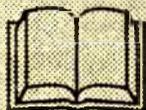


"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

JANUARY, 1996

**WHY
YOU ARE
WHAT
YOU ARE
AND
HOW
YOU GOT THAT WAY**

THE PULLEY

George Herbert

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessing standing by,
"Let us," said He, "pour on him all we can:
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span."
So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed; then wisdom, honor, pleasure.
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone, of all His treasures,
REST in the bottom lay.
"For if I should," said He,
"Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
And rest in nature, not the God of nature:
So both would losers be.
Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness:
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast."

*"Thou hast made us for Thyself,
and our hearts are restless
till they find their rest in Thee."*

--Augustine

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS ISSUE

This month's *Word and Work* is different from usual. I want to share with you some lessons from a particular class in Bible school. I myself profit each time I teach it. Students say it has helped them too.

It has been my privilege through the years, both in Manila and Louisville, to teach what we call "Christian Growth and Maturity." In this subject we study various fundamental truths, starting with God's Grace and Christ's Cross as basic to Christian life and growth. We need grace not only to be born into the Christian life, but to develop and mature in it. We are dependent on it not only for salvation in its introductory sense, but also for sanctification, and for service, and in suffering. (Use a concordance to study "grace" and see if that's true. It could be lifechanging.) So we start with grace, and its greatest demonstration -- Calvary.

After studying the significance of Christ's cross, we turn to ours. Jesus had a lot to say about cross-bearing as an essential part of discipleship, but we don't hear a great deal about it today. So we examine our death with Christ (via our union with Him), and our death to sin (repentance/cross-bearing). Then we look at the importance of being very specific and practical in opposing our entangling sins, weaknesses, and "weights" that hinder us in "running the race" (Heb. 12:1). Paul tells us, "By the Holy Spirit put to death" the sins in our lives (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5ff.). He urges us to put away vices and put on virtues. Thus we need to study the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. But we also need to know and practice self-examination, habit-formation, and the Christian disciplines.

Having laid these Biblical foundations, we proceed to an analysis of ourselves. We think about the various influences which help make us what we are. Among these forces is our individual temperament, so we give a good bit of attention to that topic. Learning about what some call "the four basic temperaments" and their strengths and weaknesses is usually a fascinating exercise, and profitable too.

Our W&W theme this month centers only on those subjects mentioned in the preceding paragraph. May the Lord help us to understand, weigh and apply the lessons that are here. For a number of these insights I am indebted to the teaching of the late Fred Renich, and books by Ole Hallesby (*Temperament and the Christian Faith*) and Tim LaHaye (*Spirit-Controlled Temperament and Transformed Temperaments*). The articles contain some repetition, but that may help us to learn and remember more easily.

--The Editor

WHY I Am WHAT I Am, and HOW I Got That Way

Alex V. Wilson

In 1985, two men in New Jersey became acquainted and made an incredible discovery. Each of them was bald, six feet six inches tall, and weighed 250 pounds. Each had a droopy mustache, wore aviator-style eyeglasses, and carried a key-ring on his belt--on the right side.

Each was single, and attracted to tall girls with long hair. More than that, they shared a liking for Chinese food, for hunting and fishing, and for old John Wayne movies. Both were raised in the Jewish faith but are not religious now. Both serve as volunteer firemen.

The two found they also have some identical habits and mannerisms: Each throws back his head when laughing. They drink the same kind of beer, and crush the can when it's empty. Believe it or not, they were carbon copies of each other in at least twenty ways! (Count them!) Other of their experiences, while not identical, were nonetheless strikingly similar: One studied forestry, the other worked as a tree-trimmer. One installs sprinkler systems, the other fire alarms.

Upon seeing these fantastic coincidences, they began searching for explanations. Imagine their surprise when they discovered they were identical twins! Separated when five days old, they had been adopted and raised in different cities. Neither had dreamed he had a twin.

What made them so alike? And, more importantly, what makes *you and me* what we are? Such questions take us to the **Nature versus Nurture** controversy. Are we more influenced by our heredity --the nature we inherit--or by our environment--our surroundings and training? Certainly both are important; neither should be downplayed. The case of those twins, however, emphasizes the great impact of our heredity. *U.S. News & World Report* (4/13/87), which reported this case, commented: "There is certainly no gene that can program anybody to become a firefighter. However genes can help produce altruistic behavior and risk-taking tendencies....Solid evidence demonstrates that our very character is molded by heredity." But that applies to our bad "character"-istics as well as our neutral and good ones.

This agrees with the Biblical teaching that all people since Adam and Eve's rebellion ("the fall") have had a sinful nature inherited from our forefathers. Some folks disagree with that belief, so let's look at Scripture. First, our **sinful nature**: "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" wrote Jeremiah (17:9). Our Savior agreed with the prophet: "From within, out of

men's hearts [not our environment], come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft,...." etc. (Mark 7:20-23; Jesus listed thirteen sins in all.) Another time he commented in passing, as if everyone knew this obvious fact, "If you then, *though you are evil*, give good gifts...." (Matt. 7:11). Compare Paul's assessment of human nature, in passages like Rom. 8:6-8, Eph. 4:17-19, and Tit. 3:3. The latter verse, for instance, says that before we were saved we were foolish (in mind), disobedient (in will), deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures (emotions). In other words, fallen human nature is rotten from the core out!

That doesn't mean the unsaved can't do good things. As Jesus observed, people--though evil--still give good gifts to their children. Nonetheless, the Bible pictures us as ruined and unclean (Isa. 6:5); as turning away from God rather than seeking Him, and thus full of all wickedness (Rom. 3:10-18; also 1:18-2:12). So the hymn "Amazing Grace" is right on target. Apart from Christ we are wretches who are spiritually lost and blind.

At various times in history such a description of human nature has been totally opposed, as various philosophers taught that we all are basically good. But listen to this statement by the Minnesota Crime Commission, regarding the cause of the rising crime rate: "Every baby starts life as a little savage...completely selfish and self-centered....All children, not just certain children, are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in the self-centered world of his infancy, given free rein to his impulsive actions, to satisfy his wants, every child would grow up a criminal, a thief, a killer, a rapist." Wow!--not even Paul puts it any stronger than that.

What accounts for this universally twisted nature of ours? **Heredity**, explained David. "Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Psa. 51:5). Since our first birth leaves us with a downwardly-inclined heart which the Bible calls the "flesh" or "sinful nature," we need a second birth--to be born from above. All this shows us the terrific impact which our heredity makes upon us. Following articles will amplify that fact. Yet no Bible believer will ignore the pervasive influence of our environment and how we were nurtured. That too plays a major role in our makeup. Clearly it's a case of both/and, not either/or.

An Insightful Passage

In his book, *Guard the Gospel: the Message of 2 Timothy*, John Stott points out how many influences that mold our lives are mentioned in 2 Timothy chapter one. Let's notice them.

1. Family Background: Paul says he served God, as his forefathers did, and reminds Timothy that his grandmother and mother both had faith before him. For us too, ancestors are life-shapers.

Our family provides us with both heredity and environment, presuming we grow up with our natural parents. We inherit various inclinations and talents with our genes. Are you gifted in music, math, mechanics, sports? Then be thankful for your parent(s) and/or grandparent(s) who handed the ability down to you. The same is true of temperament. Are you lively or laid back? talkative or quiet? aggressive or submissive? casual or careful and precise? Your disposition results from the pool of traits of the generations before you.

But the family environment is powerful too. Suppose child A and child B are identical in temperament and talent. But A grows up in a loving, accepting family, while the atmosphere in B's home is hostile, marked by shouting, angry cursing, slammed doors and perhaps physical abuse. There will definitely be differences. Oh the tragic toll of fractured families! Oh the fragrant fruit of happy homes!

You didn't choose your family, nor can you entirely escape its influence. Yet you can to some extent utilize its strengths and overcome its harmful results. You are not totally locked in, thanks to God's grace and power.

2. The Friendships we form, Examples and Leaders we follow, Teachers and Authors we open ourselves to: These vital forces are shown in verses 3-4, where Paul mentions remembering Timothy constantly, his prayers for him, his longing to see him, and the joy resulting from their friendship. Their years of companionship, the training Paul provided the younger man, the trials they had undergone together--all this and more had indelibly impacted Tim's heart and life.

Unlike our family heritage, in these areas we have great freedom of choice. Whom do we choose as our closest friends? The colorful evangelist Sam Jones quipped, "You can't run with dogs without getting fleas!" Whose example do we choose to imitate? To what leaders do we give our allegiance? What teachers and preachers do we expose ourselves to? Whose writings do we feed upon (or do we read anything at all)? These are matters of life and death, affecting time and eternity! For as computer-users learn, there is an unbreakable law: "Garbage in, garbage out." That is true of morality and spirituality as well as computers.

Looking at this area from another angle, let's ask not only, "Who is influencing me?" but also, "Whom am I influencing--and how? Whom am I befriending? Whom am I teaching, by lips and by life?" May we be faithful stewards of the influence we wield.

3. God's Direct Work in our Lives: In addition to the above factors, Paul mentions God's purpose, grace and power (8-9). Because He is purposeful, gracious and powerful, He works actively in our

lives. Specifically His Spirit bears His *fruit* in our character, producing in us "a spirit of power, love and self-discipline," instead of our natural timidity (or whatever weakness you or I may have, Tim's seems to have been timidity or fearfulness, vss. 7-8).

But in addition to the fruit of the Holy Spirit, there are His *gifts*--the abilities He imparts so we can serve the Lord. Paul reminded Tim to "fan into flame" the gift he had received when Paul laid his hands on him, probably at his ordination. But since we know that all Christ's disciples receive some spiritual gift(s) when they are born again (I Cor. 12:7, 11), Paul would doubtless say the same thing to us. Like fire, spiritual empowerings tend to die down as time passes. So we should not neglect them nor expect them to burn brightly if untended, but should fan them into a blaze -- by prayer, study, training, using the gifts, and continually relying on Christ. This leads us to our next point, the fourth component of our individual makeup.

4. Our Personal Response of Discipline and Effort: Paul mentions several aspects of our responsibility. God gives us abilities, but we must develop them (v.6). We should not allow ourselves to be ashamed of Christ, but deliberately be willing to suffer for Him (8). Like Paul, we should carefully maintain a clear conscience (3). And because we are so forgetful, we need to remember, recall to ourselves, and remind ourselves and one another of the great Truths of our faith. This latter duty is mentioned over and over. "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David" (2:8). Paul urges his younger co-worker. Notice also 1:3,4,5,6; 2:14; etc.

These are various duties of ours, the part we are to play.

The Various Influences which Mold Us

Let's review the four major influences which make you and me what we are. 1)Our family heredity and environment as we grew up. This was a "given"; we had no choice. 2)Our friends, examples, heroes, teachers and leaders. In these areas we have much freedom; our decisions are vitally important. 3)Christians have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. The fruit He bears we all should seek. The gifts He imparts differ from person to person; we all have *some* gift, though not the *same* gift. 4)Our response to the above, especially to #1 and #3. Here, as in #2, it is up to us to be devoted, diligent, and disciplined in our discipleship.

Are you fulfilling or frustrating God's purpose for you? It helps to recognize the "givens" in life, as well as our responsibilities. May God give us the "serenity to accept the things we can't change, courage to change the things we can, and wisdom to know the difference."

THE POWERS THAT SHAPE US

A. W. Tozer

Fortunately for all of us, human nature is not fixed but plastic. Every human being is in a state of becoming, of passing from what he was to what he is to be. And this is true of the Christian as of every other person.

The new birth does not produce the finished product. The new thing that is born of God is as far from completeness as the new baby born an hour ago. That new human being, the moment he is born, is placed in the hands of powerful molding forces that go far to determine whether he shall be an upright citizen or a criminal. The one hope for him is that he can later choose which forces shall shape him, and by the exercise of his own power of choice he can place himself in the right hands. In that sense he shapes himself and is responsible at last for the outcome.

It is not otherwise with the Christian. He can fashion himself by placing himself in the hands first of the supreme Artist, God, and then by subjecting himself to such holy influences and such formative powers as shall make him into a man of God. Or he may foolishly trust himself to unworthy hands and become at last a misshapen and inartistic vessel, of little use to mankind and a poor example of the skill of the heavenly Potter.

To any who might object that we cannot fashion ourselves, that God alone can fashion us, we offer this explanation: A young man decides he wants the benefits of a healthy tan. Now, does he tan himself or does the sun tan him? Of course the answer is that he tans himself by exposing himself to the sun. He has but to bring himself into contact with the sun's rays and the sun will take care of the rest.

So we fashion ourselves by exposing our lives to the molding influences, good or bad, that lie around us. Let us pull this thought down from the theoretical to the practical and identify some of the powers that shape us.

FRIENDS. We are all influenced powerfully by our companions. Even the strongest characters are shaped by the company they keep. They may flatter themselves that they, with their dominant personalities, are shaping others and are uninfluenced by the lives of their friends; but we cannot escape the power of friendships.

LITERATURE. What we read with enjoyment does much to decide what we shall be finally. To lend the mind to the spell of a book is

to become clay in the potter's hand. What we read will shape us for good or evil.

MUSIC. There is about music a subtle charm that no normal person can resist. It works to condition the mind and prepare it for the reception of ideas, moral and immoral, which in turn prepare the will to act either in righteousness or in sin. The notion that music and song are merely for amusement and that their effects can be laughed off is a deadly error. Actually they exercise a powerful creative influence over the plastic human soul. And their permanent effects will be apparent in our growth in grace or in evil.

PLEASURES. The human constitution is so constructed that it requires a certain amount of pleasure; it is built for it as a harp is built for music, and remains incomplete and unfulfilled without it. Sin lies not in receiving pleasure but in deriving it from wrong objects. A mother tending her baby in a glow of delight or smiling in death when she hears that her late-born is normal and will live presents a tender picture of unselfish pleasure. A man at the card table fascinated by the thrills and perils of gambling is an example of degraded and demoralizing pleasure. The Christian should look well to his pleasures for they will ennoble or debase him, and this by a secret law of the soul from which there is no escape.

AMBITIONS. The great saints of the world have all been ambitious. They were driven forward by an inward urge that finally became too much for them. Paul stated his ambition as being a desire to know Christ and to enter into the fullest meaning of His death and resurrection, and toward this goal he pressed with everything that lay in him. By this ambition he was propelled upward to the very peak of spiritual perfection. Carnal and selfish ambitions however, have just the opposite effect. Each one should watch his ambitions, for they will shape him as an artist shapes the yielding clay.

THOUGHTS. We Christians need to take into account the tremendous power that lies in plain, ordinary thinking. We have allowed ourselves to be cheated out of a precious treasure by the irresponsible babblings of weird occultists and quack religionists who make too much of the human mind or who misunderstand it altogether. From them we have turned away, and have turned so far that we forget that it is still true that a man will finally be what his active thoughts make him. It is hardly too much to say that no Christian ever fell into sin who did not first allow himself to brood over it with increasing desire. And every godly soul knows how much spiritual meditations have meant to the total success of his inward life. "As (a man) thinketh in his heart, so is he."

There are of course many others, but these are among the major forces that shape our lives. To sum up, the wise Christian will take advantage of every proper means of grace and every ennobling and purifying influence that God in His providence places in his way. Conversely, he will avoid every degrading influence and flee from those forces that make for evil. He has but to cooperate with God in embracing the good. God Himself will do the rest.

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS TEMPERAMENT

Alex V. Wilson

The old maxim is surely true--"It takes all kinds of people to make a world." What diversity is found among us humans: what radically differing temperaments. Ruth Paxson mentions some of these differences:

One is quick and nervous; the other slow and calm. The former can do a half day's work while the other is getting dressed in the morning.

One is socially-minded and enjoys a bit of company sometimes; the other is solitary-minded and feels no need of anything outside of herself and her work.

One is generous and open handed, while the other is thrifty and sometimes, perhaps, tight. A fellow-missionary who was housekeeper for our little company once handed me my monthly bill for __ dollars and __ cents, and seven eighteenths of a cent. Never having been good at figures, I let her keep the change.

One is spontaneous and outgoing, readily sharing her heart experiences; the other reticent and unapproachable, never revealing what she really thinks or feels.

One gives herself to prayer and is accused of laziness; the other becomes a slave to work and is suspected of ungodliness.

One is a replica of the mystical Mary, and the other of the practical Mary.

No doubt you think of examples in your own life. I remember how when we were young, my sister lost her temper oftener than I lost mine. Yet, when I did get angry I kept my anger much longer than she did. Usually she apologized just a few minutes after any burst of temper; but I remained mad for a long time, and apologizing just was not

in my nature. Another example: a professor in college once mentioned that the more tired she became, the less she spoke; when exhausted, she would clam up. But the more tired her sister became, the more she spoke, rattling on and on.

Among our Lord's disciples we notice the same thing. Peter was strongly emotional: hasty, easily stirred, quick to speak before he thought. He was the first to respond to Jesus' question and proclaim Him the Son of God; the first to strike a blow in defense of his Master when the mob came to arrest Him; and he was the one who on several occasions contradicted Christ -- "Not so, Lord!" How different was Andrew: a quiet follower rather than leader, easily fading unnoticed his brother among the group. Then think of Paul: strong-willed, whole-hearted and steadfast. He *would* go on to Jerusalem no matter if divine revelation warned him what would result and brethren begged him to change his mind. Barnabas, on the other hand, was a peacemaker and encourager who wanted to give people like Saul the persecutor and Mark the quitter another chance.

Other Biblical examples include the different dispositions of the prophet Elijah and his successor Elisha. Also the contrast between John the Baptizer, a recluse who preferred the solitude of the desert, and his cousin Jesus, who liked people and parties. Indeed, "it takes all kinds of people to make a world."

The RESULTS of our Diversity

What are some results of the many different temperaments found in the human race? A **good result** is *variety in life*. If everyone were the silent type, like Andrew, we would all be bored to tears and there would probably be little progress. If everyone were the bubbling-over, life-of-the-party type like Peter, we would all go stark, raving mad because of constant excitement. If all were leaders, there would be constant strife. If all were followers, there would be only aimless confusion. Variety is indeed the spice of life. Thank God that He has made us to differ one from another.

Yet there are **negative results** too. Some people become deeply *discouraged* because of their temperament. For instance, if they are the shy, retiring type they may wish they were like Bill or Mary Somebody, who make friends so easily and are so popular. They may even try to mold themselves by sheer will-power into the temperamental image of Bill or Mary, but this usually only creates more problems and discouragements. What they don't realize is that sometimes Bill or Mary wish that *they* were different--that they didn't so often blurt out crazy statements they later regretted and that they were not elected as leaders of everything!

Often differences lead to *misunderstanding, friction and out-right hostility*. Sometimes the hardest thing in the world seems to be how to get along day after day in close contact with fellow-workers, students or family members whose tastes and temperaments are the opposite of ours. Someone says, "I can't stand that fellow. He just 'rubs me the wrong way.'"

How many times the work of the Lord is crippled by clashes of temperament between Christians. Our hearts are incurably self-centered unless kept broken by the cross of Calvary. How critical and spiteful we are even of those whose temperaments blend smoothly with ours! And it is ten times easier to fall out with those whose minds seem to be tuned to some other channel than ours.

A keen student of human nature made the following observations about this human self-centeredness:

When the other fellow takes a long time to do something, he's slow; but when I take a long time to do something, I'm thorough. When the other fellow does something that pleases the boss, he's polishing the brass. When I do something that pleases the boss, that's co-operation.

When the other fellow says what he thinks, he's spiteful. When I do, I am frank. When the other fellow doesn't like my friend, he's prejudiced. When I don't like his, it simply shows that I'm a good judge of human nature. When the other fellow picks flaws in things, he is cranky. When I do, I only manifest discrimination.

When the other fellow spends a lot of money, he is wasteful. When I do it, I am generous. When the other fellow moves forward in a venture, he is foolhardy. When I do, I am a man of faith. When the other fellow gets ahead, he sure had the lucky breaks. When I manage to get ahead, "Man!--Hard work did that!"

SOLUTIONS for the Problems

The bad results, then, of differences among us are discouragement, misunderstanding and hostility. Are there any cures for these ills? Certainly there are, by the grace of God. For discouragement we need a good dose of **faith** in His sovereignty and grace. Since He is sovereign, it was He who decided what temperament we should inherit. Therefore, to complain about our temperament is to complain against Him. Since He is gracious, He has provided us with all resources that we need, in Christ and the Holy Spirit, to overcome the weaknesses of our temperament.

Secondly, we need a good dose of **understanding**. A Christian leader in Norway, the late Ole Hallesby, explained this clearly in his book, **Temperament and the Christian Faith**:

It is so easy for us to misunderstand one another and to misinterpret one another's natures and actions. The reason is that we judge others from our own standpoint and not from theirs. Differences of temperament are the main cause for such misunderstandings.

When the melancholic person (the quiet, meditative type) judges people of other temperaments from his own standpoint, he may assign motives to them which they do not really have. When he sees the sudden changes in mood of the sanguine man (like Peter--now happy, now sad; now angry, now friendly), he will think that he lacks character. He will say to himself, "If I acted like that, it would be because I was a hypocrite."

On the other hand, the sanguine will think the melancholic sulky and sullen. He will say to himself, "If I didn't say anything for such a long time, it would be because I was angry at someone--so he must be angry." But the melancholic may not be angry at all; quietness is just his nature.

Only when we learn to understand people's temperaments can we do them justice. This will make our judgments milder and our fellowship with them easier. Of course, I do not mean by this that we should overlook and condone that which is evil in people. But a knowledge of the temperaments will help us understand what in others is caused by an evil will and what is merely the expression of a temperament different from our own.

At the same time such knowledge will also help us to judge the real evil that we know little about. The sanguine, for instance, will discover that the melancholic is readily suspicious and pessimistic because he has an inborn tendency to be that way--something which he, the sanguine, does not have. (Quotation slightly altered for clarity.)

Last and most important of all, we need **the love of God** in our lives. Nothing else will help if this is lacking. A young preacher once gave this testimony: Some time earlier he and an older man were put in charge of a project in which several congregations were cooperating. The older preacher loved the Lord, but he was somewhat domineering and hard to work with. The situation finally got so bad that the younger man began praying that God would relieve him of his responsibility. He prayed thus for several days when Romans 5:5 suddenly slapped him! "For the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit." From then on instead of praying that God would remove him *from* the difficult situation, he prayed that God would give him the fullness of His love *in* that situation. Within a few days he noticed a marked change in his own attitude toward the other preacher. The older man had not changed, but the younger man was now experiencing the transforming love of God in his heart. Let us, then, above all else, ask our God to love His love in us and through us.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

"Temperament is the soul's reaction to the world around it." Some people react primarily with their emotions; others primarily with their intellect; others with their will. "Temperament is inborn. It is found in us before our conscience and our will begin to function. Throughout our whole life it is here, regardless of our conscious life. Truly we *can* and *ought* to affect our temperament, by knowledge and will, but temperament life lies deeper down than the conscious life. It belongs largely to our *subconscious* life, that part of our soul which we are not able to reach through our thinking and which our will has a very limited power over. It works unceasingly and automatically, pouring forth from the subconscious self like a constant fountain." It is not something we learn; instead it affects us "by the power of our instincts." (O. Hallesby)

Most of the following definitions come from various dictionaries.

CHARACTER: Eleven different meanings are given in the dictionary! For our purposes, here is the best one: Moral vigor or firmness, especially as acquired through self-discipline.

Bernard Ramm, in his book *The Right, The Good and The Happy*, draws these distinctions between acts, virtues and character. "The *act* is the specific response to a specific ethical situation. It might be said to be the unit of conduct A *virtue* is a settled moral attitude. Ethics concerns not only the right act, but the attitudes or principles that make for right action which are deeply established in one's personality. A permanent policy or attitude is a virtue A man has *character* when he has a sum or pattern of virtues. A man of character is a man of many virtues, who acts consistently from the sum of his virtues."

TEMPERAMENT: The frame of mind or type of mental reactions characteristic of an individual.

Disposition implies the dominant inclination or main direction of a person's mind or spirit (for example, a studious, or a calm, or a restless disposition). *Temperament* implies the overall total of characteristics that are inborn and which results from one's physical or nervous organization or makeup. *Character* applies to the moral qualities which must be considered in making any ethical evaluation of a person (for example, a person of honest, or generous, or unreliable character). *Personality* applies to the total qualities which distinguish one as a person, which set him apart from others.

PERSONALITY: (Six meanings!) Individuality; distinctive personal character. In psychology, the totality of an individual's charac-

teristics; an integrated or interwoven group of emotional trends, behavior tendencies, etc. Another meaning: Excellence of personal and social traits; magnetic personal quality.

INTROVERT: One who directs his attention within himself; one who has tendencies to find his satisfactions in the inner life of thought and imagination.

EXTROVERT: One whose interest is centered in objects and actions external to himself.

OPTIMIST: One who is inclined to see the bright side of life and to expect the best. **PESSIMIST:** One who is inclined to see the dark side of life and to expect the worst. The optimist says, "The thorn bush is full of roses." The pessimist says, "The rose bush is full of thorns." The optimist says, "The glass is half full." The pessimist says, "The glass is half-empty." To the optimist there is opportunity in every difficulty. To the pessimist there is difficulty in every opportunity. A pessimist is one who wears a belt and suspenders at the same time! The optimist invented the airplane; the pessimist invented the parachute!

TEMPERAMENT And CHARACTER

by the Editor

We have seen in earlier articles that everyone at birth already has temperament, for we inherit that. Now, an important additional fact: *No* one at birth has *character*, for that develops during life. At birth your character is a blank.

First let's define our two subjects, then look at them one at a time, and finally see some relationships between them. In this article we are using the dictionary definition of *character*: "moral firmness or vigor, especially as acquired through *self-discipline*." It is related to one's morality, his goodness or badness, the kind of person he is ethically.

Temperament, on the other hand, we have defined as "the soul's reaction to the world about it" (Hallesby). LaHaye elaborates: it is "the combination of *inborn* traits that *subconsciously affects man's behavior*. These traits are arranged genetically on the basis of various *hereditary* factors and are passed on by the genes. The alignment of temperament traits is just as unpredictable as the color of eyes, hair, or the size of the body" (Tim LaHaye).

Back to character: If it involves our moral goodness or holiness, then we should be very concerned about it. For "without holiness no one

shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). How then can we grow in godly character, making progress in holiness?

How Character Develops

Righteous character grows as we learn to discern good from evil, then choose to shun the evil and do the good. Observe Hebrews 5:12-14. *"Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."* Other translations use phrases like "their spiritual faculties are carefully trained by practice" or "exercised to discern good from evil." J. B. Phillips' paraphrase says, "The mature is the one who has developed by experience his power to discriminate between what is good and what is evil." Ponder those expressions. We need time, experience and training to grow in moral discernment. This is a primary area of character development.

But discernment must be followed by obedience. We are to *practice* God's Word--to be doers, not just hearers. Fred Renich wrote,

Character is developed through a series of moral choices....It is by a series of right choices, of choosing righteousness whatever the cost, that one builds a moral and righteous character.

Many people are more concerned with being "spiritual" than they are with being righteous. Spirituality today seems quite in harmony with the twisted truth, the man-pleasing spirit, the insincere promise, the ulterior motive, the practice of self-indulgence in many forms. The test is this: Do we hate sin wherever it is found, and in whatever garb it appears--whether in ourselves, our loved ones or in outsiders?

As day by day we react to circumstances, temptations and pressures, we are little by little turning ourselves into people of greater--or lesser--character, of more or less righteousness. A.W. Tozer said, "We are becoming what we love." That's true; but it is also true that we are becoming what we *choose*. We are forming habits of following or of resisting God's way. We are making ourselves better or worse persons. The old saying is still true: "Sow a thought, reap a deed. Sow a deed, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character."

Of course the Holy Spirit is active in this process. He is absolutely indispensable in our growth in holy character. But remember that He is an influencer or persuader rather than a chooser or button-pusher. *We* choose whether to walk with Him or resist Him. God's scary gift of free will has not been withdrawn.

These facts call us to self-examination: Where am I in this process? Am I advancing or retreating, becoming a person of greater or lesser integrity? Am I becoming more or less like Jesus my Savior *and Example*? (Rom. 8:29; Jn.13:13-17; 1 Jn. 2:6; 1 Pet. 2:20-21). Am I following Him?

Let's review, and think it over: Our character forms according to our *choices*. That's why we have no character at birth, nor indeed till our minds and wills begin to develop. When the child starts being able to make responsible decisions, only then does character-development begin in earnest. Yet that period may begin quite early! (Of course no one knows exactly when a child reaches his/her "age of accountability." And it's obvious that loving but firm training by parents must precede that time anyhow.)

An Unsolvable Contradiction?

The above statements, "No one *at birth* has character; at birth our character is a blank," may seem to contradict what was said in the earlier article, "Why You Are What You Are." For there we said that *from birth* our nature is evil, that heredity largely accounts for the "sin living in me...the law of sin at work within my members" (Rom.7:17,20,23).

So how do we reconcile those opposing ideas? By realizing that character-development depends on the will, which also depends on our mental development. Till children can distinguish right from wrong, and freely choose one or the other, they are not morally accountable. But when they reach that condition of responsibility, you may be sure that sinful, self-centered desires, *which have dwelt in their hearts all along*, will assert themselves. The seeds of evil have been there all the time, but we do not hold babies accountable or guilty since they cannot help having such desires nor can they control them at that stage. Neither does God hold them guilty.

We repeat, then: From conception onwards, our inherited desires and reflexes are sinfully ME-centered. Instinctively we put Self first, and, as opportunities arise, we "turn every one to [our] own way." The Great Commandment and the Golden Rule do not come naturally to us, but are followed--if at all--by willpower. They go against the grain of our moral nature. Experience shows this; so does Scripture. The word "iniquity" (as in Psalm 32:5; 51:2,9; etc.) literally means "a bend, twist, distortion or perversion"--that is, something not being what it ought. Our nature, as the earlier article proved, is corrupt, spoiled, depraved. Sin is not only something I *do*, but something I *am*. I commit "sins"; I have "sin" (1 Jn. 1:8,9).

Do we understand this? Our flight from sin and pursuit of holy character does not begin till we are able to choose responsibly. But when

that time arrives we discover that our heart is already perverted by sinful selfcenteredness, and that character development is not easy but a fight. But *the particular "shape" of that conflict differs from person to person, depending on his/her temperament.* (You probably thought we'd never return to that topic!)

Types of Temperaments, Types of Temptations

One popular and useful theory says that there are four main types of temperaments. Let's consider this.

1)The **SANGUINE** person is warm, lively, outgoing, exciting...the life-of-the-party type who brightens up the room by his arrival. With his enthusiasm he makes a wonderful salesman, children's teacher, or master of ceremonies at social gatherings. *Peter* is the outstanding example of a sanguine in the Bible. But with all his strengths went weaknesses to match. He was emotional, impulsive (often going off half-cocked), changeable, weak-willed. You can easily think of such incidents in his life. We see in him the Sanguine's usual bad as well as good traits.

2)The **CHOLERIC** person, unlike the Sanguine, is strong-willed and decisive. He is practical, daring--a natural leader. *Paul* is the major example in Scripture of a choleric. Most of the outstanding reformers, generals and dictators in history have been choleric. Along with their strengths go tendencies to be self-sufficient, proud, intolerant and unfeeling.

3)The **MELANCHOLIC** person is deep-thinking (unlike the Sanguine), deep-feeling and indecisive (unlike the Choleric), idealistic, persevering, loyal and sacrificial. Both *Jeremiah and Timothy* seem to have been Melancholics. Such people tend to be selfcentered, not very sociable, and wrestle often with fears and especially depression. Many artists, musicians, philosophers and other thinkers (including geniuses!) are of this temperament. They tend to have a rich "inner" life but often are inept at relating to other people.

4)The **PHLEGMATIC** person is calm, easy-going, friendly, dependable, careful and efficient at "detail work." Like the Melancholic, he usually does not stand out in a crowd. *Andrew* was such a person. Along with their strengths, phlegmatics tend to be indecisive and lazy. But they are ideally equipped to be diplomats (whether in government or in churches!), researchers and accountants.

Those are the four "basic" temperaments. As you think about them you can probably see yourself and some of your friends in the various categories. **BUT** be aware of two very important points: First, *nobody* fits 100% into any one temperament. Everybody is a mixture, a blend of more than one. Peter, for instance, was mostly Sanguine but also had a

strong dash of Choleric. That's why he was a natural leader. While Paul was mainly a Choleric, we read often of his tears--and that's not a Choleric trait. So your mix of temperaments may be 50/50, or 70/30, or even 60/20/20. However, most people (not all) have one temperament that predominates.

The second very important clarification is about the relationship between temperaments and character. Tim LaHaye writes, "Temperament may *explain* our behavior, but it never *excuses* it." I think it's even better explained this way: **Temperament explains our temptations, but never excuses our sins.** A Choleric is tempted to be harsh, even cruel, Melancholics are not, usually. But the latter is tempted to be a hypochondriac, imagining he has all sorts of sicknesses. The Choleric has no tendencies in that direction. The Sanguine is naturally flighty and thus tempted to leave many tasks uncompleted. He will start many projects but finish few of them. The Phlegmatic is the opposite. He is tempted to be lazy, and thus finds it hard to begin tasks; but once he does he carries on steadily till they are done. So what tempts one person may not be a problem to another. Temperament explains our differing temptations.

But it never excuses our sins. Too often we hide behind our temperament and seek to justify ourselves. Tim LaHaye gives several sad examples of this.

Mr. Sanguine, after an extramarital affair almost ruined his home, admitted, "I know I shouldn't have done it, but I'm a Sanguine and tend to be weak when exposed to sexual temptations." That was a cowardly way of saying: "It's God's fault--he made me this way!"

Mrs. Melancholy came in for counseling after her husband left her....There was no other woman in his life; he simply observed in parting, "Since nothing I do ever pleases you, I've decided to get out of your life and let you find someone that doesn't have all my faults!" Through her tears this woman admitted, "I love my husband and I didn't mean to find fault with him all the time, but I'm a perfectionist and he is very careless. I feel that it's just as bad to think a thing as to say it, so I always told him when he was wrong--I just couldn't help it." A rather high price to pay for indulging in a selfish fixation, wouldn't you say? (Transformed Temperaments, pp. 20-21)

Other examples include a Choleric who ruined his great potential as a Christian worker, but excused himself by saying, "When people cross me, I tell them off!" A Phlegmatic husband imposed a wall of silence between him and his wife, an outgoing woman who found his stonelike quietness unbearable. His excuse: "I'm an easygoing person who doesn't like bickering. Rather than get into a feud, I just remain silent." Oh how often we vindicate ourselves instead of making the effort to improve our attitudes and habits by enabling from Above.

Excuse-making and just giving in to our inclinations hinders our making progress in holiness. Yes, I may have inherited a lazy disposition; but when I shirk my work I sin and need to repent. You may be hot-tempered by temperament, but blowing up in uncontrolled rage is sin requiring confession and repentance. She may have inherited the "disease" of alcoholism; there is evidence that the tendency to addiction is indeed hereditary in some cases. But though she is not guilty for the condition of alcoholism, she is guilty when she gives in to it and gets drunk. He may have strong homosexual drives due to the twisted family where he grew up; but he can still by divine help remain chaste and not sin--just as single heterosexuals can and should. You may by temperament become easily dejected. Such a proclivity is not sinful in itself, but to just give in to it without resistance is wrong.

May we arise and quit our wimpiness!

The Importance of Godly Habits

Our behavior reflects not only our temperament "but more significantly one's habit patterns. Temperament starts us out on a pattern of behavior; *habit* perpetuates and broadens it" (LaHaye). We choose not only our isolated actions but the habits we practice. So once again we see the urgency of the decisions we make day by day, moment by moment. Also our need for dogged determination and discipline.

We should resist our negative inclinations. If we *continue* doing so, the power of habit will aid us in overcoming such tendencies--as we seek power from our Lord. More than that, we should aim to build holy habits--taking advantage of positive tendencies we have inherited, but also forming and reinforcing habits that are not natural to us. Thank God for the strengths of your temperament; but don't think you cannot improve in other areas of strength too. We are responsible to develop those virtues as well. And, "His power can make you what you ought to be."

The End of the Matter

You inherited your temperament. You may be a Peter, a Paul, a Jeremiah or an Andrew. Each has his particular strengths and weaknesses. The important thing is, How do you respond to them? You choose day by day how to handle your special, individual temptations. And as you choose, according to your choices you are forming your character. As you persevere in your choices you form habits -- which aid you if the habit is good but drag you down if it's bad. Thus the challenge: "*Choose you this day whom you will serve.*"

The Holy Spirit is active throughout all this process, but you call the final shots. "IF YOU, by the Holy Spirit, put to death the misdeeds of the sinful nature, you will live" (Rom. 8:13). And that life is life indeed, given by Christ: abundant life, life to the fullest (Jn. 10:10).

VARIETY--The Spice of Life

Examples and Illustrations

Various people in the church: Some are like White Corpuscles, which fight disease. Other are like Red Corpuscles, which carry nourishment throughout the body.

"The white corpuscle is the guy who, when he sees a disease, wants to kill it immediately--wants to find a heresy and stomp on it. The red corpuscle is the person who wants to cherish, nurture, feed and strengthen that which is growing. Every body needs both. We should not have all the white corpuscles in a test tube on one shelf and all the red in a big beaker somewhere else. The 'pure' white corpuscles will get nervous and start biting each other, because they can't find any heresy around. They'll start throwing each other out of the test tube. And the red corpuscles will get so terribly sentimental they will nurture and love anything uncritically." --Richard Lovelace in **Dynamics of Spiritual Life**

We Need Changers but Also Conservers

"We need both Christian *gadflies* to sting and harry us into action for change, and also Christian *watchdogs* who will bark loud and long if we show any signs of compromising the truth of the Bible. Neither *gadflies* nor *watchdogs* are easy companions to live with. Nor do they find each other's company congenial. Yet the *gadflies* must not sting the *watchdogs*, nor must the *watchdogs* eat up the *gadflies*. They must learn to coexist in God's church and to fulfill their respective roles by concentrating their attention on us, the majority of God's people, who badly need the ministry of both." --John Stott in **Balanced Christianity**

Varying responses by People with Differing Spiritual Gifts

My favorite illustration from Bill Gothard's teaching is about what he calls the various "motivational gifts" listed in Rom. 12:3-8. It goes something like this:

A group of Christians eat together in a cafeteria. But the last one of them through the line loses his grip on his tray, which crashes to the floor. Notice how the others respond.

The one with a Prophet's outlook says, "That's what happens when you're not careful" . . . for his driving motive in life is to *correct what's wrong*.

The one with a Server's gift says, "Let me help you clean it up" . . . for what motivates his life is *meeting the needs of others*.

The Teacher says, "The reason you dropped it was because you had all the heavy dishes on the same side of the tray" . . . for his drive in life is *understanding things*, discovering what causes things to happen.

The Encourager says, "Next time let's wait and get dessert after the meal, so our trays won't be overloaded and this won't happen again" . . . for his motive is to *improve the future*.

The Giver says, "I'll buy you another meal" . . . for he is driven by the desire to *give to tangible needs*.

The one with the gift of Showing Mercy says, "Don't feel bad--it could have happened to anyone" . . . for his main motivation is to *relieve the feelings of others*.

The Leader or Administrator says, "Jim, get the mop; Sue, help pick up the dishes; Mary, help me get more food" . . . for his gift inclines him to *achieve the immediate goal of the group*.

[What would *you* say, and why?]

Pioneers and Settlers

"Sociologists tell us that the initial stages of a movement belong to the strong charismatic personalities, to the dreamers and the pioneers. To the impatient ones.

"The following stages belong increasingly to the executives and administrators, to the consolidators. Unfortunately, we are also told that these executives tend in the long run to become rigid and fossilized, making it necessary once more for the impatient visionaries to come to the forefront--or else the movement will eventually die. So we need both in any organization that wishes to remain vital, flexible and useful for the Lord." --From a Missionary Magazine

God Can Use All Kinds

Two outstanding preachers during the latter 1800's were DeWitt Talmadge in the U.S. and Alexander Maclaran in England. Yet how opposite they were ! Talmadge was an extrovert, dramatic and eloquent and innovative. More than one newspaper called him (with exaggeration) a pulpit clown.

On the other hand, Maclaran was an introvert, very shy. He shunned visitation of his members (told his elders they'd have to do it), and avoided social mixing whenever possible. He would often be nervous and agitated before preaching, and depressed afterwards. Yet his contemporaries called him "the prince of expositors," and some of his books of great sermons are still in print today.

Christ Has the Answers

"Dr. Henry Brandt, a leading Christian psychologist, once told a group of ministers that if his patients would not receive Christ, he could not help them. He knew of no cure in the realm of psychology for all of man's behavior problems but in Jesus Christ. Dr. Brandt once stated: 'You can use your background as an excuse for present behavior only until you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. After that you have a new power within you that is able to change your conduct.'" --Spirit-Controlled Temperament

VOICES from the FIELDS

James and Karen Ashley
P.O. Box 986, Honiara, Solomon Islands

Nov. 24, 1995

I've been working for a month now translating the book of Revelation, trying to get it ready for checking by a consultant. Revelation is a tough book because of all the symbolism that people interpret in so many different ways. In the "Evangelical" church here in the Solomons there is an unhealthy pre-occupation with reports of wonders and signs in the air. People are prone to believe any fabricated news account or end-time timetable that has been printed. If it's from the "big place overseas" [the U.S.] then it must be right!

So I guess they really do need to get this book in their own language, for its main message comes across pretty clearly: Jesus will triumph over evil in the end. But just knowing the theme doesn't solve all the translation problems. Consider all the foreign items--lamp-stands, thrones, crystal, winepress, scrolls, seals, etc.--and we don't even have a generic word for "animal". (We can say "dogs", "cats", or "pigs" but not "animals".) What would you do with all the "beasts" that are mentioned? Some images will be completely misunderstood if not explained, yet once I've started explaining it's hard to know where to stop. I pray that the end result will clearly reveal God's impending judgment and his desire for his people to live righteous, overcoming lives. It's great to know we're on the winning side!

It's good to know, too, that death will soon be done away with. Just last week two babies in families very close to us died. Our typist Jonathan lost his little daughter in childbirth because the cord was wrapped around her neck. Then two days later our neighbors' 11 month old son died from malaria. He had had diarrhea and vomiting for three days which weakened him so much that the ever-present malaria hit him hard. On the fourth day he lost consciousness, and since

there were no IV's at the Sa'a clinic the family tried to get him across the island to the larger clinic over there. Fallen trees and difficulties in arranging a canoe delayed their arrival at that clinic by nine hours. He died in their arms as they carried him from the wharf up to the clinic.

I know things much worse and on a far larger scale are happening elsewhere, but these ones hurt us especially because they are so close and seemed so preventable! We hurt for ourselves, but even more for the families. When someone dies here the relatives wail on and on, sometimes passing out themselves from crying so hard. They really feel the pain of death, and I wish they would claim more strongly the hope we have in Christ.

Dennis and Betty Allen Salem, Ind December 12, 1995

Betty and I have recently completed a four week trip to Hong Kong and Manila. We had not been to Hong Kong since passing through on our return from China in 1985. I had been 12 years since we had been to Manila, so we felt it was good to go while we were both still in good health. In Hong Kong, Hui Wah Fat and Poon Kit Ping moved out of their flat and gave us full use of it during our stay. We were overwhelmed by their outpouring of love and hospitality and of the whole congregation. We got to see most of those whom we had known while there as missionaries. The children and young people of the '60's and '70's are now the middle aged church leaders! The church had their 14th anniversary of moving to Tsuen Wan the last Sunday we were there. About 120 were present for the service. In the afternoon five were baptized at a special service.

Hong Kong is changing so fast. Sleepy villages of 10 years ago are now bustling cities with 40+ story buildings. Hong Kong is now a megapolis of literally thousands of sky scrapers. A new airport is under construction--a mind-boggling project as it is on an outlying island. A huge suspension bridge will connect it to Kowloon. Of course there is apprehension about 1997, but churches are aggressively preparing.

The time in Manila was very full. One day I spoke four times. We were privileged to see first-hand several of the evangelistic outreaches that are going on. Again it was so good to see a number of those we had known in the 50's. We especially appreciated the hospitality of Frank and Polly Kwong. The big typhoon which passed through Luzon while we were there hit Manila a glancing blow, but the greatest loss of life was farther south. We had the privilege to speak twice at Central Bible College chapel. This year is the 40th anniversary of the founding of the school. It has been used of the Lord to train many but still needs our prayers as well as the other works going on there.

We are planning to go to Alaska Dec. 29 to be there for two months while Winston and Irene go to Georgia. It was 15 below in Alaska the last I heard, so it will be a challenge!

Tim and Dawn Yates
P.O. Box 2500, Blantyre, Malawi, Africa

About a month after we arrived in Malawi, we had the first leadership training conference here in Blantyre. We brought in about 35 men from the Zomba area, about an hour's drive north of Blantyre. We were able to share with these men about basic Bible doctrine such as baptism, prayer, giving, and qualifications for elders and deacons. It was a joyous time in the Lord, for many of these men had not seen a missionary in over two years. It is obvious that we have much to do here, but it is rewarding to finally be able to be here to do it!

We have also managed to put a roof on two churches and one leaders home. We have been able to get hospital care for another of our leaders, and have done various other necessary improvements that have waited for so long. Please begin to pray for the first national conference that will be taking place here in April of 1996.

We certainly hope that you all have snow, as there is no chance of it here in the 85 degree-or-more winter.

We want to say thank you to all of you who have helped us to purchase our vehicle. The truck is running smoothly and has gotten us to places we would have never been able to get to. Thanks! Also, thank you to those who have prayed for us during our time of illness here. Everything is back to normal.

James DeForest Murch--

Cooperation Without Compromise

[**Editor's Introduction:** One of our great legacies in the Stone/Campbell Movement is its emphasis on *Be True to the Bible But Don't Insist That We All Agree On Its Meaning*. The old slogan puts it so well: "In essentials, Unity; in non-essentials, Liberty; in all things, Charity." J.D. Murch lived by this principle. Thus he strongly opposed Liberalism with its denials of basic scriptural truth, but worked long and hard to promote unity between the conservative Christian Churches and the a capella Churches of Christ. (See earlier installments.)

I admire him so much because he *neither left* the Restoration Movement and its Biblical convictions, *nor restricted* himself to it--as though "we alone are right." When he was a teenager his father told him, "Whenever we can work with other Christian people *without sacrificing our convictions* and for the common good of the cause of Christ, we should do it." J.D.M. added, "That has been my belief and practice from that day to this."

In this last installment of our series of excerpts from his autobiography, we see how he sought to apply these principles. We may or may not agree with his decisions, but we must admit that cooperation with others of Christ's Body without compromising basic Biblical truths is a Scriptural duty for us all. --AVW]

Gospel-Believing Churches Band Together

[In the early 1940s] I was deeply interested in the development of the National Association of Evangelicals. Thousands of people had been alienated from the Federal Council of Churches [now the *National C. of C.*] because of its liberal policies. These believers had no medium to which they could turn that would provide essential inter-church fellowship and services. There was a yearning for "cooperation without compromise" of the great fundamentals of the Christian faith. When a "Call" was issued for a meeting of such believers for exploration, discussion and action in St. Louis in 1942, Edwin Errett, editor of the *Christian Standard*, was one of the 147 signers. The next year when a "Constitutional Convention" was held, I attended as an observer [and was favorably impressed].

Thus the National Association of Evangelicals was created by Bible-believing, Christ-honoring Protestants from many denominations to present a clear testimony for the historic Christian faith. It was a means for interchurch cooperation and action, but respected the freedom and autonomy of the member churches. By 1960 the NAE had grown to a constituency of some forty denominations and ten million

members. [It now numbers 50,000 congregations from 77 denominations which have a membership of fifteen million members.--AVW]

In 1945 I was offered the position of editor and manager of *United Evangelical Action*, the NAE's official journal. I had a deep conviction that the Lord had called me to that work, which engaged my time and attention for the next fourteen years. I am warmly in favor of the services which the NAE renders evangelical Christendom. I would hate to think of what our situation would be if we did not have such an organization in a high-pressure world like ours controlled by Liberals in almost every area of life.

Why the NAE was Needed: One example

Evangelicals were in the forefront of the forces of religion which recognized radio broadcasting as an effective means of proclamation. Radio reached out everywhere; it carried its messages at a speed of 186,000 miles a second; it leaped over boundaries, penetrated walls, and touched people never before accessible to the Gospel. It was not long until evangelicals were receiving a hearing across the nation that was mounting into the millions. They credited this wide acceptance to the drawing power of the evangelical faith. Thousands who had been denied Bible preaching by liberal ministers in their own churches rejoiced at the opportunity once again to hear the old Gospel. Then complications began to set in. Religious racketeers began to use radio preaching as a medium of exploitation. Liberals were quick to identify these men as "fundamentalists."

This was the beginning of propaganda by Liberals which resulted in an effort by the Federal Council of Churches to gain control of the broadcasting of religion. The council signed up 50 or more radio stations "with ironclad contracts obliging them to use the Federal Council-approved programs and no other." It was their intention to extend this policy and thus effectually eliminate Gospel broadcasting.

[In response the NAE formed the National Religious Broadcasters, of which Murch was a board member for over fifteen years. They drafted an official statement addressed to the radio industry and the Federal Communications Commission. In part it said:]

We believe that once radio broadcasting understands the issues involved it will be entirely fair to all parties concerned. One misconception is that American Protestantism is one unified religious group, whereas in fact there are two distinct kinds of Protestants in America today. Each adheres to a particular form of teaching--the one the antithesis of the other. One group believes the Bible to be the infallible rule for belief and conduct, whereas the other does not.

We believe it could be demonstrated that the majority of American Protestants belong to the former group. Yet this group is not given time or representation on the radio, either by the networks or by individual radio stations, in proportion to their numerical strength National Religious Broadcasters, Inc., became essential when it was evident that existing interdenomination organizations, while claiming to be representatives of all protestantism, were in reality representative of the point of view heretofore described--namely, that which rejects the infallibility and absolute authority of the Bible.

After many months of communication, understandings were reached which fully protected the rights of all accredited religious broadcasters at national and local levels. The distinctively evangelical testimony was assured of a voice on the air. Means had been provided whereby the airplanes would be kept perpetually available for the preaching of the Gospel. The National Association of Evangelicals was given its proportionate share of sustaining time on all the national networks. I am very definitely of the opinion that if it had not been for the National Religious Broadcasters the National Council of Churches would have taken over all Protestant time on the airwaves at the national level and that evangelical broadcasting would have been completely eliminated.

Standing Against the World Council of Churches

When I saw the efforts of ambitious Protestant Church leaders to create One Church for One World--a mighty religious organization comparable to the Church of Rome, I declared war against it. I realized that they were abandoning the authority of the Holy Scriptures and distorting and contradicting every basic New Testament truth. Furthermore, I realized that Liberals, committed to a completely humanistic philosophy of life, dominated the leadership of the whole movement and were assuming the right to speak and to act for the whole Church.

United Evangelical Action gave me the medium through which I could speak and write. During the fourteen years of my editorship I **majored** in **constructive** matters that would build the Kingdom of God. I was committed to the principle of inter-church cooperation. I believed that the basic unity of Protestantism should be manifest in all forms of cooperation that did not require compromise of essential evangelical and biblical convictions. I believed that there were many ways in which all Christians should participate in communities of Christian forces to "do together what can be done better unitedly than separately." My record will show that I have been active in the leadership of many such enterprises. [Yet at the same time he believed apostasy must be exposed and opposed.]

There were some of our leaders in National Association of Evangelicals who were opposed to a policy of speaking boldly against the apostasy of Liberals and against the shortcomings of the Council of Churches. They were fearful that our movement might be confused with radical "Fundamentalism" which constantly attacked everybody who disagreed with it. I was in thorough sympathy with these brethren and shared their fears but I felt there was a happy medium that could be maintained in *Action* magazine policy, which could allow for intelligent expression and confrontation of the issues involved in the ecumenical controversy. I felt we had to keep our own constituency and the public in general informed as to our reason for being a separate cooperative association. I felt that we, like Paul, must speak boldly in defense of the Gospel and not shun to confront its enemies.

[Thus Murch in the following years exposed and refuted WCC teachings and practices many times. But he based his articles and books on careful research. And he expressed himself in moderate language--not strident or belligerent or sensational. The power of his opposition was in his facts and Bible-based arguments, rather than on a bitter, hateful tone. He also gave credit where credit was due--for there were a few evangelical voices within the WCC.]

Cooperative Evangelistic Crusade

Christian Churches and Churches of Christ in the area were highly critical of Billy Graham's crusade in Cincinnati--of which I was a main instigator. Indeed, most of them would not cooperate in evangelical organizations we had formed. This stance was primarily due to their isolationist attitude toward "the denominations."

What I was doing was in the best tradition of our Restoration fathers. Isaac Errett himself, early Restoration Movement leader and founder of the *Christian Standard*, maintained relations with many denominational leaders of his day--men who were committed to the authority of the Word of God and the highest welfare of the Church universal. He was active in the International Sunday School Association and a member of its Uniform Lesson Committee. It was Errett who proposed the first series of lessons in the Book of Acts and drafted the basic outlines for that series. He frequently appeared in union meetings and spoke in denominational churches. Once he accepted the invitation of the Second United Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh to give a series of sermons on the Holy Scriptures. He preached two of a series of sermons in Cornell University and frequently appeared in inter-collegiate interdenominational meetings promoting the welfare of Christian higher education in America. He saw nothing inimical to his advocacy of the Restoration Plea in such irenic relationships. Neither did I, nor *do I!*

Christianity Today

In 1958 I was called to Washington, D. C., to become Managing Editor of *Christianity Today*. This undenominational magazine was at that time the universally acknowledged leader in evangelical journalism and the thought and life of American evangelicals.

One of my first exploits was the coverage of the merger negotiations going on between the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. I was well acquainted with the conservative leaders of both denominations, and was able to write a story exposing the liberal elements who were bent on destroying all the best in each body to attain ecclesiastical control to achieve their liberal goals. Much of the information in my story was publicized for the first time and had national repercussions. More than three thousand churches refused to enter the merger.

I was growingly amazed at the influence of *Christianity Today*. At last, evangelical Christianity in America had a voice which was respected not only in the churches but in the communications media, and in the precincts of government at home and abroad. As I write [in 1971], the paid circulation of CT is three times larger than that of the *Christian Century* [the liberal magazine which, till CT came along, had the greatest clout in U. S. religious journalism]. I believe it has an influence for good in like comparative proportions. Thanks be to God for His enabling power. [In 1962, at age 70, he retired from CT.]

Conclusion

As I look back upon my years of work and travel as a minister, leader of youth groups, as magazine editor, as author, as founder and leader of many organizations, as teacher, as lecturer, I am repeatedly struck with the mystery of how I got into all this. I have been happy in my work and would not have chosen to change anything. Yet I do not feel that the control of events has been entirely in my hands. In mysterious and wonderful ways, I have been directed. I devoutly believe that there has been God's purpose in the scheme of things. If I have made some worthwhile contributions to His Cause and Kingdom I am content. To Him be the glory!

[End of series from **Adventuring For Christ**. Copyright 1973. Reprinted and condensed by permission of College Press, Joplin, MO. Copies are still available @ \$5.00 from College Press.]

PLURALISM IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY

John Guest

In a pluralistic society, which the USA unabashedly declares itself to be, the Christians have been put on the defensive. Court case after court case is decided by an interpretation of the "division of church and state" principle and that has meant the Christian presence has been muted in the public schools and market place.

All religious and moral opinions are supposedly equally valid in a pluralistic society, and none is to be given favor over another. The net result is the moral unravelling of our nation, and Christians feel they have been forced from the public arena. It's almost as if we have been driven onto our reservations where we are free to vent our tribal praise or concern each Sunday but we have been threatened into silence once we leave the reservation and go into the real world.

Pluralism, however, has been misunderstood and misrepresented, often deliberately, in what appears to be a concerted attack on our American, Judeo-Christian heritage as a nation. *Genuine pluralism ought not mute or silence the presence of religious and moral convictions but, in reality, should encourage it!* Genuine pluralism, rather than telling the Jew to keep his or her religion private, or telling the Christian he or she should not mention the Name of Christ in prayer or conversation in public, should, in fact, stimulate us to appreciate freedom of expression from all points of view--Buddhist, New Age, Islam, etc., as well.

Pluralism is not pretending I'm not a Christian in public for fear of offending someone, but rather, pluralism is gladly allowing everyone to be who they really are in public. In principle, this should encourage the open declaration of any given religious or moral view point. The kind of vanilla, neuter-conscious spiritual and moral environment that the false notion of pluralism is advocating is destroying the character and moral conviction of our nation. In the now-complicated business of public Christian witness, the Christian can and must proceed in confidence in the evangelism of our nation, for it is our only hope.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

Changes in Address

Winston and Irene Allen are now staying with their son & his family in the Atlanta area. You may contact them c/o Dr. David Allen, 135 Forest Lake Drive, Fayetteville, GA 30215. Ph: (770) 461-0388.

Meanwhile Dennis and Betty Allen are filling in at Eagle River, Alaska, during Jan./Feb. Pray they can adjust to the c-o-l-d.

Vernon and Pauline Lawyer have made a move too, though a short one. Their new address: 722 - 13th St. Tell City, IN 47586. Phone: (812) 547-3341. They would love to have calls, notes, letters or visits.

Valiant Efforts Anyway

Jody Akers of Borden, Ind. died late last year at age 39 despite many efforts to save him. Due to intestinal disease his large intestine had been removed in 1981, & his small intestine in 1989. He was accepted as a candidate for a small-bowel transplant in the fall of '93, but his insurance would not cover the \$315,000 expense. Neighbors, family & friends held everything from auctions to suppers to raise the money. His church, Borden Church of Christ, had raised \$143,000 for the transplant by the time Jody died. After his funeral expenses are paid, the remainder will go to a children's charity, as Jody asked.

We commend the Borden church & Mike Abbott their preacher for their untiring efforts to raise the needed funds, as well as their prayers & encouragement to Jody throughout this ordeal.

Maple Manor Christian Children's Home, Sellersburg, IN

Our sponsorship program has been implemented to afford a child an opportunity to interact with mature, Christian adults. It is the intent that a child, and MMCCH, benefit from this type of program. Expectations are that the child will receive correspondence, and remembrances at birthdays, Christmas and other special days. School supplies, some clothing and other miscellaneous expenses will be shared by the sponsor and the home. Your contribution will be used for the "wants" of the child not the "needs". The home will provide for the needs in other ways.

Any visits by the child, or the sponsor, may be arranged by our caseworker. In-home visits by the child will be limited to the sponsor of that child. A sponsor does not become a "foster parent". MMCCH is responsible for the care of the child in this way.

Sponsorship is extremely important to a child and the home. It is a way you show a child you care about what happens to them. You may live too far for a visit to the home or to take a child home with you but are not too far to communicate via mail.

Your sponsorship of one or more children makes you personally involved with the home, and the children become personally involved with another Christian that cares. You may simply want to send a birthday card or gift to one of the

children. You can contact either Rose or Cindy for their birthdays.

[Write the Home for more details, & to receive its newsletter, the Horizon: 635 W. Utica St., Sellersburg, In 47172]

Just the Facts . . .

Did you know that while 92% of Americans households say they have a Bible, only 37% of Americans say they read the Bible outside of religious services. Make it a goal this week to encourage others and yourself to turn to the Bible every day!

Gallatin, Tenn.

The New Year is always a time for review and resolution. January is special to me because it was twenty-one years ago this month I began my ministry in Gallatin. Those years comprise well over half of my 35 years as a minister. This year there have been sixteen funerals and six weddings in which I participated.

In the days ahead I hope to learn that I do not serve God to get favorable response from people. If I am cheered or rejected after feeding the loaves and fishes, to God be the glory. Although the thanks and encouragement of others is appreciated, they must not determine my level of service. --Julius M. Hovan

Portland Ave. Church, Louisville

We were especially privileged to have a number of missionaries or overseas visitors with us (or at nearby congregations) during 1996: Robert and Joy Garrett of Zimbabwe, Ken Rideout of Thailand, Joseph Shulam of Israel (at Hamburg), the Nakahara family (at Sellersburg), Jimmy & Lina Yee and Herman Moldez of Manila. In addition several of our members went to Honduras on a ministry trip, & later

shared with us their testimonies & slides.

"How Churches Should Approach Change"

That's the title of a short article by Flavil Yeakley Jr. of Harding University in the Nov. *Christian Chronicle*. Here are a few excerpts:

"One person's 'matter of faith' may be another person's 'matter of opinion.' In such areas Christians need to be humble and loving. We must not . . . look down on one another (Rom. 14:1-15:7). What is needed . . . is a healthy dialogue. We need to understand why others see things as they do. Those who have power should not arbitrarily impose their will on others. The church should first look for a compromise and seek to build consensus. Everyone should always have his or her *say*, but no one should always have his or her *way*. 3 things are essential: * Enough dialogue before the decision is made. *Enough explanation after the decision is made. *Enough patience to implement change gradually."

The Tates in Your Church

Do you know how many members of the Tate family belong to your church? There is old man Dic Tate who wants to run everything, while Uncle Ro Tate tries to change everything. Their sister Agi Tate stirs up plenty of trouble, with help from her husband, Irri Tate.

Whenever new projects are suggested, Hesi Tate and his wife, Vege Tate, want to wait until next year. Then there is Aunt Imi Tate, who wants our church to be like all the others. And Poten Tate wants to be a big shot.

But not all members of the family are bad. Brother Facili Tate is quite helpful in church matters. And a delightful, happy member of the

family is Miss Felici Tate. Cousins Cogi Tate and Medi Tate always think things over and lend helpful, steady hands. And of course, there is the black sheep of the family, Ampu Tate, who has completely cut himself off from the church.

-- Adapted, by Darren Johnson in the Locust Street bulletin, Johnson City

In the Philippines: Growth, Opportunities, Needs

It is estimated that 18,000 of the 22,000 Bible-believing churches were established in the last 20 years! Yet needs still are great.

Writes a missionary leader: "While church growth is high in urban areas, the barrios (rural villages) still lag behind. To reach these areas, there is a need for churches in the main town with a vision for reaching the barrios (a 'satellite' mentality rather than a 'cathedral' one) & mis-

sionaries with coach/trainer gifts are needed who are able to work on-the-job with Filipino workers in reaching the barrios."

Nemesio & Myrna Auxtero write from Manila: "Our ministry here is very challenging. Couples are being won to the Lord. We have meetings at the street fronting the market, competing with the noise of passing vehicles. It is amazing to see how the Lord breaks the stronghold of Satan in this place. More men are eager to hear God's Word. It is nice to see a new glow in their faces as the light of God penetrates their hearts. Many of these people are now attending the church services. "On Saturdays we go to a resettlement area of former squatters . . . a community of 470 families with many children. The people all lack Bibles. They also need medical assistance. Children are malnourished."

IMPORTANT EVENTS DURING 1996

This information is tentative. Help us with updated, more complete details if you can.

Feb. 23-25: Tell City / Lilly Dale Workshop.

Mar. 14-15: S.B.S Annual Conference: Recipe for a More Effective Church--Worship, Instruction, Evangelism, Fellowship & Service. 7 p.m., Southeast Church of Christ.

Apr. 16: Ky. Consortium of Restoration Colleges Lectureship: The Holy Spirit. Speaker: Donald Nash of KCC. Place: College of the Scriptures, Louisville.

Apr. 20: Ladies Inspiration Day, Southeast Church of Christ, Louisville. Theme: Glorifying God Through Women's Ministries

Aug. 5-8: Louisville Christian Fellowship Week. Theme: "Making Connections Spiritually with Outsiders."

Sept. 27-28: Ladies Overnight Retreat, Camp Kavanaugh, Crestwood, Ky.

Nov. 18-21: Central Louisiana Christian Fellowship, Glen Mora.

PRESENT TENSE

*It was spring,
But it was summer I wanted--
The warm days and the great outdoors.
It was summer,
But it was fall I wanted--
The beautiful snow and the joy of
the holiday season.
It was winter,
But it was spring I wanted--
The warmth and the blossoming of nature.
I was a child,
But it was adulthood I wanted--
To be mature and sophisticated.
I was middle-aged,
But it was twenty I wanted--
The youth and the free spirit.
I was retired,
But it was middle-age I wanted--
The presence of mind without limitations.
My life was over--
But I never got what I wanted!*

--Jason Lehman, who was only
14 when he wrote this poem!