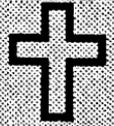


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The Word and Work (USPS 691-460) is published monthly except December under the auspices of the Portland Ave. Church of Christ, Inc., Louisville, Ky. Subscription: \$8.00 per year; bundles of 10 or more to one address = \$7.50 per subscription. Address correspondence to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Avenue, Louisville, KY 40212. Second class postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, KY 40212.

Vol. XCII

FEBRUARY, 1998

No. 2

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THEME:

PRAYER AND MISSIONS

Dennis L. Allen

So many good things have already been written about prayer that in this issue our primary goal is to "stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance." I find that I need continual encouragement to pray, because the tendency of the flesh is "to faint." That is why Jesus gave the parable of the unrighteous judge and the widow. (Lk. 18). The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak. The U.S. Center for World Mission in Pasadena for years has maintained a room where prayer goes up 24 hours a day. Members of the staff take two hour shifts night and day to pray not only for the Center but for the advance of God's kingdom around the world. Special requests can be phoned in night or day. When we were there for three months in 1995 we had the privilege of taking a shift several times. That can mean the necessity of setting your alarm and getting up in the middle of the night to go and pray. Not easy for the flesh but rewarding to the spirit. For decades Christians in Korea have arisen very early each day to go to their churches to pray together. The result? Phenomenal growth of the church in Korea, and in recent years the sending out of thousands of missionaries to the unreached peoples of the world.

No, prayer has never been easy for the flesh, but the work that is truly of God can go forward in no other way. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." (Jas. 5:16).

We hope the articles in this issue may be used to broaden and deepen the scope of our praying. How often our praying centers around praying for the sick and the difficulties we encounter. If we look at the requests for prayer Paul made we find a different emphasis. Of the Ephesians he asks prayer "that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth to make know with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that in it I may speak boldly as I ought to speak." (Eph. 6:19-20). Of the Colossians he requests prayer "that God may open unto us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds, that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak." (Col. 4:3,4). The Thessalonians were requested to pray "that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified." The second request was that he and his companions "be delivered from unreasonable and evil men". (2 Thess. 3:1,2). Paul encouraged the Roman brethren to be "instant" or "steadfast" in prayer. Rom. 12:12). This comes from one Greek word meaning "ever enduring in". The picture given is of one being always ready to pray whenever the need appears. Is not this the same readiness in Paul's exhortation to "pray without ceasing?" (1

Thess. 5:17). We are commanded to work; we know from experience we must sleep. So how can we pray without ceasing? In Christ we are in His presence. Prayer should be very natural for us. In everything by prayer and supplication we are to let our requests be made known unto God.

As this age draws to a close we know the Devil is going to step up his activity because he knows his time is short. Satan's forces constitute the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. We had better assume that his forces are highly organized and tightly disciplined. We are no match for him or his hosts. Only as we realize who and what we are up against can we see the supreme importance of prevailing prayer. "When the adversary comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him." (Isa. 59:19).

Effectual prayer is a warfare. But "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." Tennyson well said, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." May the Lord grant us the faith and vision to see the potential of our prayers. We may not be able to go in person but our prayers are not limited by distance or remoteness. Prayer is effective wherever God can go.

BECOMING A PRAYER WARRIOR

Workers on far-flung mission fields do not need your pity--but they desperately need your prayers.

Talk to missionaries and you'll find they have this in common: an unshakable confidence in the power of prayer--the prayer of people back home.

A missionary to China interned by the Japanese during World War II testifies: "We knew when supporters were really praying. We recognized the difference in our heart experience. It brought strength, peace, courage."

Praying for them is the simplest thing you can do for missionaries. But sometimes it's easy to forget.

Christians are more likely to pray about physical trials such as sickness and persecutions than about spiritual battles.

Adds the missionary who told what prayer had done for him while he was a prisoner of the Japanese: "Now, when we are facing spiritual battles, fighting against the power and principalities of the air, often that prayer strength we had during our interment has been lacking."

And when prayer falls off, so does material support.

Recently a missionary in Japan had to go without heat in his home for weeks in midwinter. Reason: lack of funds. A family in the jungles of Brazil had to eat monkey meat for months. They once had to sell their gun to have money to go up river to reach a tribe. Then they had nothing to kill game for food. They almost starved to death.

Of course you do not want to be guilty of neglecting prayer for missionaries. What are some principles to guide you in becoming a real missionary prayer warrior?

Queried missionaries throughout the world gave some suggestions:

1. *Find out all you can about the missionary for whom you are praying.*

A furloughing missionary was shocked to find that her pastor's wife did not know the names of the missionaries her church supported. "With effort she could recall the names of most of the men, she had a fairly good idea of where they were located, but she didn't know that type of work they did," the missionary said. "She knew some of the wives' names, but didn't know how many children they had. How can she pray for them by name if she doesn't know their names?"

Says a missionary in Hong Kong: "I always thought that the missionary was a person who lived in a mud hut and ate herbs and honey like John the Baptist. But when I came to the field I found myself in a modern city with every convenience plus sin just as rampant as in Chicago, New York or New Orleans."

The circumstances of the missionary in Rome are markedly different from those of a missionary in New Guinea. Remember this when you pray.

2. *Pray regularly.* Don't wait for some particularly heart-tugging story to stimulate you to prayer.

A missionary in Algiers writes: "When nothing visibly happens the missionary sometimes feels he has to 'make up' some exciting news to tell his prayer supporters. The truth is, a missionary's life is not always full of 'great' events."

Even if you don't hear any news, go ahead with regular prayer.

A woman in Iowa has the pictures of the missionaries of her denomination on the window over her sink. She prays for them while she washes the dishes each day. "Now dishes are something I look forward to, not a drudge," she says.

3. *Be specific in your prayer.* "Lord bless the missionaries" is not enough.

Prayer letters from overseas can help. Admittedly, sometimes they are not always as attractive and informative as you'd like. But consider the obstacles: lack of reproduction facilities, lack of time, insufficient writing ability.

A missionary to Japan admits: "The more intimate problems that characterize the mission field seldom make the pages of a prayer letter.

Then, too, sometimes the missionary cannot reveal the most urgent problems. For instance, at the time of peak violence in Morocco, a North African Mission publication stated: Frequently the same conditions which make facts hard to obtain also make the need for prayer most urgent. This is abundantly true now in North Africa. Violence may break out at any moment."

4. *Try to anticipate needs.* (Often by the time you hear of a need, the need is past.) Think of the spiritual problems that plague you. Perhaps they are bothering the missionary.

5. *Be persistent and persevering in prayer.* When you pray for something that requires a specific answer--don't give up until you know the answer has come. Even then, continue praying.

Of course, while you are praying for missionaries, don't forget nationals, many of whom are taking direction of the church. Pray that the missionary may deal wisely with these new leaders, being willing to give up authority and become an adviser. And, certainly, pray for native Christians and lands closed to missionaries.

Most missionaries don't feel sorry for themselves. Not at all. Says one: "When we hear talk of our giving up so much, we think of the poor folks at home who have to stay in the homeland when we have all the privileges of bringing folks to Christ."

Nevertheless, missionaries are doing a work especially commanded by Christ. The Enemy will do all he can to frustrate it. So we must pray for the missionaries unceasingly as well as victoriously.

--From CHRISTIAN LIFE magazine

WORLD MISSIONS SURVEY

This survey is published with the prayer that the information will stimulate thinking, praying, planning, and acting to help extend the mission of Christ's church worldwide. The progress of local and global evangelization will be affected by the way in which you and your church respond--or do not respond.

1. The **Great Commission** given by the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection remains in effect (Matthew 28:18-20; see also Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47, John 20:21, Acts 1:8, and Romans 16:25-27). It is binding upon Christ's disciples, the church.
2. The church's **great calling is to disciple** the peoples of the earth. The church exists to worship God, to serve and to provide fellowship, and to nurture His people for effective witness.
3. The task of discipling the nations is given to the church **in all parts of the world**. It is essential to the church's life and ministry everywhere.
4. The church which the Son of God is gathering from out of the entire human race **is growing**. The Christian church in all countries counts more than 1.9 billion members. This is the highest number since the Day of Pentecost.
5. **God plans** to incorporate into His church a vast number of members who are drawn from every people and tribe, every culture and language (Revelation 7:9). The church which mainly looks inward to its own racially or socially homogeneous membership forgets God's declared purpose for His church (and may be found in opposition to it).
6. World population has grown to more than 5.9 billion people, more than twice as many as one hundred years ago (United Nations 1991). Almost 1.2 billion live in the People's Republic of China. Another billion are found in the Indian sub-continent (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh). Africa and South America together comprise just under a third billion. By the end of the 20th century, world population may exceed 6.2 billion inhabitants.
7. Approximately **67% of the world's people** are not Christian! These 3.8 billion people constitute the prayer and ministry concern for the church of Christ around the world.
8. The overwhelming majority of earth's people today are young people in their teen-age years. Half of Mexico's 95 million inhabitants in 1996, for example, were under 20 years of age.

9. About **one half** of the world's unreached people (who total 3.8 billion people) are neighbors of Christians, who have prime responsibility for contact and witness among them. Thus, every church of Christ in every place has the responsibility to evangelize its neighbors.
10. The remaining **34% of the world's people** (about 1.9 billion) must be reached primarily by Christians from many other lands who will go as cross-cultural missionaries to bring them the Gospel by means of long-term ministry.
11. A missionary couple may be able to minister significantly to about 5,000 people by their work and witness during a lifetime of ministry. This means that a total of about **380,000 missionary evangelists** should be sent and supported by the church in all lands to bring the Gospel to the 1.9 billion unreached people.
12. The 380,000 missionaries are needed for **evangelizing and church gathering** assignments, apart from administrative and support services. The key need is for a large number of missionaries who will major in preaching and teaching the Word of God.
13. The number of **cross-cultural missionaries in 1997** is estimated to be about 403,000, sent by churches and mission agencies in many lands. Over 100,000 are sent out from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. About 78,000 are commissioned by churches in Europe, with about 225,000 sent out from churches in North America.
14. One fourth of European and North American cross-cultural missionaries currently are engaged in translation, evangelization, church planting, and teaching. **Three-fourths are assigned to administrative and support work** (deed ministries in areas such as agriculture, aviation, community development, literacy, medicine and relief efforts).
15. In the light of **current missionary surveys**, about 10,000 out of 24,000 people groups remain to be evangelized in many parts of the world.
16. **The urgent need** is for a majority of missionaries to be sent where the Gospel has not yet been preached--at least, where the need is greater than where the church already exists. Each local congregation can help to redirect missionary resources by setting the goal of helping to send and support missionaries assigned to pioneer areas of the world.
17. The urgent need for a great number of new missionaries must be faced by **each Christian congregation** (in Africa, Asia, Australia,

Europe, North and South America, and elsewhere.) **Each local church is called to discover its responsibility for missionary recruitment among its membership.** Each congregation should **pray and work toward recruiting and sending out missionaries**, until it reaches the goal of sending and supporting at least one new evangelist or church planter (individual or family) for about every 60 church members.

18. The raising up, sending, and supporting of **new missionary workers** should be a local church's main annual goal, not merely the attainment of a monetary amount. At the same time, more funds are needed--and are available. David Barrett reports that the Christian world still spends 98% of its income on itself.
19. Despite the growth in number of short-term workers in recent decades, and their value in certain mission tasks, the continuing need is for **long-term missionaries**. Adaptation to culture, language learning, and growth of personal relationships require far more than a year or two of work and residence.
20. About 90% of all missionaries today must seek their **prayers and financial support** from the Lord's people (the salaried missionary is far from being the norm). The implications for the local congregation are clear: **it should take more initiative in making missionary support funds available**, and vastly larger funds must be sought for an expanded missionary force.
21. The 403,000 evangelists and church planters needed **must receive adequate preparation** for their ministries. To be effective in the service of Christ, such workers need substantial practical experience in evangelizing and cross-cultural orientation on the field. They also should complete thorough academic preparation over a period of years (in Bible, Christian doctrine, missiology, history of missions, anthropology and culture, world religions and cults). Congregations **should take an active role in guiding prospective missionaries concerning their practical and academic preparation**, long before such persons actually apply for appointment to a mission board or agency.
22. Churches could **train members** in personal witnessing and encourage them to enter short-term training programs at home and abroad.
23. **400 cities** have more than **1 million inhabitants**. The church must reckon seriously and undauntedly with this significant urbanization of earth's people--and with the hazards to life and witness which city life presents.

24. The crises in missions today is not merely the worker shortage, which has been evident for a long time (see Jesus' words in Luke 10:1-2). The church faces a crises of faith and obedience, of concern for people lost without Christ, of serious planning, of selfless service, and of prevailing prayer. The words of James 1:22 are pertinent: "Do not merely listen to the word...Do what it says." Under God, the church can do much more toward the evangelization of the world before A. D. 2000, if it has a mind to do so. What effort will you and your church make to reach this goal?

By Dr. Dick L. VanHalsems from MISSIONARY MONTHLY
(adapted by Doug Nichols) Used with Permission.

THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

By Gordon V. Jardy Jr.

Henry Nouwen writes, "The core of all prayer is indeed listening, obediently standing in the presence of God." But it is extremely difficult for Christians living in modern society to hear God among all the diverse voices clamoring for our attention. In our highly competitive and technological world, our lives are so filled with activities, schedules, worries and pressing obligations that we are often pulled in many different directions at once, with no unifying center to give ultimate meaning to our activity.

Intercession finds its beginning in silence as we listen to God alone in solitude. Only as we encounter the Word of God in silence do we begin to see the limitations of all other words. Isaiah, in the presence of this Word, could only respond, "Woe is me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips"(Is. 6:5).

In Jeremiah 23:16-22 we find a situation where false prophets are proclaiming to the people visions of their own making instead of those given by Yahweh. Jeremiah asks the question, "Which of them has stood in the council of the Lord to see or hear his word? Who has listened and heard his word?" The answer, of course, is obvious; None of them have taken the time to be alone to listen to God. In reply God says, "But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds."

In the encounter with God in prayer we are opened to that reality which unmask our illusions. Our illusions are exposed by the light of

God's searching presence (Eph. 5:13-14). This unmasking is not easy. It is hard to confront the truth about ourselves. Some are able to respond as Isaiah did. Some are not, as evidenced by the false prophets.

Listening to God in silence happens when we allow no distracting voices to speak to us. This is the first step in the process of being disillusioned. And in being dis-illusioned we move deeper into the action of intercession. We need to be liberated from the illusions we have accepted about life, our values, the world and ourselves so that we can properly intercede on behalf of this world to God and in God's place for this world.

As we listen we are given the grace to change; to be made new in the attitude of our minds; to put on the new self, created to be like God in true justice and holiness (Eph. 4:23-24).

As we pray for God's will to be done, we are nonetheless aware of the deeply entrenched powers which seek to maintain their presumed mastery over this world. Remembering Paul's words that our struggle is against "the rulers, against the authorities, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms," our prayers of intercession for the rule of God, for love, justice, peace, and wholeness to become real on this earth in the daily reality of people's lives become, in their deepest sense, subversion of the status quo.

This order is in the grip of principalities and powers. In Ephesians 6, these principalities and powers (stoicheia) are the earthly structures which dominate life. Because they are fallen powers, these structures seek to rule life in their own image and not in the image of God. Thus the sociopolitical and economic order is an outworking of the life of these powers in their quest to dominate and control the earth and its people. Prayers of intercession on behalf of these powers become a subversion of their present state, calling them to be renewed in Christ.

The Bible is quite clear that no nation follows after God. All nations are fallen powers. Each nation pridefully seeks after its own self-interest, for its own self-generated security; and so God's judgement is brought to bear on each nation throughout time.

When the powers that exist tell us that nationalism is our right but, as Christians, we pray for justice for all nations, then our intercession becomes subversive.

When the powers that exist tell us we must have technological superiority over other nations so we can protect our institutionalized greed and selfishly consumptive patterns of behavior but, as Christians, we pray that the Third World's living standards be raised and that ours be lowered, then our intercession becomes subversive.

When the powers that exist tell us that it is necessary to kill our enemies so that we might live in peace, but we, as Christians, pray for the peace of Christ to be made real in this nation and in those we view as our enemies, then our intercession becomes subversive.

As Christians we live in a fallen world. But God has not left the world entirely to its own devices. God has acted to restore this world gone mad. That action finds its most visible expression in the coming of Christ. In Christ, we see God becoming human and actually participating in all created life. God had entered into the heart of the world through the order of our humanity in order to bring hope out of chaos, sanity out of madness and life out of death. God acts in solidarity with our humanity to liberate a world enslaved to false powers.

The word "intercession" means to take a step which puts us at the heart of a situation, like a man who stands between two people about to fight. This characterizes the life of Jesus, in both its action of prayer and its prayerful action.

Anthony Bloom describes Jesus' intercession as taking "the step to stand between fallen man and God. He is God's equal and man's equal, one with God because he is God, one with man because he is man and prepared to take the consequences of his divine love upon his human flesh.

This kind of intercession calls for solidarity with those who are helpless to help themselves. It requires a passionate commitment on the part of the one who intercedes. Going to the heart of a situation involves great risk. It may even cost a person his life. Yet this is the extent to which God in Christ chose to go.

Our intercession through the action of prayer and prayerful action continues God's redemptive work in this world. This world is deserving of judgment. Our prayer is for the will of God to be done so that hope may abound for all those who live in the fear of death.

Second, we pray for other parts of the church over against this world system that wherever our brothers and sisters are being threatened, persecuted, killed, and denied human rights, God's Spirit may bring liberation, peace, and protection to them. We intercede that the church may be one so that the world may come to believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and the ruler of history.

In order for our prayers of intercession to be heard by God they must be prayed according to the will of God. We understand this will through two primary ways: through the Word of God given in Scripture, and through the Spirit of God given in Christ.

The world today is in the throes of a great global conflict between those who are rich, powerful, and oppressive and those who are poor, powerless, and oppressed. God's action in history demonstrates a passionate commitment to the poor and oppressed of this world. God is on the side of the poor in a way that he is not on the side of the rich. There is a preferential option for the poor in the heart of God.

In 1948, our State Department produced a policy planning document that states, "We have about 50% of the world's wealth, but only 6.3% of its population. In this situation we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity."

The church has been largely silent in the face of such statements. The church must mobilize for action rooted in the understanding that God's will demands justice for the poor and liberation for the oppressed.

Even in a world deluged by despair and death, there still lies the possibility for hope and life. This is true because God remains at work in the world, preventing it from total collapse. Hope and life find their expression in active prayer and prayerful action, but one cannot be done without the other. Otherwise, there will only be religious rhetoric devoid of incarnational truth, or sentimental activism devoid of spiritual power.

Great Commission Praying

David Butts

Let's face facts. Most of us will never serve on a mission field. Very few Christians will actually move into a cross-cultural situation to present the gospel. And yet, every one of us must come to grips with the Great Commission. Preaching the gospel to the whole world is still the job of the whole church. How do we, as "non-going" Christians, meet our responsibility?

I believe the answer is found in our prayer life. Biblically, prayer and missions are linked together. We will not finish the task of world evangelization without powerful prayer focused on the spiritual needs of a lost world. Top be sure, there are other important aspects such as sacrificial giving, short-term trips, and recruitment and training of missionaries; however, giving ourselves to the Lord in prayer for missions

must become a high priority for the church. Our plans and strategies will fall woefully short without the power of intense prayer.

Jesus tied prayer and missions together in Matthew 9:37, 38. "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." In John 4: 35 Jesus said, "Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." We are living in a time of ripe fields spiritually. The world has never been more receptive to the gospel. It is time for the church to obey the command of Jesus to open our eyes, look around us, and see the potential harvest.

And then what? What is the next command of Jesus regarding the harvest? Pray! Ask the Lord of the harvest for workers. Certainly we must plan, certainly we must recruit and train, but first we must pray. That is the command and the plan of Jesus.

We are living in a day and age where this command of Jesus to pray to the Lord of the harvest has greater impact than ever before. Whole villages of people are responding to the gospel, but there are not enough trained workers to teach them. The result is often a blending of paganism and Christianity. And it's not their fault! It's ours! Jesus told us what to do when we looked around us and saw that we were in a time of spiritual harvest. Pray to the Lord of the harvest for workers. Instead of limiting prayer to praying for those in the hospital (as it is in most of the churches I visit), shouldn't we also be praying the "Harvest Prayer"?

Praying the Harvest Prayer is just the beginning of this exciting adventure of reaching this world for Christ in prayer. Many Christians are discovering the joys of adopting a people group in prayer. An individual Christian, or a whole church, begins to learn about and pray for a people-group who have never had the opportunity to hear the gospel. That people-group has now been adopted by your church! That commitment is to pray regularly for the introduction and advancement of the gospel among that particular tribe or nation. It involves praying for workers, for open doors, for receptive hearts, and much more. Some Christians have gotten so involved in praying for their adopted people that they have traveled to the country where their prayers have been focused to pray on-site.

There are many resources for discovering what people-groups are still in deed of the gospel. Among our fellowship of churches, the best way to obtain information is through the Mission Resource Center, Marvin Grooms, Director (ph. 1-800-827-5663). Many of our mission agencies also can direct you to a particular group to adopt in prayer. A word of warning: don't be surprised when your prayers lead you to

take further action steps to bring the gospel to your adopted people-group!

One of the most powerful ways we can impact the world for Christ is to begin to pray more effectively for missionaries. Some churches and individuals seem to feel that their responsibility ends after a check has been written. But prayer is the missionary's lifeline. I'm convinced that one of the reasons for the early return of missionaries from the field is a failure of sufficient prayer support. One organization that I know of recommends that all of their missionaries have 100 intercessors before they leave for the field. Think of a missionary you know, or know about. If their effectiveness in ministry depended upon your prayers for them, would they be accomplishing anything at all for the kingdom?

HOW TO PRAY FOR MISSIONARIES

How can we pray effectively for missionaries? The most effective prayer is one that comes directly from God's word. When we see something in the Bible and know it to be God's will, then we are able to pray with greater faith. This especially applies to our prayers for missionaries. In the Bible, we find a number of prayer requests from the first great missionary, the apostle Paul. Each of these requests can powerfully be used in our prayers for missionaries today.

1. *Acceptance.* Paul was rightly concerned about how other believers perceived and accepted his ministry (as are missionaries today). Many missionaries are damaged or discouraged, not by those they are trying to reach with the gospel, but by other missionaries. Each is focused and called by God, but may have a different idea about how to reach a particular group of people. "Pray . . . that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there" (Rom. 15: 31).

2. *Boldness.* The request is made for courage in presenting the gospel. Getting on an airplane to fly across the ocean does not automatically make a missionary bold. "Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel" (Ephesians 6:19).

3. *Clarity.* Paul didn't want to be misunderstood, but rather to be able to communicate the gospel clearly. Can you imagine how difficult it is for a missionary to present the gospel in a new language, or to try to translate the Bible into a language that has never been written down before? "Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should" (Col. 4:4).

4. *Deliverance.* There is a place for the prayer of deliverance from the attack of the enemy, from whatever direction the attack may come. Missionaries need prayers of protection from physical, emotional, and

spiritual harm as they serve Christ in a different culture. "Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea" (Rom. 15: 31).

5. *Extension.* Paul asks for prayer that his ministry may be extended beyond its current boundaries. Many missionaries today are concerned about groups of people just beyond their reach. "And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains" (Col. 4:3).

6. *Fruitfulness.* Paul, like all missionaries, was concerned about church growth. He wanted to see the gospel spread and be accepted. "Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you" (2 Thes. 3:1).

I believe that God is especially attuned to prayers that come out of His own Word. You can keep a missionary on the field, protect them from harm, and bring greater effectiveness to their ministry as you begin to pray God's Word for them. There is no reason why every missionary shouldn't have hundreds of daily intercessors who are vitally connected to their ministry through prayer. With technological advances such as E-mail and FAX, we are better able to know the needs of many missionaries more quickly.

Our missionaries are desperate for prayers of authority from the church to help them in their attack on the gates of Hell. There is a battle going on for the souls of men, women, and children, and prayer warriors are scarce. You *can* be a source of daily strength for a missionary through your prayers.

Prayer is a limitless ministry. It takes no special financing, no large organization, and very little training. It's something we all can do. David Bryant, founder of Concerts of Prayer, International, has said, "Prayer is the one mission to the world that all Christians can share. Through prayer any of us can directly love the unreached, even to the ends of the earth. As far as God can go, prayer can go."

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[The six specific headings for prayer for missionaries are taken from *Prayer Life*, by T.W. Hunt and Catherine Walker, published by the **Southern Baptist Sunday School Board**.]

A Missionary Thinks Out Loud

Martin Brooks

Missionaries' letters should be read not just as items of interest but as impetus to prayer. In this way we can be fellow-workers with our brothers and sisters even in remote places.

January 8, 1998

I've frequently heard that the first term of mission work is largely spent trying to figure out what to do. Not that there is nothing to do. There are thousands of paths that could be taken, the real question is which path would the Lord have us to follow. There have been many cultural questions to sort out. Again and again I ask myself, am I for "this" or against "that" based on Scripture or based on my background and preferences.

A few weeks ago, Don and I took Gene and Alice with us to Inhambane. Alice was the daughter of a missionary and was born in Inhambane in 1930. She remembered crocodiles and hippos in the lake behind her house. She talked about long trips to Lorenzo Marcas which was the Portuguese's name for Maputo. She spoke of how her father was responsible for the construction of the Free Methodist training center near Inhambane. Her memory said to take the left fork in the dirt road, go a few kilometers and turn left again by the large Baobab tree. Amazingly, the directions were very accurate. As we stopped to admire the large tree (the trunk was at least 10 feet across), Gene started a conversation with an elderly gentleman who remembered Alice's father and brother.

Alice began to cry as we walked around the house of her childhood. The center is still being operated by the Mozambican Free Methodists, but it is in terrible disrepair. As we walked through the house, she pointed out cabinets that her father had constructed. She talked about the fruit orchard that was now missing and the garden near the lake. Weeds grew tall. The houses her father had constructed for students were still there, but they were abandoned and needed a lot of work to be useful again. The crocodiles and hippos were gone. The girls dorm and medical clinic were difficult to find and what was left of the buildings needed more than a little paint. There was however a one room primary school that continues to meet on the property and the Bible school was still in operation for the local people. There did not appear to be many students.

As we walked around the training center I could not help but wonder what would be the eventual outcome of our work in Mozambique. Would our training center fall into disrepair. If there were another war

and the missionaries had to leave, would the work go on? If we were asked to leave, would anything of substance be left behind?

We then drove to Maxixe where Don needed to arrange to rent a building for future TEE (Theological Education by Extension) classes. I needed to meet with a Baptist pastor and an Assemblies of God pastor to tell them about the "Evangelist Program" we plan to start at our training center. I want them to nominate a couple of students to attend the program. The following morning, we drove to the city of Inhambane to find a Anglican pastor. He had asked about training for his people, and I wanted to tell him about the evangelist program.

This past weekend we returned to Maxixe and Inhambane, this time we took my wife, Susan. She has been anxious to see some of these places about which I have been writing. Don made arrangements for a wonderful facility in which to hold the TEE classes. It is centrally located on the main highway. It is beside the dock for those wishing to travel by boat from Inhambane and it is a neutral location so no single church can take ownership of the training. This was a problem in the last round of classes because other churches did not want to appear to support another church.

I met with the Baptist and Assemblies pastors. They assured me they wanted their people to attend, but as of yet, had not secured students. Things move painfully slow here.

The next morning we showed Susan the Methodist Hospital located in Maxixe and then we drove to the city of Inhambane to find Pastor Joao of the Anglican Church. He was very cordial, but our programs did not align with his needs. I asked him if he had any students for the evangelist program. He said that if he sent someone they would want to be a paid evangelist when they returned. The small Anglican church could not afford to pay them. I think it was being implied that I should assume an ongoing commitment to provide salaries for the students.

Next we proposed that he and his people attend the TEE classes Don was going to teach in their area. Pastor Joao thought the classes were too elementary for him, but he said he would see if some other pastors in Inhambane might care to attend. Pride is an issue everywhere.

Pastor Joao then said he was concerned about his 18 year old son. He said that he was concerned about the people with whom his son associated. The pastor also said he did not know his son's heart, but he wanted his son to be a pastor. He then asked us if we would consider letting his son live with us and put him through college (if I understood his Portuguese). Don suggested that both Pastor Joao and his son could

attend the TEE classes together. I don't think he was crazy about the idea but he nodded and gave a confirming "Hmm" as though he were considering the possibility.

As we were leaving the pastor wanted to show us the inside of his church. The church is in the edge of the city on a dirt road. It is a block structure that is pretty nice compared to many meeting houses. As we entered he said that he would like to have the church painted, but he had no money to buy paint. Next he pointed to the holes in the roof, and said that when it rains the choir loft gets wet. Again, he needed money to fix the roof. I told him when it rained, my house roof also leaks. As we left the building the pastor wanted to know if we knew of any organizations that could give them some money to fix the roof and paint the building.

This was somewhat of a disheartening encounter for me. A few weeks earlier, this very man seemed enthused about the evangelist program. He was even considering attending himself. He spoke with conviction about the people needing Biblical training. Now we were proposing two different routes to acquire the training, and he was not interested in either. He was however interested in me supporting his son or fixing his church building.

On the five hour ride home, I had no applications for the evangelist program but I did have time to think and pray. What does God want done in Mozambique? Am I on the right track (His track) by planning a school for evangelists? What is God doing here and how can I assist Him? I sometimes think we spend too much time planning programs that the people here do not want and God never intended to be done.

At my ordination service it was said, "people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." It wasn't the first time I had heard that but it is good counsel. The people here have many needs, more than I will ever be able to meet. Sometimes I don't feel like I can earn a hearing until I can show them in tangible ways that I care. The people need vocational skills. They need medical assistance and training. They need a better system of education. They need a way to provide enough nourishing food for their families. When you are not sure from where the next few meals are coming, it must be difficult to consider being an evangelist without thinking of ways to profit from the endeavor. How can I help them meet their basic needs and at the same time, help them mature in the Lord?

We could bring in missionary doctors and nurses to give medical training to whoever wanted it, Christians, Muslims, heathen, but at the same time require daily Bible and/or chapel.

We could offer vocational training in carpentry, auto mechanics, plumbing, building, etc. but also require these people to study God's Word.

We could start a Christian primary school that eventually grows into a Christian high school. In this Christian school we could strive for excellence. Subjects could be taught from a Christian perspective. Daily Bible could be incorporated into the curriculum with weekly chapel services. English could be taught as a second language. Maybe, in time, these kids would be prepared to be the leaders of the country and Christianity would enjoy great favor from the government and the gospel would be preached by competent thinkers.

Out of all this "caring" God could raise up men and women of integrity that He wants to lead His church here. We keep making our litmus test of who would be a good church leader. We then encourage those who pass the test by pouring our lives into them only to be disappointed when they prove to be opportunists. Only God knows the heart. As a wealthy American, I am not sure if I will ever understand the African mind set. I think I will always be an outsider. How can I come alongside of my African brothers and encourage them to "put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness?" (Eph. 4:24)

"A penny for your thoughts." Please continue to pray for us as we consider our calling. May the Lord bless you where you serve Him.

January 28, 1998

Last week I received three applications for the Evangelist Program. Two were from 1000 miles north of here. They are supposed to be on their way here. The third is from the Maxixe area where Don Hulsey and I have been teaching for the last several months. The student from Maxixe is to arrive this Sunday. The Lord's timing is perfect. Tomorrow we will pour the concrete floor in the building we plan to use for student housing. We were told we could construct the building for about \$400. We ran a little over the budget. It will end up costing about \$1200 but the Lord has been faithful to provide. Some reading this note gave a little extra last month and the expenses have been covered. Thank you all and give glory to Jehovah-Jireh.

The Evangelist Program is a pilot project. We are looking for confirmation from the Lord. We have constructed a small building for housing and only recruited a small number of students. Over the next six months we will work with these students. A major focus of the program is making sure they know Jesus. Don will have a discipling/accountability time each day with the students. They will read through and discuss the books of Genesis, Mark, Acts, and Romans. I will go

through a study showing the character of God and why we need Jesus to save us and why His sacrifice is sufficient to do so. When we are finished with this foundational study, they should be able to explain the gospel to others. Cecil will teach a class on church leadership, addressing Biblical issues and practical matters they will face in their local churches. Kevin will go through the Life of Christ using a TEE book.

There is the possibility of expanding this pilot project in the future if the Lord so directs. We need your help in seeking His will. Please pray.

This past Sunday was a fantastic day. It started on Saturday. Our team had set aside that day for prayer, fasting, and seeking God's direction. Sunday, David Michael (he's visiting his parents) helped us lead worship at the Maputo International Church. I always enjoy leading worship. The minister talked about persevering. It fit in perfectly with what the Lord had been teaching me the day before. Sunday afternoon, we had lunch with Claude and Marilyn Meyers from church. Later in the afternoon, I taught a class at the training center. We talked about from where the spirits came and how powerful God is in comparison. That evening our team met with Bill and Lori Gardner from Wycliff Bible Translators. They helped us with strategies for learning foreign languages. Then we had another worship time with the team and communion. I was so pumped up, I could hardly sleep. Then Tuesday, someone stole the blinker covers off our car. Oh well. The last Sunday in February we are having a community worship service here at the center. Vasco Machava is bringing his choir. I will be speaking, probably on worship. Then we will have lunch together. It should be a good day. Please keep us in your prayers. The Lord is teaching us a lot.

Voices From the Field

Robert and Joy Garrett Ruwa, Zimbabwe December 1997

The clutch on the 4-ton Toyota truck/bus collapsed and had to be replaced. It was parked at the Mbare church some 30 kilometers from Ruwa. I decided it was easier to fix there than tow it here to Ruwa. Last month we dropped the gear-box and removed the broken clutch. Then early Tuesday morning, the 9th of December, having obtained all the necessary replacement parts, I took my two helpers and we re-assembled everything. We finished the job and about 1:15 we started for home. Unfortunately this was the day that the trade unions had called for a general strike and a demonstration march through the capitol in protest against recent astronomical tax hikes imposed by the government.

We knew about the strike but it was supposed to be a peaceful demonstration. However, at the time of the march--9:00 a.m.--the police blocked all the roads into the city center and refused to allow the many thousands of marchers through. They fired tear gas to force the demonstrators to disperse. This angered the marchers many of whom became a mob of rioters who stoned and set fire to vehicles and other property. The riot spread outward from the city center. While working on the truck we heard some of the commotion and got an occasional whiff of the tear gas.

The Lords Deliverance.

We were advised not to go back through the city center but to take a roundabout way back home (Mbare is in the city). However our way was blocked by a mob of youths and thugs (not genuine workers on strike. I stopped and shifted into reverse to get away but they threw large stones, smashing the windshield and the drivers window. My glasses were knocked off so I could not see properly but by the grace of God managed to reverse out of harms way and turn into a side road where there was a police station where we could take refuge from the mob. The stoning took place no less than 100 yards from the police station. We thank the Lord no one was injured. Thankfully the windshield was the laminated type and the stones did not pass through it. The door window was not laminated and shattered into hundreds of pieces and one section of that knocked off my glasses but did not injure me. There are many dents in the body work also.

Tear Gas is Well-Named and is No Fun

A plainclothes officer had been in the crowd and nabbed one of the stone throwers— a 15-year old boy. While we were waiting at the police station a police truck drove around dropping cannisters of tear gas to try to force people to disperse. We got the full force of the tear gas also as they dropped some within yards of where we were parked. We stayed at the police station until 4:30. I praise the Lord for seeing us safely through this ugly incident.

2nd Senior Camp

Seventy-one young people came to camp the second week of December. This was our first time to hold a camp in the middle of the rainy season. But it did not rain the whole week! It was a truly a great camp. Eleven young people came to the Lord and were baptized! There were also four rededications. To God be the Glory!

Epworth

Lord willing we will have the walling contractor to erect the concrete fence around the church site in January and erect a temporary pole shelter for the church to meet under.

LEARNING in Christian Education

Paul A. Clark

Learning is a way we change. The Christian changes or learns many things in order to be effective in God's world. Christian education is concerned that the Christian learn the word of God and how to apply it in current society. Capable of learning many things as a new born, the potential Christian must deliberately, with the help of adults, learn the basics for literacy and effectiveness. Christian education includes knowledge of Jesus Christ and the Gospel as a part of this necessary learning. I have been impressed with the passage in John which says "Already you are clean because of the words which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). This was a transition time in which the followers of Jesus had not attained unto full new birth. I believe that this describes a child who is growing in a Christian home and under the influence of the church. This person is not a Christian or a person who has experienced the new birth, but he is changing as he proceeds toward the new birth by learning the personality and the words of God. In this article we will talk about what the Christian needs to learn, the role of experience in the learning, the moment of learning, and the responsibility of the church toward Christian learning.

The Christian needs to learn above all things that Jesus is the Christ and that He died and rose from the dead. The New Testament suggests that God has included this information in a package which also includes a description of the salvation which is ours if we respond to this truth about Jesus and the Cross. Truth about Jesus, how to be a Christian, and the transformation which becomes the New Birth is a package which the New Testament calls the Gospel.

The Christian needs to be literate to enter into the dialog of ideas discussed by educated people, and the Christian also needs to prepare for vocation. Christian education is not a separate effort, but is a part of the whole of the education which a person needs. Th God is Creator and Savior. Revelation, or knowledge of the word of God, to the Christian becomes a part of the dialog of the ideas of an educated person. The Christian enters into this dialog with a specific world view along with a commitment to continue, as a practicing Christian, the inclusion of Christian power and knowledge.

Of course, Christians and everyone learn all the time problem solving, seeking solutions, and making decisions based on our learning in daily living. Persons will learn even without formal schooling or without Christian education but this learning may not lead to effectiveness or to God. Christian education causes a person to consciously learn to have a background of revelation and, from knowing about the experi-

ences of men past and present, to solve these problems on a higher level. The process of learning is an interesting study. I believe that we learn those things which give us a reward. We also learn because we plan and have interest in learning. After thoughtful contemplation we pull together the data we have collected in our minds to form a kind of insight. Both the child and the adult (a person can become a Christian at either level) feel responsibility for acquiring the knowledge they need to know and for being able to use this knowledge in thinking. The Scriptures seem to suggest a deliberate discipline in which the Christian does learn to be a thoroughly furnished spiritual and thoughtful person. Christians as children or as adults must voluntarily commit themselves to the managing of their own learning. Born again Christians grow in faith and God's power guides us into what we need to know about God's word to solve problems in this world.

The church, including Christian parents, becomes involved in this learning. God made offspring dependent and only gradually, from birth through adolescence, can they develop ability to think on their own. Adults in the home, in the church, and in the school initiate, monitor, and make meaningful this important learning for the child. Persons who become Christians as adults need to catch up with the Christian part of their education. As they make this effort to learn, they need Christian teachers to instruct them more perfectly about the Way.

We call the Aquillas and the Priscillas of our day preachers, elders, deacons, Sunday school teachers, role models and general experienced Christians. These persons need to be aware of their role as guiders of the learning of children and of new Christians. The message of God must originally be presented authoritatively which requires the person to passively receive from the Word itself and/or from a Christian (parent, teacher, preacher). The church must also allow growing Christians to voluntarily learn about the Christian life.

What the Bible Teaches about...

XI. OUR MULTI-SPLENDORED SALVATION

Alex V. Wilson

A. Salvation Through the Ages

(An Outline for your Personal Study)

GOD'S SALVATION FOR US...

1. Was PLANNED Before Creation

"Take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world." God "chose us in [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy....In love he predestined us to be adopted...." "...Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world but was revealed in these last times for your sake." "[T]he Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world." Overcomers' names have "been written in the book of life from the creation of the world...." (Mt.25:34; Eph.1:4-5; 1 Pet.1:19-20; Rev.13:8; 17:8.)

2. Was FORESHADOWED during the Old Covenant Era

a. lambs offered by Abel. b. Israel's Passover lamb. c, d, etc.: How many other O.T. "types" or "pictures" can you think of?

3. Was ACCOMPLISHED and PROVIDED at Christ's Cross

"Redemption...came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood." "When we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son...." "We have redemption through [Christ's] blood, the forgiveness of sins." "Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people...." "Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God." (Rom.3:24-25; 5:10a; Eph.1:7; Heb.9:28a; 1 P.3:18.)

4. Is OFFERED through Gospel Preaching

"God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe" (1 Cor.1:21b). Very well, then: what was preached, Paul? He told the Corinthians, in two pregnant sentences.

a. "We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor.1:23). A rejected Messiah, executed both by men and God (Isa.53:6,10; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28).

b. "We preach Jesus Christ as Lord" (2 Cor.4:5). Jesus is the fore-told Messiah-King, the risen Lord, and rightly deserves our full allegiance.

5. Is ACCEPTED by Sinners' Conversion--turning from sin to God

a. **Faith:** trusting in the sin-offering God provided, the Lamb who died and arose: "...That whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." "A man is justified by faith apart from observing the law." "Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God...." "By grace you have been saved, through faith...." (Jn.3:16; Acts 16:31; Rom.3:28; 5:1; Eph. 2:8. Also see Rom.1:16; Gal.2:16, 3:1-2, etc.)

b. **Repentance:** submitting to His lordship. "Repent and believe the good news!" "Unless you repent, you...will all perish." "Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name...." "Repent and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out..." "...Repentance that leads to salvation." (Mk.1:15; 2 Cor.7:10; Lk.13:3,5; 24:47; Acts 3:19. Also see Acts 2:38; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20.)

c. **Being united with Christ in baptism:** "Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father...Son and...Holy Spirit...." "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." "Peter said, 'Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.' So he ordered that they be baptized." "We were...buried with [Christ] through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead...we too may live a new life." (Matt.28:19; Acts 2:38; 10:47-48; Rom.6:3-4. Also see Acts 22:16; Gal.3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:21.)

6. Is APPLIED by God to Converts--both Immediately, and Progressively

a. **Immediately:** At our conversion we are justified (counted righteous in God's court, Rom.3:22-26; 5:1; 8:1); adopted (given the privileges of His children, Rom.8:15-16; Eph.1:5); regenerated (born from above, given God's nature as our new nature, Jn.1:12-13; 3:3-7; 1 Pet.1:23; 2 Pet.1:4; 1 Jn.5:1-4); united with Christ (so that the terms "in Christ" apply to us: notice Ephesians; also Rom.6:5), and sanctified in a positional sense (that is, given the standing of saints--holy people, those who belong to God: see 1 Cor.1:2, 30--written to folks, many of whom were acting in very unJesuslike ways).

b. **Progressively:** From our conversion onwards, the process of sanctification continues. Our Father calls us not only to a holy status but to holy conduct. We are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. We are being transformed (literally, "metamorphosed") into Christ's likeness from one degree of glory to another. Our inner nature is being renewed every day. Thus we continue to work out our present-

tense salvation, for God is working in us. Leaders especially should guard their life and teaching closely, and with perseverance, so they may "save" themselves and their hearers from sin's power. Through faith we are shielded by God's power and are at present receiving the salvation of our souls--while waiting for the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Pet.1:14-16; 2 Pet.3:18; 2 Cor.3:18; 4:16; Phil.2:12-13; 1 Tim.4:16; 1 Pet.1:5,9.) That last clause leads us to our next, final point: we shall be saved from sin's very presence.

7. Will be COMPLETED at Christ's Return

We *have* been justified. We *are* being sanctified. We *shall* be **Glorified!** Bible scholar F. F. Bruce explains, "Sanctification is glorification begun; glorification is sanctification completed." As 1 Jn.3:2c puts it, When Christ appears, "we shall be like him." What more could we want?

Paul says the same. In only two sentences he embraces God's entire plan of salvation from start to finish. "Those God foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed to the likeness of his Son...**And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also **glorified**" (Rom.8:29-30). When our salvation is completed, we shall be fully like Christ. Richard Hooker expounds this thrilling fact for us: "The righteousness whereby we are justified is perfect, but not inherent. The righteousness whereby we are sanctified is inherent but not perfect. The righteousness with which we shall be clothed in the world to come is both perfect and inherent. Justification and sanctification, which we in this life must so carefully distinguish, when we stand before Him at His coming the one will merge into the other, because we shall be absolutely like Christ. Not only shall we have an outward standing before God of 'Not Guilty,' but in our inmost nature we shall be perfect and entire." (That quotation merits re-study.)

Hear Paul again: God "**called you...through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ**" (2 Thes.2:14).

B. The Many Facets of this Costly, Beautiful Gem--Our Salvation

The apostles and other writers of the New Covenant scriptures, stunned by God's astonishing mercy, tried to **explain the greatness of salvation in different ways.** They pictured it in many various aspects, to show the wonder of it all.

For example, it includes **Pardon:** like a king's pardon; canceling the punishment which a rebel deserves. More than that, it includes **Justification:** taking away our punishment by means of the King-and-Judge Himself paying the penalty for us, to uphold justice! It is **Reconciliation:** not only forgiveness but close friendship as well. It is **Adoption:** not only friendship, but the King graciously making the for-

mer enemy a member of the royal family--with all the privileges involved. And it is **Regeneration**: not only adopting him or her, thus bestowing the family status and rights, but also miraculously producing in the pardoned rebel who is now both friend and son the very spirit or nature or genes of the Father (see 1 John 3:9)--as though he were a natural son, not merely adopted. Fantastic!

The various aspects of salvation meet our various needs. **Justification** solves our great guilt. **Redemption** (paying a price to buy someone's liberty) is the solution to our sense of worthlessness, for God paid an immense ransom-price to free and restore us to Himself. **Adoption** overcomes our fear and our loneliness, for we are not orphans any more, but children of the King--and therefore princes and princesses! **Edification** (mutual strengthening) in His family also rescues us from loneliness. It helps solve our weakness too, for our God-given brothers and sisters support us, as we do them. **Regeneration** provides deliverance from moral corruption, for God's indwelling Spirit imparts to us the divine nature. This began our **Sanctification**, the process of becoming more and more Jesuslike--our greatest need. And that process climaxes in **Glorification**, which will solve our problem of hopeless despair. For it will occur when Christ will return to complete the salvation He has already given to us and begun in us.

J. Sidlow Baxter made the following helpful distinctions between the work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in God's great work of salvaging us from sin and ruin. (I amended this quotation very slightly): "God the Son has done all that needed doing **for** us; the Holy Spirit does all that needs doing **in** and **through** us. Our Lord's work for us includes all the **judicial** aspects of our salvation; the Holy Spirit's work in us includes all the **experiential** aspects of it. Through the **atoning** work of the Son we have justification and reconciliation (a righteous standing and peace with God); through the **inner** work of the Spirit we have regeneration and sanctification (a new nature and holy character). Christ's work for us especially concerns our **Godward relation**; the Spirit's work in us especially concerns our **inner renewal**. Our Savior's work has distinctively to do with our **standing or position**; the Comforter's work has distinctively to do with our **state or condition**. Through Christ's Calvary work we have righteousness **imputed**; through the Spirit's sanctifying work we have righteousness **imparted**. Our Lord's atoning work for us is a **finished achievement** marked by absolute finality ('It is finished!'--or, 'Paid in full!'); but the Holy Spirit's work in us is a matter of character-development having **no limits** this side of glory."

May we meditate on these terms, these aspects of salvation, and be enriched by our appreciation of them. May they not seem to us to be just some kind of "Protestant Latin," of which we are ignorant and for which we are unconcerned.

"I Will Restore Health" Jer. 30:17

Dennis L. Allen

The health of God's people has spiritual significance and is of concern to God. "Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (3 John 2).

In today's society American Christians on the whole are not in health. Just notice our requests for prayer (largely for the sick), the amount of conversation devoted to our ailments, the concern for health insurance, the amounts spent on medications, doctors and hospital bills. Is this normal? Is this God's will for His people? In Scriptures we find very little emphasis on sickness. We spend more and more on health care but are we healthier? Cancer is still on the rise. Heart disease is the number one killer in America today. The average cost of by-pass surgery is \$45,000, and most patients find the problem of clogged arteries returning in 3 to 5 years. The same is true with diabetes and arthritis. Too long we have felt that sickness just happens and we must trust our health to someone else. I am thankful for doctors, but I believe that primarily we must take responsibility for our own health. More and more people are finding they can avoid or even reverse these conditions by going a different route-- simply changing their diet and their lifestyle. These are not secrets or theories of quacks. Back in 1961 the Journal of the American Medical Association stated, "A vegetarian diet can prevent 90 to 97% of heart disease."

We are causing most of our health problems by what we are putting into our bodies. With computers we say "garbage in, garbage out." With our cars we are very careful to put the proper fuel and oil into the motor. But with our bodies we laugh about all the junk food and other things we eat that we know are not good and expect that we can get by with it. For the first 2000 years on the earth man apparently ate a fruit and vegetable diet. God spelled it out in Gen 1:29. "Behold I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, to you it shall be for food." After the flood is the first mention of man eating flesh. His life rapidly became shorter. Any connection? I wonder. Today's research is confirming more and more that the healthiest diet is raw fruits and vegetables. Why raw? Because the heat of cooking kills most of the enzymes and vitamins present in fresh raw food.

We have a real problem with getting nutritious food in our country in spite of the abundance in our supermarkets, because most of it is refined and processed and filled with preservatives until the original nutrition is largely gone. Of course they add a few synthetic vitamins back in to make us think it is nutritious. Today we personally do most

of our grocery shopping in the fresh food section of the supermarket and ignore the rest. The meat is laced with hormones that have been injected into the beef and chickens to speed growth. The age of puberty in our country in the past 40 years has dropped from age 16-17 to age 10 or 11. Why? We all know that young people are eating more and more of this meat at fast food restaurants. They are facing puberty at an age when they are not ready to handle it.

One of our main problems in our diet is too much fat--not only the saturated fat in meats and dairy products but also the processed cooking oils and margarine contain partially hydrogenated fat which has been chemically changed and contains trans-fatty acids. Olive oil and canola oil are two of the safest oils.

Since World War II our food supply has been increasingly contaminated with chemical pesticides and preservatives that weaken our immune system and cause many other problems. When we get sick instead of trying to find out what caused the problem and changing our diet or life style to correct it, we turn to drugs offered by the medical profession. The body is self-healing when the right conditions are provided. Drugs cannot rebuild the cells of the body. The drug companies are not interested in herbs and natural foods no matter how effective they are that they cannot patent and make money on.

Sir William A. Lane, a world authority on medicinal matters and reputed to be England's foremost abdominal surgeon, in an address to the John Hopkins Hospital and Medical College, said: "Gentlemen, I will never die of cancer. I am taking measures to prevent it. . . It is caused by poisons created in our bodies by the foods we eat . . . What we should do then, if we would avoid cancer, is to eat raw fruits and vegetables; first that we may be better nourished; secondly, that we may more easily eliminate the waste products . . . We have been studying germs when we should have been studying diet and drainage." Maybe you don't agree with such a strong declaration, but there is a growing body of evidence that diet is the primary cause of many cancers.

George Malkmus, a Baptist preacher, was diagnosed with colon cancer at the age of 42. His mother had died a horrible death from colon cancer at the same age after submitting to surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. He did not want to go that route. Finally a friend suggested, "Why don't you change your diet?" He did, giving up the typical popular American diet. For a year he ate nothing but raw fruits and vegetables and drank lots of carrot juice. At the end of the year his cancer was gone, as well as his other health problems such as hemorrhoids, hypoglycemia, allergies, high blood pressure, colds and flu. Today after 20 years, he is still in vigorous health. Never sick. Now he eats 85% raw and 15% cooked food. He has received thousands of

testimonies from people who have had similar remarkable results simply from making a change in their diet and lifestyle. He says, "Just try it for 90 days and judge for yourself." Makes sense. Will you take the challenge?

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. We have been bought with a price and are to glorify God in our bodies. Christians generally recognize that they should not harm or defile their bodies with tobacco, alcohol, or addictive drugs. But what about foods that clog our arteries and poison our system? It is not easy to give up eating habits that go back to our childhood, but we should not be a slave to our stomachs any more than to a cigarette or a bottle. For 2 1/2 years I have been on a fruit and vegetable diet and by God's grace it has not been difficult. The results have been so rewarding that I would not want to change back to my former diet.

Daniel and his three friends found the value of this diet almost 2600 years ago. I'm sure many of you have some of the same questions I did. Why did God permit the eating of meat? (Although He did expressly forbid the eating of the fat which we have largely ignored.) Jesus Himself ate fish, and God has proclaimed all meats clean. There are many places in the world where it would not be practicable for people to be on a raw fruit and vegetable diet year round. One thing that weighs heavily, as far as I am concerned, is the fact that the meats we buy in the store, with their growth hormones, preservatives and fat content are far different from what people ate in Bible times. Even fish are contaminated with mercury and other harmful elements. It cannot be wrong to eat some meat, but it may be prudent today also to choose not to eat meat.

Even if you are not ready yet to go on a fruit and vegetable diet, I would like to encourage you to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, less (much less) meat and fast foods, refined sugar and white flour, avoid soft drinks, and change from saturated fats to olive oil and canola oil. The church ought to be a place where people find health not only for their spirits and souls but also for their bodies. It is through them that we glorify God. If people see Christians finding help for their bodies as well as their souls and spirits will they not be drawn, and God glorified? I believe we can claim God's promises for healing and health, but we must also be willing to follow His way.

We need to face up to the bottom line: **OUR DIET IS KILLING US!** If we insist upon continuing to put into our bodies dead, refined man-concocted garbage then we cannot blame God if we reap what we sow.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

It's Earlier This Year: Don't Miss It!

Ladies of Kentuckiana, don't miss the LID: Ladies Inspiration Day. This year it will be on APRIL 4, at the Ky. Ave. Church in Louisville. There's a great theme: "Out of My Weakness, Into YOUR Strength." There will be 4 general sessions. Between them there will be times of worship together in song. Lunch and baby-sitting will be provided.

Urge ALL LADIES, young and old, to attend and be spiritually reinvigorated! Registration from 8:30 on; first session at 9:00. Ends by 2:30.

Gleanings From Louisville Church Leaders; Lunch

(They're held at 11:30 the 2nd week of each month, usually at Portland Christian School's South Campus.) Here is information learned at the Jan. meeting: 1) Cullen Istre was soon to be ordained by the elders at Southeast Church of Christ (including his dad, Robert Istre). Cullen is studying at Cincinnati Christian Seminary and ministering at a church in Ohio.

2) The Buechel Church is stepping out in faith. They have plans for both a VBS and a revival meeting in 1998, for the first time in years. They're working on a budget, and on spe-

cific plans for the next year, and the next 3 & 5 years.

3) The Ralph Avenue congregation has a very worthwhile project: They set aside funds to provide scholarships for young people to attend Woodland Bible Camp. In this way they influence youth to go who otherwise wouldn't.

4) Woodland Camp, by the way, needs a new septic system, which will cost about \$19,000. Are you looking for a good place to use some money for God's sake?

5) The Sellersburg, Indiana church is continuing its good ministry to youth of their community & the whole Louisville area, by having Bro. Sonny Childs come for Fri. night/ Sat. morning youth meetings on the first weekend of each month. Bro. Sonny's theme for Feb. 7 was "Stand For Something or You'll Fall for Anything."

5th Sunday Song Meetings

The next one will be March 29 at 6:00 p.m. at Portland Church in Louisville. There will be lots of congregational singing, as always. An additional treat will be the PCHS chorus, which will exhort us by spiritual songs for about 20 minutes.

The Louisville area church leaders request that any church wishing to host such 5th Sunday

song rallies let us know of your desire. Please write down at least 2 dates you prefer to be host during the next couple of years. Fifth Sundays fall on May 31, August 30, and Nov. 29 during this year, and Jan. 31, May 30, Aug. 29 & Oct. 31 during 1999. A committee will then choose which churches will hold the meetings on which dates. They will try to alternate between locations in Ky. and In.

185 people attended at Cherry Street during the last meeting, so your premises will need to be able accommodate that many or more. We are glad attendance has increased lately.

Youth Minister Sought

The Church of Christ in Pine Prairie, La. is looking for a youth minister during the coming summer months. Anyone wanting more information may contact the youth committee by calling the following toll-free numbers: 1-800-599-2371 or 1-888-599-2303. Or you may write P.O. Box 543, Pine Prairie, La. 70576.

Jennings Church of Christ

Mission sends News. The following was received from the Philippine work. Bro. Rudy Bato writes, "Five souls were baptized into Christ Oct. 12." Bro. Jolly Cabaya says "Our rice field was destroyed by rats. We have no harvest; food is very scarce. We are still working on our building. Our brethren are seeking rattan in the forest to sell for food." Bros. Pascual Sanchez and Johnny Espinosa write "We have visited preachers who listen to our radio program and are unhappy where

they serve. They are receptive to our teachings. Pray for us and them." Bro. Dionisio Canonio reports one baptism and Bro. Jaime Almonte reports two. Please continue to pray for the work. Thank you for giving to God by supporting this work through the Jennings church.

Upcoming Events: March 1 will be Teen Night at Cutting Avenue. April 13th the Portland Christian High School Chorus will be here in concert. More details on both these events will come later.

Graduates Highlighted

Recently David Smith graduated from McNeese State University with a degree in Environmental Science, and Cory Comeaux graduated from Delgado in New Orleans with a degree in Nuclear Medicine. Cory is now working at the Jennings American Legion Hospital. Congratulations to both these and to their parents as well!

Tell City, Indiana

Rejoice!! Gary Kellams (son of Esther Holpp) and Richard Jones (son of Diana Jones) were baptized into Christ on Monday, January 5th Please pray for these new Christians!

Christian literature is being given to Perry County Jail inmates as part of our ministry. Contributions of new or used reading materials is appreciated.

Sellersburg, Indiana Church of Christ

We previously reported that the Sellersburg church was engag-

ing Bro. Sonny Childs for a youth revival and to follow up with a series of regularly scheduled meetings in order to give further direction and set some goals to pursue. As an outgrowth of this ministry the youth have organized an outreach committee which met the first time in January of this year. Bro. Rex Prather was appointed chairman and Debbie Adams, scribe. Others of the committee are Gene Royce, Libby McMahan, Vickie Huneryager, and Debbie Adams.

The committee began with a core group of approximately 10 persons with an interest in helping others: youth, parents, unsaved, backsliders, and half-hearted, and they are growing numerically and in intensity. As a means to this they have sponsored a Thanksgiving dinner, a Christmas card mailing, and are offering a baby-sitting service to relieve parents for a night out.

I like their answer to the question that, though not asked aloud after many of our meetings, but is in the air never-the-less, "so what?" So what, let's get busy! God bless your endeavor!

Locust Street Church, Johnson City, TN

Locust Street is preparing for a 50 Day Spiritual Adventure Action. Remember this in your prayers.

Highlights of 1997 at MAPLE MANOR CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S HOME

Here are excerpts from The Horizon, the newsletter of MMCCH. To get on their mailing

list, call 812-246-2769. Keep informed on this good ministry.

Why me, Lord? Haven't you heard that refrain many times? Usually it is spoken at a time of distress or assumed persecution. However, for us it is a positive question. For we at the Children's Home have been so blessed! Why does He choose to bless us so? We are certainly no better than others. As we wind down this year of 1997, perhaps it would be appropriate to share with you some of the "highlights." Certainly, there have been downsides, but we choose to dwell on the positives.

1. Individuals, and some companies, have responded in a generous way to provide a summer vacation for our children. This enabled some who had never been outside of Indiana to travel through, and see Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. They viewed gators, Gulf of Mexico, swampland, marshland; beautiful creations of God (and maybe some that were not so beautiful to their eyes.) A camp week at DeRidder, La. resulted in four young lives discovering Jesus and making a commitment to Him! (Although the week was not entirely smooth as the Director and staff can attest!?) But it was worth it. Further activities included New Orleans with a visit to the French Quarter, Sea World, Museums, and the IMAX theater. A stop on the return trip at Nashville enabled them to enjoy a day at Opryland. How can you possibly express sufficient gratitude to the dear folks at Jennings & Amite,

La. and Gallatin, Tn. for opening up their homes and their hearts?

2. Following the summer activities, we were encouraged that some of our children were able to be placed back with family. We praise the Lord for this. Some of our children had a very negative experience and were placed in a more restrictive environment. May the "seeds that were planted" be allowed to grow in each life.

3. We again have a new group of children in need of our care. It is exciting to work with "new" children with new opportunities and challenges.

4. There continues to be evidence of God's over-ruling with the need for staff. It amazes us how the Lord directs, cancels,

and provides. Sometimes it stretches us, but that's good. We presently have a fine God-fearing staff. . .but we are looking for more.

5. The fund raising for the building program has been in effect for the past several years. It was determined to raise fifty thousand with a matching amount before the real planning/building could take place. Well, praise the Lord, that amount has been raised! So the necessary planning may start.

So much that is done here could not be accomplished without God's people. Their prayers and financial support is so integral it cannot be overstated.

-- Robert Istre, Administrator