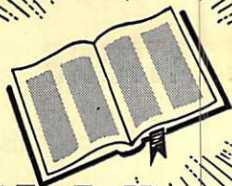
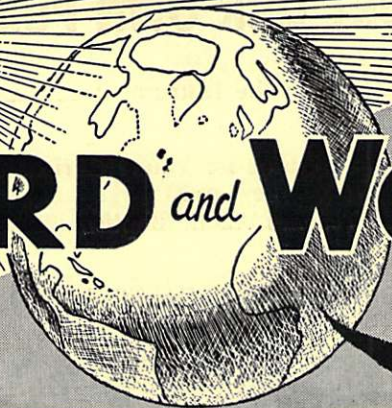


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SEPTEMBER, 1976

It is right to pray expectantly for the sick.

—Alex Wilson

"Only in the Lord" is the Lord's guideline.

—Carl Kitzmiller

"There is no way that sex of any kind outside of marriage is right."

—Article, p. 269

I suffered what foreign missionaries call "cultural shock."

—Nena Laguisin

"The days of Noah" seem to be upon us.

—Editorial

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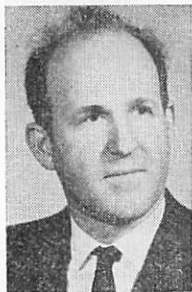
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Robert Heid is a minister in Louisville, Kentucky



God's Family

W. R. H.

AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH

When Jesus became engaged in conversation about the end-time, He said that the end-time would be parallel to the days of Noah, and to the days of Lot. Both cases deal with times when men were exceedingly sinful, had acquaintance with a Messenger from God, and failing to give heed, reaped swift destruction from the very hand of God. Also, in both instances, there is salvation to a chosen few, and there is a new beginning after the calamity is past. The survivors lived a continuation of the life they were living during the warning time.

Particularly, I wish to call attention to the preoccupation of the earth dwellers. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage. They bought, they sold, they planted, they build-ed. Notice that Jesus did not mention that any of these activities were out of order. These all go to make up life in the manner that God has ordained for us. These are honorable estates. Then, wherein was there any wrong? They "knew not" until the flood came; or until the falling fire and brimstone rained down at Sodom. They could have known, since ample warning was given. But they were preoccupied.

If there has ever been a time of preoccupation, we are living in it today. Many people have two or more jobs, to enable them to meet their needs (the first job) and to have the things they want (the second job). Sometimes the weekends are taken up. Other times the evenings (or at least too many of them) are taken. The rat race begins and the treadmill turns so swiftly that we think we can't get off. Jesus said, ". . .the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the *lust of other things* choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Recently, again, a night school was begun in the Louisville area, with a curriculum designed to further the abilities of any who desire to take an active part in the work of the Lord. The subjects offered are quite worthwhile. The teachers are capable and dedicated. The cost is negligible. The promotional work was adequate. But the enrollment, as in similar previous ventures, is

both revealing and discouraging. Evidently, the greater part of the brotherhood feel that they are as busy now in the work of the Lord as they can manage. They may be right in their appraisal. For, "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Time is a priceless commodity. It can only be obtained from the treasures of our Creator. Yet we find ourselves literally squandering it after the fashion that we consume energy and the various elements today. If we think there is an energy crisis, listen while God tells us again that there is a time crisis. "The night cometh when no man can work." May God help us to keep our "gainful occupations" from crowding out the most worthwhile things of life. Realign those priorities!

Signs of the Times

Come ancient traveler on your way
And tell us now the time of day;
For we would know from wiser minds
The meanings of the signs of times.

The seething turmoil and unrest
O'er land and sea, from east to west,
Bids fair to shake the very ground
And bring God's righteous judgments down.

When thinkest thou these things begin?
But tell us now, with word and pen,
How long will God withhold His hand
From righteous cleansing of the land?

No place within their hearts they hold
For love and grace, so often told;
Nor will they heed the warning signs
Of coming judgment in our times.

As were the days of Noah, when
He preached so long to sinful men,
So will it be on that great day
When all their works are swept away.

Nor work nor deed shall stand the test
Of righteous judgment then, unless
Such works be builded by our hand
Through grace that's in God's Perfect Man.

—Edward V. Wood



Healing and "The Prayer of Faith"

Alex V. Wilson

Kenneth Strachan was a missionary leader in Latin America. In Elisabeth Elliott's biography of him, she tells how Strachan—only 55 years old and at the peak of his ministry—was stricken with lymphoma, a dread disease.

More and more people began to pray for the recovery of Kenneth Strachan. One lady, a missionary in Costa Rica, believed that God had given her a special task of praying for Ken. She was not merely to ask that he be healed. She was to believe absolutely, and never to waver in that belief, that he would be fully cured. Scripture verses were "given" to her as proof of God's intention, and she held on so confidently that she did not even need to add "if it is Thy will" to her petitions. She knew it was His will. . . .

Billy Graham visited Strachan and told him he prayed for him every day. He said he had a strong assurance that the Lord would heal him. "He said he did not pretend to have any absolute knowledge, that it was a mystic experience, and God might have something better for (Strachan), but he added that he had frequently experienced this sense of assurance in his praying."

The missionary leader became worse and had to be hospitalized because of his critical condition.

There were those who prefaced every prayer with "If it be Thy will, Lord," and there were those who were sure enough of His will to see no need for such a preface. Some came to his hospital room to pray, and some tense little battles were waged across his bed between those who felt that no Christian has an inalienable right to claim physical healing, and those who believed that such an admission was a mere failure of faith, or worse still, an actual capitulation to Satan himself who held the sufferer in his grasp.

After some weeks he died, leaving behind him a host of confused Christians and perplexing questions. Some felt his death proved that those who had demanded that God heal him were wrong; their demands were contrary to God's will. The others felt that if only enough Christians had exercised real faith, God

would have healed him. They believed that those who prayed with uncertainty in their hearts had hindered God from demonstrating His healing power. (WHO SHALL ASCEND? pp. 151-156)

The incidents recorded above lead us to a study of James 5:14-16.

Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects.

This passage raises several interesting questions: Is this teaching still for us now or was it only for apostolic times? Was the oil used as a medicine or as a symbol of God's Spirit? If a church has no elders, what then? But we lack space to discuss these details. Let us simply assume that the passage is still valid today, since there is no explicit Scripture to the contrary. The main emphasis of the passage is obviously on prayer, which is mentioned seven times in the six verses of this paragraph (vv. 13-18). And so far as prayer for the sick is concerned, the crucial phrase is "the prayer of faith." What is meant by "the prayer of faith shall save the sick man"? There are three main interpretations.

View 1

Many who believe that healing is included in the atonement (see last month's article) contend that many Christians are not healed because when they pray for healing they add, "if it be Thy will." To say this implies unbelief, they feel. To them, faith means absolute certainty, with no doubts. We can have this certainty regarding every sick person or at least every sick Christian, because—to quote a tract—"God never puts sickness on anyone. God dose not want anyone to be sick, or to suffer pain or weakness. He is ready and waiting to heal *every sick one now.*" The writer continues,

Jesus said that when we pray we must believe that we receive (Mk. 11:24), and then we shall surely have that for which we pray . . . Continue to say to every pain, disease and weakness in your body, "Go before the mighty name of Jesus." God will make all pain, disease and weakness to wither up and leave us, as we continue to bid them to go in Jesus' name; but, we must never doubt that the work was done when we prayed. If you doubt that Jesus healed you when you prayed, you will lose your healing.

In this view, then, the prayer of faith means praying with complete assurance that God will heal, because it is His will to heal ev-

ery sick Christian. But our previous studies have shown the fallacy of this basic premise.

View 2

Others would define the prayer of faith as simply praying with confidence in the Lord that His will is best. It means trusting Him to answer "yes" or "no" each time a sick one is prayed for and anointed, according to His love and wisdom. It means saying, "We have faith in Thee, Lord. We know Thou *canst* heal, if it is Thy will. If it is not Thy will, then give courage and comfort. If it is Thy will, then heal by Thy power. We leave it in Thy hands."

Not very many churches still practice prayer and anointing for the sick. One that does is the Portland Church in Louisville. I believe it is accurate to say that most or all of the elders there hold this view. Over the years God has at times healed supernaturally: a doctor from Georgia recovered from cancer; a man was marvellously cured of perforations in his intestines. (A more recent example at another church was mentioned in *News and Notes* of the Sept. 1975 *Word and Work*). But a number of other persons anointed by the same elders remained sick, worsened and died.

Speaking personally, this view of the prayer of faith appeals to me except for one unsolved problem. The statement in James sounds universal. It seems to allow for no exceptions. It says, "The prayer of faith will save the sick" and does not add—if it be God's will." Of course conditions are named: calling for the elders; confessing of sins; prayer; anointing; faith. But James seems to imply that *every time* these conditions are met, healing will occur. Yet neither the teaching of the whole Bible nor the experience of Christians harmonizes with this. So we are led to consider another alternative.

View 3

James McConkey writes, "The prayer of faith is the prayer in which God Himself gives the petitioner an inward assurance by His Spirit that the thing he prays for is according to God's will and has been granted. The prayer of faith can thus only be prayed in that which is according to God's will. If the petition is not according to His will, God withholds this assurance." He then gives two examples.

Friends had gathered to pray for a fellow friend who was lying at the point of death in a distant mission field. As we prayed there came into our hearts a marked, conscious spirit of assurance that our prayer had been answered. One month after, tidings came by letter that although the family of the sick man had gathered at his bedside several times to see him die, yet a short time after the day on which we had received the assurance from God of his recovery, he had been suddenly restored to health and was then about his usual duties.

Not long after we were called to the room of a young friend whose eyes were also turned toward the foreign field, but who was being hindered by illness. We prayed again and again for him. At last, we arose from our knees without a shadow of assurance concerning his recovery. We could get no liberty except in resting in submission to God's will, whatever it might be. In one week the young man had gone home to be with the Lord. We had all faith in God's ability to heal the last named friend as well as the first. But we had no assurance of faith from God that He would do so. The lesson seemed clear. In one case it was God's will to heal; in the other it was not.

In other words, in this view the "faith" involved is not the same as saving faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, nor general Christian faith in His loving care. Rather it is a special faith that may be bestowed by God at certain times to help his servants meet special needs. Note that in 1 Cor. 12:9 the spiritual gift of "faith" and "gifts of healing" are mentioned together.

R.A. Torrey, noted evangelist at the turn of this century, took this view. He wrote. "The prayer of *faith* shall save him that is sick. In many instances the elders may not be given faith. Are they to blame for that? Not necessarily. It is not always the will of God to heal His sick children." Later he explained further. "Sometimes as I have prayed, God has given me clearest assurance of His will. . ."; note that it was *sometimes*. He described in detail several times when God gave "to me faith as I have prayed for some sick one, and immediate and complete healing followed."

A contemporary writer, J. K. Van Baalan, remarks, "Praying in faith is a wrestling to discover, through a surrendered will, the guidance of God in order to pray in accordance with His will. This is a long cry from having one's mind made up that God must grant our desires, and that He can be commanded to do our bidding." He recounts an experience in his own ministry to explain his statement. He was called to the bedside of a young mother who according to the doctors had thirty-six hours at most to live. Van Baalan found the family members yielded to God, whatever His will might be. (The woman herself was in a coma.) He then prayed,

asking God to do one of two things; if it were not in the divine will to heal, that we might receive courage and comfort. If, on the other hand, God should be willing to spare this young life for the husband and two small children, that we might receive the courage to pray for her recovery in boldness of faith. I then waited, and after a pause in prayer, the answer came. My heart and mind were strongly impregnated with a desire to plead for this young life, to ask God to glorify His name. . . The next morning the family physician pronounced that "something has happened here that medical science is at a loss to interpret; this woman is going to be well."

Twenty years later Van Baalan met the woman again, still well and strong and living for the Lord along with her family.

If I may speak personally again, it seems to me that this interpretation of the prayer of faith best explains James 5:14-16. It escapes the difficulty involved in the second view. Yet it carries a built-in difficulty of its own: we might mistake our subjective feelings and wishes for God-bestowed assurance or the gift of faith. Remember the strong certainty which Billy Graham, and the lady in Costa Rica, and others had regarding the healing of Kenneth Strachan, mentioned at the start of this article? They all were mistaken about the Lord's will and guidance in that case. When I was a student at Portland Christian High School, I believed God gave me a clear conviction that He would heal a Christian with terminal cancer for whom many were praying. But He called her to His presence instead. Years later a deeply spiritual friend of mine believed the Lord told him that He would cure a young person who was gripped with a dread disease. Many had prayed, and kept praying, for him; yet he went to be with Christ. May our Lord deliver us from rashly leaning on our own inner feelings, and yet make us sensitive and obedient to those inner promptings which His Spirit may indeed put in our hearts from time to time. Holy Father, we desperately need wisdom from above, and we ask for it.

SUMMARY

To summarize, the first view says the prayer of faith can and should be prayed for every sick Christian. We should pray for healing with full assurance that God will heal, because it is definitely His will to cure all His sick people. Only lack of faith (i.e., lack of assurance, according to this view) or of repentance hinders Christians from being cured. But Scripture contradicts this interpretation, as we saw earlier.

The second view says the prayer of faith means praying, "Lord, Thy will, not ours, be done. We believe in Thy power and we trust Thee to heal *or not*, according to Thy wisdom." This attitude is surely basic for *all* praying in which God's will is unclear. And He heals in answer to such prayers, if He pleases. (To pray, "if it is Thy will," is a sign of unbelief *only* when we make requests for what is certainly His will. E.g., Daniel did not need to say, "If it is Thy will, restore Thy people city, and temple." He *knew* it was God's will to do so, because the Lord had said so through Jeremiah (Dan. 9:1-3; Jer. 25:11f.; 29:10ff.). In the same way, when we pray for the Lord to raise up workers we should not add any "if" clause. But when asking Him to call John Brown as a full-time preacher, the "if" is proper. Compare Daniel's three friends before Nebuchadnezzar: Our God is *able* to deliver us from your furnace. . . but *if* He does *not*. . .)

The third view agrees with the second on the necessity of submission to God's will, and that He does not choose to heal all His people. But it believes that when He *does* choose to heal someone, He may then give a deep inner assurance of that fact so that as a result intercession may be made with certainty. It is *such* intercession which James means by "the prayer of faith (which) will save the sick," for God prompts such praying only when He intends to heal.

If James 5 were practiced by more congregations, probably the Lord would heal more among us than we see at present. And if we saw more of such healings within the local church, probably fewer members would be attracted to mass meetings of healers, in which there are often doctrines or methods which are unbalanced or even unbiblical. Following James' instructions about confessing sins to the elders would result in more repentance among backslidden members, also.

CONCLUSIONS

Finally, some things are very clear: It is right to pray expectantly for the sick (James 5; also 3 John 2: "I pray . . . that you may be in health"). Yet we should teach that God nowhere promises wholesale healing for His people, much less for the unsaved. The sick disciple whom He does not choose to heal should practice praise and beware of bitterness, for "Who makes a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?" (Ex. 4:11). It is also right to use medicine if God does not heal miraculously (1 Tim. 5:23). "The man who trusts God only and rules out medical means, is in error. Yet the Christian who trusts medical means only and rules out God is just as much in error. If the first man confines God to the supernatural, the second limits Him to the natural" (McConkey). Let us trust our Lord in sickness and in health, while yearning for that day when He shall appear and banish sickness and tears, pain and death forever. For further study:

"Prayer and Healing," by James McConkey; pamphlet published by Back to the Bible.

"What the Bible Teaches About Healing," by Richard Wolff; pamphlet published by Back to the Bible.

The Bible and Modern Medicine, by A. Rendle Short; Moody Press.

Divine Healing, by R. A. Torrey; Moody Press.

The Chaos of Cults, by J. K. Van Baalan; chapter 8: "Faith Healing"; Eerdmans.

End of the Series



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

It is very hard for Christians always to find suitable Christian marriage partners. Why do you insist that Christians always marry Christians? Some mixed marriages have worked out well.

Yes, some mixed marriages have turned out well in that the people have found happiness and have created good stable homes. Some of these have later turned to the Lord and are now Christian homes. And we are aware that some Christian(?) marriages, i.e., those which started in that way, have gone on the rocks. That all of the mixed marriages have not failed is to some extent due to the fact that God forgives sin and His mercy is very great. In counting the ones that have met with some measure of success, we do not want to forget the others where Christians have married out of the Lord and have pursued a steady course toward destruction of their faith. In many other cases there has been a neutralizing of the good works and of the testimony the Christians should have. Since our Christian faith is such a vital part of our whole life, it seems to me that simple good judgment calls for diligence in making a marriage where this will not be a problem but a blessing, where another difficulty is not added to successful adjustment.

My greatest insistence on Christians marrying Christians is based on something more than good judgment, however. The word of God insists on it! Two passages are outstanding and specific. To the widow (or, by application, to the widower) the clear instruction is this: "A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will; *only in the Lord*" (1 Cor. 7:39, italics ours for emphasis). To all, the statement of 2 Cor. 6:14 applies: "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." If it be objected that this latter passage does not mention marriage specifically, I agree. It is a statement of general principle that should govern the whole of our Christian lives, not just one phase of them. But since there is no closer relationship than marriage, I would point out that if it does not include marriage then the passage is without meaning. Personally I suspect that Christians are not nearly diligent enough in applying this passage in a multitude of ways, but that is not our point here. Certainly it includes marriage.

There are attempts to destroy the force of 2 Cor. 6:14 by de-

fining "unbeliever" to mean an atheist or someone without any inclination to religious things. But "unbeliever" is not so used in the rest of the N.T., and even many of those who use this approach would not be willing to use such a definition in many another passage. An unbeliever is one who has not been born again or one who is in spiritual *darkness*, regardless of how cultured, tolerant, or even religious he may be. A person does not have to be openly antagonistic to the Christian faith to be an unbeliever.

Again it is said that the "unequal yoke" is the situation where the unbeliever has force or power or upperhand over the Christian, and that there is an equality in marriage. But the unequal yoke (as the passage goes on to show) consists of believer yoked with unbeliever, whatever else may be true. Believer with believer, or unbeliever with unbeliever is an equal yoke, but believer with unbeliever is an unequal yoke.

Now we know that Christians sometimes disobey and marry non-Christians. Sometimes such marriages take place because of an ignorance of the restriction. Or among unbelievers, one companion may become a Christian after the marriage and the other may remain in unbelief. These causes give rise to mixed marriages. The N.T. recognizes the sanctity of even these marriages, and does not teach their dissolution (1 Cor. 7:12-17). Instead the believer is to be diligent in trying to win the unbeliever (e.g., 1 Pet. 3:1-6). But the force of the passage in 2 Cor. 6:14 is: *Become not* unequally yoked. Written to Christians, the instruction is that in the formation of a marriage this is to be avoided. Because of the high commitment involved in marriage and the importance of the home, an equal yoking does not take precedence over everything else. But let us recognize its importance and not dismiss the requirement as just a sort of good recommendation that the Lord makes. It is more than a recommendation; it is a requirement. When we refuse it, neglect it, count it as not binding, etc., we sin.

Most of us have seen Christian young people start out recognizing the need for a Christian companion. But the opportunities are limited, and perhaps no suitable companion seems to turn up. The standards are dropped, and these settle for an unbeliever. Sometimes there is something close to panic, lest they get passed by. Or sometimes the body chemistry gets active and the Lord gets shoved into a back seat. Commitment to the Lord's will is sometimes too superficial. One realizes that it is not always easy for Christian young people to meet and date other Christians who "ring the bells" and who represent potentially good mates. But I do not believe that the Lord requires of us what He will not enable us to achieve. The Christian young person (or widow or widower or marriageable person of any age) who will commit this matter to the Lord truly, to make it a matter of prayer, to wait for His ordering, will have the Lord's provision. This does not mean that mar-

riage is His will for everyone. And it does not mean that His provision will always bring the financial, social, or other attainments that may be regarded by the flesh as important. The Lord may test us, as it were, to see how committed to His will we are, so He may not act overnight. He may open doors for meeting possible companions that we are unwilling to enter for some reason. But I have no doubt of His provision for the one who will really commit the matter to the Lord.

In any case we must avoid the mentality that says, "Here is something very difficult to obey, or something very restrictive, and because it is hard we can pass it up and not bother about the Lord's will." Christian obedience is not conditioned on whether it is easy to obey.

As a preacher I have sometimes been in "hot water" for refusing to perform a marriage ceremony between believer and unbeliever. It would be *much easier* to abandon these convictions and not arouse the ire or resentment that sometimes arises. It is not my intention to sit in judgment on those men who go ahead in such cases. I know some of these hope to have a helpful influence on the couple or maybe an opportunity to further teach them. But I do not personally find it very convincing to teach what God's word says in this matter and then contradict that by helping someone to disobey it.

"Only in the Lord" is the Lord's restriction. It is not altogether popular, even with some "church" families. . . But it is the way of obedience and blessing. Disregard and disobedience to it are not unpardonable sins, but then neither is murder.

The names of the apostles given in the N.T. do not seem always to agree. Can you help me straighten these out?

It is not unusual for Bible characters to have more than one name. Saul the Pharisee later became Paul the Christian. Several factors (language, change of calling, the assignment of a more descriptive name, etc.) probably have given rise to the different names, and we do not always know the specific reason. The names of the apostles differ slightly in the lists given in the gospels and in Acts (Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13), and other names may appear elsewhere. Bartholomew is likely the same as Nathanael, mentioned by John (1:45-50). Matthew appears in some of the Gospel accounts as Levi (Cf. Mt. 9:9; Lk. 5:27). Thomas was also known as Didymus (John 20:24), a name meaning "twin." Presumably he was a twin. Simon is called both "the Canaanite" and "the Zealot," and is to be distinguished from the more prominent of the apostles, Simon Peter (also called Cephas and Simeon). Judas the son of James (in Luke's list; Acts 1:13) is apparently the same as Thaddaeus (in Matt. and Mark).

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What The Bible Says About Sex

Maurice R. Irvin

In First Thessalonians 4 Paul discusses standards of Christian conduct.

“Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more . . .

“It is God’s holy will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life” (verses 1-7 NIV).

Note first that in this part of his epistle Paul urged the Thessalonian Christians to be increasingly established in holiness. Obviously proper conduct in the realm of sexual activity is a part of holiness.

But it is clear from the references here that Paul had already discussed this subject of Christian standards for sexual conduct. Why then did he write about it again?

Had Paul received reports that Thessalonian Christians were guilty of misconduct? There is no evidence of this (verse 1). Paul wrote simply because he knew that pressures from the pagan society in which the Thessalonian Christians lived constantly threatened them with such problems. And as a counter influence to those pressures Paul wanted to reinforce Christian standards.

Paul knew that moral conditions in Thessalonica were like those that generally prevailed in that part of the world. There, Sexual promiscuity was openly tolerated. Unmarried young people engaged in sexual activity without much restraint. Unfaithfulness in marriage was common.

Both men and women engaged in prostitution. Archaeological diggings have uncovered amid ancient ruins elaborate brothels adorned with all kinds of lewd pictures on the walls. Homosexuality was extremely prevalent. In some places sexual practices were included in the worship at temples to pagan gods. Strabo, the first-century historian of Rome, declares that as many as one thousand prostitutes were kept at the temple of Aphrodite in Corinth.

Paul was in Corinth when he wrote this letter to the Thessalonians, and he was bound to feel the influence of sexual immorality in that city also. Corinth was a commercial city visited constant-

ly by sailors, tradesmen, and tourists. Opportunities for every kind of sexual activity were offered openly and the word "Corinthian" became a name for a profligate man or a loose woman. Forms of entertainment designed to appeal to prurient interests abounded. Because the moral atmosphere of Corinth reminded Paul of the kinds of influences the believers in Thessalonica must face daily, he wrote to reinforce Christian principles in their minds.

It is for the same reason I discuss these verses. We live in a society that has become as pagan in this respect as that of ancient Corinth. Sex among schoolchildren is common. I heard recently the startling statistic that the age at which the greatest number of pregnancies among unmarried girls occurs today is fourteen!

Infidelity in marriage is accepted as a way of life. Prostitution is everywhere, with call girls even advertising in newspapers sold on newsstands. Books that would have been burned a few years ago now fill the best-seller lists. Sex is openly discussed and displayed in every communications medium.

All these influences can cause problems for Christians. When sex bombards one from billboards and radio and movies and TV and newsstands and books and personal conversations, it produces severe temptations even for the Christian. It can erode our convictions. I think we need to have Biblical precepts in this area of life reaffirmed and reinforced among us.

The basic principle is laid down in verse 3 of our text: "It is God's will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality." Some versions translate the last word "fornication." According to Thayer, this is a general word that refers to illicit sexual intercourse of any kind.

So this is the general principle set forth: A Christian does not participate in any kind of illicit sexual activity.

But how do we know what is illicit and what is not? How do we know what sexual activity is wrong and what is not? Notice that in verses 4-5 the apostle says, "Each of you should learn to control his own body . . . not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God." "Concupiscence," used in the King James Version, just means physical passions. Verse 5 says, "Do not follow physical passions as the basis for your conduct, as do the heathen or the Gentiles who do not know God."

Paul here is implying a comparison between the basis for conduct among pagans, which is physical desire alone, and the standards given to the people of God in His Word. We can know what is illicit and what is not—what is wrong and what is right—by what God has down in His Word.

Paul says the pagans do whatever their physical lusts demand. And all across our nation today this is being seriously proposed as a right basis for sexual practices. I saw on television one night a dramatic program in which a farmer in a small community involved himself in an immoral relationship with a younger married woman.

He was somewhat embarrassed about this in the presence of his neighbors, particularly the church-going neighbors, who were depicted in the play as very queer, very old, very bigoted and ignorant people. In one scene the girl tried to relieve her lover of his embarrassment by saying, "If you really want to make love to me and you find pleasure in it, how can it possibly be wrong?"

Exactly that idea is being repeated over and over now as a code by which to live. "If your flesh craves it and it gives you pleasure, it must be okay." Some people call that physical craving for sex "love," and they say, "If you are really in love while you are doing it, then it is okay." That sounds a bit better, but it is still exactly the same basis for sexual activity that Paul said the pagans followed—physical appetites alone.

I am amazed to find myself on occasion arguing with Christians on psychological or sociological grounds as to why we should live the way God prescribes. I am also amazed to hear Christian people sometimes suggesting that perhaps what God says is wrong may not be so wrong after all!

There are in fact, other good reasons for behaving ourselves: the danger of an unfortunate pregnancy, the threat of disease, the psychological damage that is inflicted on those who are involved in wrong.

But for us there is a reason greater than all these. God has told us what to do and what not to do, and His Word is final.

What are the regulations set down in His Word concerning sexual conduct? First, no sex for the unmarried. This standard presents problems because a young person usually becomes capable of sexual activity and feels drives and desires in this direction for several years before it is possible in our society for him to be married.

But about this the Word of God is clear. First Corinthians 7:2 says, "Since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband." Obviously, then, that text is saying that if a person engages in sexual intercourse without being married, it is sin. According to Deuteronomy 22, in Old Testament times if a girl married and then it was established that she had been involved in sexual activity before she married, she could be stoned to death.

I am not at all impressed by the kids who think they are big shots because they have been involved in promiscuous sexual activity. Any pig or dog can act that way. It takes a real man or a real woman to be strong enough to be pure. Surely any Christian will want to be a real man or a real woman, not just an animal.

But I speak with some sympathy concerning the pressures and problems that develop between couples who love each other, but who are not yet married. When you are really attracted to a person and a love relationship develops, you may begin to experience a real hunger to consummate that relationship in sexual intercourse.

Those desires, those yearnings, are not themselves sinful. You may feel ashamed because you have had a desire to "go all the way." But God put those passions into your nature.

But since you must not give in to these desires until you are married, you must learn not to fan the flames of those desires. That means that you put restraints upon physical contact.

I do not say that couples should not hold hands until they are engaged or kiss until after they are married. But I do say this: one kind of physical contact immediately and naturally leads to another. Holding hands leads to embracing; embracing leads to kissing; at each stage the feeling and desire increases. If you let yourselves progress until you have gone as far as you can go without actual intercourse and you are still months and perhaps years away from marriage, you create a real problem. Either you will get into trouble from desires you can no longer control or you will be continually wrenching your emotions so that arguments and irritability and anxiety will result.

You may enjoy cuddling and kissing. But in fairness to yourself you must exercise restraint and not let these physical contacts bring you right up against the next step of sex until you are married. Some Christian young people need to use more wisdom and exercise more restraint in those things that are potentially dangerous preludes to sex. Do not tell me you can handle necking without ever getting into trouble. I have conducted shotgun weddings for the very same young people who have talked this way with me.

Second among God's standards is that there should not be sex with anyone except one's husband or wife. One of the ten commandments is "Thou shalt not commit adultery." In Bible times people caught in adultery were stoned. Joseph would have nothing to do with Potiphar's wife, saying, "How . . . could I do this great evil, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9 NASB). Any kind of traffic with prostitutes is condemned. Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 6:15 NIV): "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!" Clearly, in God's Word, any sex outside marriage is prohibited.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with sexual activity between a man and a woman who are married to each other. First Corinthians 7:3-5 (NIV) reads: "The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

Sexual activity in marriage can and should be for Christians a beautiful, life-enriching thing. But there is no way sex of any kind outside of marriage is right. And anyone who becomes involved

with a person other than one's own husband or wife is under severe scriptural condemnation.

There is another regulation from Scripture we should consider. No homosexual activity is permitted by Scripture. A young man said to me one day, "I am a homosexual." After we talked for a while I found that he had never participated in any kind of sexual activity with another man or boy. He was only telling me that he had found himself attracted to other men rather than to women. I told him that just having a tendency in that direction was not in itself sinful. I sometimes feel a momentary attraction toward a woman to whom I am not married. That inclination is not sin unless I harbor it, encourage it and act according to it. And a homosexual tendency is not sin unless a person tolerates those inclinations in himself (encourages them and acts on them.)

A person with this tendency should ask God to touch and remedy his personality, giving him the desire and capacity for a relationship with someone of the opposite sex. Above all, he or she must not, ever, practice any homosexual acts. This is specifically forbidden in Leviticus 18:22. And Leviticus 20:13 makes death the judgment for this kind of activity. The New Testament blasts homosexual activity as the lowest, most degraded kind of immorality.

Recently I read a long essay in which Christian leaders were urged to be understanding and sympathetic toward those who, in most cases through no fault of their own, have homosexual inclinations. That advice is valid and needed. But never can we justify sexual acts between persons of the same sex. The Bible firmly denounces this.

These things are not new or unique. They simply reinforce Christian standards for people who are inevitably influenced by the pagan society in which we live.

In another article I shall consider the reason for the regulations and for the sanctity of marriage, two very important considerations.

If you have ever been guilty of moral failure in any way, please understand that there is complete forgiveness available in Jesus Christ. Jesus is as anxious to take from our lives the stain of sexual sin as of any other transgression. Cowper wrote, "There is a fountain filled with blood Drawn from immanuel's veins, And sinners plunged beneath that flood Lose all their guilty stains." If you need cleansing, the tide of His supernatural purification can break over your soul to take *all* guilt away. Open your heart and take this by faith from Him today.

If you are having struggles and problems in any of the areas we have considered, know that Jesus is anxious to help you. We must do our part—avoid subjecting ourselves to temptation, make wise choices and exercise restraints. But if we will let Him help us with these problems, Christ is willing to come into our lives by the Holy Spirit and give divine strength.

—In *Alliance Witness*

The writer is a professor of music at the University of Louisville, and minister of the Highland Church of Christ.



Viewing the News

Ernest E. Lyon

CARL KETCHERSIDE, in an article in the *Christian Standard* for July 4, 1976, gave a fine quotation from Charles Carroll, who was the last of the signers of the Declaration of Independence to die. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of that document Carroll wrote: "Grateful to Almighty God for the blessings which, through Jesus Christ our Lord, He has conferred on my beloved country in her emancipation, and on myself in permitting me under circumstances of mercy to live to the age of eighty-nine years, and to survive the fiftieth year of American Independence adopted by Congress on the fourth of July, 1776, which I originally subscribed on the second of August of the same year, and of which I am now the last surviving signer, I do now here recommend to the present and future generations the principles of that important document as the best earthly inheritance their ancestors could bequeath to them, and pray that the civil and religious liberties they have secured to my country may be perpetuated to the remotest posterity and extend to the whole family of man." Bro. Ketcherside adds this paragraph: "Perhaps the time has arrived for our solemn and prayerful examination of this statement written on the anniversary of our nation. We are in danger of losing our 'civil and religious liberties' not so much at the hand of a superior and external power, but because of the apathy and indifference which is everywhere so apparent."

STARTLING FACTS: One murder in the U. S. A. occurred every 25 minutes last year. One violent crime every 33 seconds, one rape every 10 minutes, a robbery every 71 seconds, a burglary every 10 seconds, a motor

vehicle theft every 32 seconds, an aggravated assault every 70 seconds, and a larceny theft every 56 seconds—all this according to *Police Times*.

AN INTERESTING STORY that I have now seen in several sources says that the *London Observer* of June 13th carried a story saying that the group that planned Jimmy Carter's campaign beginning four years ago was made up of Milton Katz, Averell Harriman, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Nelson Rockefeller. The article was written by an American correspondent who was not gossiping; he was very pleased with the matter.

NEWS COVERAGE? The last week in June the convention of the National Right to Life Committee, the anti-abortion group largely headed by doctors, was held in Boston. Dr. Mildred Jefferson, a black doctor, was re-elected President of the National Right to Life Committee. More than 5,000 were at the convention with 119 speakers from all over the world, yet the *Boston Globe*, which gave over 100 lines and a quarter-page picture to a demonstration in Boston by 3,000 motorcyclists, gave, according to reports, only 10 lines and no picture to a march through the streets of Boston by 5,000 pro-lifer people. The *New York Times* did not even mention the convention.

OIL DEPENDENCY: At the time of the fake Arab embargo the U. S. A. was importing 29 per cent of its oil. Now the figure is 45 per cent, largely due to growing government restraints on our oil industry, it seems to me.

EVANGELICAL NEWSLETTER of July 2, 1976, says that *Newsweek* recently reported that Christian Science practitioners declined 40% in 30 years.

IT HAS BEEN a good while since I took notice in this column of the intense drive of unions to control the government of the U.S.A. Some of the conservative senators are much concerned that unions will eventually control police, firemen, and all branches of the armed services. An organization entitled Americans Against Union Control of Government has been formed and is striving to counteract this tendency.

A RECENT Ben Kaufman column in The Cincinnati Enquirer told of trouble with homosexual ministers in two different denominations. Unlike some of the extreme groups, these two denominations relieved the homosexuals of their positions.

THE MOST CONSERVATIVE of the Lutheran denominations, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, looks more and more like it might split over the efforts of the synod president to control the organization and keep from positions of power those who question inspiration of the Bible. Both sides of the controversy show signs of no compromising and a new group seems in the making.

BEN KAUFMAN recently reported that more than 100 Southern Baptist charismatic pastors met in a convention. The national organization has taken no stand against them, but most of these men are being cast out (with their churches) of local Baptist organizations, according to this and other articles I have read.

THE MASSACHUSETTS Supreme Court has ruled that it is legal to withhold life-prolonging medical therapy from mentally incompetent patients. This may well revive the euthanasia debate and drag it through the courts.

RITUAL FOR DIVORCE is an "alternate ritual" offered in United Methodist Board of Discipleship book to be released in October, according to Evangelical Newsletter. The board maintains that ritual does not constitute endorsement.

RECENTLY in New York's Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine, there was a so-called "Cosmic Mass" for which an admission price of \$5.00 was charged, according to The National Laymen's Digest, which is published by the National Laymen's Coun-

cil of the Church League of America. A large tiered stage was erected and on the top tier was something labeled "God," a bearded hippie-type male enveloped in a vast billow of golden silk and perched slightly above another figure called "Mother of the World." For one hour and a half rainbow-clad worshippers "from the world's five major religious faiths—Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, and Moslems—gyrated, glided, hummed, sang and raised arms to the so-called 'God' who remained impassive for the 90 minutes and to the 'World Mother' who wore a blue blindfold throughout the orgy."

UNICEF DRIVE is coming. The annual drive for money at Halloween by the so-called United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund will be accompanied by oratory about how UNICEF helps the children of the world. What will not be said is that the money is turned over to governments, many of them communist, so it is the government that is helped, not the children—especially, of course, when the government is communist.

SCARY QUOTE: "Soviet ballistic missile submarines now on patrol off both the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts of the U.S. are now referred to inside the Navy as the 'jaws' of Soviet seapower." —Paul Scott. . .

LIBERATION THEOLOGY is another of the fancy names men have dreamed up to cover the basic Marxist doctrines being promulgated. Many magazines have written long articles against this, but it should be sufficient here to warn against it. Reading any of their literature will convince you.

SOME INTERESTING FACTS from a newsletter of the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade: The Soviet Foreign Trade Annual reports that during 1974 the U.S.S.R. imported 7.1 million tons of grain at a cost of 533,376,000 rubles or 75.4 rubles per ton and exported 7 million tons for 622,755,000 rubles at 88.6 rubles per ton. That gave them a net profit of 87,379,000 rubles or about \$125 million. The U.S.S.R. also imported 2,659,000 tons of corn from the U.S. at 55.2 rubles per ton and exported

782,100 tons at 70.9 rubles per ton. "The communist ruler of Russia, Leonid Brezhnev, constantly expresses consternation at the possibility of returning to the bad old days of the Cold war. His concern is justified. It could prevent them from making huge profits from buying and selling U.S. wheat."

MORE THAN A DOZEN children in two years out of the 400 members of the Church of the First Born, a religious community at Cortez, Colorado, have contracted diphtheria, and two have died. The group refuses

inoculations on religious grounds.

DELEGATES to the biennial convention of the 82,000-member Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada voted to permit women to be ordained to the pastoral ministry.

MANY THANKS for the many expressions of interest in this column at the Louisville Fellowship Week. Please keep praying for our country and send in your clippings and questions concerning what is going on. Send them to Ernest E. Lyon, 2629 Valletta Road, Louisville, Ky. 40205.

PROPHECY

Edited by Dr. Horace E. Wood

Able To Distinguish

Winston N. Allen

"And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment, so that ye may approve the things that are excellent (original, distinguish the things that differ) that ye may be sincere and void of offense unto the day of Christ" (Philippians 1:9,10).

One morning after reading Psalms 86 and 90 I went for a walk along a wilderness trail. At one point near a small stream attention was attracted by a brightly colored bird, the like of which I had not seen before in Alaska. Because of its appearance and size and actions I suspected it was some kind of warbler, but what kind? I wanted to identify it and be able to distinguish it from other birds. After studying through binoculars this wonderful example of the Lord's creation, I checked *Peterson's Field Guide to Western Birds* and identified the bird as a Myrtle Warbler.

The experience started a line of thought which grew as I hiked along the trail. The ability to identify, to discern, to distinguish between things that differ is of vital importance both for this present life and the life which is to come.

On my desk are two pieces of rock which look alike but actually are vastly different. One contains flakes of gold. The other contains flakes of iron pyrites or "fools' gold." These are reminders that so many things we see and hear are not what they seem to be. It is easy to be deceived if we are not careful. Satan counterfeits and perverts almost every good thing, with one exception: he cannot counterfeit God's love because he is utterly selfish and insanely proud.

To fail to distinguish between things that differ can be tragic indeed. We know a man who failed to take a compass with him into a wilderness area here in Alaska, and he almost lost his life be-

cause after a few hours he could not distinguish between the right direction and the wrong direction so far as his destination was concerned. Mistaken identity regarding another human being may have far reaching results in this life (Gen. 27:23), but failure to discern who Jesus was and is means the difference between heaven and hell. He said, "except ye believe that I am he (the promised Messiah), ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24b). Failure to discern between truth and a lie regarding things of this life can have tragic results (1 Kings 13), but failure to discern between false teachers and teachers who are true to the Word can mean the difference between salvation and damnation.

In Matthew 24:24 Jesus prophesied, "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect." During this bi-centennial year the pudgy, round-faced, 56-year-old evangelist from South Korea known as Rev. Sun Myung Moon has added thousands of Americans to his global army of followers. He has amassed a fortune that includes at least \$50 million in property. Brainwashed by Moon, thousands of American youths have left their families and joined the Unification church believing that Moon is the new prophet destined to rule the world by 1980. They work 18 hours a day selling candy and flowers and begging for money. Moon claims to be the new Messiah. He says that he is the incarnation of God Himself. He denies the basic doctrines of the Christian faith and engages in spiritualism (see 1 Tim 4:1). He declares, "The whole world is in my hand, and I will conquer and subjugate the world . . . I want to have members under me who will be willing to obey me, even though they may have to disobey their own parents and the Presidents of their own nations." The church has centers in all fifty states.

In our day why are so many unable to distinguish between the true Messiah and false Christs? Why are so many unable to distinguish between truth and error, good and evil, right and wrong? Of course there are many reasons, but the following passages give basic causes:

"But Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29).

"And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error that they should believe a lie, that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thes. 2:11,12).

"And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not fitting" (Rom. 1:28).

". . . holding faith and a good conscience, which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith" (1 Tim. 1:19).

In conclusion, it is a sobering truth to realize that God can discern our thoughts; He knows all about us (Psalm 139). He distinguishes between individuals; we are not lost in the crowd. At the time of the rapture the Lord will distinguish between "the dead in Christ" and those who died in their sins. Regarding the living He

will distinguish between His own who are filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit and those who do not know Him as Savior and do not love His appearing. As a magnet passing over a mixture of sawdust and iron filings distinguishes between the two, so the Lord knows those who are His (1 Thes. 4:13-18).

"Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken and one is left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one left. Watch therefore, for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh" (Matt. 24:40-42).

Here Am I – Send My Sister

Nena Laguisan

"Men, are we saying, 'Lord, here am I, send my sister?'"

(Nena Laguisan is a Filipina, a member of the church in Manila. That congregation supports her as a missionary to the semi-civilized tribal people in their country. Since 1974, when the following article appeared in *Evangelical Thrust* in the Philippines, Nena has moved to another village where there is no church yet. Please pray for guidance: She feels it would be very helpful if she had training as a nurse, and so she is wondering if the Lord wants her to leave her present work for a few years to take up a nursing course. —Alex Wilson)

Before, I was afraid to die but not to kill. Now I am afraid to kill but not to die."

"If I had not come to know God I would still be a headhunter. I just might kill any of you here."

"Although I'm physically weak, I know my soul is strong because I'm always fed with God's Word."

These are some typical testimonies of former headhunters who, by the power of the Gospel, have become worshippers of God.

Five years ago I knew these people only through the slides shown by Emma Ronquillo and other missionaries at Central Bible Institute.

While still a student at CBI I developed a deep burden to become a missionary among the headhunters in Nueva Vizcaya. After my graduation from CBI in 1970, I found myself training for several months in New Tribes Missionary Training Camp in Bataan under Mr. Fred Penoyer.

Then I and other trainees were sent to Palawan for a five-month "internship." I received special training in teaching literacy, in the use of jungle medicine and other skills related to tribal work.

Whenever we visited tribal stations in Palawan the people were surprised to see that most of the trainees were women.

"Where are the men?" they would ask us.

Following my tribal training in Bataan I and another missionary trainee went to Gabong, Nueva Vizcaya. Two weeks after we arrived in Gabong, the senior missionary, Romeo Tiangson, took us out for a week's hiking trip to some of the Ilongot villages. Hiking is much more difficult in Gabong than in Palawan because of the

high mountain trails of the Sierra Madre range. I'm sure I could not have made it in my own strength. But God gave me strength to reach the tribes behind the very high mountains. Everytime we reached a peak my companion would exclaim, "We can almost touch the sky!"

I had to make many adjustments to live with the Ilongots. Their manners and way of life were entirely foreign to me. I suffered what foreign missionaries refer to as "cultural shock."

My burden for the tribes deepened as I lived and tried to identify myself with the Ilongots. I saw in their eyes their longing for salvation, love, compassion, understanding, and deliverance from evil practices which could come only from Jesus Christ.

I struggled to study their language in order to communicate the Gospel in their own tongue. In my early months with the Ilongots I taught Bible study, Sunday school and literacy classes with Mrs. Tiangson as my interpreter. After several months of language study I was able to communicate with them directly.

By attending literacy classes the Ilongots learned to read God's Word in their own tongue. What a joy and encouragement to see these tribesmen reading the Word. No one could be happier than the one who reads God's Word in his own language.

My missionary life with the Ilongots was not without its trials and hardships. The pressure of the work and the strenuous hiking sapped my health. When I spent a number of weeks in Manila for rest I was overwhelmed by the temptation to give up. While getting my things ready for the return to the mountains a time of great testing came. After leaving the mountains, I had paid a short visit to my family in Cagayan Valley. I was tempted to stay home and give up missionary work. But God showed me that it was only a selfish desire. I was reminded of His word, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me . . ." Also, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Aside from the spiritual conflicts there were physical dangers. Once I almost drowned while crossing a swift river. If it were not for the timely help of Romy Tiangson I might have passed on to eternity then.

Another incident that almost ended my life and my missionary career happened in August, 1974. I had a dental appointment but my scheduled flight was cancelled due to bad weather. A few days later, Mike Duvall, an American missionary pilot of New Tribes Mission braved the storm and took a chance. A few moments after the plane took off from Lipuga airstrip a strong wind hit the plane, tossing it about like a piece of cork on a stormy sea. This continued for several minutes. Fearing the plane would crash, I breathed a prayer! "Lord, You know what's best for us . . . any moment we will be with You!"

But the iron-willed pilot did not panic. He managed to control the plane until we arrived at the Aritao base safely.

From my experiences I have learned that God gives grace to bear every trial He sends my way.

I am now stationed in Lipuga (one day's hike from Gabong) with Aida Bugarin, a missionary trainee, working with me. I conduct Bible study, train young Ilongots for leadership, teach literacy and strengthen believers. My stay with the Ilongots has made me understand why missionaries invest and "waste" their lives among the headhunters. God's love for the Ilongots constrains them to stay.

The hills formerly torn by strife and tribal wars and engulfed by spiritual darkness and ignominy are now God's habitation. God's love is sweeping across the mountains, turning headhunters into God-lovers and worshippers.

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Robert L. Garrett

Salisbury, Rhodesia

August 9

A new congregation has gotten off to a good start in Zengeza Township. Zengeza is the newest or Salisbury's satellite African townships and is still under process of construction. It is also the farthest away from the city center. With it the city hopes to take care of part of the terrific backlog of demand for housing. Several of our families have moved out there from Highfields, Glen Norah and Harare and perhaps more will be following as more houses become available. Some of the families moved there late last year.

The Lord led and blessed and the Superintendent helped in finding a temporary meeting place. So the Zengeza Church of Christ was formed and began meeting on the 18th of August in the building housing the Woman's Club. A good number of supporters came out that day from the other Salisbury congregations and they had a grand meeting. I visited them on the 8th of this month and found a zealous little group. I believe there is a good future for a growing congregation there. Pray for the leaders such as Alouis Nyakudya and Edward Raradza with their families.

I marked off the foundations of the new Children's Home at Arcadia last month and the boys of the home have done some of the digging on the foundation trenches on Saturdays. It is really a bit too much for them so we employed some labor to complete the digging. Then during the school holidays the boys will help in pouring the concrete foundations. Your prayers are needed for this work.

I want to share an excerpt from a recent letter written by some missionaries here whom we know. They sent it to their prayer-backers.

"We think it is very important to tell you that shortly after most of you received our previous prayer-letter, we began to experience an encouraging lifting of the pressure that we had felt for so long. It is difficult to explain—both of us for several months had been under a certain heaviness and hindrance in all our ministry and even in living.

"As the burden began to lift, neither of us at first felt free to talk about it. Finally, after a few weeks, we compared notes and learned that at a certain time both of us had been aware of a lifting of the burden. What we want you to know is that it is no coincidence that this occurred just after most of you received that prayer-letter. Quite a number of you wrote us then that you were renewing your prayer for us with a fresh sense of urgency. God responded to your prayers and we felt a tremendous release."

In like manner, Ruth and I want to send an SOS to you. For during the past couple of months we too have often felt great heaviness and despondency. Waves of depression have at times overcome us, especially me. Life seemed unmanageable, and my faith has been weak. The Lord is faithful, and has brought us through such periods. Yet far too often I have succumbed to anxious discouragement. Oh, part of it has been due to a sickness we had for a while, which causes extreme fatigue and often depression; and we also faced more problems than usual. But that is only part of the story; and since when do problems justify unbelief and worry?

So we ask you to pray that we may grow in faith, courage, wisdom and love. The other day as I reviewed the past weeks, the thought came to mind that in recent months we lost two of our staunchest prayer-warriors: my mother in April, and sister Julieta Young of Manila in March. Could that fact at least partially explain our recent weakness? We don't know. But one thing is clear: we all need to be upholding one another in the body of Christ. "I know that through *your prayers* and the help given by the *Spirit of Jesus Christ*, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance" (Phil. 1:19). Many thanks.

J. C. Shewmaker

Bulawayo, Rhodesia

July 27

According to plan, our new building was officially opened on June 13, with 94 at Sunday School, 58 at the morning service and 165 at the afternoon opening service. Brother Loy Mitchell of Umtali was our guest speaker. It was a wonderful service of praises and thanksgiving to God, ringing from grateful hearts. We have not since that day reached the same number at Sunday school, but seem to have reached a plateau in the 70's whereas it was 50-60 previously. However, our present target is 100, which we hope to reach this year, with God's help.

At close range, we have a Vacation Bible School planned during our school vacation next month. Our young women teachers and others are working hard to follow up absentees. Also, they

plan other activities for the children at their homes.

It is very difficult for us to appraise the political situation at present; however, our young men are still being called up by the army to protect our borders. We get a few odd incidents around, but apparently no wholesale killings.

Georgia Hobby

Livingstone, Zambia

July 22.

On July 9, Alvin was burning dry grass around the borders of his garden in order to destroy insects. The job was finished, lacking a minute or two, and he did not know there was fire near him. But a blade of grass must have revived and caught a nylon shoe lacc, then his trousers which were part synthetic. Immediately he was blazing. Bro. Lester Brittell who had just left his work and gone down to the garden nearby, extinguished the blaze and brought him to the hospital. He has burns over 20-25% of his body. We do not know how deep they are, but the doctor says all of the burned leg area will require skin grafts. Most of his left leg and the inside of the right leg and the right knee and the left hand are burned.

Then, day before yesterday a new emergency arose. Perhaps due to chilling, the prostate gland, which was already enlarged, almost cut off the urine flow. We asked all day for a doctor because he was having severe pains in the lower abdomen and right kidney. But one of the two doctors was away and the other was grossly over-worked. Finally at 10:30 p.m. he came and put a catheter in. But he said it has to stay in until prostate surgery because if he takes it out the constriction of the urethra will come again.

The surgeons here (one of them is leaving day afer tomorrow and then there will be only one again) are not urology specialists and nursing care is lax. We have almost no choice but to get him immediately to the U.S.A.

Ken and Lisa Elder are leaving here on July 29, and because this is a medical emergency we were also able to get on this direct flight. We plan to leave here a week from today, and with stops at Lusaka, Frankfort and Chicago, arrive in Little Rock at 8:43 p.m. on July 30th. The air lines will furnish a wheel chair at each stop. It is going to be a very tiring trip.

You can write us c/o Geyer Springs Church of Christ, 6004 West 53rd St., Little Rock, Ark. 72209. We hope to return here when Alvin is fully recuperated. While we are away, Miss Elaine Brittell has agreed to live in our house.

Leonard and Mabel Bailey

Bulawayo, Rhodesia

July 15.

The security situation is that since President Machel closed Mozambique border with Rhodesia and harbours and encourages those who have undergone guerilla training outside Rhodesia, a few in Russia or China, but mostly in Tanzania with communist trainers. These people can now make raids into Rhodesia and run back

across the border and be safe. This was confined to the North East of the country until Mozambique became independent. They look for isolated white people they can murder but in actual fact murder more black people who oppose them.

Figures taken from the local newspaper, dated July 7, I think show the situation more clearly than I could explain. Security forces (black and white) who have lost their lives since 1972, 124. Guerillas killed, 1041 in the same period (399 since January 1976). Since 1972, 401 civilians have been murdered by guerillas, all but 30 black.

We do not know when we will be able to make extended visits in the rural areas again, but hope to be able to do more in Bulawayo in the meantime. Life in and around the city is more or less normal and we anticipate no danger at present.

Please pray for the work here that the Christians may have courage to be faithful. May the Lord's blessing be with each one of you is our prayer.

Thos. W. Hartle

Cape Town, R.S.A.

July 21.

I have again had the privilege of showing a series of film strips at the city chest hospital, Green Point, to the patients at Ward 5. About 40 patients attended and enjoyed seeing it. Once again there was wonderful singing, as was the experience at Ward 2 on the evening of June 23, as I told you in last month's report.

Families are still requesting cottage meetings in their homes, and these contacts are augmented with requests for film strip series. Tract distribution, as a part of evangelical outreach, continues in hospital wards, supermarkets, privately to friends, or wherever opportunities present themselves. Our regular service attendances are still "fairly good," for which we are very grateful.

There has been no further development with regard to our new building project due to the fact that as yet we are unable to find a suitable contractor to do the foundation portion of the project within the limits of our finances.

Rena Stewart-Brown

Cape Province, S. Africa

July 7.

Our V.B.S. has again been a great success this year. God still answers prayer. Thank you for the greatest contribution of all (your prayers) for this great work for our Lord each year.

We had many young women who are only babes in Christ, helping with the teaching. I am sure, they themselves, after a week of teaching, can feel some growth of their own, in Christ.

Work in the kitchen went smoothly, by ladies who when the school ended would go home tired and aching, to do their own work before beginning the next day of the VBS at 9:30. But all this does not go unnoticed by God; He blesses more than what we do, think, or ask, if done by a happy and willing heart.

Elaine Brittell

Livingstone, Zambia

July 18.

The *Word and Work* is always such a comfort and blessing, to read and to glean much spiritual food. Thanks to all who continually write the articles so all readers can be strengthened and encouraged to "be ready" for the great day when our Lord comes to gather all the saved ones to be with Him forever. May the Lord fill each of us with a steadfast faith and true love for Him, so that we may continue "faithful to the end," no matter what testing we must pass through.

Addie Brown

Salisbury, Rhodesia

July 22.

This is a pretty winter morning in Rhodesia. It hasn't been cold enough to kill our tomato plants in the garden so far. Daddy Brown has been to his Bible class in Highfield this morning. There have been four young people from that class baptized recently. There have been two white people baptized recently here, and another lady is to be baptized this coming Sunday. Thank he Lord for drawing people to Himself.

The ladies' Tuesday class is doing well. There were twelve of us Tuesday and two away, one on holiday and the other was ill. We are studying the book of Ruth at the moment. We are gaining good lessons for ourselves on family relationships, attitudes and making right decisions.

Donald Harris

Salisbury, Rhodesia

July 24.

We have bought another car as the '67 Cortina was going to cost \$500 to overhaul the engine. Brother Lyon from Marandellas went back to the states and we bought his '72 Peugeot station wagon for \$1800 (\$2800 U.S.). That may seem like a lot but not here. It is valued at \$2400 at least. Cars are very high here. We sold the Cortina for \$550 and raised the rest of \$1000 here. We still owe him \$800 and that is \$1200 U.S.

Dollie Garrett

Salisbury, Rhodesia

July 27.

We have just come back from teaching Scripture at two different schools. Donald and Delores taught their classes at Ard-bennie and then went on to Park Town where they do their grocery shopping on Tuesday and Thursday. They drop me off at Sunning Dale where I teach my class of forty-five little ones from 9:00-9:30. Usually they are finished and back to pick us up by the time my helper, Yvonne, and I are finished. We will now have a cup of tea and Yvonne, Delores, and I have a Bible class for half an hour. Alice, Yvonne's sister-in-law, usually comes to join us. We are studying Romans.

Forgiveness; Human And Divine

Terrance Tiessen

"To err is human, to forgive divine." So said the famous English poet, Alexander Pope, and his words have been frequently quoted in the years since he wrote them. Because it is human to make mistakes, we can indeed be thankful that God forgives. What some of us forget, however, is that it is also necessary for humans to forgive those who wrong them.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN FORGIVENESS

Dr. S. I. McMillen points out in his book *None of These Diseases* that many of our physical illnesses are related to spiritual problems and to sin. One of these problems is bitterness, the unwillingness to forgive someone who has wronged us. This can result in such difficulties as ulcerative colitis, toxic goiters, high blood pressure and physical fatigue.

Holding a grudge against someone is a stress on our emotional and physical health. If we allow that bitterness to occupy too much of our attention it drains us emotionally and eventually produces depression. Nothing is enjoyable any longer because our minds are preoccupied with the wrong (real or imaginary) which someone has done to us. Solomon spoke of this when he wrote: "Better a vegetable meal where love is than a fattened ox and hate with it" (Prov. 15:17, Berkeley). We can enjoy just a salad or sandwich when we are free of bitterness in our hearts more than a smorgasbord when we hold a grudge against another person.

For purely physical reasons we cannot afford not to forgive anyone. Forgiveness may well be an effective medical prescription for some of your health problems. But there is a much more important spiritual reason why we dare not keep bitterness in our hearts.

THE NEED FOR DIVINE FORGIVENESS

There has been a tendency in recent years for people to refuse any responsibility for sin or for any form of personal inadequacy. Someone else is always to blame. It may be the environment, the situation in one's family or one's neighborhood that is blamed. It may even be heredity: "What can you expect with parents like mine?" In one way or another people remove from themselves any sense of guilt for their own actions and minimize the seriousness of sin.

The Bible leaves us in no doubt that we are all sinners by nature and by act. We become more aware of how true this is when we consider the five words used in the Greek New Testament for *sin*. The most common word is *hamartia* which means, basically, to miss the target. All of us fall short even of the standards we set for ourselves. How well, for instance, have you kept your New Year's resolutions? Many of these are broken by January 2. How much more we fall short of the standards God has set for us!

The second word, *parabasis*, means "stepping across" and is often translated transgression (e.g., Rom. 4:15). This pictures for us the line that runs between right and wrong over which we sometimes step. There is a strong tendency in our day to relativism, which denies that the line is clearly drawn between right and wrong. It is true that it is not always clear, but there are many areas in which the Bible makes it clear which is the right action. Are you always on the right side of that line?

The idea of "slipping across" is expressed by the word *paraptoma*, which is sometimes translated trespass (e.g. Eph. 2:1). There are times when we do not deliberately step across the line that God has drawn between right and wrong—we just slip across. In a moment when we are caught off guard, we respond with words or thoughts or actions that are wrong, and which we did not plan, but which we slipped into. That too is sin.

More serious is *anomia*, lawlessness (Titus 2:14). This is the sin of the person who knows what is right but who deliberately and purposefully does what he knows to be wrong.

Perhaps the most difficult area of all is that which is spoken of as *opheilema* or debt. It is this that we speak of when we pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). This refers to our failure to pay God what we owe Him in worship and obedience, our failure to do our duty. Sin is not only doing what God tells us not to do, but it is also not doing what He does tell us to do. Who of us can say that we have always, without fail, loved God with all of our energies and loved our fellowmen as we love ourselves? That is a debt we have not paid.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN & DIVINE FORGIVENESS

It is there in the Lord's prayer that we see how important our forgiving of our fellowmen is to our spiritual condition. Jesus goes on to explain to His disciples why we need to ask God to forgive us as we forgive others who have wronged us or who have not given us our due. It is because God will not forgive us if we do not forgive others (Matt. 6:14, 15).

Jesus is not suggesting that God's forgiveness is to be earned by our forgiveness. His forgiveness is always of grace, it is undeserved. It is given to us because of Christ's death which bore the penalty for our sins, making it possible for God to remain just and still forgive us. But what Jesus is teaching is that when we ask forgiveness we must be genuinely repentant of our sin. A genuine repentance will make us aware of how great our own sin is and of how great is God's forgiveness. In comparison, we will see how small is the wrong done to us by our fellows and our grateful hearts will gladly forgive them for the small wrong they have done to us.

Jesus told His disciples a story to illustrate the situation that we are in when we have been forgiven our sin against God by His grace, through faith in Christ (Matt. 18:23-35). He told of a man who owed a king a debt that he could not possibly repay. When he asked for mercy he was forgiven the whole debt and his record

was erased. That same man then met a fellow servant who owed him just a small amount but he refused to give that man time to make payment and had him thrown in prison. Of course, the king was very angry when he heard of what had happened and threw the man whom he had forgiven into prison. And then the Lord applies the story: "And so shall my heavenly Father do to you if each of you does not heartily forgive his brother" (Matthew 18:35). How many times have we asked God *not* to forgive us, by praying those words—"Forgive us our debts *as we forgive our debtors*"!

We are sinners and we need God's forgiveness. We who believe on Christ stand between the great forgiveness we have already received and the forgiveness we need every day of our lives. Out of gratitude for God's forgiveness in the past and in repentance for our sin in the present, we must forgive anyone who has wronged us. We need to forgive; first, because we have been forgiven, and second, because we still need to be forgiven.

We can afford not to forgive men only if we do not need God to forgive us.

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NEWS AND NOTES

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

Buechel Church of Christ, Louisville: The school of Biblical studies will open at Buechel church at 7:30 in the evening on Sept. 7. Classes are planned for beginners as well as the more advanced students. You may receive an application by calling the church office: 454-4724. Instructors are: Earl Mullins, Michael Sanders, Dennis Allen and Jerry Carmichael.

The coming of the Melody Boys from Farmersburg, Ind., on Aug. 29 is looked forward to with pleasant anticipation. Echo Valley Camp reports five new Christians in one week, and some others from previous weeks as well.

Haralan Popov will be at Buechel Aug. 28 for a special meeting explaining the condition of believers behind the iron curtain. He will give his testimony of 13 faith-challenging experiences in Communist prisons. He has written a book, *Tortured for His Faith*. Come and hear his incredible testimony.

Highview Church of Christ, Louisville: Highview reports one baptized at camp the week of August 2 and one at church on August 8.

Iroquois Church of Christ, Louisville: Iroquois church started a few years ago with very small attendance. It has increased gradually till in the bulletin of Aug. 8 an attendance of 54 is recorded, 25 of whom were children (this during the vacation season).

In July five of the brethren rededicated their lives to the Lord.

Bro. Joe Blansett from Maple Manor Home's Senior Division where he has been Superintendent for some time, brought the message of the Lord to Iroquois, on July 18.

Rangeland Church of Christ, Louisville: Bro. Boyd reported that Family Week at Woodland Bible Camp was a great blessing to many.

Bro. Boyd is scheduled to speak in a number of meetings among which are: three nights at Cleborne, Texas, Sept. 8-10, a series of meetings at Southside Church of Christ, Abilene, Texas, Sept. 12-19, two nights at La Grange, Ky., Sept. 24-25, Ormsby Ave. in Louisville, Oct. 10-15, and one night at the Louisiana Lectureship at Glenmora, Nov. 18.

A young lady was baptized into

Christ following the morning worship, Aug. 8. We praise God for this demonstration of her love for Jesus Christ as evidenced by her decision to gladly obey Him, "being buried with him through baptism into death" (Rom. 6:3-4) and being "raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). Church attendance at Rangeland hovers around 100. This indicates considerable growth since the beginning of the work there.

Highland Church of Christ, Louisville: One of the children baptized at Woodland Bible camp was from Highland church.

Bro. Francis Holdeman, P.O. Box 190, Boothville, La., has had the church building where he does mission work destroyed twice by tornadoes. The Church of Christ Bible Chair in Hammond, La., is trying to raise \$7,000 to rebuild the church again. Bro. Holdeman was with us in the Louisville Fellowship week a few years ago. Send any contributions to Bro. Holdeman at the above address.

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.: There have been a lot of baptisms. There are meetings throughout the week in people's homes. Some are planned primarily for unbelievers. One is a Bible study. One is especially for believers and consists of worship, exhortation, sharing helpful experiences. Most baptisms are a result of personal work. Many are baptized at the beach between 10:00 p.m. and midnight. I wonder how the children will remember these times when they are grown, as I recall my brother's baptism in the river. —Mary Lewter, Aug. 13.

P.S.: At this church Billy and I are "old folks." I teach a ladies' Bible class once a week, and a S.S. class. Billy teaches a S.S. class. We attend Sunday morning and evening services and Wed. and Thurs. evening services. But instead of feeling tired I feel refreshed.

"Words of Life": Good reports keep coming in from the radio broadcasts. The expense is great but not so great perhaps as putting up expensive buildings in many countries. In either case who can count pennies with the Lord?

PLEASE NOTE: When Copies of Word & Work are returned to us because you have not given us a change of address, it costs us 25c each!! **HELP!**

For many of us financial contribution is all that we can do toward carrying out Matthew 28:19-20.

Portland Avenue Church of Christ, Louisville: The meeting with Bro. Kitzmiller closed Aug. 8. It was very well attended and greatly appreciated. There have been two baptisms at Portland (one during the meeting).

The following week was the annual Fellowship Week. It was greatly enjoyed. God blessed the services and fellowship. He also blessed the ladies who took care of the preparation and serving of the noon meals. Many congregations had a part in that. The food was much enjoyed. Two women, Sis. Vertna Nation from Louisville and Sister Beverly Knecht from Utica had charge of the serving. Everything was well taken care of, even the one meal where a good number more than had been counted turned up in time to eat.

On Aug. 22 there were three immersions into Christ at Portland after the morning service. The three boys were grandsons of two former members, now for some years with the Lord. Bro. Campbell and Bro. Brackett must have rejoicing in Heaven with the angels at the sight.

Borden, Ind.: A belated report of Bro. Hovan's meeting there. It was Bro. Hovan's pleasure to be there to see the harvest of seed sown before his arrival. The first Sunday of the meeting one placed membership and eight young people were baptized. Another membership and another baptism took place later in the week. —From The Lamplighter of July 20.

Henryville, Ind.: One new birth is reported from Henryville, Aug. 15. The work goes on steadfastly in the hands of Bro. Howard T. Marsh, a faithful servant of the Lord.

Jennings, La.: I am grateful for this publication and for the articles written; the news of the missionaries and admonitions to us as Christians.

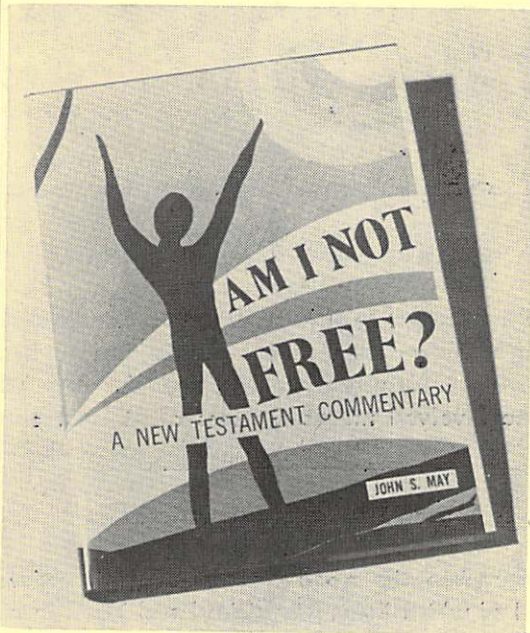
May God bless you in your work. —Roberta Smith Koll.

Keep up the good news. I enjoy the articles so much. It is a help in my growth in Christ.

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