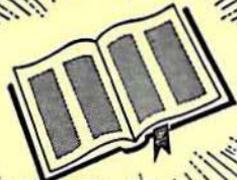
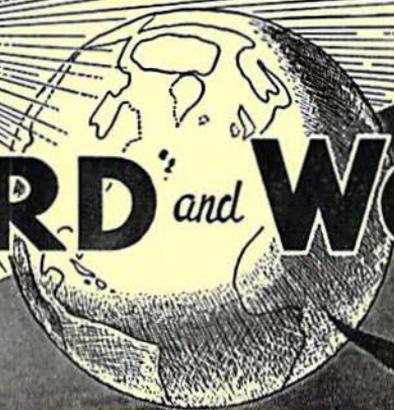


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JANUARY, 1992

GOD'S CHURCH AND OUR CHURCHES

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—Michael Griffiths

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SPECIAL OFFER

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THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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THEME:

GOD'S CHURCH AND OUR CHURCHES

Facing Some Hard Facts

Alex V. Wilson

To introduce this issue (and next month's also), let me share a letter that I wrote to about a dozen preachers. It will explain the burden upon my heart, and probably yours, if you belong to a church which is declining in quantity and/or quality.

Dear Brother in Christ,

"Mercy drops 'round us are falling, but for the showers we plead." In various ways the Lord is at work among our circle of congregations. And yet despite the mercy—drops we have to admit that spiritual drought and deadness are widespread and growing. We cannot evade hard facts like the closing of our remaining church in Jacksonville, Fla., and of four churches in the Louisville area (Rangeland, High View, Fern Creek, and Shawnee). All these have closed within a year's time, and some other congregations are struggling to survive.

We thank God for those churches among us which are growing, but they seem to be few and far between. As the number of churches dwindles, people are asking, "Are we an endangered species? Are we heading for extinction? Or can the downward spiral be stopped and reversed, by God's power?"

By His grace we have strengths and commendable features. There are many among us who "walk with Him in white" and will surely hear His "Well done" at the end. Our strengths are usually noticed most by "outsiders" who have recently joined us from mainline Churches of Christ or from other denominations, having become fed up with the deadness there! And yet such appreciative folks coming in at the entrance are outnumbered by disgruntled people flocking out the exit door of our churches.

Surely it would be irresponsible not to address these problems, and their causes, and possible solutions. It is hard and unpleasant to discuss publicly our weaknesses and decline—yet it seems imperative to do so, does it not? So I hope to have as a theme for 2-3 issues of *Word and Work* the question "Can We Grow Again?" or maybe "How Can We Grow Again?" (which seems a bit less negative... though someone suggested we really should ask, "Can these bones live again?").

Some may feel *Word and Work* is not the best forum for dealing with such questions (and with related issues which are bound to be brought up, such as our identity, our "distinctives," etc.). I would agree if these matters were being dealt with elsewhere. But the various Fellowship Weeks have not faced up fully to the problem of our decline (though Vernon Lawyer's message in Louisville last

August dealt with a few of these matters) . . . nor have the camp weeks, so far as I am aware. Where else can we "bite the bullet," then, if we are not to bury our heads in the sand and pretend that everything is OK?

I urge you then, along with several others, to think, pray, discuss with others if you wish, and then write something about these questions: Can We Grow Again? How? Why Have We Declined So Severely? What Are God's Remedies for Our Problems? You may write 100 words, or up to 1500 words or even more. (I reserve the right to condense if several writers cover the same ground.) After 2 issues with articles by those I invite to write, we shall throw open our pages to *anyone else who wishes to share and has something of value to say, including "laymen" and ladies*. Occasionally a person has helpful thoughts but feels that for one reason or another some readers are biased against him and will not consider his insights openmindedly; thus he wishes to remain anonymous. If you feel this way very strongly, I would consider running your article under a byline of "Name Withheld by Request." But as a general rule I agree with the wag who said, "To be anonymous is not synonymous with being pseudonymous—but it is equally pusillanimous."

Becoming serious again, I do urge you [*including our readers*] to write something *soon* and send it to us. Jot down your initial thoughts and feelings right now—in the next five minutes—and then stick those notes to your mirror so you'll keep thinking about all of this. (Maybe it will even provoke your spouse to contribute some ideas on the matter!) If you don't jot something down right NOW, you'll probably forget or never get around to writing—despite your best intentions. Your article is needed. "The life you save may be your own"—your own church's, that is!

Seeking Answers from Above

That was my letter. The next five articles are responses to it and our Questions/Answers column deals with these issues too, though it was written some time back. I strongly hope that others whom I wrote will still respond as well (some told me they've started writing but haven't finished yet), and that a number of other readers (yes, YOU!) will pray, think, discuss and write for us. Please do it soon.

Then, as a more positive, joyful matter, I urge you to follow up by writing about GOOD THINGS GOD IS DOING TODAY. It's wonderful to read about the good old days (see this month's article on "protracted meetings"), but since our Lord Jesus isn't dead, let's hear about His current events! If we get enough response, we'll make that capitalized phrase a theme for an entire issue. Or let's have a regular column with that designation, and encourage each other by sharing blessings, answers to prayer, growth, miracles, and other kinds of God's workings among us. And by "us" I do not refer only to the churches whose members make up most of our readership. We ask any of our readers to share testimonies of how Christ is doing good things for you and/or for your congregation.

Impossible Dream or Possible Vision?

Julius Hovan

Did you hear about the man who exclaimed, "I'd give my right arm to be ambidextrous"? Sounds like the impossible dream. When the editor of *Word and Work* requested this article he proposed several questions about our brotherhood of congregations: Can we grow again? How? What are God's remedies for our problems? I'd give my right arm to be able to relate the correct answers.

Why have so many of our churches closed their doors? Why are several struggling to stay alive? Why have some, even among the largest ones, shown dramatic decreases in attendance and souls won? The facts reveal that all this is true.

About twenty years ago when I was in public relations at Southeastern Christian College, I was privileged to visit these congregations which supported the school. I cannot think of any where I did not go at least once. Over the past thirty years, I have held revival meetings for many of them. (Some places more than once.) Thus I feel a closeness to them, concern for them and personal knowledge of their circumstances. Unfortunately it takes more than that to answer the questions which have been raised. Please allow me to suggest the following:

1. We often equated smallness with being spiritual. Doesn't the Bible say "few there be that walk in the narrow way"? I fear we whittled God down to our size, and great victories, progress and success were neither expected nor enjoyed. "Many are called but few are chosen" became "many are chilled and a few are frozen."

2. Denny Boultinghouse wrote: "Many define the cutting edge as where *they are working* for God, instead of where *God is working* through people. In reality, the cutting edge is anywhere God is allowed to work." (*Image*; Sept/Oct 1991). It seems true of almost every religious group that they believe the place God is really doing anything is where they are. "Since we are so doctrinally correct, we must be the MAIN place God is doing His work." If we thought others to be "a mile wide, but only an inch deep" in their relation to God—what were we? Did our supposed depth cause some to be unable to live in the stagnant water? Did our narrowness simply not have room for very many more?

3. It has been well said: "*Change is inevitable, but growth is intentional.*" A decrease in attendance and souls won has been true of various facets of the a cappella Churches of Christ. Did we stop wanting our congregations to grow? No. As society changed, and dramatically so, we did not realize we could change our *methods*, but maintain our *message*.

We strongly proclaimed the truth to empty seats. We forgot that part of being faithful included going and growing. Sowing the seed in the barn never produces desired results. The old methods in a modern culture will never get the job done.

4. David McKechnie wrote: "*You are only young once, but you can be immature indefinitely.*" A failure to disciple believers as

Paul admonished in 2 Timothy 2:2, has resulted in too many older believers who are spiritually immature. Since we reproduce in kind, the results have been tragic. At best, the growth has been stunted.

5. The overwhelming conclusion I have heard from concerned church members is regarding the matter of poor leadership. Our failure to train and teach means unprepared people get old enough to be elders or deacons and are appointed to those positions. Common problems among church leaders include: ignorance of simple Bible truths, unfaithful attendance at many meetings, being leaders in name only and often scripturally unqualified to serve. We can never be where leaders do not lead us.

"Most conflicts arise because of the difference in young and old thinking." (Phil Hatler) When we do not allow our younger adults to have a voice in the business of the church we fail to use a valuable resource. Churches go for decades and never get new elders or deacons. There is a need for fresher ideas and a look at things from another perspective.

What are our conclusions? Instead of asking God to be where we are, we better get where He is working. We must maintain the marvelous gospel message and the blessed hope, but make needed changes in methodology. Training new believers in the Word and prayer will pay rich dividends. Among these will be better qualified and prepared leaders. If present leaders do not feel well-qualified, there are many ways to learn to do the job. Some, due to age, infirmity or time restraints would do well to resign.

Because our mission is to be more than we have been and are, we must face the issues and seek to go forth in the power of Him who always leads in triumph!

A Thought-provoking Letter

J. Robert Ross

Dear Alex:

Thank you for the invitation to address the problems we face. Your letter and the needs of the churches deserve a thoughtful, prayerful response.

However, I don't feel that I have the moral or spiritual authority required to address these issues among the premill churches as a whole. For several years I did not work and worship among you, and even though I am now at Ebenezer, I think I am too much on the fringe to be very effective.

I will, however, say a word about our situation at Ebenezer. We are not about to close our doors, but we do need revival—no doubt about that. On the one hand, revival depends upon the moving of the Spirit of God, and like the wind, the Spirit blows when, where and howsoever He chooses. I am not responsible for the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, I am responsible for my own sin, my own lethargy, my own hardness of heart and my own grieving of the Spirit. And I am even responsible in some sense for the spiritual barriers that exist both in my own congregation and all churches.

God wants to bless us. He has ordained the church of Jesus Christ to be the means by which his grace is made available to a dying world. The question is: what do we need to do in order to become more receptive to what God wants to do for us and through us?

Of course we need to pray more—or perhaps more importantly, learn to pray better. Of course, we need stronger marriages and better teaching and direction for our children. Of course, we need to study the Bible. We need many things, but I think that if two things happened at Ebenezer, God would send us revival.

(1) We need an understanding and intentional acceptance of the requirements for church growth and how church growth would drastically alter our present church culture. I cannot explore this subject in detail, but suffice to say that there is lots of evidence that old, rural churches must undergo rather drastic, internal re-organization amounting to something like a cultural revolution if they are to effectively reach the people in their community who need Christ.

(2) We need a spirit of faith and hope that expects a miracle from God even though it would scare us as much as the miracles of Jesus frightened those who witnessed them (Luke 8:25, 37). This means thinking in terms of miracles or, as Robert Schuller says, "possibility thinking." Recently I asked the folk assembled on Sunday evening what they and others might notice different about Ebenezer if during the night God should come and do a miracle for us. When this miracle occurs, they thought that we might begin to see the following *evidence that God had touched us*:

—people would linger after services and would have a hard time breaking away to go home;

—the meetings would be rather noisy, especially with unruly children and crying babies;

—we would notice young wives getting pregnant and having babies;

—we would notice the cars of members often parked in the driveways of people in the community;

—there would be a lot of singing, lots of smiles, and spontaneous happenings in the worship services;

—we would spend our \$8,000 bank balance plus a special \$10,000 offering in one week on some kind of ministry;

—strangers would get curious about Ebenezer and would start asking questions or dropping by to see what was going on;

—one Sunday morning nobody would report any kind of problem and there would not even be a prayer to ask God for help, but instead, we would spend the entire service in praise and thanksgiving.

When God does a miracle at *your* church, what evidence will you see in the next week or month?

Decline and Recovery

Antoine Valdetero

That we have seen in some areas a decline and the closing of churches is a fact of recent history. I will try to deal with three areas of thought: Why we are declining—forces from without; why we are declining—forces from within; how we can get back on the growth path.

Outside Pressures

I believe that *from without* there are forces that have helped to bring about this decline. The "mega-church" concept of our day has a tremendous appeal. People feel, rightly or wrongly, that bigger is better. It is to be admitted that a large church can offer more than a small one. On the other hand, the small church offers something the larger church can never offer and that is the sense of belonging and family that small churches enjoy. People may go to a "mega-church" because of selfishness. One can blend in and do less and have their needs met rather than staying and working in a smaller situation. In other words, it's the "get more for less" attitude. Also, the TV concept of the church presents a church without problems. The leader is usually a very dynamic person who seems to have most or all of the answers. It should never be forgotten that wherever you have people you have problems, whether the church is large or small. However, I feel people move to these situations because they have a "fairy-tale" concept of things. Remember, dear reader, this is only one man's opinion.

Inside Problems

There may be more problems *from within* that cause people to leave. Very frankly, there are many people who were not truly converted and never committed. Like the seed on the stony ground, in the shallow soil they have no root. It should also be noted that many become weary because of the legalism that pervades in some churches. There is a subtle pride that sounds forth that becomes repulsive to those who want to grow spiritually. They search for a more spiritual atmosphere. It is unfortunate that there are those in leadership positions who equate change with compromise. There are other hymn books beside Vol. 2 of *Great Songs of the Church*; heartsongs can be sung in the worship without making us Pentecostal. People leave because they yearn for a more open and spiritual atmosphere in our services.

Some leave because they feel unwelcome because they may be different. The differences may be cultural, racial, or economic. These are problems that we must all deal with. Sad indeed is the church that cannot accept someone of a different race. Sad indeed is the church that is ashamed of some members whose economic plight is less fortunate than ours. This paragraph is not an accusation against any one church; it simply deals with situations that have come our way as a result of our diverse society.

The Positive Side

Enough of the negative—now for the positive! We can grow if we learn to love people just where they are. This was the great attraction that Jesus had. He accepted people where they were and led them on from there. Many feel that to accept people where they are is to condone their past. This isn't true! God's grace can go down to the depths of sin and lift up a man who responds to that grace. It should be remembered that we are not called to straighten out every problem in a person's life before he or she can become a Christian. The Gospel has the power to do that. Many years ago Mid McKnight said: "We should preach the truth in love and never denounce error with arrogance." That is still excellent advice. It might be well for us to remember that we should be interested in people conforming to Christ rather than to our group. To those of us who preach let us be reminded that we are to "preach the word" and be prepared for that task. Many years ago Bro. Boll shared with Bro. Ken Istre some excellent advice. He said preachers should remember that the most important moments of each week are those moments when we stand up to share the Word of God. Preachers, above all else, let us be sure that we have studied and prayed over the message we feel led to bring.

I am glad to share these general thoughts on a problem that needs to be addressed. May we all be driven to our knees and cry out to God for wisdom and courage to accomplish His will in our day.

God's Remedies for Our Problems

Don McGee

May I say something as a preface before offering my thoughts to the questions put forth. I am aware of the "disgruntled people flocking out the exit door of our churches" and am concerned to see such. However, I feel it must be pointed out that many of those same people will soon realize that they have erred in their judgment—it is NOT always better with those "other folks over there." Many of our brethren take our appreciation for God's grace (and other commendable features of our brotherhood) for granted, for that is all they know, having never been closely associated with others who may not be of our particular flavor. As wounds are healed which were inflicted at the time of their leaving, perhaps some will return. We certainly pray to this end.

That being said it must also be said that the exodus from the churches of our brotherhood is real and, I feel, the reasons are definitely justified, in some cases at least. I do not say this without thought, for it is indeed strong language. Yet, it is the fact of the matter, unfortunately. Loyalty to our brotherhood is an admirable quality but it should never usurp our loyalty to Jesus Christ nor should it prejudice our self-examination.

These concerns are not new. Several years ago a Task Force met to consider these and other relevant questions and I'm sure many were concerned even prior to that time.

I don't think the real problem lies in determining WHAT needs to be done. I feel we simply haven't applied corrective measures; and we haven't done that because it's hard and painful at times. It represents change, and takes EFFORT. With that in mind these are my thoughts on the matters set before us.

"Can we grow again?" To this I give a resounding and vibrant "Yes!" and the reason is that this work is not our own but God's. Because of this I'll never believe for a minute He has revoked His commission, tempered His power or reneged on His promise. My feeling is that congregations don't fail because of problems which can be laid in the Throne Room of Heaven, rather they fail because of problems which can be found in the hearts of God's people.

"Why have we declined so severely?" In general I feel our brotherhood has tried to bring God's will in line with our thinking instead of our thinking in line with God's will. Orthodoxy is indeed God's will but the methods we use are ours and are dictated by time, culture, society, etc. We have tried to say that "our" way of serving is the way God demands it be done, and this is not the case. This mind-set has prevented our churches from enjoying freedom and accommodation in worship—something other churches have which appeals to many people, even some of our own. Those young couples leaving us are not rebellious people looking for something charismatic or some other form of unorthodoxy—they are simply wanting to be free to worship without unnecessary man-made rules.

For example: why can't we sing for 30 full minutes building into a crescendo of praise just prior to communion or prayer? Why can't we sing a medley of songs without stopping in between, thus building on the joy of each moment of praise in song? Why can't we meet for 1 1/2 hours instead of just one? This would give us more time to sing and more time for the preacher to bring the word. I heard no one complain when the World Series went overtime and I just know that many of our people wouldn't mind going for an extra 30 minutes if the singing and preaching gave them something to take home with them.

"What are God's remedies for our problems?" Good question because it invites God's remedies—not ours. Perhaps the following may be considered:

1) Congregations should hold up God's mirror for a close look at themselves. They may see for the first time what God (and some of their departing members) see—a disgruntled, spoon-fed group of adolescent Christians with no will to work. I mean really work... work that takes a member beyond "assigned duties" such as song leading, serving the emblems, locking the building, filling the trays, teaching a class, etc. Work that is founded on the words of Isaiah, "Here am I. Send me!"

LEADERSHIP

2) Church leaders must change their way of thinking about leadership. Leadership has little to do with making "duty rosters," writing checks, heading the benevolence committee, etc. but it has everything to do with people and their families: their hopes, dreams, fears, their everyday lives. People need to see their leaders leading,

which most are not doing (probably because no one ever taught them how to do it). I will take the liberty to quote two of our brethren with whom I served on the Task Force. I think they have faced squarely at least one of the reasons for people leaving our brotherhood:

—Bro. Julius Hovan: “People are waiting for their men who have been delegated to lead TO LEAD.”

—Bro. Earl Mullins, Sr.: “Some young people want to work but are looking for ANYONE to step out and lead.”

Visitation by the elders is terribly lacking in many congregations. The preacher is expected to do most of it and some place this kind of duty above study and sermon preparation. How can an elder shepherd people he doesn't even know? How can an elder know people intimately without being with them in their own homes?

People are frustrated! Young couples in the process of raising families in this world are not being helped by their congregation's leadership. They want more of a congregation than simply a group of people who get together three times a week. They want that but they want more, and they are going where they can get it. They want application of God's word in regard to spiritual leadership—their elders never come to their homes to talk about their children, how the church can better provide assistance to them in raising their children. They want the church to be an important part of their family's daily life. They want church sponsored activities for their children and they don't mind paying for it with their contributions! Instead of seeing progress in these and other matters these young couples are met with the response that “. . . grandpa didn't have it—we don't need it . . . after all, we are here to preach the gospel and all that other stuff isn't needed . . .” We need to be reminded that though our Jesus was in very close communion with His Father, He was never so heavenly minded that He became of no earthly good.

3) As a further comment to the above we should see that, whether we would admit it or not, we have actually set up for ourselves certain of our brethren as “unquestionable” authorities on some matters of interpretation and even methodology. This feeling is quite obvious when a brother quotes his “authority figure” on a particular question and decries anyone who may dare to feel differently. I have actually witnessed some becoming so angry over what another brother feels and who he supports on the mission field that vile name-calling was resorted to in the name of “defending the faith.” And we have the brass to ask why people are leaving!

4) Preachers must stop doing what some are doing and start preaching! I cannot understand how a man can spend just a couple of hours “making” a sermon and expect to have something to offer people which they can lean on when their world falls apart on Monday morning. Yet many are doing just that. And we wonder why people are leaving! Two examples:

—In September of this year one member in a certain congregation (one of the most faithful in that group), near the end of the sermon wrote a note to someone sitting next to them with this question: “What is his point?”

—Recently another brother got into his pulpit and announced enthusiastically that the Lord had led him to speak on a topic of great importance and interest that night. After flailing away at a multiplicity of passages for 45 minutes, one was left with the same nagging question—“What was he trying to say?”

One may certainly not question the love these brethren have for our Lord but within minutes of the start of their sermons their people began questioning their diligence in preparation. This DOES NOT feed people and they will do one of two things: go some place where they may not agree with all that is said and done but where they are fed, or they may quit attending altogether. Both of these are unnecessary.

I look forward to reading what other brethren have to offer about these questions.

Leaders with Hearts of Servants

Glenn Baber

In my presence, Brother John Burgess once said, “Our churches will never grow until they have elders and deacons.” In the context of our discussion, what he meant was, leadership is a must for church growth. There may be a few converts here and there, but real significant growth, where people expand in spirituality and service, will only come where leadership leads. I agree! Brother Burgess was an elder and a preacher who was well respected in Central Louisiana. It would be rare indeed to find a believer among us who has not been richly blessed by his teaching.

My thinking is that we leaders must share a large part of the reason for decline among many congregations today. The lack of bold leadership may well result in tempting devoted Christians to seek other congregations where they can worship and serve. I believe I have seen it happen. One good speaker I heard put it this way, “Good leadership plus good fellowship equals good discipleship.”

If goals are not set, plans not made to reach these goals, activities not planned to meet fellowship needs—congregations decline. If teachers are left to “go on their own,” no training for service provided, no encouragement given, insufficient space and equipment provided, no shepherding of the flock—congregations decline.

To anyone interested, I recommend the message given by Brother Danny Miller at the Central Louisian Fellowship, on “The Progressive Church.” (Available from Don Stump, Rt 3, Taylorsville, Ky. 40071) Brother Miller points out that progressive is positive, not negative. It is having prayerfully planned goals and prayerfully planned ways of reaching those goals. (My definition) Our Lord Himself has given us the ultimate goals. There are two: Making Disciples and Teaching Disciples (Matt. 28:19). There are hundreds of functions that can be properly used to reach these goals. To quote Brother Antoine Valdetero, “Change does not mean compromise.”

I have been to places where children are taken to dark, dreary rooms, told Bible stories which have no chronological order, who must sit on chairs that are too large (or small), placed around an in-

adequate table and expected to sit very still and remember every Bible story. The same children spend five days a week in a well-lighted, colorfully decorated classroom, provided with slide projectors, video players, computers, etc. And we wonder why Sunday school declines? Then we wonder why parents seek greener pastures at other congregations?

There are many factors in the decline and closing of churches. The lack of good leadership is certainly a major one but not standing alone. Not all closing of church buildings is bad. Some have been because of good bold leadership. I think some merging of congregations in our brotherhood would be a wise move, provided the leadership is there to give guidance to greater spiritual growth and wider service. My experience has been, when believers grow spiritually and have good leadership, numerical growth follows.

At a Fellowship Week in Louisville, Brother Dennis Kaufman asked us to list time periods in Bible history when fellowship among God's people was at its best. Times such as entering the promised land; building of the wall and temple in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra; or the early days of the church. What conditions brought about such times? 1) a fresh new challenge; 2) a clarity of mission; 3) a committed army of faithful people. Remember, the wilderness wanderings were not only a result of lack of faith, but also a lack of clarity of mission.

It is this writer's belief that a vital need among us is men who are called and willing to shepherd the sheep. Men willing to lay down their lives for the sheep. For too many years we have hashed and re-hashed the qualifications of elders, looking for perfection. It is past time we look into the Word to see what shepherding really is and pray for men prepared to nurture. Men who have a servant heart. Please pray with me for this.

Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

There are churches which have not changed much in numbers in a hundred years and others which are on a gradual downward path. It saddens me to see people with so much truth making so little progress in reaching others. What can we do to get the churches to grow?

It would be nice to be able to offer on a couple of pages a magic answer to the problem suggested. A survey of the advertisements in a representative religious magazine would indicate that about the only need is a change in Sunday School literature or the hymnal in use, or possibly attendance at a given seminar. Now some *things* may be desirable and may confer benefit, but we must not suppose that the difference in growing and non-growing churches is somebody's filmstrip, or the publisher of the class material, or even the building in which the church meets. The problem is seldom (never?) that simple.

Generally speaking, church growth is good and desirable. Growth means numbers, and numbers mean people. It is certainly better to see more and more people being won to the Lord and strengthened in the faith than to see decline and atrophy. Christians deal with enormous and eternal issues, and it is still people who are saved or lost. So we can never afford to be indifferent to numerical growth.

On the other hand, we must not suppose that numerical growth is to be achieved at any cost. It is not to be our first concern, nor is its absence always a necessary sign of lazy people or of God's displeasure. Some church growth is to be attributed more to changing communities than anything else. Some church decline is almost inevitable in dying communities, however diligent or faithful the leaders or the people. What we are saying is that there are factors which affect both growth and decline which involve neither credit nor blame for God's people. It is not profitable for a church to be self-congratulatory for growth that comes from just being in the right place at the right time, and it is somewhat silly and futile to beat ourselves over the head for something that is not our fault. As the Lord oversees His church and rules in the affairs of men, He may see fit to use the church in different ways. In His ministry He chose not to do many mighty works at Nazareth, because of their unbelief (Matt. 13:58). There are times and conditions which make for hard going for His people. Much more important than growth is *faithfulness!* It is dangerous for people to be so committed to growth that they are willing to abandon God's ways or even His truth in order to achieve what seems to be growth. Some have.

Under many conditions, however, faithfulness on the part of God's people will result in growth of the church. It must be admitted that the problem in many cases involves the lack of faithfulness much more than it involves difficult or impossible situations. And this faithfulness includes more than carefulness to believe and practice certain Biblical doctrines; it includes faithfulness to be obedient to the great commission and to love the souls of men. In too many cases we have made a preacher responsible for church growth, and other church members feel that they have done their bit by supporting him financially and by being present in the church services once in a while. Except for those cases where outside factors are at work, I doubt that there is any noteworthy church growth until a significant part of the congregation gets concerned about bringing in visitors, going out of the way to talk to the unsaved concerning spiritual things, and in general fulfilling the role of witnesses to which the Lord has called all of us. It is significant that in the early church everyone felt the need for reaching people, and even persecution and scattering resulted in the spreading of the gospel (Acts 8:4). Maybe too few of us really believe in the "lostness" of the man out of Christ or in the great importance of the truths we claim to stand for. We have been infected with the idea that some kind of religion is enough and that maybe the unsaved will make it somehow.

The Laodicean type of Christianity is not very evangelistic. People whose lives are out of tune with the Lord are not very evangelistic, except as they become Pharisees building up a human program (cf. Matt. 23:15). David of old touched on one of the problems in Psalm 51. He was aware of his great sin and pleads with God for forgiveness and a clean heart. In vs. 12 - 13 we read: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." One of the great needs, then, is for the church as a whole to live on a much closer plane with the Lord. If we are not able to affect this, we may nevertheless see to our own lives and do what we can.

Of course there is need for using the various means at our disposal. Schools are valuable. Radio work needs to be supported. Much more needs to be done in the way of distributing good religious literature. Cottage meetings are often effective. Congregations ought to make the community aware of their presence. But the fact remains that until the members of a congregation in general get aroused to the need, most programs are limited. We must get back to the "every member" evangelism that characterized the early church.

Church Uses False Measures of Success

Les Cleaves

I asked a businessman the other day how things were going with his company, and he replied that he was just holding his own. When my natural response was one of concern, he answered, "Oh, don't get the wrong idea. I think we're doing great. Everyone else has gone out of business!" I guess success is relative. No individual sets out to be a failure. Every parent wants to be a successful parent. Every business wants to be successful. Churches also seek success.

There is no debate as to whether or not a church should be successful. The debate centers on the standard of success for a church. Is success installing a particular program? Is it committing a certain percentage of the budget to a project? Is success raising money? Is it building a new building? Is it a stately worship service or a rowdy one? Can a church claim success once it has specific long range goals? Is success being out of debt? Is success a certain number of conversions or a certain ratio between attendance, worship and Bible school? I have seen all these standards promulgated, and yet they seem to come up short.

With churches across the country looking for that one idea which will propel them to success, perhaps the time is ripe to consider a standard for success for a congregation of God's people.

I believe there is such a standard, and it emerges from the book of Acts in descriptions of the early church. In Acts 2:42 - 47 we see the disciples sharing their faith, giving of their possessions, continuing in doctrine, and serving others. We see this sharing and selflessness repeated again several times as in Acts 4:32 - 35. What would lead so many people to commit so fully to a faith? Why would members

undergo the sort of sacrifice and persecution to which they were subjected? Whatever the reason, it should become a standard of success for the church.

The standard I see is that the church truly made a difference in the lives of people. They saw something special in the church which could not be replaced by any human institution. They saw a quality of relationship with their Father and their fellow saints that drew them, sustained them and propelled them forward. It was a special relationship based on an understanding of what Christ did and what our relationship to Him should be.

We must ask ourselves if being a part of a local congregation really makes a difference in the lives of our members. Am I saying that programs, facilities and such are not important? No, I believe they have their place, just as the apostles provided a plan for the feeding of the Grecian widows in Acts 6. But there is a danger in focusing more and more on normal organizational concerns and less and less on what is really hitting home with the people in the pews and in our cities.

Our Bible classes, our worship, our outreach can become irrelevant in the lives of our members and the community. We must ask ourselves some hard questions. Are members able to handle life's problems and challenges better because their faith is strengthened through the church? Are their relationships better? Are they closer to Christ? Are they growing in their knowledge of God's Word?

The effect is devastating when churches fail to have a substantial impact on people. Young people see action with no heart. Adults see a church too busy to care. The heart of a congregation must be a genuine love for lost and hurting people.

Let me offer some very practical measurements. To what degree are elders involved in counseling, visiting, listening and caring? To what degree are they involved in the maintenance of various congregational works and ministries? To what extent are deacons truly using their abilities and experience to develop and lead the ministries of the church? To what extent are ministers involved in serving, mentoring and training others?

How sensitive are members to the needs of others and to one another's needs? How people-focused are our programs? Are they alive with volunteers or struggling? Is worship rich and rewarding?

Once there was a church whose leadership wanted it to grow and take its rightful place among the truly "successful churches." It added successful programs from its sister churches and exhorted its members to catch the dream. The only problem was that the leaders were deaf and blind to the very people they wanted to influence. Unheard from the pews in their building and from the streets of their city were many cries for help. Struggles went unheard.

One wonders if the goal to be one of the "successful" churches is the right goal or whether or not a better, more noble goal is to resolve to make a difference in the faith of those who are entrusted to us. I suspect Jesus' message is that the path to greatness and success as a church is first to serve.

—Christian Chronicle

WHO ARE WE?

John Greenlee

Who are we? We are the fellowship of the flawed. The company of the crippled. The walking wounded. We are the imperfect, and the incomplete. We're strugglers and stumblers. We are awkward people who have to hold each other up. Quaint as the word may sound to you, we acknowledge that we are sinners.

But we're other things too. We're becomers. We are people who are on the way. People with a real direction and purpose. And we're free people cut loose from the ties of this world. We are the people of the Reality.

We are real people. Human beings, who got tired of trying to kid ourselves or each other, of having to keep up a mask, of trying to impress other people. So we gave up on all the fake macho, the emptiness and meaninglessness of what the world called "success." We got fed up with all the plastic, surface appearances and the baloney about always being smart or "with it." We were suffocating behind the masks we were wearing. We let our false faces fall off. We gave up trying to "keep up" just for the sake of keeping up. Especially since we discovered that the people we were keeping up with weren't really going anywhere. We got angry about having the world set the pace, determine our goals, and measure our lives by their standards.

We live as honestly as we know how with our failures and our pain because we no longer have to pretend that they aren't there. We don't wallow in our mistakes or try to deny them either. It's OK to be who we are.

Losers, you say? We're losers? No, that's what we're not. We have nothing left to lose. We didn't lose anything except what we freely decided to give away. It is true that we don't have a big hang-up about winning all the time. But that's part of the pitch we got sick of. We found out that a lot of people talk about being winners only because they've used and manipulated and sometimes hurt other people in order to get their own way. We found out too that people who insist on being winners use a lot of masks and games to hide their greed, vanity, self-centeredness, and their obsession with "things." It's true that we did lose the phony stuff. But it wasn't really any loss at all.

Our symbol? Yes, we have one. It's not much to look at. At least it doesn't mean much to people who see it only at a distance. It's a rough piece of carpentry. Two pieces of lumber fastened together at right angles. A cross.

Our leader? Well, he's the one on the cross, the one with his hands and feet torn by nails. No, he isn't Mr. Success, or Mr. P.R., or even Mr. Super Salesman. In fact, he's an unlikely candidate for leadership, if you're thinking of leadership in terms of a person who pushes, shoves, and fakes you out of position. His name? Well, he's often called Suffering Servant. Some name for a big shot, I guess.

You're not interested? I can't say I blame you. It's a pretty radical kind of company. Never did have much crowd appeal. Don't apologize. I know exactly how you feel. You have to keep on getting and running and keeping up and repairing your mask.

By the way, you asked us a while ago who we are. Let me ask you . . . Who are you? I mean, when your mask falls off, who are you? Who are you when you are all alone? No . . . really, I didn't mean to offend you. Just wondered if you'd ever asked yourself about it.

Alright. I'll tell you more plainly who we are. We are the fellowship of those who believe in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God and who have His gracious love as our hope. We believe in each other and try as best we can to give our love, patience, and acceptance to strengthen and help each other. We are called the church, the body of Christ. As we said, we are the fellowship of the flawed . . . the company of the crippled . . . believers and becomeers.

—From *Wineskins* (now entitled *Metamorphosis*)
P.O. Box 40222, Grand Junction, Col. 81504

The BIG Deal of a Small Church

J. Grant Swank, Jr.

In the North American culture, big is better. Yet when one studies the Bible, one discovers that God has appreciated the small when it is of quality. A small number made it safely in the Ark. Gideon used a comparatively small militia. A small boy named David overcame the looming giant Goliath. In the New Testament there is a small barn housing a new-born babe, and there is the out-of-the-way hamlet of Nazareth.

Nevertheless, for those brought up on the American value system and geared for success, it is difficult to understand what God can accomplish with a few dedicated believers. The spiritual leader still hankers to construct his own Crystal Cathedral. To live with five small stones, a humble barn or a carpenter's shop on the other side of the tracks is not fashionable in today's ecclesiastical structure.

Yet some have been led by the Lord to work in a corner of the vineyard off the beaten path. Some of us have been put to work in the small church. Some have chafed at this calling; some have even left the field for secular moorings. Others have hung their heads in embarrassment, attempting not to let their whereabouts be known. But others of us have stumbled upon a rare treasure, the intimacy of the little flock.

After serving averaged-sized Protestant congregations, I now find that the Lord has led my family of five to a little church. It has been a struggling congregation for years, and even with some signs of growth in the three years since we arrived, it remains a cozy community of the faithful.

It can be fulfilling and enriching to minister to the few, while at the same time refusing to be content with remaining small. The balancing act comes by receiving the situation as coming from God

while still praying for more souls to come into the kingdom, and working to that end without sending everyone into frenzy.

One of the factors which helps us in our small congregation is the refusal to become discouraged. *We are always reminding ourselves of the value of each person.* We do not have to have a packed house to have the blessing of God in our midst. Jesus stated that he would meet wherever two or three gathered in his name.

Another factor that nourishes the small church is *the closeness sensed* by brothers and sisters in Christ who pull together. Each knows that he or she is strategically significant. No one is a "left-over," engaging in a religious spectator sport by hanging around the periphery. Each believer is integral to the work and therefore must put all into the witness of the congregation.

Still another dimension is *the power of unity in peace.* Cliques, divisions and factions cannot be tolerated. There simply is no room for such breaking down of the body of Christ. The numbers are few; consequently, the team must stick together and serve as one before their Lord.

Yet another contributing factor is *the informal worship surrounded by sincere reaching out* toward one another. No one is lost in the shuffle. Everyone is included in all things. There is no youth group that pushes out the senior citizens. There is no choir that nudges out the prayer and missions program. All segments of church life mesh together. All are in the Sunday school. Everyone is concerned about world missions. Recreation night is engaged in by every age. All-church picnics are looked forward to by every parishioner. Visits to the neighborhood convalescent home are a part of everyone's Christian, practical testimony to the aged. The smallness allows us to gather each Sunday noon in the church's downstairs hall for a fellowship meal.

The small church also enjoys *immediate concern for those in crisis.* When something unfortunate happens to one, all know about it within a short time.

Holiday times are especially rich periods for the united church family. For instance, New Year's eve has found us for the past several years opening up the spacious parsonage for all to come for fellowship. Then we simply walk across the parking lot to the sanctuary for midnight communion at the altar. When the new year has begun, we know that as an intertwined family of the Lord we are ready to face the challenges together.

In a small church *there rarely is a generation gap.* The facts of the situation push us together. I think particularly of the few teens who wanted a night for ping-pong. At once a retired gentleman volunteered to oversee the activity. Within a few weeks, the teens were welcoming all ages to the weekly tournaments, discovering that interest rather than age brings people together or separates them.

We have also learned that *we must all pray for our church.* The matter must not be relegated to the pastor and a few faithful ones. Just as important, *everyone is needed in giving their tithes.* If anyone slacks off, we may not have enough to pay the next light bill. Yet when all remain faithful, God remains faithful as well.

Naturally, we want more and more of our friends to experience salvation through Christ, and so see His church grow. Nevertheless, not all that is being done by divine grace can be charted, graphed or counted on the fingers. And that heavenly work must be remembered as well; otherwise, we are in danger of yielding ground in discouragement to the enemy of our souls. We are also in danger of receiving God's blessing in the small church while not recognizing it for what it is—the actual hand of the Lord. We could spend our time straining for that which has not yet come—a huge church membership—while missing out on the small treasures of five small stones he has placed within our hands.

—From *The Christian Ministry*

The Little Flock of Jesus

John R. W. Stott

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

Some people concentrate so much on the personal invitations of Jesus that they neglect His teaching about the Church. Yet it is plain that He has come not only to seek and to save one lost sheep here and another there, but to unite them into one flock, which in my text He designated a "little flock."

I. The Nature of the Church

Many metaphors are used in the New Testament to illustrate various aspects of the Church, and three of them are found here.

(a) *The Flock*. Because the Israelites were nomads in the wilderness and remained a pastoral community in the Promised Land, it was natural for them to think of themselves as the flock of God: "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou who leadest Joseph like a flock" (*Psalms* 80:1). Jesus took up the metaphor, applying it to Himself and His Church. He was the Good Shepherd, who had come to lay down His life for the sheep. He would feed them with living bread, and shield them from the ravenous wolves. Moreover, He had "other sheep," not of the Jewish fold but Gentiles lost in the wilderness; these too He would bring into one flock under one Shepherd.

(b) *The Family*. Addressing His "little flock," Jesus referred to "your Father's good pleasure." So the sheep of His flock were the children of the Father's family. It is well known that Jesus permitted His followers to refer to God by the same title which He used, telling them in prayer to say "Our Father." He urged them to believe that their Heavenly Father loved and cared for them. He taught, further, that those who have God for their Father are themselves brothers and sisters; "and you are all brethren" (*Matt.* 23:8, 9).

(c) *The Kingdom*. The little flock were assured that it was their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom. This kingdom, which is a gift of God, is not a territorial dominion, but the Heavenly

Father's beneficent rule. To be "given," to "receive," and to "enter" the kingdom are synonymous expressions for submitting to the reign of God in our lives and enjoying its benefits. Thus God through Christ is the King as well as the Shepherd and Father of His people.

This then is the nature of the Christian Church. It is not a man-made institution or formal organization, but a divine society, a personal fellowship of God's people. It is God's flock, God's family, God's kingdom.

II. Membership of the Church

Since the Church is God's flock, family and kingdom, it is plain that membership of the Church depends on relationship to Christ.

(a) *The only way to enter God's flock is to be found by the Shepherd.* By nature we are not in the flock of Christ at all, but sheep who have gone astray and are lost. We cannot even find our own way into the flock. So the Good Shepherd came from heaven to seek and to save lost sheep, and gave His life for them. Today He continues His search. Only when He finds us are we added to His little flock.

(b) *The only way to enter God's family is to be born of God.* Not all are members of the family of God. The universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man were favorite doctrines of an earlier liberalism; they are not taught in Scripture. True, in a vague and general sense God is the Father of all since He is the creator of all, and all are His offspring since they derive their physical existence from Him. Further, all may be said to be blood brothers, sharing in a common humanity, since God has made of one blood all nations to dwell on the earth. But this is not the sense in which the New Testament writers commonly speak of the family of God. The father-child relationship is reserved for the intimacy of communion which exists between God and His regenerate people. "Brethren" is similarly a title for Christians who enjoy a peculiar fellowship with one another as God's children and are drawn to each other by brotherly love. The only way to enter the family of God is by being born from above by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(c) *The only way to enter God's kingdom is to submit to the King.* Jesus did not regard everybody as being in the kingdom of God. He affirmed that unless men are converted, become like little children, and are born again, they cannot enter into the Kingdom at all. Since it was Jesus who came to inaugurate God's kingdom, entry into the Kingdom depends on our relationship to Christ.

All this is of great importance, because there is much confusion today about the nature of the Christian Church and how to enter it. I do not deny that the Church of Jesus Christ is visible on earth in local congregations of worshipping people, or that the means of entry into the visible church is baptism. Nevertheless, the overwhelming teaching of Jesus Christ is the membership of His Church depends not on the external ordinance of baptism, but on a personal, spiritual and inward relationship to Himself.

III. The Suffering of the Church

Our Lord's words to His followers were "Fear not, little flock," and there is no sense in telling people not to be afraid if they have no cause for fear. The words presuppose that the Church has enemies, bent on its destruction. Sheep in the flock of Jesus are threatened by a pack of fierce and ravenous wolves.

It is the devil who is the implacable enemy of the Christian Church. If we doubt this, we need to read the Book of Revelation which lifts the veil hiding the unseen conflict between God and the devil, the Lamb and the dragon, the world and the Church. By persecution, by enticement into sin, and by the insinuation of error the devil is seeking to destroy the Church of God.

There can be little doubt that this is the reason why Jesus called them a "little flock." He seems to have known that like the godly remnant in the Old Testament, His Church would be a minority movement, worshipping and witnessing in the midst of an adulterous and sinful generation. There would be *many* on the broad road that leads to destruction, He said, but, as for the narrow gate which leads to life, "*few* there be who find it." It is true that according to the Parable of the Mustard Seed, the kingdom of God would develop from tiny beginnings, and this has happened in the context of world history. But at any one time the true flock of Jesus has been a "little flock." All over the world, in the midst of so much nominal attachment to the Church, the little flock of Jesus may be found. The reason for its littleness is that the authentic New Testament message is unpopular, because it humbles the sinner as a rebel under the wrath of God. It speaks of sin, judgement and hell, and tells us that our only hope of salvation is in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. There is nothing so galling to the proud hearts of men as to be told that they are helpless, undeserving sinners. The gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified is still folly to the wise and a stumbling block to the mighty.

IV. The Safety of the Church

Although the little flock of Jesus has *grounds* for fear, it has no *need* for fear, as Jesus says to it: "Fear not, little flock." This is because the Church is not ours but God's. It is He who is our Shepherd, our Father and our King, and it is our Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom. The Church's safety lies in the will and pleasure of God. If it is His good pleasure to give us the kingdom, all the powers of hell can neither keep nor take it from us, nor thwart the fulfilment of His design. We need fear neither the hatred and persecution of the world, nor the venom of the devil, nor the scorn of the nominal Church. True, the Church is only a little flock of defenceless sheep, exposed to hungry and savage wolves, but the Good Shepherd gives them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of His hand. The citizens of God's kingdom are no match in themselves against the wiles of the devil, but the kingdom of God is a mighty kingdom, and of it there shall be no end.

Does the Church Have Anything To Do with GOD

J. Robert Ross

One beautiful summer day I stopped on an Indiana highway to pick up a young hitchhiker. When he got into the car, I noticed that he had a cross hanging around his neck. So I said to him, "You must be one of my brothers in Christ."

He replied, "Well, I don't belong to any denomination, and I don't go to church, but I like God a lot."

I think I knew what he meant. When I see hypocrisy, racism, sexism, snobbery, and bickering in the churches, I wonder if they are a help or a hindrance to God. As a French atheist put it, "I could receive Christ if he didn't bring his leprous bride with him."

I imagine that young hitchhiker had some of the same reservations about the church. But that raises the question of whether it is possible to receive Christ without getting involved with the church. In order to answer that question, we first need to be clear about what we mean by the word "church." If it means "Christendom," that includes a lot of territory, a lot of which I cannot personally approve. I believe in Jesus, the Son of God, but I do not believe in Christendom.

Or perhaps "church" refers to any one or more of many sects and denominations. But I do not accept any particular sect's claim to have a monopoly on the truth or on Christ. If I have to join a particular sect to be a Christian, please count me out. I may decide to join your group, but please do not tell me it is mandatory in order to please Christ.

On the other hand, "church" can mean the community of people who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and seek to follow Him. In this sense the church is composed of all those who believe in Christ and have by faith in Him become children of God and thereby brothers and sisters one or another. When God adopts us into His family, He does not ask us if we want the other children. We cannot have God as our Father without having His children as our brothers and sisters; we cannot have God as our Father without having the church as our mother.

As a member of this wonderful, if often perverse, family I have the privilege of sharing mutual concerns, loving and being loved. The church is a family affair, but a family to which I owe certain responsibilities. Members of the church, the body of Christ, are members one of another. "God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it" (1 Cor. 12:24 - 26, NIV).

Therefore, when I accept Christ, I am not given an option about accepting the church. I know Christ only in and through the members of His body. I do not endorse every project or activity of the body. Members sometimes get sick, sometimes they smell, sometimes they need a bath. But these members belong to me and I to them through our baptism into Christ. I do not accept the status quo in the body. It can grow. It ought to grow. And I need to grow along with it.

My essential solidarity with the church means, first, that all of us are one in our need. We are all sinners. We are in the church because we seek mercy. If I find a sinless church, hopefully I will have the good sense to stay away and not mess it up. Second, my membership in the church means that however bad the church is, it is the place where Jesus is confessed, remembered and proclaimed as Lord. Not everything about the church edifies me, but where else can I go to find the Word of Life?

Jesus did not come to entertain us or to free us from pain in this world. He does want to purify us, and He does that precisely through the struggle of learning to love one another. In the church we often seem to hate, and fight, and hurt and kill one another. It just means that we will never learn to love one another as we ought without Him who is Love Himself teaching us how much He loves us.

I too, "like God a lot," but in order to get very close to Him I have to stay close to His church.

Protracted Meetings in the Early 1900's

Part One

Florence Olmstead Collins

(An outstanding preacher in the early and middle decades of this century was Harold L. Olmstead. He wrote often for this magazine. He also was one of the major founders of Southeastern Christian College. But he is best remembered as the beloved preacher of the Gallatin, Tenn. Church of Christ where he preached fulltime from 1931 - 1958, when he went to be with the Lord.

Last year his daughter, Florence O. Collins, wrote a colorful, folksy book about several generations of her family. Entitled *The Glory of the Imperfect*, it is available from Word and Work for \$6.95 (in Kentucky add 42¢ sales tax). It contains 145 pages. Part of one chapter from the book follows, used by permission. "Munna" was Florence's mother.)

Protracted church meetings were important events in the rural South in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most farmers and their families planned their summers around the dates of the "big meetin'." City dwellers visited their country relatives at this time so they could attend these religious revivals. Housewives planned in advance to have special food . . . and plenty of it.

Protracted meetings were not only times of spiritual awakening, but socializing. Many a romance was sparked by a young man taking a girl home after services. Longlasting, stable marriages have been spawned in church houses during revivals.

Today when the term "protracted meeting" is used, someone usually asks, "Why did they call revivals 'protracted meetings'?" The answer is easy—it was because they were protracted. The first ones I recall continued for three weeks. Occasionally, the meeting was extended beyond the scheduled time if interest and attendance were still high. Pa never did this. Rather than excessively tire them, he preferred to leave an enthusiastic congregation to continue their own teaching and evangelizing. Besides, he often had another revival planned for the next week.

Beginning in the mid-twenties, Pa held meetings of about two weeks duration. This allowed him to preach at more locations. Because of changing customs, by 1950 revivals conducted for a single congregation were shortened to one week. At that time, Pa preferred it to be a concentrated Bible study.

Until 1940, however, Pa wouldn't make a contract to be regular pulpit minister for a congregation unless he was given three months of the year off for evangelizing. Having been successful at holding meetings in brush arbors and establishing new churches, he continued to enjoy the thrill of the spiritual birth of "new creatures in Christ."

In those days, an evangelist was a respected person. Literally, the word means "a messenger of good news." What better news could there be than that God, the Creator, loves you, and you can receive full benefit of that love by trusting Jesus Christ? This message was the heart of Pa's sermons. He believed Jesus' words, "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He depended on this promised power of the cross to draw his listeners, so preached the good news of Christ's substitutionary death.

A hallmark of Pa's sermons on all occasions was that they never focused against any other religion or against rituals and practices of Christians or professed Christians. Pa spoke about what he believed, not about what others believed. He thought a sermon could not be Christ-centered when it concentrated on human tenets and observances. He also believed that trying to destroy what is sacred to people won't bring them to faith in the one true God; helping them to know and accept Jesus Christ will. Only God and His word can destroy false gods.

Another characteristic of Pa's sermons was that they contained no remark—even an aside remark—which ridiculed another person's dogma. Writers of the New Testament, being inspired by the Holy Spirit, when exposing errors of doctrine of Jews who didn't accept Christ, or even of pagans, never scoffed at them. During a time when some men refused to speak to a congregation that held doctrines different from theirs, Pa preached Christ wherever he was given the opportunity. Had he lived in Paul's day, he, too, would have appeared on Mars Hill with the "sages" of the pagan world and delivered the message of the cross to them.

Well-meaning, devoted and uninformed preachers sometimes deride the beliefs of others. Those listeners who blindly accept their words see them as holy shepherds; others clearly see their lack of humility; still others, who know the facts about the beliefs that are

being inaccurately jeered, see them with egg on their faces. No person knows exactly what another believes.

When I had been a Christian for only a few years, Pa taught me how harmful such snobbery can be to God's purposes. I was a teenager, and riding with a carfull of friends one evening when we saw a tent, and under it pews and many people. We stopped on the roadside to watch. Some of the people sang, some rolled on the ground, and, with uplifted arms, some shouted praises. The loudest was the man standing in front encouraging the frenzy. We disrespectfully watched and giggled.

On returning home, with uproarious laughter, I told my parents about the scene. Then I received the scolding of my life. Pa exclaimed, "Never make fun of someone else's religion! That may be the only way those people know how to worship. They know they need to worship. They are being exposed to the Bible. Good may be done there. God knows their hearts—we don't!"

Emphasizing the truth of God's word, and the importance of an individual's faith in it, Pa often spoke on the theme, "What do *you* think of *Christ*, whose Son is he?" He believed that it is impossible to be neutral about Jesus Christ, and that not to accept him is to reject him. But no one can believe for someone else. Each of us must open his own sovereign heart.

Pa didn't keep account of the number of converts during meetings when he preached. But among Munna's keepsakes was a notice prepared for the Franklin, Kentucky newspaper. It states, "On the fourth Sunday of August, H. L. Olmstead began a meeting at Locust Grove and closed on Sept. 5, at the water, with 44 additions from all sources—34 by baptisms. Many of these were well-matured in years. The Lord will amply reward him for all service rendered."

When scheduling summer revivals Pa tried to plan no more than two without a few days between. This gave him opportunity to come to Granny's to rest and see his family. Protracted meetings were strenuous. Farms and farm animals don't wait for their tenders to take two weeks off to attend meetings. Therefore, few men regularly attended the morning services. But the preacher delivered a message every morning to an audience composed mainly of women. Then he and the visiting song leader were expected to eat two large meals before returning for the evening service. They also visited all those in the community who were considered to be "prospects" for conversion. The night meeting, including singing, sermon and fellowship lasted about two hours. Pa enjoyed this exhausting agenda—except for the steady diet of chicken. Many people never knew of his dislike of chicken, because he ate it without comment. Pa had a good appetite.

There were no cooling systems in country churches before the mid-thirties. Hand-powered cardboard advertising fans were the only cooling devices. Open windows were needed not only for cooling, but for the overflow crowd who sat in cars, wagons and buggies outside listening to the sermon. Pa needed no public address system.

Pa dressed for revivals in a business suit, white shirt and solid black necktie. Munna thought the audience might be distracted by a bright, figured tie, or think it too showy for a preacher. In the 30's, when Pa bought a robin's-egg-blue car and received no criticism, Munna started buying him colorful, but subdued-patterned neckties. In earlier years, Pa wore shirts with separate stiff collars which were fastened to the shirt neckband by collar buttons designed for that purpose. This allowed him to keep looking fresh and neat by changing collars two or three times a day without changing shirts.

[To be concluded next month]

When Winning Means Losing

Jim Carter

Clovis Chappell, a minister from a century back, used to tell the story of two paddleboats. They left Memphis about the same time, traveling down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. As they traveled side by side, sailors from one vessel made a few remarks about the snail's pace of the other.

Words were exchanged. Challenges were made. And the race began. Competition became vicious as the two boats roared through the Deep South.

One boat began falling behind. Not enough fuel. There had been plenty of coal for the trip, but not enough for a race. As the boat dropped back, an enterprising young sailor took some of the ship's cargo and tossed it into the ovens. When the sailors saw that the supplies burned as well as the coal, they fueled their boat with the material they had been assigned to transport. They ended up winning the race, but burned their cargo.

Do you think that churches can sometimes get caught up in something similar to that? Inappropriate congregational pride is not an unusual thing. Nor is confusion about the authentic purpose of the church. Religion can get pretty competitive at times. What we perceive as silent taunts from other ships that seem to be moving through the same waters at a faster clip can stir up fiery juices in overly ambitious seamen. Sometimes programs do get pushed right over the top of people. Priority is given to power and speed and to smooth sailing, whatever it takes. Valuable human cargo has been entrusted to the church. How much are we willing to sacrifice just to look good in our own eyes? Frankly, I have seen it come down to something like that.

But, what a wonderful thing it was last Sunday to see some of the "precious cargo" the Lord has entrusted to this congregation respond obediently to Him. Seven Asian young people, borne along on their spiritual journey for several years now by this church, publicly proclaimed Jesus as their Savior and were baptized into the Father's family of faith. I'm thinking of at least three things this experience ought to say to all of us.

Surely we should be grateful about it. The process by which spiritual fruit is produced is marvelous to behold. The seed is life-

giving, dynamic and powerful when received in honest hearts (we are all, remember, to become like little children). It always germinates into new life. Thank you, Father, that these young folks have heard, received and responded to your word.

We should be encouraged by it. Who is personally responsible for bringing this cargo aboard and for its safe passage thus far? Well, of course some have been more directly involved than others, but everybody on this boat or anyone who has helped to keep this boat afloat has played some part. God has used all His vessels. So take heart, rejoice, be of good cheer. In other words, 1 Corinthians 15:58.

We should be challenged. This cargo we are talking about is precious alright but also young, vulnerable and in need of much nurturing. Some of these, due to circumstances in their everyday environment are especially vulnerable. How they need to be handled with ongoing care and prayer. We should also be challenged in just knowing that there are so many additional cargo possibilities everywhere, all around us, just waiting on the dock. All types of potential transportees, young, old, rich, poor, east, west, boy, girl. Our Captain cares nothing about which of His boats travels fastest or gets there first. He cares very much about having us care for and deliver His cargo to its intended destination.

—Bulletin of Brookvalley Church, Atlanta

Major Lessons from Minor Prophets

COMPLAINING TO GOD

Ernest. E. Lyon

(Habakkuk 1:1 - 2:1; read the passage first)

The opening verse in this short and very profitable prophetic book tells us all we know about the author, his name and that he calls himself a prophet. It was a rare thing in the prophetic books for the writer to call himself this; he could have been a "professional" prophet, earning his living by prophesying in the Temple or court. This is not certain, but he obviously was recognized as one having the prophetic gift or he would not have referred to himself by this title.

Habakkuk has two complaints to, or arguments with, God in the first chapter, the second being brought about by God's answer to the first complaint. Complaint number one is in verses two through four and the reply of God is in verses five through eleven. The problem to Habakkuk was that God was ignoring violence and oppression in Israel and not answering when the prophet asked about it. Look at the list he felt God should be doing something about—violence, injustice, wrong, destruction, violence (the second reference), strife, conflict, the law is paralyzed, justice never prevails, the wicked hem in the righteous, justice is perverted. (We are using the NIV.) It is little wonder, then, if one does not understand God's ways, that one could not figure out why the Lord (Yahweh) did not seem to listen to the report of these evils. This is a similar lack of understanding

to that which puzzled Job long before that. God did not give a direct answer to Job, but simply pointed out to him His greatness that made Job's complaint foolish. Neither did He give a direct answer to Habakkuk in verses five through eleven.

The answer the Lord gave to Habakkuk was so different from what human wisdom would give that it is not strange that Habakkuk was startled. God realized that Habakkuk would not understand, so He prefaced His answer by pointing out to Habakkuk that He was going to do something in Habakkuk's day that he would not believe "even if (he) were told." The startling answer was that He was raising up a "ruthless and impetuous" people to take over the whole earth, including Israel, of course. He then gives a detailed list of how evil the Babylonians (Chaldeans) would be, how effective they would be as a fighting force and that they would be doing all this to "promote their own honor," not God's honor!

The Lord gave such a detailed description of this evil power and then of its success, that it made an even greater problem for Habakkuk. His second complaint is much longer than his first one, for it extends from verse twelve through the first verse of the second chapter. The Lord had described the Chaldeans in such a way as to show Habakkuk that He knew that the Chaldeans (Babylonians) were worse than the Israelite—even in the face of the sins of the Israelites. How could He, then, use them to chastise Israel?

Do not condemn Habakkuk for this attitude. Christians throughout the centuries have often felt that way. Look over the past 2,000 years and you will find many examples of God using extremely bad nations and rulers to chastise people that needed it. Think in our own century about the wars that we have had, most of them caused by very evil nations. One that stands out vividly in my memory was in a Sunday School class I was visiting during World War II. When this subject came up, I mentioned that God could well be using Hitler to chastise many of His people in the world who had grown far from the ways He approved. The teacher and the whole class except for one man felt that I was being ridiculous. They felt that God could not possibly use such an evil person to accomplish something He wanted done.

Now let us look at how Habakkuk brings his complaint (or argument!) to the Lord. He begins by pointing out that he realizes God is eternal ("from everlasting"). He adds to that the statement that he realized that "we" (meaning Israel as a whole) will not die, will not be wiped out regardless of the ferocity of the Chaldeans. But then he shows that he realizes that God has actually appointed that self-centered, ferocious people to execute judgement on Israel and other nations better than they were. And then he reverts to the way he is puzzled: Verse thirteen points out the absolute purity of the Lord, Who is "too pure to look on evil" and cannot tolerate wrong. But in spite of that, He is tolerating the treacherous and is silent as the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves. How could that be? It seems to Habakkuk to be inconsistent with God's nature.

Habakkuk then uses somewhat picturesque language, describing the Chaldeans as fishermen who catch the other nations like fish by hook and nets. They ("The wicked") then show their idolatrous nature by worshipping their nets (by sacrificing to them and burning incense to them); they do that because they give them the means to live in luxury.

After ending what we divide off as chapter one by asking if the Chaldeans are to keep on with this, "destroying nations without mercy," Habakkuk shows he feels he has brought something to God's attention He had not considered. He is going to take a place to watch and see how God would answer him and show what answer Habakkuk is to give (to himself and others?) about this complaint. I think this still sounds like an argument as much as a complaint.

In our next article we will examine the answer by the Lord, "who changes not."

VOICES from the FIELDS

Winston and Irene Allen

Eagle River, Alaska

Dec. 1991

During this season of the year people are especially concerned about lists. Christians should be concerned during all seasons regarding the list God is making in heaven. "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20b. "And there shall in no wise enter into it (the New Jerusalem) anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie, but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life." Rev. 21:27.

As we look back over 1991, some of the events crowding memory include recovery from by-pass heart surgery, the visit and assistance of Dennis and Betty Allen during January, the severe winter and great amount of snowfall, the visit and assistance of our son Norman following Winston's eye surgery in April, Kentucky visitors Clair and David Stewart and Mike Sanders, paving of the church parking area, increased attendance in the meetings and decisions made for Christ, the first snowfall Oct. 13 and 14 of this season which brought 15 to 24" in the Eagle River area. At ages 72 and 70 we are going into our 28th winter in the Northland. We continue to pray for younger leaders of the Lord's choosing and sending.

Appreciation is expressed to all who have assisted with prayer and financial support during the past year. We are thankful to be able to report that our physical bodies are stronger than they were a year ago. May the joy of the Lord be yours this season and in the New Year.

Tom and Kristy Nickell.

Luzon, Philippines

Dec. 1991

We're *all* back at Blos River—our family, and Agta villagers. Not many of us (only twenty-four), but we're together. [Editor's note: The Nickells and many Agtas fled from there due to Communist threats made on their lives, *many* months ago.]

The gospels of Matthew and Mark are almost ready for the final consultant checks in February. That's 22% of the New Testament. Whew! Lots of fine details still to attend to.

Joe and Grace McAlpine are considering joining us as a literacy team, but need further Stateside training. Please pray for them. [It's not much use having God's Word written in your language if you can't read *any* language!]

Virgilio Torrefiel Central Bible Institute, Manila Dec. 17, 1991

CBI closed her 1st semester classes on December 13, 1991 with a simple Christmas Fellowship. The following day a Dinner Fellowship was held in the Chapel among the former CBI dormitory residents. During this time, former dormers testified to the spiritual and social blessings they gained during their stay. We are truly blessed to discover the way God molds the lives of young men and women in the dorms.

This Christmas vacation, we plan to visit the province of Leyte that was devastated by the flash floods. Right in Jaro, there is an evacuation center for the flood victims whose houses were swept away by the fatal floods.

Myrna Auxtero Bohol, Philippines Nov. 1991

We praise God for the opening of another term in the Bible School. We have 46 students. There are 10 family men, who with much prayer and tears took a big step of faith to enroll and trust the Lord for their families. These students are assigned to 20 island and 17 mainland outreaches each week-end.

We praise the Lord for the growth of the work despite the enemy's attempt to divide and destroy. Christians have become more prayerful. We now have 22 congregations.

We praise Him for the success of the latest crusade in Kauswagan, 30 kilometers from Talibon, a mountainous part of the next town, Trinidad. We could not believe we were stepping on the area which is the center and training ground for the rebels that attacked the town months ago and killed four people. The Lord rewarded the faithfulness of the workers that have to walk 40 Kms. back and forth in the heat of the sun on dangerous paths. At least 20 people came forward including the village 2nd in rank leader. There were many who did not come forward but also say they want to accept the Lord. Our workers are closely following up.

I've been suffering with my right arm for 5 months now. I can hardly move it. X-ray showed swelling in the shoulder bone. I was under medication for 2 weeks, and the doctor said that if it did not heal for 2-3 weeks, it may be a tumor. It didn't. The doctor is considering the possibility of malignancy. *Pray!*

GO EAST, YOUNG MAN

Victor Broaddus has led a number of tours to Far East mission fields: the Philippines, Japan, Hong Kong. He is seeking God's will whether or not to lead one this year, and time is short. Much depends on how many want to go; a few are already eager. The trip would begin around June 1 and last for 5-6 weeks, mainly in the Philippines. If you are interested, contact him by March 1: (606) 269-1312, day; (606) 253-9834, evenings. P.O. Box 54842, Lexington, KY 40555.

NEWS and NOTES

IMPORTANT DATES IN 1992

Mark these in your calendars.

Feb. 28 - 29, Annual Tell City/Lilly Dale Workshop, at Tell City this year. See back cover.

March 12 - 13, Training Conference sponsored by the School of Biblical Studies, Louisville. Theme: "The Joy of Discovering God's Word." Place: BUECHEL Church of Christ. More details later.

April 25, Ladies Inspiration Day, held this year in Louisville.

Aug. 3 - 6 or 10 - 13 (?), 45th Louisville Christian Fellowship.

Nov. 16 - 19, 17th Annual Central Glenmora.

We will publish more information about these and other important events, as we receive it. Send us camp schedules, etc. We do not usually announce protracted meetings in the churches, since there are so many of them. There is not space to include them all. (Frankly I am reluctant to call them revival meetings, for it seems to dilute that term. Of course, revival is their goal, but it seems to abuse the magnificence of true revival to call meetings by that name unless revival truly occurs!). We will gladly carry news of special church meetings (call them what you will) after they occur if something of newsworthy significance takes place.

The Southeast Louisiana Christian Fellowship for '92 has already taken place, Jan. 13 - 16. We were not notified soon enough to announce it earlier.

"The Old Order Passes..."

Dennis Kaufman stepped down after four years as director and chairman of the Board at the School of Biblical Studies in Louisville. During his seven years on the Board, Dennis helped develop SBS' present curriculum, taught various subjects—such as the epistles of Peter, doctrines of salvation, and pastoral counseling (his

specialty). During his directorship, he spearheaded the Task Force on setting church goals. Also during his tenure, SBS extension classes (taught at various congregations) developed and grew, and SBS became part of the Kentuckiana Consortium of Restoration Colleges. He is minister at Ky. Ave. Church of Christ, is engaged in a counseling ministry, and hopes to teach some at SBS still. All at SBS are grateful for his years of devoted leadership.

Randy Coultas to Louisiana

Randy and Jill Coultas have moved from Indiana, where they were active in the Lilly Dale Church of Christ, to Louisiana, where Randy will preach at the Oak Grove Church. He has studied at the School of Biblical Studies in Louisville for several years. Pray for them in their new ministry.

Bob Morrow to Africa

Robert and Joy Garrett are presently on furlough in the U.S. Bob Morrow would like to go to Zimbabwe while they are here. He does not plan to stay the whole year, but is especially interested in being there during the youth camp weeks (5 - 6 months).

"Lord willing, departure date is targeted the last week of March. Anyone wishing to share in this endeavor may make checks out to Church of Christ Mission Fund. You may contact Bob at (318) 748-4843 or (504) 748-9953."

—Mrs. JoAnna Morrow, Box 406,
Glenmora, La. 71433

Longtime Preacher Goes Home

Clyde Edens, who called himself a "mountain preacher," died at the age of 92 in LaGrange, Ky. He first began preaching in 1919, and kept on for over seventy years. He even wanted to hold some meetings this year, in Tenn. and Virginia! He loved the Lord and His word, and served Him faithfully. "I will miss him," says Nathan.

Mark Baker, who has served a number of years as youth minister at Southeast Church of Christ, has resigned to take employment elsewhere.

"What a wonderful week!" says the Gallatin Tennessee Church.

We have just concluded an outstanding week of spiritual feasting and fellowship. Our Homecoming Meeting with Bro. Val (Antoine Valdetero) had powerful and practical preaching. Homecoming Sunday was a resounding success due to the hard work of many.

On Saturday, five elders, seven deacons and both ministers enjoyed a retreat on the houseboat. Plans for 1992 were discussed. Sunday morning we enjoyed our quarterly prayer breakfast. The testimony and message by John McNeerney was a blessing.

A surprise visit by Ken and Ruth Rideout, longtime missionaries in Thailand, brought additional blessing this past Sunday. His timely message and challenge was used of the Spirit to bring over 30 people forward to seek God's special help and blessing. Entire families came, along with aged saints, teens and young adults. Who would deny it was all of the Spirit.

1992 Off to a Good Start, Gallatin, Tennessee Church.

The first Sunday of the New Year saw attendance back to normal and a sweet, sweet spirit in evidence. Several who had been ill were back and others were improving. We joyfully announced that on January 1st, two of our teens were born again into God's family. Michelle Dobbs and Kim Harrison were baptized by Barry Fowler.

Looking Ahead, Tell City, Ind. Church

Revival Committee: We would like to put together a committee to plan our future revivals. If we want to get the best speakers, we must do some long-range planning, several years ahead of time. If you would be willing to serve on that committee, let Jerry know. (A good example to follow.)

The Tell City congregation hosted a joint Thanksgiving Service. Church, Johnson City, Tenn.

"Looking to God as my helper and acting in accordance with Christian principles, I will do what I can to influence at least one new family to begin worshipping with us this year, and I will do what I can to help someone to be converted to Christ."

Good thinking, Locust Street. In lieu of Christmas cards to the folks regularly

seen at the church services, for several years a number have donated an amount equal to the cost of cards and postage to Maple Manor Children's Home. A poster "Christmas Card" has been placed on the bulletin board. Members exchanged greetings by signing their names on the poster and dropping their offering in the collection box below.

OUCH! "If you missed last Wednesday night, you missed (among other things) a fine message by Bro. Don McGee, of Denham Springs, LA, who was a drop-in visitor," says Bro. C. Kitzmiller.

MISSIONS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Southeast Church of Christ had a "Missions Night" and James and Karen Crowder Ashley spoke of their work in the Solomon Islands.

Mission Memo from Gallatin, Tenn. Church bulletin: There is word of a renewal movement in the Anglican Church in the Solomon Islands among laymen and priests alike who are coming to know Christ better... Pray for the Ashleys. They are being investigated by police and immigration officials for "selling gasoline" in the village, the accusation being that they are operating a store without a license in violation of their work permit. The Ashleys have at times sold gasoline from their personal stock to help someone in need when there was no other way for them to get gasoline, but that is a lot different from "opening a gas station." Pray for a quick resolution in favor of James and Karen and for improved relations with the officials involved. This is important for personnel from other missions as well. Satan would like to have ALL missionaries "kicked out."

More from Gallatin: Lahu Village, Makam Bang, Thailand, August 26th a truckload of 30 Lahu Christians entered demon village of 30 families to witness for Christ. The thirty Christians requested the witchdoctor to allow them to use the spirit temple to worship and praise God all day. God opened hearts. It was very good. Twenty-seven adults of the village were on opium. The Lahu Christians will do follow-up. PRAY!

Ken and Ruth Rideout will be back in Bangkok in January, 1992. PRAY!

Eagle River, Alaska. The Allens, Winston and Irene, express appreciation to all who have assisted with prayers and financial support during the past year. Pray for younger leaders of the Lord's choosing and sending for some relief of these "good and faithful" servants of God Most High.

Angela Harris of Gallatin is serving the Lord through the Peace Corps. Greetings will reach her at this address: Peace Corps Country Director Waneen Polly—Angie Harris, P.O. Box 1790, Boroko, Port Moresby, Papua, New Guinea.

"CUPS OF COLD WATER IN THE NAME OF A DISCIPLE"

These congregations have found ways to fulfill their stewardship. Southeast Church of Christ, Louisville. "Operation Shoebox," fill a shoebox, wrap it up, label it for a man or a woman and bring it next Sunday. They were delivered to the Wayside Christian Mission to hopefully brighten up the Christmas of someone in need.

"God blessed us with 24 visitors last Sunday," Nathan Burks.

Another Southeast Church project: "If you are interested in a beginner's sign-language class, see the sign-up sheet in the foyer. Any questions, see Kathleen Williams."

Ralph Avenue, Louisville: Craft Class for the ladies meets on Tuesday.

Locust Street Church of Christ, Johnson City, TN. The ladies of the church

have undertaken a project of placing handmade bears in the pediatric section of JCMC Hospital... an estimated 50 bears per month. The first 50 were delivered this past week and were well received. Another 50 will be needed in January, etc., so those sewing and stuffing will not be able to let up just because of the holidays. Each bear carries a tasteful label with the church name and might cause parents to visit with us. Encourage the Dorcas!

The Turkey Creek LA congregation, upon three hour notice, made a Christmas float and put it in the Christmas Parade. A mighty fine PR project!

The Gallatin TN Church cooperates with "Remember Gallatin C.A.R.E.S. needs volunteers. There are many calls for assistance, especially this time of year." and then follows a report of some of the community CARES has served and how they have done it. Christians should have caring hearts and hands and feet.

If your church has not been mentioned about some of the things you are doing, we may have overlooked it, it may not have been reported to us, or there may not have been space for them all. Thanks to those who are sending bulletins, and please, those who have not been in correspondence, let us hear from you. All churches like to hear from sister congregations. And get them to us as soon as possible.

S. B. S. TRAINING CONFERENCE 1992

"THE JOY OF DISCOVERING GOD'S WORD"

THUR. MARCH 12, 7:00 P.M.

The Joy of Discovery — Don McGee, Louisiana

Testimonies from students at the School of Biblical Studies and other schools in the Kentuckiana Consortium of Restoration Colleges

Congregational singing, and special singing by the chorus of Southeast Church of Christ, Louisville

FRI. MARCH 13, 7:00 P.M.

First Workshops: "MOTIVATING PEOPLE TO STUDY"

Separate workshops for those working with children, or youth, or adults

Second Workshops: "TRAINING PEOPLE TO SERVE"

Separate groups again

ALL MEETINGS AT BUECHEL CHURCH OF CHRIST,
2105 Buechel Bank Rd., Louisville

TELL CITY — LILLY DALE WORKSHOP

February 28 -29, 1992

At the Tell City Church of Christ, Ind.

Theme: . GOOD HOMES IN BAD TIMES

FRIDAY — FEB. 28, 1992

7:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time: Singing

7:45 The Impact of Choices in Our Families —Dennis Kaufman

SATURDAY — FEB. 29

8:30 a.m., Eastern Standard Time: Prayer Time

9:15 Wholesome Families in a Rotting World? —Alex Wilson

11:00 Helpful Habits in Our Homes —Alex Wilson

12:00 Lunch Served by the Ladies

1:30 Managing Conflict in the Home —Dennis Kaufman

2:45 Open Forum led by Dennis Kaufman

SATURDAY — Nursery provided for up to age three.

OVERNIGHT LODGING FOR FRIDAY NIGHT may be arranged by calling the Carmichaels at (812) 547-6778 or Lincoln Trail Daystop Inn at (812) 547-3474.