

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

FEBRUARY, 2001

**Is Something Wrong With
This Situation?**

**A Major Problem in the
U.S.: being overweight.**

**A Major Problem in the 3rd
World: starvation.**

Leroy Garrett Will Speak at S.B.S. Conference

We eagerly await March 9-10, the upcoming S.B.S. lectureship in Louisville. **Dr. Leroy Garrett** — who prefers to be called simply “Brother Leroy” — is scheduled to speak at every session. He has spoken in past years at our Louisville Christian Fellowship Week, Southeastern Christian College’s Bible conference, and at various gatherings at Ingallwood Park camp in DeRidder, La. He has also permitted W&W to reprint numerous articles he has written.

Brother Leroy studied at 5 colleges or seminaries — including Harvard Divinity School, where he received a Ph.D. in philosophy. While there, he was picked to speak at the campus chapel’s Easter service since he was the only student they could find who believed Jesus literally arose from the dead! Despite being exposed to every subtle expression of skepticism, he held fast to his trust in Christ and the Bible. He proved himself to be a *man of faith*.

In later years he taught philosophy in at least six colleges, including schools representing each of the 3 branches of the Stone-Campbell Movement. But at times he found that many who shared his faith were narrow and contentious. Then he proved to be a *man of love*, who sought to promote graciousness and to build bridges.

For 40 years Brother Garrett edited the magazine *Restoration Review*. Negatively, he exposed the follies of legalism and sectarianism. Positively, he emphasized God’s grace and the need for loving cooperation among Christians despite doctrinal differences. Now Brother Leroy has become highly respected as an “elder statesman” among many Stone-Campbell Movement churches. He has spoken at the Abilene Christian University Bible Lectures, the North American Christian Convention, and numerous unity forums.

He will speak at the S.B.S. Spring Lectureship on Friday, March 9, at 7:00 p.m. and on Saturday, March 10, from 9:00-11:30 a.m. These meetings will be at the Southeast Church of Christ, 12610 Taylorsville Road in Louisville (just in from Snyder Freeway). This is not only S.B.S.’s annual conference, but serves this year as the K.C.R.C. Joint Lectureship. The Kentuckiana Consortium of Restoration Colleges consists of Louisville Bible College and the College of the Scriptures plus the School of Biblical Studies. Everyone is invited to attend.

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Bennie Hill, News & Notes

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EDITORIAL

Remember the Poor

Dennis L. Allen

During the first year we were in Hong Kong we were meeting with a small group already there. A prominent preacher from the States visited one Sunday and was asked to preach. I was drafted to interpret, though my Cantonese was very limited. Maybe it was a blessing to the Chinese considering the content of the message! The preacher declared forcefully, "You will never build a strong congregation with these poor people. You have to find people with education and status." I thought at the time, "Brother, your viewpoint is very different from that of the Lord Jesus."

We cannot escape the fact that He was poor when He was on the earth, even though He had made the world with all its wealth. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." (11 Cor. 8:9.) He was born into poverty. His parents were unable to bring the normal offering for purification. Instead they brought two pigeons. This was characteristic of His whole life here on earth. See also Matt. 8:20; 17:27. When He visited the synagogue in Nazareth he stood and read from Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk. 4: 18-19). In Lk. 7:22 when He gives evidence that He is the Messiah he says, "Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good tidings preached to them."

The primary proof Jesus gave to John was that the Good News was preached to the poor. In the Gospels it is evident that the blind and lame people were often beggars. Prisoners were often put in jail for debt and did not come out until the last penny was paid. Lepers were outcasts and cut off from most means of making a living. We see other references to Jesus' ministry to the poor in Luke—the widow in Nain whose only son had died (Lk. 7: 11-17), the woman who had spent all her living on doctors (Lk.8:43.) See also Lk. 1:53; 3: 12-14.

God has always shown concern for the poor. He was moved by the suffering of His people as slaves in Egypt (Ex. 3:7,8.) "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker; But he that hath mercy on the needy honoreth him" (Prov. 14:31). "He that hath pity on the poor

lendeth unto Jehovah, And his good deed will he pay him again." (Prov. 19: 17). The prophets were especially severe in their denunciation of God's people for their oppression of the poor. (Isa. 10:1-3; Amos 2:7; 5:10-15; 6:1-7.)

It is well for us to remember that Jesus is just as much concerned for the poor today as He was then. Because of the great increase in population today and many other factors, there are more poor in the world today than ever before. This should always be an important factor in our missions strategy. The five countries today with the largest number of absolute poor are China, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Pakistan. But there are other countries with a higher percentage of absolute poor such as Haiti, Burundi, and Papua New Guinea. Many people exist on an income of \$150 a year or less.

It is hard for us to conceive of such poverty. Most of us who went through the depression know something of what it is like to be poor, but that is long past, memories fade, and most Christians today have little conception of real poverty. Just what would a typical Western family need to give up to adopt the lifestyle of a typical family living among our billion hungry neighbors? Economist Robert Heilbroner has helped us to visualize it:

We begin by invading the house of our imaginary American family to strip it of its furniture. Everything goes: beds, chairs, tables, television set, lamps. We will leave the family with a few old blankets, a kitchen table, a wooden chair. Along with the bureaus go the clothes. Each member of the family may keep in his "wardrobe" his oldest suit or dress, a shirt or blouse.

We will permit a pair of shoes for the head of the family, but none for the wife or children.

We move to the kitchen. The appliances have already been taken out, so we turn to the cupboards. The box of matches may stay, a small bag of flour, some sugar and salt. A few moldy potatoes, already in the garbage can, must be rescued, for they will provide much of tonight's meal. We will leave a handful of onions, and a dish of dried beans. All the rest we take away: the meat, the fresh vegetables, the canned goods, the crackers, the candy.

Now we have stripped the house: the bathroom has been dismantled, the running water shut off, the electric wires taken out. Next we take away the house. The family can move to the tool shed....

Communications must go next. No more newspapers, magazines, books -not that they are missed, since we must take away our family's literacy as well. Instead in our shantytown we will allow one radio....

Now government services must go. No more postman, no more fireman. There is a school, but it is three miles away and consists of two classrooms. There are, of course, no hospitals or doctors nearby. The nearest clinic is ten miles away and is tended by a midwife. It can

be reached by bicycle provided that the family has a bicycle, which is unlikely....

Finally, money. We will allow our family a cash hoard of \$5.00. This will prevent our breadwinner from experiencing the tragedy of an Iranian peasant who went blind because he could not raise the \$3.94 which he mistakenly thought he needed to receive admission to a hospital where he could have been cured. *The Great Ascent: The Struggle for Economic Development in Our Time.*

I am not trying to load everyone with a guilt trip, but I think we do need to realize the tendency of affluence to put scales on our eyes and dry up the milk of human kindness in our hearts. We can become unconcerned. (Lk.2: 15.) Covetousness is basically a striving for material possessions. If we find ourselves wanting to acquire more and more possessions that we do not need, we are in the same position as the rich fool. (Lk.12: 16-21.) Do we not often want more sophisticated gadgets, better and faster means of transportation, bigger homes, etc., not because such possessions will truly enrich our lives, or enable us to serve Christ better, but because we have come to expect more and more? The world expects people to live on just as high a life style as they can. Millions go beyond their income through credit card debt, but it should not be so among the true disciples of Christ. A Christian should not buy things just because he can afford them. After all, when is a standard of living "high"? Is it based on the amount of material goods one consumes or when he lives in an improper relationship to God and to other people? Certainly one needs an adequate supply of material resources, but Paul said "food and covering" are the basics. (1 Tim. 6:6-8.) Christians should be the first to consider simple lifestyles and thus witness to others that happiness is not found primarily in material possessions.

This whole question has a close relationship to missions. I believe it is only as Christians adjust their thinking and then their lifestyles to the standards Christ has given us that we will have the resources to minister to the poor and preach the Gospel to the whole world.

I was shocked when a good Christian woman said to me, "I don't know any needy people." She was, of course, thinking of her own narrow circle of contacts. It is easy in this country to have no contact with the "haunts of wretchedness and need". But what of the world around us? Unless we shut ourselves off from the news media we can hardly be unaware of the tremendous need in the Third World. I feel indebted to ministries like World Vision, Food for the Hungry, Voice of the Martyrs, and Open Doors which continually remind us of the pressing need to serve the poor in His Name. In today's world we cannot excuse ourselves just on the basis of distance. Now we can walk by on the other side even though our "neighbor" is in Bangladesh or the Sudan, because we know of his need and we have the means to help him.

(Jas. 5:3-5.) If you personally know of individuals to whom or through whom you can minister in Christ's Name it is even better.

In the story of the rich man and Lazarus Jesus does not indicate that the rich man exploited or mistreated Lazarus. He simply had no real concern for him. Probably he was willing for him to have the scraps that fell from his table, since it cost him nothing. When we think of the destruction of Sodom we associate it with their gross sexual perversion. But that was not the only reason. (See Ezek. 16:49,50.) The first reasons given were: they were overfed, unconcerned, and did not help the poor and needy. Does this not sound painfully like us? Dare I spell it out--like twenty-first century American Christians? We have to go on diets because we continually eat too much.

Some day we will be confronted by the words of the Lord Jesus and rejoice or be dismayed, "I was hungry and ye gave me to eat, I was thirsty and ye gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me" (Matt. 25:35-36). In answer to the question, "Lord, When"? Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). On the other hand there is the dreadful prospect of failing to minister to Christ Himself because of our neglect. (Matt. 25:45.)

Other articles and news items in this issue will suggest ways we can minister to the poor in Jesus' Name.

LOTUS EATERS

R. H. Boll

After ten years of arduous warfare in the siege of Troy, Ulysses (so the ancient tale runs) with his companions, turned their hearts eagerly homeward. Among the perils of their journey there was one that proved well-nigh fatal. They had anchored their ship on an unknown coast, and were met by friendly natives who offered them lotus plant which had the peculiar property of causing all who ate of it to forget their business, their homes and their destination, and to settle down in dreamy apathy. When the companions of Ulysses ate of the lotus a soft languorous feeling came over them. All thoughts of home and loved ones seemed to fade from their thoughts, and they forgot the object of all their journey. They refused to go back to the hardship and danger of the journey, and were content to dwell and live and die in the land of the lotus-eaters.

One can hardly read the old myth without seeing the application as a parable. The Christian, too, is on a homeward journey, a pilgrim and

a stranger in the world, after the pattern of Abraham, who being called of God, went forth to find a promised inheritance, looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Among the sweet songs we sing, this is one of the sweetest.

“I’m a pilgrim and I’m a stranger,
I can tarry, I can tarry but a night--
Do not detain me, for I am going
To where the fountains are ever flowing.

“Of that city to which I journey
My Redeemer, my Redeemer is the light--
There is no sorrow, nor any sighing,
Nor any tears there, nor any dying.

“There the sunbeams are ever shining,
O my longing heart, my longing heart is there.
Here in this country so dark and dreary,
I long have wandered, forlorn and weary--

“I’m a pilgrim and I’m a stranger,
I can tarry, I can tarry but a night.”

But one day the song is hushed. A strange lethargy has befallen the pilgrim. He has forgotten his calling and the goal of his pilgrimage. His zeal, his aspiration, his hope, has well-nigh faded away. What has happened? The world is full of lotus and lotus-eaters. Has he fallen in with them and eaten of the fatal weed? Likely so. “Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims that ye abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,” says the apostle Peter. That is the fatal lotus which makes the Christian forget his purpose and his calling and inheritance. The love of money, the quest for honor among men, and popularity—“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life”—these are the tempting lotus-leaves which are offered to God’s pilgrims. The booths of Vanity Fair are filled with such wares. He stops and eats and grows forgetful of his high and holy destiny. A drowsy feeling enwraps his soul, a deadening of his spiritual sensibilities, a dreary indifference to the things of God. He has eaten the lotus.

Haste thee, my brother, to the good Physician, if perhaps the poison may be removed, and the heart renewed unto repentance and by His grace you may again sing the joyful song of your pilgrimage to the home of God.

TRUE STORY FROM CHINA

A Chinese itinerant evangelist was traveling one Christmas in the rugged province of Gansu. He trudged on foot from village to village. It was snowing and a cold wind blew, but his heart was warm.

This was his first trip as an evangelist, and he had made quite a few converts in the five villages he had just visited. But as he approached the sixth village, he was to be catapulted into a drama that, when looked back upon, seemed like a replay of Bethlehem itself.

He tells the story with great emotion:

As I drew near the village, I sensed that something was wrong. People were huddled together, talking in low tones, glances darting accusingly at each other."

I introduced myself to them. "Greetings, I am the bearer of the Good News, that..."

A small man interrupted me. "Well, we have only bad news here right now." With ill-concealed irritation, he explained, "A couple has just had their baby stolen."

In the poorer areas of China, where couples are restricted to one child, baby snatching is not uncommon. Indeed, there are even gangs that roam the countryside, stealing babies for wealthy childless couples in the cities.

I asked to see the couple, but the people just said to me, "Go away. We don't want you here. Stop pestering us and move on."

Tears sprang into my eyes. I had rarely been spoken to like that. Should I shake the dust from my sandals and move on? Or should I strive with them a while?

"Please take me to the couple," I pleaded with the villagers. "I may be able to help."

Reluctantly, maybe only because I was a stranger, they took me to the cottage of the unfortunate couple. I stepped inside the house to find both husband and wife staring quietly at me. Other villagers crowded at the doorway.

There was silence. The couple's grief hung heavily in the air. I said, "I'm so sorry to hear about your plight, but I know someone who may help...God. Let me pray to Him."

There was no reaction on the couple's faces, so I went into my prayer, feeling very uncomfortable indeed. "Dear Father, many years ago at this same time of year you sent a child into the world and rescued us all. We ask now that you will send back this child to us, and deliver this village from the sadness that grips it. Amen."

Suddenly the young husband spoke. "Shut up and go away. We have prayed to our gods and nothing has happened. Why should yours be any different?" I was grabbed from behind by the other villagers and propelled out of the village. "Don't you dare come here again!" they bawled as I retreated.

Failure and Resolve

What a failure! I wandered the hills in a daze of humiliation and tears. "Lord, have I prayed in vain?" I shouted.

Then I stopped, and began to think a little about Christmas. The Son of God had come to a world knowing He would be despised, kicked, beaten, misunderstood and finally crucified. Yet He still came.

And I thought, "I went to that village expecting a hero's welcome, or at the very least, I relied on being a curiosity, quizzed and entertained by people who live very dull and isolated lives. Instead, I had only been treated a little like Christ was treated."

Kneeling there in the snow, I knew what I had to do. I had to go back to that village, knowing for sure I would be despised. This was to follow in the Master's footsteps. He had the courage. So must I.

Yet I quaked with fear. Those villagers had handled me very roughly. My arms and shoulders were still sore from the bruises they had inflicted when they grabbed me.

With a pounding heart, I turned and began to walk slowly back towards the village. It was going to be dangerous, and what would I say?

Welcome Sound

Suddenly, in the still afternoon air, I heard a baby's cry.

I headed toward the sound. There was the cry again, coming from what appeared to be an old well shaft.

I reached the shaft. Six feet down was a little baby, wrapped in a thick blanket, lying at the bottom of the dry well.

"Lord I praise you," I shouted into the well, and the booming echo frightened the child into another whimper. The baby was blue in the face, and I climbed down to hug some warmth back into it.

This must be the missing baby from the village, snatched only that morning. I unwrapped the blanket. Ah, there was the explanation, it was a baby girl. Those who had taken it did not know it was a girl, and finding later that it was, left it in this old well to die. The city couples that finance this hideous trade invariably want only males.

I walked back to the village with the precious bundle of life clasped to my breast. The villagers came running. They were amazed and overjoyed. Loving hands led me to the cottage of the poor couple, and the smile on the mother's face as I placed the baby into her lap was unforgettable.

"Come, warm yourself by the fire", said the husband. They drew up a chair for me, and as the other villagers crowded around, he asked, "Who was that God you prayed to?"

Honored Guest

What an invitation! Here I was, the honored guest, looking at 30 people waiting eagerly to hear the Gospel.

"Well," I began, "He came to earth in the form of a little baby, just about this time 2000 years ago... ."

The couple believed in Jesus that night, and I learned a great lesson. I only heard that baby's cry because I had turned to go back to the village. If I had refused, I would have walked in an entirely different direction, far out of earshot of the baby's cry.

If I had not had the courage to take the Gospel despite the consequences, I would never have found the baby, never have introduced people to the Lord. I had to first accept the price of evangelism, of taking the Good News knowing I would be despised, caring nothing for myself.

I gained a great insight that Christmas into the courage the Lord Jesus showed in coming to such an unwelcoming village as our world. I went back to that village reluctantly. He came willingly.

--Open Doors Newsbrief

Diana--A Story of Hope for the Future of Africa

Kathie Watters of Wycliffe Bible Translators

Over the last seven years I have had the joy of seeing God call and equip one young African woman to be a partner with her husband in a ministry of love and compassion to her own people. Hers is not the only such story, but it is the one I know best....

I remember the day I met Diana*. She was 17 and frail from six years of refugee living. She spoke Kraun* and her country's trade language. She was shy. The first time I greeted her, she giggled nervously and stared at her feet. Mark*, a friend and student, introduced us. He was from her country and had experienced a remarkable conversion from another religion. He was in Kenya learning how to translate the Bible.

Because Mark was certain that God had brought Diana to Kenya to be his wife, he wanted to help her get an English education and training in a skill. He didn't even know yet if they would ever marry. But the Lord impressed on my heart that the most important contribution I could ever make to the Kraun church was to take an active part in Diana's training.

Diana's first step was language school, where she learned to speak, read and write English. I then taught Diana to read and write her own language. She attended typing school and was soon typing Kraun folk tales.

One day I saw some pictures she had sketched in the margins of her notebook and realized she had a gift. A friend agreed to help Diana improve her drawing. She taught Diana how to ink her sketches and do layout and lettering. Diana's first project, a Kraun alphabet chart, was the first piece of literacy material ever produced in her language.

Some time later Diana and Mark married. She was soon pregnant, and a precious baby, Luke*, was born. We began working on an alphabet book, the first in a series of primers to teach her people how to read. One day I gave Diana a miniature mock-up of the proposed book, and I had only a short time to explain the process. A week later I returned to check her progress.

She invited me into their small apartment. It was still early in the morning, and I had awakened her. She had had a long night with their newborn baby. Luke now asleep at last in the middle of their bed. Mark

had gone to town to arrange their trip back to their home country. We went into the kitchen, and Diana put some water on for tea. In her kitchen hung a maze of clothesline filled with strips of salt-dredged meat hanging to dry. She was making beef jerky. On the windowsill were trays of sliced okra drying in the sun.

"Why are you drying all this food?" I asked.

"Because they say food is expensive at home, and we still don't know if we will have a house to live in or any money," she said. They had a job to do but no guarantee that their church, a poor church in a war-torn country, would be able to pay Mark a salary.

As she prepared the tea, I went into the living room. There, spread out on the table, was Diana's work: the drawings, ink, scissors and mock-up. In the middle of it all was the final paste-up of the book. Diana nursed Luke while we sat looking at her work. She had completed half the book. It was lovely! We talked about how she might finish the book. Occasionally she would interrupt our conversation to coo at her baby or tweak his cheek to quiet him. Luke didn't seem to appreciate his mother talking while he was drinking his milk.

What a precious moment! There sat Diana, a wife and mother at 19, able to speak, read and write in three languages, able to type, draw and make books in her own language.

The tea was ready. Diana prayed. Whenever we had prayed together in the past, she would pray in Kraun. Today she prayed in English so I could understand what was on her heart. She thanked God for the food and then asked Him for strength to accomplish her work. She also prayed for the ability to teach other Kraun women how to read and write so that someday they too could understand His Word.

A year later a friend went to Diana's country to help with a literacy workshop. She returned with a calendar that Diana, Mark and some Kraun people had made. The style resembled Diana's drawings, but they weren't done as well.

"Are these Diana's pictures?" I asked.

"Oh, no," she said, "those are pictures drawn by Kraun women who learned to draw from Diana."

Diana is not only passing on her design skills, but she is also one of the team's typists. Their translation team has grown and produced many literacy booklets and Old Testament stories. They have also started translating the New Testament.

When the Israelites were in exile in Babylon, far from home and feeling forsaken, God sent them a message through Jeremiah: I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster; plans to bring about the future you hope for (Jer. 29:11).

I often remember Diana's prayer. I have realized that she expressed a plan already in the mind of God when time began. My dream for Africa is that God would enable us to see Diana's story repeated in Bible translation projects across the continent.

From -- *In Other Words*, Spring, 2000

*Pseudonyms

Indonesia Revisited

Johan Companjen

I am deeply shocked to see and hear what has taken place in this country since my last visit.

The young jihad warriors have swarmed over the whole of Indonesia. By now we know what terrible consequences this has had on the Moluccas. But they have spread death and destruction on other islands too.

According to reliable sources, at least 3,000 Christians have been killed in Indonesia in the past few years. No one can give an exact figure. A missionary told me how Christians have been attacked in the various towns and villages. Many are in the hospital with their limbs severed. Churches and houses have been destroyed, villages burned to the ground. Because of the vast distances and isolation of the various islands, it is difficult to gain a complete picture and report everything correctly.

Yesterday morning, I was speaking at the Doulos Bible School, on the outskirts of Jakarta. Last December, a gang of 400 or 500 youths, who call themselves "Defenders of Islam," attacked the campus of the Doulos Institute. They set all the buildings on fire and caused real devastation. One student was killed and 40 others were wounded. Twelve of those injured were drug addicts who were part of a rehabilitation program. Dormitories, the library and the main building were destroyed.

With help from abroad, the main building has now been restored. I met Domingus, one of the boys who was seriously injured in the attack. The scars he showed me spoke for themselves. At first, he was

believed to be dead, but he came to life again, as if by a miracle from God.

"It was as if I were in heaven for a moment," he told me. "Wonderful! People were singing; they were worshiping God. I saw figures in very bright robes. Then I heard a voice saying that my task on earth had not yet been completed. I want to serve God for the rest of my life."

The school is still under threat. The opponent wants the doors to be closed for good. But the leaders are persevering courageously.

Two weeks after the attack, ten new students had already enrolled. Four months later, a hundred more students had joined. Here young people are trained to bring the Gospel to the unreached people groups of the Indonesian archipelago.

"We think it is a privilege that God finds us worthy of suffering for Him," they told me. "But we cannot do it without your help. We are experiencing a lot of opposition, even from the authorities. Please help us, pray for us."

--Open Doors Newsbrief

Update on Persecution Worldwide

Brother Andrew

As we begin the second year of the new millennium, I am carrying a deep burden because of the incredible number of brothers and sisters suffering severely for their faith. For example, Christians are heavily persecuted in 28 countries; and in 23 others, they suffer discrimination and severe harassment.

The German news agency IDEA estimates that 43 million Christians have been martyred since Jesus was crucified.

Only the Father knows the exact number of those who have lost their lives for their faith. I give you this estimate to help you visualize the big picture--and to encourage your resolve to "strengthen what remains and is about to die" as we start 2001.

These are some of the recent stories of suffering:

Pakistan--Two Christian brothers were sentenced to 35 years in prison on blasphemy charges. Both are married. Rasheed, 33, has five children; Saleem, 29, has three.

Peru--Antonio Izuisa Chasnamote, a village evangelical leader, was executed by Marxist guerrillas. His eight children witnessed his martyrdom.

Tajikistan--The Sonmin Grace Church was bombed by Muslim extremists, killing 10 Christians, leaving 7 in critical condition, and hospitalizing 39 others.

Cuba--Several house churches are threatened with closure; their leaders face prison if they refuse to shut down. The home of Jorge Ferrer, co-pastor of the 1,000-member Evangelical League Church, was seized by state security agents. His family was evicted and tossed out onto the street.

Indonesia--As I write, religious violence has left 3,931 dead; 746 seriously wounded; and 632 injured. And 168 churches, 14,217 homes, and 115 schools have been destroyed.

Nigeria--Nearly 900 Christians were killed and 800 churches were burned or demolished in Kaduna state in the ongoing religious conflicts.

China--Sixty security troops were recently sent to re-arrest 81-year-old Bishop Zeng Jingmu of Jiangxi Province. Prior to his release in 1998, Bishop Zeng was in a labor camp for holding unauthorized religious services.

India--Persecution of Christians is increasing dramatically in Orissa state, with apparent government sanction.

Sudan--The Islamic government continues to condone the slaughter and enslavement of non-Muslims in the south; the bombing of schools, hospitals, and humanitarian relief workers; and the forced Conversion of Christians to Islam.

Bits and pieces. Several names. A few statistics. These are global snapshots of the Persecuted Church. And they testify to two critical facts.

First, they combine to form an impassioned plea to you and me for help.

Second, they remind us that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12).

One of the greatest spiritual wars of all time stands before us right now. It will not move from our path, and we cannot go around it. Our only hope is to charge through it, fully armed and armored, under the banner of the Son of God.

And one of the fiercest spiritual battles we face continues to be China.

The first prong is to distribute more Bibles, including Pastors' Study Bibles, than ever before to our persecuted brothers and sisters.

The second prong is to significantly increase our support of new schools to multiply our training efforts. This comes as a result of our successful Christian leadership training program conducted throughout China--through which many underground house church networks have started their own Bible schools to train new pastors.

Providing both training and Bibles is critical as it is now estimated that 25,000 Chinese accept Christ every day. And the persecution and danger increase accordingly.

One of our Bible distributors reports:

"I was working late in a Bible depot when suddenly there was a loud bang on the door. I knew the visitors were not friendly because they did not knock in code. My heart thumped, and I quailed inside. Something warned me not to open the door though I thought this was foolishness since all the lights were on and it was obvious that someone was in. So I crouched down and waited.

"I could hear what seemed to be three men talking. I didn't know whether they were robbers or police. Then I heard one of them say he was going to climb the building and videotape what was inside through the window. I heard his feet booming up the corrugated iron structure.

"But as he neared the window, I heard him slip. He cursed and something bounced down the side of the building and smashed. There was silence. Then the men began to quarrel loudly. Apparently, he had dropped the video camera, and his supervisor was furious and said that the damage would come out of his wages. They got into such an argument that they forgot why they had come. They drifted off, I made a quick telephone call, and we moved the Bibles out that night. When the police returned in the morning, there was only empty floor."

Unfortunately, not all the reports we receive have a sigh of relief at the end. Father Jiang Sunian, an underground Catholic priest work-

ing in the Zhejiang Province, was recently sent to prison for six years for printing Bibles without official permission.

Suffering and Martyrdom: God's Strategy in the World

Josef Tson

Jesus Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords, calls people to Himself and demands from them total allegiance to Himself. Nothing of this world, not father or mother, husband or wife, son or daughter, or material goods, ought to stand between Him and His children. Jesus expects them to learn from Him and to become like Him. Then Jesus sends them into the world, to spread His message and to be His witnesses. He knows that the world will hate His witnesses and will turn against them with merciless violence. Nonetheless, He expects them to meet that hatred with love, and to face that violence with glad acceptance, following His example by suffering and dying for the lost world. Their suffering and martyrdom are prompted by their allegiance to His own Person and are endured for the purpose of spreading His gospel. Christ's disciples do not seek these things for their own sake, and they do not inflict these on themselves. Their goal is not to suffer and to die; on the contrary, their goal is Christ's Person and Christ's cause in the world, the spreading of His gospel.

Suffering for Christ is not only the suffering of persecution. It begins when one leaves close relatives for the service of Christ. For some, it means selling their possessions and giving them to the poor, which often means giving them for the propagation of the gospel. For others, suffering for Christ may mean agonizing in prayer for the cause of Christ, or agonizing and toiling for the building up of the body of Christ and the perfecting of the saints. Again, to clarify this concept, suffering for Christ is not a self-inflicted suffering. The disciple of Christ seeks to do the will of Christ and to promote the cause of Christ. However, suffering for Christ does mean that the disciple will voluntarily involve himself in suffering and in sacrificial living for Christ and His gospel.

Furthermore, a disciple of Christ thinks as a slave of Christ; he is totally at the disposition of the Master. It is the Master who decides what kind of service this particular disciple should perform. The first duty of the disciple is, therefore, to discover the will of this Master and to do it with joy and passion. If and only if the disciple does his

duty can he be certain that his Master is always with him, living in and through him to accomplish His own purposes.

Martyrdom is the function God gives to some of His elect to literally die for the sake of Christ and His gospel. From what the Scriptures intimate, it is apparent that there is a fixed number of God's children who have been predestined by God for this supreme sacrifice. For some, martyrdom might be a quick event, like being shot or beheaded, but for others it could also be preceded by torture. God may have in His plan a long martyrdom of toiling in a labor camp or the misery and pain of a long imprisonment. In such a situation, even if the Christian is released after some time and the actual death occurs at home because of his health having been shattered by the long detention and suffering, I believe that God still reckons the death as a martyrdom. In our more sophisticated age, martyrdom might also take the shape of an imprisonment in a psychiatric hospital--a modern form of torture that is possibly the most cruel form of martyrdom where one's mental health and even one's personality are utterly ruined by means of drugs and other psychological torture.

God does everything with a purpose. If He chooses to call His children to suffering and self-sacrifice, He must have very important purposes to achieve through them. Hence, it is the duty of the children to obey their Father even if they do not understand the purpose or rationale behind the Father's command. But the Father wants His children to understand Him because He wants them to develop a mind like His. Therefore, He has revealed His mind, His purposes, and His methods to His children in His written Word and in His Incarnate Word.

God entered into history by sending His Incarnate Son as a suffering slave who would end His own earthly life enduring torture and martyrdom. In this event, God revealed to us that suffering and self sacrifice are His specific methods of tackling the problems of rebellion, or evil, and of the sin of mankind. Self-sacrifice is the only method consistent with His own nature. For instance, God cannot respond to hate with hate, because if He did He would borrow not only the method but also the nature of the one who is the originator of hate, the evil one. God can only respond with love because He is love, and by suffering and sacrificing Himself for the ones who hate Him, He expresses the essence of His own nature.

Now, the ones who are born of God have become partakers of the nature of God (2 Pet 1:4). Therefore, the children of God are called to tackle the problems of this world with the same agape love which is the nature of God (1 John 4:4-21). More than this, Christ united Himself with His brethren in a union that is comparable to His union with

the Father (John 17:21-26). Christ lives in them and continues His work in the world through them. But He has not changed the strategy He used when He was in the world. His method is still the method of the cross. With this in mind, Christ told His disciples that He would send them into the world just as His Father had sent Him into the world; in other words, He sent them to be in the same position and to conquer by the same method, namely, the method of the cross. For precisely this reason, Jesus asked them to take up their own crosses and follow His example by going into all the world to preach the gospel (to witness), to serve others, and to die for others. Their crosses represent their voluntary, sacrificial involvement in the fulfillment of their Father's purposes with mankind.

Three basic things are achieved by the deaths of the martyrs:

1. The triumph of God's truth
2. The defeat of Satan
3. The glory of God

Martyrdom and the Triumph of God's Truth

The unredeemed world lives in spiritual darkness. The eyes of unbelievers have been darkened by Satan, resulting in their hatred of the light of truth. For people who have lived a long time in darkness, a bright light that suddenly shines upon them produces pain. They cannot stand the light. They hate the light, and they do their best to put it out. Jesus explained the world's reaction to His own coming into the world in these terms (John 3:19-20), and He told His disciples to expect exactly the same kind of treatment.

Speaking in modern terms, each group of people on this planet considers its own religion to be one of its most precious treasures. Thus telling them that their faith is wrong or untrue becomes an unforgivable offense and insult against them. The attempt to change their religion is perceived as an attack on their "national identity." This is why Christian missionaries are met with hostility and violence in every place to which they carry the gospel. For his part, the missionary must be convinced that the population to which he takes the Word lives in the lie of Satan and is damned to hell as a result of it. If the missionary is not convinced of this, he will not risk his life to kindle the light in their midst.

However, when the ambassador of Christ speaks the truth in love, and meets death with joy, a strange miracle occurs: the eyes of the unbelievers are opened, they are enabled to see the truth of God, and this leads them to believe in the gospel. Ever since the centurion's eyes were opened at Calvary, ever since he believed that Jesus was the Son

of God because he had seen the manner of His death (Mark 15:39), thousands and thousands of Christian martyrdoms over the centuries have produced the same results. Moreover, this was precisely what Tertullian had in mind when he wrote that the blood of the martyrs is the seed out of which new Christians are born. Many, many groups of people on this planet have testified that the darkness which had been over them was dissipated only when a missionary was killed there. However, countless areas and peoples of the world today so experience a darkness that will be vanquished only when enough Christians have given up their lives in martyrdom.

Martyrdom and the Defeat of Satan

Jesus saw His own coming into this world as an invasion of the strong man's house in order to spoil his goods (Matt. 12:29). He saw the Prince of this world being cast out at His own death (John 12:31-33), and as a result of the ministry of His own disciples (Luke 10:17-19), Jesus taught them not to be afraid of the ones who can kill only the body, and He charged them to bravely lose their lives in order to gain the victory (Matt. 10:26-39). Hence, John was simply following the teaching of his Lord when he depicted the casting out of Satan and his defeat through the deaths of the martyrs in Revelation 12:9-11.

Satan has two instruments with which he keeps humans in bondage and slavery. His first instrument is sin. The sins of people are Satan's "certificate of ownership." But this document was nailed to the cross of Calvary and was canceled by the death of Christ (Col. 2:14-15). Satan's second instrument is the fear of dying (Heb. 2:14-15). Again, by His own death, Jesus liberated His own from the fear of death. When the martyrs meet their death without fear, Satan's last instrument is rendered powerless, and he is crushed and defeated.

As the deceiver of the nations, Satan maintains their enslavement by keeping them in the darkness of his deception. When the martyrs cause the truth of God to shine brightly among the nations, those who were formerly in the bondage of darkness respond by turning back to God. The death of the martyrs opens the eyes of unbelievers, and when they see the light, Satan's power over them is gone. We have further proof of this reality in the Book of Revelation, where we see the knowledge of God coming to all the nations as a result of the deaths of the martyrs (Rev. 11:1-19; 14:1-12, 15:2-4). The martyrs are shown to defeat Satan by bringing all the nations to God through their witness and death.

The story of Job shows us another aspect of Satan's defeat by the faithfulness in suffering of God's people. Job's refusal to curse God demonstrated to the whole population of heaven that God had genuine worshippers on the earth, thus proving Satan wrong. The suffering of

Job was watched by the hosts of heaven as an extraordinary spectacle. It appears that Paul had the experience of Job in mind when, speaking of the suffering of the apostles, he said that they "have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men" (1 Cor. 4:9).

Writing from prison about his own ministry, Paul told the Ephesians that "the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places" now have the opportunity of knowing God's "manifold wisdom" as it is being manifested in the Church (Eph. 3:10). Paul was talking about the same wisdom of God that he had earlier described in 1 Corinthians 1:17-31. This is the wisdom of God which the world considers utter foolishness; that He sent His only Son to die on the cross. However, the manifestations of God's wisdom in this world did not end with Jesus on the cross; it is continued in His children when they obey God's commission to go into the world and to sacrifice themselves for the cause of Christ. As they conquer by dying God's children demonstrate His wisdom to the whole cosmos. Moreover, by their witness and death, Satan is discredited and defeated.

Martyrdom and the Glory of God

Jesus described the outcome of His crucifixion as both His own glorification and as the glorification of God (John 12:27-32; 13:31-32). Yet death by crucifixion was one of the most shameful and barbaric modes of execution; how could that be considered an act glorifying to God? The answer becomes clear when one sees what that act has revealed to the world. In Christ's voluntary suffering for the salvation of mankind, the true nature of God was revealed. His essence was shown to be perfect love, utterly and unconditionally giving itself to others, even enduring pain and death for them. The glory of God shines through the beauty and splendor of self-sacrifice as nowhere else and, most importantly, this glory of God, the glory of His self-sacrificing love, shines out in each martyrdom. For this reason, John referred to the martyrdom of Peter as "the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God" (John 21:19, NIV). It was also the reason why Paul was so determined to glorify Christ by his own dying (Phil 1:20, NASB).

Martyrdom has the power of revealing the love of God to those in darkness. Herein lies its power to convince and to persuade; people see the love of God in the death of the martyr and are compelled to believe in God's love and sacrifice for them. Paul expressed the same idea in the concept of reflecting the image of Christ or the glory of God to other people through our suffering and our loving self-sacrifice for others (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:1-15). As the knowledge of Christ and the grace of God is spread to more and more people through the sacrifice of the children of God, there is more and more thanksgiving, praise, and glory given to God.

VOICES From The FIELDS

Mark & Candy Garrett
November, 2000

Senegal, West Africa

I've worn a lot of different hats as a missionary in Senegal. But I believe the job of directing the Pastor's Book Set conference may prove to be the most significant one of our whole four year term. We saw God provide in many miraculous ways to equip His servants here in Senegal and all across West Africa. Here's how it happened....

The planning for this project started years in advance. All the books would be ordered well in advance and received months before the distribution conferences.

However, the best laid plans of mice and men did go awry! Some of the titles were printed as far away as Sri Lanka. Power outages, strikes, and missing documents slowed the projected delivery of others. How can you have a Pastor's Book Set conference without any books? That seemed to be the reality we were faced with the week before the conference.

But the Lord provided just at the last moment and all went fairly smoothly. As I look back on it, I really did have a peace in the middle of all the uncertainties about the coming of the books. In many ways it was out of my hands, so I just prayed, asked others to join in praying and concentrated on the other details of the conference.

There were two shipments of books. Both were delayed. Neither could have arrived in time under normal circumstances. But God intervened.

The ship from France finally arrived in Dakar on Sat. 16th. We were wondering how it was even possible to get the books through customs in less than a week. Power outages hampered the customs officials from their work. The shipping company couldn't find the original papers for our shipment! But after phoning France and faxes flying around, the permissions were in hand. We collected the pallets on Thursday morning the day before the end of the conference. A small team made fast work of bagging 159 sets for distribution the next day. Praise the Lord for His perfect timing! For us of course it seemed like we were saved "by the skin of our teeth!"

That Friday afternoon it all came together as we distributed 158 sets of 36 books.

On the teaching side of the conference, things went well. Everyone really appreciated Chawkat Moucarray, author of one of the books in the set. He talked about how to understand and witness to Muslims. He spoke with authority, not just based on his studies in Islamology but based on his experience in evangelism among Muslims.

One of the workshops caused a great deal of heated debate. "How to harmonize the Bible and Traditional religion." This session raised important issues about world views and cultural awareness. How does a Christian bring his view of the world (from his upbringing) into line with what the Bible reveals? How can the Church keep from mixing Christianity with Traditional religion?

One of the participants is an evangelist in a Wolof area where he and his co-worker are the only Christians in a sea of Muslims. After the conference he told me that he was reading *To the Ends of the Earth* by Jean Isch. He said the stories of the missionaries in the book were encouraging him to persevere in a hard place.

Tim & Dawn Yates
Nov. 2000

Charlestown, NSW, Australia

With all the hype and all the build-up over the Olympic Games, there is now a tremendous sense of let-down in most Australians. The experience of the Olympics was a wonderful high while it lasted, but just like everything else in life, it's a high that has not lasted for long. As we continue to minister in Australia we are constantly learning about the culture and the nature of Australian people. I'm sure it won't take much convincing from me for you to realize that Australians love sport. Recreation seems to be in their blood from the time they are born.

But it also has its price. As Australians become more and more dedicated to recreation and sport, there seems to be very little time for anything else. The work week is simply endured so that on the weekend, you can spend all of your time relaxing. Church is very seldom considered when planning out the weekend's activities. This, quite frankly, is one of the most frustrating parts about working here. We are in constant competition with all the school sports and other activities that happen on Sunday morning. Preaching the Gospel is not the problem. ..having people there to listen to the Message is the most challenging issue of all.

Our young mums outings are still a huge success. Lord willing, we will be able to start a devotional with the meetings, now that we are getting to know some of the non-Christian mums on a personal level.

All our girls are doing really well. Lauren is the top of her class in reading. We are very proud of her. Leah has not been very well since we have lived here. She was having a lot of breathing problems and vomiting episodes as well as being on puffers and treatments for asthma. Finally, after being told we would have to live with it, we decided to get rid of the carpet and see if it made a difference. Amazingly, Leah has gone over two months now (a record) without a problem. I can not tell you what a relief it is not to have to deal with that on a normal basis! God is good, and we are so thankful the problem is solved. Anna is just about to walk, but hasn't taken that first step yet. She says quite a few words and is still as social as ever. It is hard to believe she will be a year old soon!

Many have been wondering about our status with our Permanent Residency. At the writing of this newsletter, we are still waiting for our bridging visa. Because the government still hasn't made a decision about the permanent residency, we are required to get a bridging visa that "bridges" the gap of time from the expiration of our temporary permit to the (Lord willing) approval of our permanent residency visa. Fortunately, we have a very capable lawyer who is handling the paperwork for us. We are also fortunate that to process our bridging visas, they actually have to have our passports. That means that even if we wanted to, we can't leave the country at the expiration of our current visa. There are really no other details that I can share beyond that. These things take time, and we are best to just leave it to the Lord.

Paul & Virginia Kitzmiller
December 22, 2000

St. Petersburg, Russia

OUTREACH TO ORPHANS IS GROWING. We are especially encouraged by some of the developments that we have seen in this ministry. Currently, Virginia and Anya, our interpreter, are working with a group of six second-graders at Orphanage 51. We are permitted to "tell Bible stories" as well as play with the children and show them some individual attention. Earlier this month we were trusted by the orphanage staff to take these children to the local circus. The children's appreciation for our presence with them seems to be growing each week. We are thankful to report that during our upcoming absence from the scene, Anya has purposed to continue these visits on her own.

We are also pleased to report that when we asked our Narvskaya congregation if they would like to help provide some candy for the children's New Year's celebration, the response was immediate and generous. Although our work with the older group of orphans has not been as consistent as we would have liked, we have still seen some progress. These young people (ages ranging from 15 to 18) live in

dorms and have supervision, but also have some freedom to come and go as they please. It may take a little longer for this ministry to develop, but it has great potential. As with the younger children, we cannot have formal Bible classes, but we can meet with them regularly and talk about the Bible while we study English (or some other subject). Already, Misha, a young man contacted through this program, has twice visited our Sunday worship services.

This fall we have averaged almost 19 each Sunday for worship attendance at church. Within this small group of attendees, four are women named "Anya." One of those "Anyas" visited us for the first time this fall and is not yet a Christian, but we are pleased to say that she has attended very regularly and has shown great interest.

Since our last general newsletter was sent out, we made a trip to Kineshma. We found it to be a very encouraging and worthwhile journey. Sasha P was recently elected as a member of the Kineshma Duma (similar to a city council). Sasha is a school director (principal) and well-acquainted with several of the American Christians who have visited Kineshma in the past. Perhaps good things will come from this.

We recently became acquainted with Helen, a young woman from Kineshma who now lives in St Petersburg. Just a few years ago, she visited the U.S., including Louisville and Portland Christian School, as a part of an exchange team from Kineshma. At that time she was not a Christian, but since then she has become a Christian and has been attending a Christian University in St Pete. She told us about friends that she has in Kineshma who want to know more about God. She hopes to be able to return and help them.

Although some Russians seem to be getting along fine and some are even prospering, in general the economic conditions are not good for most. Many, including well trained and educated people, are reduced to working for almost nothing and are just barely able to get by. Even the thieves have had to become more "resourceful." Previously, we told you about Kineshma where daredevils are stealing street light electric cables from the public utility poles. Since then we read about an instance in the Kaliningrad region where two men stole a water tower and sold it for scrap metal. We also read about an even more serious problem in Vladivostok where thieves are raiding the pipelines that supply hot water to apartment buildings causing many people to be without heat. Lord willing, we will soon be on our way to the States for a short visit. We are looking forward to a good time with family and friends.

Robert & Joy Garret
December, 2000

Ruwa, Zimbabwe

Towards an Eldership: The word of God works in wonderful ways. For the past two months each Sunday morning I have been visiting different congregations giving lessons on leadership. The lessons were concerning the kind of spiritual leadership that the Lord wants in His church leading towards the appointment of Elders. The lessons were not evangelistic but directed towards every believer serving the Lord. The first time I gave the lesson several came forward at the invitation, one for baptism and others for confession of sin and rededication. The next Sunday at a different congregation the same phenomena happened, and this was repeated every place I gave that lesson. I had not thought of the lesson as being evangelistic, nor in the vein of calling straying believers back to the Lord, yet that was the result the Lord was giving! Surely the Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, and who knows which part of God's word the Lord will use to pierce a heart and bring that soul closer to Him.

Kuwadzana Over 300 attended Kuwadzana's Big Sunday. This was to celebrate and give thanks to God for the use of their new building. Although it is not yet completed they have been able to use the building since we put the roof on two years ago. In November I managed to get the steps built on one of the side entrances and the concrete floor with ramp poured for the front and the other side entrance which is also a veranda serving a couple of rooms and the toilets. In doing that, one of the workers accidentally cut the water line (plastic) which the plumbing contractor had not buried deep enough. I took out the feeder line from the meter and redid everything in galvanized to serve the toilets and the mandatory Fire Hose. I hung a couple of doors and installed an outside sink (made of concrete) for washing up. There still remains a few doors to be hung, some hand basins to be installed, and then the biggest job remaining is the ceiling. The ceiling is required by the municipal by-laws. We will have a contractor to do that. It must be fireproof plaster!

Water Tank: Here at the Ruwa Camp our water system is gravity fed after being pumped from a well into an overhead tank. Our existing tanks have taken care of our needs up to this time. However the Boys Bunkhouse is on higher ground and although the water reaches there it will not rise up to the showers. In anticipation of this need I had earlier built a platform about twenty-five feet up on top of a house-sized granite rock. We made a trip to South Africa where we bought a plastic water tank 6ft in diameter and about 6ft 6in tall. These have become quite common in rural areas as they are very light, less expensive than other materials, and are supposed to last at least twenty years. We tied it to the canopy roof of our pick-up. Although it weighs

about a 100 pounds its size created enormous wind resistance. Instead of being able to travel at 65 to 70 mph we were only able to do 45 mph and sometimes less. The 480 mile trip took us 15 hours, arriving home after midnight.

A Message from Don Carlos Smith re: his uncle, longtime missionary Virgil Smith:

We received a call from Brazil on Dec. 20 informing us of the death of my uncle, Virgil Smith. He was 98 years of age in October. He had been hospitalized for pneumonia a few weeks ago...then apparently was dismissed to go home. He caught a cold a few days ago and, being in a weakened condition, was admitted to the county hospital again. He was in that hospital for only a day when he passed quietly into the presence of the Lord, whom he had served faithfully since about 1920. (In Brazil since 1927)

The funeral was today. Virgil was widely known and loved so I am sure there was a large group at the service. Brazil, as is typical in South American countries, does not embalm the deceased so the burial must take place within 24 hours after death.

Uncle has been preaching from his early twenties until into his 80's. He went to Brazil as a missionary in 1927 and has worked there ever since, except for a few years in the States periodically. In his early decades there he worked in the interior and traveled by horseback and motorcycle.

It was during his first few years in the interior that he was captured by the bandit group of national renown headed by Lampiao. At that time the majority of the interior people were Roman Catholic, but he found that most of them had never seen or heard of the Bible. He made a resolve that some day in every village where there was a post office, there would also be people praising the Lord. He lived to see that, and helped to make it so. In his last decades of ministry he pitched a large tent in or near the large coastal cities and had daily evangelistic meetings and saw many conversions. (Others shared the pulpit too.)

Uncle Virgil was the "kid brother" of my father, Earl C. Smith. He made his confession of faith in Jesus for salvation in a little country school house in response to a sermon that my father preached at age 19. Daddy immediately baptized him in a nearby creek. He is with the Lord now whom he loved and served for many decades. Praise the Lord that Virgil is home at last! "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

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Moving into the Readers' Circle

Joyce Broyles

At a very early age, my dad had to go to work for a farmer in order to help his family financially. Because of that, he was never able to complete even first grade. He would tell us that on the first day he went to school, his teacher had said, "say two," and Dad thought she meant, "C'est tout" (that's all), so he went home. He joked about it, but we knew he was hurt and embarrassed about it. He reminded us often that education would be something no one could take away from us.

Dad knew he would be a laborer all his life, but fortunately, he loved farm work and continued even after he had retired until he fell one day and hurt his right arm severely. He was 70 years old at the time.

Dad continued to keep his garden, huge as it was, with Mom's help. They enjoyed selling produce at the farmer's market for years. Only when Mom became bedridden after a stroke, requiring constant attention, did Dad stop working outside. He was 80 years old when he began his new career, as he called it, of being a houseboy, cook and nurse.

Mom had attended school for three or four years. She read the newspapers and the Bible, until we were skilled enough to join her. Dad loved to hear the Bible read, so it was understood that we would gather each evening before bedtime. Those are some of my most precious memories. Afterwards, Dad led in prayer and we could go to bed peacefully, assured that God was in charge.

One of the milestones for each of us as youngsters was the time we were finally admitted to the readers' circle. I was so excited and felt so proud the night they let me read a few verses of scripture aloud. As the years went by, I was often surprised to hear Dad correcting my attempts at difficult words or filling in for me if I hesitated. He could not read so he overcompensated with his auditory skills. He listened to the verses read so often and loved them so much that he could quote many of them.

When I returned from overseas and moved next door to Mom and Dad for their last six years, I wondered aloud why we had never taught Dad to read. After all, five of his six children are educators. Dad explained practically that both he and the rest of us had always been too busy working.

MORE ABOUT LITERACY

Literacy, emphasized in Joyce Broyles' article above, is also important in world missions. Dennis Allen writes: For those interested in serving the Lord overseas (or here in the U.S., among immigrants), through teaching "English as a Second Language;" there are opportunities in China, Russia, Central Asia, Central Europe and the Mediterranean area. In most cases you are given a living stipend and housing is provided. Travel expenses may not be included. Two Christian organizations that are involved in this ministry are ESI, 1-800-895-7955, and ELI, 1-800-366-3542. The worldwide hunger to know the English language provides ways to penetrate many "closed" doors and witness for Christ.

After Mom died, I became certified to teach reading to adults, using the Laubach method. Both of us excited, I began to teach Dad the consonant sounds. He memorized everything so rapidly, and enjoyed it so much. He had only learned a few letters before the pain from cancer became too much. Within six weeks, Dad was gone.

Just before the funeral service for him began, my younger brother placed the little book he had authored in Dad's hands. Then, turning to me, he smiled and whispered, "Dad can read now."

Counselor's Column

AIMLESSNESS

Dennis Kaufman

Question: I feel like I have been pretty aimless with my life for the last 15 years. After a recent crisis, I committed my life to God and was baptized, but I fear I may drift back into old patterns. What keeps a Christian emotionally and spiritually healthy for a lifetime?

Answer: First of all, I want to celebrate with you because you have discovered the true remedy for your aimlessness. Walking with God may take us in many directions, but aimlessness is not one of them.

It will be a challenge to boil down the key principles of spiritual and emotional health in a few paragraphs since the Bible is full of such concepts. However, Christ did give us a "greatest command-

ment", which provides an obvious central focus. A lifetime of spiritual vibrance hinges upon our passion for God.

As a counselor, I have observed several reasons why loving God with all of our heart is so primary to our spiritual stability. First and foremost, we must recognize that human beings are creatures of "desire." God made us with powerful "wants" which we must decide how to channel. God clearly intended that these passions be guided toward joyous fellowship with Him and loving relationships with others. However, the whole race of Adam has been deceived to follow our desires in directions that are not healthy, or in measures that throw our lives out of balance.

The world has hundreds of things it offers as "gods." An idol might be defined as anything which we give the majority of our passion. Numerous things that land people in counseling, such as eating disorders, sexual addictions, alcoholism, spending compulsions, etc. are the result of desire gone awry. There is incredible wisdom in the Biblical mandate to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Anything that excites you more than your walk with God has the potential to become the focus of too much attention and produces an unhealthy attachment in your life.

I sometimes ask my clients to draw a pie-shaped graph and give estimates as to what percentage of their "passion" is going to various areas of their lives. If our relationship with God is not primary, we are missing the mark, and sooner, or later our spiritual and emotional well-being will suffer. It is also my experience that for the committed believer, God will frustrate those things that rival our allegiance to Him. In the best sense of the word, He is a jealous God, and wants His church to love Him as a bride cherishes the bridegroom. He knows this is the real road to abundant life.

One way I try to monitor my own passion is by imagining it is a river and observing the direction of the flow. It is my responsibility to make decisions that reflect the balance God intends. There may be numerous tributaries that reflect my passion for family, career, a hobby, but the main trunk of the river needs to symbolize my relationship with the Lord. Like the Corps of Engineers, I am regularly working to dam up some areas, restrict flow in others to keep this stream of desire healthy and life-producing.

The greatest obstacle to developing this intense love for God is our lack of discipline as human beings. It is just easier (in the short run) to let passion flow where it may. We must be more intentional. The second obstacle is more subtle and insidious. Many Christians can find little passion for God because of the way they imagine Him. Our

concept of God can be distorted in many ways. Things such as our parental models, our religious background, and our defense mechanisms can skew the way we view God. It is hard to muster much love for a God whom we perceive as controlling, capricious, abusive, or distant. If we have not settled the fact that God is good and that He loves us beyond measure, we are likely to be doomed to a lackluster desire toward fellowship with the One who died for our salvation. Aimlessness is a direct result of misdirected passion.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

9th Annual Christian Crusade for Christ... hosted by the Poncechatoula Church of Christ is scheduled for March 26-29. This year's theme is: **"The Beatitudes."** Speakers include: Joe Stone, Louis Schuler, Ed Coon, Kenneth Istre, Ray Naugle, Robert Gill, Kenneth Preston, Harry Coultas, Bennie Hill, and Orell Overman.

World-Wide Web... By the time many of you receive this edition of the Word & Work the Cramer & Hanover Church of Christ should be on the web. We're excited about this new approach in sharing information about the work of the Lord to the whole world. If you have access to the internet - check us out at www.cramercoc.org

It's Not Too Early... to start making plans to attend the four day Billy Graham crusade that will be held at Papa John's Stadium from June 21-24. Christians

throughout Louisville are being asked to begin praying for this crusade.

Recent Trip to Nigeria... (from Robert Gill) On December 17 Earl Mullins Jr., Cleo Russell and I returned from a successful ten days in Nigeria. Brethren there have been requesting such a visit for several years. We were graciously welcomed and greeted by old friends and new. We spoke at 16 different congregations where the audiences averaged over 100 persons. Probably 10 other congregations were represented in these meetings by either the preacher or others. We were transported to 5 widely scattered areas by brethren E. Ogedengbe and J. Oginni. We delivered many Bibles and hymnals from America. The nation has many problems which seem to be expanding. Many are faithfully carrying on in spite of poverty and lack of jobs. Please continue to pray for them and the proclamation of the Word.

Buechel: (Bud Ridgeway) We have had a good year. During the holiday period we furnished dinner at Thanksgiving with 44 present, dinner on Christmas with 42 present and a New Year's Eve gathering with 38 present. We continue to host the Men's Prayer Breakfast on the 2nd Saturday of the month. For January there were 16 men in attendance. We are looking forward to doing more evangelism this year in our the community of diverse nationalities. It is a challenge that will be well worth it. We have asked each member to invite one person per week to church. In 2000 we had a total of 172 visitors at Buechel.

Mackville (Frank Preston) Thanks to everyone who helped make the reprinting of the Great Songs of the Church such a success. We want to thank the Lord for opening every door we came to. Praise the Lord for his wonderful works to the children of men. If you missed out on ordering some new song books, we do have some extra. We also have a limited number of leather bounds available.

Elijah is coming! Sing about it: Dale Jorgenson sent information about an event that has become memorable to many folks during the past 7 years: The 8th annual (and final) oratorio weekend will be held on Palm Sun., April 8 at the Perry Christian Church in Perry, Missouri. Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah* will be presented by singers and chamber orchestra

that evening. There will be participants from 10 states and all 3 branches of the Stone-Campbell movement.

In the morning service Leroy Garrett will preach; others from Churches of Christ, Independent Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ will read Scripture and lead in prayer. Dale Jorgenson, minister of the Perry Christian Church, will conduct the oratorio. For more information, you may call him at 660-665-8575 from Tues. evenings thru Fri.

The Ladies Inspiration Day will be held on Sat., April 28 from 8:30-2:00 p.m. at the Cherry St. Church, 302 Cherry St., New Albany, Ind. Its theme will be "One Anothering." It will include a special workshop for teens, 6th grade & up. More information will be given later.

Reunion Planned: Some SCC alumni have engaged the old Library Building on the old campus of SCC, which is now Winchester's "College Park." and also the Picnic Pavilion which is nearby, for May 28, 2001 for a reunion party for KBC, SCC, Bible Institute alumni and former teachers. SCEC will provide meat and drink for those who tell us they are coming, and participants are expected to bring pot-luck dishes of potato salad, vegetables and/or dessert. Contact Cecil Garret at 399 College St., Winchester, KY 40391 or e-mail at rgarrett@mis.net

Bakht Singh Goes Home to Glory (see Jan.W&W, p. 28, for reference to Brother Singh): In 1903 Bakht Singh was born into a Sikh family in India. He came to Christ while studying engineering in Canada, then returned to his homeland in 1933. His father disowned him at that time, but 12 years later the son had the joy of baptizing the father.

He became a flaming evangelist who in large crusades preached Christ and Him crucified. Many responded to his preaching, but he saw the faith and love of most converts shrivel in the numerous spiritually-dead denominational churches. So the Lord led him to start an indigenous church-planting movement free from Western and worldly traditions. According to *Christian Mission* magazine, "he was responsible for over 2000 churches in India, and probably 10,000 churches worldwide trace their roots to his movement."

It was my privilege as a student at Wheaton College to hear him speak. When he later visited Louisville, he spoke in chapel at Portland Christian School. And more than once in Manila we were privileged to have fellowship with him thru our common friend Raymond Golsworthy. He was truly a man of God--humble, prayerful and Spirit-filled.

After more than a decade of serious illness, he went to his Savior's presence on Sept.17,'00. In the next five days over 600,000 people paid their respects to this spiritual leader.

Public services could not be held at a soccer stadium, as hoped, due to opposition from a Hindu organization. But about 250,000 believers attended the funeral service. Holding their Bibles high, they followed the van that carried his body to the common people's cemetery. No foreigners attended that occasion, to avoid the Hindu accusation that Christianity is a foreign religion. --avv

Moto Nomura, Japan, Dec. 2000 Recently, the Jennings congregation sent us two big boxes filled with peanut butter, honey, southern coffee, and grits. As I delivered them to our folks one Sunday morning for the first time they came to realize in holding these gifts in their own hands how much they have been blessed by sisters and brothers in a far away distance, and yet so close to each other in the Lord as well as in Christian love and prayer. Many were overwhelmed by the reality of love from Jennings church....

We had twenty last Sunday morning. Excepting some school children, the rest of them all partook the Lord's Meal. We started studying Romans chapters 1-3, and I personally thought of Bro. Frank M. Mullins at KBC / SCC often while getting myself prepared for the message. I owe so much to men like him and Bro. R.H.Boll, just to name some.

Rachel Johnson Eriksen to Brazil again. She is the daughter of Robert & Corrine Johnson,

longtime missionaries first to Brazil & then to Mozambique. After they & her husband died, Rachel spent 1 term teaching children in Brazil. She has begun work on a master's degree in a U.S. school, but finds she can continue this study via internet. "I plan to take one grad. class per semester while teaching school in Brazil. It will take longer to complete the master's program, but thanks to technology, I'll be back where I am more useful." Pray

for God to give wisdom, insight & guidance to her & all who are at the mission school. Her email address: eriksen2@juno.com

A W&W Reader for 48 years!
"I now begin my 48th year as a subscriber to Word & Work. The names of Chambers, Boll and Jorgenson are precious to me. God bless your labors." --Dr. Forest McCann, 490 College Drive, Abilene, TX 79601

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