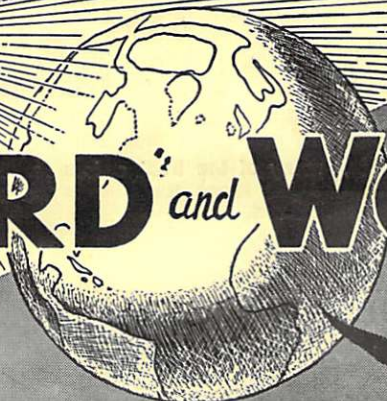


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APRIL, 1985

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and John Stott, who admit to the same spiritual dryness and resistance that all of us Christians experience from time to time. It is some encouragement to know that other saints have found times when it was not a delight to pray. Satan is using the same battle-plan against us, then, as he has down through the ages. Even with Satan, there is nothing new, under the sun. Other saints have fallen asleep on their knees, or felt that the heavens were "shut up", or been distracted by circumstances or mind wandering; anything to keep us from pulling the bell rope to God's throne of grace.

SIX THINGS WE CAN DO ABOUT IT

Bro. Alex Wilson then gave six practical suggestions to help in this situation. I will only name them briefly, but they warrant our acceptance:

1. Pray, anyway. One man advised that "if you don't feel like praying, then you should pray until you do." We have to do other things, such as work or school, whether we feel like it or not, so why not pray to our God?

2. Tell God how dis-inclined you feel, since He already knows about it anyway. This will rid you of any self-charge of hypocrisy, and will warm the heart a bit to make the praying easier and more satisfying.

3. Use scriptures to prepare the heart to pray. Maybe it will be scriptures that fit our mood. Better yet, scriptures of great promise to prayer. We may need words that help us count our blessings, or that help the heart well up in praise to the Almighty, Whom we are going to approach in prayer.

4. Search to see if some sin is the culprit. A "dry" time spiritually does not necessarily indicate a presence of sin, but we do well to ask God to "search me, and know my thoughts," and then "lead us in the way everlasting."

5. There are some practical ways to help us pray. If we quickly go to sleep while kneeling, then stand up a while, or even walk about as we pray. If possible pray aloud; it has a wonderful effect on keeping us on our subject. We might need a like-minded partner to join us, on a regular basis.

6. Resist Satan. He is the enemy! Our wrestling is against him, and we need to remember it. Long ago it was written "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest Christian on his knees." So his chief effort is to knock us off of our knees and stop the flow of divine power. We have already been told to "resist the devil, and he will flee from us."

In summary, I have used the example of physical weakness to show how difficult it is to pray in that situation. The sermon listed later, shows a parallel to spiritual weakness, and how it, even moreso, can cripple our prayer life. But there are listed things that we can do about it.

Personally, I want to thank the Lord for His special blessing to me in my sudden surgery, and thank the countless number of friends who have supported me by their sincere prayers. God is so good!



Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

What is fellowship? Are there degrees of fellowship? Does fellowship require complete acceptance of the one being fellowshiped?

Fellowship is translated from the Greek word, *koinonia*. Thayer's lexicon gives: "Fellowship, association, community, joint participation, intercourse; . . . 1. the share which one has in anything, participation . . . 2. intercourse, fellowship, intimacy . . . 3. a benefaction jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution. . . ." We are concerned here with Christian fellowship, of course. Fellowship speaks of the sense of relationship that Christians have with other Christians, the sense of partnership that is felt and experienced between Christians. We have fellowship with others when there is a sharing with them in relationship, activity, or purpose. Collections or contributions are also called fellowship because one thereby has a part or share in the work for which the contribution was taken.

It is evident from the nature of things and from the usage of Scripture that fellowship is possible in many degrees. There is a fellowship which exists between all true Christians everywhere, simply because we are all members of the same family. We share in the same Father, have the same Elder Brother. Many of us will never meet, never know each others needs or even of the others' existence in this life, but the fact remains that we share a common salvation. All Christians have been "called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:8). Because of the separation in time, distance, our ignorance of men's hearts (who is or is not a Christian), or other factors, this kind of fellowship is somewhat general and exists only to a very limited degree. We acknowledge it, on rare occasions we may rejoice in it, but the limitations of our present fleshly body keep us from much present benefit.

At the other end of the spectrum are those situations where Christians of like mind, like commitment to the Lord, like understanding of His word, all living closely together, sharing spiritual responsibilities and blessings together, experience fellowship together in a single congregation or even as part of a congregation. In this case the sharing has reached a high degree and the sense of fellowship is very strong.

Between these two extremes there are many degrees of fellowship. Our sharing may be limited by lack of opportunity, failure to claim available opportunities, differences which hinder (some righteously, some unrighteously), and other things. Some fellowship may be

THE WORD AND WORK

"A monthly magazine set to declare the whole counsel of God."

Wm. Robert Heid, Editor

The Word and Work (USPS 691-460) is published monthly except December for \$4 per year, bundles of 10 or more to one address \$3.50, by the Word and Work, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, Ky. 40212. Second class postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

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

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God's Family

W. R. H.

WHEN I AM WEAK...

I recently read the statement: "Seven days without prayer makes one weak." The author was speaking spiritually, of course, and it was a reminder of the constant need that our souls have to be in communion with God. We who have learned how abundantly our Father answers our feeble asking, ought never forget that we have an ever-present "rope" with which we can ring the bell of heaven and summon help. One of the first things I learned in the recent hospitalization, was to feel free to "ring for the nurse, and ask for what I wanted."

However, there is a weakness of body that is not at all akin to a weakness of faith. There are protracted periods of time when we really need for others to be bearing us up to the throne of grace because we aren't able to properly pray for ourselves. I speak of physical weakness. Not so weak as to neglect thanks for the food, yet there was a time of fatigue, some misery, and an inability to even try to concentrate in prayer. One might expect that time in the hospital would be a chance to catch up on reading, or on meditation and planning, or visitation, and especially praying. I want to confess that it wasn't necessarily so. The visiting, of course was delightful, because the guests did the talking and encouraging. But for my part, my conversation to them left something to be desired. And to read; who wants to read when one's arms are too tired to hold a book, and the mind is disinterested? No wonder, then, that praying had to suffer most of all, for praying is hard spiritual work.

I think of many sick folks I have visited down through the years, and how little I was able to relate to them then. Sometimes I would even forget to suggest praying, until they would ask for it. Like Moses, holding up his hands to God during the battle against Amalek, the sick ones need an Aaron and Hur to hold up their arms during the battle of the hospital. We need not wonder if the bedfast would appreciate our prayers, we can be assured of it! The convalescing one can use help in making his joy and gladness known unto the Father.

DISINCLINED TO PRAY?

Just this evening Bro. Alex Wilson gave a splendid message of encouragement for us, in the event that (sick or well) we might feel disinclined to pray. Reminding us that prayer is the most useful of the spiritual exercises, and that Satan is set to thwart us in any way, he pointed to the experiences of two great men of prayer, George Mueller

largely theoretical (that is, if we lived in the same community or worshipped in the same area, we would enjoy much sharing together), and some of it may be very practical (that is, we actually work together in a given situation). One may sometimes have a limited fellowship with another because fully sharing would involve that one in wrongdoing. An example might be as follows: A recognizes B as a Christian, but B engages in a practice A believes to be wrong. Full fellowship would involve A in sin (whether actually a wrong practice or simply one he believes to be wrong). A does not sin in judgment on B by denying he is a Christian, but he does refuse to share in the particular practice.

One thing should be made clear in the matter of fellowship. While true Christian fellowship can only exist between those who are truly Christians, the denial of fellowship *in a given matter* is not necessarily a denial that another is a Christian. Of course there are those who are extreme and legalistic who make virtually any error or wrong practice a denial of salvation, but we are trying to look at this matter scripturally. A Christian may do wrong without losing his status as a Christian. My responsibility is to help him as a Christian brother, bring him to repentance if possible, but I must not have fellowship with his wrongdoing.

Many discussions of fellowship seem to ignore the Christian's responsibility to refrain from wrongdoing. The idea exists that fellowship is total or else it is not fellowship at all. It is believed that if I fellowship a man, I must accept him sin and all. Such is simply not the case. The N.T. teaches withdrawal of fellowship in certain cases of sin in the church (e.g., 1 Cor. 5), but such a one is to be dealt with as a brother (2 Thess. 3:15). In other words, the issue is not whether he is a Christian. The withdrawal of fellowship by the whole church can take place without such a denial. He is a Christian, but he is denied a wide range of sharing with fellow Christians. If such an extreme case does not deny that he is a brother, then a much more limited refusal to share in some matter can hardly be a denial of brotherhood.

There are many foolish and sinful things that have caused breaks in fellowship which ought not do so. These things have been characterized more by hatred and other works of the flesh than by Christian love. There is no doubt that Christians need to be careful to keep the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3) and to work at attaining the unity of the faith (Eph. 4:13). Surely right-thinking Christians are concerned about having, maintaining, and encouraging proper fellowship between Christians. Nothing in this answer, therefore, is meant to justify any unrighteous lack of concern for fellowship.

At the same time we must remember that we are not to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). Many discussions of this matter seem to overlook this side of things. Those who contend for purity in the church, no matter how lovingly, are sometimes regarded as disturbers of fellowship (an old tactic of the devil, cf. I Kgs. 18:16-18). Even in a single congregation there may be limitations on fellowship, not always because some are narrow and vicious but because of the disobedience of others. Examine the letters to the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 2 & 3) and it will be seen that

fellow-worshippers even in the same congregation cannot in the name of fellowship go along with the standards of the crowd. It is not merely a question as to whether others are Christians. I see no evidence that the faithful ones (at Thyatira or Sardis, e.g.) were in a campaign to deny that the wrong-doers might be Christians. Even so, light cannot have fellowship with darkness and the righteous must have had only a limited fellowship with those doing wrong. Insofar as they did right there could be fellowship, but in the wrongs the faithful had to pursue another course.

There are plenty of people who give evidence of knowing the Lord, and among certain religious groups I recognize that there are probably many Christians. Salvation is by grace of God to those who believe, not by human perfection. If God's grace does not cover a lot of error and failure, none of us will make it. An erring Christian is still a Christian. Within the requirements of the N.T. as to what constitutes a Christian, I am not in the business of pronouncing who is or is not a Christian. In the final sense only the Lord knows hearts for this kind of judging. There are many cases where we simply have to reserve judgment—we do not know! Certain conduct may give evidence of unfaithfulness and may cause us to fear for the spiritual safety of individuals, but we do not know at what point one is "spewed out" by the Lord. If the Lord receives an individual, I do not want to be guilty of denying fellowship to the extent that I can righteously exercise it. On the other hand, recognizing a person as a Christian—or possibly as a Christian—does not require that I accept his error too. Fellowship exists, but it also has limitations.

It may be that another gives solid evidence of being a Christian and under many circumstances we have fellowship. We might enjoy prayer together, discussions in God's word, a share in many spiritual activities. But he may also be affiliated with a particular religious body doctrinal posture or engage in religious practices which I believe to be wrong. When I must meet him on those grounds, our fellowship is interrupted. While not denying that he is a Christian, I nevertheless cannot go along in these matters. I may in love rebuke such. I have not denied him fellowship as a Christian but a limit is put on our fellowship. Some would suggest that we ought to be "big enough" simply to overlook the differences. In some cases we can—each can hold his view but does not involve the other in wrongdoing. In other cases, in the name of toleration and fellowship we may submit to a participation in a religious situation that violates either our conscience or some clear teaching of the Lord. That is not being "big" but foolish.

There is still another facet to fellowship. It does not rule out the use of sound judgment. Let us say, for example, that A is a Christian but he does not have much talent at teaching and does not have a good understanding of the word. He is often prone to make off-key statements or propose misleading ideas. Is the leadership of the congregation required, in the name of fellowship, to put him in a teaching position? The answer is evident. If they seek to shut him out of participation in the work of the congregation for selfish reasons, that is wrong; but if they seek to be wise, recognize the limitations he has and seek his sharing in the work in other ways, the case is far different.

Fellowship is a big topic. In the name of supposed truth and purity, it can be reduced to "me and my wife, my son John and his wife; us four—no more." Hatred of brethren can occur. On the other hand, in the name of broadmindedness it is often urged in such a way as to make any attempt at scripturalness seem evil. There is a unity that belongs to all believers in Christ, but there are occasions when withdrawal of fellowship from an offender is a righteous course. In short, we can go to extremes, either way. Fellowship can be sweet and precious or it can be so non-existent as to be meaningless. As in all issues, we need to stay close to the word. We need to be careful about generalities and broad statements which do not admit of exceptions.

In the fullest sense, two cannot walk together except they be agreed (at least on such basic issues as direction, speed, etc.). Agreement is necessary in certain basic spiritual issues if we are to do much walking together. Full fellowship one with another comes from my walking in the light and my brother walking in the light (1 Jn. 1:5-7). Either one of us can create a hindrance to fellowship.

113 N. 6th St., Oakdale, La. 71463



THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

"Be Led by the Spirit"

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live (habitually) according to the flesh. For if you live (habitually) according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you (habitually) put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are (adult) sons of God. (Romans 8:12-14, New King James Version with added words in parentheses to give more fully the force of the original Greek).

On the basis of the wonderful background of the first eleven verses of this chapter, Paul here starts with telling us we are debtors. He then states the negative side of this—to what we are not debtors—and then implies through the verses to come to whom we are debtors. Let us remind ourselves first of who (or rather "Who") we are in debt to, but with the preliminary reading of this passage again in the Amplified Version, which is an attempt to show as fully as possible the full meaning of the Greek (a great help to anyone studying the Bible; get one!). Here is how the AMP states these three verses: "So then, brethren, we are debtors, but not to the flesh—we are not obligated to our carnal

nature – to live a life ruled by the standards set up by the dictates of the flesh. For if you live according to (the dictates of) the flesh you will surely die. But if through the power of the (Holy) Spirit you are habitually putting to death—making extinct, deadening—the (evil) deeds prompted by the body, you shall (really and genuinely) live forever. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”

Yes, we are debtors—to God the Father, to Christ the Son, to the Holy Spirit. God the Father so loved us He gave the most precious thing in the universe, His Son, to be one of us and die for us; Christ the Son loved us and gave Himself for us as the Father had decreed; the Holy Spirit came to dwell within us and make these things real in our hearts and in our lives. Indeed, we are debtors, we owe them everything. Everything we have and everything we will have through eternity is from the One Who is three.

On the other hand, we owe absolutely nothing to the flesh, the old carnal nature that we inherited from Adam, who became our forefather after he sinned and fell from the high position in which he had been placed when God created him. That nature wants us to live according to it and it will try in every possible way to make us obedient to it. But, thank God, we are under no obligation whatsoever to do that and, as you will see, we have the power residing in us to refuse.

Now note “You will die” or “you must die.” That is speaking of eternal death, not the death of this body, the death that brings to an end our sojourn here in this place where we are “strangers and pilgrims.” This could be brought about by living by “the deeds of the body.” The body has not been redeemed, so it is selfish, therefore evil. The new life in Christ does not rebel against God as the old nature does; instead it rebels against the deeds the body leads to. That does not mean that our lives must be perfect or we will be lost. But it does mean that if we have Christ living in us we will not habitually live in the deeds of the body but, instead, our mode of life will be to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Now note the contrasting, “Ye shall live.” That also is speaking of living eternally. The Word gives us (especially in I John) many ways to examine ourselves to reassure us that we are truly in Christ. Here in Romans 8 is one of these ways. Let us look and see what our real inclination, our real desire, is.

We close with a word about our being “sons of God.” At the beginning I put the word “adult” in front of that because the Greek word used here is not the word for a babe or for little children but for a son who has reached maturity and is now in position to take up the inheritance when his father lays it down. You see, all of us who are led by the Spirit are His heirs, co-heirs, we will see three verses later, with Christ. Isn’t that a wonderful picture? In all the ups and downs of this life we can go steadily forward, looking upward and knowing that God is preparing us for a greater inheritance throughout all eternity. Let us praise His Name and be led by His Spirit.



Viewing the News

Jack Blaes

REPRESENTATIVE CLAUDE D. PEPPER (D., Fla.) recently reported that his research into the problems of the elderly reveals that the abuse of the elderly is commonplace in the U.S. and that it is often perpetrated by family members of the abused. Congressman Pepper, himself 84 years old, finds that more than a million citizens 65 and over are seriously mistreated—physically, psychologically, and financially every year. One out of every 25 of the elderly is misused. Some experts say alcoholism, drug addiction, marital problems and long term financial difficulties contribute in leading people to abuse their parents. The son is the most likely abuser, accounting for about 21 percent of all cases, followed by the daughter and the victim's spouse. People who were abused as children are most likely to mistreat their parents when they grow old. "...without natural affection." (2 Tim. 3:3)

WALTER WILLIAMS IS A PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS at George Mason University. He has refused the President's invitation to join his team since 1980. When questioned about it, Mr. Williams recalled that one time during Mr. Reagan's first term a reporter had asked him what his definition of social justice is, and he replied in this vein: "Social justice is where I keep what I produce, and you keep what you produce. You can't have what is mine unless I give it to you. Social justice mean's there's neither illegal nor legal theft." The professor said that he would spare the President the attacks the media would make upon any high level official who would make any such remarks. Mr. Williams says further that "too many Americans think they have rights to the fruits of their fellow's labor." I can see why Mr. Reagan wants him, and I feel like the President could cope with a few more simpleton attacks.

IN A SPEECH ON MARCH 9th, DENG XIAOPING, the present Chinese leader, said that his aim is to develop socialism, not to give Red China a free enterprise, capitalist economy. He explained that the aim of socialism is "to allow all the people to become rich together, not to produce two classes." Deng told his audience that should his reforms bring in a new capitalist class in China he would consider himself a failure. Since he has said it maybe the State Department will believe it.

ACCORDING TO MICHAEL NOVAK, A LEADING AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER and theologian, the least understood and most painful bigotry in America today is that directed against evangelicals. Writing in the *ADL Bulletin*, the national publication of the Anti-Defamation League, Novak said that the recent U.S. elections "revealed more bigotry against evangelicals—without anybody leaping up to denounce it—than against any other group... Jerry Falwell, in particular, has been accused as a person and as a member of a group violating the American way. Code words without the existence of evidence and a string of associations are techniques used to engender fear and to elicit hatred and contempt. What would happen if that set of procedures was used against any other religious body or group of religious leaders in the U.S.? I think it would be perceived as an outrage."

ABOUT ONE FIFTH OF THE FOOD PRODUCTION IS WASTED according to a federal study. Storage, transportation, and processing accounts for a great deal of this. In excess of six billion dollars worth of food is wasted at the wholesale and retail level. Little is recoverable.

WHO SAID THAT IT "WON'T PLAY IN PEORIA"? Well, on this score, they were right. Two separate committees composed of librarians, teachers, and principals, decided to remove two of Judy Blume's books from the school library. *Deenie* and *Then Again, Maybe I Won't* contained sexually explicit information which in the committees views was too much for elementary age school children.

PARENTS IN TWO DIFFERENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN CALIFORNIA were not as successful in their bid to rid their schools of a magazine which regularly contains obscene fiction and ads soliciting membership in lesbian organizations, lesbian literature, and information on lesbian love making. The court battle began in 1980 and a judge finally ruled to eliminate the school district's restriction of the magazine.

FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY DOES NOT REPRESENT THE THINKING OF MOST WOMEN. A Democratic Party insider told the *New York Times* that feminists were responsible for the magnitude of their defeat (1984), saying, "The party got a gun put to its head by the women to choose a woman for Vice President. . . They over-promised what they could not deliver: the sweep of the women's vote, millions of unregistered women voters, millions of volunteers. . . The truth of the matter is the feminists didn't bring in anything. Women vote for the president just like the men do. After this performance, I don't think women should come running up to the table demanding more very soon." Another Democrat leader said of their defeat: ". . . these people can't deliver their sisters. Anybody who can get a majority among women as Reagan did without ever going to the National Organization for Women convention—there's got to be a lesson there. How

can the feminists deliver the women's vote when they are removed from the women's vote? Look at them. Listen to them. They are not talking like most women are talking."

REPORTS CONTINUE FROM RED CHINA OF FORCED ABORTIONS. Abortion is very bad here where women are merely given the choice, but with government coercion in Communist China it is horrible. Jonathon Mirsky, writing in *The Nation* for July 2, 1983, reports that "newspapers in Guangdong Province reported that 50,000 women who were pregnant without permission had been kidnapped on party orders and forced to have abortions. On a lesser scale, this practice is becoming routine throughout China. Even women in the third trimester of pregnancy are not exempt." China scholar Steven Mosher spent a year in the People's Republic studying life in a peasant commune. Like many U.S. intellectuals, he had believed the propaganda about a "changed China." The reality he found there was astounding. He saw hundreds of women far along in pregnancy forced to have abortions. In his naivete he presumed the authorities were simply unaware of what was happening. "After some deliberation, I decided to contact Vice-Premier Chen Muha, who heads the national birth-control program, about the problem. The short, carefully-worded report I sent her pointed out that in Guangdong Province, where I was doing my commune study, the P.R.C.'s own birth-control regulations, which forbade abortions after six months of pregnancy and the use of coercion, were being regularly and systematically violated. . . I was hoping that there was a hard core of integrity and decency in the upper levels of the Deng-led Communist Party capable of mitigating its own evils." The campaign continued, however, indeed it intensified.

Beyond The Rescue

Gordon Aeschliman

Have you ever wondered what people did to become Christians before modern evangelicals simplified the whole thing into the sinner's prayer? I've often searched through the Bible trying to find exactly where we get the notion that being a Christian is synonymous with getting to heaven, but I've yet to find a single verse to support it.

Yet too often many of us display this "get to heaven" mentality in our efforts to lead people to Christ. We pass out a lot of free tickets using the sinner's prayer—"Just repeat these words after me . . ."

Imagine what would happen if everyone who prayed to become a Christian had to be screened by Jesus first.

We see this very thing happen in Luke 18. The rich young ruler asks, "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Or in other words, "How can I get into heaven?"

Jesus' reply probably startles him. Apparently ignoring the man's actual question He continues, "Give up everything you have; *then follow me*" (not, "then get into heaven"). Jesus turns the tables on the guy. Instead of giving him a moral formula to follow in exchange for a place in heaven, He tells him to become His disciple.

How different it would be if God was simply "good," as the rich man referred to Him. There would be no moral imperative to follow Him. We could barter with Him (for a place in heaven or peace of mind) just as we would with any other good person. But God doesn't barter. We either follow Him or we don't.

All the language of lordship and commitment wouldn't be necessary if we had this proper view. But instead we present the gospel to people as a list of "benefits," i.e. peace, joy, heaven, etc. No wonder we have a weak, spineless Christianity! If I take part in it simply for what I'll get out of it, you can count on me giving up when things start to get tough. Why don't more of our crusades and altar calls say "Come to the front tonight in order to carry your cross, in order to die, in order to get persecution, in order to be obedient to God and to receive peace, joy and eternal life?"

In Luke 14, Jesus describes the cost of being a disciple. Again, He calls us to give up everything, even our very lives. He presents the parable of the man who failed to finish a building because he didn't take into account the total expense in advance, and He tells how a king loses a battle when he doesn't plan beforehand to bring in enough men. Both are cases of failure.

Then He concludes with this statement: "In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has, cannot be my disciple." What a message—we will fail to be Christians if we don't give up everything!

So Jesus isn't on a "get to heaven" campaign, and we aren't supposed to be either. Yes, the subject of hell is very real (the main theme of **WORLD CHRISTIAN**, July/August 1983), and people do need to be saved from hell. But rescue from hell is only part of a disciple's inheritance of suffering, peace and joy.

Jesus refuses to make deals with us based on how much we're willing to give up. It's either *all* or *nothing*. When He says "follow me," He's saying, "Abandon yourself absolutely to me and my will for your life. Come on and join me in the way of the cross and I will change your life from the inside out."

And it's this sort of disciple that He uses to change the world. —Reprinted by permission from WORLD CHRISTIAN, copyright 1983, volume 2, number 5. P.O. Box 40010, Pasadena, CA 91104.

Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Motoyuki Nomura

Tokyo, Japan

February, 1985

Not so many American missionaries in Japan are being missed by our people, but men like the late Bro. E. A. Rhodes and this Bro. Prout are rather exceptions. Bro. Prout is a very humble and meek man of God. He has given us lasting impression of what a man of God ought to be. He is a main-stream church of Christ missionary and yet is far greater a man for that category. He is a Christian and Christian only or a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. He was a close friend of the late Sis. Brittell of Africa. I thought the *Word and Work* readers would be interested in him.

AN EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE UNITY AMONG BELIEVERS IN JAPAN

"It is exciting to hear of the Joplin, Tulsa and Conway unity meetings. I am glad to learn that some of the American religious descendants of the Campbells are exploring their common roots and seeking ways to express their unity in Christ."

"For several years I have been trying to pursue a similar course in Japan. As you know, missionaries from the American "restoration movement" have been working in Japan since the arrival of Charles Garst in 1883. J.M. McCaleb came here in 1892. So Japan has a long history of the 'return to the Scriptures' plea."

"Unfortunately many Japanese Christians do not know this historical background. Also, and even more unfortunately, differing opinions among the American missionaries have caused confusion. Many of the divisions which plague the church of Christ in the USA have been exported to Japan. Those divisions have broken fellowship among Japanese believers who thought they had to observe every line that their teachers drew. Some Japanese Christians now wonder if the American 'restoration movement' can actually produce unity among believers."

"So you can see that the news of renewed unity efforts in America is very exciting to me. I am glad to share this news with Japanese Christians. I want to have the same kind of meetings and unity efforts here in Japan. Will you help me in the search for ways that

'restoration movement' heirs can cooperate in Japanese evangelism? Is it possible that you could come to Japan to join this effort?" (Paraphrase summary of letters from Motoyuki Nomura, preacher for the Yatsugatake, Japan, church of Christ.)

Brother Nomura's letters are a challenge to all who share in the American "restoration movement" heritage. I believe Nomura San is correct in thinking that the present resurgence of interest in unity should be shared with Japanese believers. They need to know that there is a growing willingness on our part to take a closer look at what unity means in a biblical, rather than a cultural perspective. We must openly admit that we, too, have our share of human traditions. We must confess that we have confused those ideas with the teachings of Scripture and have carried them with us to Japan and other parts of the world. We must affirm that we are willing to submit those traditions to the judgment of God's Word. We should welcome the fellowship of Japanese Christians in the critical process of working past cultural accretions to the unmixing Word of God. These steps are not direct evangelism. But I am convinced that unless a church is liberated from sectarianism and cultural norms, it cannot be truly evangelistic. I believe that a re-evaluation of "restoration movement" ideas can result in increased evangelism in Japan.

My wife and I (we have spent 15 years in Japan in the period from 1958 to 1980) have decided, Lord willing, to return to Japan to be a part of this unity effort. If you are interested in assisting please contact:

Elmer and Geneva Prout
1620 Oak Tree Drive
Roseville, CA 95678

Nemesio and Myrna Auxtero Bohol Province, Philippines March 1, 1985

(Filipino missionaries from Manila. Taken from a letter sent to Alex Wilson)

We are pleased to report what the Lord has been doing in our two churches during the past year, 1984.

In the church in SAN FRANCISCO there were 28 baptisms during 1984. This brings to 66 our total membership in this congregation which began five years ago. That number does not include the regular children's Sunday School population.

I (Nemesio) shepherd this church, but am assisted by ten other men leaders. Seven of them serve as deacons.

In spite of the devastating typhoon, the Lord by His grace still enabled us to accomplish our planned activities for the year as follows: 1. Vacation Bible School. 2. Five home Bible classes were held. 3. Bible club was carried on in the city high school. 4. Monthly evangelistic meetings were held, plus at other special opportunities like during holy week, Christmas time, and at funerals. 5. Overnight prayer meetings were held the second Friday of every month. 6. Training: we conducted teachers-training programs, leaders training, and counselors training.

The church on the island of JAO (pronounced "how") continued to grow despite the terrible destruction of the typhoon (which wiped

out our camp buildings) and also the threats and persecutions endured by the Christians and especially new converts. There were 15 baptisms last year, bringing to 41 the church's membership (not counting the regular Sunday School population).

I am pastor there also, assisted by four deacons. The ministries carried on at Jao were similar to those at San Francisco, mentioned earlier: VBS; two regular Bible classes; monthly evangelistic meetings; overnight prayer meetings held the last Friday of each month; and training programs for teachers and leaders. Also two pioneer outreaches were initiated, at the barrios (villages) of Soom and Guinobatan.

So in the two congregations there is a total of 107 believers. We thank God the churches are growing. We need prayers for the following needs: 1. *Summer camp*: We could not have it last year due to lack of funds. We surely hope it can be held this year. 2. *Scholarships*: We have lots of young people here who cannot afford to go to high school. It is not expensive, yet it is beyond their means. Please pray we shall have educated leaders. 3. *A Bible school*: With growing evangelism outreaches to other villages, and more home Bible classes, we need more trained leaders. About 20 people already want to enroll if we can start a Bible school for them. Pray for facilities; the building we started before this was leveled by the typhoon. 4. *Boat*: the boat we used for outreach to nearby islands needs repairs.

To God be the glory for the things He has done and will continue to do. And thanks to all who back us in the ministries He has given us.

Joy Garrett

Ruwa, Zimbabwe

March 15th.

The Lord has really answered prayers this year for rain. We have had such good rains that in the Harare area the dams that were almost dried up by 3 years of drought are now spilling. Water rationing ended in Harare March 1. We are really grateful to God.

Here at Rockwood Park, Ruwa, all are busy trying to get everything ready for two youth camps during the April school holidays. The first camp will be for senior youth 18 years and over during the Easter break April 4-8. Then April 14-20 will be for the high school groups. We have no permanent buildings as yet, but do have some tents and steel huts. The Harare brethren were here last Saturday working and will be here two more Saturdays before the camps begin.

There is a small group of Christians north of Kadoma at Jompani that have requested help. Some leaders of Harare churches went there and two were baptized. Bro. Jonasi of Gweru has been visiting on some Sundays to assist them. Pray for this little congregation.

We still have good attendance at our scripture classes in two schools. In one school Mother Garrett had more grade 1's than her classroom could hold and they have shifted 45 of them to join my grade 2's. Bob takes the older pupils—grade 5, 6, 7. This teaching takes 4 mornings a week. It is a wonderful opportunity to teach God's word in truth to children who would probably never hear it otherwise.

HEROES OF THE FAITH:

William Carey

James C. Hefley

"It's no use, Mr. Carey," the captain of the British sailing vessel told him frankly. "I can't risk taking you and your friends to India."

At this word the shoemaker broke down in tears. "Please, you don't know how much this means to us and to our society."

"The East India Company could make me lose my command if they discovered me trying to smuggle missionaries into the country," the resolute captain insisted firmly. "You'll have to get your baggage off the ship."

William Carey walked away, removed his baggage, stood on the Portsmouth dock and watched the ship disappear into the channel fog. "After all I've been through and now this," he mumbled to his missionary doctor companion, Dr. John Thomas. "But somehow God will yet get us to India," the shoemaker continued determinedly. "Let's go to London."

While riding on the coach to London the missionaries wrestled with their problem. "Let's go directly to the East India Company and seek their permission," Carey suggested. But he knew the company had a contract with the English government for the supervision of English interests in India and would not make an exception. Their policy was firm: "No missionaries are to be admitted to India."

When they reached London they separated. Carey went to write a letter to the Baptist Missionary Society. Thomas walked to a coffee house where he faintly hoped he might hear news of a foreign ship sailing to India.

Carey's companion reached the popular rendezvous of seamen and wasted no time in making inquiries. "No, we do not know of a vessel going out," he was told by seafarers. Then a waiter who had overheard his questions slipped a card into his hand:

A DANISH EAST INDIAMAN
NO. 10 CANNON STREET

Thomas read and reread the card before hurrying away to the address. "Yes, the Kron Princessa Maria is expected any moment to dock in Dover. She's India bound," he was assured, "and will take passengers."

Quickly he told Carey the good news. The two rushed off to Carey's home at Piddington. Before this Carey's wife refused to accompany him to India. But now she consented to go and early on the morning of June 13, 1793 a new era in the Christian Church began when the families of William Carey and John Thomas sailed for India as missionaries of the Baptist Missionary Society.

Ahead was an almost impossible task. But William Carey, who launched the modern missionary movement, was equal to the assignment that would require a man of vision who utterly depended upon God. And long before he had been commissioned a missionary Carey had shown himself to be that type of man.

Carey's childhood was spent in Paulers Pury, a small village tucked away amid the rolling lands and woods of middle England. His father was the village postmaster and parish clerk. The twin interests of natural science and geography captivated his mind as a child. He kept his room filled with birds and insects and while a boy became manager of his father's garden. He read incessantly. His favorites were accounts of trips made by explorers to new lands. Villagers nicknamed him "Columbus" because he so often spoke of the great discoverer.

When he was 14 the English sunshine irritated his face and hands so much he had to give up his agricultural labors. "I've apprenticed you to Clarke Nichols, the shoemaker at Piddington," his father informed him one day. So Carey at 16, with his few clothes tied in a bundle, moved into the shoeshop.

In the shoeshop Carey drew a large map of the world, hung it behind his bench, and excitedly followed the events of his times. The American War of Independence had broken out, England was threatened with revolution at home, English explorers were regularly returning from voyages to India, Africa and the south seas. Their reports stirred Carey to want to know more about his fast-expanding world. As explorers brought to England new facts Carey classified the information under the countries that were named on his map. He began studying Dutch, Spanish, French, and Portuguese. He had already learned Latin in grammar school.

Villagers snickered when they passed the cobbler's shop at night and saw Carey's light burning late. "Why should you, a poor cobbler, need to know so many languages?" a customer queried.

"The world needs men of different nations to understand one another," the teen-age shoemaker retorted. "I want to be able to speak other languages to understand other men."

The inquisitive Carey, who read whatever he could get his hands on, found a copy of Jeremy Taylor's sermons. The old divine's pointed messages disturbed him greatly. He discussed his burden with William Warr, his fellow apprentice who attended the "Dissenters' Church."

"You need to be born again," Warr pointedly told him.

"But I'm already a church member," Carey fired back in defense. "Once I was even a choir boy."

For several months the two apprentices argued about the differences between the Dissenters and the Church of England. "You'll like our church services," Warr assured him. "None of that old dry ritual for us."

Carey finally broke down and went, but he was slow to admit that the Dissenters were right about the new birth. "I'll go to church three times on Sunday and leave my lying and swearing," he resolved. But peace didn't come.

Then England was plunged into war with France and Spain. The enemy's fleets held the channel. King George set aside February 10, 1779 as a national day of fasting and prayer. That day Carey attended the special service held by Dissenters and the preacher, Thomas Chater, spoke about the reproach of following Christ. Carey writes, "I had a desire to follow Christ." A little later he testified, "I felt

ruined and helpless." From that point it was but a step to receiving Christ as his Saviour.

After his conversion William Carey could not learn enough about the Bible—even if it meant starving himself to buy precious books. He wasn't satisfied with just knowing what the English translation said but pressed on to unravel the mysteries of the original Greek and Hebrew. For his morning devotions he read a portion of the Bible in three languages—Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.

Carey's master died in 1779 freeing him from the remainder of his apprenticeship. He took a job as a journeyman shoemaker with Thomas Old. Two years later Old died and Carey, having since married Dorothy Placket, hung out his own shingle,

"SECONDHAND SHOES BOUGHT AND SOLD."

One summer day in 1782 Carey did not have money enough for his midday meal. When he was attending the meetings of Olney Baptist Association friends asked him to join them for lunch and two weeks later they sent him another invitation: "Come preach for us at our meeting house at Barton." The Barton people made this a regular bimonthly appointment for three and a half years. The opportunity to preach made him study harder than ever. Italian was added to his linguistic knowledge. He never sat down to work without a book before him. Even on business trips he was to be seen at each opportunity poring over a book.

Here he is in his tiny workshop in his workclothes and leather apron. With two or three nails in his mouth—between strokes of his hammer—he glances at the book before him as he quietly works. No wonder one man called his cottage "Carey's college."

When he was old and world-famous he told his nephew, "If anyone writes about my life they can give me credit for 'being a *plodder*. Anything beyond this will be too much. I can plod. I can persevere in any definite pursuit. To this I owe everything."

Carey was poor but he could plod. Business reverses and the death of his child did not keep him from satisfying his thirst for knowledge. To supplement his income he opened a room in his cottage for a night school for village children. After the school neighbors saw his light burning far into the night as he sat plodding with his books.

To help teach his children geography he fashioned a crude leather globe drawing on it the various countries. He kept reading accounts of explorers and later recounted, "My attention to missions was first awakened . . . by reading the *Last Voyage of Captain Cook*." Other people saw in this account adventure. Carey saw human need. The tattooed savages were God's creatures in need of salvation. As he devoured books that told about the peoples of other lands his missionary burden grew. On his homemade map he wrote in what he knew about the religion of every nation.

On August 10, 1786 he was formally appointed a Baptist minister. A few weeks later he was present at a ministers' meeting at Northampton. At this meeting, an older minister suggested one of the group name a topic for general discussion. Carey rose and hesitantly sug-

gested, "Whether or not the Great Commission is binding upon us today to go and teach all nations." Before another could speak, the moderator soundly rebuked Carey. "Sit down, young man. When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine." Carey was silenced but only for the moment.

He began to carefully cultivate the ground of his acquaintances. In his preaching and even daily conversation he told others what he had learned about the needs of the world. Ministers and church leaders shook their heads. "Won't young Carey ever give up his foolish ideas?" they asked.

Carey persisted. "Are the souls of men of less value than heretofore?" he pleaded in a ministers' conference. "Are there no opportunities . . . to convey the Gospel to the heathen? The truth is we wait for we know not what . . . We pray for the conversion of the world, and yet we neglect the ordinary means by which it can be brought about . . . How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?"

At long last, May 30, 1792, Carey's golden moment came. Invited to preach at the Baptist Ministers' Association at Nottingham, he delivered a history-making sermon. Prematurely bald, wearing an ill-fitting wig, stooped because of constant bending over his shoeshop's last, short and rather thin—he was not a commanding presence in the pulpit. But his heart burned with a message. Using as his text Isa. 54: 2, 3 he sliced his sermon into two memorable divisions: "Expect Great Things from God; Attempt Great Things for God." Next morning he proposed, "Let us discuss forming a missionary society."

"This is impossible," fellow ministers told him. The shoemaker seized one of them, Andrew Fuller, by the arm and asked in distress, "Must we separate again without doing something?" The ministers hushed to listen as Carey continued pleading, and before leaving they resolved that at their next meeting "a plan be prepared for forming a Baptist society for propagating the Gospel among the heathens."

On October 2, 1792 twelve ministers, a student, and a layman met in Widow Wallis' house, known popularly as the "Gospel Inn." Under the guidance of the glowing Carey they bonded themselves together into a missionary society with capital less than \$100. Carey went home rejoicing.

The very next year William Carey and his family sailed for India on board the Danish sailing vessel. After five weary months at sea Carey caught sight of the Indian shores. But could he land? He knew that an act of Parliament declared: "British subjects found in the East Indies without a license are subject to fine and imprisonment." Carey's party had no license. Fortunately the captain of the Danish ship was in sympathy with the missionaries. Before landing he transferred the mission party to a native boat. The boat stealthily slipped up the Hooghly River and landed in Calcutta. The missionaries were unnoticed.

Threat of arrest by Calcutta authorities forced Carey to retreat into the interior through dreaded tiger-haunted swamps. Then came good news. A wealthy Calcutta Englishman, George Udney, sent word

for Carey to come manage one of his indigo factories. Here was enough salary to support his family and still give him spare time for missionary work.

Carey settled down to study Bengali, Sanskrit, and several other languages of India. He translated the New Testament into Bengali—the language of the common people of India. This was the first time Bengali had been written down.

It was seven long years before the first convert was baptized. During this time Carey's wife went insane and had to be secluded from the other missionaries. On December 28, 1803 the fast aging Carey baptized Krishna Pal, a Hindu carpenter, and his own son Felix who later became a missionary himself. But his rejoicing was short-lived. Within a year, Dr. Thomas, his missionary colleague, had to be hauled away to the asylum in Calcutta.

Danish authorities at Serampore, India asked him to take charge of the new language presses of their colony. The Governor-general of India liked Carey's translation work so well that he invited him to become Professor of Bengali and Sanskrit at the newly established Fort William College near Serampore. These jobs gave Carey an excellent salary but he channeled it all into the common work of the mission.

The plodder continued to plod. In addition to teaching and supervising the mission work he translated the entire Bible into the four leading languages of India. He guided others in the translation of the Scriptures into 32 other Asiatic languages. He put out the first newspaper ever printed in an Oriental language plus publishing translations of Oriental classical works, grammars, and thick dictionaries.

Carey fought vigorously two native superstitions. A sick baby was thought to be bewitched and so was left exposed to die. The missionary persuaded British authorities that this was murder, thus stopping the practice. Sati (Suttee) burning of Hindu widows upon the funeral pyre of the dead husband—burdened him for years until finally he was instrumental in getting the government to stamp out this cruel custom.

The man who "attempted great things for God," supervised the setting up of 126 Christian mission schools and an Indian missionary college. Even more important, he inspired English and American Christians to push out for Christ on a global scale. Thus Carey is appropriately called "the father and forerunner of the modern missionary movement."

The former shoemaker, who reportedly made the Bible available and readable to 300 million people in their own languages, whispered on his deathbed in his beloved India: "What hath God wrought!" To one of his last visitors he said feebly but earnestly: "When I am gone say nothing about Dr. Carey—speak about Dr. Carey's Saviour."

After his death Calcutta newspapers joined Christian leaders around the world in lauding his greatness. On his gravestone was chiseled his life motto: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God."

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GLEANINGS

Compiled by Larry Miles

WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT?

The second time the Lord used this saying was in the sequel to Peter's confession in Matthew 16:24-26. When Peter had attempted to dissuade the Lord Jesus from taking the way of the Cross, He called together His disciples and said to them, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it." And He adds, "For what shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life? And what shall a man give in exchange for his life?"

—R. H. Boll, 1941

SAFEGUARDS OF THE FAITH

God has provided safeguards to protect the faith of His people against the cunning craftiness of Satan and his agents. They are much needed today. Here are some of them:

First—the Word of God. By this we mean the written Word, the Bible, as against all visions, dreams, impressions, traditions of men, or anything else that pretends to afford spiritual guidance and illumination. This is fundamental. It is utterly impossible for man to find his way. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23) His guidance must come from God, and through God's word. "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Ps. 119:105) If therefore men speak not according to this word, surely there is no light in them.

Then, there are certain fundamental doctrines which constitute the frame-work and the backbone of the Divine revelation given us in the Book. Among these first and foremost is the teaching that concerns the Person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Beware of any teaching that would tend to detract from His Absolute and Universal Authority and Lordship; or would discount His Divine Nature and Being, or would in any way lead men to honor Him less than they honor the Father (John 5:23). The belief in the truth concerning Him is vital. (John 8:24) Any teaching that would deny that He, the Man Jesus, is the Christ (I John 2:22) is anti-Christ. Then as to the Gospel—"that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (see Isa. 53), that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the scriptures": if any doctrine or theory is seen to meddle with that—shun it without further consideration. However plausible it may present itself, it is fundamentally false. The Cross, the Blood, the

actual bodily Resurrection—by those we can test every teaching. It has also often been noted that every false cult and system of doctrine minimizes sin, counting it as a lighter matter, or as a temporary imperfection in the present stage of things (as in the slogan, “Evil is only good in the making”) or denying its reality and existence altogether. This is a sure mark of Satan’s work.

—R. H. Boll, 1933

TRUST AND OBEY

Finally there is one more safeguard that will keep us safe and hold us true to God’s way in all evil times. The formula of it is “Trust And Obey.” Obedience to Christ is the thread which guides us safely through the labyrinthine mazes of life—not an obedience of the Law and in the spirit of bondage, but the obedience of faith and love, in the filial fear and spirit of the gospel. “If any man willeth to do His will”—that is the key to light and truth. “Who is he that is among you that feareth Jehovah, that obeyeth the voice of His Servant? He that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of Jehovah, and rely upon his God.” (Isa. 50:10) The way of obedience is that path that, as the dawning light, shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

—R. H. Boll, 1933

To Believe or not To Believe

A Commentary on Prophecy

Bernice Gumm Gammon

If a speaker before an average religious assembly should hold up a Bible and ask a show of hands on this question . . . “How many in this audience believe all that is written on the pages of this book?” it is reasonable to estimate that practically all hands would be raised in affirmation, but would it be an honest reply?

A test on that subject that too many could not pass would be on II Tim. 3:16, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” Because the cross marked the end of adherence to the Mosaic Law, it in no wise excuses the church from faith in unfulfilled prophecy and principles of Christian conduct, or in considering certain passages invalidated, spiritualized or figurative. Much criticism has been offered, and justly so, for the substitution of WORD for WATER and BECAUSE OF for IN ORDER TO on the subject of water baptism. But many of the critics are guilty of relegating much unfulfilled prophecy and Christian practices erroneously to a spiritualized or outdated status, not intended for present day observance. Matt. 4:4, a statement of the Lord Himself, “Man must not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Inasmuch as it seems to be the consensus of many articulate and astute minds that the history of the Jew is the history of the world, it may well be the opening or the beginning of these comments.

In consideration of the restoration of the Jews, there is widespread disbelief. If one accepts the term “Israel” in its true meaning, anywhere

it is used the meaning is "Jews". True, some have claimed to be Jews who are not, but inspiration has not classified them as such. Care should be taken . . . whether in the old or new testament, Israel is Israel; then Romans 11 will create no problem.

The Lord made promises to Israel through the centuries, which were conditional on obedience. However, He was longsuffering, and if after disobedience they repented He continued the blessing. During this time, He allowed them to suffer captivities for periods, returning them to the homeland on retrial; but after centuries of such dealing He, according to warning, finally scattered them throughout the nations, and suffered them to be without a homeland until May, 1948, when they began a trek back, and many of them are now settled in their own country as a nation. Generally, they have returned in unbelief, and for that reason they are not receiving full blessings of the Lord, and will not, according to prophecy, until they recognize and ask for Jesus as their Messiah. Although their full blessings are not being realized, it is obvious to those who look through the eyes of history and prophecy, that the Lord's overall care for Israel is constant and good, and He is giving them a foretaste of His continued care to be bestowed on them when they accept His will for them. As an example, consider the Six-Day War with the Arabs. Against incredible odds, they won a smashing victory. Other successes in greater or lesser degree, have been reported since their gradual occupation. The land which since their dispersion had become a veritable wasteland, has begun to blossom like a rose. Reports from tourists are coming in number telling of the progress being made in today's Israel in spite of the struggle in maintaining a thriving growth. A close study of this, with their potentials in natural resources, lends strength to the hope that in the not too distant future Israel will be among the leading nations of the world. All of this is substantiated in prophecy, such as Hosea 3:4,5, "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, without a prince, etc; Afterwards the children of Israel shall return and seek their God and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days." Amos 9:15, ". . . and I will plant them upon their land, and they shall be no more pulled up out of the land which I have given them . . ."

While the promises of God to the children of Israel were more or less conditional, the covenant with Abram was not. Note Gen. 13:14, 15, "And the Lord said unto Abram after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever."

Contingent with the reign of Christ with His saints, is the reactivation of the Throne of David. The Father has declared it a perpetual institution. To re-enforce the position that David's Throne will be reactivated consider the following: (Psalm 89) vs. 34, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that has gone out of my lips;" Vs. 36, "His seed shall endure forever;" Vs. 37, "It shall be established forever as the moon and as a faithful witness in heaven." (Jer. 33:17) "For thus saith the Lord: David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of

the House of Israel.”

One of the principle features of the study of prophecy is the consideration of the Millennium, the period Jesus is to reign on the earth with His saints, the living and the dead who are found in faith, at His appearance, according to I Thes. 4:14-17. Such will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and have the promise to remain with Him forever. After a given period, according to Jude 14, 15, He will return with His saints to execute judgment on the ungodly, obviously those who did not qualify for what is generally called the rapture. The length of the stay and the conditions of the earth reign that follow are brought out in the paragraphs which are taken from scriptures in both the old and new testaments.

It seems timely that at this juncture the subject of more than one resurrection be mentioned, as some believe the saved and the unsaved will be raised at one sounding of the trumpet. That seems doubtful, as Rev. 20:5 states: “The rest of the dead lived not again until the 1000 years were finished. This is the first resurrection.” When the term “first” is used, it indicates that more than one commodity or event are considered.

Testifying to the above are offered these scriptures: II Tim. 2:12, “If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him.” I Cor. 6:2, 3, “Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?” “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” Rev. 2:26, “He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.” Rev. 3:21, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with men in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” For the length of that reign see Rev. 20:6, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him for a thousand years.”

There is a great and glorious promise to the whole world in the “Restoration of all things.” Referring to Acts 3:30 we note Jesus is the subject, (vs. 21) “Whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restoration of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began.” This prophecy should set the entire conscious universe aflame with zeal to search out that promise for a glorious existence that places the redeemed of all ages in complete triumph and dominion over the works of Satan and deprives him of his temporary rule of terror and ambiguity. Then shall the righteous enjoy a thousand years of bliss in a paradise once had by Adam and Eve, and as planned by the Father to be the fulfillment of that plan and purpose for man whom He created for His own glory and joy.

For an interesting interlude in the accounting of the glorious future, please note the often disputed act of Jesus’ setting His feet on the earth again. The entire book of Zechariah is abundant with descriptions of events of that period of time, climaxing in ch. 14:4 on the event of His setting His feet on Mt. Olivet. “And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the East and Mt. of Olives shall cleave in the midst toward the East and toward the West, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the North and half of it toward the

South." Visitors to Israel seem all to testify that the topography of Mt. Olives does not indicate a cleft.

In the discussion of the supernatural, as anything pertaining to the eternal, it is fitting to give some space to miracles and the work of angels. Many miracles of today are categorized as special providence. That may be in some cases the explanation, but there are some incidents that are too spectacular to rule out miraculous intervention. . . What about the Israeli victory in the Six-day War and the escape and recovery of the President and his staff in the assassination attempt? Perhaps the receiving of miracles is limited to some extent by the attitude of the recipient. It seems hardly to be a safe position to adamantly contend that the "days of miracles are over." To test one's own position, let him challenge the Lord to withhold for some stated period of time every miracle He might have in store for him. As for the administration of angels, Ps. 34:7, "The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them."

It is frightful to darken the picture of the Blessed Hope of all Christians with a mention of the great tribulation, but as God is not only loving and merciful, He is also just. He has offered a way of salvation, and He deserves that His every word be honored and revered. The warning of a day of reckoning is given. The Revelation from chapter 6 through 17 describes the judgment that is to fall upon them who do not heed the warning. It behooves everyone to take note of all these things. They were written for our current learning. Luke has given us in Ch. 21, not only a reminder of the things, but also a way of escape. In verses 35 and 36 the warning is given of both. He warns that the day will come as a snare on all that dwell on the face of the whole earth, and admonishes, "watch ye, therefore . . . and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Note Acts 3:25, regarding a prophecy: "And it shall come to pass that every soul that will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." What assurance have we that to fail to hear any (true) prophet of God will escape the same condemnation? Take particular note of this: (Luke 11:52) "Woe unto you, lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." Some apparently otherwise exemplary Christians ignore, if not oppose, study of Prophecy themselves, but forbid the teaching in the congregation. The danger is that this passage might apply.

It is in the spirit of love for the brethren and the unity of the Spirit, that the foregoing is submitted, in the hope that hearts may be stirred to examine the attitude being manifested among us and do what we can to bring us all together in the spirit of unity and the bond of peace, searching the scriptures to determine what the Lord has in store for the church, the nation and the world.

The Lord has spoken. Who will hear? **TO BELIEVE** or **NOT TO BELIEVE**, that is the question. Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His Glory, with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Savior be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, both now and forever. Amen. (Jude 24)

Studies in the Book of Acts

Larry Miles

The Conclusion of the First Missionary Journey

Acts 14:1-28

In the 13th chapter of the Book of Acts we read and studied about what is referred to as the First Missionary Journey. We read about how the church at Antioch had sent out Paul and Barnabas to evangelize among the lost. It is in this chapter that the Apostle Paul begins the first of his three missionary trips that would take him from Antioch all the way to Rome.

Here in the 14th chapter we will continue our study of the Book of Acts. We invite all who read to study along in their Bibles and be willing to be led by the Holy Spirit. Let us learn from the experiences we read about and let us strive to preach and teach the principles of New Testament Christianity in our day and age. The teachings of the Bible are timeless.

THE WORK AT ICONIUM: ACTS 14:1-6

The text tells us that when Paul and Barnabas entered into the city Iconium they entered the synagogue. It was their practice to preach the gospel to the Jew first (Romans 1:16). Further in the first verse we are informed that as a result of the preaching of the gospel many believed. It is said that both Jews and Greeks believed in the message of truth.

In verse 2 the Jews who disbelieved stirred up some trouble. It seems that wherever the gospel is preached Satan causes trouble. Everywhere Paul was to go there would be those who caused trouble and stirred up the people against the teaching of truth. Here in Iconium was no exception. They stirred the Gentiles against the brethren.

Verse 3 tells us that Paul and Barnabas spent a long time in the work at Iconium. Luke tells us that they were speaking boldly and relying upon the Lord for guidance. The Lord was bearing witness to the word of His grace. There were many signs and wonders being done. The power of the Almighty God was present and many hearing the good news proclaimed.

In verse 4 we're told that the multitude of the city was divided. Some were standing on the side of the Jews and some were standing with the side of truth. In verse 5 we read of the plan to stone the apostles. The apostles became aware of the plot against them and fled to the cities of Lycaonia. Two of the most prominent cities of the region were Lystra and Derbe.

THE WORK AT LYSTRA: ACTS 14:7-20

After they had fled from Iconium and came into Lystra they continued to preach the everlasting gospel. J.W. McGarvey wrote the following,

"Finding at Lystra no Jewish synagogue to afford them an assembly of devout hearers, the missionaries were constrained

to preach in the open air. The narrow streets universal in the cities of that age were unsuited to gatherings of the people; but in every city there was a more or less unoccupied space about the gates, both inside and outside, and these were always favorite places for crowds to gather. It seems from the context below (verse 13) that Paul was addressing a crowd at the principal gate when the following incident took place."

In verse 8 we're told of what happened in Lystra. Luke tells us that there was a certain man who was lame from birth. This man was listening to the words of the Apostle. Paul had determined that the man had the faith to be made well. In verse 10 Paul healed the man and he leaped up and began to walk.

It was a result of this event that the people thought they had been visited by gods. In verse 12 they called Barnabas, Zeus and Paul, Hermes because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus brought oxen and garlands to sacrifice. They wanted to honor the apostles thinking them to be gods.

It was at this time that the apostles heard of the events that had been transpiring. When they heard that they were being called gods they were outraged. They rushed out into the crowd to dispel this false praise. Verse 15 tells us that they told the pagan Lystrians that they were men like themselves. They were not gods. Paul urged them to turn from worshipping idols and worship a living God. Gareth Reese gives us this contrast of Paul's preaching to the Jews and his preaching to the Gentiles.

INTRODUCTION:

All the openings of Paul's sermons are dependent on the audience to whom he is speaking. Whether he was before a Roman Governor, or before the Athenians who were ignorant of a living God, or in a synagogue, Paul's introductions were appropriate to the moment. If Paul must defend himself or give his credentials, these must be in his introduction. Following the introduction, the main points emphasized to his respective audiences would usually be:

Jewish Audiences

1. God's dealings with the Jews.
2. Reference to the Law and the Prophets.
3. Jesus is the Messiah (telling of His birth, death, burial and resurrection).
4. Forgiveness through Christ.
5. Universal salvation (The gospel is for Gentiles also).

Gentile Audiences

1. The creative activity of God.
2. Man's relationship to the creator (sometimes shown by a reference to the heathen poets).
3. Repentance is now required of all men. No longer are these days of ignorance which God overlooks.
4. Coming judgement and need for Jesus as a personal Savior.
5. Resurrection of Jesus is proof He can save.

It is at this time that we return to the sermon at hand. Paul was

urging these pagans to turn from idols to a living God. He tells them that in the past God permitted them to go their own ways. In verse 17 he says that God has always had a witness. He tells them that He did good and gave them rains and fruitful seasons. Paul tells them that the Living God satisfied their hearts with food and gladness. Verse 18 tells us that they were reaching the people. They had restrained them from offering sacrifices.

It seems that there is an interval of time between verse 18 and 19. It is at this time that the trouble making Jews show up on the scene inciting the people and stirring them against the apostles. It is told that they won over the multitudes. The people stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city supposing him to be dead. In verse 20 while the disciples stood around him Paul arose and entered the city. The next day he and Barnabas departed to the city of Derbe.

THE WORK AT DERBE AND THE RETURN TO ANTIOCH: ACTS 14:21-23

After they had left Lystra they came unto Derbe. Luke tells us that the work there was very successful and that many disciples were made. A congregation of believers has been planted in a pagan land. Verse 21 tells us that the apostles returned back to Antioch passing through the areas they had come earlier. They passed through Lystra and Iconium. Verse 22 shows us the reason for returning that way. They were striving to strengthen the souls of the disciples and encouraging them to continue in the faith. They informed them that there would be tribulations but if they endured they would enter the kingdom of God. Verse 23 informs us that they appointed elders for them in every place.

PASSING THROUGH PISIDIA AND PAMPHYLIA: ACTS 14:24

The text simply tells us that they passed through Pisidia. According to past practice they would have spent the time evangelizing the area. They were retracing their steps. These steps would now take them through and into Pamphylia. They were making their way towards the seacoast.

GOING THROUGH PERGA AND ATTALIA: ACTS 14:25

It is said they spoke the word in Perga. They were striving to reach many for the Risen Lord. Their travels took them next to Attalia. It was a town on the seacoast. It would be there that they would find a ship to take them back to Antioch.

THEY RETURN TO ANTIOCH OF SYRIA: ACTS 14:26-28

From Attalia they sailed for Antioch. They would have landed at Seleucia. It was the church at Antioch who had sent them out on this journey. Paul and Barnabas had, through the grace of God, carried out the work for which the church at Antioch had sent them.

Verse 27 tells us about the arrival of the missionaries back in Antioch. The church was gathered together to hear about all that God had done. They wanted to hear how God had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas didn't disappoint them. They spent a long time with the disciples sharing with them the

mighty works that God had wrought in their lives since they had left Antioch.

We have studied about in the 13th and 14th chapters of the First Missionary Journey. We have learned much about the spread of New Testament Christianity. Paul and Barnabas were willing to go anywhere to preach the everlasting gospel. Let us be willing to go anywhere to share the good news.

The next lesson in this series will cover the events in the 15th chapter. The events to be covered are referred to as the Jerusalem Conference. Please study the 15th chapter in anticipation of the study. With the next essay we enter into the latter half of the book. Until next time, **MARANATHA!**

The Home: Forge of Christianity

“You just don’t marry the girl,” runs the adage; “you marry her family.”

Which is another way of saying that of all the formative influences in a person’s life, the influences of Family and home are the most determining.

Not only will that beautiful young thing look like her middle-aged mother a score of years hence, but she already has a natural disposition programmed on the same course. Young Joe Gallahad, the heart-stopper, may be irresistibly handsome now, but another twenty years and he, too, will have taken on both the appearance and temperament of his immediate forebears.

This is why the collegian on the verge of falling in love ought to tread hesitantly until he/she has had opportunity to get to know the other’s family, most preferably in their normal habitat.

Educators a few years ago, faced by the accusations of parents and pastors unhappy about the behavioral result of four years of college (people seldom complained about the academic results), defended themselves by countering that they had to work with the kind of young people parents and churches sent them. It was not the whole story, but they had a point.

And now that the mood of young people has taken so significant a turn for the better, presumably the colleges are congratulating parents and churches for suddenly doing so much better in rearing their children.

The family is the Bible’s basic social unit. In Old Testament times parents (and specifically fathers) were directly responsible for the religious indoctrination of their offspring (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

That is why Christians should look very hard at any societal system, whether China’s or ours, that proposes to relegate this responsibility to a third party while both parents are employed elsewhere all day long. It is why absentee fatherhood, a way of life in many of our slums, is so frightening.

Despite such dismal Old Testament examples as Manoah (his son Samson was a playboy who never quite got beyond the dirty-tricks stage), Eli (his priestly sons were wayward and wicked), Samuel (his sons did not follow in his steps), David (both Absalom and Adonijah

attempted forcible take-overs of the government) and Solomon (his son Rehoboam foolishly split the kingdom), there are many instances of solid, worthy offspring.

The godly prophets, the good kings, the conscientious judges, the faithful priests and singers and government ministers were more than self-made men. They were the product of Israel's family life as Jehovah intended it to be. Amos came from the poverty of pastoral life in Tekoa; Daniel came out of the adversity surrounding the waning Judean kingdom; Esther was raised by her uncle (presumably because her father had died), yet all of them made their marks for God during critical days.

The New Testament offers us the perfect example of Jesus Himself. Although He early recognized His direct relationship to God, He continued to be subject to Mary and Joseph (Luke 2:49-51) and apparently remained with them until He was about thirty, learning carpentry and probably taking over the family business after Joseph's premature death (see Matthew 13:54-57).

Maybe because most of the New Testament was written before the church had aged, there is only one clear instance of a second-generation Christian: Timothy. His mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, had nurtured him in the faith (his father was Grecian) and he was held in high repute (Acts 16:13). He became Paul's apprentice and later had a ministerial role as overseer of churches in Ephesus and Asia Minor (see the two Timothy letters).

It is almost axiomatic that the spiritual zeal of one generation wanes by the second and is entirely lost in the third. The history of denominationalism in North America bears out that pattern. An unusual work of the Holy Spirit, often among economically poor people, results in a new church organization. The Protestant work ethic and clean living bring a higher standard of living and better educational opportunities for their children, but usually at the price of cooled spirituality. That generation's children in turn accept the material benefits of the gospel and perhaps maintain a nominal relationship to the church, but their hearts are far off. The home has failed in its major role.

But if the home fails to promote the standards of spirituality which God intended that it should, it is probably because parents have failed to demonstrate those standards to their offspring.

At home people are themselves. Father, under obligation to be pleasant on the job, takes out his pent-up frustrations on the wife and children. Mother, everybody's friend at the market, is everybody's misery at home.

The Christian parent has arrived when he or she is just as pleasant and easy to live with at home as at work or on the street. And not because that parent has somehow managed to extend an artificial good humor into the hours at home but because God's grace in his or her life has begun to produce the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

In that atmosphere the home will continue to exert the positive influence which God intended it to have.

—"The Editorial Voice", *The Alliance Witness*, April, 1974

... And Joseph Took Mary ...

Detmar Scheunemann

Have you ever thought about the inner struggles and tensions Joseph and Mary went through as an engaged couple?

Would Mary's fiance accept her account of the angel's explanation that "the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most High will overshadow you?" What would her family think of her? What story would the whispering campaign in the little town spread about her? The Roman army camp was only four miles away—had Mary had an affair with a Roman soldier? Would not Mary have to face the possibility of being stoned, according to Jewish custom?

Against this backdrop, Mary's simple and deep statement of faith shines forth: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be to me according to your word."

Such statements of faith are not composed overnight. They testify to a hidden, personal walk with the Lord that is evidenced in the challenge of a crisis. The question is put to us: Do we believe the Lord totally, unreservedly in a crisis situation as Mary did?

Do we trust the Lord *and* each other? Joseph had to go through a similar test of faith, but he was challenged to trust God *and* his fiancée. In the beginning he wavered. We know he did not receive the testimony of Mary because we read that "he resolved to divorce her quietly."

Joseph was a "just man." He always acted according to the law. Two courses of action were open to him. He could accuse Mary publicly, which included the possibility of Mary being stoned; or he could quietly give Mary the letter of divorce.

Joseph considered the second course. Mary's heart bled. For a short time there loomed the possibility that the Son of God would be born outside the shelter of a legal marriage as many children experience in our world today. Then God stepped in and "an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream..." Joseph believed the message of the angel and took Mary as his wife.

Joseph took Mary as his wife. What a beautiful little sentence! Every happy marriage is built on a living faith in the Lord and unreserved trust in each other. Only then does a spouse feel accepted and understood. Only then in openness and honesty is fellowship practised. Accepting each other in forgiveness at the foot of the Cross leads to a deep oneness.

—from *Worldwide THRUST*, December 1984

Don't You Believe It Unless ...

Edgar C. Carlisle

I am amazed at some of the wild stories told today that are supposed to be fulfillments of Bible prophecies. Bible prophecies relating to the coming of Christ and the anti-christ are exciting. To see their fulfillment in today's news is even more thrilling. But some people

find it difficult to be contented with these prophecies coming to pass in modern world events. So they spice them up and try to hurry them up. How? By inventing stories that alert, arouse and alarm their readers and listeners.

The sad thing is that millions of trusting, eager Christians believe these tales. Some are preachers who tell and write about these false "fulfillments." They do so in all honesty and sincerity. But one thing is lacking: most readers fail to check out the stories as to their truthfulness.

I got hooked on one of those stories one time. I read Joe Esses' book, "The Next Visitor to Planet Earth." In that book he said he saw shoes coming from Italy with the Common Market stamp upon them. It was a circle with a line drawn through the middle. In the top half was the picture of a lamb's head with two horns. In the bottom half was 666.

Because he said he saw it and wrote about it in a book I believed it. I preached it in several states. I also drew a picture of it and showed it on a screen in many churches.

Then I went further. I started looking in shoe stores to find that circle. I excited others and they started turning shoes over in shoe stores searching for it. A couple in our church went to Europe and searched from Rome to Amsterdam. They never found it.

So I wrote to Mr. Esses. But he would not answer. I tried to reach him by phone. But he was unreachable.

Finally I wrote to the U.S. Emigration authorities in New York. They searched for it. Finally they wrote and said as far as they knew there was no such Common Market stamp as I had described. I even contacted the British Embassy people. They knew nothing about it.

Finally with embarrassment I stopped telling the story and showing the circle. Oh it was quite a thriller. But I could not prove it. So I shut up. And I learned a lesson.

Another so-called "prophetic fulfillment" was in the book, "The Jupiter Effect." The authors were two young American scientists named Gribbon and Plageman. They predicted that the planets of our galaxy would line up in 1982. Then, due to an increase in sun-spots and a few other heavenly phenomena, all kinds of troubles would erupt in the skies. These would produce major problems upon the earth.

What Gribbon and Plageman described looked to many people like the horrors described in Revelation. That would have put the world in the Great Tribulation in 1982. And the rapture of the saints would have needed to happen in 1978 or 1979.

But Gribbon wrote in the Omni magazine that their predictions were erroneous. He said, "I have bad news for the doomsdayers: the book has now been proven to be wrong. The whole basis for the 1982 prediction is gone." The planets lined up but the horrors did not happen.

In addition there is a little tract that has threaded its way all over America. It insists that all kinds of wild birds and especially vultures are increasing in Israel.

There was an article in a prominent Washington D.C. paper which declared this to be a fact. The author of the tract assumed this

newspaper statement was true. And evidently so have multitudes of Americans. I have seen the little tract everywhere I travel.

I doubted the story about the birds from the first time I read it. So I recently wrote the Society of Preservation of Nature in Israel. I soon heard from the head of this Israeli organization. He said he had received at least 30 previous inquiries about the vultures.

Are vultures increasing in Israel? No. Just the reverse is true. According to the Jewish authority they are "in high deduction!" There are now only 60 mating pairs of these birds in all Israel! Man has greatly reduced this bird population by means of poisons.

This fact does not damage Bible prophecy. Take a close look at Ezekiel 39:17-20 and Revelation 19:17, 18. There God says He will call for birds to come to Israel and feed upon the dead bodies of invading soldiers. If the land was full of vultures God would have no needs to call them. They would already be there.

But since these flesh eating birds are reducing in number in Israel the Lord will need to call them in from other lands. That is what He said He would do in Ezekiel and Revelation.

Have you heard the latest? In several southeastern states some people's Social Security checks are said to require the payee to have a mark upon his head or right hand. These people supposedly went to their banks and the bank officials reportedly were very disturbed over the requirement.

When I first read it I wrote the editor of the little paper requesting proof and verification. He promptly replied. He said the story appeared in an Eastern U.S. newspaper. But he failed to tell me what paper so I could contact the newspaper editor.

Mr. Howard Estep is a Colton, California prophecy preacher. He read this same story about the Social Security checks. Mr. Estep contacted a top Internal Revenue Service official about the so-called required mark in the skin. The government official said that no such checks had been issued. And none were planned.

Mr. Estep contacted the same author I did and failed to receive specific information about the people who reportedly received those checks. This is evidently another one of those prophetic hoaxes.

The inventors of such wild prophetic tales no doubt enjoy stirring up the emotions of their readers. But they also do a serious injustice. I think Satan laughs at these rumors.

Such wild stories cause many weak saints and unbelievers to have increasing doubts about the rest of Bible prophecy. They turn away from the glorious hope of the soon coming of Christ.

Bible prophecy is a powerful weapon to defeat Satan in this decade. Let us use it to win souls and strengthen saints. But let us make sure that what we speak is "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." If we hear or read a "prophetic fulfillment" that seems to be extremely unusual it would be wise not to believe it unless we thoroughly check it out.

These wild, untrue stories do not hinder the soon coming of our Lord. Refuse to let them discourage you. Let the Bible and current events keep you excited about our seeing Jesus very soon.—from *Pulpit Helps*.

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