

*"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."*



# *The* **WORD** *and* **WORK**



*"Holding forth the Word of life."*

**APRIL, 1973**

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# THE WORD AND WORK

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## Talking Things Over

G. R. L.

### Those "Unimportant" Doctrines

It was a course in Old Testament literary forms and the professor was a Roman Catholic priest of the new breed. He quickly informed the class that he didn't take the Bible to be inspired by God. Most of the class were Catholics who had been brought up to believe otherwise, and there were some expressions of shock. "I don't know why you should find that so strange," he answered us. "After all, there are fewer than twenty verses in the Bible which dogma requires us to believe." The Roman Church, in declaring that certain things *must* be believed (dogma), had prepared the way for the rest to be declared insignificant.

Almost every group of Christians does something very similar. Standards for membership and perhaps rules of conduct are defined, but outside the prescribed limitations anything goes. The Gospels give us that picture of the Pharisees. If a man was orthodox on tithing and keeping the Sabbath, he could get away with injustices of major proportions. Now this is not to imply that present day Bible-believing churches are guilty of similar conduct. I do say that the door to such is left open whenever doctrines begin to be classified as "essential" and "non-essential," or "cardinal" and "secondary."

When a doctrine is "non-essential," then I can choose to ignore it. But to ignore something that God has said is to ignore God! "Speak to the rock" was surely to Moses a "small" command; yet it was not! "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" Do I really recognize Him as Lord when I choose which commands I will obey? "If I am a father, where is my honor?" This question was asked through Jeremiah (ch. 35) and again through Malachi (1:6) at critical points in Israel's history. The church that gives only lip-service to the authority of Christ may be on the verge of entering the same spiritual darkness that overtook Israel.

### Some Difficulties

Now a question. How will this affect my fellowship with other believers? Does this mean that I must bring them into compliance to what I understand to be the truth of God? I think this

may be where the original problem began. I can accept you as a brother even if at some "minor" point your doctrine doesn't match mine. But that doesn't mean that our "minor" doctrine is unimportant; it certainly doesn't mean that one of us should give up his position for the sake of fellowship. It is true that some doctrines do affect fellowship (e.g., 2 John 7, 10), but I do not see this as a warrant to second-rate the doctrines that do not.

Shammah (2 Samuel 23:12) is in "God's hall of fame" because he stood in a bean patch that belonged to the Lord and refused to yield it to the enemy. In like manner, I believe we should hold to whatever bit of truth that has been entrusted to us—regardless of how "unimportant" that bit of truth may be. It is hard to do this and at the same time hold to our brothers and sisters who may not be standing with us. Our responsibility to them is, I believe, two-fold. First, we owe it to them to accept them *as they are*, because they have been accepted by the Lord (Romans 14:3). Secondly, we need to help them on to a deeper reverence for the Lord and His word. When the heart is fully surrendered, then the ears will hear what the Lord has to say. In this, all of us have room for growth.

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## SPECIAL REPORT:

### Mac LeDoux in Viet Nam

Saigon, South Vietnam  
January 19, 1973

Hi Everyone!

This is Mac LeDoux speaking to you from half way around the world, about sixteen thousand miles away in South Vietnam. We drove this morning, forty miles west of Saigon to Tay Ninh Province to visit the Phuoc Ninh Refugee Center. We stood in the magnificent Cao Dia Temple. That's a holy place to millions of Southeast Asians. They, too, worship Jesus Christ, and also Buddha, Laotse, Confucius, and Mohammed. In less than fifty years, this Satanic cult has enslaved millions of poor, ignorant Asians. Where were we, "the keepers of the Gospel," all this time? And yesterday I flew by helicopter to Dalat, and to Yah Trang, and back to Saigon over

the vast desolate, mountainous region of the Cental Highlands of South Vietnam. Did you know that these mountains are populated by many tribes called Montagnards, or mountain people, by the Vietnamese? Extremely poor, these people can hardly afford to buy a pair of shoes, much less a blanket to sleep under and right now it is very cold there. They can even remember a time when it snowed in the mountains of South Vietnam. Can you imagine that? Scores of these tribal languages have never been reduced to writing. In Dalat, I talked to two young single ladies working with the Wycliffe translators. They are living with the tribes people in VC infested territory, writing their language for the very first time, translating the Bible into their language and then teaching them to read the

message of Jesus. As I talked with these two young ladies, beside me sat a handsome cotton-headed 13-year-old boy named Tom. Tom is the son of the Thompsons who were murdered by the VC while trying to reach these tribes way back in 1968. My heart is moved to beg you to pray that we too will so inspire our youth with a vision of dedication and sacrifice that they will bring the message of salvation in Jesus Christ to these and other peoples like them around the world. Even unto death, if necessary, to win souls to Jesus, and we beg you to pray that we, too, will be burdened with a hunger for the souls of men, so that nothing, absolutely nothing, will hinder God's work through us here. Our opportunities are so great, our talents are so meager, and our faith is so small.

As we expected, we have been disappointed in the commitment of some of our young men, but we have been absolutely surprised and elated about the growth of others. Here, as in every country, young university students are searching for truth and meaning to life. We have had great opportunities to study with some of them. Some of them are now under conviction. One of them recently gave his life to Jesus and was baptized into Jesus; but of course, our primary responsibility and work here is among the young pilots who became Christians in America, and with their friends and their families. We have been having daily Bible classes with these young men in our home. Sometimes two or three a day, sometimes very late at night or very early in the morning. They cannot all

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**“In addition, we have distributed tons of food, clothing, and sleeping mats.”**

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come at the same time and they cannot come at a set time, and we have to take them as they come and have personal Bible studies with them. This is a great opportunity and a very enjoyable work. We have also tried to involve these young men in the welfare and relief work that we are doing here in South Vietnam. Recently, through the generosity of some Christians in America, some desks and benches were provided for a school near Saigon that had been destroyed by the war, and the people of the community were so appreciative of this that they opened the school for teaching of the Bible in the school and one of the young men volunteered to go out there and teach the Bible every week to those children. It has been a real joy and a blessing to see his spiritual growth and his joy at being able to teach these people about Jesus Christ. Of course, you know that our opportunities among the refugees are almost limitless. It is estimated that daily there are more than 1,000 new refugees in South Vietnam. The need is so great that we were moved recently to step out by faith and buy tons of material to make five thousand hygienic kits for the refugees. These plastic bags contain towels, soap, toothpaste, tooth brushes, medicine, and gospel literature. Each colorful bag is printed with this message in Vietnamese, “Jesus said, ‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.’” In addition, we have

distributed tons of food, clothing, and sleeping mats. In this ministry, we have been your representatives in the name of Jesus Christ, going directly to the people with your message of love and hope and indeed God has rewarded this step of faith because already you have sent in enough to pay for this material. We believe that God will provide in the future. This is an effort to minister to the whole man. We are not just saying, "Be ye warmed and filled," we are trying to help, but we know that the ministry of welfare and relief to people, even with gospel literature is not our main task—our main task here is to teach. But it is a little bit difficult to teach people who have empty stomachs, people who have no clothing for their backs, no shoes to wear, and we are going to follow the example of Jesus Christ and try to help them with material things as well as giving them the gospel of Jesus.

As we expected, we have obtained unlimited travel on American and Vietnamese military aircraft. This is really a blessing, but it is not always the ideal way. There are no regular schedules and sometimes no flights at all. This means that I cannot expect to get anywhere on time and it means hours and hours of waiting. We are thankful to the Lord that He has blessed with this means of travel for the moment. The Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Vietnamese High Command agreed upon this privilege in principle soon after our arrival, but it has taken about six months for the red tape to be circumnavigated. I really don't mind that too much since this

is the first time that a civilian—and a foreigner at that—has been granted such a privilege in the history of the Vietnamese Air Force, and I will begin traveling now and trying to work at the bases principally in the northern part of the country. Should a peace agreement be signed, and it may very soon, then it may also affect this relationship with the Air Force, as yet we don't know.

This year we are determined to make a special effort to begin learning the Vietnamese language. As you know, I have been studying for several months. Peggy began studying after we got here. But it is extremely difficult with all of the activity that we have. We know that we cannot, however, do an effective work and a lasting work in Vietnam unless we learn the language fluently. We are determined to do this. This alone will be a formidable task and how we do need your prayers.

Many of you have been concerned about our safety, and we don't want you to worry not even for a minute. Doesn't the Bible say in Deuteronomy 33: 27 "The eternal God is our refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." We are in no more danger than you guys riding to work every day on the freeway and especially if your wife is driving. Seriously, though, we know that there is an element of danger in being here but the thought of such diminishes with the opportunity to win souls. Just today, for example, a young pilot came back from Soc Trang to Saigon. He told us of a very hot battle yesterday in which

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**“the danger of a rocket hitting  
our house is somewhat equivalent  
to a bolt of lightning  
hitting your own home”**

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several aircraft were shot down. His friend was almost killed. Both of them had just left our home the day before going into that battle. Such dangerous situations give opportunities for teaching and the danger of a rocket hitting our house is somewhat equivalent to a bolt of lightning hitting your own home. So we say to you that you should not worry at all about our safety here.

Now in conclusion, let me read to you from the 17th chapter of the book of Exodus, beginning with the eighth verse. “Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men and go out, and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on top of a hill with the rod of God in my hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him and fought with Amalek and Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. It came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed and when he let down his hand Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands were heavy and they took a stone and put it under him and he sat upon it and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side and the other on the other side and his hands were steady until the go-

ing down of the sun. Joshua mowed down Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.” Now that beautiful story represents our situation here in Vietnam. We can do nothing without the prayer support of the brethren back home. We are truly your representatives here. How often have you said, when you read about this terrible war and the conditions here, “Oh! if I could just get around the graft and corruption in the government, and be able to help the people themselves. Oh! we would be so glad to do it.” And now we have exactly that opportunity, brethren, to go directly to the people and in such a way that no one else has been privileged to do. We thank the Lord for that and we thank you for the support that you have given. Some of you have supported us generously. Others of you have intended but just didn’t get around to doing so yet. To give the message of Jesus to these people! Oh! how we pray that God will use us and all the more in the future, so that they will hear, most of them for the first time, the sweet story of God’s grace. Will you truly join us in prayer that this may be so. Those of you who have not received reports of our work, the Springtown Road Congregation sponsors us will be glad to send you the reports which have been sent out previously and put your name on a list for any future reports. Their address is Springtown Road Church of Christ, P. O. Box Q, Weatherford, Texas 76086.

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I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. —Abraham Lincoln



# *A Word and Work Reprint*

## Being or Doing

H. L. Olmstead - 1919

A student of present day times and tendencies cannot fail to note that there is a vast expenditure of energy in the effort to do something. "Something must be done" is an expression on almost every tongue. Something must be done about the H.C.L. Something must be done about the prevalent unrest, the increase of immorality, the increase of crime, the outbursts of anarchy, the labor situation, the lethargic condition of the churches, and so on without number the tasks loom up before us. One thing is quite generally forgotten, viz., the people who are to do this are the same people generally who have brought about these very conditions. A black cloud of uncertainty without doubt overshadows the world. It is not the purpose of this article to decry honest efforts at readjustment of affairs, national or international, political, economic or industrial. Nevertheless, we would point out God's method of dealing with conditions as He finds them in the world. The different sore spots now breaking out on the surface of human affairs are but the symptoms of a deeper-seated disease. Doctoring symptoms seems to be a human pastime, and failure to look beyond them is a characteristic human blunder. God's method of dealing is clearly pointed out in Ephesians 2:10. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." This passage without doubt teaches the advisability of *doing* something and the necessity as well; however the "good works" here mentioned are the result of something else—the result of God's work in us.

*Being* something should precede *doing* something. Frankly we cannot be supremely optimistic over what a world of unregenerate humanity may do. Professors of "applied Christianity" are sitting in our institutions of learning teaching the young idea, not only how to shoot, but also how the beneficent principles of Christianity may be applied to world-affairs and be practiced by the great body of mankind while they leave out, and even cast slurs at, God's method of preparation for the practice of Christianity.

In God's sight, it is not who or where you are or what particular thing you do that counts but what you are. The good works which God has prepared are for those to practice who are His workmanship. The world still refuses to believe that anything has happened to the human family or if it has, it was only a mere accident of some sort. They are not willing to accept the Biblical view that "by one man sin entered into the world." Consequently they continue to remain away from God. They must all try to *do* something and get others to *do* something not knowing that Christ has died, "the

just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." The Church must set itself to the task of healing the running sin-sores of the world by doing something and getting the world to doing something, but must put the soft pedal on the very doctrines that point the way to *being* something. That way which leads men first to God that he may *do* something for them and make them a piece of His own workmanship, has ever been evil spoken of. It is against the fleshly mind; it is too humbling to our pride; it casts too low at the feet of the Master; it opens the way for God's grace to meet our human need, and we cannot confess that need! We must do something, *we can* and *we will*. So it goes and God and His gospel are left out.

Let all who propose to preach the primitive gospel sound no uncertain note as to this matter. Let us not be guilty of teaching that doing something is the equivalent of being created in Christ Jesus. Believing, repenting, confessing and being baptized could not make us God's workmanship, if God did not work. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus."

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#### BOOKS OF INTEREST:

### Jeremiah and the "Post-Christian World"

**Death in the City**, by Francis A. Schaeffer (InterVarsity Press, 1969; 143 pp., \$1.95)

Francis Schaeffer, a Christian who deals with the problems of modern intellectuals both on the lecture circuit and through his L'Abri ("The Shelter") Fellowship in Switzerland, has written a sobering book to stir up and awaken evangelical Christians—that's us—to the calamities that have befallen modern man and his culture. He says that we are in a "post-Christian world," meaning by this that the culture of mankind, as a whole, is no longer directly influenced by Christianity.

In the United States in the short span from the Twenties to the Sixties, we have seen a complete shift. Of course, in the United States in the Twenties not everyone was a Christian, but in general there was a Christian consensus. Now that consensus is completely gone. Ours is a post-Christian world in which Christianity, not only in the number of Christians but in cultural emphasis and cultural results, is now in the absolute minority. To ask young people to maintain the status quo is folly. The status quo is no longer ours. In the last four decades the change has come in **every portion** and in **every part** of life.

Since Jeremiah faced a similar set of circumstances in Judah before the days of the captivity, Schaeffer uses the book of Jeremiah as a basis for approaching the situation we face, and pleads with us to awaken to the fact that we have the answers: "We need not be ashamed of the gospel and the *answers* it gives to men." But

to keep this warm assurance in our hearts from turning to cold pride, he gives this warning:

If we are Christians and do not have upon us the calling to respond to the lostness of the lost and a compassion for those of our kind, our orthodoxy is ugly and it stinks. And it not only stinks in the presence of the hippie, it stinks in the presence of anybody who's an honest man. And more than that, I'll tell you something else, orthodoxy without compassion stinks with God.

This book is written primarily to Christians who have some dealings with unbelievers in academic and intellectual circles, and this may make it difficult for some, at first, to understand what Schaeffer is driving at. But it is a reliable, accurate, thoroughly Christian approach—valuable for the Christian with a campus ministry and for the college student as well. —Robert W. Heid

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## Reflections of a British housewife

# Knock Down My Pedestal

We've had a missionary couple staying with us for a few days. They're home from Kenya on their first furlough.

I've been rather wary of putting up missionaries before. They always seem such "good" people—far better Christians than we are, and I could never imagine them getting angry or bad tempered, or having doubts about their faith.

Anyway, that's what I've always thought that missionaries were like—so you can imagine how surprised I was when I discovered that Lyn Sutton was not like that at all.

"It's worrying, really," Lyn said, "To know that people think of us like that—put us on a pedestal and imagine that we're somehow 'set apart' and don't have the same problems and annoyances and weaknesses as other folk.

"Take me, for instance," she went on. "I absolutely loathe being left alone with the kids while Pete goes up to the hospital every day. His life is full of interest and excitement, and he has tremendous fellowship with the other Christian doctors and nurses at the hospital. Sometimes when I have a whole day when I haven't seen anyone, and Fiona has done nothing but scream, and Ian has been in one of his temper tantrums, I feel that it wouldn't take much to make me throw the whole thing up."

I was really staggered—and must have shown it in my face.

Lyn gave a wry grin. "Sorry if I'm disillusioning you, Betty," she said. "But you might as well know the truth. It's no good pretending that I'm an angel of light when I know I'm jolly well not."

"But surely you must take an active part in the work sometimes?" I asked. "Don't you get the chance to take meetings and things like that?"

"Not very often," Lyn said. "You see, with three small children I'm as much tied to the house as an ordinary English Mum. Besides, I've never had time to learn the language."

"But aren't there other missionary wives who live near you?" I asked. "Women in the same situation as you are, with whom you can be friends?"

"Afraid not," Lyn said. "All the nurses at the hospital are single. That's another thing that makes me mad. If ever one of them comes down to the house, it's always Peter they get talking to—about some wretched patient or other whom they have both seen that day. Nobody's particularly interested in Paul's new tooth, or the fact that Fiona can write her name all on her own."

"I suppose there aren't many shops either," I said thoughtfully. "If an English housewife gets fed up she can always go for a walk round the shops."

"We have got one shop," Lyn admitted. "But it wouldn't take you more than thirty seconds to 'walk around it.' It's kept by a rather elderly native who doesn't speak very good English!"

"Letters must mean a good deal," I said.

"If only people realized how much they meant to us they would probably find time to write a little more frequently," Lyn said, a trifle wistfully. "I'm always hopeful when I hear the post is in, and you feel so deflated when there's nothing for you."

"I seem to have done nothing but moan," she went on apologetically. "I don't want you to get the idea that missionary life is nothing but a bed of thorns, but it's not a bed of roses either. Most of the time of course Peter and I get on like a house on fire, and neither of us have any doubts that we are in the place, and doing the work, that God wants us to do. We have our highlights too—when someone for whom we have been praying for a long time is suddenly converted, and we know this could well be the beginning of Christian work in a completely new village. The opportunity of travelling, too, and seeing other parts of the world is one of the bonuses of missionary life."

"Do you ever have doubts about your faith?" I asked her.

"When the Quiet Times and Bible reading gets pushed out by other things I get just the same kind of doubts as you must do," Lyn assured me. "Only in a way it's worse—because being a missionary one shouldn't, so you have a terrible guilt complex and don't often talk to people about it."

It did me good to talk to Lyn. I've never realised before what was involved in being a missionary wife. I shall be able to pray for her much more constructively in future, because I'll really know something about her difficulties.

Carl Kitzmiller is minister at the Piedmont Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas.

# Questions Asked Of Us

Carl Kitzmiller



What is hedonism? I have heard this term used concerning our present society, and I am uncertain as to its meaning.

Hedonism is a philosophy which says that pleasure should be man's chief pursuit, with some going so far as to say his only pursuit. The word is derived from a Greek word which appears in Luke 8:14; Titus 3:3; James 4:1,3, and 2 Peter 2:13 (translated "pleasure" in ASV), which usage gives some idea of its content. The philosophy is often identified with the "Playboy" philosophy of today, in which pleasure is defined largely in animal terms, the satisfying of fleshly lusts and appetites. Even so, that person who very avidly pursues pleasure of any sort above other things, however innocent the pleasure seems to be, has largely become hedonistic.

If pleasure is to be man's chief or only pursuit, then pleasure becomes his "god," and it should be evident that such an overemphasis on pleasure is utterly contradictory to Christian truth. Solomon of old tried the hedonistic life and declared it vanity (Ecclesiastes 2:1ff). In its stead he established another all-consuming pursuit for the wise man—that of fearing God and keeping His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13). The danger to the Christian from the hedonistic view of life is probably not that of outright adoption, though many unregenerate have adopted it and are thus very hard to reach for the Lord. The Christian's danger is that of allowing his thinking to be tainted thereby and of allowing the natural desire of being like others press him into such a mold (cf. Romans 12:1,2). We have gotten away from the older misconception that Christianity is a long face and whatever is unpleasant, but today's Christians are threatened by an opposite danger of excessive emphasis on fun, pleasure, frolic, and amusement.

What is happening to our youth? It scares me when I realize how little interest the young people I know in the churches seem to have in the Bible and in spiritual things! I'm concerned for the future of the church.

About all I can do in response to such a question is to express some opinions. First of all, we should not create a picture that is darker than the true situation. Let us recognize that there are many high quality young Christians who put to shame many of their elders. I know some young people who are a credit to their parents, their church, and their generation. This is especially true

when we consider what they face as to temptation and pressures to do evil. Secondly, if we were able to compare fairly the youth of several recent generations we might not find such a difference as we think we see. As we grow older and more mature ourselves we tend to forget the lack that may have characterized our own early age. Our viewpoint as changed somewhat, so we are forced to judge from a different perspective. The latest generation is not the first to suppose that they have all the answers and to despise the judgments of the past. Third, it is normal for young people to make some misakes and to fall on their face a few times as they learn the Christian walk. We are not born into the family of God fullgrown Christians, and these are much nearer the beginning point than others of us. So it may be that the first great need is that of judging righteous judgment with respect to our young people.

As for the future of the church, (1) it may not need to last long before it will be raptured out of the earth, or (2) in any case "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." It is the Lord's church, and, faced with matters over which I have no control, I should have the faith to leave things in His hands. Over the centuries the church has survived a lot of human weakness and bungling and as somehow been the Lord's instrument in spite of much failure. Just as with our supply of material needs, it is supremely right for us to "take thought" for tomorrow with respect to the church, but extremely wrong to be "anxious" for tomorrow. We need to be ever ready to do the will of God, but the Bible offers ample evidence that helping God out of a problem generally seems to be little more than our own unbelief.

Having said these things, one does need to look at the other side of the coin. I confess that I, too, feel a concern for our youth. I am persuaded that Satan is engaged in an unprecedented world-wide campaign to corrupt young *and old*. He is having a lot of success. The problems we face are not unique to America. We can expect evil to wax worse and worse—we have been forewarned (2 Timothy 3:13)—and can expect the onslaught to be against the rising generations. Our world is filled with multitudes of godless and Satanic ideas, and there is no longer the great degree of isolation from such evil as may have existed in the more idyllic rural days. As never before we need to impress our children with the need for being different from the world instead of being like it. Let's confess that as parents we have often been guilty of teaching the latter more strongly than the former. In many cases our young people are simply reflecting the kind of half commitment they have seen in the adults about them. Quite frankly I believe the church is failing its youth much more in this respect than it is in the lack of sufficient or suitable programs and entertainment "to keep them interested in the church."

There is another influence that tends to negate a lot of good parental teaching, however. Youth faces a lot of pressure from their peers and from the largely godless public education that monopolizes much of their developing years. Now men have never been taken

in great numbers with the idea of being different; most have the desire to be like the nations and their neighbors. I'm persuaded that we must preach and teach much more positively the need of the new birth—not just some reformation or “joining” the church—and the power of the indwelling Spirit—not just a moral, respectable life.

If the Lord tarries, I strongly suspect the repetition of some experiences of the past. Some wise young people will remember their Creator in the days of their youth and will follow Him in spite of the pressures. Some, after a period of rebellion and some hard knocks from God's chastening hand, will come to themselves and will turn out to be good Christians. They will have missed opportunities, of course, and they will regret the folly—just as do some of today's dedicated adults who did not have such illustrious periods of youthful dedication. Others, tragically, will buy the bill of goods Satan is trying to sell and will drift further and further into darkness. Such is the price that is required of those—even young people—who do not love the truth. Any lost soul is a reason for sadness, and we must be faithful to declare God's message of salvation prayerfully by word and by deed, but if we have been faithful in that, there is little more we can do.

**What can we do to help our churches to grow?**

We can give green stamps, with double stamps on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights, and we can offer an all-expense paid two weeks vacation for two to the Bahamas to the person who brings in the most visitors over a period of time. We might also take a poll and come up with the doctrine (or lack thereof) that is most acceptable to the greatest numbers of people in the world. Etc., etc. Of course I speak in satire. It must be assumed that such a question supposes *true* growth for the *Lord's* church and not merely the gathering together of mixed multitudes for religious activity. Some of the things being used to promote growth, even among so-called evangelicals, often seem terribly tainted by the flesh. The idea is that the end justifies the means. I'm not convinced that many of the means used really bring about the desired end result, however.

This does not mean that church growth is not a very legitimate concern. Nor does it mean that we may not wisely use some of the materials and methods available to us today to stimulate interest. In the final sense, however, I'm persuaded that true church growth is the result of Christians living and acting like Christians seven days a week, faithfully spreading the word of God, always careful to “abide in” Christ. By all means, let's have training classes, visitation, admonition and exhortation to teach and reach the lost. Let's also strongly insist on the responsibility of *every Christian* to have a contagious faith and to be involved in the evangelizing of the world. But for these things to produce the best results we desperately need a lot of true revival. In too many cases our churches are choking to death on sin and worldliness within the professing church and our message is muted.

7110 Bruton Rd., Dallas, Texas 75217

# Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

## Gospel campaign begins in Zambia

This morning about 8 we went to Musokotwane for worship, then to the village to visit a sick sister. God let us return home and enter the house just before the hard rain came. How thankful we were for His care, for when the rain comes while you are on the road from Musokotwane you cannot travel for the sticky mud. Last week after being stuck at the kabondo on Sunday afternoon, we waited until Friday to return to town.

Please pray for the campaigns that are to be in the Copperbelt in at least two areas where the church is weak or nonexistent, that with the concentrated effort the Lord's church may be established, and many will hear and read of Christ. The brethren are printing hundreds of tracts to distribute. They also print 7,500 copies of "What the Bible Says" each month which reaches into many homes and is teaching many the way of truth. Brother Roy Lanier, Jr. and S. Leo Richardson are planning to work with them in the campaigns.

We thank God for answering prayer. We know He is able to do all things. —*Elaine Brittell*, Livingstone, Zambia, February 18.

## In Manila, thanksgiving for salvation

At Christmas, we sent a newsletter to a number of friends, thanking them for their interest and sharing various burdens and blessings. One thing we requested prayer for was that our children, Stephen and Joy, who are ten and eight respectively, might obey the Lord in baptism. In answer to those prayers, Christ has moved in their hearts so that, without any pushing on our part, they were baptized today. We are deepy grateful.

We also thank the Lord that Billy and Mary Lewter and their children will be coming to Manila, Lord willing, to replace us during our furlough (June '73-May '74). After that they may stay on here, or work in Hong Kong once more, or return to the U.S., as the Lord leads. Please remember both the Lewters and us during these next several months. Taking care of red tape with the governments, and making nutitudes of decisions and arrangements about things at home and halfway around the world at the same time can become quite frustrating and time-consuming.

As perhaps this will be our last letter from Manila to Word



and Work for some time, we would like to express heartfelt thanks to many behind-the-scenes co-workers: Brother George Albus, our treasurer; Sister Helen Condra and Brother Cecil Thompson, who type and mimeograph our prayer-letters, plus others who help to address and mail them; also the ladies who work so faithfully at the missionary office—Sister Smith, Sister Wilborn, and other helpers.

From June onwards, we may be reached by mail at the addresses of our parents: during the summer, % the Woods, 221 College Street., Winchester, Ky. 40391; from September onwards, % the Wilsons, 231 S. Galt, Louisville, Ky. 40206. We look forward to seeing many of you in coming months. —*Alex and Ruth Wilson*, Manila, Philippines, March 8.

### **Responsible for 17 children in Rhodesia**

Reports have been reaching us both indirectly and directly that the Harrises from Dallas are preparing to come to Salisbury as soon as they can to relieve us. So far their immigration papers have not been returned to us but they could be any day. They are reported to be a very energetic couple, and this is a good place to work off any surplus energy one may have.

There are 16 children in the home in school and we are trying to get number 17 in. Bro. Jones has taken her to the educational department, obtained a birth certificate, and smallpox vaccination, possibly a health certificate. All of this and more is preliminary. When she came to see us she was barefooted and had only two thin dresses. Most U.S. girls 14 would hesitate to come under such circumstances. This morning at the meeting she looked very well.

The terrorists continue to make news. The morning paper reports the killing of six more by the security forces. Zambia still has her border closed even though Rhodesia has opened hers. The Zambians have made all kinds of wild charges against Rhodesia. A civilian was shot dead and two other were injured by Zambians on the Zambezi River not long ago. It is no longer safe to fish up that way but some still try it.

During the "Easter Vacation" they have invited me to speak at Gatooma on "Church Leaders." We hope that Harrises will arrive before then but have no assurance that they will. Those in charge of the "Preachers' Workshop" in March have asked me to speak on "Communism," but there may not be time for me to prepare for both. The article, "Queries About the Apostles," was written in request to some things that I said at the last "Preacher's Workshop."

There are some prospects of us returning to the U.S. sometime before the end of 1973, Lord willing. We can find plenty to do here outside of the Arcadia Children's Home. —*J. Miller Forcade*, Salisbury, Rhodesia, February 19.

# PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

## Malachi: Christian Living in the Last Days

Bill McRae

“The coming day of the Lord” —Malachi 2:17-3:18

Do you ever allow the sneaking suspicion to crop into your mind that maybe sometime God changes? Have you ever felt that He feels differently about you now than He did yesterday?—maybe after you have in a particular way disappointed the Lord by some act of sinfulness or unfaithfulness to Him? If you have, then you are suspecting that He has changed. Sometime when you kneel to pray, do you ever wonder what mood you are going to find God in? When that kind of thought enters our mind we are really wondering whether God does change. Sometimes we find ourselves in a reversal; things were going in one direction and then all of a sudden the bottom falls out; the pattern changes and perhaps just for a moment the thought flashes into our mind that maybe God has changed His mind about some promise or some direction in our lives.

It is that kind of thinking that had developed in the minds of the Israelites in the days of Malachi. In Malachi 2:17 the children of Israel are saying, Our God has changed He used to be such and such, but now He is different. He is not the way He used to be. They had come to that conclusion because of the way God was—or was not—working at that particular time.

We now come to the second main section. In the opening chapters the prophet of God has appealed to the people of God to turn from their wickedness and their sinfulness because God has loved them. Now he appeals again to Israel to repent, to turn to a heart relationship with God. Now the appeal is based upon the future day of the Lord in the first six verses of chapter three. But chapter three really begins with the last verse in chapter two. In that verse we see the pattern of the book unfold. There is first the affirmation of the prophet, “Ye have wearied the Lord with your words.” Then their challenge, “Wherein have we wearied Him?” Then comes the refutation, “When ye say everyone that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord and He delights in them, or when ye say where is the God of judgment?”

The children of Israel were asking a question and making a statement. Their statement is that everyone that does evil is good in God's sight. God is all for the evil people. On the other hand they are asking the question, Where is the God of judgment? These

two questions are built against the background of what has happened in Israel. You will recall that they have returned from their captivity. They had been in the land for a century but they are still under the bondage, the yoke and influence of the Gentile powers round about them. They are in desperate poverty. The Messiah has not come, and as they look at their situation, what they are simply saying is this, "The unrighteous round about us are getting along an awful lot better than we are. There is no doubt about it, God used to be for the righteous, God used to be on our side, but now it is the evil people that are good in God's sight. We can look back in our history and we can see those evidences of God moving in judgment upon the wicked and the ungodly. Where is the God of judgment today? He is just not around. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah had assured us that when we built the temple the Messiah would come and with Him the day of the Lord and His judgment on the Gentiles and the wicked; where is He?"

Of course at the background of their thinking there is the problem of the righteous, the people of God suffering, and it is because of their suffering that the question is being asked. It is because of the prosperity of the wicked that they are beginning to question God's justice and whether God is really active today. Now it is in response to the last question particularly—Where is the God of judgment?—that Malachi 3:1-6 presents to us the day of the Lord when the God of judgment is going to appear in judgment upon the wicked.

"The day of the Lord" is a technical term. It is a term that occurs many times in the Old Testament and in the New. It is the day of the Lord's manifestation. There are two major periods included in the day of the Lord. The tribulation is one part of the day of the Lord. The millennial period is also a part of the day of the Lord. So if we wanted to define the day of the Lord we would say that it is the period of time that begins after the rapture, extending through the tribulation on into the end of the millennium; that is going to be the "Lord's day." Sometimes when the term is used it refers to the tribulation; other times it refers to the millennium. In our passage it is the tribulation period that is primarily in view.

But let's note how the prophet begins to answer the question, "Where is the God of judgment?" The answer is given in the first six verses of chapter three. First of all there is the preparation for His coming that is presented. The Lord begins, "Behold I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me." This has reference to John the Baptist (Matthew 11:10). John the Baptist is the third messenger in our study of this book. God's first messenger, the priesthood, has failed, and God raises up a prophet Malachi as a second messenger. Long after Malachi God raises up the last of the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist. He was the messenger sent to prepare the way of the Lord. So in answer to the question then, first of all there is a statement con-

cerning the preparation for His coming. Malachi 3:1, "And the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant whom ye desire, behold he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts."

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**"The prophecy is that He is going to unexpectedly arrive at His temple and then initiate the judgment and day of the Lord"**

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This is a very clear prediction concerning the coming of our Lord. John the Baptist is the forerunner. Notice what it says about this person that was going to follow John. It says really that He is going to be God. There are some very remarkable things in this phrase. It says, "and the Lord whom ye seek;" whom were they seeking? The God of judgment (Malachi 2:17). And so the one that was going to follow John was the God of judgment. This is a very clear statement concerning the Deity of the one who was going to follow John the Baptist. It also says that He is going to come to His temple, and that is the temple of God, the temple of Jehovah. It says that He is going to come suddenly—perhaps the Hebrew word means unexpectedly. Now that was partially fulfilled in the triumphant entry. When our Lord rode into the city of Jerusalem and arrived at the temple and cleansed the temple there was a partial fulfillment of this passage; but it was only partial, because what is to happen in the following verses did not take place. The prophecy is that He is going to unexpectedly arrive at His temple and then initiate the judgment and day of the Lord.

This text is the background of Satan's temptation of our Lord. When he takes Him up to the pinnacle of the temple, he says, "Jump off and the angels of God will deliver you safely to the courtyard of the temple. And then all of Israel filling the courtyard there will recognize that this is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Malachi 3:1. They will accept you as the Messiah. And thereby you will by-pass the cross." That is the temptation that Satan was putting before our Lord.

The prophecy is that the God of judgment whom you are looking for is going to come suddenly to His temple. He is going to be announced by a fore-runner, John the Baptist. The purposes of His coming the described for us in verses 2-5. In verse two it says, "But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth for he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap." His coming is to judge. His judgment in verses three and four is against the priesthood. We know that the priesthood was far out of touch with God. They were polluted, distorted, unfaithful in every way. This purifying will probably be in the fires of the tribulation purifying Israel and especially the priesthood of Israel.

In verse five, God is going to punish the people of Israel. In verse

six comes the capstone, "For I Jehovah change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed." You see, the children of Israel were questioning the immutability of God. And that word means that God does not change. His character is consistent, it does not fluctuate. Israel was challenging that. They were saying that God has changed. He used to judge the wicked; now, where is He? Why doesn't He do something?

The immutability of God is emphasized in this verse in three ways. First of all He says, "I change not." Secondly it is emphasized in the name Jehovah. The verb root from which this word comes implies His immutability. He is the "I am." He is the consistent one, One who does not change. The third evidence that He does not change is the fact that Jacob has not been consumed. In all of their wickedness and all of their sinfulness, God has not consumed Jacob, that is, the children of Israel. He has not consumed them because He does not change. Hundreds of years before He had made a promise to Abraham, a promise to Isaac and to Jacob. It was a promise that was to be perpetually kept. The only reason that Israel in all of her wickedness and unfaithfulness was not consumed and wiped off the face of the earth was because God does not change. He is faithful to the promise and covenant relationship that He had established with Jacob. This is the basis of what is going to take place in the rest of the book of Malachi. The Lord is going to return, and when He returns—says Malachi and the Lord—He is going to return in judgment upon you, you priests, you people.

What are some applications of this passage? Three great principles emerge that apply to us today. The first principle is the suffering of righteous people. The people of God are oppressed and they are suffering. Is it because God has forgotten them? Is it because God has changed? Why is it that God's people, righteous people suffer? What are some of the answers? There are many. Perhaps because of their failure to live righteously, and it is God's discipline. This is perhaps the main reason that the righteous suffer (Hebrews 12). Perhaps God is using this suffering to witness to other persons either to come to a saving knowledge of Christ or to help them in their Christian experience. Perhaps this suffering is to test one's faith, to strengthen one's faith, to make it more mature. That is the whole point of 1 Peter 1. The thing that God is going to have to evaluate, the thing He is going to appreciate in you is your developed faith, and so He permits testings and trials in your life in order to strengthen and mature and perfect that faith. The amazing thing is He is doing it so that when He sees us there will be something in us that will bring great pleasure and delight to Him, our faith. James, chapter one says it develops patience. The Greek word means endurance, steadfastness. This is one of the primary qualities of Christian character. Another reason is to conform us to the image of Christ (Romans 8:28,29).

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**“Each believer has a God-given gift. We can cheat God by not discovering what our gift is and not using it.”**

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The third principle in Malachi 3:6 is that God does not change. Our God is an immutable God. My opinion of people changes but God's opinion of you never changes. When you sin, His opinion of you does not change. His evaluation of you does not go up and down with how you live and what you are. You need not have to wonder when you fall on your knees to pray what mood you are going to find God in. When something happens and there is a reversal in the program of God as it looks from our point of view, we need never wonder if God changed His mind in the middle of the stream. He is the unchanging God. It is a tremendous thing to realize even though the reverses come and all of the situations begin to change and the foundations begin to waver, it is a great thing to realize that our God is unchanging.

In Malachi 3:1-6 we find the basis for the prophet's appeal. The day of the Lord is coming, judgment is going to fall upon Israel. In view of that comes the appeal, verses 7-12. First the accusation, "From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. But ye say, wherein shall we return?" What do you mean to turn back to God? The answer comes, "Will a man rob God?" Of course not. "Yet ye have robbed me." "Wherein have we robbed thee?" Now the refutation, "In tithes and offerings." The children of Israel were defrauding God. They were cheating God! Think of a person trying to cheat God! Keeping from God what was His by right! They owed God ten percent of their crops, ten percent of their livestock; in reality it amounted to about thirty percent that the children of Israel owed God. Every Israelite knew what his tithe was, and above the tithe was the offering. They were robbing God of what was rightfully His. Next, in verse nine, comes the curse, "Ye are cursed with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation." In verses 9-12 a remarkably gracious invitation is extended to the people of God. "Don't keep back any of the tithe, bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts. If I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Isn't this a remarkable thing? They are in the midst of a famine; they do not have food, do not have clothing. They are starving to death, and what God is saying is, "You bring the whole tithe into the store-house and just test me."

In verse eleven, "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the time in the field, saith Jehovah of hosts." The prophet speaks of the locust as being the devourer. They probably had a tremendous plague of locusts. They were

having famine year after year. "And all nations shall call you happy for ye shall be a delightful land, saith Jehovah of hosts." That is a far cry from what they are now.

What are some direct applications for this present generation in these last days? The first application that surely emerges is the great principle of the restoration of a believer, "Return unto me and I will return unto you" (Matthew 11:28). Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8). Is there an area in your life where you have turned from God? Is there some quiet area where God has been saying to you, "Return unto me and I will draw nigh to you?" If we confess our sins, He will cleanse us and He will forgive us. That is the wonderful restoration of the believer in the New Testament. This is the promise of Malachi and the book of John and it is spoken directly to you.

Another direct application for this generation is in defrauding God, cheating God. How can we cheat God today? Each believer has a God-given gift; some have more than one, but all believers have at least one. We can cheat God by not discovering what our gift is and not using it. "We have been created for good works" (Ephesians 2:10). We are not saved by good works, but we are saved unto good works. Therefore, if we are not doing good works, we are cheating God. If my life is not characterized by good works, then I am robbing God.

In the area of worry, we are cheating God of the trust that He deserves, of the faith that is His. When we gather around the Lord's table and we are thinking of other things, what we are going to do tomorrow, etc., we are robbing God of what rightfully is His—our undivided attention and remembrance—we are cheating Him of the worship that should be His. If we do not give to God the time that belongs to Him, we are cheating Him and we are robbing Him.

The last principle is, God loves to be tested, and this is what He says to the Israelites. He says, You just put me to the test. Now this is the kind of a God you have, my Christian friends. He loves to be tested. He comes to us every day of our lives and says, Test me. I am going to take your promise and I am going to put you to the test. There was a man who died and left his Bible with many little marks in the margin, and these marks were T and P. Upon examination of so many Ts and Ps in the margins the ones examining the Bible came to His widow and asked her what on earth all these two initials meant. She replied, that meant tried and proven. He lived his life testing God. He lived his life proving God.

As we take the promises of the word of God and trust Him we are putting Him to the test, and He loves to be put to the test for that is when He really reveals Himself as He is.

*To be continued by Dr. Ed Blum*

It was the turning point of my life.

## Learning to be Thankful

Betty Fletcher

Whatever happens, the Bible commands us to be thankful.

I first saw this amazing fact about six years ago while studying the book of Philippians. "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6,7).

As I read, I suddenly realized that the word *everything* applied to "thanksgiving" as well as to "requests." If it said that I was to be thankful in everything, I reasoned, it must mean everything. We are to be thankful for circumstances which appear to be unfavorable to us as well as for those which appear to be good.

I mulled this over in my mind for some time, considering the various changes in attitude which this principle would effect. I talked with a few people about it, and this new concept—new to me, that is—continued to develop in my thinking.

I noted other references: "Always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father" (Ephesians 5:20) and "Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thes. 5:18).

Then I went to Campus by the Sea as camp secretary. After I had been there a few days, God confronted me with the fact that I was not thankful that I was a widow. My husband had died eleven years before, and I had not ever said—nor could I then say with honesty, "Thank you, Lord, for taking my husband from me and making me a widow.

The command was clear: "Be thankful for everything." I was not thankful, and therefore this was sin.

Oh, I wasn't resentful and never had been. I was a Christian when my husband died, and I had immediately believed that this was from the Lord. I had accepted it without bitterness, and my son (born two months later) and I had had a happy life.

But I was not truly thankful. Deep down in my heart I wished it were otherwise. I would have preferred, in fact I had developed a longing, to have a husband. It was as though I were saying to God, "All right, Lord, if you want me to be a widow, I'll accept it, and I'll be happy. But if you had only asked my advice, I would have had You plan it differently." But what an attitude to have! How dared I, an ordinary human being, presume to suggest to a Holy, Almighty God that my plan was better than His?



I was overwhelmed by the sin in such an attitude and I spent the next three or four days in turmoil, asking God to make me thankful that He had taken my husband.

I understood what happened when Jacob wrestled with God. For I wrestled with God, refusing to let go until He gave me thankfulness. And He did.

For no reason which I could perceive, He filled me with thanksgiving so that I could say with complete truthfulness, "Thank you, God, for taking my husband. Thank you that I am a widow."

It was the turning point of my life. With joyful thanksgiving—and its consequence, the peace that passes understanding—I could fulfill the position in life to which God had called me: widowhood. I no longer wished it were otherwise.

And as I pondered this, it became clear to me how very logical this concept is. A mother desires to do for her child only what is good for him. But because her love is imperfect and her understanding is finite, she sometimes does the wrong thing. But God knows us better than we know ourselves, and He knows what is good for us. He is all powerful and can do what is good. His love for His children is beyond our comprehension.

No further evidence is possible than that "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). And in this perfect love He wants what is good for us. He will not give us second best. How can we be less than joyfully thankful?

God had allowed me to become a widow because He loved me.

I know that my thankfulness in this is real because it has never left me. Never once since then have I wished that my life were different. Because He loves me, God has called me to be a widow, and this is the best thing that could happen to me.

There was a time when I was just a little pleased (secretly, of course) when people would feel sorry for me. But after this, when someone found out for the first time about my husband and said, in words or merely in attitude, "What a shame—I'm sorry," my first, involuntary reaction was, "How silly, If God gave it to me, it's good."

Of course I would immediately realize that this was a natural response from the other person. But even in my subconscious mind, the reality of my new attitude of thankfulness was present.

Although I still don't see the reason for being thankful for this, God did confirm it to me. Within a month after He changed my attitude, He allowed me to become acquainted with another widow who subsequently became a Christian. She would listen to me, because (in her words) I could understand her.

I was now unalterably convinced of the importance of the *Philippians* passage, and I began to ask the Lord to show me other areas in my life where I was unthankful. Some time later He showed me that I was not thankful that my son was fatherless. This was difficult. To be thankful that I was a widow was one thing, but

this was like being thankful for someone else's misfortune. Yet the command and the promise were there, so I asked the Lord to make me thankful even for this.

It is always exciting to watch the Lord work out His purposes, and this was no exception. About a year before, I had been in a Bible study on 1 Corinthians 1 and 2. We had discovered that God uses our weakness to show His strength. And now, as I prayed about my attitude toward my son, I was reminded of this truth which God had taught me a year before. Could he use this weakness, this situation in my son's life, to show His strength?

The answer seemed to be Yes. He could use my son in a way that He couldn't use a boy with a father. What a glorious prospect.

Then, I learned through Philippians 3 that we must count our earthly heritage as loss so that we may truly know Christ. And this was one possible "reason for confidence in the flesh" that my son would not have to consider as loss. It was already gone. What a blessing!

About that time an Inter-Varsity staff member visited our area and I discovered, through informal conversation with him, that he had been fatherless since the age of one. But it was through this weakness that the Lord had been able to make him a man of God whose dependence was on Him. God could do this also for my son.

And then one morning, as though to confirm this to me, God called my attention to His provision in Psalm 146. He upholds the fatherless. Now of course He upholds all His children. But He has a special favor reserved for boys without fathers, one which is not available to boys with fathers. What a privilege to be the recipient of this special favor from God! How fortunate my son was!

And I could say with joy, "Thank you, God, for leaving my son fatherless."

I continued to pray for insight into these thankless areas of my life. And two summers ago, again at Campus by the Sea, I realized that I was not thankful that I had only one child. I was sorry that I didn't have several, and if I could have changed this situation, I would have. Again I was suggesting that my plan was better than God's.

Knowledge of what my attitude should be did not make it so, and I began to pray regularly that God would make me thankful that I had only one child and would probably never have more. One day, as I was praying thus, it was as though God said to me, "You haven't anything to pray about. You have many children."

And as I considered this suggestion I saw that it was true. Some time before, a boy who had been at Campus by the Sea wrote me that his particular need that summer had been for a mother, and I had filled that need. And a girl, upon leaving Pasadena for another area, had said to me, "You're my Christian mother (her mother was not a Christian). And just a few days before, I had received a letter that was signed, "Your son in the faith."

My mind took me on to many similar instances. I did have children, many of them. More children, certainly, than if I had remained married.

There was no problem to pray about. And I had peace.

The Lord had worked differently in all these circumstances, each of which involved the sin of wishing that God had acted otherwise. In the first, He made me thankful without giving me an obvious reason. In the second, He made me thankful through a long, carefully planned series of events. In the third, He showed me that there was no situation—no reason to ask for thankfulness. But in each the result was the same: peace of mind and heart.

One would think that after all this, the lesson would have been learned. However, I am amazed and chagrined that the Lord must teach me the same truth over and over again. And last spring I found myself with a similar problem.

My brother and his family had lived in Pasadena almost as long as my son and I had. Their lives were inextricably, so it seemed, bound up with ours. But God called my brother to leave Pasadena with his wife and the babies.

I knew that their leaving would create almost as great a void in my life as my husband's death had done. And I was unhappy about it. I was convinced (all of us had prayed so much about this move) that God was calling him to leave. But I wasn't happy about the personal loss to my son and me. In fact, as I sat at my desk working, tears would roll down my cheeks until I would have to leave the room to wash my face.

I was praying that God would take away my unhappiness about this and give me peace, but the situation remained unchanged. And then one day I saw what was lacking. I had merely asked to be able to accept this without unhappiness. I had never asked the Lord to make me thankful, which is the only antidote for the sin of wishing a situation were otherwise.

So I began to ask God to enable me to say truthfully, "Thank you for taking Paul and his family away from us," knowing (although it was not yet a reality to me) that God would not give us second best. For some reason it was better for my son and me to be in Pasadena without my brother and his family.

I prayed, and continued to pray, and by the time they left I was looking forward with happy anticipation to living in Pasadena without them. For a reason which I did not know, God had chosen this way to show His love for my son and me.

And since then, I haven't been lonely. Of course I miss them—this ought not to be otherwise—but I am thankful that the Lord has taken them from us. Impossible? Yes, humanly speaking. But such are the ways of God. And I had peace again.

God is just beginning to awaken me to the possibilities of the true peace which comes as a result of joyful thanksgiving for all circumstances. I am praying that God will continue to show me the areas in which I am failing. And I am confident that as He confronts me with this sin, and I ask Him, He will make me thankful.

—In *Christian Platform*

Ernest Lyon is a professor of music at the University of Louisville and minister of the Highland Church of Christ.



## Viewing The News

THE BIRTH RATE in the USA for January through September, 1972 was 2.08 per family. That is below the 2.1 set to keep the population at its present level by the Zero Population Growth (ZPG) organization. What "population explosion"?

BOYS TOWN, the large Catholic home, now has \$186 million endowment and \$29 million in land, buildings, and equipment. It makes two public appeals for money each year.

THE LAST General Assembly of the National Council of Churches (NCC) was just that—the last; for it is to be replaced by a 347-member Governing Board.

CROP FAILURES in Russia again mean that we will be giving them money to keep up their strength to subvert us and destroy us!

THE WATERGATE bugging was run so badly that surely it was planned that way! It would be hard to mess something up that badly unintentionally!

A CALIFORNIA representative has supported the Black Panthers and other Communist organizations, yet he has been appointed to the Armed Services Committee and will have access to top secret military documents.

ERA (the "equal rights amendment") has backfired for women employees of the Bank of America in California. In the past women employees who end their work after dark have had taxi fares paid by the company. Starting March 1 they planned to quit that as a means of equalizing rights. Does that mean that the women now have an equal right to be mugged? If that infamous amendment ever passes (it is

now receiving great opposition) the laws requiring the husband to be the support for his wife and children and to provide a home for them to live in will be invalid and the wife will be equally responsible to provide the home and pay 50 percent of the financial support. Maybe women who support the amendment ought to read the comments found even in the New York Times news service concerning women in the Soviet Union. One of the quotations I read was, "The revolution freed us so that we can work harder than men."

SOME ITEMS from Kinsolving's column "Religion Today": A Disciple of Christ (Christian Church) minister in California claims to be Jesus Christ reincarnated. He has more than 4,000 followers and wild claims of raising the dead and working other miracles are made for him by some of his followers . . . The Episcopal Church is having as much trouble with its "poverty war fund" as the federal government is having with its poverty war . . . The "Rev." Kinsolving is upset at the conduct of the top-ranking administrator of the 3 million-member United Presbyterian Church. Strangely Mr. Kinsolving compares William P. Thompson's harangues against those who oppose his left-wing work to John Calvin ordering the burning at the stake of Michael Servetus (the father of Unitarianism). I don't approve burning at the stake, but at least Servetus was a false teacher!

SOME REPORTS TAKEN from Ben Kaufman's "The Week in Religion" column: The United Methodist Church claims that two new UMC congregations have been organized behind the Iron Curtain (If so and

this is approved by the government, there is great cooperation there between the UMC and the Communists!) . . . The Tennessee Supreme Court has heard the appeals on Nashville attempts to tax the property of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and the Methodist Publishing House; both are essentially publishing firms . . . Kaufman calls the Stated Clerk of the UPC Willard P. Thompson (Kinsolving refers to him as "William") and he says he and Moderator C. Willard Heckel have sent out a letter to the churches saying Americans must seek repentance for our role in Indochina fighting and that we must help rebuild that region . . . The UMC is one of the groups backing the "Equal Rights Amendment"; at least its Committee on Women's Concerns of the Women's Division of the Board of Global Ministries (such a proliferation of titles!) is backing it.

"IS THE WAR Really Over?" asks Julian Williams in the March 4, 1973 *Christian Crusade Weekly* and then he goes on to compare the surrender there to our surrender in Korea leaving the communists in power over the millions of the Northern part of that unfortunate country without ever getting a real truce.

SENATOR STENNIS was shot in a city that has a strict gun control law, yet his shooting is being used to further the demands for strict gun control laws "so that won't happen anymore." Draw your own conclusions.

A GREAT MANY unbelievers are using "Love thy enemy" as support for the coming "reparations" to be paid to North VietNam for killing 50,000 of our young men (hundreds of thousands of South VietNameese also), being the aggressors in a war

with the South, and helping our federal government become more and more bankrupt. The Gospel should call a nation to repentance, but it is not a law concerning the relations of countries, to say the least.

IN SPITE OF all the mass media crying out to say it is so, it is not true that the communists have given up their plans to enslave the entire world. They still continually proclaim that as their goal (though they call it "liberating" the world, of course). No paper they ever sign will in the slightest deter them from working feverishly to that end.

HENRY KISSINGER was reported by UPI to have said a strange thing: "We are not opposed to the unification of Vietnam in principle, if Vietnam is unified by peaceful means. If the performance of one part or the other is so clearly superior to that of the other that it tends to achieve moral superiority over the other, that is not an American concern." In what way does he think communism "tends to achieve moral superiority"? Which side is he on, I wonder.

AT LAST doctors in many places are beginning to publish reports of studies showing that there are a great many permanent harmful effects from the use of the cannabis plant (marijuana). Let us hope that the terrible results of smoking marijuana will soon be made clear.

MANY THANKS for your questions and your news items. Keep both coming and pray that this column may help us all keep aware of the workings of this world in which we are living but of which we are not a part, just sojourners and pilgrims. Write to Ernest E. Lyon  
2629 Valletta Road  
Louisville, Ky. 40205

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### Salvation is by God's mercy

That we can never gain heaven by our own goodness is plain from God's Word: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5).

Would God have let His Son suffer and die to save those who already possessed the ability to save themselves? Hardly. By our own goodness we cannot be saved; by God's grace we can!

It is only the part of wisdom to stop trusting that which can never save you—your own goodness—and to trust in the One who can—Jesus Christ. Apart from Him salvation is not even remotely possible. —Ralph Woerner

# Philip's Virgin Daughters

Mrs. Paul J. Knecht

Philip the evangelist had four virgin daughters that did prophesy (Acts 21:9). There has been much conjecture as to the meaning of this verse. We may never know exactly, but a few suggestions as to its possible meaning are not out of order.

That both the words "virgin" and "daughter" are used and that they are different seems significant. *Parthenos* does not mean only a "young woman" else it would be superfluous in this verse—English grammar calls it redundant. The word for daughter would be enough to carry the meaning to be conveyed if *parthenos* did not mean virgin. Therefore, four unmarried daughters of Philip prophesied. (This same word is used in the Septuagint version to translate the Hebrew word *Almah* in Isaiah 7:14.)

And they *prophesied*. The original word is used of both men and women who foretold things revealed to them by God. That it can also be said to mean "forthtelling" is beside the point. The meaning of *prophetis* is an "inspired woman" and in the masculine, "an inspired man." The Septuagint Bible uses the proper form of the same word in describing Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, in the Old Testament and Anna and these daughters of Philip in the New. Let us admit then that women prophesied, *i.e.*, foretold things. It is good therefore to look briefly at the women.

God, speaking through Micah (6:4) said to the Jews, ". . . and I sent before you, Moses, Aaron and Miriam." Miriam herself said, with Aaron, ". . . hath he (God) not spoken also with us?" I believe this was true. It was not their saying it, but their rebellion against Moses that caused God to judge Miriam so severely. God had no doubt dealt individually with each of them to fit them for the place He wanted them to fill. Miriam is called a prophetess in Exodus 15:20. She was a leader of women, the vast number of women in that multitude who came out of Egypt under Moses. She carried the messages of God to them. Moses was more than a prophet (Numbers 12:6-8). His was the final word under God. Rather, except on one occasion, it was the word of God Himself, spoken through Moses. But who can say that He did not give Miriam something for the women in that big crowd? Perhaps by dream or vision as He suggests in verse six. There was no written word in those days as we have it now.

Deborah is called "a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth" in Judges 4:4. She seems to have been that literally—not just the wife of a prophet. Nothing more at all is said of Lappidoth.

God gave Deborah a message to Barak (v. 6) to go into battle against Sisera. He agreed on condition that she would go with him. She obeyed, going as far as Mt. Tabor. The record does not say that she went down into the battle with him. Deborah's

message was prophetic. She gave it to Barak just as God had given it to her. She gave no commandment. He was in authority and she obeyed. Moreover Barak won the battle, for Sisera was on the run before Jael even got a chance at him (v. 17). God ruled in the time of the judges (1 Samuel 8:4-7). The judges judged, *i.e.*, they had the wisdom from God to decide matters (Judges 4:4-5).

Huldah was the wife of Shalum (2 Kings 22:14-20) and also a prophetess. Josiah sent Hilkiah the priest, and four others to inquire of her and she gave them God's answer to their query.

Anna was the daughter of Phanuel. Her husband's name is not given. A lot is said about her in three verses (Luke 2:36-38) which we will not repeat here. More is said of her intercession than of prophecy yet she evidently knew, perhaps by revelation, just when to come forward ("that very hour"). And Luke under inspiration calls her a prophetess.

On the strength of the foregoing it is safe to conclude that the daughters of Philip did prophesy. There is no hint, even, that the Old Testament prophetesses prophesied or preached to crowds. They did not, so far as we know, denounce publicly the sins of the nation of Israel, as the prophets did, or in any way that we can find in the record take the lead among or over the men. Those of them who were married must have had husbands who recognized God's right to use them as channels. If not, God was able to handle the situation.

There evidently was a need at times for women channels to augment the teachings of the men. For John says (John 7:17): "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." And the Psalmist said (Psalm 111:10): "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all they that do his commandments; His praise endureth forever." It follows naturally therefore, since men cannot do some things that women are told to do and vice versa there would of necessity have been some female prophets in those days before the Bible was written whom God could trust with certain messages, especially to women, but also on occasion to men as seen in the days of Deborah and Huldah.

Sometimes today the Lord of the harvest lets fall some handfuls of purpose for hungry women who glean behind the reapers of the great, profound truths of the Bible to satisfy their own specific needs for blessing in certain areas. And if so what harm is there in their passing them on to women, as Miriam did, or to men even as Huldah and Deborah did?

Since in creation the man was not complete without the woman could it not be possible that his message is not always complete without the portion from a woman's viewpoint which God can give through such women as He has prepared to receive and pass it on?

# Of Tears and Thunderbirds

By a missionary on furlough

After the service she clutched my hand warmly; I could tell she had been moved by the message. "Oh, you missionaries," she said, "you're doing such a wonderful work."

She choked a little, blinking back a tear. Another tear was making an untidy furrow through her makeup. She caught it swiftly with the back of her hand.

Her husband, a tall, handsome man in a mauve, tailored suit, moved toward me and pressed a bill into my hand. I glimpsed the bearded features of Lincoln, a five.

"We wish we could do more," he apologized. "This is just a little something. We hope it'll help."

I assured them it would, adding, "Do remember to pray for our work."

"Oh, we will, we will," they both responded eagerly. "We've thought about taking a share in you; you know, one of those five-dollar-a-month pledges. But, well—" she continued, groping for the right words, "we've talked it over and feel that, uh, with our present obligations . . ."

"I'm afraid we just can't swing it right now," he put in.

There was no doubt about it. I knew they'd have trouble "swinging a pledge." First, there was the car payment—a nagging \$87.50 a month. That's a lot even for a \$12,000-a-year man. Transportation is one thing you just can't do without.

Perhaps, too, he was thinking of the new rug. His wife would have reminded him of that. Acrylon fabric. Only half paid for. She had grown so weary of the old beige one. Besides, it was wearing in spots, especially at the foot of the overstuffed chair in front of the TV.

And the TV. That was another thing. The oily salesman had neglected to mention repair costs on color TV.

He was thinking, too, of the bookcase in the den. Custom made, he remembered with exasperation. It housed a set of spanking new encyclopedias, impressively bound in red and gold. "We owe it to the children," his wife had argued. But somehow Dave and Linda had found the Rolling Stones and the Jackson Five more exciting.

She was still sniffing back a tear as they walked out through the carpeted foyer and climbed into a sleek tan Thunderbird.

My thoughts flicked back to an evening three years earlier. I had been with a group of missionaries as they discussed the task confronting them in their field—a teeming city in the Orient.

That day I had seen the refugees living like animals in makeshift stalls, thrown together in tangled colonies on the barren hillsides. Other shacks were sandwiched together along the clotted thoroughfares. I had seen the beggars with their faces that screamed of hunger.



"I think God wants us to open another Gospel hall and relief center," one of the missionaries announced. She was a small woman with gray hair and a remarkably soft, even voice.

"But how?" her colleagues asked, turning to one another, puzzled. One of them expressed what all were thinking: "Our budget hardly meets our present expenses."

"I know that." The small lady was talking again. She paused as though uncertain how to continue. Then she said, "Perhaps we could raise the funds among ourselves."

There was a long moment of silence. I knew well enough what their allowances came to. I also knew that it cost about as much to live decently in that food-scarce city as in any U.S. metropolis.

"I think we can pledge \$10 a month," one of the group offered.

"We'll give the same," said another.

While the missionaries stated their pledges the small woman with gray hair sat quietly. She was smiling as if to herself. The others had all spoken when she began.

"I have no family now," she said. Her husband, a veteran missionary, had died ten years earlier. "I eat native food twice a day and my needs are few. I have plenty of clothes (about four dresses to be exact) and the mission provides me with a home." The home of which she spoke was two small bedrooms furnished with bamboo furniture and located in a downtown building swarming with refugees.

"I have figured it out," she concluded. "I can afford to pledge \$40 to open a new hall."

"You mean \$40 a year, of course," we added.

"No, I mean \$40 a month."

"A month! But how can you live on what you'll have left?"

"I can do it," she said simply, and there was a finality in her voice that ruled out further discussion.

I stuffed the green bill bearing the image of Lincoln into my suit pocket and reached for my overcoat. I lost sight of the sleek tan Thunderbird as it swept around the corner. I kept thinking of the tear that crept out of the corner of the lady's eye and down her perfectly powdered cheek.

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## NEWS AND NOTES

"They rehearsed all that God had done with them . . ."

**Highland Church, Louisville, Ky.:** Brother Orell Overman is to hold a meeting July 22-27 . . . Mr. and Mrs. Charles Longwell placed membership with the Highland church recently. . . . The Donald Harrises have set

May 1 as the "target date" to go to the Arcadia work in Salisbury . . . Horace Wood will speak and show slides of the area of the seven churches of Asia (Revelation 2-3) Wednesday April 11.

Parksville, Ky.: Brother Ray Naugle and family are leaving Parksville to take up the ministry of the Tell City, Indiana church. Their last Sunday at Parksville was the 18th.

### "WORDS OF LIFE" RADIO

The response and outreach continues to be great. It keeps the minister very, very busy answering the mail . . . about 100 letters in the past 30 days. Based on mail response, we now know that we have listeners in 30 states and Canada.

**Henryville, Indiana:** The area Youth Rally was held at Henryville, March 18. The SCC chorus sang. The evangelistic meeting is to begin May 6 with Brother Ringer from Borden to bring the messages.

To go back a little, on March 4 the PCHS chorus sang at Henryville. The ninth anniversary of the founding of the Henryville church was celebrated in the Sellersburg Children's Home by a fellowship meal on February 18.

**Jennings, La.:** God continues to bless us in the work here, although Satan is very busy, and quite successful, even with some of God's people, it seems

We are looking forward to a Revival Meeting in April with Neal Phillips preaching and God sending the revival. We hope to appoint additional elders and deacons during this same week, if Jesus tarries. Fred Smith, Arba Reed, C. O. Istre, Sr. and I have been asked to serve with Ivy J. Istre and Lawrence Prather as elders and Harold Istre and David Bowers have been asked to join the present deacons who are Lionel McLean, Jake LeDoux, Richard Lafleur; Fred Smith was a deacon.

Please pray for us. —A. J. Istre, Sr.

**Fort Lauderdale, Florida:** Praise the Lord for His blessings toward this growing congregation. With Florida rules and regulations besetting us we are still running the race. We thank God for the ability afforded us to purchase a one acre parcel of land for our future house of worship. We are making plans now to erect the much needed facilities for the church here which continues to grow at a steady pace. Seventy-one were recorded for Bible school the first Sunday in March. With God's help we are encouraged daily and I am

convinced when adequate facilities are made available our congregation will surely prosper.

A statewide fellowship of the churches in Florida was well attended the last Saturday in February. Congregations represented were: Carrington Drive, Orlando; Raiford Road, Jacksonville; Southside, Jacksonville; Westside, Fort Lauderdale; preaching and teaching were Bill Spears, D. L. Griffis, Steve Kraftchick, Mac Reeves, Bennie Hill, John Adams, Willis Allen, Joe Bentley, Judy Reeves, and Vaughn Reeves. The Fellowship was held in Orlando at the Carrington Drive Church of Christ.

Please continue to pray for our labors here. —Vaughn A. Reeves

**Highview Church, Louisville, Ky:** We were very happy to have Brother and Sister Donald Harris with us on Sunday, March 11th. He told us a little of the work he is to do at the Rhodesian Children's Home. Brother LaVern Houtz was also with us for the morning and evening services. His messages were very inspiring.

The SCC Chorus was with us for the morning service on March 18th and four of the young men spoke to us. Lunch was served to them before they went to the Youth Rally at Henryville.

April 22 is "Miracle Sunday" at Highview. The chorus will sing the morning worship service. Triumph of Our Lord Jesus is the theme of the service. —Margaret Jean Pace

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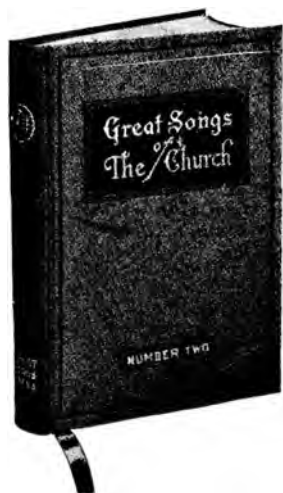
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