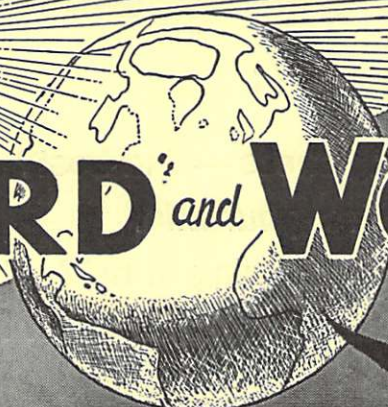


"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."



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



"Holding forth the Word of life."

JUNE, 1987

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NEWS AND NOTES

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

TO THE GRACIOUS DONORS OF THE MARGARET-BOYD-FUND:

Since early February when our first letters were mailed, announcing this love-offering in honor and appreciation for the Robert Boyds, \$17,002.00 has been thankfully received into this fund. Our goal was set at \$15,000.00, to help Margaret in keeping the family house and car. Truly, God's rich grace has abounded through you! Gifts for this fund came from over ninety different sources, i.e., our churches and many individuals. We believe it speaks most worthily of our esteem and gratitude for Bro. Robert Boyd and his faithful "help-meet" Sis. Margaret, and for their many years of lovin' ministry among us.

Now, we would like to close this fund, and finish the account. Letters of receipt have been sent to each donor. Donors whose gifts were received after the \$15,000 goal was reached, have been notified and several have responded by requesting their gift be added to the total offering. We are suggesting June 15th, as our "cut-off" date. At that time, all funds at hand (unless otherwise directed, by the donor) will be delivered to Sis. Margaret.

The brethren of the Dugger church have been greatly blessed in having the honor to sponsor this fund. We bless the Lord and thank you all for your generous cooperation.

In the Joy of His service,
Vernon C. Lawyer
(For: Dugger Church of Christ)

LOUISVILLE FELLOWSHIP WEEK

August 3rd through 6th

Theme: Jesus is Lord

Japan: Shichiro Nakahara had surgery for cancer, as reported last month, and half of his stomach and esophagus were removed. Yet doctors believe they removed all the malignancy, and were amazed at his rapid recovery and great improvement. He was scheduled to leave the hospital the first week of June.

* * * * *

Philippines: Pray for wisdom, love and unity among leaders. Reports say that one of the largest congregations has suffered disruption and might divide. No details are known, but your intercession can make a difference.

Missionaries in Indonesia are facing a visa crisis. Practically every missionary who has been working in Indonesia ten or more years is being told that he may remain in Indonesia only one more year from the time of his visa renewal. The Christian Church/Church of Christ missionaries in Indonesia will by the middle of next year lose at least 60 percent of the small number who remain unless the Lord intervenes. Your prayers for the Lord's intervention are urgently needed.—from *Christian Standard*

* * * * *

Louisville:

The 60th graduating class of Port-Christian High School held its com-
(Continued on inside back cover)

THE WORD AND WORK

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

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

The Word and Work (USPS 691-460) is published monthly except December for \$5 per year, bundles of 10 or more to one address \$4.50, 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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Speaking Truth in Love:

I Hope Your Wife Is Fine

Alex V. Wilson

This month's issue has three themes, not one. The most important one is *God's grace* versus man's deeds of merit. Someone said that when we sing John Newton's great hymn, most of us really mean, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like you!" Be sure to read Bill Brown's shocking testimony, and Gordon Linscott's antidote for the disease of legalism.

A second theme is *unity* among God's people. We who are God's children by grace should build bridges, not walls, between ourselves and other members of His family. An attempt to do that was made recently at Cincinnati, and I report on it in later pages. The timing is fitting, for this month's biography is about Raccoon John Smith, who helped divided brethren to unite in Jesus Christ. And how appropriate it is that the Great Commission is uniting churches of different kinds. Unity promotes evangelism (see John 17), and evangelism promotes unity. Read about it.

But actually our main theme is *being balanced believers in balanced churches*. Sometimes when I'm discussing with someone from another congregation, I'll ask, "How is your church's wife?" For the letters W-I-F-E stand for four essential purposes of the church: worship, instruction, fellowship, and evangelism. To express it another way, the church is here to *celebrate* the greatness of God (worship), *cultivate* the knowledge of God (instruction), *care* for the people of God (fellowship and service), and *communicate* the gospel of God (evangelism).

Every Christian and every congregation should evaluate its W-I-F-E, and see where improvements need to be made. We offer you one article on worship, one on teaching, one on evangelism, plus those on unity or fellowship. But to get the ball rolling, think about this quotation from Gene Getz's book, *The Measure of a Church*. He observes that all believers need "vital *learning* experiences with the Word of God, vital *relational* experiences with each other and with God, and vital *witnessing* experiences with the unsaved world." He then clarifies his point by showing what happens to churches that do not fully emphasize all three of these major needs. The rest of this editorial is from Dr. Getz's book (published by Regal @ \$3.95).

Some churches tend to focus on *one* of these experiences.

Note what happens:

Churches that emphasize Bible teaching to the exclusion of fellowship and sharing Christ soon become cold and academic.

Churches that emphasize fellowship and neglect Bible teaching and sharing Christ soon become superficial and emotional.

Churches that emphasize evangelism and neglect Bible teaching and fellowship are filled with people starved for the Word of God and hungry for deep relationships.

Many churches tend to focus on *two* of these experiences. Note what happens to them:

Churches that emphasize Bible teaching and fellowship but neglect evangelism often become ingrown and stagnant. There is no fresh flow of new life that keeps a church vibrant and pulsating with New Testament dynamic.

Churches that emphasize fellowship and evangelism and neglect Bible teaching often get off into false doctrine and create splinter groups.

Churches that emphasize Bible teaching and evangelism but neglect relational Christianity produce Christians who know the Word and share it but never feel comfortable in developing deep relationships with other Christians—an absolute essential if we are to be mature New Testament Christians.

May I emphasize again, to become a mature New Testament church we must have all three of these experiences and in balance. We need not one, not two, but all three experiences.

We see, then, that our churches can often be categorized according to their emphases, and, consequently, their weaknesses.

There are the Bible churches. There are the relational churches. There are the big evangelistic churches. There are the ingrown churches—the Bible teaching and fellowship type churches, but without outreach. There are the fellowship and evangelistic type churches, but without a deep knowledge of the Word of God. There are the Bible teaching and evangelism churches, but without deep relationships.

But where are the churches that are striving for balance? Unfortunately, they seem to be few and far between.

Balanced Churches:

WORSHIPPING GOD

Mike Hudson

When I was in the eighth grade I made a new friend. He was Polish, and one of the first things I found out about him was that his mother was a great cook. So when he invited me to spend the night with him, I was excited and couldn't wait to have supper with his family and taste his mother's cooking. It was wonderful. His older brother was a hulk of a guy and his father too was robust and enthusiastic. They both knew how to appreciate good cooking and en-

courage a guest to do the same. If I ran out of anything another helping was piled on my plate with the words, "Eat up—there's plenty more." I remember going home and telling my Mom what a good time I had and giving her a play by play account of supper and breakfast.

I had another friend whose family had a motor boat. He told me about their early morning skiing on the smooth water of Lake Hartwell. He promised to take me when the weather warmed; I could hardly wait. June finally came and he invited me to go with his family for a weekend. As soon as the sun was up, we were up, gulping our breakfast, heading for the boat. He was right. Feeling the smooth water under the skis, the wind and cold spray on my face, the powerful pull of the boat through the rope, hearing the splash of water and the roar of the motor and our own laughter—this was a wonderful experience and is still a rich memory. There is no substitute for participating in life's events with a happy, expectant heart.

Later, when I became a Christian, I learned that God also spreads a rich feast and invites us to experience an exciting life. There was nothing at all in me that was inclined to just let others "tell" me about it. If there is a feast, and if I am invited, then *bon appetite!* Feasts are for feasting! It didn't take me long to realize that God himself is the main course. The experience we have of him is the richest life has to offer. This was the beginning of my pilgrimage into worship.

Since those early days of walking with God, I've learned that worship is a jewel with many facets, a mountain with many sides. The more I worship, the larger God becomes and the worship itself grows in excitement. Yet I remain one small creature bending my neck to look up at the majesty of God. Certainly there are principles of worship, but no one knows them all or can fully describe even a few. All we can say is that we are learning. So a few suggestions follow as a reminder of what worship is and how we might grow as individuals and congregations that have set ourselves to experience God.

Worship is adoration. The first principle of worship is to try to see God as He is and then respond to Him, offering as much of our hearts, minds and strength as we are able. All our concepts of God are inadequate, but the more mature they become the deeper our worship will be. Imagine yourself sitting in your room. Now picture the resurrected, glorified Christ walking it. How do you respond? This is a simply example, but it is at the core of worship. When we see God, we must worship. *Every* knee bows, *every* tongue confesses His lordship when in His presence. Look at the picture we have of the throne of God throughout the book of Revelation. What are the heavenly beings doing? They are adoring God, for to see Him is to worship. And if we are not worshipping it is because we are not seeing. It might be easier for us to begin by thanking God for what He has done, but the heart of worship is to praise Him for who He is.

During times of corporate worship, remember that He is faithful even if you think you may be the only person who truly wants to worship. Enter into the words of the songs and hymns; let them teach you more about God or give your heart words to praise Him.

Make a covenant with yourself to always try your best to worship with every hymn you sing from now till the Lord comes, and as you sing, glance up at Him; He is surely there.

Worship is transformation. When Isaiah saw God he experienced three things: repentance, cleansing, and commitment. True worship always bears this kind of fruit; it also yields encouragement, healing and restoration. This is part of seeking first the kingdom. We worship God because He is worthy, but these things always follow. To come into the presence of the living Lord is to be changed, and so as ministers of the new covenant and of reconciliation, we rejoice to see ourselves and others transformed into the image of Christ through the experience of worship. Beholding God we see what we are to become; as children we recognize our Father and strive to take hold of our inheritance of godliness. As we worship, the command, "Be holy for I am holy," changes from a crushing law into a steadfast desire, a shining potential. The thanksgiving we feel for the goodness of God looks for a way to express itself in service and obedience; our will comes forward of its own accord to submit itself to the will of God; our souls having been fed find new strength to say, "Here I am, send me."

Perhaps you would like to practise this principle. Try hiding these words in your heart: "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness . . . (2 Cor. 3:18)." The next few times you worship recall this verse. Remember Jesus has taken the veil away so we can stand before Him and feel His glory like we can stand under the summer sun and feel its warmth. Fix your heart on Him. Bask in His warmth, and as you continue to worship and enjoy the goodness of God, yield yourself to Him in quietness and trust. This is one of the ways we can cooperate with Him in the transformation of our lives.

Worship is proclamation. To people who don't know the Lord we are a barometer of His glory. If we say that God is great and majestic but respond to Him like He is distant and ordinary people will believe what they see. Worship in our churches too often leaves the world thinking that God has no impact on people—even His own people. We must become better stewards of His glory in the church. In Psalm 145, speaking to God, David says that we praise, "so that all men may know of Your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of Your kingdom." In worship our churches have the opportunity to proclaim that God is mighty. We should never *pretend* to be excited about God. Instead we must set ourselves resolutely toward becoming worshipping people, people in whom others can see that God is loved and cherished and exalted in the hearts and lives of His children.

In summary, remember that God is to be experienced by His church (not just talked about) and that through worship we can taste for ourselves that He is good. Remember also that worship is *adoration, transformation, and proclamation*. In seeking to bless God with all our heart we begin to overflow with a warm love; we are changed in our inner being. Others, then, can look at us and see that our God is worthy of their attention.

—from *Paraclete Journal*

Teach to Reach Every One in Your Class

Dr. Clyde M. Narramore

Tom Thompson leaned back from the book-covered table. After much reading and planning he felt prepared to teach next Sunday's lesson. Illustrations were chosen. Visual materials were ready. And questions were worked out to stimulate an open discussion period.

"There's no doubt about it," said Tom half aloud as he rearranged his notes, "this is an important lesson for those junior high fellows I teach. The question is, Will I be able to make it seem important to each one of them?"

Every conscientious Sunday school teacher asks similar questions: *What about the boys and girls (or men and women) in my class? When Sunday school is over do they face their Monday-through-Saturday living with stronger spiritual understanding because the lesson had personal meaning for them?*

A successful Sunday school superintendent recently challenged his teachers with the importance of the individual. "Teaching your class is not enough!" he told them. "To be a worthwhile teacher you must strive to reach every individual in your group."

And you can do just this, for there are psychologically sound teaching methods which will enable you to reach out to each person in your class. Use at least one of the following "reaching-the-individual" pointers next Sunday.

"Tie-in" to student's interests

"Last night I received a phone call from an old-time friend. He said . . ."

Did the above sentence catch your interest? Chances are you're wondering what my friend said. Or perhaps you're thinking about a phone call you had from an almost-forgotten acquaintance.

No doubt you've seen this "tying-in" tactic put to work by a speaker. A minister tells about some personal experiences and instantly the "pew-sitters" become alert listeners. They are interested because he is mentioning things they know about, places they have been, or even thoughts they have had.

Successful speakers, writers and teachers frequently use this method to gain the attention of their audience. Psychologists call it "identifying" with the listener, and they say you are bound to get through to the people you teach if you "tie in" to their personal experiences and interests. And, it is easy! Just remember: when you explain or tell something to your class, begin with an experience with which the group is familiar.

If you teach children, you may be telling the Bible story of the boy with the five loaves and two fishes. Instead of beginning, "Our lesson today is about Jesus feeding the multitude . . ." ask the class, "Have you ever been on a picnic?" And, after a pause for their response, "Of course, you have!"

"Aren't picnics fun? When you go on a picnic there's one thing you always want plenty of. Yes, food. Now suppose you were on a

picnic with enough food for yourself, but many, many people came and they were all very hungry. They didn't have a bite to eat, and there was no place nearby where they could get any food. Wouldn't that be terrible?

"What do you think you would do? Well, I am going to tell you what one little boy did when this happened to him. This is a real story from the Bible, God's Word. Once there was a little boy..."

When you "tie in" a lesson to the personal experiences and interests of those you teach, ask yourself these questions: (1) What are the interests of this age group? (2) What do my students know? (3) How do they spend their time? (4) What experiences have most of them had?

Naturally, if you are going to be able to answer these questions you must be well acquainted with those you teach. And the importance of being acquainted cannot be overemphasized for it is your best means of knowing how to reach the members of your class. Tailor your teaching to match the group you teach.

Why is this "tying-in" method successful? A psychologist might come up with the following explanation: A person may not be aware of his feelings, and he may not be able to explain them. But he senses that the teacher who relates the lesson to his daily life understands him, knows his interests, and has a feeling of concern for him.

So, as you look into the faces of your students, ask yourself, "Is what I am saying remote or is it related to their everyday living?" When you do this, you are taking an important step toward reaching the individuals in your class.

Promote Student Participation

"I was in a play at our church," said little Gracie happily.

"What did you do?" her friend asked.

"Oh, I carried the spear," she explained, meaning that she was in a mob scene. But even though her part was small, she was happy about it. She personally felt the importance of the church's program because she had *participated*.

The Sunday school superintendent of that church appreciated the value of the well-known rule: "People learn by doing." And he often reminded his teachers, "The participating individual is the interested individual."

How can the members of your class participate? What can they do? How can they contribute to the group?

There are many ways. Draw them into discussions. Encourage them to share some of their significant experiences. Let them tell of their opportunities to witness. Perhaps they have some special prayer requests.

Youngsters especially enjoy the opportunity to bring objects from home. Dolls in foreign dress, stamps, coins, flowers for the worship center, an old family Bible—all these can be a valuable contribution, and at the same time actively involve members of the class.

There are many other things youngsters can do. Some of them can help to read the Bible references for the lesson. Others can

“act out” various character parts. They can say Bible verses in unison. They can trace, paint, color, cut out and paste. They can build and work on class projects. They can take class responsibility. And surely they can raise questions!

And don't forget object lessons. (Adults like them, too.) Not only does this type of visual aid create interest for its own sake, but here again is an opportunity for pupil participation.

If you are teaching adults don't miss the many Sunday-by-Sunday possibilities to involve the members of your class. Are there visitors to be greeted? Are there books to be distributed? Is there an offering to be taken? Who would like to make announcements?

As you look for new and different ways to encourage participation, remember that getting an individual involved in “doing” may be the beginning of his “learning.” Some simple activity may be his first step toward spiritual understanding.

Encourage Your Students

I was seventeen and a freshman in college. It was my first weekend at home. Thanksgiving time was near and I had a wonderful, excited feeling as I dashed up the broad cement steps to the old general store in our ranching community. Mr. Walton, a stately old gentleman, and one of our leading citizens, came out of the store just as I reached the top of the steps. “Well, Clyde, look at you,” he said, as he shook my hand, “It's good to see you, son. How are you making out at college?”

“Oh, pretty well, I guess.”

“Let me tell you something, my boy,” he continued. “Everybody in the community is looking to you. We're all as proud of you as can be, and we know you're going to break all records at that school.”

I was on “cloud number seven” for the rest of the year. In fact, it gave me a thrill to think about what my friend had said. I worked harder than I had before. I made better grades.

That is the way encouragement works. It gives you a lift and makes you do “more than you are capable of doing.” Research studies show that individuals who are praised and encouraged accomplish more, and develop more abilities than those who are criticized or ignored.

Encouragement also stimulates *spiritual* growth and well-being. You can help a member of your class find a more abundant Christian life by encouraging him. Compliment him for his willingness to serve wherever needed.

You can guide a new Christian's growth through encouragement and praise. Let him know it pleases you to see him carrying his Bible. Praise him for his faithful attendance at the meetings of the church. Compliment him on how well he can read Scripture aloud.

Yes, encouragement is an important part of every teacher's equipment. An outstanding Sunday school teacher once told me, “I try to compliment or encourage every member of my class each Sunday.”

Individual recognition and encouragement costs only the thoughtful interest of the teacher, yet the benefits are beyond estimate.

Reach the Individual

Whether you are teaching your Sunday school's largest class of adults, or a small group of 2- and 3-year-olds, these "ways to reach the individual" are of equal importance, so:

1. Begin now to learn the characteristics, needs, and everyday experiences of the age you teach. And then, relate each lesson to the individuals in your class by "tying in" to their interests.

2. Use your imagination as you search for new and different ways to involve the individuals of your class in the lessons and in the class activities. Dedicate yourself to helping each student's interest grow through participation.

3. Take notice of each member of your class. What ability, accomplishment or trait can you discover to compliment or praise? As you seek ways to encourage those you teach, remember that the encouragement you give may help a soul grow closer to God.

When you prayerfully use these "teaching" and "reaching" techniques God will not only use you to teach a Sunday school class; He will help you to reach boys and girls, and men and women, for the Lord Jesus Christ.

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* * * * *

What Non-Christians Ask

by Paul Little

I can predict with 95 per cent accuracy the questions that will be asked me in the course of an hour's discussion with non-Christians.

These questions turn up again and again in discussions in fraternities, sororities and dormitories. Christians can anticipate them and search out their answers. As we do this, the Holy Spirit will liberate us from the fear that has paralyzed so many of us in the past, and make us increasingly helpful to our friends.

THE HEATHEN

The first, most common question is "What about the heathen who have never heard of Jesus Christ? Will they be condemned to hell?"

We must begin by acknowledging that we don't know fully how God will deal with these people. Certain things are known only to God; we must concern ourselves with what He has revealed (Deuteronomy 29:29). And God has clearly revealed that He is Just. On the basis of the evidence we have, we can confidently rest in His character, and trust that what He does with those who have never heard of Jesus Christ will be right.

Second, the Bible seems to indicate that if a person really seeks God, he will find God (Jeremiah 29:13). Missionary history reveals instances of missionaries led by the Holy Spirit to villages where people had been worshipping an unknown God, having realized that idols were worthless because they were the creation of their own hands. When they heard about the Living God in Jesus Christ, they immediately responded and recognized that this was the God whom they had been seeking. Man has enough basic information from the

creation around him to warrant such a search if he is interested (Romans 1:20).

Third, it's important to realize that a person who hasn't heard of Jesus Christ will not be condemned for rejecting One about whom he has never heard. Rather his condemnation rests on his failure to measure up to his own moral standards, however high or low it may be. The assumption frequently behind the question of the heathen is that there are people in some foreign place living beautiful moral lives, whose only problem is that they have never heard of Jesus Christ. Actually, no culture exists in which the inhabitants claim to have lived up to their own standard perfectly. Every culture has a basic moral code which men knowingly violate, thereby condemning themselves (Romans 2:14, 15).

A fuller discussion of this question of an inherent universal law is found in *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis.

THE SINCERE BUDDHIST

Closely related to the first question is: "What about the sincere Moslem, Buddhist, Hindu, etc.? Doesn't he worship the same God, but under a different name?" In other words, "Is Jesus Christ the only way to God?"

The first thing to be seen in this question is that sincerity doesn't create truth. The basic consideration is the validity of the object in which faith or sincerity is placed. If the object of faith is invalid, all the sincerity in the world can't change the fact that one merely has superstition. A bushman's sincere confidence in a potion given him by the village witch doctor to cure his daughter doesn't raise his faith beyond superstition, no matter how intense it may be. In fact, it may kill his daughter if it's not based on sound medical principles. So we must ask about the faith itself, "Is its object valid?"

Islam denies the deity of Christ. Christianity affirms it. Both cannot be true. The question is, "What is truth?"

Christians don't say that Jesus Christ is the only way to God because they've gotten together as a club and decided that this is true. Rather it is because Jesus Christ Himself said it, and truthfulness is inherent in His whole being as God. A questioner often assumes that if Christians were only less bigoted they could change the rules of their club.

But entrance into the Kingdom of God isn't determined, for example, as are the speed laws of a particular community. A ten-dollar fine for going through a stop sign isn't inherent in the breaking of that law. A citizen's committee could easily get together and vote to reduce the fine to five dollars or raise it to fifty dollars.

But to break certain laws of the universe involves an inherent penalty. If you put your hand into a fire, you will get burned. A group of people could get together and pass a resolution that a person's hand wouldn't be burned if he puts it into a fire, but this obviously would be futile. The result of breaking that law is inherent in the law itself.

Just as there are immutable physical laws in the universe so there are immutable moral laws. An immutable law, inherent in the nature

of Jesus Christ, makes it impossible to come to God in any other way than through Him, because *He is God*.

Having said that Jesus Christ is the only way to God doesn't mean that other religions of the world are of no ethical and moral value. But this isn't the same as bringing a person into vital relationship with the Living God. Man needs more than good advice. He needs power. His problem is not in knowing what he should do, but in failing to do it.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

A third frequent question is this: "If God is all good and all powerful, how can He allow babies to be born deformed or diseased? And how can He allow wars and suffering? Either He must be all good but not all powerful, or He must be all powerful but not all good."

Here again we must acknowledge that we don't have full knowledge of the origin of evil or the complete answer to the problem. But although many things are unknown to us, we do know some things. Evil came into the world as a result of man's deliberate rebellion against God. A man's actions are not limited to himself, but often involve other people. This is the way the universe is set up. God could stop war and could stamp out evil, but if he began to judge every person righteously, who of us would stand till nightfall? Each of us must admit that he possesses the potential for incredible evil. Some of us haven't gone the way of others because we haven't yet been tempted in the same way.

God has done the greatest thing that He could possibly do to solve the problem of evil. He has given His Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place in order that the problem of forgiveness can be solved personally. If we refuse His love and salvation, we have no one to blame but ourselves when we find ourselves personally still faced with the problem.

C. S. Lewis points out that it is useless to speculate about the origin of sin and evil. We are faced with the fact of evil and must come up with a solution to this. We must leave the academic problem, and address ourselves to the practical problem. C. S. Lewis in *The Problem of Pain* discusses this in detail.

Continued next month.

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* * * * *

"We Are Free To Differ, But Not To Divide"

Alex V. Wilson

There are in the world today over thirteen thousand congregations, with over 1,400,000 members, which are called Churches of Christ, sing a cappella in their meetings, and trace their historic roots back to the Campbell-Stone "Restoration Movement" of the early 1800s. Of these congregations, about 10,000 are "mainline churches" that cooperate with each other; under one hundred are lumped to-

gether and labeled "the pre-millennial group," and the remainder are other groups which for various reasons have either been blackballed by the "mainliners" or have withdrawn from them.

There are also over five thousand congregations, with over one million members, called mostly Christian Churches. They are sometimes called "Independents," to distinguish them from the highly structured Disciples of Christ, and sometimes "instrumental churches," to distinguish them from the a cappella group mentioned above. (But to make things confusing, many of these congregations—especially up north—use the name Churches of Christ rather than Christian Churches.) They sprang from the same movement.

Another group with indetical historic roots is the Disciples of Christ. Several years ago they had about 4,400 churches and 794,000 members in North America.

How did one movement become three groups? I'll try to explain. The Campbells, Stone, and other early leaders stressed that God's people had two urgent needs: 1) to unite; 2) to get back to the Bible fully in doctrine and practice. They believed that #2 was the means to #1. That is, the path to unity among the children of God who were scattered among the different Gospel-believing churches was this: to follow Scripture alone as our authority, and reject manmade creeds as binding but instead allow much liberty in matters where Scripture is "silent." Both these emphases were Biblical, important and needed.

But as time passed, divisions arose. The Disciples of Christ held firmly to the unity emphasis and in fact became leaders among the National Council of Churches and other forms of the ecumenical movement. But in general they became very lax regarding the reliability of the Bible. Modernism became widespread, so that many preachers (though *not all*, by any means) would hardly distinguish between the inspiration of the Bible and of Shakespeare's plays. Though they might mention Christ's resurrection, they mean merely that His ideals or movement lived on. I preached once at a Disciples church, on the bodily resurrection of Jesus and its implications; afterwards some older members said ruefully that they hadn't heard preaching like that for many years. During Sunday School one woman said that Jacob probably wrestled with his conscience, but certainly not with an angel; also he couldn't have lived one hundred and eighty years—"maybe that word really means months or something"! Such attitudes are widespread in their churches, though again let me say that there are many exceptions. There are those among them that love God, trust the Bible, and preach Christ and Him crucified. Yet in too many places, sad to say, there are those who either reject or neglect the *Gospel*, the heart of the Christian message of salvation. And there are no *real* disciples of Christ, no born-from-above believers, apart from the Gospel of salvation by God's grace through the redeeming death and victorious resurrection of the fully-divine Jesus Messiah (John 20:30-31; Rom. 3:23-26; I Cor. 15:1-11; Gal. 1:6-9).

But while the group that became the Disciples held fast to a unity emphasis and to a degree let loose of the Bible, the other two

groups have done the opposite. Thankfully, we still hold fast to the Bible as God's trustworthy word. There is hardly any liberalism/"modernism"/neo-orthodoxy among us. But where is the unity?

Here is what happened, though not necessarily in this order. As several decades passed, many of those within the movement stopped thinking of it as a movement toward greater faithfulness to God's word and more loving unity among His people. They felt no need to "move" any more, for they had arrived—at all truth! In fact, they and those who agreed with them were alone *the* New Testament Church, the whole of God's family on earth. What a sorry mistake! They cut themselves off from multitudes of believers who were born again of water and the Spirit but didn't use identical terms and labels or didn't put their steps in exactly the same order. Thus they isolated themselves from those *outside* the movement.

Also a split came *within* the movement, over the scripturalness of missionary societies and instrumental accompaniment. That occurred mostly in the 1880s-90s, and by 1906 the break between instrumental Christian Churches and non-instrumental Churches of Christ was accepted by most. Then in later years the Churches of Christ split and re-split among themselves. Then the splits split, until what began as a unity movement had splintered into sixteen or more separate parties. What grief to our Father's heart!

From time to time efforts have been made to promote understanding and unity. From 1937-41 special meetings were held, regionally and nationally, between ministers of the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ. They were spearheaded by James DeForest Murch of the former and Claude Witty of the latter. From pre-mill congregations E.L. Jorgenson, Don Carlos Janes and J.R. Clark attended, and wrote favorably in *Word & Work* about the meetings. The approaches to unity included 1) prayer; 2) surveying "how much we have in common"; 3) establishing individual friendly relations; 4) "joint activity in enterprises which will not do violence to . . . convictions"; 5) "open-minded study and humble discussion of the things which at present divide us." However, the attempts fizzled out as powerful Church of Christ leaders opposed them. (It has been shrewdly observed, "We don't have archbishops, we have editors.")

During the 1940s and early '50s R. H. Boll spoke year after year at conferences of the Chicago-area Christian Churches. Later, the Lord turned Carl Ketcherside from a church buster-upper to a crusader for love and peace. Though for a long time he seemed to be a lonely voice crying in the wilderness, as time passed his work bore fruit in many places as people sickened of sectarian strife. Frank M. Mullins Sr. promoted fellowship between the a cappella and the instrumental churches; one year half of the speakers at the Southeastern Christian College lectureship were from each group. From 1966-75, annual unity forums were held at various colleges of the three Restoration Movement branches. LaVern Houtz promoted those conferences and S.C.C. played host one year.

Despite these various efforts, most Churches of Christ ignored or strongly opposed the idea of fellowship and cooperation outside of

their particular circle. But in the last few years some of the tides have begun to turn. In August 1984 a forum was held in Joplin, Missouri, where fifty men from Churches of Christ and fifty from Christian Churches around Portland, OR, sponsor a church-growth agreeably for several days. Spearheaded by Don DeWalt and Rubel Shelly, among others, the conference seemed like a spark in a tinderbox. Cooperation was an idea whose time had come.

Since 1984 four more such major forums (plus some regional ones) have been held —at Tulsa, Pepperdine, Milligan, and Cincinnati Bible Seminary. From the pre-mill churches, four other brothers and I attended the one at Cincinnati in April. I believe all of us were encouraged, and glad we went.

Speaking for myself, I was very heartened by several things. First, God's grace was stressed, and legalism repudiated. For instance, Edwin Hayden warned us not to think of the New Testament as a legal code, another Old Testament given to God's people as a set of laws. Second, the Holy Spirit's ministry was magnified by several speakers. Listen to Tom Burgess: "What we can do together is fervently seek the same Holy Spirit who was Jesus' power source in His ministry. . . . The Holy Spirit is the great unifier. We ought to be so filled with the Holy Spirit that if a mosquito lit on our arm he would fly off singing "There's Power in the Blood!" Third, there was love despite disagreements and unity amid diversity. At the end of one session where the two speakers had strongly disagreed on point after point, they ended by reaffirming their love for each other as brothers in the heavenly family, shook hands and embraced. Fourth, deep concern was voiced about our great need to reach out with Good News to a perishing world. And fifth, we enjoyed warm fellowship, especially in meetings of small groups.

And headway is being made. For example, every two years the Christian Churches around Portland, OR, sponsor a church-growth clinic, and they regularly feature a speaker from the a cappella churches. In a famishing world, food supplies have been sent to Poland, India, Central America and Ethiopia. Of \$7,000,000 worth of food sent to Ethiopia, over one million was given by instrumental congregations, for the a cappella churches to distribute. Again, the Christian Churches have a goal of doubling their number of congregations by the year 2000, but "We do not wish to plant churches where they will duplicate the efforts of our non-instrumental brethren."

Of course questions remain. Some ask, How can we work together if some believe instrumental accompaniment in worship is unauthorized by the New Testament and thus unwise or even sinful, while others believe it is perfectly all right and valuable and that forbidding it is adding man-made laws to the Word of God? How can the underlying question be solved regarding how to interpret the Bible's silence? Also, how big is God's family? Some at Cincinnati felt that very few people outside the Restoration Movement are saved. But others have a much wider view. Rubel Shelly has said, "There are sincere, knowledgeable, devout Christians scattered among the various denominations." And Larry Atken wrote in the forum's magazine, *One Body*,

If the current unity effort between the two conservative elements of the Stone-Campbell movement is but 'Phase One' of a plan for reactivating our historic purpose of restoring the unity of ALL the Lord's people, then it is 'on target.' But if it is merely the attempt to consolidate numbers and swell 'The Brotherhood' into 'the third largest non-Catholic body in the U.S.,' to more successfully compete against the Baptists and Methodists, then it is mis-directed and will not enjoy God's blessing.

In closing, three suggestions. One, pray for unity—as Christ did. Two, pray for revival, for a heaven-sent awakening. After all, uniting corpses doesn't solve anything, and too many believers are nearly dead. Three, avoid prejudice: either thinking too highly of the Restoration Movement and looking askance at all others, or thinking "Can any good thing come out of the Restoration Movement?"

* * * * *

(Editor's note: The following article, written in 1985, is by the minister of Eastern Heights Christian Church in Ponca, Oklahoma.)

Unity—Action or Reaction?

by Harold A. Prough

Much has been written in recent months concerning the discussions between the Independent Christian churches and our brothers of the non-instrumental churches of Christ. Beginning with the one-hundred-man "Restoration Summit" at Joplin . . . , representatives from both segments have at least explored our common ground. However, talk is elemental.

Surely there must be some practical ways to convert words into action and ideals into reality. The *Christian Standard* suggested cooperation in relief aid for Ethiopia as a starting place and then recounted additional efforts at the congregational level.

Our church,—Eastern Heights, has been involved in two "grass-root" cooperative ventures on the mission field in Africa for some time. The efforts were not designed to be innovative, they just happened as an outgrowth of a desire to see Malawi and Zululand touched for Jesus in the most cost-effective way. These examples are worthy of scrutiny, as they span both extremes in the area of directive oversight. In one area we take the back seat, while in the other we take the lead. It should make no difference, for if the motivation is right, the decision will be right and unity will prevail.

In Malawi we support the ministry of Jim Albright, first-born son of Jim and Velma, one of our finest families. Jim, a young professional with the firm of Schlumberger, combined his experience in electronics and purchasing with the knowledge gained at the Houston Bible Training Work sponsored by his home church (the Main Street Church of Christ of Houston, Texas) and became a missionary under their oversight. In my opinion, this work is one of the most exemplary ministries in vision and scope of which I am aware. We have no input in decision making, we just rejoice in the many victories.

In South Africa the situation is reversed. There we underwrite the Living Link of missionary David Brown and native evangelist Bro. Zulu. However, the bulk of the Service Link (\$700 to \$1000 a

month) is given by the Highland Church of Christ of Louisville, Kentucky, who previously sponsored David in Africa. While Eastern Heights has the primary oversight, major decisions are shared with the leadership at Highland. This has been a good "marriage" and I believe it exemplifies the trust that is needed for believers to be "one" in ministry.

But this "mutual trust" doesn't just happen, it requires a leader to *MAKE* it happen. Such a leader is Bro. Ernest Lyon and his wife Georgia who for 35 years shared their ministry with Highland. I have preached twice at Highland and have always been warmly received as a beloved brother in Christ. They shared "their" missionary, "their" money and "their" right to full oversight—with us! Why? Because Bro. Ernest taught by word and example that these things were not "theirs," they were **CHRISTS!**

May these examples become "legion", "... that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:21)

EARLY RESTORATION LEADERS

Raccoon John Smith: Frontier Minister

Sylvia Root Tester

For three days John Smith rode his horse doggedly. He arrived at the meeting place tired, with dust of the road on his striped, cotton jacket and his boots. He wished for time to wash and shave, but the afternoon meeting of the Tate's Creek Association of Baptists was about to begin.

The meetinghouse was too small for the crowd, so the meeting was moved to a nearby grove. Two young ministers spoke, both dry and pretentious. The crowd was restless; people were beginning to leave.

Upon his arrival John Smith had been asked to preach that afternoon, but he begged off, conscious of his dusty, uncouth appearance. Now, seeing people leaving, John rose and called, "Stay, friends. Hear what the great Augustine said."

People turned, curious.

"Augustine," Smith continued, "wished to see three things before he died: Rome in her glory and purity, Paul on Mars Hill, and Jesus in the flesh."

Some people returned. Others continued to leave. So Smith called again, "Will you not stay? Hear what the great Cato said." Upon hearing the three things Cato said, more people came back.

A third time Smith called, this time using the name of Thales. Now everyone was interested.

Smith then introduced himself. "I am John Smith, from Stockton's Valley. In more recent years, I have lived in Wayne, among the rocks and hills of the Cumberland. Down there saltpeter caves

abound, and raccoons make their homes. On that wild fountier, we never had good schools, nor many books; consequently, I stand before you today a man without an education." After this introduction Smith launched into a sermon on redemption. His words rolled out deep, rich, and rhythmic, for he was a powerful preacher. People had claimed at times that his preaching could be heard in cabins two miles away.

A man slipped from the crowd. He ran to find a friend who was in the business meeting of the association, which was going on at the same time.

"Hurry, Jacob," he called. "That fellow with the striped coat on, that was raised among the 'coons, is up. Come and hear him preach."

Raccoon John Smith had returned to his calling.

Times had been hard for this frontiersman. In only a few month's time, his cabin had burned, killing two of his children; his wife, unconsolable, had also gotten sick and died. Smith, too, had been sick with "the fever" and had nearly died. As he recovered, he questioned whether he should continue as a minister. He had grave doubts about his calling and his ability to do the work. Even now, he was still weakened from the disease. Trembling could overtake him without warning. Indeed, he nearly fell, so weak was he at the end of this sermon.

But his choice had been made. He was, as before, a preacher.

A Product of the Frontier

John Smith was, in one sense, a "man without an education" as he said. He had attended school for only four months as a child. As an adolescent he had gone to school another three weeks. He tried again as an adult to go to school, but the responsibilities of caring for his family soon interfered, and he was unable to continue. This, however, doesn't tell the whole story.

In that first four months of schooling, Smith had learned to read. He had gone on to read every book, journal, and newspaper he could find. As a young man, he found a wheelright who owned many books. In exchange for the privilege of reading the man's books at night, Smith had worked for him days. He also taught himself to read Greek, in order to study the Scriptures better. Like quite a few people on the frontier, Smith was self-educated.

Raccoon John Smith was a product of the frontier in many other ways as well. He was born October 15, 1784 in Sullivan County, East Tennessee. (At that time, that territory was not Tennessee, but the State of Franklin.)

As a child he hunted deer with Indians. Many times he tramped the Tennessee mountains in search of ginseng, which brought a good price in town. He grew up to be tall and wide shouldered, with a wiry, mountain-man strength.

Smith's father required Bible reading every Sunday, so Smith knew the Scriptures at an early age. He also grew to love the hymns of the church, memorizing most of them and gaining a love for poetic meter evident in his sermons.

John Smith could do all the things necessary for life on the frontier. He could farm; he could build a house and barn. He could cut down a tree, age the wood, make boards, and from them construct a table. He knew how to shoot a bear, skin it, dry the meat, and prepare the skin for use as a rug. He knew the entire process of raising a hog, butchering it, and preserving the meat. He could make shoes for his children. He could shoe a horse or tend it during illness. Smith took these skills for granted. Men did these things regularly on the frontier.

But John Smith, unlike many on the frontier, was highly articulate. He had the "gift of gab." His sense of humor, though, was very typical of frontier humor—sometimes rough but usually apt.

An Eye for Humor and Beauty

When Smith was a young man, his sense of humor had shown itself in pranks. His second stint in the schoolroom had ended with one such prank. The schoolteacher was lazy, ignorant, and a drunk. He was also cruel. Once Smith, by now a tall teenager, had stopped the teacher from administering an undeserved caning to a student. The teacher complained about this "lack of proper respect for him" to those who had hired him. They gave Smith a gentle reprimand, knowing that the problem was more with the teacher than with him, but being bound by the contract they had signed. Not long after this, the teacher came to class half-drunk and fell asleep during the session. With all the students watching, Smith put hot coals in the pockets of the teacher's jacket. This rather dangerous prank ended the teacher's stay at that school, to everyone's relief.

As an adult Smith was still prone to pranks, but he turned them to use as teaching tools. On one occasion he saw a minister sprinkling a baby, to the baby's outraged squalls. When the minister finished, Smith strode up, grabbed him, and started wrestling him toward a nearby stream.

"What are you doing?" the man demanded.

"I'm going to baptize you," was Smith's reply.

"But I don't want to be baptized!" the minister shouted.

"Doesn't matter," said Smith.

"It won't do any good! I don't believe in immersion!"

At that point, Smith released the man. "Just so," he said, "your sprinkling of the baby did no good. For that child didn't want you to do it, and he didn't believe."

Another time John Smith baptized several members of a family against the will of the elderly patriarch of the family. Later, Smith met the man and greeted him pleasantly, calling him "brother."

The man answered with scorn, "Don't call me brother! I'd rather claim kinship with the devil himself!"

"Go then," said Smith, smiling, "and honor thy father!"

People particularly liked the story of his encounter with two Methodist circuit riding preachers. Smith had met these two ministers on one of his many evangelistic trips. Since they were going the same way, they rode together for some time and then stopped at an inn for lunch. Smith asked if the two ministers would join him in a glass

of whiskey. One exclaimed in horror that he never touched hard liquor. (The temperance movement was in its infancy at this time.) So Smith asked if he would like a glass of sherry instead. Again the minister declined, but the other said that he might like a glass of sherry with Smith. Two glasses were ordered.

Then the minister who had been so horrified about the whiskey insisted on giving thanks for their food. Smith mentioned that he was a little uncomfortable about making a public showing of his piety, but the man insisted. Rough frontiersmen looked on in scorn as the minister proceeded to offer a lengthy prayer of thanks. While the minister was praying, Smith drank down his own glass of sherry and then the other minister's glass as well. The crowd guffawed.

When at last the prayer was over, the other minister started to lift his glass, but found it empty.

"The Bible says," Smith began, a smile lighting his face, "*watch and pray.*"

These and similar stories about Smith's escapades circulated among the churches on the frontier. Raccoon John Smith became known far and wide for his antics.

He was also known as the "marrying preacher." Couples sometimes traveled many miles to be married by him, in his home or in a nearby church or outside in a grove. In a time when many frontier weddings were hasty events, presided over by a harried justice of the peace, John Smith tried to make every wedding a special, sacred, and beautiful occasion.

In 1806 John had married Anna Townsend, and brought his bride to a cold log cabin with a floor of dirt, which she made into a comfortable home. He was devastated when she died. After a time he married again, this time a woman named Nancy Hurt. She was a sturdy pioneer who loved his children and bore him more, who tended the farm while he was away, who visited the sick and comforted the grieving, who sewed and cooked and cleaned and did all the other things pioneer women did—and who liked beautiful things.

For a wedding present, Smith had some beautiful silver spoons made for her from coins. Nancy treasured those spoons. At a quilting bee in her home, she used them, showing them with delight to her neighbors. The result was that the church leaders called her to task, saying it was not seemly for a minister's wife to show such pride in her possessions.

Nancy endured her censure meekly, but she and Smith agreed that liking beauty was no sin. She continued to use and treasure her spoons. And she kept wearing bright, pretty aprons over her skirts, putting lace and ruffles on her petticoats, and ironing pretty ribbons for her daughters' hair.

A Movement With Answers

The movements begun by Thomas Campbell and Barton Stone were sweeping the frontier. In these two approaches, John Smith found answers he had been searching for. His own difficulty in not having had a "typical" conversion experience nor a clear call to the

ministry paralleled Stone's experience. Smith and Stone became good friends.

After reading one issue of Alexander Campbell's *Christian Baptist*, Smith subscribed to the journal and read each issue avidly. Smith also met Campbell and questioned him at length about a number of issues. The two held each other in great esteem.

Walter Scott's way of evangelizing fit Smith beautifully, and he adopted some of the same tactics, clothing them, of course, in his own homespun expressions. Soon he was a convinced and convincing "reformer."

As Campbell finally found it necessary to move from the Baptist fold, so Smith was voted out of Baptist fellowship. He deeply regretted this development and did all he could to make his leaving gentle. He succeeded in keeping several lasting friendships with those who had chosen the other side. And he went on with his work as a minister.

In 1827 and 1828, there were 392 baptisms in the three churches to which Smith ministered. Nearly a thousand baptisms can be attributed to his preaching in other places those years.

John Smith and a friend of his, John T. Johnson, were the initiators of the famous Christmas and New Year's meetings at Lexington in 1831-32, with Barton Stone. Here the union between Stone's followers and Campbell's had its beginning.

At that New Year's meeting, John Smith spoke persuasively for union. "We have one faith, one God, one baptism, one Book, one name, one brotherhood," he said. "And by this shall all men know that we are His disciples, that we have love one to the other.

"Let us then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites, New Lights or Old Lights, or any other kind of lights. But let us come to the Bible and to the Bible alone, as the only book in creation which can give us all the light we need! Let us stand together united in the church of Christ as His disciples and as Christians only!"

John Smith and John Rogers were sent out evangelizing, trying to effect union between other Disciple and Christian congregations. For three years the two men labored, supported by offerings from the churches. In 1835 two more evangelists joined them. While Smith was a traveling evangelist, he was away from home much more than he was there. His wife and children, with the help of a hired man, took care of the farm.

At last John Smith went back to being a more settled minister. He continued his work until his death in 1868.

Raccoon John Smith's gifts to the movement he loved were many: his wild and sometimes raucous humor—still remembered and recounted with pleasure years after his death; his gentleness toward those he cared for, even when they disagreed with him; his understanding that rough and uneducated people of the frontier needed beauty in their ceremonies and in their lives as much as city people did; and of course, the union he helped to begin and worked so long and hard to effect, between Christians and Disciples.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO Church of Christ Members

Bill Brown

March 3, 1987

Dear People of the Churches of Christ:

I humbly come to you with a compelling cry in my heart, bringing a plea to you that may rescue an untold number of unsaved persons who were reared in Churches of Christ. I beg you to hear my story concerning the misconceptions that I believed about salvation, its attainment and requirements, from my childhood days until my incredible discovery of early last year (1986).

My parents were missionaries to Africa under the auspices of Churches of Christ, and certainly proclaimed the teachings and doctrines of the churches. I was reared under these same teachings. The clear conception I received from them was that salvation is gained through works, and it was devastating to my life and my Christian living! It caused me, at maturity, to view Christianity and salvation as being burdensome, complicated, controversial, and virtually impossible to ever accomplish or attain, no matter how hard I tried and worked for it!

This resulted in my becoming very callous toward religion as a whole. I never read or studied the Bible for my own understanding of the doctrines as laid down for all men by Jesus Christ himself and the Apostles. After all, the truth had been taught to my parents, who in turn taught me accordingly. So I rationalized to myself that if I led a relatively good, clean life, maybe—just maybe—God would extend His mercy, and spare me from everlasting fire and torture! I resigned myself to the fact that I would never make it by works to heaven, but surely He would understand, and forgive me up to a point.

I am convinced that there are hundreds of people out there today who have received these same teachings about salvation that I did for well over forty years (I am 62 now) and who have not yet discovered that “by *grace* you have been saved through faith; and that *not of yourselves*, it is the *gift* of God; *not as a result of works*, that no one should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). And there’s 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5 or Romans 6:23, just to mention some of the real eye openers that could lead them back to Christ. It would make them realize as I did that salvation is there for the taking. It’s free! It’s the free gift of God! (Thank God my parents later came to know and trust His grace, but the churches I attended kept reinforcing the idea of salvation by *my* efforts and *my* faithfulness.)

My heart’s burden now is that we let our loved (but lost) ones learn, as I now have, that though there are many religious movements in the world today, in actuality there are *just two*. The one finds salvation as a work of man, or man’s cooperation with God. The other attributes salvation to God alone, though man must receive it, of course.

I realize that believers will be *judged* according to their works, but that they are *not saved* on the basis of their works. John 3:16-18; 5:24; 6:37; 20:31; Acts 16:30-31; Romans 1:16, 17 and a host of other passages show that we are saved on the basis of whether we have believed in Christ alone for salvation. It seems we are judged according to our works, however, for two reasons. One, works are evidence that we have saving faith, for genuine faith always results in works (Ephesians 2:10; James 2:14-17). Second, works are the basis for rewards in heaven. For these reasons we find a passage like Romans 2:6-8 which says God will render eternal life "to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality." The believer will do that, and it is evidence that he is a believer. That is also why 2 Corinthians 5:10 says "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body". This is an evaluation for evidence of salvation as well as reward in Heaven.

I had to learn these truths the hard way, through my wife's involvement with the cult of Jehovah's Witnesses. She became very interested in their presentation of "the only true way to be saved." I knew then and there that I had better dig in and study with my wife, so that we could both know the truth. The only measuring stick for truth is, of course, the Bible. So I did an extensive study which turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

When I realized the truth about salvation, I went to God in deep and most reverent prayer, asking Him with all my heart for forgiveness of all my sins, declaring my complete faith and belief in Jesus Christ the Savior! I knew then and there my repentance was accepted, and that I had just received salvation as the free gift of God!! I felt like the whole world had just been taken off my shoulders. Oh, what inner peace! (I had believed in Christ and been immersed when I was twelve; but in the following years my legalistic environment caused me to despair and give up my hope, and finally rebel against the Lord. Now I had peace again!)

And so I write, asking our churches to consider carefully their teaching in this area. Please make sure you not only mention but also *explain clearly and* (most of all) *emphasize urgently* that we can never earn salvation by our good conduct or service for the Lord or faithfulness to the church. We can only receive salvation as an undeserved gift. Please prevent happening to others what happened to me for over 40 years. I write to you as a . . .

Deeply Concerned Christian,
Bill Brown
9439 San Jose Blvd., #252
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A TRUTH TO GROW ON: "God uses strain, pain and suffering toward the chiseling of character and the sanctifying of man. That idea is very unpopular today, but it is biblical and it affects one's attitude to many areas of life." —James Packer

Reprint:

The Man and the Plan

Gordon R. Linscott

In 1952 K. C. Moser's *Christ Versus a Plan* went on sale at the Harding College Bookstore. That little booklet stirred up a controversy that still hasn't been put to rest. Every so often somebody publishes an article with a title similar to the one above. Some agree and some disagree, but the majority, I am convinced, never really understand what Bro. Moser is talking about. He charges Church of Christ preachers with neglecting to preach Christ, preaching instead a "plan of salvation."

This is a serious charge. If we are commissioned to preach one thing and we preach something different, the consequences may be disastrous. Those of us who preach would do well to occasionally review the content of our preaching. The gospel—which is what we are sent to proclaim—is briefly outlined in 1 Cor. 15:1-8. How often do you hear it preached?

THE REAL ISSUE

A few days ago I shared Moser's booklet with a fellow-worker of mine who also preaches. When he returned it, I asked for his opinion of it. "Well," he said, "I'm kind of in the middle on this. I don't think a person should go to either extreme. Grace and works are both necessary." I had to give him credit for seeing the real issue—which I don't think Bro. Moser had spelled out quite as clearly as he might have. The real question is whether salvation is by grace, by works, or by grace and works.

The third option is quickly dispatched by Rom. 11:6: "If it is by grace, it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace." As far as salvation is concerned, grace and works cannot be mixed. This conflict should not be hard to understand. *Grace is a free gift; it is not an item on sale at a ridiculously low price.* "He that hath no money . . . come ye, buy and eat . . . without money and without price" (Isa 55:1). *A payment of ten cents turns the gift into a fabulous bargain—but a bargain is not a gift.* "The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

The second choice above—salvation by works—is completely ruled out by scripture. "By works of law shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom. 3:20). "... God reckoneth righteousness apart from works" (Rom. 4:6). "By grace have ye been saved . . . the gift of God; not of works" (Eph. 2:8).

THE MAN AND THE PLAN

Moser's complaint was that men were preaching that salvation comes from following a "plan." Rather, he said, salvation was accomplished by a Man—Christ Jesus, at Calvary. If salvation is by

a “plan,” then grace is no more grace and our salvation is no more perfect than our obedience. If, on the other hand, salvation is the work of God—and given as a gift—then we may say, “Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God hath done it . . .” (Ecc. 3:14). “By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14).

In a discussion of this topic, one question is always raised—and legitimately so. What about works? Aren’t you doing away with obedience? Not at all! “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). Works have nothing to do with procuring salvation: they *follow* our being “created in Christ Jesus.” He has made us to be new creatures; consequently, old things have passed away; all things have become new. We keep His commandments because we love Him, and His commandments are not grievous (1 Jn. 5:3).

THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon



“All Israel Will Be Saved”

I do not want you to be ignorant of the mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.” (Romans 11:25-27, NIV)

The three verses that head this article have been the source of a great many disagreements. I am not planning to give and answer those interpretations with which I disagree. I would simply like to look at this very important passage with you to see what the obvious teaching is. May the Lord help me and you to set aside any preconceived ideas of what God would like to tell us here and simply see what He is telling us by His Spirit through the Apostle Paul.

First of all, then, let us note that Paul seemed to think that the truth given here is very important. If the Christians (“brothers”) to whom Paul was writing were ignorant of the teaching here, the likelihood is that they would be conceited—think more of themselves than they ought to think. Then let us notice that the teaching here was a

“mystery,” a truth not clearly revealed before and one that could not be known until it was revealed. That means we can not look for clear teaching on this in the Hebrew Scriptures. The fact of times of apostasy and there being only a remnant of believers among them is revealed, of course, but the time limit (“until the full number of the Gentiles has come in”) and the Church made up of believers from among both Jews and Gentiles were not clearly stated. Let us, then accept simply what Paul says in verse 25 and go on to the part usually disagreed on in verse 26.

“And so all Israel will be saved”—that is the part about which there seems to arise so much disagreement. “All Israel” is sometimes taken (falsely, to me) to mean every descendant of Jacob through all the centuries, thus requiring a tremendous resurrection. Others take quite an opposite view and feel that Paul is simply stating that all Israel that is saved must be saved by faith, just as the Gentiles are; but that has been made clear all along in this book of Romans and would certainly be no mystery, for even many of the Old Testament saints recognized that truth (Psalm 32:1, 2 and Genesis 15:6 are my favorites on this.) Then what does he mean? Obviously in some way “all Israel” is included, but how? The simple thing to do is to look at the rest of verse 26 and all of verse 27. In that portion Paul quotes from Isaiah 59:20, 21, which you should read along with Isaiah 27:9 and Jeremiah 31:33, 34. He is showing that “all Israel will be saved” when the deliverer comes and turns away godlessness from Jacob. That, to me, very obviously means that he is speaking of all Israel living at that time. He would hardly speak of taking away godlessness from the Sanhedrin of Jesus’ day or of others of Israel who have died without the faith without which no one can be saved.

There are many passages in the Hebrew Scriptures that refer to a time when God will cleanse His people who descend from Jacob. Some of them, as in Ezekiel 20:33 and verses following, teach that God will first pass judgment on those who continue to disbelieve in that day. That passage, along with others, indicates not only that Paul is not speaking of the dead Israelites but goes further and indicates that some of the living will lose their lives for not turning in faith to Him.

As we get ready to close this article, may I urge upon myself and my readers the necessity of knowing and believing what the Lord says in His Word. There are many Christians today who are conceited about the superiority spiritually of Gentiles over Jews, ignoring the fact that unless Christ had died for our sins and been raised again, we would all be still in our sins and headed for an eternity separated from God and from all that we would count worthwhile. No one can come into God’s presence and live with Him eternally who has not seen the truth that we can do nothing to earn our salvation but that God has paid the price for us to be with Him—the blood of His only begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I hope that He is your Lord (Master) and Savior also; if not, turn to Him, repent of your sins and receive His salvation in His way, through Jesus Christ.

Building Better Christian Families

by Fred W. Schott



“NO SUBSTITUTE FOR TIME!”

“Let the little children come to me.”

Mark 10:13-16

Jesus seemed indignant! He found out that His disciples were trying to keep children away from Him.

The disciples had said to the children, “Go away now and leave Jesus alone.” It’s understandable. Jesus was doing important work. We know now, even more than His disciples did then, that Jesus was on the most important mission in the history of human kind. He was swamped with requests. Crowds were around Him all the time. His enemies were looking for every opportunity to attack. He was healing people. He was *busy!* The disciples, probably worried about Jesus overdoing things, were just trying to protect Him.

But Jesus said, “No. That’s O. K. Let the children come to me.” Or in other words, “Yes, I do too have time for children.” He’s also said that the rest of us must become like a child if we want to enter the kingdom of Heaven.

This story has a lot to say to Christian parents. I want to use it to make an important point. It has to do with how parents, grandparents, teachers, and church leaders view their families and children in relation to time. We learn from Jesus that there must be time for the children. We can add to that, time for families as well.

When I do parenting seminars and touch on these things, someone will usually ask, “Don’t you think that quality time is better than quantity time?” Well, I think quality time spent with children and families is great. I believe in it. It’s the stuff memories are made of. But for parents and grandparents especially, there is *no substitute for time spent with our children!*

Children are a special gift, a sacred trust from their Heavenly Father to us. There is no greater God-given responsibility to us than the care and development of children. It is impossible to fulfill this sacred task without devoting a lot of time to it! Brief periods of quality time are not an adequate substitute for the time we know we should be spending with them.

This is a real problem for devoted Christians. Many readers will disagree with some of the things I am about to say. I ask only that you keep an open mind. Think about these things. Ponder how they

relate to your church. Even church work is not more important than good parenting and quality family life!

I'm going to go even further. Sometimes churches are the worst robbers of family time. A few years ago a back-sliding friend of mine repented and then joined a Baptist Church. At the next family reunion he announced to his uncle Frank, who was a Baptist deacon, "Uncle Frank, I've given my life back to Jesus and you'll be happy to know I joined a Baptist Church!" Uncle Frank replied with genuine delight, but also concern. "I'm so pleased you've let Jesus have first place! But, watch us Baptists. We'll meet you to death! Remember church work and kingdom work are not necessarily the same thing! You just try to follow Jesus, young man."

I think uncle Frank was right. People can get so active in "church work" that they hurt their families and alienate their children. And, of course, we are not just picking on our Baptist brothers and sisters.

Not long ago I spoke on family life to a conference of church leaders. I raised this point somewhat diplomatically. One man who pastors a church stood up and enthusiastically agreed, and he offered a possible solution!

First, he related that when they looked at their schedule, there was some kind of meeting every single night of the week! They became concerned that all of their activities were really pulling families apart rather than together. Their solution? This congregation decided to move everything to Wednesday nights. It started with a simple soup and sandwich supper for everyone at 6:00p.m. This way people could come straight from work. Right after supper all of the various committees met, including the young people. After the meetings, those who wanted to sing in the church choir went to practice. Another group held a Bible study. Another group went calling. They all met in the sanctuary at about 8:45 for 15-20 minutes of prayer and a dismissal song. Once a month the committee meetings were replaced by the monthly business meeting.

Howard Yoder in his book *The Problem With Wineskins* even goes so far to suggest that there is nothing sacred about 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Sundays. He reminds us that the disciples of Jesus in the book of Acts seemed to meet on the first day of the week because it was convenient, not commanded. Traditional yes, sacred no.

What is commanded is that "we forsake not the assembling of ourselves together." That assembly should build and unite families, not divide them. These are things to ponder, to think about.

One other thought to Christian teachers, church leaders, pastors, and youth workers—paid or lay. Jay Kesler, former National Director of Youth for Christ, is reported to have said to a national conference of church youth workers, "It matters not how many kids you help through your ministry if you step on just one kid in the process, including your own!"

Is that not just another way of Jesus saying to us, "Do not prevent your children from coming to me?"

Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller



Can a Christian embrace modern psychology and psychiatry and use them? Are they safe?

Psychology and psychiatry involve a study of the mind (from the Greek, *psyche*, soul, or mind), and as such are not exact sciences. Many theories have been formed concerning the working of the human mind, and these theories are of varying worth. Some have proven to be false, while others may provide a solid basis for reasoning. But not all human minds necessarily work alike under every circumstance like a piece of machinery. In brief these sciences try to formulate rules concerning the mind, how to motivate it and treat it, but even at the best there are many variables which affect it. The worth of these sciences, therefore, is dependent upon the truth of the premises which are used, the wisdom with which they are applied, and the ability of the user to recognize the variables which apply in a given case.

True psychology represents important knowledge. Since we live with others and interact with them, it is important to know what pleases and displeases, what motivates, etc. In the process of growing up we learn a lot of psychology without being specifically aware of it. We learn that some things make others angry, or happy, or that certain conduct or words can hurt, etc. There is nothing wrong with true psychology provided we use it to righteous ends. It can smooth out human relationships, give practical meaning to Christian love, and enable us to live righteously one toward another. Good psychology is needed for the successful proclamation of the gospel. The Bible is full of good psychology.

Psychiatry generally deals with the medical treatment of people whose minds may create problems for themselves or for others. The definition of a "sick" mind tends to vary with the standards that are adopted. For example, with rabid communists belief in God is considered a sickness. On the other hand, those who embrace Christian values and standards may regard as perversion those things that less conservative elements in society regard as normal. The worth of psychiatry is determined in great measure, then, by the truth of its premises and the standards of those who are involved with it. Obviously there is need for the proper treatment of sick minds and there is nothing wrong with sound and healthful attempts to minister to such needs.

Asking if a Christian can use psychology and psychiatry is a little like asking if a Christian can use the English language. If one

is to communicate with English-speaking people it is almost necessary to do so. Now there are words that a Christian cannot righteously use, and there is a manner of speaking that can be wrong (in anger, sneering, with falsehood, in deceit, etc.), but that does not cause us to throw out the good use of language. Language may be used to good purposes or it may be used for evil purposes.

By Christian standards, psychology that is used to manipulate people for unrighteous or selfish reasons is wrongfully used. Motivational psychology that seeks to obtain responses not in the best interests of the person(s) on which it is used is wrong. The Christian, in his desire to act righteously, should not attempt to use psychology for wrong ends with others and he should not submit to its use for unrighteous ends with himself. The fact that many may use this wrongly and with deceit does not mean that there are not righteous ways of using it, however.

I am sure that the question is concerned especially with the use of modern psychology and psychiatry from a medical viewpoint, for the changing of the behavior of individuals with problems. Can the Christian turn to these people for help in time of need? The answer is a qualified "yes." Some problems may be such that they can be profitably treated by those without a Christian set of values. There are ethical people who will show respect for the patient's set of values and avoid trying to interfere with that. As a rule, however, there ought to be concern for the orientation of the one from whom help is sought. If one can find those who have a Christian set of values and who have subjected their principles and ideas to careful examination in the light of God's word, then there are cases when their help can be invaluable.

Now this does not mean that every professing Christian will properly use or evaluate all the theories and principles. Profession is not possession, in many areas of life. Nominal Christians often tend to accept the prevailing education in a given field without getting much Christianity involved in the process. Hence, in urging the use of a Christian psychologist or psychiatrist we speak of those who have genuinely brought true Christianity to bear on their beliefs and practices.

I confess that I have sometimes felt the need of recommending "professional help" to people but did not do so, mainly because of the lack of knowledge of an available true Christian professional to recommend. Because these people deal with the mind and with one's set of values, it is possible for an ungodly practitioner to do more harm than good. For example, an ungodly man might deliver a person from a nagging, disturbing sense of guilt that has him in depression by convincing him that the practice causing the guilt was not a sin (when by Bible definition it is absolutely a sin). I have trouble with the practice which treats drunkenness as merely a disease. Of course some of us are more tempted in certain areas than others. But if drunkenness is only a disease, then the drinker is not responsible and drunkenness is not a sin (though the Bible declares it so). If we do not believe we have sinned, then we do not seek forgiveness for the sin. Again, it is not unknown for a professional to recommend an

adulterous fling as a remedy for impotence. Hence, care needs to be used in the selection of the one to whom we might turn in case of need. Some men with high standards are available, but they are not numerous.

That there are sick minds should be evident, and these may be so sick that they are not able to exercise needed will power or sound thinking. Good professional help can be an immense blessing to these. However, one reason for the qualified "yes" given earlier as to the use of psychologists and psychiatrists was due to the fact that many a mental problem is first of all a sin problem, and the only real remedy is to deal with the sin. Some of the great men in the field of psychiatry have realized that many mental problems (note the language—many, not all) are first of all spiritual problems. An accusing conscience, a sense of guilt, a sense of impending judgment of some sort can greatly disrupt one's mind. It should be evident that there is a mental health that come from the well-lived spiritual life, and that there is perverted thinking that arises from sin. Getting rid of the sin problem is often all that is needed.

1503 Skyline Dr., Johnson City, TN 37604



Robert & Corinne Johnson

Brazil

April 17th

(Robert Johnson graduated from Portland Christian High School in 1955.)

Today is Good Friday. It was Good Friday twenty-nine years ago that I returned to Brazil to begin my missionary career. Coming in from the airport with a Brazilian companion, we encountered a long procession. "Someone important must have died," I commented. "Yes," the Brazilian replied. "Today is Good Friday. It's the most holy day in Brazil." I was embarrassed because I had not remembered the day or recognized the significance of the procession. From that Friday to this, the Lord has guided and blessed through many good times and a few difficult times.

Easter is hardly noticed in Brazil, but for me it is the "most holy day" of all. A dead, defeated Christ without the victory of the resurrection would be totally futile.

We have cooperated indirectly with the organization of a new church in Campinas. It is doing exceptionally well with its own pastor and strong ministry. Curtis Goodson and I have finished our first group in Evangelism Explosion and are to start our second group this month with 10 or 12 trainees. Now, the Campinas leaders have assigned me to work with two seminary students in the beginning of another new church in the neighboring city of Vinhedo. It is exciting to be in pioneer work again.

Our literature ministry among students is progressing slowly. Last year's Christmas card had a circulation of 40,000. This year's card is already in composition. Our most recent publication is a cartoon tract oriented toward high-schoolers. We are looking for new tracts for college students. Presently, we are reprinting eight of Dr. Azambuja's mini-messages. (His health is still failing.) Several weeks ago we sent a mailbag with 60 lbs. of evangelistic literature to our colleague in Angola.

Robert & Corinne Johnson
Caixa Postal 1411
13.001 - Campinas, Sao Paulo
Brazil

Joy Garrett

Ruwa, Zimbabwe

April 25th

Our Easter holiday family camp meeting held at Glen Norah Church was a feast of good things. Our trucks picked up Christians from far and near.

The theme of the meeting was *The Church in the Last Days*. Titles of Sermons: Prayer; Leadership; Devotion and Commitment; Church in the Last Days; Unity: The Search for Truth; Personal Evangelism; Youth; Home Bible Studies; Christian Family. Then on Sunday morning, What Will Happen When Jesus Comes? That excellent portrayal of the entire second coming events took 3 hours. Five came forward confessing sin and wanting to be ready for Jesus' coming. Four came forward to be baptized. Three women had already been baptized Friday morning. There were over 500 there on Friday and Saturday. Sunday's attendance far exceeded that. Many were outside listening on the loudspeakers our brethren had put up.

The cooking and housing problems for such a group points up our need for the facilities we are planning here at Rockwood Park.

This meeting made the Lord's coming more precious to us all.

Karen Ashley

Honiara, Solomon Islands

May 1987

We are back in Honiara, the capital, for a couple weeks after spending our first two months in Sa'a village. Let me describe the village to you. In the Solomons, the word "village" is used for any group of houses—maybe as few as 3 or as many as 100. Sa'a is by this standard a large village, having about 60 houses (450 people). Actually, it's more like two villages one third mile apart. Half of the houses, the clinic, and the school are along the road near the river. The others (including our's) are grouped around a clearing containing the Anglican church and the toho hut (the community meeting house where the old men discuss village business). As new houses are built, they tend to line up along the road between the two settlements; that's probably where we'll end up building our own house.

The people of Sa'a village, like most Melanesians, are *very* friendly. The first week or so we were almost overwhelmed with at least 5 or 6 and often 20 or 30 people in and around the house from

sunrise until 10 at night. They would go away for an hour while we ate, but they were back looking in the doorway (and through cracks in the walls) as soon as we got up from the table. We were thankful for a nice rainy evening or two—a chance to be alone for a while!

As the days passed they gradually got used to us and went about their business, and we began to feel more comfortable with a daily routine (of sorts). James attends morning prayers at the church while I fix breakfast, and then after breakfast James spends the morning gathering language data from the old men. I help Kent with his school work and then bake bread, wash clothes at the river, or chat with women that often stop by. At noon James takes the boys swimming in the river to get them cooled off; then after lunch we rest and/or work on projects around the house (e.g., building shelves). Five o'clock brings baths in the river and then supper. Around 7:30 I go to evening prayers while James puts the boys to bed. Several people usually come by after church, and we sit around and talk till bedtime.

We know many of you have been praying for us as we adjust to village life, and we really appreciate it. All in all it wasn't really bad. In Sa'a everything is so different you feel like you're in another world. The pace of life is incredibly slow, and so many things that we concern ourselves with in U.S. society are just not important. Nobody cares if your hair is combed, much less curled. There's no shopping to do, no errands to run, and no phone to interrupt you. I can clean house, but there are no windows to wash, and a concrete floor that is starting to crumble will never be clean enough to eat off of. Washing clothes by hand is no picnic, but the boys don't wear shirts (except to church) so there isn't quite as much laundry to do. We bathe in the river in our clothes, and the walk home is much cooler if we don't dry off, so we don't dirty up many towels and of course there's no bathtub to scrub. Some of the things that were hard to take—no electricity, no running water, no refrigerator, canned meat, mattresses on the floor—have been remedied or will be shortly. Our solar panels and lights are now installed, our rain tank and fridge should arrive this week, we're having beds made, and we'll take enough meat over this trip to fill the freezing compartment. We still have mosquitoes, but we're getting used to the smell of repellent and the bites aren't swelling up as big any more (I guess our blood isn't as fresh as it used to be). We only had one rat the whole two months, and I don't think he'd have been in the house if the bait in the trap hadn't attracted him. We have very few roaches, and I'd rather have an occasional crab in the house than black widow spiders in the backyard like in Phoenix.

Yes, we miss home, family, and friends, but we are beginning to make friends in Sa'a. Yes, it is stressful to be an outsider culturally, but other stresses like time pressure are absent. As I told my mother in one letter—it's not any *harder* here, just *different*. When we do feel like we've had it and need a break, God knows and He sends us what we need—a rainy afternoon for retreating into a good book, a bundle of letters from home, a late Christmas package, or even the encouragement of finally responding automatically to a phrase in Sa'a.

(from inside front cover)
mencement May 29. Of 21 seniors, 17 graduated with honors! And 8 of those were in the top-honors group, meaning that for all four years of high school they averaged A or B-plus. Six graduates were 2nd-generation PCHS-ers, and two were 3rd-generation graduates.

May we pray especially for Jan Rake, Karen Leach, and Victor and Mae Broaddus as they left the 7th of June for the Philippines and other points in the Orient on a Missions Training Trip. Brenda Paris (Pekin, Indiana Church), Brent Heeke of Tell City, and Ross Knecht (Utica, Indiana), three teenagers who are working with summer mission projects, need prayer too.

Japan: From May 20-23 our All Japan preachers' annual fellowship was held.

Brother Tex Williams from Sunset School of Preaching in Lubbock, TX was our guest speaker and we were really blessed. The mainline brethren are changing rapidly. Grace-oriented, unity-minded brethren are many now.

—Moto Nomura

• • • • •

Solomon Islands: A phone call from the Ashleys said Karen and Philip, the younger son, both came down with malaria, while Kent had infection in both ears. Later reports say all are okay now, thank God.

• • • • •

Portland Oregon:

Thank you so much for your kindness in sending several booklets to me. It was a great refreshment to read and reread them. It is a great encouragement to find brethren whose ears are not sealed regarding Biblical prophecy.

—Will Tebbs

The Lovers of Christ's Cross Are Few

Many crowd the Saviour's Kingdom,
Few receive His Cross,
Many seek His consolation,
Few will suffer loss
For the dear sake of the Master,
Counting all but dross.

Many sit at Jesus' table,
Few will fast with Him;
When the sorrow-cup of anguish
Trembles to the brim—
Few watch with Him in the garden
Who have sung the hymn.

Many will confess His wisdom,
Few embrace His shame,
Many, should He smile upon them,
Will His praise proclaim;
Then, if for a while He leave them,
They desert His Name.

But the souls who love Him truly
Whether for woe or bliss,
These will count their truest heart's blood
Not their own, but His;
Savior, Thou Who thus hast loved me,
Give me love like this.

—Author unknown; paraphrased
from *The Imitation of Christ*, by
Thomas a Kempis

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