

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

May, 2003

Prayer and the Wildebeest

Facing Temptation

What Marriage Means

The Church's Response to Co-Habitation

Jesus can act like Jesus

When Prayers are Not Answered

"When the Imam said they wouldn't bury me, I said, 'That's just fine!'" I'm not going back."

God calls us to live by *principles*, not passion.
He calls us to follow *convictions*, not convenience.
We should be people of *integrity*, not just impulses.

56th Annual Kentucky / Indiana Christian Fellowship

August 4-7, 2003

Day Sessions: Portland Ave. Church of Christ, Louisville
Night Sessions: Sellersburg, Ind. Church of Christ

THEME: The NAME (Acts 4:12)

Monday Evening, August 4

7:30 **IMPORTANCE of the NAME** Sonny Childs

><> PRAYER Time, Tues. - Thur. 9:00 - 9:20

Tuesday, August 5: The MEANING of the NAME

9:20	He is Jesus	Harry Coultas
10:20	He is Christ	Jerry Carmichael
11:20	Exposition of Acts 2:22-36	Robert Garrett
1:15	He is Lord	Randy Coultas
7:30	He is the Word	Bud Ridgeway

Wednesday, August 6: FOLLOWERS of the NAME

9:20	I am the Way	Bennie Hill
10:20	I am the Truth	David Johnson
11:20	Exposition of Acts 2:37-47	Robert Garrett
1:15	I am the Life	Elmer Pacheco
7:30	Call His Name Immanuel	Don McGee

Thursday, August 7: DEFENDERS of the NAME

9:20	Always Ready	Paul Denny
10:20	Free in Christ	Elmer Wheatley
11:20	Exposition of Acts 4:8-22	Robert Garrett
1:15	Prepared to Suffer	Richard Lewis
7:30	I AM	Paul Estes

Daily Lunch: 12:00

Nightly Youth Activities after the regular meeting.

There will be a Missionary Offering Wed. Night.

Dinners at Sellersburg: Tues. (SBS), Thur. (Goin' Fishing) plus
Goin' Fishing Breakfast & Missions Conf. Fri. 8:30 - noon.

For Housing: Bud Ridgeway 502:477-8255;

Clint Dorman 812:246-2600

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Bennie Hill, News & Notes

The Word and Work is published monthly except December by Portland Ave. Church of Christ, Inc., 2500 Portland Ave. Louisville, Ky. 40212. Subscription: \$11.00 per year; bundles of 10 or more to one address = \$10.00 per subscription. Address correspondence to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Avenue, Louisville, KY 40212.

Periodicals Postage Paid at Louisville, Ky POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Word and Work, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, KY 40212.

Vol. XCVI

May, 2003

No. 5

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Sad News and Glad News about Missionary Concern

Alex V. Wilson

First the **sad news**. Mark Galli writes in *Christianity Today* magazine: "During the 19th and 20th centuries, missionary stories were the staple of evangelical reading. I recently asked some evangelical publishers why they didn't carry biographies of the great missionaries. The answer was worrisome: evangelicals no longer read missionary biographies, or books about things that happened overseas in funny-sounding places. Instead, we spend our money and time buying and reading historical romances, apocalyptic thrillers, and self-help books by the millions."

That's too bad. For just as we need to be stirred by the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, so we need to see that kind of faith as it has been demonstrated through the centuries since then. We need to know folks like William Carey, Hudson Taylor, John Paton, the many Moravian missionaries, Jonathan and Rosalind Goforth, John and Betty Stam, Joy Ridderhof, Helen Roseveare, Jim and Elizabeth Elliot, and many others who challenge us to "expect great things from God and attempt great things for God" (as Carey said). Bookstores can order biographies of these even if they don't have copies on their shelves.

And what about missionaries from Churches of Christ who made an impact for Christ? Like McCaleb, Bixler and Rhodes in Japan, the martyr Elaine Brittell, the two generations of Broadduses -- in China and the Philippines, the three generations of Garretts in Africa, and a number of others. The good news is, they were faithful servants of the Lord. The gloomy fact is that not many of us know much about them, and to most of our children they are totally unknown.

The **glad news** may be seen in a recent prayer-list in our Sunday bulletin. One section said, "*Pray for Missionaries*: Earl Mullins & Paul Kitzmiller in Russia, to follow up people who have been studying God's Word by radio & correspondence classes. James & Karen Ashley in the Solomon Islands: Their translation of the Sa'a New Testament is almost complete! Pray for protection & guidance in the next months. Robert & Joy Garrett will arrive in Louisville May 6, Lord willing. Pray for their last weeks in Zimbabwe this term. Bennie Hill, J.R. Satterfield & their wives & other friends are visiting George & Sofia Galanis in Greece; also the work in Crete. Crystal Hardin is leading a student group from her school in Korea to Spain this week. Remember Tim & Dawn Yates: her mom died, & Dawn had severe back pain." On other weeks we list other overseas workers, of course.

A special current request is that Dennis and Betty Allen will get their visa in time for their scheduled flight back to China, hopefully on May 14. [This issue was delayed--but more glad news is that the Allens have been in China since mid-May.]

Thank God, the list of cross-cultural workers the churches know and support by prayer and giving is longer than it was 10 and 20 years ago. Back then our missionary vision, enthusiasm and numbers seemed to be declining. That trend appears reversed, hooray! Questions arise, though. Some of the veteran overseas workers are not as young as they used to be. They ask the Lord and the churches to send co-workers to assist and (some day) replace them. But very few workers have arisen for the purpose of longterm labors.

Don't get me wrong, I believe in the value of short-term workers, projects and trips. In many places that's the only way nearly-closed doors can be entered. I and many of you know a married couple who first taught at a Christian college and then in secular universities in the U.S. They had a strong witness -- especially to international students--in those important fields. Now they teach college and graduate courses in a closed land where many Christians are persecuted. Satan may slam doors but the Lord gets His people through the cracks. A former teacher at Portland Christian School now lives, with her husband, in a Muslim land so "closed" that only their nearest friends can even be told the name of the country!

And short-term mission-visits -- whether to preach, or teach English as a 2nd language, or build walls and repair buildings, or give affectionate attention to orphans -- all these can be a valuable part of the Lord's master-plan to show and tell that "Jesus saves!" But let's be clear that there still are a number of places on the globe where workers are needed who'll stay for 5, 15 or 25 years. Is anyone listening for that call?

Next month we will have some more articles with a missions emphasis, provided by our missionary editor Dennis Allen before he and Betty left for China again (see their letter in *Voices*). Those articles will follow up the enlightening writings last month on culture shock, a topic of value to us all as the world shrinks. But don't miss this month's articles on various aspects of Christian living: prayer (and wildebeests!), temptation, and more. And as we celebrate this magazine's 95th year, there are two articles by former editor Gordon Linscott. Also the conclusion to historian Hans Rollmann's story of various W&W writers in the years before R.H. Boll became editor, and the responses aroused by their teachings. Happy reading.

How Should The Church Respond To The Rise In Cohabitation?

By Matt Soper

The title of the article in the *LA Times* said it all: "Today's Romance Reality: First Comes Love, Then Comes Cohabitation" (Sandy Banks, May 20, 2001). Banks, a widowed mother of three, had just gotten engaged and was surprised by how many of her friends saw it as a matter of course that she and her fiance would move in together. By taking the "traditional" route she and her fiance had embarked upon a road increasingly less traveled.

Banks, a weekly columnist for the paper, made a non-religious and thoughtful case for her decision, but the heart of the article was about how increasingly common and especially how socially acceptable cohabitation has become. Consider: The 2000 census data shows a 12 percent increase from 1990 in the number of cohabitating couples. A Gallup poll reveals that 60 percent of Americans find nothing wrong with premarital sex, and 52 percent say living together is okay. My conversations with fellow ministers confirm my own experience: When a couple approaches me about performing their wedding ceremony in the majority of instances they have already moved in together.

Lyle Schaller, a noted observer of religious trends, warns church leaders to "Watch the changing attitudes toward marriage" (and the corresponding acceptance of cohabitation). "That's the next big issue for the church."

First, let me say that there are many kinds of cohabitation; the primary difference being those who live together instead of getting married and those who live together in anticipation of getting married. As a preacher for ten years, my experience in the church has largely been with young couples pursuing the latter, and that is the particular niche I am going to focus on for this article. Most couples in my experience who are actively or even marginally involved in the church do not intend to cohabit indefinitely; they are either planning to be or already are engaged. The question is, how can the church respond redemptively and faithfully to this rising trend in cohabitation?

I will begin by suggesting two responses that will not be very effective. First, it will not be effective simply to condemn it. By this I mean condemning it from "afar" through sermons and other blanket admonitions and prohibitions. I know this because I have tried it! In 2000, I preached a 12-week series on "The Sexual Christian" and

spent two Sundays talking about relationships, dating, premarital sex and cohabitation. A few months later one of the cohabitating couples who approached me about performing their marriage ceremony told me how much they had enjoyed the series! To be sure, there may have been many couples who took the messages to heart but such "general" communication has its limits.

Second, it will not be effective simply to condone it. There seems to be a sense of fatalism in some Christian circles that "the horse is out of the barn" and this is a social norm that cannot be rolled back. Aside from being problematic from a Biblical standpoint this is needlessly pessimistic and, more importantly, just plain lazy.

I suggest a three-pronged response, by Christians and churches as a whole:

1. Try to understand why couples are choosing to cohabit.
2. Educate them about the misperceptions of its benefits.
3. Point them to the "deeper yes" of the Biblical covenant of marriage while concurrently speaking truthfully in love about the sin involved. Let's take these one at a time.

Try to understand why couples are choosing to cohabit.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The widely noted trend on college campuses the practice of "hooking up" wherein a couple (usually after getting drunk at a party) sleeps together without any significant prior or post-encounter relationship building. It is basically "sex for sport," and one campus survey revealed that 40% of college women had "hooked up," at least once. In the post-college young adult secular scene, the relatively standard practice is to date, have sex, go steady, move in together, then get engaged. Ask yourself this: If you're a young Christian in either or both of these environments, wouldn't you feel you were living a relatively chaste lifestyle if you waited to become sexually involved and/or cohabitate until you were engaged? Wouldn't you feel pretty good about your level of restraint? Cultural influences have re-defined what it means to be chaste.

SOCIOLOGICAL FACTORS

The preponderance of divorce among parents of college and young adult couples leads them to approach marriage very carefully. In a cover article in *Newsweek* magazine ("Unmarried With Children," May 28, 2001), several authorities weigh in on the phenomenon. "Paradoxically, more people today value marriage," says Frank Fur-

stenberg, professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. "They take it seriously. That's why they're more likely to cohabit. They want to be sure before they "take the ultimate step."

Furthermore, notes the Newsweek article, the average age of first marriage is now 25 for women and 27 for men--up from 20 and 23 in 1960. This gives more time for a live-in relationship to test a potential partner's compatibility. "Today it's unusual if you don't live with someone before you marry them," says Andrew Cherlin, a sociologist at Johns Hopkins University. "Before 1970, it wasn't respectable among anyone but the poor." Many young couples see living together as a kind of trial marriage without the legal entanglements that make breaking up hard to do. "They're trying to give their marriages a better chance," says Diane Sollee, founder of the Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education. "They're not trying to be immoral and get away with something."

EXPERIENTIAL SPIRITUALITY

The postmodern mindset values feelings and experience. Numerous couples to whom I have spoken, defending their decision to move in together, give an argument that basically boils down to: "How can it be wrong when it feels so right. Variations of this are "How can it be wrong in God's eyes if we feel so close to God? and "We've never felt so close to God before. We even pray together now." When I point out the biblical prohibitions against fornication, they often shrug their shoulders. Such standards seem to them terribly archaic and almost quaint.

"DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL" IN THE CHURCH

When I preached my 12-week series on "The Sexual Christian," the single most frequent comment I heard was, "I've never heard this talked about in church before!" (This was not always a happy observation). It is assumed that people know the "Biblical standards" on this subject and will do their best to adhere to them. But we don't make that assumption about stewardship and tithing; why should we make it about sexual faithfulness?

MINISTERS ARE MARRYING PEOPLE TOO CASUALLY

Many ministers feel a vocational obligation to marry whoever approaches them provided they complete some kind of premarital counseling. To be sure, we don't want to discourage cohabitating couples from marrying. But I wonder what would happen if more couples found it difficult to have a church wedding as long as they were living together? What would happen if more ministers conveyed to cohabitating couples that to have a church wedding with a Christian liturgy entails some obligations and commitments on their part? What would

happen if more cohabitating couples faced the stark choice of getting married at City Hall versus in the church? Could such "tough love be exercised redemptively for all involved?

The second thing the church can do is educate people about the misperceptions of the benefits of cohabitation.

We have to start by acknowledging that cohabitation seems so...logical. You wouldn't buy a pair of shoes without trying them on. You wouldn't attend a college without visiting the campus. Why would you marry someone for life without a trial period of living with them?

This is where we have, almost literally, all the facts on our side. The sad irony is that study after study shows cohabitation to be of no benefit to long-term marriage and in most cases a hindrance. In other words, couples who live together before marriage generally are more likely to divorce than those who don't, according to the Rutgers National Marriage Project (David Popenoe and Barbara Defoe Whitehead; June 2001).

Why is this so? Because when couples live together without the covenant of marriage they are training themselves to avoid commitment. They have the illusion of really testing out the relationship, but because they don't feel bound to the relationship they tend to avoid arguments and troublesome issues. Of course, once you are married (i.e., bound) you find yourself having to address these issues. Furthermore, in a related but less tangible sense, cohabitating perpetuates the adolescent mindset of pursuing gratification without investment or sacrifice.

Not surprisingly, this carries over into marriage, where investment and sacrifice are central to a happy and long-term relationship!

Third, the church can point to the "deeper yes" by creating a culture that values and honors the marriage covenant while speaking the truth in love about the sin of premarital sex.

Many congregations have marriage support and enhancement ministries such as *His Needs, Her Needs*. These are valuable for strengthening marriages and helping to stem the tide of divorce. Our congregation also has developed a marriage mentoring ministry in which newly married couples who are willing to be mentored are paired with experienced couples who agree to meet four times per year for conversation and relationship building. The mentor couples are trained in marriage mentoring through Pepperdine's Center for the

Family. We are considering expanding this to include mentoring for new parents as well.

But moving in the "other direction" is vital, i.e. mentoring or somehow ministering to couples before they are married, to encourage them in the exercise of good choices and also to help them prepare for a lifetime marriage. In addition, any congregation with a viable young adults ministry, and perhaps even those without one yet, should consider putting together periodic seminars in which special speakers address single people about healthy dating, relationships, engagement, and marriage. Single Christians are starving for teaching and guidance about how to have healthy romantic relationships and how to choose a life partner. After my "Sexual Christian" series a lady in our congregation approached an elder's wife and said, "Okay. I get it. I understand the dangers of pre-marital sex and cohabitation. But now I need to know how to do it right."

As for speaking the truth in love about the sin (and marriage hindrance) of premarital sex, this should be done as thoughtfully, lovingly, and clearly as possible. In this regard, silence is interpreted as consent, a sort of de facto "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" culture in the church. Ironically, under the guise of sensitivity, we do a dis-service to our young people, who need and want guidance and encouragement.

The church can respond faithfully and redemptively to the rise in cohabitation if we will see it as a positive opportunity to point people to the "deeper yes" of God's plan for marriage.

[Reprinted by permission from *New Wineskins*, Jan./Feb. 03.]

WHAT MARRIAGE MEANS

A. V. W.

[This article follows up the one on co-habitation. If a man and woman who have been living together (and perhaps already have children) later turn to the Lord and want to have a Christian wedding, I will perform it if they agree for me to make the following statement as the wedding sermon -- or part of it.]

In His Word, the Bible, God teaches us that when a man and woman marry, they are entering a relationship that He intends should be **permanent**. Many people today enter marriage secretly feeling, "Well, if it doesn't work out we can always divorce and then I'll look

for someone else." Such an attitude is an abomination to the God who created both us and the institution of marriage.

Don't misunderstand me: God **loves** divorcees, and will forgive and help them if they repent and surrender to His will. He **loves divorcees**--but He **hates divorce**! For He knows the terrible damage that divorce does to divorcees and their families and friends. He knows how it especially devastates the children, usually for the rest of their lives.

He knows the emotional, financial, physical and spiritual grief it causes. Therefore He tells us that before we marry we should be sure we are **committed to each other for the duration**, for the long haul, for "as long as we both shall *live*" rather than "as long as we both shall *love*." For, as a song says, "Love is not a feeling, it's an act of the will."

To have a wedding does not necessarily require having a church building, or a beautiful bridal gown, nor music, nor a lot of bridesmaids and groomsmen, nor a reception, nor a wedding cake, nor even wedding rings. But it must have the **exchange of promises**, those solemn vows by which the groom and bride pledge their loyalty to each other. **Without such vows, there is no wedding. Without commitment, there is no real marriage.**

The groom and bride should sincerely and publicly promise to stay together as long as they both shall live. That means in good times but also bad times, in sickness as well as in health, in prosperity but in poverty too. **God calls us to live by principles, not passion. He calls us to follow convictions, not convenience. We should be people of integrity, not just impulses. Feelings come and go, but we are to keep our promises no matter how we feel.** Affections grow stronger or weaker from time to time, but that does not dissolve our responsibility to keep the solemn vows we freely choose to make before God, with our friends and relatives as witnesses. Circumstances may change, but that should not change our commitments to each other.

In our days there is widespread ignorance of what God teaches in His Word the Bible. Thus many people are unaware of God's wise commands and the loving reasons behind them. Because of this, [**Groom and Bride**] now realize an important fact of which they were ignorant before: God's good and wise plan is that a man and woman should marry **before** living together as a couple. **Before** entering the good and God-given relationship of sexual union, and **before** having children, a man and woman should officially make their covenant to be faithful and true to one another, as long as they both shall live. We are very glad that [**Groom and Bride**] have chosen to take that step at

this time. They now wish that they had known and followed God's plan before living together. They join me in urging all who are here today to follow our Creator's will for marriage and the family. They have sought God's forgiveness (and He does forgive those who sincerely seek Him), and from now on they want to set a good example of family living in every way. We warmly commend them for this. And we urge each and every person who is here today to study God's Word, accept His grace, and trust Him. *To trust Him enough to follow His wise and loving commands.*

The Bible over and over urges us to "believe" in God the heavenly Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, the only savior. Perhaps the best-known verse in the Bible says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever *believes* in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Again we read, "*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved." But *believe* means very much more than just believing facts about Him. It means to *trust Him enough not only to depend on His caring promises, but also to obey His wise and loving commands--to be truly committed to Him.* He also calls us to be truly committed to our husband or wife, as long as we both shall live.

Facing Temptation

by Rubel Shelly

Jesus' experience lets us know that temptation and sin are not the same things. That you can be tempted does not mean that you have sinned or that you must. It means simply that you must have a strategy for dealing with temptation in the power of the Spirit of God. Here are some suggestions that might help.

First, never be surprised by temptation. No one is exempt from it, and no one is invincible to it. Something that you have prayed about, struggled with, and thought you had overcome may still have an appeal to you at some weak moment. Don't be shocked by your humanity and weakness!

Second, stay in the Word of God and prayer for the sake of keeping your conscience tender to the Lord. It was not coincidental that Jesus responded to Satan's temptations in the wilderness encounter with quotations from Scripture. If you are not living with that same Word in your life, it will not come to you magically in your times of temptation. And Jesus taught us to pray for deliverance from Satan and his seductions to evil (Matt. 6:13).

Third, be serious enough about your spiritual life to avoid people and situations you know to be unhealthy. All of us have the ability to play games with our own hearts to rationalize our presence in situations where we have no business. That person provokes you, but you continue being with her. He or she does not respect your personal boundaries and tries to seduce you into having sex with him, yet you still occasionally accept a date with him when he calls. Nobody needs to tell you the right thing to do in these situations. You simply need to decide how serious you are about following Christ.

Fourth, if there is an area of particular vulnerability in your life, dedicate a time of prayer and fasting to that issue this week — at least twelve hours, and perhaps a full day. Fasting does not force God’s hand. It signals your repentance, consciously opens your heart to the Spirit’s purifying power, and puts you on heightened alert against Satan. You have this promise from Jesus: “But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Matt. 6:17-18).

Fifth, see the positive side to temptation. And what would that be? If you take it seriously, it will drive you closer to your Father. Resisting Satan has the effect of showing you the one safe place in all the cosmos (Jas. 4:7-8).

We will never develop Christian character except through struggle waged against Satan in the power of God’s indwelling Spirit. Don’t make peace with Satan, for he is the enemy of your Savior.

[This copyrighted article was originally published in Grace Centered Magazine (www.gcmagazine.net), a daily, online publication, dedicated to stimulating personal and public thought, prayer, and discussion about living the Christian life.]

Prayer and Wildebeests

Gary Butts

Prayer has been difficult for me. It's not that it is hard, or takes up too much of my time. It's just difficult for me to get started sometimes. Sometimes I quickly mumble a thought or two. At other times I think I really should pray about this, but I think I can handle it myself.

I shared this with my friend John not too long ago. John asked, "What is the problem?" I had to tell him I wasn't sure, prayer just didn't seem to come easy to me. John looked me straight in the eye--no wait -- John is quite a bit shorter than I am so he sort of looked up into my eye. I have seen this look before; it was on a *National Geographic* special. A crocodile had been lying motionless in some tall brown grass on the edge of a watering hole in the African savanna. The croc had been watching a timid wildebeest cautiously approach. The wildebeest took a few steps, paused and looked around nervously. The croc lay perfectly still with glassy eyes fixed on the hapless animal. The wildebeest finally made its way forward to within a few feet of the water (and the croc). He pauses one last time, scans the area and sniffs at the air. ALL RIGHT! The joyful and thirsty wildebeest almost prances the last couple of steps. Suddenly he freezes and looks down into the grass. And I am certain the last thing the doomed animal saw was the icy stare and the crocodile smile that John now had on his face. It was too late to run. I couldn't hide. It isn't easy being a wildebeest.

"Let me ask you a question," John said. "So you think prayer is a waste of time?" "Of course not! I didn't say that," I vainly protested. "So you think that God doesn't listen when you pray?" John fires right back. "No John, I'm sure he hears prayers," I replied. At this point anything I say is going to be useless. John stopped listening two questions ago, and he is savoring the moment of kill.

"Does God ever talk to you when you pray?" John quizzed. He caught me off guard there; I didn't see that one coming. "Well, no, I just kind of pray and that's it," I answered clumsily. Now John starts to circle me staring at his shoes as he walks. I couldn't see his face, but I would bet my last quarter he did that so I couldn't see him smile. He pauses, looks squarely at me and asks, "Do you ever listen?" I paused and thought for a moment. "Well... no. I just, you know, I just pray." I was stammering now. It was bad enough I got into a discussion I could in no way participate in at any level of intelligence from this point on. He was making me finish the kill for him. I was now clubbing myself.

“Do you ever think about what you are going to pray about?” he drove on. “Well, I don’t have a script.” I think I was actually sweating now. “I just say what is on my mind and in my heart.” John now takes a step forward, raises his eyebrows and asked with a puzzled expression, “So you just wing it?” Feeling just like my fellow wildebeest lying in a watering hole with a hungry croc ripping its throat away, I replied with my last dying breath, “Yes, John, I guess I do just wing it.”

John smiles and says in a fatherly tone, “*You have a problem. You have a big mouth. You are doing all of the talking and God does all of the listening. He may be trying to say something to you and you don’t even give him a chance.*” The cruelest, most painful wound of all, the truth. Painful only because I failed to recognize the simple facts myself. I had focused on my problem instead of trying to find the solution. This vision impairment is common among all wildebeest.

My biggest mistake however was I had forgotten what I was doing, and I had completely forgotten Who I was dealing with. Prayer is an intimate conversation between God and me. There was no exchange of thoughts or any two-way communication. I had held God captive and turned it into a lecture. I had been pretty arrogant about it too. I had called my lectures at my convenience with little regard of my Audience. This was my personal meeting with the Creator.

Do you know who God is? Let me explain. He is the designer of the universe, the creator of the cosmos. His hand crafted the heavens and earth. From the peaks of the tallest mountains to the innermost depths of the earth, the fingerprint of the maker is upon it. He brought life into existence with just a thought and mere breath from his lips. God knows what was in my heart. He knew my thoughts. Yet I a mere wildebeest was telling God what I needed and what was best for me. It’s like a three year old telling his parents, “My bedtime is at 11:00 PM, I will have ice cream for breakfast and you need to buy me a swing set immediately.”

Before I pray now I take a moment to remember our proper roles in this talk we are going to have and my attitude changes. I find myself humbled and thankful for the opportunity to encounter this awesome, powerful presence. I also have some quiet times during prayer. We don’t need to keep taking, He knows our heart. Take a bit of advice from Psalms 46:10, “Be still, and know that I am God.” When I’m quiet and in prayer I find I can truly appreciate God’s goodness and greatness. Instead of a task, prayer becomes a much needed and sought after relief in a stressful day.

I also started to listen. I didn't know what I was listening for. But I listened anyway. Then He started to speak to me. Quietly and softly, I heard Him. I hear Him in the rain that softly hits my bedroom windows as I lie in bed late at night. I hear Him in the sound of distant thunder as it rolls across the sky, and in the sound of children laughing.

He also touches my face with the warmth of a summer sun or a cool autumn breeze. I can hear Him in the taste of a fresh peach or in the smell of freshly cut Christmas trees. I see Him in the smile of my grandson and in a black quiet night filled with stars. I see Him in hills covered with brilliant fall colors; snow covered mountain peaks; oceans that lap at my feet on a sandy beach and stretch across the horizon beyond my sight to distant countries. I see Him in clouds; birds, beasts and I even see Him in the crocodile smile of my friends. He tells me in dozens of ways every day that He is here, that He is God, and He is in control.

What an awesome God we have. How blessed we are to be able to talk with Him. Just be careful around dead grass by watering holes. Crocodiles are everywhere.

Counselor's Column

Appreciating Dad

Dennis Kaufman

Question: We are coming up on another Father's Day, and I never know what to do for my Dad. I typically get him a gift and a card, but there's not much fanfare, and I find myself wanting to do something different for a change. What do dads really want from their adult children?

Answer: The reality is that dads probably do not want a lot. I am 45 years old, and I have been a father for 22 years. In all that time, I have never heard a man say, "Oh, I am so excited. Father's Day is coming up. I wonder what my kids will do for me!"

I have often wondered whether Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparent's Day, Secretary's Day, Boss's Day, Valentines Day...are inventions of people who really desire a little special attention or more a part of an American marketing scheme that needs us to perform on command. Well, that's another subject, back to your question.

Since these special days exist, it makes sense to take advantage of the opportunity to lift others up and I do think there are some ways fathers can be encouraged.

First of all, it is nice to be recognized. Since there is a "Father's Day," it certainly would be hurtful if the day went by and there was no acknowledgment whatsoever. I encourage people to send a card or make a call, even in situations where the father has been highly dysfunctional. I would see this as a part of honoring a parent, and thus keeping a Biblical command. I also think acts of kindness such as this move us down a track of forgiveness and prevent "roots of bitterness" from developing and going deeper.

Finding a card that says the right thing can be all but impossible when relationships are strained. I have had several clients through the years that have encouraged me to write some greeting cards for dysfunctional families. That may be a good business endeavor for someone out there.

In addition to being acknowledged, fathers who have worked hard at the role also like their efforts to be appreciated. Through the years of raising children, fathers can often feel their hard work is taken for granted. At times like Father's Day, I think it is great to reminisce about specific memories where Dad went the extra mile or was heroic. Most men have significant needs to be respected.

The last thing I will emphasize is the blessing of a "personal touch" to cards or gifts or other expressions of appreciation. People always are more eager to see what you wrote on the card more than what the card says. Fill up the page with personal sharing about what your dad means to you. I remember when my daughters were in their early teens, they enclosed some words to a song they wrote for me. They then performed the song. That's the kind of thing I will never forget as a father.

So for faithful fathers, give them a day of relaxation, a little special attention, and a personal touch that allows at least a teaspoon of heroism. If your father was not as faithful, go as far as you can to honor the position of fatherhood and as far as truth will allow you in thoughtfully acknowledging the day.

CONTENTMENT

JOYce Broyles

If someone were to ask you how you can know when you have reached contentment and inner peace, what would you answer? When I ask young people that, they tell me they are content in that they are happy where they are now, but they want to keep improving themselves in the future.

As to inner peace, they tell me that they are at peace until someone tells them something that "burns me up!" After six decades, I can say that once in a while, I get burned up, too. Most of the time, though, I am content with where I am, and very peaceful.

This is how I know. When I wake up in the morning and feel like singing, I know that I am content. When I hate to go to bed because there is so much more I want to do, I think I am content. When I forget to eat because there is something more important to do than eat, I believe I have found satisfaction, or contentment.

When I watch a sunrise or a sunset and it gives me such pleasure, I know that I have inner peace. When I cannot wait to see the sun rise or set again, I have peace. Everyday things like flowers blooming, birds soaring in the sky, children laughing aloud, make me know that my heart is full and I am at peace with the world.

I am no philosopher, but I do believe that I should live each day to the fullest. Some twenty-three years ago, I survived a close brush with Death. Since that time, I have felt obligated to make each moment meaningful. Some days I succeed; some days I do not. Reaching that place of contentment and inner peace will mean something different for each of us. For me, it has always been bound up with my spiritual life. Daily Bible reading and praying are an important part of it.

Another part of my life has always included a love for literature. I enjoy all genres, but especially poetry. I get excited when I understand the large thought that a poet has concentrated into a few words.

Religious songs have always had lovely poetry. One favorite that reminds me about inner peace is

"Peace, Perfect Peace" by Edward H. Bickersteth.

Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin:
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.
Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed:

To do the will of Jesus -- this is rest.
Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round:
On Jesus' bosom naught but calm is found.
Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away:
In Jesus' keeping we are safe, and they.
Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown:
Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.
It is enough; earth's struggles soon shall cease,
And Jesus call us to heaven's perfect peace.

As the poet wrote, "It is enough." Just knowing Jesus can give us what we are continually searching for. He is the answer to contented and peaceful personal expressions.

UNANSWERED PRAYERS

Edward Fudge: GracEmail

A gracEmail subscriber writes: "Over 20 years ago, I prayed for God to heal a sister in Christ. She died, leaving a husband and small son. Several years later, a beloved elder and his wife died despite earnest prayer by many. Later my mother and father died of illnesses within three weeks of each other. By then, I'd quit praying altogether, convinced that God didn't answer my prayers and doubting that I was even a Christian. I used to cry myself to sleep, feeling like my knuckles were bleeding from banging on God's door. I still enjoy going to worship, helping others, teaching about Christ and doing whatever good I can. But I feel like a deaf-mute Christian when it comes to praying."

* * *

Truly I empathize with your grief. I also have experienced the agony of seeing a loved one die whom I had begged God to heal and restore. I had to be reminded that death is the common lot of all mortals until Jesus comes and that sickness or disease will probably be the occasion by which it comes to most of us. There is a time to die, in God's purpose, and God answers prayers for healing that fit that divine purpose (Eccles. 3:1-2; Psalm 139:16). One day he will answer our untimely prayers as well, when he "heals" his people perfectly by resurrecting them to deathlessness and eternal glory (1 Cor. 15:51-55).

Is it possible you have missed seeing the forest by focusing on particular trees? The disappointment of your unanswered prayers for

loved ones to live might well have distracted you from noticing numerous other prayers which God did answer. Many people find it helpful to keep a prayer journal -- in which they daily write down every request they make to God, beside which they also record answers to those regular prayers. When God says "not now" to an enormous prayer request we sometimes overlook his positive responses to our smaller prayers day after day.

Your standing as God's child does not depend on your record of positively-answered prayers. The great Apostle Paul received a definite "no" to some of his prayers, and so apparently did our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 12:7-10; Mark 14:35). Our children are not our children because we give them what they ask for, and they are no less our children when we do not. The same is true of us and the Father in heaven. Your relationship with God is evidenced in your continued faithfulness despite your disappointment involving prayer. Those who believe without having seen are especially blessed, said Jesus (John 20:29). Be assured that the Savior has that same loving attitude toward you now. Don't give up, dear sister. Your prayers are not in vain.

VOICES From The FIELDS

Dennis & Betty Allen

Salem, Indiana

May 1, 2003

We have applied for a tourist visa to China. We have also made ticket reservations. We are scheduled to leave Louisville at 3:10 pm May 14 and to arrive in Manila at 6:00 am on May 16. Then we fly from there at 2:15 pm to arrive at Xiamen, China at 4:25 pm. We feel better about going through Manila rather than Shanghai because of the SARS epidemic.

All this depends on getting our visas in time. Please pray about that. We are grateful for your prayer support and to know that God's hand is above every other hand.

[Dennis and Betty have committed themselves to stay for one school year. As on their preceding stays in China, they are allowed into the country as teachers of "English as a second language." The area where they will live has not been invaded by SARS, at least yet. Pray about that, also.]

Tim Yates

Australia

April 28, 2003

Just a quick note to everyone to let you know we are back in the land of Oz (Australia). Got in Saturday morning and spent the day

trying to stay awake so we could get back on track. Sunday was filled with normal busy activities, so today is the first day I could concentrate on the computer screen long enough to write an email.

Things went pretty well for the trip back, but it's never easy with three little ones. I know many of you were praying for Dawn's back and your prayers were answered. She really hasn't had a problem with it since we left Australia! We were very thankful for that.

Please continue to pray for Dawn's family at this time of loss, especially her dad. It will be a big adjustment now, especially after we left the house. Thanks for all your prayers for us during this most difficult time. We had a good visit with family and friends while we were in the States, and we leave there with the peace that Dawn's mother is with the Prince of Peace.

Crystal Hardin

22 Mar 2003

Seoul, S. Korea

I haven't been good at all about asking for prayer this year, but it isn't because we didn't need it here! God has blessed in many ways: Good spiritual emphasis weeks, students accepting the Lord, good accreditation review, and observable growth in maturity in some of the students. Several of the senior guys have been in a Bible study all year, and their lives have been changing. In addition, we have already had one wedding of a staff member, and there will be three (!) more this summer.

Our staff has had many struggles with health, though, and two had to return to the States this month, one with chronic fatigue and one for surgery for diverticulitis. It seems we are always under attack here in the area of health. There is also a great deal of fear among students about the war situation.

The school has mission teams going to five places during the week before Easter: Cambodia, China, Tibet, Japan, and Spain. I will be leading the team of seven students to Spain where we will be working with a team from YWAM that works with immigrant Muslims. We will help with a camp for the children, trying to build relationships between the families and the team there so they can share the gospel. Our team has been meeting and preparing songs, skits, and games for the kids. We have also committed to providing ten scholarships for the children as most of the families are very poor.

Not all of those going are from Christian families, and we pray that what they gain from discipleship training at our school will be used by God to carry them into adult lives that are surrendered to

Christ. Pray that the lives of our students will be forever changed by what they learn on this trip.

Update: Crystal's group got to Spain and back, having a good ministry there. But the trips to the four Asian lands all had to be canceled due to the SARS scare! --avw

Mark and Candy Garrett Senegal, W. Africa April '03

"No one told me to listen to the stories. No one told me to believe. I looked into this myself and believed! When the Imam told me that they wouldn't bury me when I died, I said, 'That's just fine! Just throw my old body out in the bush and let the birds eat me.' I'm not going back! Jesus is my friend," testified 90 year-old M. Sylla right before he was baptized this past December. He and four others from the Kaffrine area followed Christ in baptism including an important village leader and his wife. Praise the Lord!

In other villages several want to claim Christ publicly but are waiting for others to join them in baptism. (In fact a sixth person slated for baptism that day backed out.) One man said to the missionary, "Don't be disappointed with us. We are hoping to bring many at one time to be baptized, so that we can stand firm against opposition." Join us in praying that that day will come soon and bring great glory to God.

Our South African colleagues, Bennie & Maggs Bonthuys, have been partnering in the Kaffrine area for over a year with another evangelical missionary couple, Jim & Bev Vaughn. The Vaughn's many years of ministry in that place are now bearing some fruit. The harvest in the Kaffrine area has been stunning compared to other Wolof areas; 10 Wolof villagers have come to Christ in the past three years. The Vaughns have been using a chronological "storying" method for several years now and have so many openings to teach God's Word that they need help to fill the demand.

Rejoice with us and the angels as we see the Holy Spirit's work in the hearts of Wolof people coming to light! We have prayed for fruit among the Wolof for years and now God is beginning to answer! PTL!

The day before the baptism our co-workers helped organize a one day Wolof Bible conference there. Malick Fall, the voice of "Yoonu Njub" (the radio broadcast we sponsor) was one of the key speakers. It was a time of teaching and answering many questions from believers and inquirers alike. Why do you call Jesus God's Son? Do Jesus' disciples have to eat pork? Do Jesus followers recognize any prophets af-

ter Jesus? (i.e. could John 14:16 refer to Mohammed?) Should Jesus' disciples ritually pray and observe the month of fasting? Do Jesus' followers go on pilgrimage to Mecca? How would you answer such questions? Thank God for the wisdom He gives Malick and the others to answer these important questions from Muslim background inquirers. Pray that God will call out many to Himself.

I'm happy to report that we're safe in spite of the general displeasure of the Muslims toward the U.S. over the war in Iraq. While Muslims have staged big protest rallies nearer to the Middle East, public displeasure here has been muted. (We kept a low profile during the conflict just to be on the safe side.) Many friends and acquaintances have questioned us about the justification for the war and told of their sympathy for their Muslim brothers in Iraq. But the Lord gave us some opportunities to redirect the discussion towards the second coming of Christ. After all, what this world needs is a truly righteous ruler! And only Jesus fits the bill. Are we ready for His coming?

Born From Above

Gordon R. Linscott, 1967

Some time ago an evangelist of international fame found himself before a group of government officials. Desiring that these should know his Lord and share his faith, he proceeded to recount the story of his conversion. It had been a sudden and dramatic experience. All at once, the reality of Jesus Christ had burst upon him, and he was all but overcome by it. In an instant he had come to see and acknowledge Jesus as risen Lord, and in the same instant he had realized that he was a special instrument--"Chosen to undertake great Gospel campaigns." At a later date he had been baptized, but of this he said nothing to his audience. He simply urged upon them that they might become as he was.

This is a true story. You may have already guessed the identity of the evangelist, but that is secondary. I want to ask a question: Did he consider baptism to be important? I think he would say "Yes." No doubt others would reply, "No, because he didn't mention it." Before we consider this question further, let's examine a different one.

WHAT IS THE NEW BIRTH?

We have to be careful not to overextend figures of speech, but I think it is safe to say that the new birth and natural birth have at least these things in common: 1) Birth is primarily an experience that hap-

pens to a person, without cause or ground in himself. 2) The result is a radical, irreversible change in the individual's life.

That these things are true of the new birth follows from the Scriptures. Jn. 1:13: "Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh; nor of the will of man, but of God." This clearly excludes anything in the natural realm--even the person's own will. I have heard people say, "I decided I was going to become a Christian, and I did!" Absurd! A decision there may well have been, but at the most, this can be only a decision to accept God's work. The new birth is of God. It is supernatural through and through (therefore often spoken of as a miracle). Yet there is a host of "Spiritual obstetricians" who apparently don't recognize the fact. Hence the use of neat little salvation formulas (e.g., hold up your hand, sign a card, or four-steps-and-you're-in), prolonged invitations, and various psychological devices borrowed from the advertising business. The message of the Gospel is apprehended by the intellect and it does stir the emotions, but we must not think of it as being intrinsically rational or emotional. The power is in the Word of God--not in the "irresistible logic" nor the "heart-stirring oratory" of the preacher. "Not of the will of man:" says the Word. This excludes the will of preacher and hearer alike.

A network radio preacher representing a large segment of the Restoration Movement recently stated that the new birth takes place through obedience. Later in the program he said, "I hope that in the end my good works will outweigh the bad ones." In his view, a person causes himself to be born again by obeying certain commands. Then he sees the sinner working himself all the way to Heaven on the same basis. Of such Paul says, "Ye are fallen away from grace....severed from Christ." The "obedience" of this particular preacher (and the many he represents) is in the natural realm, proceeding from the will of man. Am I carrying this too far? Read 1 Cor. 2: 1-5. See Paul's deep concern about his own preaching. He recognized that he could "win converts" by human persuasive powers, and he knew that people so won would be devoid of the power of God--actually without the new birth. During the open forum of the 1966 Louisville Christian Fellowship Week several preaching brethren acknowledged that we have this problem in our churches--members, perhaps active members, that show no sign of the radical change that results from the new birth. Such are lost, eternally lost, unless someone warns them and they turn. Leroy Garrett (Aug., 1966 issue) affirms that the greatest mission field is the local church. Why? I believe it is because we have reduced the new birth to a procedure (as a local preacher termed it) which is carried out "by the will of man."

What is the new birth? It is a supernatural event with supernatural consequences. It is an intervention of God in history to create a new

individual, to endow with new life a member of the old creation. The new life bestowed is eternal life--the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus. It necessarily follows that He is manifested in that person to whom the new life is given. And since He is the same today as He was in Galilee, it is little wonder that we find ourselves acting quite "out of character." Suddenly we are harboring thoughts and desires that are totally foreign to the nature we were born with. These are the fruit of our new nature which resulted from our second birth. Oh, the blessedness of it! Not a set of resolutions, not a new set of rules to live by, not a reformation of life, but LIFE FROM THE DEAD!! Not by works of righteousness that we might have done, but by His amazing work at Calvary and resurrection from the dead He gave His life to us. This--experienced in us--is being "born again."

WHEN IS A PERSON BORN AGAIN?

On this question, I tend to agree with a statement made by A. W. Tozer some years ago. He said something like this "I'm a little inclined to be suspicious of these people who have one eye on the clock and one eye on the Lord." The new birth has to do with eternal life, and that word "eternal" immediately takes it out of the time-bound system within which we live. Our experience of the new birth is, of course, time-related, and so even though the importance of "When is one born again?" does not rank with "What is it to be born again?" the former is a legitimate question.

Among the churches of Christ, two answers are given to the question. The first (given by the overwhelming majority) is clear and unqualified: When a person has been baptized. "Baptism marks the dividing line between the saved and the lost." No exceptions allowed. A minority (mostly among the pre-millennial churches) are not quite so consistent. They would leave a few loopholes for exceptional cases--the person who is killed on the way to being baptized, the person who has obeyed as far as he has been taught, etc.

Let's take a closer look at the person who dies on the way to the creek. How is it that so many are disposed to make exception for him? The more or less stock answer is God knows the man's heart. Let's probe a little deeper: Did God know his heart before, or after he died? Does God know only the hearts of those who die suddenly after trusting Him? When did He recognize the quality of my heart? Before or after baptism? (In the case of Cornelius, He knew beforehand--Acts 15:8.) Do we really have any basis for applying one rule to the person who is struck dead and another rule to the living? It appears to me that we have really been believing one thing and preaching another. We've really been believing that a man was saved when he believed, but

preaching that he had to be baptized first. It would seem that our doctrine needs some doctoring at this point.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM

How important is baptism? According to some preachers, baptism is to be put on a par with the blood of the Son of God. One writes, "The blood of Christ and the act of baptism sustain the same relationship to salvation. . . The relationship of baptism to remission of sins is that of CAUSE to EFFECT." Such a statement, rather than elevating the act of baptism, defames the name of our Lord. Imagine comparing anything we do--even by God's command-- to the incomparable Person of our Lord Jesus Christ!! Surely it is not necessary to manufacture any such exaggerated claims for baptism in order to declare it "important."

Now refer back to the preacher mentioned at the beginning of this article. Did he consider baptism to be important? Does a person consider baptism unimportant if he doesn't mention it in every sermon? Such accusations have been made against some of our brethren. I believe he spoke as he did because he was so led by the Holy Spirit (you can read his entire speech in Acts 26). The rest of the sermons recorded in Acts for the most part follow the same pattern. Where did we get the idea that the Gospel is not preached if baptism is not mentioned? Not from the apostolic pattern!

How should we treat baptism if it is important? One brother suggests that we (in the churches of Christ) have almost done with baptism what the Jews did with the Sabbath--we have made it the test of orthodoxy. Do we want to attach that kind of importance to baptism? It might be profitable to restudy the crucial place that the Sabbath occupied in the thinking of the Pharisees.

Other claims are made for baptism, no doubt in sincerity, but behind them all there seems to be a fear that baptism will fall to the ground and be discarded if we don't stretch out our hands to hold it up. Somehow it must be placed above every other act of obedience. One says, "The act of baptism puts the individual sinner in contact with the blood of Christ." (Scripture?) Another, "Baptism is a test of faith" (which passed, presumably, makes you approved by God). Another: "Baptism is the door to the Church." Another: "Baptism makes you acceptable to God." Statements such as these remind me of the ubiquitous wall plaque, "Prayer changes things." Whenever I see it, I want to shout, "God changes things!" How easily we honor the creature above the Creator!

Frankly, brethren, it is my opinion that we have (or at least a goodly proportion of us have) arrived at such a practice with regard to

baptism. We have attached an importance to an act which it does not have. We have made it to be the one indispensable act of obedience. Baptism is important--but not because of what it does for us (God deliver us from this American--born philosophy of pragmatism!) Baptism is important because of Him who gave it to us, and because it speaks of His saving work on our behalf, and because in baptism we are identified with Him. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.." Can we find a higher motivation than this? Must we descend to the level of the trader in the market place and turn baptism into coin to exchange for salvation in order to make it "important"?

Brethren, God is jealous for the glory of His worthy Son. How can we stand by while people ascribe to us or to our acts--whether faith, prayer, baptism, or martyrdom--honor that belongs to Him who alone is worthy? May we, like the Father, find our delight in Him who died and rose again, who loved us and loosed us from our sins with His own blood. Let's de-emphasize ourselves and what we do, and magnify Him and what He has done. "If any man glorieth, let him glory in the Lord! "

Jesus Can Be Jesus

Gordon R. Linscott, 1967

In my younger years I heard a good many sermons on "God's part" and "man's part" in salvation. The emphasis was invariably on "man's part." When I began to preach, this became my emphasis as well. Then a tract by K. C. Moser called to my attention that the good news is what God has done ("gospel," 1 Cor. 15:1-4) Only then did I begin to realize that it is possible to view salvation in other perspectives.

Four Ways Of Looking At Salvation

There are people called "hyper-Calvinists" (who go beyond Calvin's doctrine), so I am told, who believe that everybody--at birth--is already predestined for heaven or hell, and there is nothing he can do about it. There is no place for free choice or human responsibility. I don't know that I have ever met anyone of this persuasion.

A little removed from this extreme is the view that "Salvation becometh to the Lord" --that it is His work and only His--but that there is a human responsibility to accept God's work and to respond to it. This view, like the other, I would call "God-centered," since God receives all the credit for salvation.

A third view might be called "cooperative view," with man doing everything he can and God making up the balance. This doctrine, that "grace completes nature" was thoroughly developed during the Middle Ages by Thomas Aquinas (the "Angelic Doctor" of the Roman Catholic Church"). Many non-Catholic groups embrace this system which divides salvation between man and God. With most of them, salvation really depends on the individual. This is why I would refer to it as being "man-centered."

An extreme of the third view would be some form of deism, which makes the universe a big machine with God on the outside. Man is on the inside, with all the responsibility for his destiny upon his own shoulders. Deism as such is almost unheard of now, but its end conclusions are not much different from those held by many "liberals."

The two extremes—the first and last views just outlined—may be summarily discarded. I doubt seriously that any of my readers hold to either of these views. Nor would it likely be possible to make a clean division between those of the second and third views given. Most of us probably tend more in one direction on some matters, and in the other direction on others.

Your Life—God-Centered Or Man-Centered?

In several earlier issues I have spoken of this same thing—hopefully purposing to turn our eyes away from ourselves and what we do, to Him who has already done on our behalf everything that needs to be done. As a "group" I think we need to shift our emphasis from man to God. Here are some additional thoughts on why we need to move in that direction.

First, let's focus on a verse that brings together "God's part" and "man's part" in the Christian life. We'll see where Paul places the emphasis. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12,13). We have a definite personal responsibility indicated in the words "work" and "your own." However, the word "for" tells us that there is something more basic than "our part." There is something wonderful and powerful going on within us—God is at work! He is not an absentee landlord, but a permanent house guest. From within He is renewing our minds, transforming our lives. What is our responsibility? To let His inward work "break through" to the outside (affecting our manner of life). "Work out" presupposes something inside to be brought to the surface. "There is a painful tendency among believers to seek fruit from without instead of within," writes A. J. Gordon (*In Christ*, p. 136).

The Difference That "I" Makes

Whether our life is God-centered or man-centered may not make a great difference in our activities. It would be hard to out-do the praying, fasting, and Bible-reading of the Pharisees. Then where is the difference? The first and major difference lies in who gets the glory for it all. "For of him, and through him, and unto him are all things. To him be the glory for ever. Amen." The only things that can be unto God (to His credit, or glory), are the things that are of Him (have origin in Him) and through Him (carried out by Him). Let's consider some actual cases that will illustrate what we're talking about.

Many a time I've heard a testimony like this: "Well, I didn't use to go to church very much. Then one day they were having a meeting up here, and I decided to become a Christian. So I went up and was baptized." Was this individual thinking in terms of what God did, or what he himself did? Did he really consider that the blood of Christ had anything to do with his salvation? Another describes his life as a Christian: "I know I'm not as good as a lot of Christians, but I do the best I can." Where does the indwelling Holy Spirit figure in this man's thinking? His view is not unusual; the Christian life is something he does himself—not the life of God within. Some preachers encourage this kind of thinking: "I want to see everybody here tonight! You can do it if you try, so just make up your mind that you're going to do it!" Again the individual is made to be the center of his own spiritual life and destiny. Where there is personal failure, there is despair; and where there is success, pride slips in—and He who deserves all the credit is perhaps acknowledged as having helped!

"Not I—But Christ"

The Bible emphasis is on the Lord Jesus. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me..." (Gal. 2:20). So speaks Paul of his life, and of his labors he says, "By the grace of God I am what I am... I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15:10). The importance of the Christ-centered emphasis is illustrated by Mary's foot-washing (Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Jn. 12). The disciples wanted to spend the money on a good work for Jesus; Mary did the good work to Him. The Mary-Martha conflict (Lk. 10) illustrates the same truth. Martha was wrapped in her activity; Mary was enraptured by her Lord.

This has a practical application in the Christian life. I heard Tom Skinner, the young black evangelist, illustrate it this way: "Look at the person sitting beside you. Suppose that you decide you want to be just like him (or her); could you ever hope to succeed? Before you

even begin you realize that you could never be just like that person. Yet some of you think that being a Christian means trying to be like Jesus. You couldn't hope to be like the person beside you, and yet you would try to be like Jesus! Such a thing is impossible. But that's all right. Being a Christian is not living a Christ-like life. The Christian life is simply the Lord Jesus living His own life in you. You could never be like Jesus—but Jesus is perfectly capable of being Jesus!! And He will be Himself in you if you will just let Him."

This is the secret of the Christian life, the mystery of Godliness—"Christ in you" (Col. 1:27). The poverty of the Laodicean church lies right here—Christ was outside. This is the poverty we see in professing Christendom today. There is the name, Bible doctrine, and works-a-plenty—but man is the center: "our" church, "our" program, "our" converts, "our" preacher, etc., etc. Oh, that in all things He might have the preeminence!

We have no promise extended to Laodicea as a whole. There is an appeal to the individual who may be tiring of the merry-go-round of Laodicea's "full church calendar." The appeal (Rev. 3:20) is not to reform the church, but to renew a personal relationship with the Lord. Go back to the place at His feet, look up into His loving face, hear sweet words from His lips, offer up to Him the praise and adoration due His name. "Behold I stand at the door and knock..." Is He welcome at your door? Then just say, "Come in, Lord Jesus." What a feast awaits! What blessing! The Lord becomes not prominent, but preeminent—the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and end of every activity. He Himself is Bread and Drink and Light, and whatever else is needful. And then from experience we can exclaim with Paul, "For me, to live is Christ!"

Word and Work at 95 years old:

The Very Beginnings of the *Word and Work* Part Two:

Some Background to the Later
Division over Prophecy

Hans Rollmann

[Dr. Rollmann, a professor and historian, is working on a very thorough biography of R. H. Boll, whose character and significance he deeply appreciates. In this article he *describes*, rather than evaluates, events leading up to Brother Boll's becoming editor of *Word and Work* in 1916. --avw]

Stanford Chambers, the new editor of *Word and Work* after D. L. Watson, had -- like R. H. Boll -- been a student of James A. Harding in the Nashville Bible School. He had been disappointed by Church of Christ preacher L. S. White's performance during the notable debate in 1908 between White and Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Chambers later wrote, "I had no sympathy with Chas. T. Russell's theory, but I could not find in my Bible all that Brother White taught." He also said that White contradicted other popular Church of Christ teachers like Harding, Brents, Lard, and Lipscomb.

In the wake of this debate and in order to clarify such prophetic issues, Chambers started in the September 1913 *Word and Work* a regular "Department of Prophecy." This became a forum for dispensational thought and the study of the prophecies. H. L. Olmstead used his "Department of First Principles" in the same journal in those pre-war years for the discussion of premillennial topics as well, as did E. L. Jorgenson in his "Department of Work and Worship." In 1914 Charles M. Neal also wrote a lengthy dispensational series on the kingdom in the Cincinnati-based *Christian Leader*, a journal published by friends and supporters of Harding. Neal's articles soon appeared as a book, illustrated with apocalyptic charts and titled *Lessons on the Kingdom*. This work, advertised vigorously in *Word and Work*, appears to be the first dispensationalist book published among Churches of Christ.

Olmstead, who headed the department "First Principles" in *Word and Work* was also editor of the Odessa-based *Christian Companion*, in which he did not hesitate to reprint without modifications from the *Scofield Study Bible* an article on the "kingdom." Later, in 1915, he would also engage, together with Boll, in discussions on apocalyptic themes with the editors of the *Gospel Advocate*, who opposed premillennial ideas. In 1914 and 1915 Boll, Chambers, and Olmstead also published commentaries on portions of the book of Revelation that followed strikingly similar interpretive principles and traditions. They reveal an acquaintance with the *Scofield Study Bible* and other premillennial literature as well as their own reading of the text. Some distinctive dispensational beliefs -- such as the interpretation of the messages to the seven churches as a preview of the seven ages of church history -- are shared by all three writers.

The articles of B. F. Rhodes, another student of Harding, on the Second Coming in the *Gospel Herald* as well as the discussion by A. M. Morris on the letters to the seven churches in Revelation in Daniel Sommer's *Apostolic Review* were to Stanford Chambers indications of a renewed interest in eschatology. In his "Prophetic Department" Chambers rejoiced over the exploding prophetic studies during 1914 and 1915. "We predict the passing of much of the 'Dark Age' rubbish,

which has beclouded prophetic vision so long," Chambers wrote, "and the rise of the truth above Dantic and Miltonic traditions."

With this flurry of dispensational articles in papers of the Churches of Christ, the *Gospel Advocate* shareholder-editors suspected a churchwide "Russellite"* conspiracy and defended their millennial distaste with vigor. This added to the tension and drama and eventually cost Brother Boll his front-page editorial position on the *Advocate*. This atmosphere was permeated by feelings, on the part of Boll's friends, that the underlying reasons were personal in character, rooted in preacher jealousies and, possibly, generational differences. Even a contemporary opponent of Boll such as Price Billingsley confided to his diary:

I know that the *Advocate* was justified in severing relations with Brother Boll, and Srygly, Smith et al. were right in the opposition to that young German theorist. Yet much of this opposition to Boll was sounded in their jealousy and suspicion of his ability to think opposite them. Those brethren are in a rut and could not now get out into new fields of thought or use any other expressions or literary forms than those they have used for long years. Boll is a new thinker and a growing man. These brethren resented this capacity in Boll, and they are naturally suspicious of something new. (Unpublished Billingsley diaries, Center for Restoration Studies, ACU)

But there emerged also a new religious identity among those sharing a common futurist premillennialism, including mutual support and reprinting of articles. When defending his prophetic views, Olmstead spoke of "several brethren, including myself," who espouse such thought and invokes repeatedly the collective "we."

Neal, who later defended the premillennial view in a famous debate against Foy Wallace Jr., in the introduction to his *Lessons on the Kingdom* was "fully aware that the views set forth in these articles did not coincide with the fathers' of seventy-five and one hundred years ago," but the new truths were nevertheless part of a wider and what he judged to be more profound study of the prophecies and the end-time. Neal also suggested a broad base of support for the new views, when he stated that many had now acquired a more satisfactory eschatology. "Many longing hearts," he wrote, "that for years have been catching but vistas of glorious truths, have been led by prayerful, careful, study into a fuller and more satisfying revelation of prophetic truth than our fathers enjoyed."

D. L. Watson, founder of *Christian Word and Work*, was eventually disfellowshipped by the a cappella brethren in New Orleans, ostensibly because of fraudulent fund-raising practices which had caused

public offense in the brotherhood at home and abroad. Watson, on the other hand, insisted that he had been disfellowshipped for disagreeing with Chambers about prophecy, and the *Gospel Advocate* took his side of the story. Watson then joined the local Disciples congregation, to which Harris, his former co-editor, had defected before the issue of premillennialism arose. As noted above, Chambers as editor added several new departments, reflecting increased attention to prophetic topics. The journal changed hands again in January 1916, when R. H. Boll became editor-in-chief and publisher, while Chambers, Olmstead, and Jorgenson remained as coeditors. Boll, whose ties with the *Gospel Advocate* had been severed in 1915, now moved *Word and Work* to Louisville, Kentucky, where a new stage in its history began. And the present editor told that story, to some extent, in the March issue this year.

* [Note by avw:] In the early 1900s the Jehovah's Witnesses were called Russellites after their founder, C. T. Russell. Then, as now, they stressed the "millennium" but with peculiar views about it: Assisting Christ in His rule over the earth at that time will be 144,000 people, all of them Jehovah's Witnesses (the most zealous ones).

As disputes over premillennial teaching began spreading among Churches of Christ, some who opposed it accused its teachers of being Russellites. After all, both believed in a 1000 year reign! Boll, especially, was the object of such allegations for decades, despite his repeated denials. Research by Hans Rollmann shows that this was particularly ironic. For during Boll's years on the *Gospel Advocate* staff he wrote more articles exposing the Russellites' errors than any other writer.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

SCC Reunion May 26, 11:00-3:30, eating around 12:30.PM. at the Sellersburg Christian Family Center. Meat, soft drinks, plates and tableware will be provided. Bring yourself, spouse (if you have one), a dish and a dessert.

Ralph Ave. Church of Christ was formally known as the Parkland Church of Christ and was located at Southern and Beech Street from 1913-1953. Bro. H. N. Rutherford was the first minister. In 1953 the church purchased property on Ralph Ave and became known as the Ralph Ave. Church of Christ. Bro. J.L.

Adams was serving as minister then until 1975. After Bro. Adams retired, ministers who served included Jim Goodwin, David Tapp, and Bill Smallwood who has continued since 1990. Over the last several years two local congregations had to close their doors because of declining members. Many of them joined in the work at Ralph Ave. Special 50th Homecoming Anniversary services are being planned for Sunday July 20th and all former members are encouraged to come and join the celebration of God's grace over the past 90 years! A church history has been printed and will be available in July. Also, two quilts will be on display with pictures of those presently attending and pictures of Parkland some 90 years ago. Services begin with Sunday School at 9:45 a.m. and worship at 10:50 a.m.

Mackville Church of Christ (KY) was established September 1917 and will be 86 years old this year! Frank Preston is announcing an "Old Fashion Bible School" June 9-13. Then, July 7-13 there will be a Gospel meeting with Don McGee of "Crown and Sickle" ministries.

Bohon (KY) Revival...with evangelist Jerry Carmichael is being planned for July 27-30, 2003 at 7:00 pm Special homecoming services on Sunday with dinner on the grounds in a newly constructed building at the church. All are invited to come and share in the study of God's Word and fellowship with God's people. Services nightly at 7:00.

Tell City Church of Christ (Ind) A short-term mission trip to Mexico is being planned for the week of July 21st - August 1st. Plans are

to take three church van loads to minister. Cost is \$350 for each participant. If interested in going, please contact David Johnson for information packet. (1206 Tenth Street, Tell City, Indiana. (812) 547-6778

Woodland Bible Camp...is now taking registrations for summer camp. Weeks included are:

Junior June 8-13
Intermediate I **Cancelled!**
Intermediate July 13-19
Senior July 20-26
Sr.Citizen Sept. 7-11
Youth Ret. Sept.12-14

For additional information or forms contact:

Woodland Bible Camp
R.R. 3 Box 649
Linton, IN 47441

Wahiawa Church of Christ ('Oahu Hawaii) Singing a capella "is not an issue for debate but a part of our Christian heritage that we have chosen to preserve. Since worship is something we "do"- not just something to "watch" we encourage everyone to participate." (Kevin Gilbert)

Koinonia House (Chuck & Nancy Missler) "As Christians, we have God's supernatural will and power. First, He counsels us as to what His will is, and then He gives us His supernatural power to perform His will in our lives. In other words, He hasn't left us incapable of carrying out His will. He has given us all that we need. Only the choice is ours."

Visit their website:

www.khouse.org

Cherry St. (IN) Bro. Don McGee presented a series of five challenging prophetic messages to the

Cherry St. Church of Christ in May. Bro. Don is the evangelist and founder of the "Crown & Sickle Ministries." While in the Louisville area, Bro. Don also presented an overview of his ministry at the area church leaders that meet for a luncheon each month. On Tuesday, Bro. Don presented a full day of timely topics at Portland Christian School. If interested in scheduling a prophecy meeting with Bro. Don, contact him at Don McGee 60498 Floyd Road, Amite, LA 70422; (985) 748-2943; csmin@bellsouth.net

Greece Report...(Bennie Hill) A condensed version with pictures of our recent trip to Athens Greece and the Island of Crete can be seen by going to www.cramercoc.org. Any church desiring to learn more about the work of Bro. George Galanis (Athens) and Bro. Nick Tsagarakis (Crete) can contact Bennie Hill, P.O. Box 54842, Lexington, KY 40555; (859) 269-1312; Bhill40482@aol.com

"**Joseph Shulam** and the members of the Netivyah ministry in **Jerusalem** are taking medicine, food and money to the Palestinian villages near Bethlehem. 'We call upon the church to seek peace and pursue it and pray for the salvation of people in Israel and in the whole Middle East,' Shulam said." -- from the *May Christian Chronicle*

The Bryantsville Hunger Relief Project (BHRP) This is the good work begun years ago by Hollis Sherwood of the Bryantsville, Ind. church. Its purpose statement says it "exists to help provide food to

the 'poorest of the poor' people in 3rd-world or disaster-ravaged countries by supplying High-Lysine corn for distribution by various relief agencies." That type of corn is a high-nutrition food especially valuable for people in lands affected by famine. The ministry needs a new corn-processing & storage facility to be located in a more convenient location on Rose Hill Farms. They want to complete this important project in time to process this fall's crop. \$15,000 is on hand, but \$35,000 is still needed. For more information write P.O. box 1023, Bedford, IN 47421 or contact www.bhrp.org

James Girdley, minister at **Highland Community Church** in Louisville, just finished a series of Wed. night studies going through the book of Revelation. Now the class has begun studying various passages on strengthening and deepening our relation with the Lord.

Robert & Joy Garrett arrived safely in Louisville. But upon visiting an eye-doctor in N.C., Joy was found to need surgery for cataracts on both eyes. The dr. felt she should "stay put" there for 6 weeks so he could keep tabs on her. Thus the Garretts' **schedule is cancelled till Robert's meetings in Sellersburg, Ind. June 22-29.** Robert also had some eye problems, though not so serious. They are staying with Bob (their son), Bessie and grandchildren. Pray for them & also the work in Zim-babwe.

SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

Class Schedule for Fall Semester, 2003

Classes begin Aug. 19 - End Dec. 22

>> We have moved to the Buechel Church of Christ <<

2105 Buechel Bank Road, near Bardstown Road,

Louisville, KY 40218; (502) 499-0724

All Classes will meet there unless marked otherwise

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Day/Time</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
Apologetics	Mon. 9:00 - 12:00	Mike Abbot
Old Testament Survey	Mon. 1:00 - 4:00	Jerry Carmichael
Scientific Creationism	Mon. 1:00 - 4:00	Earl Mullins, Sr.
Christian Growth and Development	Mon. 6:30 - 9:30*	Alex Wilson
Christian Counseling	Mon. 6:30 - 9:30	Bud Ridgeway
Life of Christ	Tues. 9:00 - 12:00	Bud Ridgeway
Personal Evangelism	Tues. 1:00 - 3:00	Bennie Hill

* At Portland Ave. Campus,
2500 Portland Ave.

Each credit hour @ 25.00. Audit @ 12.50/hour.

Senior citizens accepted tuition-free so long as space is available.

Study to deepen your knowledge of the Lord and His Word.

**Train so you can serve Him better, as disciple, Bible teacher,
deacon, elder, preacher, or missionary.**