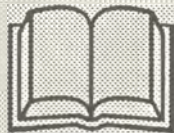


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Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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THEME:

"TO ALL NATIONS"

The Burden on God's Heart

Alex V. Wilson

In studying Isaiah recently, I began to notice a recurring theme I'd never seen there before. Soon it seemed to pop up everywhere.

"The Holy One of Israel . . . is called the God of **all the earth.**"

"They will proclaim my glory among **the nations.**" "And they will bring all your brothers from **all the nations** to my holy mountain . . . **All nations and tongues** will come and see my glory." "My house will be called a house of prayer for **all nations.**"

"**All mankind** together will see the glory of the Lord." "**All mankind** will know that I, the Lord, am your Savior." "**All mankind** will come and bow down before me, says the Lord."

And that's not all. Look: "The Lord is the Creator of **the ends of the earth.**" ". . . Bring my salvation to **the ends of the earth.**" "Announce this . . . to **the ends of the earth.**" "**All the ends of the earth** will see the salvation of our God." "The Lord has made proclamation to **the ends of the earth:** Your Savior comes!"

Wow--is our Lord trying to tell us something or what? Obviously the "Great Commission" is not based on the New Testament alone. Isaiah, plus Genesis and of course Jonah all reveal that our Creator's heart has always yearned over all peoples worldwide. But to us, the church, He gave special marching orders with extra force and clarity: Blanket the entire globe with the Good News of My love and lordship. Send the Light to everyone everywhere.

Recurring Failures

Though God called Israel in OT times to be a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6) or mediators, and to advertise His power, truth and grace to the nations, they usually failed. In earlier times they *conformed* to the nations' idolatry and immorality, and thus had no message or example to share. In later times they turned from idolatry but proudly *isolated* themselves from the nations (the Gentile "dogs"), and thus had no audience to share with. Sadly the church through the centuries has not done much better: Sometimes spiritual compromise and *conformity* to society's ungodliness. Other times trying to be different from the unsaved, but *withdrawing* from all meaningful contact with them. And

meanwhile multitudes have walked in darkness and the shadow of death, perishing--while Christians hoarded the light.

The Church Awake and Active

Thank God, however, for times of advance. 201 years ago William Carey left England for India. He didn't know that future generations would consider him the "father of the modern missionary movement" which burst into flame during the 1800's. Yet sixty years earlier a small group of Christ's disciples in Moravia (central Czechoslovakia) led by prayerful Count von Zinzendorf, experienced a powerful revival. That resulted in a 100-year prayer meeting, and also in such a missionary burden that a higher percentage of the Moravian Church's members became missionaries than any other church in history!

Exciting progress in world missions took place following World War II also. And, in fact, some really good things are happening in the broader evangelical (gospel-preaching) movement *right now*--but we must save that story till next month.

The P-Bomb, and a Jar of Microbes

In the meantime, the world's population grows bigger and **BIGGER** and **BIGGER!** You've heard of the population-bomb? Well, it's exploded! I repeat for you the helpful illustration first told me by Dick Lewis.

Suppose you are a scientist. Into an empty laboratory bottle you place one microbe of a type which you know doubles in number every minute without fail. (Since microbes multiply by dividing, a-sexually, you can start with one, not two.) You know that by the end of one minute there will be two microbes, and by the end of two minutes, four. Then eight, sixteen, thirty-two (minute 5). After ten minutes, 1,024 will be in the bottle, and 1,048,576 after twenty minutes (but of course that's still nothing, considering these are microscopic critters).

Now to continue. Suppose you have picked just exactly the size bottle so that at the end of one hour--sixty minutes, no more or less--the microbes will fill it. (Fantastic microbes you have! Fantastic scientist you are!) Now to review: you began with one, after one minute had two, and now after one hour your bottle is exactly full. Question: at what minute was the bottle half-full? (Don't look ahead; work it out for yourself--actually it's easy.)

I was half-full only one minute before it was full. More questions: when was the bottle 1/4 full? 1/8? Let's work this out: If the microbes were visible, at the end of 57 minutes an observer would say, "There's plenty of room in that bottle. Why, it's just 1/8 full . . . it's 7/8

empty." But at the end of minute 58, he'd say, "It's 1/4 full now." Minute 59: "Look, it's half full." And one minute later, "Hey, it's FILLED UP NOW!"

This is what scientists call exponential growth. And it's happening to the world's population. (We may not notice it here in our spacious land, but go to Asia!) It took *thousands* of years for our planet's population to reach one billion, in 1850. It then took only *eighty* years to reach the two-billion mark, in 1930. Only *thirty* years passed before there were three billion of us, in 1960. And a mere *fifteen* years brought us to four billion, in 1975. Just *eleven* years later, and we numbered five billion, in 1986. And each one needs to learn of the Lord Jesus and the salvation he offers.

Some experts estimate there are more people in the world today than were in all preceding generations of mankind PUT TOGETHER!! There are more unsaved people in India now than were in the whole world when Jesus gave the Great Commission!

Here's something else you won't believe. At least I didn't, for a l-o-n-g time. But some have estimated that there are more people in the world today than were in all preceding generations of mankind PUT TOGETHER!! All the people from Adam till one generation ago--all the people of the days of Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Jesus, and the following centuries up till around 1900--all those multitudes put together, are outnumbered by the people living now while you read this! That boggles our minds so much let's run it through again: More people are living now, than have died throughout all human history! How is that possible? Go back to those microbes and you'll see: there were more of them in the 60th-minute generation than in the 1st-minute through 59th-minute generations combined.

Exponential growth means our job is bigger than ever. In the land of India alone, there are more unsaved people than there were in the entire world in the days of Jesus. But don't lose heart. In many places the number of conversions is growing fantastically too--in Latin America, parts of Asia and Africa, etc. God isn't dead and His church is growing fast when you look at the whole world.

These days are difficult, and exciting. May we not by unbelief or laziness miss out on what our King is doing in this day of His power. By watchful prayer, sacrificial giving and earnest labor may we participate in His movings. And all the time, look up. Christ said the Gospel would be preached in the whole world, to all nations, "and then the end will come" (Matt.24:14). Let's hasten that day.

BAD NEWS AND GLAD NEWS

on PLANET EARTH

As children of the God who loves the whole world, we Christians need to keep informed about what is going on in various lands and among various peoples and ministries. We need to see the Big Picture, especially from a spiritual perspective. The secular media won't provide this for us, which is why Christian periodicals play a vital role in alerting us to what's happening in the worldwide spiritual war in which we are engaged.

The two articles which follow are both from the *News Brief* published by Open Doors, a ministry led by "Brother Andrew" (read his story in *God's Smuggler*). Through the years they have specialized in the most difficult fields, where persecution is most intense. For your own copy of *News Brief*, write Open Doors, P.O. Box 27001, Santa Ana, CA 92799.

The first article is greatly condensed. We include only 6 of the 23 items in their review of 1992.

Persecution Continues Around the World

It may come as a surprise to some that with the Cold War ended and democracy on the rise, persecution against Christians has increased.

While we no longer have to report on believers in the "Gulag" prisons of the Soviet Union, the Suffering Church certainly has not ceased to exist--nor will it as long as Satan roams the earth.

The following excerpts from the news helps demonstrate the scope of this persecution. Please pray for the believers in these areas throughout the coming year.

India: Hindu fundamentalists stepped up attacks against Christian ministries throughout India, including violent assaults.

Egypt: Members of Islamic Jihad murdered 16 Christians in a three-month period, the worst religiously-motivated bloodshed in a decade.

China: Authorities have escalated attacks against unregistered house churches in central China, leading to the arrest and detention of hundreds of itinerant evangelists and church workers.

Nigeria: At least four pastors and several leading church officials were hunted down and killed by Muslims in northern Nigeria during the latest round of religious rioting.

Sudan: The predominantly non-Muslim refugees trapped in the "displaced camps" throughout Sudan have come under intense pressure to convert to Islam if they want food.

Pakistan: A new law was passed requiring individuals to list their religious affiliation on their national identity card. Pakistan adopted Islamic law in 1991.

An Unprecedented Move of Prayer

After 60 years of study on prayer and spiritual awakening, the well known Bible Scholar J. Edwin Orr wrote, "Whenever God is ready to do something new with His people, He always sets them to praying."

Today, a move of united prayer is sweeping the world. According to David Bryant, founder of Concerts of Prayer International, this prayer movement is unparalleled in several respects:

1. **Numbers.** Mission statistician David Barrett estimates 170 million Christians are committed to praying every day for spiritual awakening and world evangelization. In addition, 10 million prayer groups focus on these priorities.

2. **Breadth.** The prayer movement crosses national borders, denominations and ethnic groups. For example, Open Doors' current "Ten Years of Prayer for the Church in the Muslim World" campaign affects people in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and elsewhere.

3. **Scope.** Entire denominations are involved, as are Christians across entire countries. In South Africa, for example, multi-racial prayer groups are scattered throughout the nation, helping prevent a bloodbath. Open Doors launched a worldwide "Seven Years of Prayer for the Soviet Union" campaign in 1984, and in 1987 a call for united prayer was circulated among the churches inside the USSR, asking for spiritual and political liberation. Events at the end of the decade show what God is willing to do.

4. **Strategy.** Prayer movements are being linked to specific events, such as crusades by Billy Graham, Luis Palau and John Guest. In Atlanta, Quest '96 is focusing on the 1994 Super Bowl and the 1996 Summer Olympics. Open Doors has held an annual prayer conference for several years, bringing hundreds of people together specifically to develop their prayer power.

5. **Leadership.** In past spiritual awakenings, leaders tended to come from a single group, such as the clergy or businessmen. Today, leaders are coming from every level, including pastors, missionaries and lay people. On

January 20, leaders will gather in Colorado Springs for a 24 hour National Consultation on United Prayer, focusing exclusively on a call to prayer for spiritual awakening.

God is already moving worldwide as a result of these prayer activities, releasing a new passion for Christ and His kingdom and a new sense of hope for His ultimate purposes.

Please continue your faithful prayers on behalf of the Suffering Church and the spread of the gospel around the world as the spiritual battle intensifies. Victory is ours if God's people will dedicate themselves to seeking and carrying out His will.

NEEDED: WORLD CHRISTIANS

Dennis L. Allen

The term *World Christian* may be of comparatively recent origin, but the concept goes back to God Himself and His original purposes. God said to Abram when He first called him, "In you and your seed shall *all the families of the earth* be blessed." (Gen. 12:3) God's heart has always taken in the whole world. This was also true of the Lord Jesus in all of His earthly ministry. It was true of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, who quoted Isa. 49:6 as applying to Barnabas and himself: "I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto *the uttermost part of the earth*." (Acts 13:47).

THE MORAVIANS

World Christians should also be applied to Count Zinzendorf (1700 - 1760) and to the Moravians at Herrnhut. Within the course of 150 years, 2,158 members of the Moravian community were sent all over the world--from Greenland to China, from South Africa to Labrador. This was in great contrast to the general indifference of the Protestant church at that time to the Great Commission. Most of them went out as "tent" missionaries. "I have one passion," cried Zinzendorf; it is He and He alone." This passionate love for Christ sent them out to the most difficult places. It caused them to so identify with the slaves in the West Indies that they went into the sugar cane fields and worked right alongside the slaves that they might win them. Of all the Protestant churches the Moravians were the first to recognize that taking the Gospel to the whole world was the responsibility of the church as a whole and then act on it.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A WORLD CHRISTIAN

So what is a World Christian in today's context? He is first of all one constrained by the love of Christ. He can no longer be satisfied to

concentrate all of his attention on his own local church but is one who is constantly enlarging his vision and extending his borders. Nor is he just concerned for his own country, but his genuine concern and burden is for the whole world, especially the unreached countries and people groups.

A World Christian is not denominationally oriented, i.e., he is not just concerned about what the "-ists" to whom he belongs are doing around the world to spread the Gospel. His burden takes in all that God is doing even in groups that never heard of the "-ists". Wherever the Gospel is going out over the air waves penetrating the doors closed to the Gospel, he rejoices that Christ is being preached. For every advance, for every victory of those who proclaim the Lord Jesus, he humbly thanks the Lord.

The World Christian is color blind, race blind. He rejoices in what God is doing through other peoples. Nor does he feel, because America has taken a lead in world evangelization in the past, that now Americans who go to foreign fields should hold positions of leadership. The Western World no longer holds a monopoly on sending out missionaries. *15,000 missionaries have been sent out to other countries from Third World countries.* In many countries missionaries are no longer needed for leadership roles but to *assist* in training and developing workers.

There are many other ramifications that go with being a World Christian. It means I can no longer insulate myself from the world's suffering and need. I can't insist that I have a right to maintain a lifestyle completely unrelated to my brothers and sisters in other lands who are lacking in the bare essentials. How can affluent Christians selfishly hold on to wealth and possessions when much of the world is hungry and impoverished? "But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (1 Jn. 3:17). This does not necessarily mean that if my brother in India does not have a car, neither should I have one. In my present circumstances it may be necessary for me to have a car to get to my job. Otherwise I could not earn the money which enables me to share with him. In another setting, however, it might mean I should forego the convenience of a car so that I could better relate to my brother. It certainly means that I not be indifferent to his needs.

Some say that they do not give because they don't know how to get help to those who really need it. They have been disillusioned by those who misuse funds. It is true that one should use discernment, but there are many Christian organizations who have been proven to be faithful stewards and whose financial records are open to examination. Need demands involvement on our part. When the saints in Je-

Jerusalem were in need Paul immediately went into action. He encouraged the brethren to give, he went to the churches to collect what they gave, and himself took it to Jerusalem to meet the need. After telling the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus said, "Go and do thou likewise." This means I must be willing to take risks, to inconvenience myself, and to sacrifice to meet the needs of my neighbor.

Paul said, "Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." A soldier does not choose the place where he serves because it is safe or easy but because his commander has given the word to go. Consider the troops that over a year ago contended with sand and heat in Saudi Arabia. They did not choose to go there. Their lifestyle was very different from what it had been in the States, but their officers said, "Go," and they went.

World Christians who go to people of another culture and standard of living need to be careful about having a life style that creates a gulf between them and the people they went to reach. Can they feel at home with you? If you have a lot of things they could never hope to have, it could well prove a barrier to their acceptance of your message.

Because the time is short and the task is great, World Christians must be *willing to adopt a wartime life style*. Ralph Winter tells of the stark contrast which the *Queen Mary*, now a tourist attraction at Long Beach, California, presents to her visitors:

"Used both as a luxury liner in peacetime and a troop transport ship during the Second World War, its present status as a museum the length of three football fields affords a stunning contrast between lifestyles appropriate in peace and war. On one side of a partition you see the dining room reconstructed to depict the peacetime table setting that was appropriate to the wealthy patrons of high culture for whom a dazzling array of knives and forks and spoons held no mysteries. On the other side of the partition the evidences of wartime austerities are in sharp contrast. One metal tray with indentations replaces fifteen plates and saucers. Bunks, not just double but eight tiers high, explain why the peacetime complement of 3000 gave way to 15,000 people on board in wartime. How repugnant to the peacetime masters this transformation must have been! To do it took a national emergency, of course. The survival of a nation depended upon it. The essence of the Great Commission today is that the survival of many millions of people depends on its fulfillment."

The last days in which we are living also call for a wartime lifestyle, not only for those who go to the poor of the world but for all of us. If those who stay and "send" also adopt a wartime lifestyle they will find themselves having much more to give.

When we realize that Americans give no more to mission agencies than they do for chewing gum, and spend seven times as much for pet food as they spend for missions, we must conclude that missions has a very low priority. The fact is a few give sacrificially, some give occasionally, and many give nothing. But a World Christian establishes his priorities and adapts his lifestyle accordingly.

He is convinced that God has called him to stand in the gap and that *all of his resources are at the disposal of His Master*. This gives him no cause for worry or alarm because *the reverse is also true* which makes for the very best kind of security.

Some become World Christians by physically crossing geographical and cultural barriers to bring the Gospel to those who have never heard. But every Christian is called to be a World Christian by sacrificial praying, stewardship, and laying his life on the line to back up those who do go. The World Christian finds that his whole outlook on life is transformed by a world vision. He can no longer be satisfied to fritter his life away on a thousand lesser pursuits, no matter how interesting and important they once seemed to be. Ultimately it is allowing Christ to so live in us that He is able to express His great heart of love for the whole world.

We have been redeemed to be a witness to others of Christ's love and grace. It is our reasonable service to give our bodies as a living sacrifice to Him.

Work on your Knees

"I believe it will only be known at the Last Day how much has been accomplished in missionary work by the prayers of earnest believers at home. Solid, lasting missionary work is done on our knees. What I covet more than anything else is earnest, believing prayer."

--J.O. Fraser,
missionary to tribespeople

THE JOYS OF BEING A MISSIONARY

Mrs. Ruth Wilson

An article in a mission magazine a few years ago was entitled "Life is Wonderful". Yet the article, by a missionary in New Guinea, tells of a rainy Sunday in the capital city of Port Moresby when the missionaries' car lost a wheel. So, what's so wonderful about car trouble and being late to church on a bad day? Simply this: that the national Christians, who held up the service to wait for them, chose as the first song, "Life is Wonderful Now!" And I can imagine that, as the missionaries sang along with that group, they felt profound joy that, despite all the difficulties of serving the Lord in a less-developed country, they had been privileged to take the gospel to these people.

It is wonderful to be a missionary. I have written a companion article about the problems missionaries face, entitled "How to Pray for (Women) Missionaries". But, since that article concentrates on some negative aspects of missionary life, it seemed best to first assure you that we who have had the privilege of serving our lord in a foreign field wouldn't want to ever exchange the experience for anything in the world! Why? Let me share a few reasons.

First and foremost is the joy of *telling someone the Way of salvation who might not have heard it from anyone else*. I remember a young girl saying to me, "I had heard about Jesus all my life, but I never knew I needed to personally receive Him until I heard it from you in our Bible Club." Later she wrote, "Since I received Him as my personal Savior and Lord, I found my life to be complete." Another young woman wrote Alex: "I praise God for the desire for God you awakened in my life almost seven years ago at a youth conference. I was 16 years old, and it was the most exciting thing I'd ever heard." Another, who went on to be a full-time Christian worker, told him that she was on the verge of becoming a member of the Mormon religion but was stopped when she remembered teaching Alex had given.

Of course, along with this joy is that of *seeing lives transformed by the gospel*. When Alex visited a young man who had shown interest after an evangelistic meeting, the young man was drunk! But later, Alex convinced him to attend Central Bible Institute (in Manila), and there he became a real Christian. After years of preparation, he became a missionary to his home province and led over 100 people to Christ. Then for eleven years he himself served as director of CBI. Others whom the Lord enabled us to reach and teach are now out in needy areas of the Philippines, or serving as missionaries--to England and Cyprus, for instance. What a joy to have spiritual "grandchildren" coming to life, even in places where you have never been.

Certainly we are not unique in having such experiences as these. Most missionaries, especially in such responsive fields as the Philippines, have such spiritual children and grandchildren. And of course, many Christian workers in this country as well have had the joy of winning souls to Christ.

Friendships that will last throughout this life and eternity are among our other treasures from the mission field. What joyous people the Filipinos are, with a rich heritage of laughter, flair for drama, love for music and hunger for education. Furthermore, they are a most generous and hospitable people with a strong sense of what they call "pakikisama"--or community spirit. And there are many Chinese among them, and these we found to be extremely industrious people whose churches often show a profound missionary concern. What a privilege to have countless dear friends among these two races!

When you travel to a distant country, it is an added "bonus" to be *able to meet other Christians* along the way. How glad we are to have met with groups of Christians in Japan, and also to have become personally acquainted with some fine young leaders of the church which was started by the Dennis Allens in Hong Kong. Our travels have enabled us to meet Christians in many parts of the Philippines. Alex and Victor Broaddus had the joy once of visiting a village where almost the entire population had come to Christ simply through reading and studying a copy of the New Testament, which had been given to one of the villagers by a U.S. serviceman. Our three children and I had an exciting three days in a tribal area where head-hunting had ceased to be practiced only a few years before. Yet we felt safer there than in downtown Manila, since a majority of the people in the village had turned to Christ.

And speaking of children, we feel that our three gained far more than they "sacrificed" in growing up on the mission field. Imagine their memories of that tribal village; of seeing a former Ilongot head-hunter demonstrate his war dance for us, then to see these men and women gathered in the little grass chapel to worship the Lord together! Though at times our children felt they were missing many things in not growing up in the States, they all look back with nostalgia on the land of their youth. (Joy was born in the Philippines, and all three did most of their growing up there.) I believe they realize far better than most people how fabulously wealthy the U.S. is in comparison to other parts of the world.

Furthermore, there are *pleasant family memories* of palm-lined beaches and snorkeling over coral reefs; of spending two nights in a Boy Scout tent on a tiny island "paradise"; of yearly vacations in quaint, lovely Baguio, far above Manila's heat. And of course, traveling across the Pacific in jet airplanes and moving in and out of count-

less airports is "old hat" to them. We recognize of course that missionaries are not necessarily more spiritual than people who remain in their own culture. Yet we rejoice that Dan has taught in a missionary school in Honduras for two years.

We serve a great King, and He pays extraordinary benefits to His subjects. It is a pleasure to serve Him anywhere, but to anyone who may be hesitating to answer the call to overseas missions, let me assure you: you will never regret that you chose to take His gospel "to the uttermost part of the world!"

[Ruth (Mrs. Alex) Wilson and her family were missionaries in the Philippines from 1963-83.]

"Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life." --Christ Jesus, Matt. 19:29

THE SOCIAL FRUITS OF MISSIONARY WORK

Frank W. Allen

Kenneth Scott Latourette says, "The Christian leaven has to a greater or less extent modified every environment into which it has penetrated." He goes on to say, "Everywhere Christian missionaries had a share in introducing Western forms of education. In hundreds of instances they reduced languages to writing and began in them the creation of a literature."

Singlehandedly and with great courage they attacked the social evils of their times: child marriage, the immolation of widows, temple prostitution, and untouchability in India; foot-binding, opium addiction, and abandoning of babies in China; Polygamy, the slave trade, and the destruction of twins in Africa.

In all parts of the world they opened schools, hospitals, clinics, medical colleges, orphanages and leprosaria. They gave succor and sustenance to the dregs of society cast off by their own communities. At great risk to themselves and their families they fought famines, floods, pestilences, plagues. They were the first to rescue unwanted babies, educate girls and liberate women. Above all, they gave to the non-Christian world the most liberating of all messages: the Gospel of Christ.

--Condensed from **Evangelical Thrust**

STREET CHILDREN: TRASH OR PRECIOUS SOULS?

Doug Nichols

"If 40,000 spotted owls were dying every day, there would be an outrage. But 40,000 children are dying, and it's hardly noticed." --Peter Teeley

100 million extremely underprivileged and street children struggle for existence in today's cities. Does this estimate bother you? Would it if your child or grandchild was among them? If you counted one child per second, that would be 60 per minute, or 3,600 in one hour. At the same rate in 24 hours, without sleep, you would reach 86,400. It would take over 23 days to count two million. All 100 million street children of the world would take over three years and two months to count! And every unit counted is not a mere figure; it represents a living child, loved by God and purchased by Christ's blood. 100 million, think of it!

Or are they trash? "Vermin. Garbage. If we let them grow up, they will be criminals, a blight on our society," say local businessmen in the Philippines. Therefore, some policemen "moonlight" by contracting to kill off as many of them as they can. Do we care?

Some of these children are young and cute. They can still smile. But most are older, have rotten teeth, and are scar-faced, disease-ridden, flea and lice infested, shifty eyed, suspicious and fearful. They are the poor, the outcast, the abandoned, the exploited, the children of the streets. Some 4,000 to 5,000 of them in Brazil were murdered last year, about 400 in the city of Racife alone.

How do they exist on the streets? By begging, stealing, selling their bodies, or eating out of garbage cans. The government of the Philippines estimates that there are 15,000 child prostitutes in Manila's infamous flesh trade between the ages of nine and twelve, and over fifty percent of them are boys. The city alone--not the entire nation! In Thailand there are 800,000 prostitutes from twelve to sixteen years old.

This type of child seems to be bypassed continually by all efforts--relief, evangelism, discipleship, church-planting. They are expensive to work with, lack the appeal needed for a sponsorship-type program, and certainly do not make good church members.

The Word of God, however, clearly teaches that we, the church, should reach everyone with the Gospel, whether poor or rich, of whatever race or level of society, regardless of ethnic background or age, old or young! Paul said to the church at Colosse: "...Christ in you, the hope of glory....we proclaim Him, admonishing every man [*which includes street children*] and teaching every man [*the ten year old child prostitute of Manila, Bangkok or Bogota*] with all wisdom, that we may present every man [*all street children and underprivileged children throughout the world*] complete in Christ" (Col. 1:27b-28). **Should not this be the purpose of each local church and mission?**

Of course, not everyone will accept the invitation, but it is our responsibility and privilege to press the claims of Christ upon all. Usually, without care for physical needs, there can be no opportunity for street children. They are starving for bread--physical and spiritual.

Paul continues: "And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to his power, which mightily works within me." Do we labor? Do we really work to reach the masses of the world with the Gospel? Our labor cannot accomplish the work that can only be done through the Spirit of God, but Paul goes on to say in Colossians 1:29 that he labors, but it is "...striving according to *His* power, which mightily works within me [Paul, or any believer]." Notice both sides of the coin: we are to labor, but in God's power!

What if all evangelical organizations, especially in Asia and Latin America, would make bold plans to "labor in God's power" to reach the millions of underprivileged street children? How wonderful! The need is so great that all major evangelical denominations and all faith missions need to help.

Each church and mission should begin to target underprivileged and street children for major ministry. Missions could challenge missionaries in their ranks--the young and the old, the inexperienced and the experienced--to devote a large portion of their ministry to long-range involvement in evangelism and discipleship of street children, especially those ages six to nineteen.

We should not relegate this Herculean ministry to missionaries who have a natural affinity for children. Let mission leaders "pray it through," plan it, and not shove it off on a few "children's workers."

Shouldn't we devote a large portion of leadership, strategy, planning and prayer to reaching the following?

- the 1,900,000 underprivileged and street children of Mexico City, including 240,000 who are abandoned

- the 50,000 to 70,000 children on the streets of Manila
- the 15,000 child prostitutes of Manila
- the 5,000 to 9,000 street children of Bogota, Columbia
- the 14 million underprivileged children under the age of five who die each year from infection and malnutrition
- the seven million children worldwide who are refugees of famine and war
- the 150 million children who suffer from malnutrition
- the 50 million underprivileged children who are working in "slave type" labor in unsafe and unhealthy conditions
- the 12 million homeless children fighting to survive on the streets of Brazil
- the 50 percent of Mexico City's over 20 million people who are under the age of 14
- the estimated 800,000 girls, ages 12 to 16, actively involved in prostitution in Thailand
- the 100,000 children in slave-type work throughout India between three-and-one half and 15 years of age
- the estimated 500,000 teen-age prostitutes in Brazil
- the 40,000 children under the age of five who die *daily* in the developing countries

The Convention on the Rights of the Child convened in 1991 at the United Nations. Peter Teeley, President Bush's representative on the Planning Committee, said, "If 40,000 spotted owls were dying every day, there would be an outrage. But 40,000 children are dying, and it's hardly noticed." Another has observed, "If one hundred Boeing 747 planes carrying 400 people each crashed every day, the governments of the world would take action, but an equal number of deaths occur daily amongst children throughout the world but there is little comment!"

May we not be so callous as to allow staggering figures to turn us off.

[Doug Nichols is International Director of **Action International Ministries**, and a friend of the editor's since our time in Manila. Pray for him; he recently underwent surgery for colon cancer.]

HISTORY OF SPRING BROOK CHURCH OF CHRIST, EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA

Winston N. Allen, Minister

A logical beginning point for this account of our ministry was a statement in the 1943 Harding College Yearbook--a statement to the effect that Winston Allen, following graduation, planned to be a missionary to the Territory of Alaska. However, it was 21 years before the desire was realized. The Lord of the harvest knew I needed much more preparation and experience and He had other important work for me to do first, in the South 48. Major events of those 21 years included obtaining a Master of Science degree; marriage to Irene Spaulding (niece of E.L. Jorgenson); serving as President of Kentucky Bible College/Southeastern Christian College; and teaching Bible and Biology there for eleven years. God used the college to help launch a number of Christian homes, missionaries and ministers. During those years (1949-61) I also preached part time for churches in Kentucky and Indiana.

After resigning from Southeastern Christian College in Winchester, Kentucky, we moved to Columbia, South Carolina. There I attended the Graduate School of Missions of Columbia Bible College and wrote a thesis entitled "A Survey of Missionary Work in Alaska," while earning the MA degree in Biblical Education.

In the summer of 1964 we travelled to Anchorage, Alaska. We were under the Sponsorship of the Gallatin Church of Christ, Gallatin, Tennessee. The passage of Scripture that gave Irene peace and courage to face an unknown future at this time was Deut. 31:8--"And Jehovah, he it is that doth go before thee: he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee; fear not, neither be dismayed." Now after these 28 years, her testimony is that God has been faithful to His promise.

In order to have a place in which to live, as well as a place in which to begin a work, we made the down payment on a mobile home in Anchorage, Alaska's largest city. After settling in and enrolling our boys in school, we made plans for our first Sunday service. Present besides our family were only two others, Ruth Disher and her young son, Paul. Ruth's home was formerly Tell City, Indiana. Through Ruth a contact was made with a searching young mother, and gradually the work grew. Neighborhood children attended Sunday School classes and week-day Bible classes Irene taught.

Of all the 28 winters we have spent in Alaska, the first one was the most severe and almost did us in. For more than two weeks the temperature reached 20 and 30 degrees below zero (37 below zero was the coldest we recorded). Our water pipes froze and survival became a real challenge. Actually the long months of cold, darkness, record-breaking snow and ice are major causes of physical, mental, moral and spiritual problems in the Northland. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), caused mainly by lack of sunlight during the long winter months; affects the endocrine system in many individuals and manifests itself in deep depression and inability to function normally.

In order to make more contacts and reach more people we had a weekly radio program for about a year on Station KHAR. Tapes were made in our mobile home which was located close to Merrill Field and Elmendorf Air Force Base. As you can imagine, the planes flying overhead posed a real problem many times while recording messages. In the summer of 1965 the Good Tidings Quartet, composed of Neal Phillips, Mac LeDoux, Stanford Broussard and Dennis LeDoux, flew from Dallas and helped us in an evangelistic meeting in the Muldoon area. We rented a building and chairs, advertised on the radio, printed literature and distributed it to many mobile homes in the area inviting people to attend. But attendance was small. More and more we were learning that Alaska is a very difficult field. One poll conducted a number of years ago indicated only about 5% of people in the Anchorage area regularly attended any church service.

In a later summer, Hall Crowder was the evangelist when we rented the lower floor of the Carpenters Hall in Anchorage for a week of meetings (also showed Moody Institute of Science films to help attract people). Still later while in Anchorage we rented for each Sunday morning a large assembly room in the Odd Fellows Hall. In summer we rented this building for one week in order to conduct a DVBS and an evangelistic meeting. Charles Kranz was the Director. Also while in Anchorage the book "Have Faith in God" was written, published and distributed. This was used of the Lord as one means of doing missionary work. Other means were visiting and speaking in the Alaska Native Hospital as we had opportunity, giving out Christian literature, and developing a small church library.

For several years we prayed about and looked for a suitable lot or lots to purchase on which a church building could be constructed, but the prices were astronomical. Finally in the Spring of 1971 there was a dramatic change. One Monday, using my archery equipment, I went hunting for black bear in a wilderness area adjacent to the Chugach Mountains just north of the small but growing town of Eagle River (about 12 miles from Anchorage). Here I found that a homestead had been divided into lots and they were for sale. Two of the lots were es-

pecially appealing--one for the church and one for us. Irene and I agreed this must be the answer to our prayers. The lots were available from the owner for \$3,500 each (a few years later lots in the subdivision were selling for several times the original amount). After the papers were signed, the next steps were to sell our mobile home and order a larger one with an expando which could serve as a meeting place until a church building could be constructed. This was a wilderness area then (moose and black bears were seen at times). Irene and I did a lot of work clearing and preparing a place for the mobile home. Obviously we tasted some of the thrills and challenges pioneers must have experienced.

For about two years classes and meetings and worship services were conducted in our mobile home (on which we were making monthly payments). The largest number crowded in was a few over 50 two or three times. Whenever there was a baptism, it was necessary to rent a baptistery in Anchorage or in the Chugiak-Eagle River area if one was available.

Ken Stockdell, an elder at our sponsoring church in Gallatin, Tenn. , led the drive to raise money for the construction of the basement church building. We are grateful for each church and every individual that invested in this effort. The project was completed in the fall of 1973. Men of the congregation helped to plan and construct the flat-top concrete block basement. Irene did much of the interior painting and wood finishing, making curtains, etc. Water was piped from our mobile home well. Now, however, the church is connected to the municipal water system.

We were then assisted in an evangelistic meeting and a DVBS by Julius Hovan together with his wife Claudia (both graduates of Southeastern Christian College). Working with them for a week here that summer following construction of the basement building was Ken Stockdell. He also led the drive to complete the church building--that is, to build an auditorium on the basement structure. Many members helped in this project. The improved and enlarged facilities have played an important part in increased attendance. Sunday morning attendance is now around 60.

Over a period of six or eight years since our location in Eagle River I was invited to speak to Mr. Andy Kirk's Comparative Religions class of Juniors and Seniors at Chugiak High School on the subject "Creation or Evolution." This was an unusual opportunity and there was good interest and participation.

Perhaps something should be written about the parking lot and experiences connected with it, revealing some of the conditions Christian workers deal with in this area. At the present time this is the only

comparatively large cleared and level area in this or two other adjoining subdivisions. Consequently neighborhood children often play here. Some cause no problems; others do and have to be controlled. As a means of helping the community and building up good will, we gave permission for the parking lot area to be a school bus stop. Some of the public school students have caused concern and extra work because of trespassing and leaving garbage on church property. Many times people have taken advantage of an apparently free and safe parking area and we have found it necessary at times to call the police for assistance in dealing with the situation.

One Saturday, because the parking area was covered with glare ice, we had purchased a large heavy sack of sand to distribute on the ice so people on Sunday morning could park and walk safely. The sack was placed in the middle of the area and I planned to distribute it after a time of rest. This was the wrong thing to do, but I took the risk. Burglary, alcoholism, drug abuse and all kinds of violence and crime are major problems in the Anchorage-Eagle River area. After a period of rest I looked out of the window of the mobile home toward the parking lot and saw three teen-age young men in the process of stealing the sand. Almost without thinking I ran down to the snowbank bordering the parking lot, and while holding my empty right hand behind my back I shouted to the one individual who had not yet entered the car, "You get that sand out, and get it now!" He quickly looked at me, evidently decided I had a gun, and then said something to the driver who immediately got out, opened the back door, picked up the heavy sack of sand and struggled a few feet toward me before setting it down. Then he stood looking at me briefly while I held my pose, not saying another word, desperately hoping the three of them would not call the bluff. They didn't, and I thanked the Lord and asked Him to pardon the deception. Recently it was announced that "violent crimes in Anchorage doubled in 1991." The apostle Paul foretold that "in the last days perilous times shall come" and "evil men. . . shall wax worse and worse" (2 Tim. 3:1, 13).

Being in our 70's, Irene and I know our time is limited, and for several years because of health problems (diabetes and fibrositis) and declining strength, we have hoped that a younger couple could be found to replace us. Because of a shortage of preachers and full-time Christian workers in the South 48, we have been told the prospects are not good. Nevertheless we continue to pray for workers of the Lord's choosing and sending. In the meantime efforts to train and use the men now in the congregation have been increased. Dr. J. Vernon McGee's 5-volume set of commentary on the entire Bible has been given to men of the church. Many times Norris Caraway has preached and taught classes. Pat Cromwell currently is teaching the Adult S.S. class. Several of the younger men have led Sunday evening meetings.

I can remember many times when it was necessary for me to lead all of the singing, teach the Adult S.S. class, and preach Sunday morning, and then after a time of rest get ready to lead the evening meeting. No longer is this necessary.

It is worthwhile to note that the present population of the growing Eagle River-Chugiak area is 26,000. Thirty-six churches (of all kinds) advertise in the local paper. About half of the population of the vast state of Alaska is located in the Anchorage-Eagle River-Chugiak area (275,000).

Appreciation is expressed to all who through the years have prayed, encouraged and contributed. May the Lord of the harvest reward Lester Butler who for 28 years has faithfully and efficiently served as the Gallatin Treasurer for the work here.

Some scripture promises which have helped to keep us going are Mt. 28:18-20; Jn. 15:5; Phil. 2:13; Eph 3:16; Jude 24; Gal. 6:9; Luke 18:1; and many others which have been impressed upon us at a moment of need. Often through difficult experiences we have learned that for the effective Christian worker there are no real substitutes for preparation, persistence, prayer and faith in the promises and power of God.

"'The Great Commission' is great because it is given by One with 'all authority' to all the church for all the world for the whole dispensation and involves the joy or doom for all eternity of all to whom it comes. the Great commission has water in it. It also has Go in it. It is strange that so many people have preached water so diligently and missed the go with which the commission begins. The Great Commission is concerned with the preaching of the Gospel. There is Mission in commission and there is Go in Gospel. A true church of Christ will preach the 'Go ye into all the world' just as fervently as Go ye into the water. Both are the Lord's words." --R. H. Boll, 1929

Foundations for Missionary Ministry . . . and Martyrdom

Betty Scott, a teenage girl, entered into a personal covenant with her Savior-God, and copied it in her Bible: "Lord, I give up my own purposes and plans, and all my desires, hopes and ambitions, and I accept thy will for my life. I give myself, my life, my all utterly to Thee, to be Thine forever. I hand over to Thy keeping all my friendships. All the people whom I love are to take second place in my heart. Fill me with Thy Holy Spirit. work out Thy whole will for my life, at any cost, now and forever. To me to live is Christ."

Nine years later (1934) she and her husband John Stam, missionaries in China, were executed by the Communists. The church worldwide was stirred!

VOICES from the FIELDS

James Ashley

Solomon Islands

March 1993

Many of you are already aware of the need for literacy work to go hand in hand with translation so that the people can read God's word when it becomes available. In considering the literacy needs here, Karen and I have seen that while many people know their alphabet and can count out one word at a time, very few can read fluently with expression. Fluency comes with practice, so the people need materials to practice with, and also the motivation to practice regularly.

We are not sure yet how to address this need for the total population, but we have decided to make a start here in Sa'a by producing a weekly 'newspaper'. It is just a one page, front and back, no frills production, but it is in the Sa'a language. The people write the articles, our typist types them into the computer, we do a bit of editing, print a stencil, and then turn out 50 pages with a hand-crank duplicating machine. We have printed a wide range of articles from news to editorials to cross-word puzzles, and the variety stimulates interest and motivates people to practice their reading skills on a regular basis. After a couple of weeks, more articles were being submitted than we could print, and 80% of the households in the village had bought subscriptions. (We sell the papers for a penny a piece to ensure that they are distributed to the people who want them).

Not everything has been 'hunky-dory' however. We were shocked and grieved when we received an article from the chief, John Haluwate, for publication in the paper. The article was an account of a "dream" of his where a lay preacher appeared in the church, performed a miracle, and told the people that they should reject the revival movement which has been growing in the church and return to the old 'custom' ways. He likened the custom ways to a tree cut off at the ground so that only the root is left, but which with tender care would live and thrive again.

We had thought that this chief was as staunch a supporter of Christianity as anybody in the village--after all he had been a lay missionary in his youth, and has always been a faithful church-goer. We were stunned to hear him advocating heathen practices, and even more stunned to think that he expected us to support him in it. I refused to print the article, but unfortunately many people already knew about the dream. We can see that some are being influenced by it; for several weeks later I got three more articles along the same lines from a good friend in Honiara.

We have known for a long time that there were a lot of heathen ways still being practiced here, mostly in secret. When faithful churchgoers openly advocate those ways, however, we realize afresh how thoroughly Satan has deceived people. He had led them into thinking that there is no conflict between God and animism; that they can keep God happy by going to church and mouthing the Lord's Prayer, and at the same time keep the spirits happy by looking after their relics and holy places.

We are very concerned that people develop the discernment to distinguish between practices which are spiritually neutral, and those which are inextricably tied to the worship of evil spirits. Chief Haluwata is much liked and well respected by his people, and we do not want to see him go astray and thereby mislead others. He did not get upset at my refusal to print (which was a relief), and I am hoping that we may get one of the village elders to take a stand against this syncretism. If we do, this problem could be a wonderful opportunity to confront the issue and provide the necessary spark to ignite the revival which is so badly needed.

We can tell that many of you are praying regularly for us--we haven't had malaria for ages and the translation project itself is going well. But the whole purpose of our being here is to see the Sa'a people truly loving and serving Jesus Christ with their whole hearts. Pray with us for them that their eyes may be opened to the truth.

Robert and Joy Garrett

Zimbabwe

March 4, 1993

We are endeavoring to visit all our congregations. On our visit to Raffingora we were delighted to meet 26 new converts baptized in 1992. On one Sunday at Kadoma there were 5 baptisms, one for rededication, and a new member from another town.

We are preparing for our 3 youth camps coming in April.

God has answered prayers for rain and we've had one of our best rainy seasons. The dams still are only partly full. We are praying that we at Rockwood Park will have enough for our needs throughout the dry season.

We praise God that we have at last gotten the concrete foundation completed for the Kuwadzana building. For two Saturdays the Harare brethren worked while the sisters cooked their food.

As the foundation was six feet below floor level now there remains to do the brickwork up to the floor slab. The brethren will do the concrete for the floor slab.

COULD PRAYING FOR REVIVAL HINDER REVIVAL?

After a major conference attended by many thousands of Christians, a concerned missionary named Phil Bogosian wrote the following startling critique: "The idea often expressed at this meeting that we need a massive spiritual revival first before we can evangelize the world--and the resulting preoccupation with revival--is *a serious distraction* that keeps us from obeying Christ's Great Commission. *Revival depends on obedience as well as the opposite*" (Mission Frontiers magazine).

Last month we ran an article by A.W. Tozer saying the church in the U.S. badly needs reformation and revival lest its missionary outreach actually cause harm by spreading a degenerate form of Christianity. That's true, but Phil Bogosian is making an important point too, which merits our consideration.

He felt so strongly that the Lord laid this burden on his heart that he amplified it in the following message, couched as though **Christ Himself is speaking to us**.

This people cries out to me year after year for revival as though I were somehow responsible for withholding revival. But I tell you, I stand ready at any moment to fill any person or any church with all the fullness of My love and power the moment they begin to fully obey the command of My word to disciple all the nations.

Have not I said in My Word that if you draw near to Me, I will draw near to you? Have not I said that if you abide in Me, I will abide in you? But this will only happen as you obey Me and keep My commands.

For I have said if you obey My commands, you will abide in my love. I have said if anyone loves Me he will obey My Word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him; for My Word says that I give the Holy Spirit to those who obey Me.

No, I am not responsible for the lack of revival, you are--by your disobedience to My commands. I have commanded that you pray earnestly that laborers go out to the harvest, and that there be open doors for the Gospel, but you spend hours watching nonsense on TV, and on many other of your own pleasures while millions perish year after year among the thousands of un-reached tribes, nations, tongues and peoples.

I have commanded that you give your finances to reach the nations, but you weary yourselves to fill your homes with the finest of furnishings, clothes and foods, contrary to My commands.

I have commanded that you live the way My Son did. He used all His strength, wisdom, time and money to reach out to a lost and dying world. His life was totally focused on reaching the nations. Your life is so filled with your own pursuits and pleasures that the perishing nations seldom come into your mind. When will you begin to have His mind in you, as I have commanded?

But you will say, "Revive us, Lord, and we will obey." I say to you, I have poured out My Spirit on you many times and you have taken your fill of My power, My love and My joy and simply gone off to pursue your own desires. I will no longer do this. There is power, love and joy in My Spirit, but have you not read that, in this present time, I give My Spirit that you may have power to be My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth?

I tell you surely, I will not continue to pour out My Spirit on those who are disobedient to My purpose. This is why so many no longer enjoy the fullness of My Spirit.

Others of you will say, "Lord, we want to see America saved!"

I tell you the truth, you do not want to see America saved because you are interested in righteousness or for compassion for the lost. You only want to have a crime-free, drug-free, immorality-free, prosperous, beautiful country to pursue your own pleasures. But this is not what I intended for this land. I intended this land to be a platform to plant My Church among every tribe, nation, tongue and people.

Unless My Church obeys Me, America will not be saved. She is even now at the threshold of judgment. As My Word declares, the axe is already laid at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. As was true of many other nations before America, the Kingdom of God is already being taken away from her and being given to nations producing the fruit of it.

So I say to you, do not continue to cry out to Me for revival year after year, decade after decade. I am weary of hearing it. I am weary of your using it as an excuse not to get busy and obey My command to disciple the nations. Begin, now, to earnestly obey Me, and pray that My Church will obey Me sacrificially with its time, its prayer, its finances. And I will fill all who do obey Me with My Spirit, My love, My joy, My power and My blessing to overflowing so that all peoples would have a chance to know My Son's love.

I long to intimately and powerfully partner with those who have ears to hear so that I may soon return to a bride made up of those redeemed by My blood from every tribe, tongue, nation and people.

QUESTIONS ASKED OF US

Carl Kitzmiller

Will heathen people who have never had a chance to hear the gospel be lost?

Every *responsible* person who does not accept and follow Christ as Savior and Lord will be lost. The New Testament does not offer any salvation except through Christ. We simply cannot avoid the plain meaning of many Scriptures. "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12).

It is around that word *responsible* that the interest centers, however. Who is responsible? Many Christians believe the Word makes an exception of children until they reach an age sometimes called "the age of accountability." This is not clearly set forth in Scripture, but it is true that Jesus speaks of the children in terms that indicate they are not under condemnation (Matt. 18:1-6; 19:13-15). Until the child can know what sin is, who Jesus is, and can exercise faith, we assume, on the basis of this rather weighty evidence, that sin is not imputed or else the cleansing of the Lord is imputed.

In the same way we may raise questions concerning the person who has never grown up in mental capacity. We do not believe God holds responsible those of whatever age who have never possessed the mental capacity of believing. (Those who have lost sanity after having capability and opportunity to believe are surely in a different situation.)

With the same reasoning some would hold that those who have never heard and therefore have not had a chance are not responsible. The cases are not exactly parallel, however, for to normal persons moving toward adult status there comes a consciousness of sin. It is universally true that very unenlightened people develop a sense of right and wrong; thus of sin and a consciousness of having sinned. Certainly the untaught are not as responsible (cf. Lk. 12:47-48) as those of us who have had many opportunities, but it is not possible to see them as safe, either. Under the old covenant God seems to have allowed for such ignorance, but the early proclaimers of the Gospel declared that day past (Acts 14:15-17; 17:30). Even those who have never heard the Gospel are not without the testimony of nature and hence, are "without excuse" (Acts 14:17; Romans 1:20-21). Romans 2:12-16 seems to suggest judgment for such ones on the basis of how well they have lived by their own innate standards, but even so, the passage speaks of perishing (v. 12), not of salvation.

It seems to me that God has not fenced Himself into a corner with respect to such ones and He does not clearly say what their final status is to be, but neither have we any real reason for dismissing them from responsibility before God or ourselves from responsibility for carrying the gospel to them. Of this much we may be sure: Christians are under orders to carry the Gospel to every person in the world (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). We must not hold back on the grounds that those who have never had a chance will be saved. We do well to regard it as a life and death matter.

Why was Jesus baptized?

Certainly Jesus was not baptized for the remission of sins, because he had none to be remitted or put away. Some, opposed to baptism for the remission of sins, try to make a point of this. But it is just as equally true that He was not baptized because of remission of sins (that is, because His sins had already been put away, as some contend the purpose of baptism to be). He had no sins that had been put away. Jesus' baptism, in the very nature of the case was unique. In one sense He needed not to be baptized at all. John recognized this purity and the lack of the need for baptism, therefore "John would have hindered him" (Matthew 3:14).

Jesus Himself gave the reason: "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Our Great Example, though He needed it not at all, was baptized so as to provide us the right example. None can ever hold back "because Jesus was not baptized." Can you imagine the number of times human beings would have rejected baptism on this grounds, seeing the multitudes who reject it even after He was baptized? His baptism marks the beginning of His public ministry and affords us an occasion for further being taught in His will.

Those who reject baptism for the remission of sins cannot find support for their position in the example of Jesus nor in the teaching of the New Testament.

GOOD NEWS FOR WEAK PEOPLE!

R.H. Boll

One might well hesitate about encouraging the average sinner to come to Christ, if it were the power of man's will and excellent qualities of character that are to enable him to live and succeed in the Christian life. The preacher, if this were the case, might well say to himself: "I will not invite such and such men to become Christians; they haven't the stamina, nor the foundation for a Christian conduct; they will only bring reproach upon the church." And the sinner might say: "This gospel of Jesus Christ may be 'good news' to others, but it is not so for me. I know my incredible weakness. I have no will, no strength, no perseverance, no self-control. Confess Christ, I could; I want to be saved; baptized I could be; and no doubt the Lord would forgive me all my past. But what would it profit? For after having been washed I would but return to my wallowing in the mire--I could not hold out."

But now the Lord has shown us that He made His gospel good news for all, and has made His salvation equally accessible and obtainable to all. Instead of requiring great excellencies of character, he requires faith, of which, if there be a difference, the weakest and least is more capable than the strong. For faith is a leaning upon God, and they who cannot stand alone can lean even better, if anything, than the rest. Instead of a feat of power, it is an act of faith God wants, an act possible to all. And instead of requiring wisdom and strength and previous righteousness, God requires us to fling these aside and come to him empty handed, and through that little gate of humble faith through which all that would come unto Him must enter, that so He might save them all by grace.

And what it takes to enter is sufficient to sustain. As they received Jesus the Lord, so they walk in Him. "Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God chose the foolish thing of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God chose, yea and the things that are not, that he might bring to naught the things that are; that no flesh should glory before God. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor. 1:26-31)

TRANSFORMED OR CONFORMED?

In her book on *The Hilarity of Community*, Marva J. Dawn tells the story of a little boy who made a persistent effort to open a flower bud, only to have it fall apart in his hands. In frustration he asked his mother why it is that when God opens a flower it is beautiful but when he tries it falls apart. His mother was impressed with the child's insight, especially when he went on to answer his own question, "Oh, I know! When God opens the flower he does it from the inside."

As Dawn observes, the story points up the difference between being conformed and being transformed. The boy was trying to manipulate the flower by controlling it from without (conformity), while God was working from within, allowing the flower to move on to its next stage, from bud to bloom (transformation).

Dawn relates all this to Rom. 12:2: "do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed," and she likes Phillips' rendition of the first part, "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mold."

It is the nature of sects to conform people to their mold by pressing the "issues" that the sect champion. Unless one yields to the conformity she does not count. She isn't loved. A sect loves only its own, if that kind of passion can be called love. Moreover, a sect will seek to destroy the nonconformist, one that opts for transformation. The most dangerous thing that can happen to one in a sect is to resolve to be a free person in Christ and to put devotion to Christ above all else.

It is what murdered our Lord, nonconformity. The legalists could not squeeze him into their mold. That must be what He meant when He said, "I have overcome the world." It is that context that he tells us to "Be of good cheer" (Jn. 16:33).

We can always be of good cheer when we yield to God and allow Him to change us from within. Transformation! The world will not understand, for it knows only conformity. Even the church may not understand, for it is inclined to be like the world instead of like God. Those who work from within use grace, love, compassion; those who work from without use rules, tradition, the party line. Transformation means freedom; conformity means bondage. Isn't it good news that we have a choice?

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

Dear Word & Work,

I'm sending my subscription for three years of W&W. This magazine means so much to me and I read it as soon as it comes. It reminds me of the Reader's Digest of the spiritual world. There are always many relevant articles that help one during these scary times.

--Mary Kerr Fisher

Alexandria, Louisiana

I always read W&W cover to cover! The March issue was especially excellent. I used the contents of this effort in sermons, for illustrations, etc. But most of all, aside from the Scriptures, it helps me in my personal walk before the Lord. 'Changing Your Thought Patterns' was a blessing and insight to me.

--David Johnson

Elmer Ringer Now With The Lord

On April 30, brother Elmer Ringer went home to be with his Lord, after a brave struggle with cancer. He was 83. We shall have his obituary next month, D. V.

Victor Broadus Leads Another Missions Survey Group

On May 28, Victor Broadus will again take several young people to Asia for about six weeks. They will get acquainted with missionary work of various kinds, and have opportunities to minister too. Most of the time will be spent in the Philippines, but they will also be in Japan and Hong Kong. Please pray for them.

Portland Christian High School Students Help Send Food To The Malnourished

Working with Hollace and Ila Sherwood for four days, four hours per day, grades 9-12 prepared 16.5 tons of high lysine corn for shipping to Sudan. This is in addition to the time spent on the road between Louisville and Bryantsville, IN.

It was hard work, but they were glad to do it. "The night cometh when no man can work." (see W&W April, '93 for related story)

Bohol Island, Philippines

Four days ago, we had our graduation exercises. There were 6 students who graduated and completed the Basic Theology course. Please pray for Nemesio and me as we may have to carry a bigger load next term. We may have to allow our college teachers to resign because we failed to raise the needed support for them. Teaching will then be a voluntary unsupported basis. We hate to lose our very gifted and able staff, but they need some subsistence for their family as well.

Another new congregation is now formed through the faithful effort of 2 students of the college. Last month Nemesio baptized 8 people there.

Camps and VBS's are approaching. Aside from the Junior and the Senior Camps, Nemesio and I are specially planning to hold a camp way up North, with my own relatives. I have been so burdened that my own relatives are not saved. This will be a real battle because they belong to a very legalistic "only

church". --Myrna Auxtero (& Nemesio)

Words of Life

We have received information that our radio speaker's wife, Sis. Virginia Ramsey, has been diagnosed with a life-threatening medical condition. By the time you read this, she should have already had special treatment; however, we understand from Bro. Ramsey that the doctors have indicated that the prospects for success are not very good. Now, as always, we look to the Great Physician; please keep the Ramseys before God in prayer.

Just Suppose

Just suppose that tomorrow you went to your local post office to purchase a first-class stamp, but instead of charging you 29 cents, the clerk asked you for \$4.06 for one stamp! Imagine your surprise! Something comparable to this has occurred in recent months in Nigeria; postage rates have increased by 1400 percent. Naturally, this has drastically reduced the number of letters we receive, but more importantly, this reflects the increased hardship that brethren in Nigeria are facing with such high inflation. Crime is also on the rise. Remember these brethren.

Report From Manila

Central Bible Institute held its commencement exercises on March 14. Four students received the 4-yr Bachelor of Theology diploma. Seven completed the 3-yr Associate of Theology degree. Two finished the 1-yr Basic Bible Course. All of them are very active in the ministry of their local churches; four are already pastoring. Two are from our downtown church--the "mother" congregation.

We thank God that the students displayed a high degree of responsi-

bility and cooperation one with another. The student body manifests the unity within the body of Christ.
--Virgilio Torrefiel, CBI President

Maple Manor Christian Home Adult Division

Today, four volunteers from the Buechel Church of Christ are here washing and rolling the hair for several of the ladies. This is an important day for the residents. They look forward to the ladies coming to do this service for them. It is something that has been done through the years and is greatly appreciated.

Lamb And Lion Ministries

Conferences --Keep in mind that we are going to replace our annual conference this year with several regional conferences as follows:

- 1) Lexington Ky. -- June 24-26
- 2) Atlanta, Ga. -- July 15-17
- 3) Lafayette, La. -- July 22-24
- 4) Dallas, Tx. -- August 12-14
- 5) Houston, Tx. -- November 4-6

All the conferences will run from Thursday evening through Saturday noon. All will focus on the theme "Understanding Bible Prophecy," except the conference in Dallas which will feature a study of Revelation. --David Reagan

Woodland Bible Camp

110 B Street N.E. - Linton, IN 47441 - (812) 847-9248 Registration deadline is May 1st for \$35.00. After May 1st \$40.00 per camper

1993 Schedule

May 1 - June 1 Worker's Month
Orell Overman

June 4 - 5 Workshop: W. Nethery, David Pound, Eugene Pound, Buford Smith, James Reintjes

June 13 - 19 Jr. Week #1 Harry Coultas

June 20 - 26 Int. Week #1 Dan Ford
July 11 - 17 Jr. Week #2 Jerry Carmichael - Jon Mayeux
July 18 - 24 Int. Week #2 Mike Abbott - Nick Marsh
July 24 - 31 Sr. Week David Pound - Will Nethery
Sept. 3 - 6 Young Adult Retreat David Pound and Committee
Sept. 12 - 17 Senior Citizen's Week Eugene Pound - Bob Morrow
Sept. 17 - 19 Int. Week Retreat Sam Marsh
Sept. 24 - 26 Senior Retreat Joe Overman
Oct. 23 Annual Meeting & Dinner

Borden Church of Christ

The following is a letter received by Bro. Mike in response to the petition we signed & sent to Congressman Lee Hamilton.

Dear Mr. Abbott:

I noted your opposition to abortion. In view of the sensitivity and importance of this issue, I believe the Congress must proceed with the utmost care. Personally, I would object to taking a life, or potential life, at any stage. I do not know of any instance when I would find abortion a desirable solution though, as in the instance of the pregnancy of a woman seriously ill, it may be a necessary one. Such cases where there is a conflict between the unborn life in the womb and a fully existing life present for me the greatest difficulty.

Generally, I have supported amendments before the Congress to deny federal funds for abortion. The law now prohibits federal funding for abortions except in cases when it is needed to save the mother's life. I have supported that position. Today, far less than one percent of the abortions performed in the U.S. are paid for by federal funds. Thank

you again for bringing your comments to my attention.

Lee H. Hamilton

Denham Springs Church of Christ

June 20th will mark the close of another chapter in the history of this congregation. Don McGee and his family will be leaving in order to assume the pulpits at the Amite and Hayden Grove churches. That day will mark the fifth anniversary of his ministry here. It has been a time of challenge, growth, heartache, joy, and just about every human emotion one can imagine; even some battles. But through each one the Lord has carried this work and its workers.

A lot comes to mind when a preacher reflects upon his tenure. There are always low ebbs and high points. Here, the latter far outnumber the former. The highest high point can best be described as personal spiritual growth for this congregation. Hardly a person here would not agree, especially the preacher. Nothing instills dependence upon the Lord like the recognition of inability in one's self.

Many have said that the last five years have been good for them in many ways. None could be more sincere in saying that than the preacher. Words cannot describe the joy of seeing one's own children grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. Again, words fail when a church leader sees a person transformed from a condition of spiritual bankruptcy to that of being an influential worker.

As of this date no preacher has been located to fill the pulpit. The discouraging thing is that many of our young men have not considered the ministry for their profession; for a number of reasons, perhaps. The encouraging thing is that this work does not need reviving and rebuild-

ing. It is a growing, dynamic work which needs a pulpit minister, not a miracle of resurrection. The Lord knows the need and has a man for the job. Pray that the two will soon be brought together. --Don McGee (504) 665-5261

Welcome "Home" Paul Estes

It's been a long trip home for Brother Paul Estes, who will teach at SBS for the first time this fall. Born in Winchester, Ky. he spent four years in North Carolina, four years in Ohio, and 5 1/2 years in Louisiana. But this June he and his wife, Rita, who was also born in Winchester, and their three teenage daughters will move to Louisville. Paul will be the preaching minister at the Kentucky Avenue Church of Christ.

Paul will teach "Scientific Creationism" at SBS this fall. A manuscript he has written on this subject is due to be published soon.--**School of Biblical Studies Newsletter**

Three Crosses

As you travel on I-77 in West Virginia you cannot help but notice the message of the three silent crosses. A sermon comes to mind: "A Hill With Three Crosses." One cross portrays a thief dying IN sin, the other one dying TO sin. The center one is the Redeemer dying FOR sin. It divides all humanity into one of the two camps. Are YOU dying IN sin or are you dying TO sin? The choice is yours. Come to Christ before it is too late! He will be there for you. --T.Y. Clark / Larry Miles, Iroquois Church

Johnson City, Tenn.

The following report was handed in concerning the recent series of Tuesday morning meetings held by some of our ladies:

The nine different ladies who were in attendance at various meet-

ings of the "Joy" series have truly been blessed of God. The Lessons led by Mary Crouch, Janell Lewis and Yvone Singleton were: The Joy of - Glorifying God; Meditating on God's Word, Jesus, Heaven; A New Song; Being Quiet; Early Rising; and the Christian Race. These studies were inspirational to those who joined in fellowship, prayer and study. --Carl Kitzmiller

Athens, Greece

"The Lord granted me the blessing to celebrate my 72nd birthday. I was born in April 1922, and got saved in January 1943 during the terrifying World War 2.

"Sofia's health is getting worse and worse day by day. She hardly can walk now." --George Galanis

[She has Parkinson's Disease.] Brother Galanis reports that while the new building has made good progress, about \$36,000 is still needed to complete it. Donations may be sent via Victor Broaddus, P.O. Box 54842, Lexington KY 40555.

Louisville Christian Fellowship Week

The dates for this conference are Aug. 2-5, so hold them open. The theme is "Worship: Man's Relationship to God." There will be Bible expositions on worship in the book of Revelation. Also messages on topics such as worship as individuals, in the home, and in church gatherings; also worship in spirit and in truth.

Next month we'll have the complete schedule of topics, speakers and times, D.V. For more information, call Dale Offut at (812) 246-2524 (church) or -2694. As usual, the day sessions will be at Portland Ave. Church in Louisville, the evening sessions at Sellersburg, Ind. Church.

We can DO the Job by GOD'S Power

"The N.T. epistles were written, and the lives they indicate were led, against a background of paganism. There were no church-buildings, no Sundays, no books about faith. Slavery, sexual immorality, cruelty, callousness to human suffering, and a low standard of public opinion were universal. Travelling and communications were chancy and perilous; most people were illiterate.

Many Christians today talk about 'the difficulties of our times' as though we should have to wait for better ones before the Christian religion can take root. It is heartening to remember that this faith took root and flourished amazingly in conditions that would have killed anything less vital in a matter of weeks. The early Christians were on fire with the conviction that they had become, through Christ, literally sons of God; they were founders of a new Kingdom. They still speak to us across the centuries. Perhaps if we believed what they believed, we might achieve what they achieved."

--J. B. Phillips