, and all of their side benefits, appeal to human beings, but we must go beyond human reasoning to find the truth.

The only time in the history of the church that it was ever the largest group of believers was in the first century, after it had been established in Acts 2, and for the first two or three hundred years thereafter. Even during those days, though, it was in the minority in comparison to the world and the other religions of that time.

Within thirty years after the church's beginning, the apostle Paul warned that there would be an apostasy and that there were erring brethren already at work, bringing this about. Elders of congregations in one area eventually recognized one man as the chief elder over those congregations. Others recognized chief elders or bishops in their areas. This, in turn, led finally to the recognition of one of these chief elders as the head or "pope" of the entire church. Through this departure from the biblical pattern, the majority of the church fell into apostasy. That apostate church, as we know it today, is called the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

But what about those brethren or those congregations that did not go off into error? What happened to them? Did they eventually die out? No, they did not die but even as *a minority* they went on, and Christians in churches of Christ have continued through the years right on down to our present day.

After the apostasy, which church did the Lord recognize as being the one He had established? Neither? Both? For sure, He did not endorse those that had gone into apostasy, even though they were in the majority. Rather, He stayed with the faithful — the minority — and will always remain with them as long as time stands, and for all eternity.

## CHURCH HISTORY

Those who have read through the Bible are aware that, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, God's people were always in the minority. We should remember also from reading the Scriptures that **there has never been a time when the Lord did not have faithful people in this world to represent Him.**

The Old Testament writers said that God would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed, but that it would stand forever (Daniel 2:44). John the Baptist, and then Christ, came preaching that the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven would soon be established (Matthew 3). Christ said His kingdom would come in the lifetime of some who heard Him speak (Mark 9:1). He said that He would give the apostles the keys of the church or kingdom, to open it for the admittance of the obedient (Matthew 16:18,19). It was said of Jesus, that *of His kingdom there would be no end* (Luke 1:33).

True to His promise, Jesus established the church — the spiritual kingdom — in Jerusalem, approximately A.D. 33, and we are told that when the apostles preached the Gospel for the first time, around 3000 believed, repented, and were baptized for the remission of sins. The result was that the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2).

That church grew and spread rapidly throughout the world, and as pointed out earlier, even though the *majority* later fell away, the *minority* continued to be faithful, so that even now *that same church* exists in most countries of the world.

Contrary to this history, some believe that all of the true church was swallowed up in the apostasy, and that only in recent years has it been restored. They explain that *the seed of the word* was never destroyed and that, in that sense, neither has the church been destroyed. They further explain that when the seed was planted anew during the "Restoration" period in America in the nineteenth century, it brought forth fruit — meaning Christians — and that this brought about the restoration of the Lord's church among humanity. Certainly this explanation is true of some parts of the world, but it is absolutely false for us to conclude that the church everywhere died. If there has ever been a time when the church did not exist, that would have contradicted the Lord's promises that it would never die and that there would be no end to it. Moreover, had there ever been a time in which the Lord was left without representation on the earth, why would He have allowed the world to continue? On the other hand, we are told that when the Lord comes again, He *will find faith* and that He *will deliver up his*

## CHURCH HISTORY

*kingdom to God* where it will forever reign with him (1 Corinthians 15:24).

But if the church has existed somewhere in the world ever since its establishment, where are the records? How do we *know*? One answer is simple: for the believer, the promise of God is enough. The very fact that the Scriptures say that the church would never be destroyed is all the proof we need.

Surely one of the reasons we do not have a lot of information about the Lord's church down through these hundreds of years of its existence is because *it was a minority group*. The apostate majority got the attention of the world in ages past, and that continues to be the case right on up to our present day.

**Luke 1:33: "... of His kingdom, there will be no end!"**

Because the majority of the church went into apostasy, becoming the Catholic Church, that church has been in the spotlight of history from that time to this. We know of practices that were introduced, when sprinkling became baptism and when mechanical music was added to worship. We know of the split in the Catholic Church, when it became the Roman and the Greek Orthodox Catholic Churches. The Roman Church was the larger group, so it has gotten most of the world's attention since that division. We also know of the Reformation Movement brought on by Martin Luther in his desire to reform the Catholic Church. When this failed, Luther continued to preach his beliefs and this led to the Protestant Movement and the beginning of literally hundreds of denominational churches.

Up to the present, the Roman Catholic Church continues to be the largest group of believers in the world. As a result, the Pope and the Catholic Church get most of the attention and publicity among "believers". Wherever the Pope goes, he gets the Red Carpet treatment. The Press, TV, radio, and every type of media is there to cover every word he says and every move he makes. Why? Because he represents the majority.

What about all of the Protestant and denominational churches? Even though some of them may number into the millions, and altogether they represent a large group of people, yet in comparison to the Catholic Church they are in the minority and most of them get very little attention. History, a thousand years from now, will have even less to say about them.

And what about the church? Even though all of us know it exists widely in the world today, though we know it is the one true church, the same one Christ established and the one He will return to receive and to take to

## CHURCH HISTORY

heaven where it will live forevermore with Him, and even though it claims several million members around the world, because it is so small in relation to the Protestant Churches, and especially the Catholic Church, for the most part it goes unnoticed. A hundred years from now or 1000 years from now, if the world continues to stand, what will history say about the church of Christ of the 1900's and early 21st century? Not much, if anything. It probably will not even be mentioned. Does that mean that it did not exist during this period? No! *It obviously does exist, and is found throughout the world!* But in comparison to the larger groups, extant records about the church in this era will be few and difficult to trace down.

Looking back, the same has also been true of history down through the hundreds of years since the majority of the congregations went into apostasy. But just because major history books do not mention the church through this period of time does not mean that it did not exist in many places in the world, even as it exists in most countries today. In fact, there have been studies made of library archives of letters, books, and other records that do tell of the church in Europe and Asia, and of the persecution of those who would not submit to the dictates of "majority" groups. Quiet testimony is there; it's just that history's magnifying glass doesn't focus on it because history is not overly concerned about minorities.

Christ made an important observation about majorities and minorities when He said, "*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it*" (Matthew 7:13,14). Based on this statement, if the Lord's church was the largest group of believers in Christ in the world today, I would have to question whether it was really the true church or not.

Certainly, I am not advocating that we should *not* go out and evangelize and bring more souls to Christ, desiring to keep the church small. However, regardless of our own efforts, we will still always be the minority group because *most people* are going with the majority, and Jesus says the majority will always be on the broad way.

Don't be ashamed of being with the minority, spiritually. Don't reject the Lord's church because it is small in comparison to other churches. Look at its teaching. Investigate it. Put the truth and the strait way above the physical and material things of the world. Remember, too, that when we are with God, we may seem in the minority numerically, but spiritually we are in the majority after all.





# An Amazing Story

(Written in 1965, during our years in  
Karachi, Pakistan)



Recently a man stopped at our gate here in Karachi, and stood looking up at the sign "Church of Christ". After a few minutes he came inside the gate and rang the door bell. We invited him in, and an amazing conversation followed.

Dr. A.S. Khan is originally from Iran. He said he was checking out the sign that identified us as the church of Christ, wondering if he would feel able to fellowship us. We had never been under such an investigation, so we were very interested in what Dr. Khan had to say. His first astounding statement was that there are approximately 750,000 people in the area of Azerbai-

jan, and extending on up into Russia, in a very mountainous region along the common border of the two countries, who claim to be just Christians!

My wife and I have had subsequent meetings with this gentleman and have been even more thrilled with what we have heard. This past week we sat with Dr. Khan for some time and questioned him extensively concerning this group and their practices. We were amazed at the answers he gave. We deliberately did not tell him what we believed until we had the opportunity to hear what he had to say. On the basis of what was discussed,

## CHURCH HISTORY

it appears that these people and the American churches of Christ are very close indeed.

Dr. Khan talked at length to give us the background of which he is still a part. He said that this group of people dates back to the birth of Christ. The "Wise Men", from what has now come to be called Iran, saw the star and followed it, ultimately finding the baby King. They stayed for a while and then returned to Iran by a different route.

### **Heard Peter at Pentecost**

About twenty-five years later, when the child would have become a man, a group of twenty-five men made a trip to Israel to see what had become of the one they had worshiped as the new King of Israel. They remained for several years and were present on the day of Pentecost to hear Peter's sermon. After that they came home.

Later, another group made a trip to that part of the world. They also spent several years, with the last part of the time being in Antioch. When they returned home, they brought with them a book containing "The Sayings of Christ", which Dr. Kahn says corresponds closely with the writings in the present day New Testament.

Dr. Kahn explained that the faith of these people has been handed down from father to son through the years, and that they have not

changed. He said that although he has traveled a great deal and has searched for others with like faith, he has not left his original beliefs.

### **Persecution Hindered Evangelism**

As to being evangelistic, they have not been, other than to teach the truths to their own children, because of persecution. First they were persecuted by the Catholics, then by the Armenians, then by the Muslims. So they have remained to themselves through the centuries, living in a mountainous area. Although they call themselves Christians, they are known by the government as "the Nazarenes" even to this day.

### **They Are "Christians Only"**

This body of people, according to Dr. Khan, believes that Christ established the church and that all other churches or denominations are the anti-Christ. They look to Christ as the head of the church, with no earthly head or headquarters. They are Christians only. They meet each Sunday for worship, having the Lord's Supper, prayer, Bible study, singing (vocal music only), and giving.

When asked how many come together for worship in his home congregation, he said 5000. He said that there are numerous assemblies with two- to three hundred to two- to five thousand meeting for worship. Each congregation is independent and has its own elders. They

## CHURCH HISTORY

also have a program for the education of their children, providing three hours a week of Bible training in addition to what they receive on Sunday. The women do not preach or teach publicly but they do teach the children and other women.

Dr. Khan told us that although they believe in immersion (for adults only) they immerse three times, once in the name of the Father, once in the name of the Son, and once in the name of the Holy Spirit. They recognize Easter and Christmas, but both at the same time, on March 4. They believe that Christ was born and resurrected on the same date. On that day they have a gathering and a sermon about His resurrection.

With the exception of these points, we found no differences. There probably are others, but it is amazing to run across someone in this part of the world with such a background. We concluded that there must be something to his story for he knows a very pure New Testament Christianity, and in every way speaks as the oracles of God, without denominational jargon. In these years of living on this side of the world, we have never talked or studied with anyone who, from the beginning, had such a clear understanding of the Truth.

Being cautious, we asked ourselves what he had to gain if he was trying to deceive us. He asked for

no money, and he offered to go with me to his home in Iran. I was eager to do this, and we discussed potential timing. As it turned out, he was out of Karachi at the only time that I could work such a trip into my schedule (we moved to Sri Lanka shortly thereafter), so I decided to visit brethren who were stationed in Teheran in the American military, and to go from there alone into the part of the country where these Christians were supposed to be.

I did that, traveling by car as far as was possible. From that point, the way into the mountains was only by horseback, and I decided I could not make that trip alone. It was a great disappointment that I was not able to trace the story to a proven conclusion. However, the people with whom I talked at the stopping point did tell me that there used to be many Christians in that area, but that because of persecution they had moved into the mountains, which was also what Dr. Khan had said.

Perhaps someday, conditions in Iran will again be such that someone can investigate this story fully. Knowing how many scams there are in the world, my skeptical human nature listened in doubt. Yet every time I recall the detailed *biblical* truths Dr. Khan spoke in those visits, I am convinced all over again that there must have been *historical* truth in his story, too. †

# The Power of Evangelism

The Lord's church has been given a work to do. That work is to evangelize the world. Jesus commanded the apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15,16). The Gospel is the good news that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world, that He was buried, and that He was resurrected from the grave, so that man might be saved and have the hope of eternal life. Christ said that it was the facts of that Gospel — the facts of that good news — that were to be taken to all the world. He also said that the commands of the Gospel were to be preached and obeyed if man was to be saved.

Individual Christians exist in a city or village, and throughout the world, wherever the message has been preached and there are those who were willing to obey it. With the conversion of two or more, a local congregation is established and begins to function. In addition to meeting each first day of the week to worship God, its main work is to evangelize, to preach the Gospel to those in that area, and as it grows in knowledge and numbers, it is to reach out to the whole area in an effort to establish other congregations.

A Christian, or a group of Christians, that make up a local congregation, should never be satisfied to just meet on the first day of the week to worship. Worship is very important, and so is living the Christian life every day, but each Christian, and the local church itself, should be very much aware of the need to take the Word to their family members, to friends, to those with whom they work, and to people in general.

As a congregation of the church of Christ, what efforts are you making to teach others? Is the church growing? Is it establishing other congregations in the area around it? What plans does it have for the future? When the church is busy reaching out to souls, it is happy, it has a mission, it has plans and goals to reach the lost and, as a result, it will grow both spiritually and numerically.

Are you a Christian? If so, what are you doing? Are you teaching God's Word to those around you? Have you converted anyone? What are your plans for the future?

May God help us to do more to take the Gospel to the world. This is the hope of mankind. But it is also your hope and my hope. †



# The Army of God

**Introduction:** We have the perfect illustration for this lesson. What may sometimes seem vague and totally figurative in the spiritual world is absolutely real in the physical world. Yet Christians are, literally, in a war — a war that is much more critical and deadly than physical warfare because the outcome of this war will be eternal. We can look at the war situation around us now and get a more vivid picture of how we ought to be engaged in the spiritual fight.

## Our Enemy Is Identified

*"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world" (1 Peter 5:8).*

## Our Instructions Are Clear

*"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier" (2 Timothy 2:1-4).*

## CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

*"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (1 Timothy 6:12).*

### The War on Terrorism

- ✓ Our nation is a super-power, led by our President. He speaks to the nation, encouraging us and specifying the direction we will take.
- ✓ We have the front lines where the enemy is being spotted and bombs are being dropped.
- ✓ We have the home-front, also under threat and being safe-guarded.
- ✓ We have the equipment in the field — aircraft carriers, B-52's, drones, bombs, special forces.
- ✓ The personnel in the field are specialists. They have been highly trained for the work they are doing.
- ✓ We have the Secretary of Defense and the General in charge, making daily reports to the American people.
- ✓ We have intense interest on the part of the American citizens, with willing hearts to make sacrifices in order to protect our homeland and our people.

### Our Spiritual War

- ✓ Christ is the Supreme Commander of His kingdom, the church; His instructions are in the New Testament.
- ✓ The elders in each congregation are the Generals on the battlefield.
- ✓ Each congregation is a fighting unit in this war.
- ✓ Each Christian has volunteered to fight in this war.
- ✓ We have front lines — mission fields — and we have home-fronts — the battles that must be waged for ourselves and for others in the church.
- ✓ The Generals in God's army should meet regularly to study the battle field around them (and foreign fields), to map out new areas of attack and to draw up battle plans. A city should be divided into zones. First thing to be noted would be the locations of all congregations; then there should be discussions and decisions about where next to take the battle. (Most new congregations today are started because of a "split". This is not the way wars are waged and won; if physical wars were fought as we fight spiritual wars, certain defeat would be the outcome.) We must PLAN our strategy, our advances, our personnel and our equipment. With proper planning we can cover the whole world, as God has asked us to do.
- ✓ The church must be equipped with the tools to defend itself and to fight an aggressive war. We must be equipped with faith and with a knowledge of the Word.

## CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

- ✓ Individual Christians must be trained as foot soldiers, and as specialists, so that all needs can be met.
- ✓ Communication between the fighting units is vital, as well as the reports made to the church at home. There must be intense interest in everything that is happening, just as we see today in the secular world. One of the most vital elements is the spirit of involvement and support, as every Christian mobilizes to do his part in winning the war.

### Method for Involvement of the Entire Army of Christians

The work — not play — program on the home-front should be divided into specific categories. Everything that needs to be done should be included. Groups should be developed to be responsible for the work, with group leaders and co-workers. The goal should be to involve every man, woman, boy, and girl in some responsibility. A congregation that is working and serving together — fighting the enemy *without* — will not be involved in fighting and bickering *within*.

- ✓ Benevolence (Galatians 6:9,10).
- ✓ Brother's Keepers (1 Thessalonians 5:14).
- ✓ Building Maintenance (Nehemiah 2:17).
- ✓ Counseling and Support (Galatians 6:2).
- ✓ Evangelism (Ephesians 3:8-10).
- ✓ Fellowship (Acts 2:42-46).
- ✓ Finance (Matthew 22:21).
- ✓ Public Relations and Communication (Matthew 5:16).
- ✓ Teaching Children (2 Timothy 3:15).
- ✓ Transportation (Isaiah 2:3).
- ✓ Welcoming (Romans 16:16).
- ✓ Worship (John 4:24).
- ✓ Visitation [sick; visitors; new-comers to the community] (James 1:27).
- ✓ Involvement in home Bible Studies.
- ✓ Bible Correspondence course work.
- ✓ Retreats, seminars, and Gospel meetings.
- ✓ Mission efforts to aid churches in weak places, and to establish new work.

### Conclusion

As long as a Christian is in this world, he has work to do; congregations must be deep in involvement in pressing the battle on the front lines, so that finally all of us can say, "*I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith*" (2 Timothy 4:7). †

All people have enemies. Even though Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, He had enemies. Not only did He have enemies, but they were religious enemies — men who hated Him because He was righteous and because He taught that all must be righteous in order to be acceptable to God. The end result was that He was finally crucified on the cross. The Romans — the secular government — crucified Him, but His religious enemies were the ones actually responsible for His death.

We also have enemies. We who have obeyed the Gospel and are members of the Lord's family are surrounded by people who oppose us. We are trying to live the Christian life so we can go to heaven, but there are those who resent us because of our godly living. They find fault with us, and work against us. The world, itself, offers all of its temptations, trying to lead us away from the Lord. Unbelief, humanism, and materialism are tools of evil being used to destroy us, while the misplaced zeal of false religious

### *How Do We Deal with Our Enemies?*

bodies and false religious leaders is set in opposition to Christ and to us because we follow Him. In addition, always, there is Satan, our arch enemy, with his host of followers, working to see our souls condemned in hell. Peter warned, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Peter 5:8).

So, how do we deal with our enemies? Christ said that we should **love our enemies** and do good to them. He said, *"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"* (Matthew 5:9-12).

Continuing, He said, *"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also"* (Matthew 5:38,39).

Then hear Him as He says, *"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou*



*shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust"* (Matthew 5:43-45).

But how can we love our enemies, those who hate us, spitefully use us, and persecute us? By human nature it would be impossible, but Christians are to grow in partaking of the nature of God, according to instructions given in 2 Peter 1:4: *"...by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."*

The answer, therefore, is in having an *agape* love (the Greek word for the highest form of love) for our enemy. What kind of love is that? It is not an *emotional* love but, rather, it seeks what is best for that person, even though he would do us harm. Such a godly love prompts us to return good for evil. We would not try to hurt him or to cause him to be lost. Instead, we want that person to be saved. We

want to help him and, hopefully, to change him.

*Agape* is the kind of love the Lord had for us when He laid down His life for us — while we were still enemies and alienated from God by our sins. We didn't deserve such love and mercy, but He loved us anyway. As members in His family, the church, we are to have that type of love for the lost, for the sinner, and for our enemies.

But what about the wicked, those who seek to harm us and others? Is their wickedness to go unpunished? If we who are wronged are forbidden to seek revenge, how will matters be righted? The Lord has not authorized us, as Christians, to take the law into our hands and to punish the wicked. Our work is to try to teach and change those who are wrong.

Yet, God has tools for retribution: the civil government of the land is authorized to judge and punish evil doers in this world, and God Himself will judge and sentence the unrepentant on the last day.

As individuals who have lost loved ones or suffered great injustices, we could take it upon ourselves to try to punish the terrorists and evil doers, but that is not the job of individuals, and it is certainly not the responsibility of Christians. The law, *"An eye for an eye ..."* was not given to Christians. "But," you object, "that

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

is in the Bible! Has God changed?" No, not at all. In the Old Testament, God gave both civil and spiritual laws to the nation of Israel, because it was a secular as well as a spiritual nation. Its civil leaders were instructed in the punishment of the wicked, and its spiritual leaders provided spiritual leadership. However, under the New Testament law — which is binding on us today — Christians are a spiritual body living under spiritual laws, with instructions to leave the secular laws to the civil governments of the world to enforce.

To individual Christians, Paul was instructed by the Holy Spirit to write, *"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good"* (Romans 12:17-21).

On the other hand, God says to civil governments, "You are my sword to execute wrath on evil doers." Therefore, governments of countries around the world are God's agencies to control lawless-

ness and to punish those who would harm the helpless.

In the New Testament we are commanded, *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil"* (Romans 13:1-4).

And God, Himself, will have the final word as He executes judgment on that last great day, when evil doers and the disobedient receive His condemnation for the evil they have done. *"And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ... And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire"* (Revelation 20:12-15). †

## Responsibility of Stewardship

In the process of growing older, I find myself more frequently looking around me at the material possessions we have accumulated through the years and wondering, "When we are gone, what will become of these things? Whose will they be? How will they be used?"

These are questions that each Christian must ask himself and must answer. Some allow them to be only passing thoughts, concluding with, "I won't make that decision. I'll let the living divide whatever I leave behind."

No decision? Yes, even in that brief consideration, a decision was made, for good or bad. Perhaps all of the heirs — Christians and all — will be drawn even closer together through the process of dividing the inheritance. Perhaps, as Christians, and realizing that they themselves are fairly well established in life, they will want to give much of the money or property to be used in the Lord's work.

But often, not all of the heirs are Christians, or if they are, not all behave as Christians where money is concerned. Far too frequently the matter ends up in court with lawyers and court fees consuming the greater part of what was being fought over. And the heirs? Greed, then enmity, then bitterness separate the family permanently. Those whose Christianity wasn't strong enough to see them through the mess are often lost eternally as a portion of their "settlement".

We should not put these decisions, these responsibilities, these temptations before our heirs. In so doing, we are "passing the buck" in perhaps the most harmful way one could shirk one's responsibilities. Why?

First, because of the often very grievous eternal effect it has on those who shoulder the responsibility in our stead. Parents must hold themselves somewhat accountable when the lack of a clear-cut legal will results in greed, family disputes, unchristian behavior and enmity, all of which will have direct bearing on the eternal destiny of those involved.

Second, each of us is given the responsibility of stewardship over the possessions with which God has blessed us. Is it good stewardship if a man conscientiously gives 10%, 15%, 20% of his weekly earnings all of his life but makes no will concerning any of his other possessions? Perhaps he bought a house or property years ago, and that property today might be worth

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

10 times what he paid for it. Is this prospering not also a blessing from God, and is he not, in turn, responsible for making provision in his will so that he will be giving to God His portion out of such blessings of increase?

Yet, seldom is such provision made. While struggling along with inflation and unending family expenses, a man may think fleetingly as he writes out his weekly contribution check: "I wish I had a lot to give to the Lord. I wish I could afford it."

Sadly, while it was not possible for him to make a substantial gift from his salary, he could have done so in his will — but too often that thought is never there.

Jesus once said of a rich man, "*But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*" (Luke 12:20). We, too, must answer this question because we can't escape the fact that, if we own anything, at our death those physical goods will of necessity become the property of some other human. We can make the choice to settle that question as a responsible steward of God, or we may refuse to do anything and force that decision on others. In that case we have also decided the answer, even though we tried to shun it. Perhaps by our silence we decided:

\* That we would deny God any part of the increase with which He had blessed us.

\* That enmity and bitterness come between our children.

\* That souls be lost, for generations yet unborn, because weak Christians could not handle the trials of dividing an inheritance.

\* That non-Christians inherit our lands and money, enabling them to further indulge in worldly living.

\* That courts and lawyers receive most of the inheritance in payment for their efforts to work out a legal solution to the dispute.

\* I personally would not want to face God in the judgment, having deliberately chosen to do such a poor job as steward over the gifts He gave me. Would you?

### Godly Wisdom

How much better to exercise godly wisdom and set our business in order, to live in a state of preparedness even on this matter.

There can be many wonderful results from exercising this stewardship. After all the outstanding bills have been paid, after whatever percentage you feel is needed and right has been willed to your children, there could still be

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

a sizeable sum left for God's work.

\* Think what \$1,000 would do, divided into portions of \$150 for fifteen minutes of radio preaching in India! Many thousands have been converted through these programs.

\* Would the average orphanage be thrilled to receive a gift of \$5,000 for clothing or food for its children?

\* You could fund TV programs in India with \$10,000.

\* With \$25,000 you could be responsible for the printing of 10,000 books of Hindi radio sermons, 10,000 copies of **The Gospel of Christ** in Tamil, 10,000 books on a study of **New Testament Christianity** in the Telugu tongue, and 10,000 copies of **The Church of the Bible** in one of the dialects of the Philippines and in the Zulu tongue in Africa! That would mean that long after your death, 50,000 messages of truth would still be circulating among people, bearing fruit and having their leavening influence!

\* With \$60,000 you could sponsor the entire network of radio broadcasts for India for seven months! There would be many millions across Asia who would hear the Gospel because of your gift, and hundreds, perhaps thousands, who would obey God because of those months of preaching.

\* Imagine what could be done with \$100,000! You could pay for the first printing of the graded literature series, **"Into God's World"**, that the church so badly needs. Many congregations in the US are falling into apostasy because too little definitive doctrine has been taught during the past 30 to 40 years. Much of the classroom material that *looks* so good is **slightly edited, inter-denominational fluff**. It contains nothing about the church of Christ, the Gospel and how we obey it, nothing to define who we are, what we are, why we are in the world, or any of the other factors that separate God's people from the masses.

Statistics say we are losing 70% of our young people. It's not that they are *leaving* the truth — in most cases, they were never taught! And when the older generation of leaders dies, and leadership in the church goes to the "Baby Boomers", we are going to see a sweeping apostasy, because too many of them have never been properly taught either. The only way to prevent this from happening is to provide literature from the cradle up that teaches all of these things. These materials can be prepared in a first class way by volunteers in the Lord's church. But even after they have been developed, they must be printed. Your bequeathal could change the very future of the church in America and throughout the world! **Will you do it?**

## DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING

I've listed only a few of the ways your possessions could be of invaluable service to God. I'm sure you are aware of many others that would be equally fruitful. My purpose in writing this is not to direct you as to where you use what you have, but to encourage you to exercise godly stewardship over it. We have not, as God's people, been properly educated and trained to think in terms of God's part in our bequeathals. It is time that we realize that even in this area we have not only a responsibility but a privilege. How wonderful to have something that can be given to Him and can be worth so much in the preaching of His Gospel!

All of us need to listen closely to the wisdom of Solomon: "*Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he have rule over all my labor wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity.*"

*"Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labor which I took under the sun. For there is a man whose labor is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured wherein shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil. For what hath a man of all his labor, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This also is vanity.*

*"There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God" (Ecclesiastes 2:18-25).*

The Christian's soul should receive more pleasure from furthering God's work than from any other thing he could do with his possessions. †

**God Is Working**  
If in the work  
you are trying to do,  
**You have done all that**  
you can,  
**Be still:**  
God is working,  
And though you  
may not now be able  
to see  
or hear  
or feel  
what He is doing,  
Know that He is  
not idle.  
— Betty Burton Choate

## **We Need a Revival!**

When I was growing up, the denominational churches were always talking about the need for revival. They even called their meetings "revivals". We in churches of Christ reasoned that we didn't need a revival because the church was not dead.

However, in more recent years I have come to the conclusion that the church does need a revival, and it needs it now! I am not saying that the church is dead, or that it is going to die — the Scriptures promise that the Lord's body will never die — but there are ample signs that the *American* church is in serious trouble, and it is in critical need of an overall revival.

Many individual members are spiritually dead, and far too many congregations have passed on without the members being aware of the decease. In such congregations the funeral was never conducted, but the stench of death is heavy in the air. It is too late for revival in such cases.

There are other individuals and churches, though, where an awakening now would make the difference. Where Christians are sickly, apathetic, bored, tired, negligent, and unfruitful, there may yet be the possibility of turning things around. In these cases, the churches are not dead yet — although they are close to it — but they most certainly will die unless something is done quickly to revive them and to restore them to a living and active faith.

Our problem today is that we are in love with self, thinking of what we want and of having our personal preferences about everything. This is true in the physical realm, and we have brought it over into the church as well.

The world that concerns us most is the material, and it shows in our attitudes, our actions, our jobs, what we have or don't have, the way we spend our money, the way we deal with our families and with each other, our forms of recreation, and life as a whole. In the church, many don't make time for God, for study, for reading, and even for worship and work. Many arrive at the building late for worship, and they leave early. Attendance in most congregations is half the number on Sunday night as on Sunday morning, and not much more than a third on Wednesday night. This tells us much about the time many Christians devote to study and meditation on spiritual things during the week. If we are honest we would admit that too many are secular people, living in a secular world, and are spiritual only about 1/165 of the week. If that is all the time we have for God now, do we honestly expect Him to give us eternity in Heaven as our reward?

**We need a revival — NOW!**

†



## *Casual Dress*

When I was growing up, back in the 40's and 50's, there was a general understanding about "appropriate" dress. Farmers wore overalls. Sports called for athletic shoes. Formal gowns were for evening dress. Midriffs were covered, and dresses were neither above the knees nor plunging to the waist. Khaki pants were required for school, and shirts had to be tucked in. In addition, special occasions demanded baths and good clothes. We put on our dress clothes even when we made our weekly "town trip" on Saturdays, and on other occasions that seemed important to us. Of course, the day of worship called for "Sunday best".

In more recent years, things have changed to the point where most people wear tennis shoes, blue jeans, and such like on almost any occasion, even when attending a service of worship of Almighty God.



## ETHICS

A few years ago, a Gospel preacher was visiting with the church in New Delhi, and he was invited to preach on Sunday evening. The local brethren were shocked when he showed up in faded jeans and tennis shoes, in stark contrast to their choices to wear their best to honor God.

On one occasion, I was visiting brethren in South Africa. On Sunday morning, walking to worship in the heat with the local preacher, I was wearing dress pants, a white shirt and a tie, but I had not brought a dress coat. The preacher asked, "Brother, where is your coat?" He and all of the other men were dressed in suits or dress pants and jackets, in spite of their poverty and the heat. They obviously wanted to honor God by wearing their best to worship.

Here in America where brethren are blessed to have nice clothes from head to toe, things have deteriorated to the point where many show little respect for God or themselves or others by the way they dress.

If a person is so poor that he has no good clothes, certainly God understands, and we should also. James, the brother of our Lord, wrote, "... if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, 'You sit here in a good place,' and say to the poor man, 'You stand there,' or, 'Sit here at my footstool,' have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?" (James 2:2-4). Such differentiation, based on wealth and poverty, would be wrong.

But notice: the difference in the dress of the men resulted from their condition in life, not from their indifference about their appearance. If a person is poor and is doing the best he can, that is all anyone should expect of him, and he should be accepted and treated with respect and equality.

However, our problem today is not one of poverty; it is one of a slouchy culture that has bled over into how we prepare for worship. Just as we would not go to meet the President of the United States wearing casual or sloppy clothes, neither should we presume to go into God's presence as though He is our "buddy" and requires nothing by way of respectful preparation in our appearance. Dressing appropriately is not a matter of "showing off", but it is a matter of showing respect.

How many of you have read in the Old Testament of the Lord's tabernacle (and later, the temple), and of all that went into its make-up? It was not just some place to worship, but it was made of the finest of materials, and those who worshiped there were told by God how to prepare themselves to come into His presence. His specific instruction was, "**By those who**

***come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified***" (Leviticus 10:3).

With such a precedent in the respect God required in the Old Testament, can you believe that brethren today would go before Him and worship in the casual, sloppy clothes that often are their Sunday attire? Surely, they would not attend a wedding or go to a funeral dressed in such a manner, yet they presume to enter God's presence as though the occasion is nothing.

If that is not enough, what about young girls, women, and mothers who go to worship with so much of their bodies uncovered? How can they possibly think that they can be pleasing to God, dressed in such a manner? Isn't it time to have some sermons on modesty in dress at all times, but especially in worship?

Not only do we need sermons dealing with such dress — or lack of dress — but the elders or men of the congregation should go before the church and explain to the members that they expect them to dress properly and respectfully when attending worship. Then, if this is not enough, they should call the guilty parties to one side and explain that such immodest dress is not acceptable. Perhaps it would be helpful if a sweater or robe could be kept in reservation for those who persist in being offensive in their choice of immodest clothing.

But some might think that this is taking things too far. How would that be the case? Perhaps even the leadership in the church has gotten too lax, too tolerant of every person's "rights" and individual choices, without even considering that it is offensive to **God** for people to dress immodestly. We must help these women to understand that they are setting a bad example and are leading the younger women astray. It would be better to get the problem under control now, rather than to allow many to be lost through this worldly influence.

I am personally embarrassed when I see women, even young girls, coming to worship in short dresses or spaghetti-strap tops or plunging necklines, or when nine-months-pregnant women go out in public dressed in tight tee-shirts. This is not the kind of image Christian women should be presenting to the world.

Casual dress is fine in casual settings, but whether in worship or whatever the occasion may be, Christians should first dress modestly, then appropriately, for the occasion. Especially in worship should our dress reflect the deep awe and reverence we feel in being allowed into His Presence. ✠



# SETTING PRIORITIES

I realize that not all Christians can give full time to preaching the Gospel. I realize also that "vocational workers" can make tremendous contributions to the Lord's cause, and that all Christians are to be busy in His work. But I realize, too, that we have a problem in our thinking concerning priorities.

### What Is the Problem?

Somehow, somewhere along the way, we have lost sight of what should be the most important thing in the minds of Christians. We have forgotten that the reason we were left in this world was to preach the Gospel. We don't have heroes in the church — elders, preachers, and missionaries — that we teach our children to look to as examples of following God and as patterns for the height of service in developing their own lives.

Why not? We read about Paul and we admire his courage and dedication. He would be a wonderful example, a heroic example, to follow. We look at Peter, at Timothy, at Barnabas, and we see them as giants of the first century. Their heroic images lie not in the fact that some of them were apostles but in their desire to give their lives to the spreading of the kingdom.

## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

They were heroes because they were willing to set aside secular pursuits and to devote their time exclusively to the preaching of the Gospel.

Do we hold up this type of hero to our sons and daughters today and encourage them to develop into such heroes for the 21st Century? Or do we, in the secret places of our hearts, feel that sparks of secular talent must at all cost be fanned to a flame and that, in the final analysis, those who are left to preach the Gospel are those very few who preach out of great desire or those who have no other particular talent?

People excuse themselves from the responsibility of preaching by reasoning, "I am just not cut out to be a speaker." But then, often, they will spend years of rigorous study and training to develop themselves in a secular field. What challenges must be met and overcome to be an engineer, a dentist, a lawyer, a doctor? If they had put the same desire and effort into training to preach the Gospel, could they not have successfully learned to do that?

There would be a few exceptions, I realize, but I am convinced that almost any young Christian could excel as a preacher if he had the sincere desire, and if he was willing to invest the time and effort and energy into developing along those lines that he invests in learning a secular vocation.

On the other hand, just how many would choose to preach if they were required to study eight long rigorous years in preparation? Or if they had to pass a very difficult bar exam before being allowed to preach? Or if they were required to work their way into the ministry through competition and winning over one challenger after another in order to be able to go on to the next level, as in most sports? Or if part of their training was as agonizing and as shocking to the emotional system as the dissecting of a dead human body is in the training to be a doctor? Or if they would graduate from college with a \$100,000 to \$300,000 indebtedness for their education? Or if their lives would be committed, as is true in many fields, to a 12, 14, or 16-hour work day, with no time to really count as their own to be with their families?

Certainly, there is a difference in the pay scale, and doctors, lawyers, and engineers make much more money than the average preacher. But money doesn't explain the drawing power of these professions for many people. What really appeals is that these are *respected* positions. The sole word "doctor" or "lawyer" or "engineer" establishes a new-comer's credibility in a community. We know that these people are "the cream of the crop". They are intelligent people of initiative and achieve-

## CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

ment; they are successful; they will be pillars in the community. In other words, these are our secular leaders, our "heroes", and a young man who pictures himself as scaling the top, as proving his intelligence and worth, pictures himself in one of these highly respected professions.

That is understandable in the world, but what has happened in the church?

Anyone in the world, with a sense of integrity, can be a good doctor, a good lawyer, a good president. But no one, out in the world, can be a good preacher of the Gospel. That work is left exclusively for God's children. If we were truly aware of our special relationship with Him, and of the special work He has left us in the world to do, and of the teamwork we establish with Him when we go out to preach His Gospel, then shouldn't our most intelligent people, our most successful people, our heroes in the church be those who dedicate their lives to this work?

On this point, the Buddhists put us to shame. Do you know how their monks are chosen? The parents dedicate their **firstborn** son or their **favorite** son to serve in the monastery. That means that the best of their population is serving their religion.

If we were training our children

to view life through God's eyes, wouldn't those sons and daughters who desire to prove themselves most dedicated, most talented, most intelligent, and most successful devote their time and energies to learning to preach the Gospel? And for those who just cannot attain such a high goal, there could always be the second choice of becoming doctors or lawyers or teachers or engineers or some other secular worker.

*If* our thinking was molded in this way so that preachers would have a high image to live up to, surely there would be few who would turn out to be hypocrites and scoundrels.

*And if* we trained our children in this line of thinking, surely more excellent people would preach God's word, and more parents would proudly send them out to work great changes in Satan's domain.

*And if* we had more men (and wives) of such caliber, the world would be turned up-side down through their dedicated efforts.

**And** the effects of this thinking would be eternal.

We claim to be a people who are spiritually alive. We claim to realize the value of the soul. We claim to believe in the Gospel and in heaven and hell.

**What has happened to our priorities?** †

# Marriage

**Definition:** "The joining of man and woman as one; wedlock; an act whereby man and woman are united for the purpose of rearing a family; an intimate union, recognized by legal authorities."

In the beginning God created Adam, and from his rib He created "... a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:22-24). This was the will of God in the beginning and it has remained the same throughout history.

There are three reasons for marriage:

⊗ **For companionship:** Adam had the companionship of God and of all the creatures He had made, but God said, "*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him*" (Genesis 2:18). Just as the first man and the first woman were literally "one flesh", God intended that marriage be a partnership in which the two halves would become a whole. The Scriptures teach that "... *husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church*" (Ephesians 5:28,29). With this kind of loving, selfless relationship, marriage would be the precious thing God intended.

⊗ **For procreation:** After creating Adam and Eve, God said, "*Be fruitful and multiply ...*" (Genesis 1:28). The great blessing of marriage is the home that results, providing love, guidance, and security for the children born to the union. The most important responsibility is spiritual training.

⊗ **To avoid fornication:** "... *because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband*" (1 Corinthians 7:2,3). God totally condemns unfaithfulness on the part of either spouse. Contrary to the world's thinking, it is grievous sin.

Keep this in mind: as long as one abides by the divine laws that govern marriage, he/she will be happy, but breaking those laws will inevitably bring sorrow, regret, shame, and disaster to the family members. †

# Divorce

**Meaning:** Sever; separate; divide; disunite; disassociate; disrupt; dissolving a marriage relationship or partnership.

The modern world is experiencing divorce on every hand. It seems that the trend is to marry today and divorce tomorrow, or marry this one and if you don't like her/him, get a divorce and marry someone else. In this day of "no fault" divorces, the common attitude of people of the world is that marriage is a trial and error experience, and divorce is the solution when things "just don't work out". Going into marriage with the expectation of eventual divorce means that the break-up of the arrangement is almost inevitable.

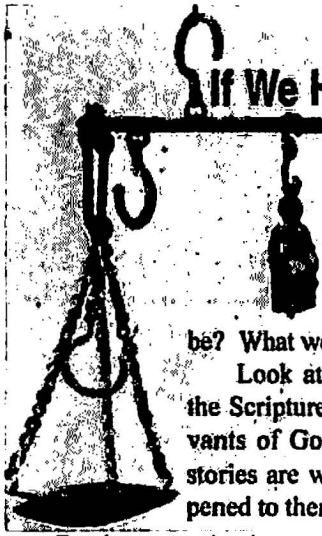
But what does the Bible say? God teaches that there is but one scriptural reason for divorce, and that is for the cause of fornication. "... *whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery*" (Matthew 5:32). Hence, one can't get a scriptural divorce for any little thing that comes up.

Several years ago, psychologists were saying that it is better for the children, and everyone involved, for a bad marriage be dissolved. The assurance was made that children are very resilient and that they do not suffer long-term damage from divorce. More recently, those who study the growing problems among children are conceding that divorce causes life-long problems, and that it may actually be better for children to grow up in a less-than-ideal marriage situation than to be torn between parents through the agonies of a broken home. Time and experience can be painful teachers.

No doubt, divorce has caused more trouble, strife, bitterness, hardship and grief than any other one thing — more, even, than the death of a spouse. It leaves children homeless, it results in psychological problems, drug abuse, alcoholism and many other destructive behavioral problems. Yes, divorce is not simply a bad choice; according to the Scriptures, God counts it as SIN. We need to be teaching every one who will listen that this is one word and one "solution" that should never enter their thoughts.

*"For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence,"* says the LORD of hosts. *"Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously"* (Malachi 2:16). †

## Where Would We Be If We Had Not Become Christians?



Have you every wondered where we might be if we had not become Christians and members of the Lord's church? If we had not obeyed the Lord, to let Him change our lives, who would we be today? Where would we be? What would we be doing? Would we even be alive?

Look at the apostles and other well-known people of the Scriptures. Look at all of those who became great servants of God, people of renown through the ages whose stories are written in God's Book. What would have happened to them if they had not submitted to the Lord's will?

For instance, in the great history of mankind, what would the lowly fisherman, Peter, have ever amounted to without the Lord and Christianity? If Saul had not been converted, what would have been his end?

Not only did it make a difference to them that they initially obeyed the Lord, but their faithfulness was vital in their story. Consider some who fell along the way. Judas is a prime example. What a difference his faithlessness made, comparing his end with that of the other apostles. Then there is the story of Ananias and Sapphira and how they were struck dead by the Holy Spirit for lying. What about Nadab and Abihu in the Old Testament? In addition, even the great Pharaoh failed when he opposed God, and Herod was struck down by the angel of the Lord when he spoke with such grandness that the people proclaimed it was the voice of God and not of man, and he did not give God glory. The acceptance or rejection of God by these individuals determined the entire outcome of their lives.

If we had not responded to the Lord's will, not only would we be lost, we might have been satisfied to settle down with some mediocre job, to have married and divorced and married again, to have become a drunkard, a drug addict, to have developed a habit of cursing, to be physically abusive to those around us, to get into all kinds irremediable trouble.

Even if we had not gone in some of those directions, we might still have ended up amounting to nothing, our lives making no positive difference in



## THE CHRISTIAN HOME

this world. In other words, we could have just lived and died, and have finally been lost for all eternity. Now wouldn't that have been horrible?

Though we initially became a Christian, if we had not been faithful we would still have lost our soul, going back into the world, living a life of sin and deceit, perhaps joining some erring religious group, and living in opposition to the Lord's way. It is frightening even to think of such things.

What a contrast when we become God's children! We may choose to give our lives to the greatest work in all the world — preaching the Gospel. Many other Christians go on to become prominent in the secular world. They succeed in business, are leaders in their community, and become heads of schools and colleges. There are numerous other areas where they may see great success, primarily because they are Christians and live by the sterling principles of Christianity.

The problem, however, is that even Christians are often prone to be blind as to how they reached this place in life. They may take full credit themselves and say, "Look what I've done, what I've been able to accomplish!" True, people out in the world do succeed, but one who has become a Christian is far more likely to have success when he

applies the guidelines in the New Testament to his life, while refraining from practices that are not in keeping with truth and righteousness.

When one becomes a Christian, he changes his life. He looks at the world in a different way. He has Christ and the principles of Christianity to follow, giving him goals to reach, pitfalls to avoid. He becomes a hard worker, has respect for those with whom he works, is honest in dealing with others, and tries to do the best job possible. In his church family, he is associated with Christians who will help and encourage him to succeed.

As a Christian, one's physical life, and the lives of his family members, have changed. They don't abuse their bodies with what they eat and drink, or with their manner of life, so they usually have better health. They are able to spend their money on education, business, and other worthwhile things since they don't waste it on strong drink, gambling, and bad habits.

So where would we be if it had not been for Christianity that changed our lives, our future in this world, and where we will spend eternity? It's a good question to ponder.

Do you have something to live for and to die for? I encourage you to be a Christian and to let Christianity make your life an eternal success. †

## Glory

I walked along my path today,  
in the quiet,  
in the woods.

I saw the spangled gown of fall,  
Heard the warbler's farewell call  
Where the trees in glory stood,  
leaves of crimson,  
gold and brown  
falling gently to the ground.

*They look to me a living fire  
burned by frost,  
aglow with sun.*

But how can glory such as this  
Be so quickly done,  
be so quickly laid to rest  
in winter's snow  
and quiet death?

Is not "living" like a tree,  
green at first  
and small of strength?

But life should grow to majesty,  
Lifted high and reaching out,  
Bringing good to all about,  
Reaching then crescendo's peak,  
Falling into winter's sleep,  
Soon to wake in heaven's spring  
Where eternal breezes sing!

## Aloneness

He has told me  
— Searching for the words  
to say what he feels —

He has told me  
of the loneliness

Away from home.

Night after night

In a foreign land.

He says that his music  
— his panacea for peace —

Fails him now

And the gnawing ache remains.

He lies in his bed

And cannot sleep

So he waits in the still loneliness

For morning — and others — to come.

I *understood* what he said

But I *feel* it now

in this house

at night

Where I rattle around

Alone.

Whatever door I may pass

Emptiness looms before me;

Whatever room I leave behind

Was filled with that same emptiness.

The *absence* of others  
Is, itself,  
Like a physical presence  
Filling all the space  
    where I am not,  
And smothering me with entrapment.

There is no need to *think* of being alone:  
I feel the lone-ness,  
    like a dead spirit  
    sucking the heart out of me.  
Inside, my soul turns this way and that,  
Searching for escape  
But there is none.



# ***I Reach Out to Find Your Hand***

**Betty Burton Choate**

*Almost always*

*For me*

*You've been there,*

*My foundation stone,*

*The walls around me,*

*The limit of my sky,*

*The structure of my day,*

*The color of my life,*

*My future and my past,*

*So much a part of me*

*I lost the feeling of just where I ended*

*And where you began.*

*And, like my own existence,*

*You seemed a "given"*

*While thoughts for others*

*Filled our lives.*

*Then you went away.*

*But you'd often been away*

*For weeks and months before,*

*And always you'd come home.*

*So somehow the fabric of my life*

*Seemed little changed,*

*Except your absence*

*Which was always in my heart,*

*And the waiting,*

*Like a backdrop to the whole of life,*

*Waiting,*

*To hear you walking through the door,*

*Coming home at last.*

Slowly, though,  
Day by day,  
As challenges eroded strength,  
The walls that once had seemed secure  
Crumbled  
and fell in dust and broken ruins,  
And suddenly,  
frighteningly,  
The space around me had no bounds.

In a monstrous world  
You were gone  
Forever  
And there was no one . . .

Loneliness,  
Then emptiness,  
drained my heart,  
And the sky so blue  
Turned to black  
And seeped into my soul.

Grasping for support,  
For guidance in the wilderness,  
I reach out  
Beyond myself,  
Beyond expanding space,  
Beyond this emptiness.

I reach out to find your hand . . .

But, oh dear God —  
No one can reach past death . . .

Help me to endure this silent screaming loneliness . . . .



FROM THE HEART OF . . .

**J.C. CHOATE,**  
TEACHER OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST



**FEBRUARY 6, 1932**  
**FEBRUARY 1, 2008**

**Betty Burton Choate**

Departing in this issue from our usual "From the Heart of . . ." feature, I am compelled to show you a little of the heart of the Christian man who

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

dreamed of many things in his life, and who chose me to share with him in the exciting fulfillment that God brought for most of those dreams.

J.C. Choate preached in a Gospel meeting in Winona in 1952, before the times when visiting preachers were housed in motels, so he stayed in our home. According to his diary entries, he called the various denominational preachers in town, had personal studies during the days with people who came to the evening meetings, and baptized seven souls and restored three. He had a flat on the way down and a blow-out on the way home; didn't get back to Corinth until 4:30 in the morning. And it was a "mission meeting"—free; but he concluded that we were "very fine people" and he would "never forget this place". He was 20, the eldest son of Jesse and Hollis Choate of Corinth, MS, and I was 12, the daughter of Clyde and Theola Burton.

I thank God for bringing our paths to cross, for the 52 years of life together, and for the blessing of being tools in His outreach for souls that was far greater than we could ever have imagined with our small-town backgrounds. But a trip to the "Holy Land" before our marriage had opened his eyes to the expanse of the world and the multitudes of souls, so I was not greatly surprised when he confided one day that he wanted us to do some mission work overseas. India was his choice because it was the largest democracy without the Gospel.

In 1960 he resigned from local work with the Central church in Minneapolis, MN, and we moved into the house with Daddy and Mother in Winona. We had no sponsor and no income, but it never crossed our minds to doubt that the support would be raised and that we would be able to go, because this was what Jesus had told His people to do.

Someone made the remark at the beginning,



*J.C. and Betty Choate with Sheila, who was 1 1/2 when they moved to Pakistan.*



## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

“They won’t last long.” And with the visa difficulties during those years in India, someone else questioned, “Why don’t you go somewhere where you can stay long enough to do some good?”

The story is long — 48 years. Part of the time we were in Pakistan, working closely with Gordon Hogan, then Sri Lanka, then India, as a family. Our firstborn, Sheila, was one and one-half years old when we moved to Pakistan. Steve was born there a year later. We adopted my niece, Darla, when we came home after four years in Pakistan. When we returned to India in 1971, Shannon (Brad) was four months old, and Barbara Oliver had decided to join us as “extended family”. We were a happy and busy seven, and hoped to get long-term visas that would enable an extended stay in India.

The small church in New Delhi had grown in knowledge as well as in numbers during J.C.’s absence. Moving the meeting place to the living room of the house we rented, and using personal visits, Bible courses, a monthly magazine, and hospitality as means to contact and convert people, we were encouraged by the continued growth. After we had exhausted the visa time allowed for tourists, through exerting pressure from some influential people, we were finally able to get permission to apply for visas as a journalist for one year. At the end of the year, to our disappointment the visas were not granted (avoiding setting a precedent that would have enabled us to get renewals each year). So we had no choice but to turn things over to the local brethren again and to come back to the States.

But we felt far from defeated. We had learned that it was now possible to buy time for religious broadcasting on Radio Sri Lanka, and that the programs could be heard over much of Asia. The negative was that we had no equipment or funds for the programs, so we knew that if we took on such a challenge, it would necessitate being in the States to raise support to cover all the costs. By that time we had formed working relationships with preachers in South India who had been Christians a number of years and were mature in their knowledge as well as capable speakers, so we felt that we could arrange for programs in several of the major languages. Brother Reggie Gnanasundaram, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, managed the contracts.

From 1975, J.C. spent three months in the spring and three months in the fall in India alone, recording radio tapes in English and with the various Indian speakers in four of their languages, and working with them on the literature to be used in follow-up. The other six months he visited churches to raise the funds for the programs we had never expected to be able to have.

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Because we could not get long-term visas for India, and because he had to be in the States to raise funds, the children and I lived in Winona during those 20 years. I admit, we had never planned on doing mission work by separation, and it was a cost that had to be counted. In the end, we knew we could not put our own human preferences above the opportunity to help bring the truth to many who would be reached in no other way except mass media. After we committed to the sacrifice, we discovered that God turned it around and made it into a blessing in countless ways, allowing us to work together on opposite sides of the world!

The radio programs grew in number, and sometimes shrank because of not enough funds to keep all of them going. J.C. had an English program, Sunny David spoke in Hindi, Joshua Gootam in Telugu, P.R. Swamy in Tamil, P.K. Varghese in Malayalam. With extreme effort we maintained good coverage in these prominent languages of India. The response in mail and requests for Bible courses and literature was overwhelming, so the need to raise funds for printing mushroomed.

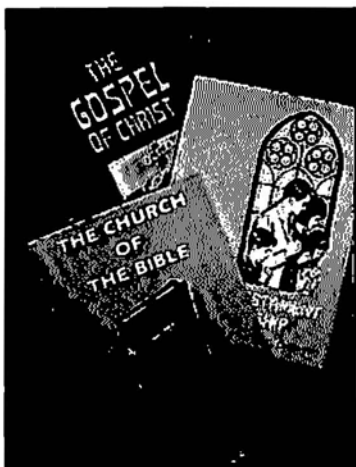
In J.C.'s travels back and forth, he realized how much literature and radio work were needed in other places, so he raised funds for those needs too. For several years there was an aggressive program of printing and radio work in Indonesia, which was curtailed when the local man through whom he was working came to the States for further education. Some printing continues to be done through Colin Mckee and others who are working there. In time, about 20 broadcasts were arranged for various islands in the Philippines, with literature for follow-up, co-ordinated by Reuben Emperado. During this time, also, Wayne and Janet Barrier retired from their jobs and became full-time partners in the mission effort under the oversight of the Double Springs church.

Part of the work on the American side was the publication of a newspaper, *World Evangelism*, which served as our own report venue and also provided space for us to help publicize the work being done by other missionaries in many parts of the world. J.C. had also wanted to print a quarterly, Readers Digest-sized magazine to be shared among Christians in the States as well as in mission fields. Finally, in 1993 we brought out the first issue of *The Voice of Truth International*, with J.C. as the Editor, Byron Nichols as the Managing Editor, and me doing the layout work. That same year we built the World Evangelism office building, with a lot of volunteer help (Andy Akins, G.K. Tanner, Clayton Malone, Clyde Burton, and others) to house our "staff" — J.C., Barbara Oliver, Eulene Ramsey, and me — and to provide storage for the books we were printing in the States.

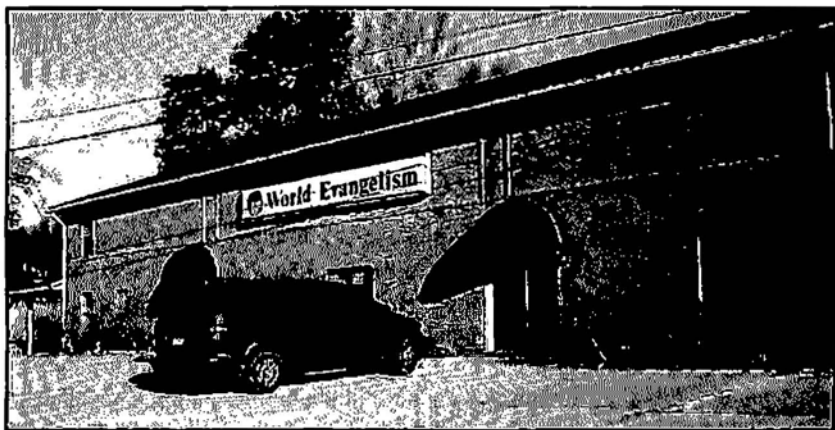
## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

J.C.'s first book had been printed in 1953. I wrote **First Steps in Faith**, about our mission efforts, in 1969. He had written numerous study books to supplement the Bible courses being offered overseas and had decided that it would be good to make them available outside of India. He had also encouraged many missionaries to write their stories, in spite of the fact that he knew there was not much "market" for them. He felt that the record needed to be available for posterity, so he enabled the printing of more mission stories than probably any other publisher in the church.

Overall, more than 200 titles are available, with twenty-five or more being offered to World Bible School teachers, people involved in jail ministries, and to those who would give them in evangelism at \$1.00 per copy — often below cost. Countless books are given away, and sent on request to people overseas, so that the printing and distribution of books grew to be another major outreach.

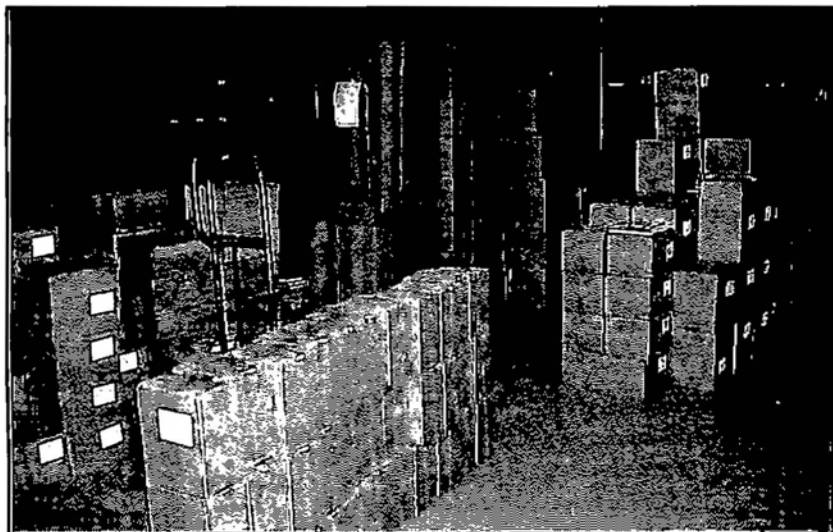


*Three of the books available to teachers for students' on-going studies.*



*The two-story office building which provides space for the various parts of the work, and for workers.*

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .



***Books are printed by thousands and sent out by ones, fives, twenties .... These are the stock, waiting to be used.***

*The Voice of Truth International* is used widely in the States, as well as being sent to brethren throughout the world, free of charge. This issue is volume 57. All told, more than 1,500,000 are in circulation. John Thiessen became a co-worker with a Spanish version of the magazine, bringing out seven issues before his death in 2006. Plans call for the continuation of that magazine, too, when a person capable of doing layout in Spanish can be found.

Another great need J.C. saw was for a good mission news magazine. As we got more involved with various parts of the work, we discontinued the printing of the *World Evangelism* newspaper, intending to publish *Global Harvest* instead. We did bring out one issue, a 48-page, full-color news magazine, allowing space to feature work being done in many parts of the world. We had hoped to make it a quarterly publication, also, but because of J.C.'s illness it had to be shelved temporarily.

J.C. had envisioned a mission training school (**World Evangelism School of Missions**), bringing former or currently "at home" missionaries together to train prospective men from the experience gained from years on the field. Wayne Barrier has taken the lead in organizing the meetings to write the curriculum for this school, which is scheduled to begin in August, 2008.

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Following the organizing of a Bible Training School in Myanmar, schools are now in operation in numerous places, with Wayne also raising funds and working with local brethren in their development.

After twenty years of working much of the time on opposite sides of the world, in 1994, after our children were out of the nest, J.C. and I were blessed to do everything together — weekend visits to churches, trips to India and other countries, work here at home. What wonderful years! We talked and planned and prayed and cried and exulted and dreamed and waited and worked, together. What wonderful years!

### THE FAMILY



***L to R: Chris, Darla, J.P. and David Rosinski; Matt and Stephanie Kessler, Sheila, Alex and Rob Gibson; Betty and J.C.; Seth, Arwen, Brad, Georgia and Savannah Choate; Jonathan, Steve, Erin and Melinda Choate.***

In 2002, J.C. was diagnosed with colon cancer. His first statement, after hearing the diagnosis, was, "We are in God's hands." For three years after the initial surgery, everything continued as before. We made the two trips to India each year, and we did the work at home. Then he was diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer and was told he must have the tumors removed. Following that surgery, he was short-of-breath and very limited in any physical activity. He underwent intensive treatment, and was the subject of countless prayers for his health.

Thankfully, he was not in much pain until the last months, and he was able to continue with limited office work, writing, communication, handling of payments for overseas radio, TV and printing contracts, enjoying visitors,

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

attending our curriculum-development meetings, etc. The last three months he was in and out of hospitals much of the time, and was bedridden during the last month because of increasing weakness. Our son, Brad, who works for a software programming company, was able to be with us for that month when nothing else could be done for J.C., medically. I was so thankful that he could be at home rather than in a hospital room.

J.C. was in a coma for twenty-four hours before his death, not responding to anything I said or did. When I realized, because of erratic breathing, that he was dying, I hugged and kissed him, and — wonderful gift! — he kissed me back. The next breath was his last. He died at 12:20 PM on February 1, 2008. On February 5, Wayne Barrier, Colin McKee, L.D. Willis, Dennis Larson, Loy Mitchell, and Byron Nichols led the funeral service at the Winona Church of Christ facility for the many loved ones who gathered to say their last goodbye. He was laid to rest in the Oakwood Cemetery in Winona.

Were all of those prayers for him, for us, answered? Yes, in God's own good way. J.C.'s spirit was young, but his body was 76 years old, weak with sickness and worn with age. God was ready for him to come home. But we had needed the time for others to be brought into the team at Winona, and for me to learn many things from him that I would have to know when he was gone. God granted not only the time but packed it with development for the school and all the other preparations that needed to be made. He brought Jerry and Paula Bates, and Louis and Bonnie Rushmore to live in Winona and to work with me, with the Barriers, the Nichols, the Larsons, and other team members so that the programs here in the US and overseas can continue.

But none of this work could have been done without the oversight since 1965 of the elders of the Liberty Church of Christ in Dennis, MS, and the support all of these years of many congregations and individuals who have faithfully sent their checks month after month, without fail. We have often said that when a person is involved in a mission effort, those who join hands in that work are the "cream" of the church. It has truly been a foretaste of heaven to have known and loved such brothers and sisters in the American church and in congregations around the world.

I am deeply thankful that the Liberty elders and the many congregations and individuals who support the work have pledged their continued involvement so that the mass media programs so vital for evangelizing in India and other countries in Asia can go on without interruption.

Now the mantle of leadership in the overseas work and in the mission training school passes to the Wayne Barrier family, along with the others of

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

the team. Wayne, Jerry, and Louis will do J.C.'s part, continuing to add to the work as doors of opportunity open. I am doing the work J.C. and I did together, so the closeness with him is very real in my heart.

*"Be strong and of good courage. ... And the Lord, He is the one who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; Do not fear nor be dismayed"* (Deuteronomy 31:6,8). †

## OUR CHILDREN . . .

### Sheila

(This is a letter Sheila wrote at the time J.C. received an honorary doctorate from Heritage Christian University. He looked forward so much to her daily calls during his illness. She and Rob live in Kotzebue, Alaska)

"Daddy, as you receive your honorary doctorate from Heritage Christian University today, I wanted you to know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. You have overcome a lot in the past two years just to be present for this award, and I wish that I could have been there to share the moment with you and Mother in person.

"But in spite of the distance, you are always in my heart. I owe so much to you: my foundations of faith, my love of music, my appreciation of beautiful parks and scenery ... so many things I trace to you. Your steadfast effort to carry out your vision for the mission work you and Mother began all those years ago has truly been inspiring. I know that you have a love for God and for the work you hold so dear that has seldom been eclipsed.

"Whatever your future may hold, I know that it holds a place in the kingdom of Heaven, and that you hold a place in the hearts, minds, and lives of so many people that you have touched with your dedication to the Word of God, and the sincere spirit with which you have reached out to others to share the good news.

"You hold a special place in my life, and in the lives of each person in our family. But most of all, I know that you and Mother are bonded, connected with a unity that the rest of us can only glimpse. Maybe it takes 50 plus years of forging the ties, or maybe you two were uniquely suited for each other. But the example that you have shared with the rest of us will inspire and encourage us all far beyond your physical lives."

### Darla

(Darla is my niece whom we adopted when she was eight. Her words mean so much to me. She and Dave live in Hethzebah, Georgia.)

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

“How did J.C. Choate affect my life? More to the point, how did he *not* affect my life? Writing this piece is odious to me because it means that there is a big empty hole in my life that no one will ever be able to fill. But that’s me, I’m selfish — he wasn’t. Even though he was my uncle by marriage and not by blood, when he realized I needed a home, he gave me his. This may not seem like much to some, but he did this knowing that I was nothing but a rolling ball of fury.

“I’ve heard that the definition of kindness is ‘goodness in action.’ That’s the living example he gave to me. I was always a big person and even as a child I was often told I was too big to be picked up. When we would get home from a car trip and all the kids were asleep, he would carry us and put us to bed. Even if I was wide awake, I did my best to pretend I was asleep, not to miss this extreme kindness. I never remember him raising his voice in anger. He could get very animated and there was never any doubt about where he stood on an issue, but he never yelled.

“Once I was looking for stamps in his desk drawer and instead I found a very hurtful letter from my mother’s husband. He came in as I was reading it. He was so kind in assuring me that the things in the letter were untrue — he was so sad that I had found it. If you love someone, in a sense, you study them and store away information about them.

“I can’t remember getting a gift from him I didn’t like, because he knew me. As a young girl, I was wild about the Osmonds. (He thought I was too wild about them!) Even at that, once we were in Memphis when they were too, and it was his plan to take me to see them if our plane tickets to the mission field worked out to allow the time. Small kindnesses mean a lot. Without them people can’t see God on the earth. Today I’m waiting to go live with the God who made me because of the kindnesses of JC Choate and the people he surrounded himself with — Christians. Kindness, goodness (Godliness) in action, made me want all there was to have of it. Thanks, Dad!”

### Steve

(Steve and his family live in Searcy, Arkansas where he teaches at Harding University. I am thankful to have them within driving distance.)

“I find it extremely difficult to speak of my father, his mission and accomplishments in the Lord’s work. Having devoted all of his life to missions with a sense of resolution and dedication few could equal or imagine, having, myself, been born on the mission field in the early years of that lifetime of effort, I feel that I am too close to all of it to speak with any sense of proportion or comprehensive balance, like a man who lives in the foothills



## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

and cannot grasp the profound scope and scale of the mountain that surrounds him. I can only glimpse some aspect of these things in hearing and reading the words of others, evangelists, missionaries, preachers, men and women better positioned than I to speak of his efforts in a variety of missions-related fields, and how those efforts impacted peoples' lives, led to conversions, inspired others to lead and evangelize, touched upon eternity.

"I can say a little about the man, as husband and father. Even here, though, his dedication was so complete, his focus so constant, that to know him, you had to know his commitment to the Lord's work. Through this, however, you found a strong man, vigorous in following the Great Commission, one who knew no bounds, recognized no meaningful obstacles in spreading the Gospel. You would also come to know a quiet man, one who projected a sense of resolution second to none. Sure in his faith, a loving husband and father who led by example, slow to anger, tender in his affections, my father also possessed many interests. He was a great music enthusiast, loved to travel, to experience different cultures, make new friends, and one who recognized no cultural, ethnic, linguistic or class boundaries. He recognized better than any human being I have ever known the common truth that we are all God's children, and all of us are in need of God's saving grace and the blood of Jesus Christ. It is through these disparate things that the stature of the man — and the magnitude of our loss — may be measured."

### **Brad (Shannon)**

(When Brad left for college, he fell in love with Georgia the first semester, worked at Harding during school vacations, and didn't come home for those long summer months that allowed his mother to emotionally "let go" of her baby. At the end of every visit through the years I cry, and explain, "It's because you didn't come back home like the other kids did." When his company allowed him to come to be of help to J.C. and me during those last weeks of his life, Brad remarked, "You always said I never came home. Well, now I've come home." In helping me to lift and turn J.C., I have never seen more gentleness — like a father with a sick baby. Those experiences together in caring for the one we so deeply loved meant more than I can say. About computers, Brad can talk endlessly, but about his heart the words don't come easily.)

"As a selfish child, I grieve for the loss of my father. But I am comforted knowing that he is now with the Father that he loved and served so faithfully all of his life. He was truly a good and faithful servant."

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

COLIN MCKEE, INDONESIA . . .

David said of the death of Abner, "A prince and great man has fallen this day in Israel." We may say the same of J.C. Choate. He was a gallant soldier of the cross. He was relentless and untiring in his efforts to share the Gospel through every medium available. Thousands upon thousands of books and magazines and radio and television programs have been distributed worldwide to send the light to lands steeped in darkness because of his efforts and love for the truth of the Gospel.

Brother Choate was motivated from an early age to concentrate on regions beyond the borders of the U.S.A. and his name became synonymous with evangelism. He wrote, produced, and helped to produce many books and radio programs in Indonesia and often visited there through the years to help with the work. It was a high point of our year when he and Betty came to visit us, and his first concern always was for mass media production to evangelize the lost and for materials to edify the brethren. He enjoyed his work, and he enjoyed life. He could really break up over some funny situation or story, and it was a joy to see him in the spasms of laughter. He was a fan of old western movies but gave little time to entertainment because of his dedication to evangelism.

I remember traveling in the mid 90's with brother Choate to a remote city in Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo), Samarinda. It was one of the dirtiest cities in all of Indonesia that I had ever been in, but it didn't bother him because he was focused on trying to get the Gospel to the people of that city. We had to use the public transport, a diesel burning, smoking, choky bus for several hours to get to that place from Balikpapan, but he was undeterred because of his interest in getting radio programs on local stations, and thus taking the truth to people who had never heard it.

He was a great encourager to missionaries and preachers and could always be depended on to stand strong in the old paths. He cannot be replaced, but through his books, articles, mass media programs, and life of sacrifice, we will continue to be inspired to go forth as he did, for "he, being dead, yet speaketh".

JOEL STEPHEN WILLIAMS

J.C. Choate published two of my books when I was a very young preacher. He asked me to go with him to India in 1985. It took me a couple of weeks to figure out what he was trying to do as a missionary. I finally realized that he was trying to be (1) a good missionary in one location, (2)

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

the Gospel Advocate publishing house for the whole mission field, and (3) the Herald of Truth for as much of the mission field as possible. While he wrote and published probably 50 of his own books, he also published many dozens of books by others.

J.C. had a hard time saying, "No," to any good project and to a request for help. If a missionary needed help, he would try to raise some money for him, get him some books, or do whatever he could. He always traveled economy, stayed in the homes of other missionaries and local Christians if possible rather than in a hotel, and was very frugal in spending money for himself. He will have no worry over the heavenly CPAs going over the financial books of his ministry. Those who watched from the early years came to realize that working in mission fields was not a short-term commitment for J.C. He would give his life to world evangelism. He will be missed by many people in the world.

### RANDAL J. MATHENY, BRAZIL . . .

It was a special trip, for one purpose only. I had driven down the Natchez Trace Parkway, from my mother-in-law's house in northeast Mississippi, to Winona just to visit him and his wife.

For years I had read books he had published, starting with Glover Shipp's book, **God Answers His Mail**, given me by the author on a campaign to Belo Horizonte. In 1978 it was only a two-year-old volume, and I came away with the author's autograph. On a subsequent trip back to Belo Horizonte, I came away with another autographed book of Glover's, **Fire in My Bones**, by the same publisher. Then in 1981 came yet another book of Glover's, the type this publisher excelled at, an account of the first years of work in Belo Horizonte, **There's No Nut Like a Brazil Nut**. Since we had developing plans to move to Belo Horizonte, these books were precious companions.

When we moved to Brazil in 1984, Dr. George Hobby did our medical exams required by the Brazilian government. So his mother Georgia Hobby's book, **They called him Muluti: The life and times of Alvin Hobby, a Teacher in Africa** (2000), drew our attention. Again by the same missionary publisher. Many of his authors I came to know; others became co-workers in the mission field.

So, this trek down to Winona became something of a necessity. An imperative, meeting this name I had read and seen on the spines of countless books. We had exchanged a few emails. When I announced my desire to visit, he and his wife welcomed me warmly. They opened their home,

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

gave me the grand tour of their working facilities, showed me attention and kindness. This missionary publisher loaded me down with missions and preaching books from his stock.

I did not know him so well, but his soft-spoken manner, his attentiveness, his concern for faithfulness in doctrine and missions, his treatment of me as an equal, invested in that long familiar name all the good and gentle qualities I could have hoped for.

So, as he rests from his labors, and as we continue ours, encouraged for years by his efforts, we salute this servant of Christ who showed the perfect love of God for all men, J.C. Choate.

### ARJUNAN AND GLORY, BATLAGUNDA . . .

We miss brother J.C. a lot. Though it is unbearable to us we comforted ourselves that we would meet him in Heaven. We thank God for his literature ministry which is alive. We know a couple in Batlagundu, both are retired teachers. Whenever we meet them they speak about our brother J.C.'s ministry in India because they had attended the meeting and heard J.C.'s preaching. Through the good work which was committed unto us we could reap 50 souls at "Readers' Seminar" in Ariyalur District, an unforgettable event.

### DEMAR AND DIXIE ELAM, OPEN DOORS MINISTRY . . .

You know how much Dixie and I love you and how much we loved J.C. He was truly a "Soldier of Christ". He was a great warrior of the Lord's Cause on this earth and he will be greatly missed.

Dixie and I both know J.C. is better off than those of us who are earth bound, but we also know how much good he was doing and could have done had he stayed with us longer. The statement, "he will be missed", is said about many people but when it comes to J.C. that statement is amplified because he was a giant in missions. He has been a voice in worldwide missions for so long. Many missionaries looked to him for inspiration. We were motivated by his zeal. Global missions was made richer for J.C.'s years and years of personal involvement.

### ASGHAR ALI, LAHORE, PAKISTAN . . .

I have known brother Choate since, as a young man in Lahore, I left the Muslim faith and was baptized into Christ.

I do not know how to express my feelings on this sad news of our brother passing away. He was the first pioneer missionary to Karachi and

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

the second pioneer missionary to Pakistan. So far as literature is concerned he has left behind hundreds of tracts and small books. His passing away is a great loss to the brotherhood.

### AL AND DONNA HORNE, SOUTH AFRICA . . .

We are heartbroken for you but so happy for J.C. — because as it says below, he has “entered the promised rest”. And honestly, we know few men of God who have worked as hard and as steadfastly and as committedly as your dear husband.

We remember the time you spent in our home and came to love both of you. Because of Christ, we were joined in heart. We have continued to keep up with your work over the years and have faith that what you and J.C. began and nourished to life will continue to bear fruit for the Lord and His church.

Especially do I appreciate J.C. because he encouraged me to write a book about our mission work in Africa. That book was probably one of my greatest contributions to the mission field, and it would not have been possible without you and J.C. behind it.

### CLAUDE AND MADGE LEWIS, PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

J.C. was one of the greatest servants of our Lord. He will be greatly missed, but his marvelous influence will never die. We are thankful for you. The love you have for Christ and the church is comforting and encouraging, and your loving care for J.C. during his illness has been wonderful.

### FELIX GARCIA, USA . . .

The church of Christ has lost a great man, evangelist, missionary, preacher, teacher, leader, brother, son, husband, and father. Even though we are so saddened by his loss and for his wonderful family, we know brother Choate is now resting, indeed, from his labors and long illness. In life, he denied himself, took up his cross, and followed Christ, never looking back. He preached the saving Gospel to thousands, planting the seed of salvation and hope in the hearts of many souls. Because of his efforts, many learned about the Master and have given their lives for Christ. That is precisely what this immoral, sin-infested nation and world need today more than ever... more God-fearing men like brother Choate who truly loved Christ, was eternally grateful for the Savior's sacrifice, and was never afraid to speak the truth to mortal men. Like the apostle Paul, brother Choate was a great example for all of us (1 Corinthians 11:1).

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

Even though our dear brother is now gone, his legacy, however, will remain forever. I personally thank God for him, for he preached the Gospel "in season and out of season" and took the Great Commission very seriously, as it should be. The sacrifices he made in life were many, but now comes the reward. Victory! Much like the apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:7,8, I could imagine brother Choate saying before his departure, "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*"

### WAYNE AND JANET BARRIER. WORLD EVANGELISM

My association with J.C. Choate started in 1982. My wife and I had been evaluating missions programs for two years to identify one that we could be personally involved in helping. J.C. and Betty visited us and spent time in our home on numerous occasions. As we learned more about their work, it was an easy decision for us to commit our efforts to what they were doing.

Over the next 26 years, I had opportunity to travel and work with J.C. in Asia. The more I learned about the vision, mission, and reach of the extensive work J.C. was leading, the more amazed I was that such a program could be managed by a single individual. J.C.'s team involved a network of dedicated individuals in India and Asia, with the backing of churches and individuals in the United States, but J.C. was the director and heart of the great program.

The "World Evangelism" effort involved a unique and effective integration of mass communications, literature, personal teaching, training, and networking. The system succeeded because J.C. put time and effort into it, with work-days of 12-16 hours. He was constantly seeking better ways to do things and pushing to expand the reach of the teaching.

The force that drove J.C. was his unwavering faith in the Lord. He was burdened by the fact that the church, today, is not obeying the command in Matthew 28 for followers of Jesus to teach the Gospel to every person in all the world. J.C. approached the commandment as a submissive, hardworking, loyal servant. He sought no recognition or glory. His primary concern was that the job was not being done. With every step of progress, he felt that our efforts had been blessed as God had given an increase.

I have been blessed to know and partner with this powerful warrior in the Lord's army. His work is done and, because of his leadership, I know better how to do my work in reaching out to the lost.

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

It is my privilege to write about our beloved brother J.C. Choate, who was indeed a great soldier in God's army, and a great servant in the Lord's kingdom. When Moses died, God said, "Moses, My servant, is dead" (Joshua 1 :2). I believe God would have said the same words for J.C.

FRANCIS DAVID, NEW DELHI, INDIA . . .

I have personally known J.C. since 1970 when I was just a young boy. I was quite impressed with his dedication and missionary zeal for the Lord. He was totally committed to the Great Commission. It was back in 1977, I remember, when he first approached me and asked if I would leave my secular work and join in the fulltime ministry. I accepted, and today I am what I am because of his encouragement. For me, he was just like Barnabas who is called the son of exhortation.

J.C. made trips to India twice a year, and his first destination would be New Delhi, where he would stay for some weeks to record the radio sermons. We used to eat, laugh, crack jokes, and discuss our efforts to spread the cause of Christ. I have no hesitation in saying that evangelism was in his blood. His life was evangelistic, and that is why most of the time he was away from home, working in Asia. I can imagine when he was bedridden, he must have been thinking how to print more literature and reach more people.

Once I was talking with J.C. and asking him (I was just kidding) what would be our retirement age? And you know what he said: "Francis we never retire in the Lord's work." He also always gave first preference to the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33). He taught me by his example. He would never miss the worship service, and always encouraged his co-workers and Christians not to travel to Delhi or back to their states on Sundays, missing worship. Another important thing I learned from him that he had a great faith in prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

The church in Delhi will miss him, because he was like a family member, and no doubt, all over the world Christians will miss him.

JOSHUA GOOTAM, KAKINADA, INDIA . . .

J.C. was remarkable and extremely courageous. I am feeling sorry that I did not have more time to spend with him. But whatever time we had together, it was quality time. When he first came to Bombay in 1965 he was the one who taught me how to build a sermon to preach. He also took me to a Bible book store down town and bought my first Bible concordance. The

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

outlines method and the concordance are still with me. They will be with me till my sojourn on this earth comes to an end.

During the intervening years since those early days in Bombay, we have shared many hours of preparation of radio tapes together, and have printed many thousands of books and magazines to be used as follow-up tools. A few years back he raised funds for Telugu TV programs . . .

JOHN REESE, PRESIDENT, WORLD BIBLE SCHOOL . . .

We remember with fondness and love all the many times that J.C. and you came to visit us in South Africa. You were always such an encouragement and inspiration to us. You shared with us a deep faith in the Lord and inspirational ways to reach greater numbers of people in the world for the Lord. There never seemed to be a limit to what J.C. believed could be done. He shared with us a great vision for reaching the lost around the world.

J.C. was also a wonderful inspiration to many missionaries in getting their experiences in a presentable format to share with the brotherhood. We, certainly, have been inspired by reading many of these accounts. Thanks to both of you for helping share these stories with all of us.

NIRMAL MALIK, NEW DELHI, INDIA . . .

In brother Choate's good health, he courageously tried to teach us The Way from the Word. In his failing health, he tried to teach us to live The Way. In his final abode, he teaches us to leave off the world to go The Way...

PHILEMON RAJAH, MADURAI, INDIA . . .

Some 20 years back I met brother J.C. Choate, a gigantic-figured man with a child heart and very strong, dynamic dedication to evangelize the whole world with the only one true Gospel of Christ. I must thank brother P.R. Swamy for giving me a chance to meet such a wonderful Christian.

In India alone, because of brother J.C., through radio, TV, literature, Bible correspondence courses, hand bills, and books, many people speaking Tamil, Telugu, English, Hindi, Malayalam, Kannada, and Paite languages have obeyed the truth. Apart from these, he was instrumental in taking the Gospel through magazines and other printed materials to many countries in Africa and Asia.

To myself, along with Indian brothers like P.R. Swamy (Bangalore), Rajanayagam (Kangayam), Arjunan (Batlagundu), P.K. Varghese (Trivandrum), Joshua Gootam (Kakinada), and Sunny and Francis David



## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

(New Delhi), God gave the opportunity to work with brother J.C. and the "World Evangelism" team in mass media.

My family and I, and churches of Christ in Madurai and other cities and states in India will remember him and live to honor his vision of evangelism and to fulfill it.

P.K. VARGHESE, TRIVANANTHAPURAM, INDIA . . .

We are sorry that J.C. has been separated from this world, but we are glad that his pain and suffering are over now. All of his wonderful works will live forever. What a great work he has been doing for the last five decades: Many books, recordings, publications, tracts, Radio and TV programs. All of these will be memorials for him in many countries and in many languages. Sister Betty, may the Lord continue to bless you to be in His great service. You both are still our inspiration. Even though J.C. is away bodily, his suggestions and advices are with us. As co-workers in His kingdom we are fortunate to uphold those principles in all our respective fields.

P.R. SWAMY, BANGALORE, INDIA . . .

When I called Sister Betty and asked her how was J.C., she said he was weak and sleeping. This happened on Wednesday 30th Jan. When I called her again on 1st Feb, Sister said that he passed away.

India lost a great spiritual leader who initiated the radio and literature work and TV work, through which the whole of India had the opportunity to hear the Gospel. His service to our nation for four decades was unforgettable.

What he started, we will continue for the glory of God. This is the best way we can remember our beloved brother J.C. He was our unsung hero. He called me 100% evangelist. I will keep up that banner. We as a family remember his great service and sacrifice. India will remember this great worker.

KALUM GAMAGE, COLOMBO, SRI LANKA . . .

It was indeed a shock to hear about the passing away of Mr. J.C. Choate. Very sad for us, as on the 5th of February we had the Bible study at brother Paul's place, and Harold informed all about this sad news. Incidentally, we also understand that the funeral was held on this day. Even more sad was that we were holding the very book that he had written — **The Gospel of Christ**, which is so meaningful to us. In fact, our study is based from this valuable book.

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

We are indeed privileged for all the hard work put in by the late Mr. J. C. Choate, you and all the other Christian brethren, that we in this small island were able to benefit spiritually. (Note: This man obeyed the Gospel last week. He is a sub-manager in a German-owned rubber factory, managed by brother Harold Thomas, son-in-law of the late Reggie Gnanasundaram.)

S. RAJANAYAGAM, KANGAYAM, INDIA . . .

Our brother, J.C. is a great Christian. It is impossible to replace him, and his loss is irreparable not only to his family but also to the entire Christian community across the world. We are thankful that he has had the vision of reaching the millions through radio, TV and printed pages.

Our brother was a man of few words and LET US DO IT was his favourite phrase. This is the exact phrase he used when he entrusted me with several of my works. Still it is ringing in my ears.

The only comfort we can have now is that our brother is in a much and far better place. We all know and you, sister, know very well how he suffered and agonized in the recent weeks, and so he is in SAFE hands. We know that he often tells that we are in His hands, and he is now literally in *His* hands, which is unmatched.

ROBERT MARTIN, PACIFIC ISLANDS . . .

J.C. has been such a great example of a man of great courage and strength. Betty, you are such a great example of a living help mate in life that loves, care and stands so strong by her beloved partner in life in all he faces. You both mean so much to Mary and me and all that we have tried to do for the Lord over the last 34 years in the Pacific. We must say it is because of the influence of you two beloved soldiers of Christ. I know that I have said that many times, but I must say it always of you two beloved true hearted workers. Some missionaries are professional missionaries and then there are those who have the heart of a true missionary in loving, care and serving the Lord and people that they work among. We are so thankful to the Lord that you two have impacted and influenced our lives to have the heart of a true missionary to the people in the Pacific Islands.

We love you so much and you will just never know except in eternity the good that you and J.C. have done for mission work worldwide. The work that J.C. did while on this earth will live on through missionaries like me and many young missionaries that we have and are training.

In 1968 I first met brother J.C. Choate in New Delhi where I live with my family. I was working in a religious bookstore. Brother Choate had just arrived in Delhi with his family with the goal of planting the New Testament church in the capital city of India. In his visits to the bookstore, he asked me to come to his house on Sunday for worship, which I did. Afterwards, he asked me a few questions, as to what church I was member of, and how and when was I saved, etc. After listening to me, he showed me what the Bible teaches about the church and how to be saved. It didn't take long for me to see and believe the truth. From the time of my baptism, J.C. began to encourage me to teach others what I had learned. Soon, I was able to lead my family members and others to obey the truth.

In the years to follow, as the church grew and as the Choates continued to come to Delhi, we were like a big family. Each time they came, everyone rejoiced, but when they would leave, everyone would be saddened. When J.C. got sick and was unable to come anymore, everyone in the church here was earnestly praying to the Father in heaven for him. When it was announced that he had passed away, the whole church went into mourning. J.C. was very much loved and respected in Delhi.

Brother Choate was a faithful Christian, full of evangelistic zeal. He firmly believed in the power of the printed page. With his initiative, here in Delhi we printed countless number of books and tracts, some of which he himself had written and others were written by various members of the church in the States and by preachers here. He began publishing **The Bible Teacher**, a monthly magazine, which is now in its thirty-ninth year of printing. J.C. was so zealous for the spread of the Gospel that he would not want to miss any opportunity. His mind was always searching for ways to reach more people with the Gospel. When he learned in 1975 that radio was available in Sri Lanka (Ceylon at that time), for Gospel preaching beamed to India, he brought several men together to record lessons in different languages of the country. When he came to know that TV could be used in India, itself, he began to use that too. The Gospel of Christ was first and foremost on his mind.

As I look back to many years of working together with J.C. in the kingdom of our Lord, I am reminded of what the voice from heaven instructed John to pen about those who die in the Lord in Revelation 14:13. Yes, we know, he is no more with us on this earth, but he still speaks, and will continue to speak and lead many to obey the truth.

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

HAROLD AND LILANI THOMAS, SRI LANKA . . .

Brother Reggie taught me the way of the Truth for almost one year before I rendered obedience in 1986 and thereafter married Lilani. During these times I came to know how our late beloved brother J.C. had come to Sri Lanka over 40 years ago, and was instrumental in establishing the Lord's church in our beautiful island. One of the first converts had been our late dear brother Reggie.

Over the years J.C. and Betty had been constantly visiting Sri Lanka and continued teaching the "whole council of God" to the church. In doing this great vocation, he flooded us with all possible literature on the basics and the advanced pure Christian doctrine. Those valuable materials were of immense importance to the growing church and J.C. believed firmly that the investment in pure Christian doctrine is very profitable.

As years went on, it was Lilani and I who would go to the airport to get JC and Betty, and as usual he comes with more than 5 full suitcases of radio tapes and many types of Christian books. I felt so sorry for him and told him, "Let me carry these bags, JC." "Harold, don't even think about it," he told me. As I was in my mid-thirties I tried carrying those bags. Believe me, if I did, my arm would have come off!! (As I write this, my eyes are filled with tears.) This is how JC worked for the Lord. He stood for all the doctrinal truth as a barge!

One day I asked him, "J.C., can a man become an elder in the church, having one faithful child?" "There are many arguments on this issue, Harold, but as for me the Bible says to be an elder you must have believing children, and children means more than one. Till I die I will only follow the Bible."

To the church in Sri Lanka J.C. was the perfect mentor, and as the years went by, he was instrumental in helping to raise the necessary funds from the churches in USA to erect a church building in Colombo. We have faced many ups and downs but brother J.C. stood with us through all. His sickness and the eventual death of the physical body were a shock to us, but as all Christians know from the Truth, JC will have a place prepared for him by our Lord.

### **To JC, MY OTHER FATHER — Lilani**

How can I describe the confusion in a 6 year old girl's mind when her father introduced a big, tall white man as "Brother JC"? My confusion was, how can one's name be two letters in the alphabet? It was explained that the

## FROM THE HEART OF . . .

two letters were really his name and not his initials. Let me tell you all that it was not easy to comprehend.

As the years went by, the older I got, it was not difficult to see how hard it was for JC to be traveling to our part of the world, carrying so much of luggage, mainly books and tapes, but never was he without a smile and a joke. He sure did love his Lord with the strong belief in the risen Saviour and to follow our Lord's final command to go and tell the good news. If it was not for JC, our souls would have been damned, and that's a frightening thought.

When my husband Harold and I were in Zambia for two years, as we preparing for the trip, our first request went to JC for the address of the church and a contact over there — and our plea to visit with us, as I had not lived anywhere without my family. Well, folks, he did visit us and he stayed a week. How can I explain the joy I felt in my heart when I saw him at the airport? My own papa was represented through him. At that moment my father and JC were one.

In 1985 when I brought my papa to the US for heart surgery, after his recovery we went to Winona. JC, for the first time in my life, introduced me to a 25-pound water melon. What can I say? My love affair with food goes back as long as I can remember.

From 1968 till today, JC and Betty have been a part of our lives through our joys and tragedies, sickness and health. Now I am 44 years old, I have lost physically my papa on the 8th of June 2007 and JC on the 1st of February 2008. Now, by our Lord's grace, my husband Harold is continuing the work started by JC and my papa. Harold baptized his Bible student of 2 1/2 years on the 19th of April '08. This is his first baptism and it was so emotional for me, as I felt JC's and Papa's presence strongly.

I would like to place on record our gratitude to all the Christian brethren in different congregations in the US for the support you have given brother JC all these years, that has enabled us to know the Truth. God bless you all.

I stand to bear witness of the great sacrifice and the dedication of this one man. How hard it is to leave all comforts and safety of home and to come to our part of the world, and face the heat, mosquitoes, political unrest, different kinds of food and to sleep in different beds. Unless there is a fire inside to go out and reach the lost, it is a huge task to undertake for so many years, non stop.

Is it so surprising that he won the heart of a little girl of 6 who now, at 44, is still confused: how can one be named with two letters in the alphabet?

I love you, papa JC, and hope to see you soon. ☩

## *If You Could See Where I Have Gone*

**Author Unknown**

*If you could see where I have gone,*

*You'd know*

*The beauty of this place,*

*And how it feels to be at home,*

*To see the Savior's face,*

*To wake in peace and know no fear,*

*Just joy beyond compare.*

*While still on earth you miss me,*

*Yet you wouldn't want me there,*

*If you could see where I have gone.*

*If you could know where I have gone,*

*Could see the things I see,*

*You'd know I didn't go alone,*

*The Savior came with me.*

*I woke to find Him at my side,*

*Reaching out His hand:*

*"Hurry, son, you're going home*

*To a grand and glorious land.*

*Don't worry for the ones you love,*

*For I am with them too,*

*And don't you know*

*with you at home,*

*They'll long to be here soon?"*

*If you could see where I have gone,*

*And see what I've been shown,*

*You'd never know another fear,*

*Or ever feel alone.*

You'd marvel at the care of God,  
His hand on every life,  
And realize He really cares,  
And hears each broken sigh.  
You'd know He weeps when one is lost,  
His heart is filled with pain,  
But oh the joy when one comes home —  
Safe in His arms again.

If you could see where I have gone,  
Could stay awhile with me,  
Could share the things that  
God has made  
To grace eternity —  
But, no, you'd never want to leave,  
God's presence on His throne,  
You couldn't bear to walk earth's path,  
Once heaven was your home.

If you could see where I have gone,  
You'd know we'll meet some day,  
And though I'm parted from you now  
You'd know I'm just away.  
So thank you, loved ones,  
thank you, friends,  
For living for the Lord.  
For teaching me to love Him,  
To trust Him and His word.  
And now I'm safe at home with Him,  
Secure in every way,  
I'm waiting here at heaven's door,  
To greet you some sweet day.

## A Wonderful Dream . . . .

Normally I do not dream in my sleep at home, in India, or anywhere else. But last night I had a dream. It was an exciting dream, having to do with Betty and me and the work we are doing in Asia.

I dreamed that Betty and I were visiting friends in a particular congregation in the States. We knew that they wanted to make a contribution to the Lord's work, and we knew that it would amount to several thousand dollars. That was a wonderful thing to look forward to!

When the check was given, I couldn't help but slip a peek just as soon as I could. As I opened it, I saw the figure 10 and so I automatically concluded that it was a check for \$10,000, but as I looked closer, I saw that it was made out for \$100,000!

I could hardly believe my eyes! As I thought about this amount, I realized that we could get caught up on all of our printing debts and could answer "yes" to the many requests of brethren for much more printing in the countries in which we are presently working. Maybe we could print the concordance we have in mind in several languages. It was wonderful and thrilling to think on all of those possibilities!

But then I remembered that Betty is deeply concerned about the need to print a whole series of class materials for the church — a new project that will take a lot of money. This \$100,000 would only begin to get that work off the ground. **So, how to use the money was the big question . . . .**

Then — of all things — I woke up! It was only a dream! What a disappointment! How wonderful it would have been if the dream had been real!

I lay there thinking of all the good brethren we know who could easily make that dream come true. There are any number who could give \$1,000, \$10,000, or even \$100,000 to the literature, radio, and TV work, or to the class material project. There might even be a few who could give a million dollars! No, I am not dreaming when I say these things, and if there were those who would give in this way to these needs, just think of what could be done, of the people who could be influenced, of the souls that could be saved!

So, I am going to put my dream on hold, with the prayer that it will soon come to pass, and perhaps even far exceed any dream I have ever had. With God all things are possible; and even with my brethren who long to do God's will — even with them — things are possible that we have never imagined.

Yes, I pray that my dream will come true and I hope you will also pray to that end. To be honest with you, I believe that it will one day be a reality. ✧



# THERE IS NO TIME FOR APATHY IN CHURCHES OF CHRIST!

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



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

## GOSPEL BROADCASTING NETWORK

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



*"Current Issues from a Distinctly Christian Point of View"* — the theme of "Think" magazine. Phone: 866-313-6474; email: [mail@focuspress.org](mailto:mail@focuspress.org); Web site: [www.focuspress.org](http://www.focuspress.org). Brad Harrub, Jim Palmer and Dewayne Bryant offer faith-building seminars.



For pennies per household you can spread the Gospel in your city through this doctrinally-sound bi-monthly paper. It will even be personalized with the local church's address and news. Phone: 256-435-9356; email: [info@jvillecoc.org](mailto:info@jvillecoc.org); Web site: [www.HouseToHouse.com](http://www.HouseToHouse.com)



# SEARCH

OF THE LORD'S WAY

TELEVISION MINISTRY OF THE EDMOND CHURCH OF CHRIST  
P.O. BOX 371 FRANKLIN, OK 73744-0371

Mack Lyon's SEARCH TV programs are on 76 broadcast TV stations, 41 broadcast radio stations, 192 cable systems, and 5 satellite systems (Dish, GBN, American Life, DirecTV, and INSP). Benefit

from the lessons, support the preaching of the Gospel. Phone: 800-321-8633; email: [search@searchtv.org](mailto:search@searchtv.org); Web site: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

# GOSPEL ADVOCATE

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

to the Biblical message, with attention to current issues and needs in the church. You will benefit greatly from its monthly infusion of truth. Phone: 800-251-8446; Web site: [www.gospeladvocate.com](http://www.gospeladvocate.com)

Restoration Radio Network International, led by Roy Beasley, uses short-wave radio to reach people in English, French, Philippine dialects, Spanish and Arabic, with a well-organized "Apollos Follow-Up Program". Phone: 615 833-4771; Web site: [www.rrni.org](http://www.rrni.org). Help reach the masses through radio.

## Restoration Radio Network



PO Box 111633  
Nashville, TN 37222

Gospel Gazette Online is a 20-page, monthly Gospel magazine on the Internet, begun by Louis and Bonnie Rushmore in 1999. Thousands of articles, written by faithful Christians, are archived and selectable through the onsite search engine. GGO is free to users throughout the world, and it is visited regularly even in parts of the world that remain virtually inaccessible to missionaries. ([www.gospelgazette.com](http://www.gospelgazette.com))



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



has produced excellent DVDs on The Silencing of God in America and The Quran. Phone: 800-234-8558; Web site: [www.ApologeticsPress.org](http://www.ApologeticsPress.org).

## **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 60,000 to 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!). 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!

The world cannot get better without the guidance of God's Word. Please help us to have the funds to send **THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL** to those who are asking for it.

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

**THE VOICE OF TRUTH INTERNATIONAL  
P.O. 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**

**Web site: 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 (56 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 \$35 each month to help send this magazine to mission fields of the world, including the USA.

(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 \_\_\_\_\_



# **WHEN THE STORY IS TOLD**

**Betty Burton Choate**

**When the story is told and it's over,  
When there's nothing more to be said  
But a whispered unfolding of memories,  
Recalling the life of the dead,**

**When the voice that we loved has grown silent,  
When the smile that we cherished is still,  
When the heart that aroused us to action  
No longer responds to the will,**

**When our own hearts are hurting and broken,  
The pain like the edge of a knife,  
Oh let us recall, with the anguish,  
That the dead in the Lord wake to life!**

**He has gone — yes — to be with the Father  
Through the veil that now shadows the way —  
Dear God, pierce my darkness of sorrow  
With the light of eternity's day!**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

