



JANUARY, 1988

SUFFERING

"If you are succeeding without suffering, it is because someone else suffered before you. If you are suffering without succeeding, it is so that someone else may succeed after you."

—Author unknown

"God does not comfort us to make us comforted so much as to make us comforters."

—Author unknown; see 2 Cor. 1:3-4

"Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your power. Pray for powers equal to your tasks."

—Philips Brooks

**His grace is great enough to meet the great things,
The crashing waves that overwhelm the soul,
The roaring winds that leave us stunned and breathless,
The sudden storms beyond our life's control.
His grace is great enough to meet the small things,
The little pin-prick troubles that annoy,
The insect worries, buzzing and persistent,
The squeaking wheels that grate upon our joy.**

—Annie Johnson Flint

SONGS FROM A SICKBED

Martha Snell Nicholson was bedridden for almost thirty years, and in the last years of her life she suffered from four incurable diseases simultaneously. Talk about problems! Yet from her sickbed she wrote many poems of warm devotion to her Lord. Here are a few samples.

TREASURES

One by one He took them from me,
All the things I valued most,
Until I was empty-handed;
Every glittering toy was lost.

And I walked earth's highways, grieving,
In my rags and poverty.
Till I heard His voice inviting,
"Lift your empty hands to Me!"

So I held my hands toward heaven,
And He filled them with a store
Of His own transcendent riches,
Till they could contain no more.

And at last I comprehended
With my stupid mind and dull,
That God COULD not pour His riches
Into hands already full!

GUESTS

Pain knocked upon my door and said
That she had come to stay;
And though I would not welcome her
But bade her go away,

She entered in. Like my own shade
She followed after me,
And from her stabbing, stinging sword
No moment was I free.

And then one day another knocked
Most gently at my door.
I cried, "No, Pain is living here,
There is not room for more."

And then I heard His tender voice,
"Tis I, be not afraid."
And from the day He entered in—
The difference it made!

For though He did not bid her leave
(My strange, unwelcome guest,
He taught me how to live with her.
Oh, I had never guessed

That we could dwell so sweetly here,
My Lord and Pain and I,
Within this fragile house of clay
While years slip slowly by!

WHEN SKIES ARE BRASS

When skies are brass and though we
pray,
No answer comes; and when our day
Is filled with pain and grief and care,
Sometimes we wonder, "Is God there?
And does He hear us—does He know
The pangs we suffer? And if so—
Because He is omnipotent,
And we so weak, our small strength
spent—
Why not reach down His mighty hand
To help?" Could we but understand
His ways with us—could we but know
What God is doing for us now!

What is God doing for us now?
O child of His, why should we know?
He is the Potter, we the dust,
Shaped by His hand. Can we not trust?
Enough that He, the Perfect One,
Will finish what He has begun.
The master Artist's own design,
Worked out in lives like yours and mine.
The Shepherd knoweth what is best
F'or that small lamb upon His breast;
And tenderly the Father feeds
And nourishes the child He leads.

O suffering ones, whose skies are brass,
Know that all grief and pain will pass;
All tears be dried. We may be sure
This life is but the overture.
Some day our voices we shall raise
In swelling symphonies of praise . . .
We could not bear it yet to know
What God is doing for us now!

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:

Beginnings, Endings, and Sufferings

Alex V. Wilson

May each of our readers have a blessed 1988. The new year brings changes. With this issue we start a new series of short articles on family living by Cecil Garrett, an elder in Winchester, Kentucky. He writes mostly about husband-wife relations, which supplements Fred Schott's helpful column on parent-child relations. As the hymn says, "God give us Christian homes."

With this issue another series ends, the articles on "Early Restoration Leaders" by Sylvia Tester. I am grateful for her permission to reprint these insightful mini-biographies, and I trust we now understand more about the strengths and weaknesses of our historical roots. E. L. Jorgenson's article also draws lessons from the past that we need to consider.

J. W. McGarvey, the subject of this month's biography, was a scholar and apologist (which of course means defender of the faith). Often we don't sufficiently value the labors of such men, and the debt we owe them. McGarvey contended strongly against poisonous beliefs that were creeping into much of Christendom in the 1800's and following. For example, a restoration-movement preacher named Cave "asserted that Abraham and Moses were grossly ignorant of the true character of God." He also "denied both the virgin birth of Jesus and (His) bodily resurrection. He described the Bible as an evolution, not a revelation, and declared that there was no such thing as a divinely-given 'plan of salvation.'" He taught that David, Elijah and Isaiah "had a conception of Jehovah far higher than that of the heathen world around them, but still sadly imperfect and frightfully false."

How did his hearers react to such ideas? "Most of the congregation, captivated no doubt by his unimpeachable character, glowing personality and scholarly appearance, congratulated him." (All these quotes are from Earl West's *The Search for the Ancient Order*, vol. 2, chap. 13.) Of course many other people protested vigorously, and a sad period of struggle followed, for Cave was only one of a number of "enlightened, modern" teachers who arose seeking to strip the Christian faith of all that is supernatural.

Thank God for raising up men like McGarvey, C. S. Lewis (his books *Mere Christianity*, *The Problem of Pain*, and *Miracles* are excellent bulwarks to faith), Francis Schaeffer, Josh McDowell, and other apologists like them. Thank Him for other scholars too, such

as church historians and biographers who record for us lessons from the past. We need them as well as evangelists and pastor-teachers.

SUFFERING AND GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Coming now to this month's theme of suffering, I am again awed by the Most High's free and unpredictable sovereignty. This is seen so often in the area of sickness and healing. I wonder if you noticed it in the biographies presented in our earlier series, "Heroes of the Faith"? Let me refresh your memory.

Martin Luther for years suffered off and on from extreme insomnia and constipation, dizziness, ringing in the ears, gout, and other sicknesses. Charles Spurgeon also suffered from gout and the spells of deep depression that usually accompany that disease. Hudson Taylor, pioneer missionary leader, had long-standing heart trouble and also contracted a painful liver ailment. Jonathan Goforth, who was greatly used by God as an agent of revival in China and North America, was totally blind during the last several years of his ministry. Amy Carmichael, surely a woman after God's own heart, was confined to her room for the last twenty years of her life. At the height of John Sung's amazing evangelistic ministry in Asia, his health began to weaken; he died from cancer and tuberculosis while only forty-four years old.

Obviously the "health-and-wealth-gospel" preachers are way off base. They claim that every Christian who abides in Christ should not remain sick but can take healing from God just as surely as we receive forgiveness from Him. But church history and (more important, of course) New Testament examples such as Paul, Timothy, Trophimus and Epaphroditus contradict such a view. (Gal. 4:13; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20; Phil. 2:25-30).

ON THE OTHER HAND

But those who take the position that God no longer performs miracles of healing are just as wrong on the other side. To claim that the age of miracles is past cannot be proved from Scripture, and it too flies in the face of church history. Back to our "Heroes of the Faith":

When Martin Luther prayed for his closest co-reformer, who was at the point of death, the latter's condition instantly and visibly improved—and he lived another twenty years. Luther also wrote about a cabinet maker who was "afflicted with madness and we cured him by prayer in Christ's name." The German pastor Johann Blumhardt, after months of terrific spiritual warfare, exorcised a desperately demonized girl. This resulted in stunning revival, with many conversions, deep repentance, and numerous healings. "The movement of repentance was followed by one of healing. . . . They found that with forgiveness often came cure. Here a rheumatic found himself healed. Others afflicted with tuberculosis, eye troubles, necrosis, spinal curvature, were freed" (*W & W*, Jan. '86).

A. B. Simpson at thirty-seven was told by a doctor that his days were numbered due to a bad heart.

One Friday afternoon he walked out under the open sky, painfully, slowly, for he was always weak and out of breath in those days. Here on a carpet of soft pine needles, he knelt and sought the face of his God. Suddenly the power of Christ came upon him. "Every fiber in my soul," he said afterwards, "was tingling with the sense of God's presence. . . ." He left that piny temple a man physically transformed. A few days later he climbed a mountain three thousand feet high. The old trouble never visited him again. (Wingspread, by A. W. Tozer) In fact he lived about 35 more years of incredibly active service for the Lord (W & W, May '68), before finally slowing down and dying from hardening of the arteries.

You remember that Jonathan Goforth was blind in his latter years. Actually it was due to his *wife's* failing eyesight that they temporarily returned to Canada in 1930. "She had become almost blind from cataracts in both her eyes. While home the Lord remarkably touched and healed her from impending blindness" (W & W June '86). Why did our Father heal Rosalind but not Jonathan? Not now, but in the coming years we shall learn the answers to such questions.

Though John Sung died from uncured diseases, his ministry was a remarkable example of evangelism plus prayer for the sick. Our Aug. '86 issue told of his balanced approach, of numerous healings, and of a number of sick people who received no physical benefit at all. But many did.

Our last two examples are contemporary. Knofel Staton wrote how the Lord healed him, and of a fantastic miracle He performed on a close friend of his (March '86). Yet in early 1987 brother Staton suffered a heart attack. Again, John Wimber is a preacher through whom the Lord has marvellously raised up many people in our day. Yet both he and his wife have recently suffered from illness.

Let us bow before the mystery of God's sovereignty. Knowing His power, it surely is right to pray expectantly for the sick believer (James 5). Yet we should also teach that God nowhere promises wholesale healing for His people. Disciples whom He does not heal should practice praise and beware of bitterness, for "Who makes a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?" (Ex. 4:11). Let's trust Him, come what may. But don't rule out His miracle-working power. He is the living God.

THEME:

Problems and Sufferings

The Mystery and Mastery of Suffering

Summary of a sermon preached by John Stott

I begin with an apology for what may appear the glibness of my title, as if I were proposing to give you either a slick solution to the mystery of suffering (which has baffled the best brains of Christendom for centuries) or five easy rules for the mastery of pain. For,

although there are many possible attitudes to suffering, the one universally condemned is frivolity. Suffering threatens to undermine the foundations of our humanity. Nobody dares speak of it who has not felt its pain.

Yet there is something important in my title, namely that the Bible is essentially a practical book. It claims to be the Word of God; it does not claim to solve all riddles. For example, it is full of stories of evil men prospering and of good men suffering. Yet its purpose in handling these themes is not to explain the origin of evil or the meaning of suffering, but rather to help us to endure suffering and to overcome evil. In the words of my title, it is more concerned with the mastery than with the mystery of suffering.

I would like to refer you to Psalm 22, which describes the terrible sufferings of an innocent victim. *Physically*, he feels as if he has been turned into liquid ("poured out like water"), his bones are out of joint, his heart has melted like wax, his body is dehydrated, he is already "in the dust of death" and he seems to have been tortured too, for men have pierced his hands and his feet (verses 14-16).

His *mental* suffering is worse. Calling himself "a worm and no man", he knows that he is despised for his symptoms and mocked for his faith. His enemies taunt him saying, "he committed his cause to the Lord; let him deliver him." Indeed, they are so pitiless that they seem more like animals than humans. He likens them to strong bulls of Bashan, roaring lions, pariah dogs and wild oxen. They even gamble for his clothing, ostentatiously anticipating his death (verses 6-8, 12, 13, 16-21).

But worst of all is his *spiritual* anguish. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" he cries. Again, "I cry by day, but thou dost not answer" (verse 1, 2). When Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal, they cried out all day "O Baal hear us", and then indeed "there was no voice, no-one answered, no-one heeded." But was Jehovah, the living God of Israel, no more real than Baal? The pain and the ridicule were bad enough; but how could he bear being forsaken by God?

No neat answer is given to these questions, but the Psalm brings the people of God—now clearly, now tentatively—a fourfold assurance.

AN ASSURANCE OF THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

At first sight the opening verses are a cry of unrelieved despair. Yet as we listen more carefully, it is evident that the psalmist cannot believe the witness of his own feelings. His faith rises up in rebellion against his feelings. For in the very act of asserting his God-forsakenness he denies it, and cries out three times "My God, my God . . . O my God . . ." Thus he still clings to God in his anguish. As one commentator has written, "It is the union of total privation with total adherence to God."

Indeed, the whole psalm is constructed to express this paradox. Each paragraph in which he describes his affliction is followed by another in which he affirms his faith. The cycle is repeated three times. First, after declaring himself God-forsaken, he adds "yet thou art

holy", the living and true God, the deliverer of Israel in former days (verses 3-5). Secondly, although he is despised as a worm, yet he knows that God was the divine obstetrician who took him from his mother's womb and to whom he owes his life: "Since my mother bore me thou hast been my God" (verse 9-11). Thirdly, despite the pain of his enemies and of his symptoms, yet he is able to pray, "but thou, O Lord, be not far off! O thou my help, hasten to my aid!" (v. 19).

So in the midst of his sufferings, his faith lays hold of the faithfulness of God as expressed in the past both to Israel and to himself. He continues to call this God "My God", who will never break his covenant.

AN ASSURANCE OF THE LOVING DISCIPLINE OF GOD

I take the word "discipline" from Hebrews 12:5-11 where it is written, "The Lord disciplines those whom he loves . . . God is treating you as sons . . . He disciplines us for our good that we may share in his holiness."

Although we speak of the "mystery" of suffering, suffering is no mystery to the atheist to whom in any case everything is random and nothing has meaning. It is to the believer that suffering is a mystery. For he is persuaded that God is good, and wonders how to reconcile suffering with the goodness of God. But supposing God's goodness is not the sickly sentimentality of a weak parent who indulges the whims of his children, but the strong love of a parent determined to seek his children's good at the cost even of his pain and of theirs? C. S. Lewis has written: "We may wish, indeed, that we were of so little account to God that he left us alone to follow our natural impulses—that he would give over trying to train us into something so unlike our natural selves: but once again, we are asking not for more love, but for less."

Let me particularize, and ask two questions. First, wherein lies a human being's chief good? The Christian would reply that it lies neither in a superficial kind of happiness nor in freedom from pain, but when he learns to love God and his neighbour, and forgets himself in his loving. It is then that a human being becomes human and begins to reflect the love of God in whose image he was made. Man finds himself only when he loses himself in the love of God and man.

My second question is: what is the chief hindrance to the attainment of man's chief good? The answer to this is "self" in a thousand ugly manifestations—self-indulgence, self-seeking, self-assertion against God and man, self-love, self-pity and self-will. It is these things which destroy the humanity of human beings.

Now supposing these things are true, that our chief good lies in loving God and man, and the chief hindrance to the attainment of our chief good lies in self-love, how do you think God might set about redirecting our love, cutting us down to size and showing us the folly of being obsessed with ourselves? Might he not disturb our security (of body, mind and estate) and give us a taste of insecurity, of the transience of life, health and wealth, and of the madness of supposing that we are an end in ourselves?

Psalm 22 hints at this. It says that "all the proud of the earth" will bow down to God, and especially the man who "cannot keep himself alive", that is, who comes to realize that he is not autonomous (v. 29). The whole Bible teaches the same truth, whether in the Book of Job in the Old Testament or in connection with the apostle Paul's "thorn in the flesh" in the New Testament. And there are many modern voices who can testify to this also. Malcolm Muggeridge has written: "Supposing you eliminated suffering, what a dreadful place the world would be! . . . The world would be the most ghastly place because everything that corrects the tendency of this unspeakable little creature, man, to feel over-important and over-pleased with himself would disappear. He's bad enough now, but he would be absolutely intolerable if he never suffered."

There is nothing more unbecoming in man than arrogance, and nothing more becoming than humility. When we begin to see this, we shall not only not resent suffering, but actually cry to God to discipline us—at whatever cost—if only we may thereby become more like Jesus Christ, that is, less selfish and so more human.

AN ASSURANCE OF THE TRIUMPH OF GOD

There is only time to mention this. Psalm 22 is divided into two parts, first a cry of anguish and then a song of praise. It begins with feelings of God-forsakenness, but ends with the triumph of deliverance.

This is a further assurance which fortifies the Christian in a time of suffering. However dark the night, the dawn is sure to break. However long the tunnel, we are certain to emerge into the sunshine again. Disease and death will not have the last word. We believe in the resurrection of the body, that our bodies will be transformed into new, powerful and immortal vehicles of the human spirit. Pain and suffering will one day be no more, and God will wipe all tears from our eyes. The New Testament rings with this joyful expectation. The apostle Paul could write: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18).

AN ASSURANCE OF THE SYMPATHY OF GOD

The fourth assurance of Christians is that God suffers with his people, which is the meaning of the word "sympathy". No Christian can read Psalm 22 in a purely Old Testament context, for it is suffused with New Testament light. We cannot help seeing its fulfilment in the crucifixion of Jesus, not only in his physical pain (the thirst and the piercing of his hands and feet), nor only in his mental anguish (the soldiers gambling and the enemies mocking), but in the spiritual agony of God-forsakenness, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is the most perplexing of all the utterances of Jesus. It was a deliberate quotation from Psalm 22, and he quoted it because he believed he was fulfilling it. It was not a cry of despair (for God was still "my God" and he knew that he would be vindicated by the resurrection), but it was a cry of dereliction, expressing the pain of a God-forsakenness that was real, not imaginary. He was bearing the

sin and guilt of the world. It was this experience, beyond our finite understanding, which drew from his lips the awful cry of God-forsakenness.

The cross of Jesus lies at the heart of Christianity. There is no authentic Christianity without the cross. It is there that we see in brightest light the glory of the love of God. The cross tells us of a God who cares, who was not only made flesh but actually made sin and a curse for us. This truth is well illustrated by the contrasting figures of Christ and the Buddha. The Buddha sits cross-legged and cross-armed, serene, smiling, silent, remote from the suffering of the world. But Jesus hangs from the cross, his body twisted, tortured and bloodstained, crying out in the God-forsaken darkness, bearing the sin and the suffering of mankind. It is Jesus Christ, not Buddha, who reveals the sympathy of God.

Suffering is the universal lot and language of mankind. What differentiates us is our reaction to it. Some try to escape. Others lapse into bitterness and hatred. Others seek to develop a stoical fortitude. But the true mastery of suffering lies with those who even in it can cry "My God, my God".

For this "my God" is a God who cares enough not to leave us alone in our self-indulgence; enough to take trouble with us in order to turn us inside out from the misery of self to the ecstasy of unself; enough to risk our hostility by disciplining us for our good; enough to let us feel ourselves forsaken in order that we may assert the more confidently that we are not; enough to suffer for us, bearing our sin and pain on the cross; enough to suffer with us in our sufferings today.

Happy is the man who knows this God as his God, and who can say: "This God is *my God* forever and ever; he will be my guide even unto death". —Used by permission

* * * * *

Loneliness

Going to College? Be Sure to Read This.

Louise Miller

Have you ever been lonely? By "lonely" I mean so lonely that you just ache inside for someone to show a little sympathy and understanding. In the dictionary loneliness is defined as a feeling of being deserted or forsaken by human beings. And I can think of no better example of this feeling than that of a young Christian on a college campus. Here are some definitions of loneliness which may reveal some of the situations in which the young college Christian finds himself.

Loneliness is sitting in your dormitory room while your room mate and your other "friends" go out to get "stoned".

Loneliness is being in a psychology class and hearing your professor discuss the "hang-ups" which religion causes.

Loneliness is sitting in an English class and hearing your pro-

fessor ask sarcastically, "How many people now really believe that God knows all?"

Loneliness is hearing the majority of your classmates defend abortion.

Loneliness is sitting with a group of your college "buddies" while they share the exciting experiences they have had under the influence of booze.

Loneliness is discovering that the drunk youth who just stumbled up the dormitory steps is one of your Christian brothers.

Loneliness is coming back to a very quiet and empty dorm at 8:30 on a Saturday night because your date could not appreciate your moral behavior.

Loneliness is being the only person in the class to mention God during the discussion on morality and then being laughed at by certain of your classmates.

If you are a young Christian and you plan on going to college, remember what Paul said in Colossians 2:8. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." And again in Galatians 1:12, Paul says, "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

We must remember that just as Christ promised to be with the disciples "even unto the end of the world" in Matthew 28:20, so he is with us always. We do not have to face the greatest loneliness of all, that of being alienated from God, if we accept Christ as our Savior. Christ experienced that loneliness in our place as evidenced by his cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Christ also experienced loneliness in the garden of Gethsemane for he said unto Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: tarry here and watch with me." Matthew 26:38.

If you are a parent of a young Christian or if you are a loving Christian brother, it is your responsibility to lay the foundation upon which this young Christian will be leaning heavily. Whether the foundation is laid strongly enough or not depends on how well you built it. The familiar verse, Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it," is so true. Discuss with the child why certain things are right while other things are wrong. When a young Christian is extremely lonely and temptations are so much more hard to resist, he needs more than a few "don'ts" to pull him through. He must be taught the true love of Christ and be able to experience a deep love of Christ in return.

So, young Christians, as you sit in loneliness in the dorm room or classroom, consider how much greater your loneliness would be if you did not have Christ. The loneliness of being alienated from God is a far deeper feeling than that of being isolated from the world. And during those times when you feel alone, consider it a blessing and a time for meditation with God.

—from *The Exhorter*. The author was a junior in college when she wrote this, years ago.

Standing in the Need of Prayer

Barry A. Wolfe

For 17 years I have made hospital calls with a smile on my face as a means of cheering the patient. Too often, my hospital calls never went beyond the friendly visit. If patients wanted to talk about a problem, they had my undivided attention; however, I was not the one to initiate the in-depth, personal, faith-searching questions.

To minister in the sickroom has always been uncomfortable. Often a nurse comes bouncing into the room to inquire if the patient's bowels have moved or to shove a thermometer into his/her mouth.

Many of us clergy may feel that we have entered a foreign realm the minute we enter the lobby of the hospital. We, therefore, apologize for taking up space and promise, unspoken of course, to get out of everyone's way as quickly as possible.

Why do we forget that Jesus Christ is the Great Physician? All healing, whether acknowledged or not, comes by His divine grace. Why do we so easily forget that by a call from God, an affirmation of the church and the laying on of hands, we are ordained to be Christ's representatives?

Why have so many of us taken the self-imposed position of second-class citizens in the hospital sickroom? The answer, for the most part, lies in an evaluation of the purposes for which we call and what we do while we are present with the patient/parishioner. My recent hospitalizations have changed my entire concept of the hospital call.

I entered the hospital to have two lumps removed from my neck and shoulder. The surgeon and my physician were certain that I had Hodgkins Disease. The only thing I grasped from all the information given me was that the disease is a form of cancer and has a 95 percent chance of total cure. Amazingly, a high cure rate does not count at all when you are the one with the cancer.

As I prepared for the biopsy the following morning, I went to the hospital chapel. My mind flooded with thoughts of cancer, my eyes flooded with tears, and I cried for a long time while kneeling there. The next morning I knelt beside my bed, and again, my prayer gave way to tears. I cannot remember being so frightened in all my life.

My second surgery called for my spleen to be removed, my liver biopsied, another lymph node removed, and the inside of my body searched for lumps. What a surprise to find it took me four days to come to. I was sore, scared, hooked up to an I.V. and a catheter, and could not eat.

I even found I was unable to pray. Imagine, a minister that could not pray? The inability to pray lasted for several weeks, even after I left the hospital.

I told a colleague that all I could remember saying was, "God, I hurt," but I could not pray. His generous response was, "That statement was in a sense of prayer." It may have seemed a prayer to him, but to me it seemed nothing more than a curse brought on by the pain.

To pray has always been an act of conceptualization. The mind and spirit produce an ordered form through which the needs of the soul are offered unto God. Suddenly conceptualization was not possible, and I was rendered prayerless. A being composed of mind, body and spirit, I found when my body was racked with pain and my mind fogged by medications and fears, my spirit had little hope of breaking through.

The first thought that crossed my mind was that I had lost my faith. I then questioned my ability to function as a minister. I was overcome with guilt and lostness. I wondered if I dared tell anyone. A spiritual vacuum is the loneliest place in the world.

These experiences have changed my approach to hospital calling. I realized that while trying to encourage, I only heaped guilt upon patients when I suggested that they pray. Prayer is not always possible, no matter how much one desires it.

I became totally dependent upon the prayers of those who visited me. I received several letters and phone calls reminding me that I was part of a covenant community and was being held before God in prayer. The covenant concept became a vibrant reality to me, and I leaned heavily upon it.

Now, I talk to each patient candidly about his/her prayer life in the hospital, relating my own difficulty in prayer. Most were surprised that someone else had the same difficulty they were experiencing.

After discussing the problem, I assure them that they need not carry a burden of guilt. God understands this pain, confusion and frustration. I then invite the patient to follow the prayer I offer.

Now when I enter a patient's room, I consider the visit a healing time. As the minister of Jesus Christ, I offer the comfort and reassurance of God's written Word and bring to each an affirmation that the community of faith is undergirding them with prayer.

—from *Pulpit Helps*

* * * * *

AIDS: A Mother Reveals Family Struggle

Joy L. McMillon

Reaching near-epidemic proportions in just five years, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is raising troubling medical, social, legal and moral questions. In churches across the nations, Christian families are coming to grips with the disease on a personal level. In a special interview with the *Chronicle*, one family agreed to share their true story. Pseudonyms have been used to protect their privacy.

It was the hardest question she'd ever had to ask. "What's wrong with you?" Faye Smith finally blurted out to her son John, who was fidgeting behind the steering wheel of his parked care.

It was a crisp, sunny October day, which held no hint of the heart-stopping conversation about to take place. It took him several minutes to choke out the words, "I have AIDS."

The next few moments are still a haze, almost two years later. A tidal wave of emotion swept over her as she struggled to grab onto reality. More than 30 years of nursing him through mumps and measles, tending his cuts and bruises, applauding his adolescent successes and working with him daily flashed through her mind in an instant.

John sat motionless, his body rigid. Sunglasses obscured his eyes from her glance. He went on: "My death is not imminent, but I don't have a very long life-expectancy."

Lord, help me to be strong, not to cry, she thought as she paused, waiting for the power to speak.

Slowly, she remembered the events of the past month. *At work, only weeks ago, she had asked him about the strange-looking spots on his arm. Family members, eating Sunday dinner together had commented on the spots developing on his face. At her urging, he had agreed to see a dermatologist.*

But when John returned from the appointment, his answers to her anxious questions seemed vague and elusive. Yes, he finally admitted, the spot might be malignant. They had spent the rest of the day talking and crying together.

It was odd in a way, she recalled now. Through the years, she had been troubled occasionally by doubts about John's private life. She even had wondered if he could be homosexual.

The day John returned from the doctor's office, she had a strange sense he was not telling her everything. "There is nothing you could ever do that would make me not love you," she assured him. If he needed to tell her anything else, she wanted to leave the door open. But John was silent.

A honking horn startled her back to the present. "Well, what are we going to do?" she heard herself saying.

This time it was her turn to visit the doctor and the social worker at the hospital. The social worker was candid. John had Caposi's sarcoma, a rare form of cancer, often occurring during the latter stages of AIDS.

Despite chemotherapy, John grew weaker and weaker. Six months after the diagnosis, he was dead.

During the last months of John's life, Faye realized she'd been closed off from much of her son's world, and she wanted to make up for lost time. They talked for hours.

Once, her sister, who often sat with her at the hospital, asked Faye how she thought she might have reacted to John's homosexuality, if he had not had AIDS. "I don't know," said Faye. "And I won't ever know because I never knew until he was dying."

John confided his greatest fear had been that if the family ever found out his secret, they would quit loving him. Despite the strain at times, John's family rallied to his side. "We never quit loving and kissing and hugging him even until the end," said Faye.

Although he grew up at the church, John had not attended services for many years. But a year before his diagnosis, Faye saw signs her son's heart was softening.

"Before, when we would have special days, like Mother's Day, I would tell him I didn't want a present. I just wanted all the family to sit by me at church. Sometimes he would come; sometimes he wouldn't. But that began to change. He was like the prodigal son. You could see him making little changes, taking one step closer and closer back to the Lord," she said.

Before his illness John had attended a gospel meeting at their home congregation and told his mother his knees "felt like water during the invitation."

And three months before his death, a heartbroken John confessed his faithlessness and was publicly restored. He had planned to start working with the singles group at church, but time ran out.

Said Faye: "You've never seen such a total surrender. He never said, 'Why me?' Anything you did for him, he appreciated so much."

When the going got so bad at the hospital, Faye went to their minister. That night he and the elders circled John's bed, holding hands and praying. "You have never seen such an outpouring of love in all your life as was shown to us," said Faye.

Many acquaintances still don't know the cause of John's death, but a good portion of friends were taken into the family's confidence. "People reacted differently than what you might think they would. So many have reacted with kindness, love and compassion," said Faye.

As John's health failed, nights were spent in his parent's home, where Faye set the clock and gave him his potent medication throughout the night. "Those were such special moments," recalled a tearful Faye.

But thoughts of his past life tormented John. Often, in a fitful sleep at the hospital, John would toss and turn. Faye would sit by his side and hear him say, "I am so sorry."

"What are you sorry for?" she would ask.

"I am so sorry for every sin I have ever committed."

"Well, you have told the Lord that. He's forgiven you, and now you don't ever have to worry about them again. You're as white as snow."

"But the devil keeps making me remember them."

"Yes, I know. He would like nothing better than to torture you with them and for you to commit them again. So, when they come into your mind, just push them out. You don't ever have to think about that again."

As he grew weaker, John asked his father to pray the Lord would take him away, that he was ready to go. "And his dad did," said Faye. "We all did."

During his illness, Faye became acquainted with other AIDS patients in the hospital. "I didn't have any patience with homosexuality before all of this. It was a sin, and it was terrible. It's still a sin, of course, but I hope I am more compassionate and more understanding now."

The Smiths became acquainted with John's former partner before their son died. "At first I couldn't stand the sight of him," said Faye. "But in the past year, I have learned to love that young man. He's

called me every week. He's been so kind and compassionate. He's a young man with a sexual problem that is a sin in the sight of the Lord. But none of us can claim we are sinless—and with God, one sin is as bad as another.”

Has she felt anger? “No,” she said. “How could I? For 12 years we prayed every day that the Lord would give our son time to get his life right, and He could have taken him earlier. But He didn't. He gave him time, and if having AIDS was what it took to get his soul right with the Lord, then all I can say is, ‘Thank you, Lord, for AIDS.’”

Life after John's death has been trying for the entire family. Mr. Smith finds it difficult to discuss the loss. One sibling is seeing a counselor; another avoids family gatherings because John's vacancy “has left such a big emptiness in all of us.”

“I think I was in shock for at least a year,” said Faye. But now she talks weekly with some of the young men she met at the hospital, sharing her faith in the Lord and urging them to tell their parents about the AIDS. “Families need to know because they could be sharing precious moments,” she added.

Faye admits she didn't think she'd ever have the strength to face a tragedy of such proportions. Now, she said her advice to other grieving parents would be, “The Lord is there. And he will help you do what you have to.”

At John's request, his funeral was conducted in the church building. Several hundred attended. —from *Christian Chronicle*, Sept. 1986

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Churches Learn About AIDS

by R. Scott Lamascus

Churches of Christ in four major U.S. cities are becoming more aware of the AIDS epidemic in their communities and are reaching out to victims and their families more than ever.

Ted Thomas, Silver Spring Maryland minister, said, “In our country, especially, *somebody you know who is 'straight' is going to get AIDS if statistics continue as they are.*”

“We want to educate our church to the point they don't run away when they find out someone has AIDS. Instead, they'll be prepared to deal rationally with these people,” he said.

Still, Thomas said he isn't trying to get a high level of volunteerism from the congregation. “We just want to sensitize the church to the psychological and spiritual trauma AIDS victims go through,” he said.

But Thomas does believe volunteering to help AIDS victims fits into the church's mission: *“It's not hard to talk about eternal values to people who know they're going to die.”*

Thomas said he is *“insisting”* that engaged couples take AIDS tests, an increasing trend among counselors. *“A clean bill of health is the best gift you can give your mate,”* he said.

In New York City, where AIDS cases are among the highest reported in the nation, Manhattan Church of Christ minister Jim Petty said many people still have a lot of irrational fear about spreading the virus through casual contact.

Calls for help are coming in almost weekly, said Petty. Often the church is asked to visit an AIDS victim in a hospital or to provide counseling services for a victim or for family members. Petty said he is beginning to learn about more heterosexual AIDS cases.

"One case was a 29-year-old man whose wife was infected by a blood transfusion and died Jan. 15. He came up to me after a civic group meeting, and I guess he thought I was someone he could talk to. He started crying, and I've never seen anyone so devastated," said Petty.

But *the difference between appearing to condone a lifestyle that contradicts biblical teaching and helping the "thirsty and hungry of Matthew 25" is difficult*, said Petty. "I try to answer those questions individually, not from the pulpit," he said.

"Some people still think AIDS is the 'wrath of God,' but all you have to do is see someone dying with it, and your tune changes pretty fast," said Petty.

Counseling family members who have lost someone to AIDS is a growing area of need, said Petty. They get a heavy dose of shame and are dealing with their own disappointment as well as the death and the grieving process. "The families really need support," he said.

"People here feel a deep sense of concern and horror over AIDS victims. And yet, AIDS is a reenforcement of God's will and how we have to be faithful or natural consequences will come upon us," he said.

University Church of Christ minister Bruce Wadzeck said his Denver congregation has a few members who have abandoned a homosexual lifestyle and who need help coping with their risk of contracting AIDS. One AIDS victim was helped with counseling costs, although the congregation has not yet been asked to help with medical expenses.

"We shouldn't be afraid to minister to anyone," said Wadzeck. "I hope our members are out-reaching enough, and I'm hoping we stay in contact with all people who are hurting or suffering.

—from *Christian Chronicle*, February, 1987

YOU CANNOT BUILD ON INDIFFERENCE

At Thessalonica where St. Paul was mobbed: he founded a church. At Philippi, where he was flogged: he founded a church. At Corinth, where there was a court case: he founded a church. At Ephesus, where there was a riot: he founded a church. At Athens, where he met only indifference: he founded no church. There are Epistles to the Thessalonians, the Philippians, the Corinthians, the Ephesians; there is no epistle to the Athenians!



THOUGHTS FROM ROMANS

Ernest E. Lyon

"Differing Gifts—All Important"

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. (Romans 12:6-8, NIV).

Here the Holy Spirit guides Paul to give some specific instructions concerning the different functions he had said in verses 3-5 that each of us has. Before going into detail on these things, may I stop to remark that one of the great reasons that the Church is not having the influence it should have in the world is because so many parts of the Body of Christ on earth are not using the gifts that the Lord has given them to accomplish His work. No one man is given the ability to do all the things that the Lord requires, but He distributes His gifts in such a fashion that if every member uses what the Lord has given him then all that is needed will be done. What a great difference this would make in the world today! Not all the gifts, not all the functions are named here, of course. More detail is given in I Corinthians 12-14, but that does not include all either. Read this passage and the Corinthian passage and all the Word of God and ask the Lord to help you to recognize and to use your gift. Every Christian has a gift and, so, a responsibility. And all are true gifts and should be used "according to the grace given us."

The first gift listed here is "prophesying," a much misunderstood term. I think the great Greek scholar, Vincent, spoke well on the subject of prophecy—"in the New Testament, as in the Old, the prominent idea is not *prediction*, but the inspired delivery of warning, exhortation, instruction, judging, and making manifest the secrets of the heart." Reread the Old Testament prophets and see that, while they may predict the future (and often do), they will give much more time to looking at the conditions around them and giving God's judgment on what they see and hear. That was considered in many ways the most important of the gifts. See Ephesians 4:11, where prophets are listed just after apostles; also see I Corinthians 14:1, where the gift of prophecy is the one listed as to be especially desired. To see something of the work of prophets turn to I Corinthians 14:3 and 31.

The second gift listed here is "serving" in the NIV. Many were confused by the KJ and ASV translations of "ministry" in this case, thus thinking the apostle was referring to what is often called "the minister" in a church today. The Greek word is the one often translated "deacon," and simply means one who serves. Don't think that lowers the importance of this gift; remember that Jesus came into the world to serve, not to be served, and He said that it is the servant who would be first in the kingdom of heaven.

"Teaching" is the third gift in order here. Teaching is aimed at the understanding. Think of the importance of Christians understanding the things of God. It is not the most frequent of gifts, I suppose, for in the church at Antioch in Acts 13:1, there were listed only five "prophets and teachers." If you are asked to teach a Sunday School class, please do not use the excuse that you do not have that gift. He is speaking here of those who can delve into the Word and bring forth great truths for the assembly. Everyone should be a teacher in the sense of explaining the gospel and the essentials of the Bible to others.

The next gift is aimed at the heart rather than the understanding—translated "encouraging" in the NIV and "exhorting" in many other translations. There come times in the lives of nearly all Christians when the need arises of lifting their spirits by "encouraging" or "exhorting" them. We can all do this in a limited sense, but I have met many who far surpassed my own ability to do this. They had this special gift from God, but that does not excuse me from doing it when the need arises and I am the one available.

"Contributing" is almost self-explanatory, is it not? There are many in need and there are some who have what they need and have it in abundance. If you are one of those to whom God has given this gift, use it to the glory of the Lord and do not hold back!

Many will be surprised to find "leadership" listed next to last; note that he explains the work of the leader as to "govern diligently." There is a dangerous teaching abroad today in many Churches of Christ that the elders are called to rule—that is, to make the decisions and pass them on to the underlings. This overlooks the fact that Peter (I Peter 5:1-3) calls the elders "shepherds." It is a well-known fact that shepherds take care of their flocks, but they lead them, not drive them. And Peter also there exhorts the elders not to "lord it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." Nowhere in the Scriptures are elders listed as life-time appointments or appointments to a dictatorship.

There is a great need for the last gift that Paul here lists, especially in this day of many troubles everywhere—the gift of "showing mercy." This seems to be that important ministering to the sick and needy, the dying, the bereaved. Oh, what a blessing it is in a time of bereavement when there is someone who knows just what to do or not do, what to say or not say, and how to say it or to show sympathy while remaining silent. If you have such a gift, thank God and use it.

I don't know the gift you have, brother or sister Christian, but God knows and He expects you to use it to glorify Christ. Do it with all your heart.

Building Better Christian Families

by Fred W. Schott



"Teenagers! God Give Me Strength!"

"By the strength which God provides." I Pet. 4:11

I was a college freshman when I first met Earl. He was my supervisor at the Boys Club when I worked part-time. The club was located in a rough inner-city neighborhood of Chicago. Earl was a committed Christian with a lovely wife and three beautiful young children. He was a wonderful youth worker. I looked up to him.

We only worked together for about a year. But, in the years since we would see each other at the annual national gathering of Boys Club workers. Each year we asked about each other's families and children. Earl's three children are about six or seven years older than mine.

My children were approaching the dreaded teens, and one year I asked, "Earl, what's it like having teenagers?" "Great!" he responded. "We're having a ball!" "Really?!" I said in disbelief. "Really, Fred, teenagers are a lot of fun. You'll love it!" I began to grill my friend on how he and his wife were coping with dating, driving peer groups, and all of the other things that worry the parents of pre-teens. Sensing my anxiety, my good friend gave me some advice. Because I looked up to him, I took it to heart. I am grateful I did.

"Fred, let me tell you something." He became quite serious. "The teen years are sometimes difficult, but they are also wonderful. Teenagers are among God's most fascinating creatures. They are full of life. That life spills over into your own life. To watch them grow, mature, learn, stumble, get up, to gain a sense of who they are is one of life's greatest joys. You have to work at it, but it's great."

"Most important, Fred," he continued, "get rid of that sense of dread you seem to have. Start planting positive thoughts, positive predictions about what a great time the teen years will be for all of you. Your attitude and your faith in your children can make all the difference in the world. You'll be less anxious and you'll be able to genuinely enjoy your teenagers. God wants you to enjoy your children at every age."

I went home determined to follow Earl's advice. So far it's worked! As I write our children are 15, 17, and 19. We still have a way to go, but so far it's been a ball living with teenagers! Earl was right. Teenagers are on the whole great fun and one of life's greatest pleasures. I have shared Earl's advice with many parents in the years since.

I have also thought a lot about these things. Earl and his wife are committed Christians. I think his advice can be backed up by scripture. The Apostle Peter exhorts us to love one another and press on, "By the strength which God provides." and to the Ephesians he triumphantly proclaims that God has "blessed us with every spiritual blessing (or gift) in Christ."

Do these things not apply to parenting as well? Of course! Would God fail to provide the strength, the gifts, the blessing necessary to us parents? I do not think so.

Is this to say that Christian parents should have no trouble, no heartache in raising children, especially during the difficult teen years? No, we are human. We fail. The teenagers fail. There are a lot of outside pressures on both teens and parents. We should expect some difficulties. Which one of us does not need to pray with King David, "Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways" (Psalm 25:7). Living with and parenting teens can be difficult, but God does give strength, wisdom, and grace to help us. The importance of prayer cannot be overlooked. We must ask for these things. Peter also tells us in this same passage that "love covers a multitude of sins."

Yet, it is also true there are no guarantees, because God has made each of us to be "free agents." He will not deny free will to our children no matter how much sometimes we would like for Him to. Some children rebel or fall into very difficult situations even when they have "the best" parents.

I saw my friend only a couple of years ago at a small gathering. His two oldest were gone from home, happily married and pursuing careers. Earl, a good speaker, gave the after-dinner talk. I listened in disbelief as he told of his youngest child's chemical dependency! As he spoke he frequently fought back tears. It was obvious that the year and a half about which he spoke had been difficult years. But, God had remained faithful. Earl and his wife had received good counsel, they had prayed fervently, and God had given them strength, wisdom and courage.

Within just days of discovering their 16 year old son's problem, they acted decisively. They committed their son, against his will at first, to a reputable treatment center. They participated fully in the family counseling and education that was provided. They prayed and sought the prayerful and active support of fellow believers.

Earl fought the tears again toward the end of his talk. Tears of thanksgiving this time. Not only had his son maintained sobriety since his release from treatment, but had become active in local prevention programs. Now 19, Earl's son has thrown himself into helping others avoid the things he had suffered. He was being wonderfully used by God to help chemically dependent teenagers and their parents. Earl could not have been more proud!

The teen years can be hard, but God promises strength to do *all things*—even parent teenagers. Through the difficult times He will be with us. May we never fail to see His presence during the *good times* as well. He has *blessed* us with children. Pray not only that He

deliver them (and us!) from the influences of the culture, but also from our own sense of fear and dread. With His guidance we can parent with confidence and experience the joy He intends for us.

Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller



Are there not a lot of unregenerate people in the Bible-believing churches today?

Very likely. Regeneration is a matter of the heart and a transaction between God and man. God alone has absolute knowledge as to when and if it takes place. We may see a person go through the external acts of gospel obedience and his name may be added to the church roll; but we do not know if the profession of faith was genuine, the repentance was from the heart, or if the new birth ever really took place. Now over a period of time we may see fruit from the life which suggests the presence of the indwelling Spirit on the one hand or the same fleshly concerns of the old life on the other, but even this can be misinterpreted.

A truly born again person begins life as a spiritual baby and often does some stumbling around as he learns to walk in the Lord. Not every misdeed is evidence that the individual has never been regenerated. There would be no need for the continual cleansing of the Christian if none of his thoughts, actions, or words needed forgiveness. Even in the case of offenses so serious as to call for disfellowship we cannot assume that the offender is not a brother (2 Thess. 3:15). Such a man as the apostle Peter could act very hypocritically years after he had become a Christian (Gal. 2:11ff.). The Christian can sin, in other words. And though a Christian does not practise sin (a continued course of action, Gal. 5:21; 1 Jn. 3:6), there is such a thing as a carnal Christian (1 Cor. 3:1), a weak Christian (Rom. 14:1), or an immature Christian (Heb. 5:11ff.). Even those who count themselves to be faithful, truly regenerated children of God can sometimes become very uncharitable in judgment, rendering an unrighteous judgment in these matters. Who has not often been very thankful that the Lord (who knows men's hearts and all that is involved) is the judge (cf. 1 Cor. 4:3-5).

There are some related thoughts that need to be expressed concerning this matter. While I may not have certain knowledge of another's state, I can have assurance as to my own as a Christian

(1 John 5:13). This is not to say one cannot be self-deceived or that one may not substitute some tests other than those proposed by the Spirit. But it is to say that God has made it possible for honest, concerned Christians to know whether regeneration has occurred in one's own life.

Neither are we suggesting that God's word is not plain enough nor that we may not take a stand on what is contained therein as to become a Christian. It is not a case that "anything goes." We have no authority for reducing the terms of pardon nor for applying His message to men according to whether or not we are favorably disposed toward them. God knows how righteously to count obedience in the heart as obedience in fact if He chooses to do so, or how to judge according to the light people may have had, so we do not want to pronounce final judgment in doubtful cases where people seem to love the Lord and yet have not responded in full obedience. But neither must we whittle the word of God down to fit such cases. It is not unrighteous judgment on our part to preach, teach, and insist upon regeneration according to the teaching of the New Testament.

It is very possible that churches contain unregenerate people because of a defective kind of evangelism. Modern high-pressure salesmanship seems to have spilled over into our efforts to reach people for the Lord, so that a fast-talking evangelist or personal worker with a good working knowledge of psychology may "sell" someone on becoming a Christian. But after the "buyer" has had time to think about it he is not so sure that he wanted it. He may repent of his repentance. By that time, however, he has been baptized and his name added to a church roll, and the shepherds of the flock begin what is likely to be a life-long effort to trying to keep him interested and showing concern for walking "the strait and narrow way." The tragedy is that many such ones get a sort of inoculation against ever being truly converted. They can always look back to the supposed-to-be conversion. Young people are often susceptible to emotionally charged situations so that when others are responding to the invitation they may respond too. I suspect that not all "losses" of young people in the later teen years in our churches is because of a lack of an exciting youth work; it may be due to unregenerate young people walking the only way they can—after the flesh.

Now the point is not that there is no such thing as a prodigal son, a child of God who strays from his Father's ways. It is certainly not that we do not need to do anything about reaching people. But it is important that we be vitally concerned with bringing people to the new birth, not just counting another statistic. We are not selling vacuum cleaners and collecting commissions.

A recent article in a religious magazine had a number of good things to say, but the author seemed to pronounce judgment on those who disagreed with his application of scripture to certain political, economic, and social issues. Why can't preachers realize that it is one

thing to preach the word but another to insist on people swallowing their (the preachers') own personal viewpoints?

It is not easy to be a preacher. Folks enjoy a message as long as it lambastes someone else, but if it gets too close to home it is "meddling." What meets the needs of one person may leave another untouched and a third angry. Moreover, we are human. With all the talking (or writing) we do, we are sure sooner or later to say something that is unwise or even erroneous, something which can be misunderstood, or something which though true will rub the fur the wrong way.

There are at least two sides to the matter you mention. On the one hand, in preaching and teaching Bible truth there is need for making application to life. A preacher is not expected just to read a passage or scripture without comment. He explains its meaning and significance to other parts of the word. But he must go further. Scripture is not something to be studied as theoretical; it is something to be applied in a practical way to life. This demands that we use human judgment and see how the passages speak to us in the every day affairs of life. We must apply in many cases or else the truth will be missed. Of course there is a right way to do this, and there ought to be evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in one's life as he does so. Some unkindness and even downright meanness is nothing but the flesh in domination.

On the other hand, most of us—preachers and others alike—are guilty at times of taking our view of many things as being the Lord's. Men with little minds are often quite sure of their simplified answers to what may be complicated problems. They cannot understand why anyone who is even half-way sincere cannot see that their pontifications are right. Some preachers tend to forget (even if they can discern) just where the word ends and opinion begins. It is one thing to speak with authority wherein the word of God requires or permits it and another to suppose that our opinions and applications carry that same authority just because we are used to speaking in that way. It is one thing to express our understanding of how a scripture applies to life and another to judge the man with another valid concept as being a sorry specimen of a Christian, dishonest, and unwilling to follow the Lord as fully as we do. We agree that this is a too common trait. There are some issues that may be complex enough or about which we do not have sufficient knowledge so that equally sincere (and even equally enlightened as to God's word) Christians may stand on opposite sides.

We are not suggesting that the Christian ought to pussyfoot where God has spoken plainly, nor that he adopt the "can't be sure about anything" view so popular with some moderns. But we must not get carried away with our own scheme of things and they warp God's word to fit it as we denounce any opposition. The social, political, and economic positions some Christians defend as being God's way are sometimes about as far from being Biblical as the ones they want to replace. Extremes beget extremes.

—1503 Skyline Dr., Johnson City, TN 37604

Dear Nieces and Nephews,

I didn't realize how many nieces and nephews Betsy and I had until we started attending some of your weddings. And thoughts I had about the success of your marriage became more frequent as the wedding of our own daughter Mary Lynn came into view. I would like to share with you some of the things I have been led to understand in my recent studies of the subject of marriage.

First, a good practical joke: Take a 45 rpm record and drill another hole 1 inch from the center, the same size as the spindle hole. Then take it to a friend's house, ask to play it on their hi-fi, and use the new (wrong) center on the spindle. When the awful sounds come out of the speaker innocently ask if there isn't something wrong with their stereo?

Of course, you know it is neither the stereo nor the record, but the use of the wrong center that produces the repetitive interludes of unpleasant sounds.

Now I want to suggest that discordant episodes in our married life are produced by the same kind of things: we have the wrong center for our marriage or for our individual lives. It is easy to say that, but using the right center will prove difficult if you don't know where it is! (Sometimes even when you *do* know).

I'll begin pointing toward that center by reminding you of the instruction booklets that come with major appliances, automobiles, etc. When we ignore the instructions of the manufacturer or the design engineer, the appliance is often unable to render the service we expect, and breakdowns become common and expensive. (For example, ignoring the oil in the engine and the water in the radiator).

Our Creator who designed our bodies and minds has not left us without instructions on how to best utilize them. He made us for His own purposes, surely, but how can we cooperate with His design? Solomon said, after exploring questions about the meaning of life: "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man". Solomon's father David said in the first Psalm that a person will prosper in whatever he does if he takes delight in the law of the Lord.

If serving our Creator this way is made the center of our lives, will not our marriages prove the most successful and gratifying, even as a by-product of serving God? Tune in to the next letter and find out. Your Aunt Betsy and I are rooting for you.

Love from Uncle Cecil (Garrett)

REPRINT:

Church of Christ—Sect or Main Body

E. L. Jorgenson, 1961

(Part Two)

All the great men of the nineteenth century unity movement understood there were some born-again ones in many of the American religious groups. It was the general understanding at least to the turn of the century when I was a boy. McGarvey, Larimore, the Srygleys, Kurfees, *et al* knew it, but hoped and labored to show many “the way of God more accurately.” The non-sectarian concept of the church grew measurably dimmer with the spread of the “re-baptism” theory—the view that a candidate for valid baptism *must know* (besides all other antecedents) that he is being baptized *for* remission of sins. This strange twist (by which the word “for” in Acts 2:38 was thrown back into the mind of the candidate instead of in the stated mind and purpose of God Almighty, the remitter) tended directly to make a sect of the church; a “sect” (or “cut-off” section), because in effect they cut themselves off from those who had indeed been baptized in sincere faith toward God, but had not understood at that moment that the act was *for* (Gr. *eis*) remission of sins, which culminating design we do not dispute.

Thus on and on it went, the loveless emphasis and the schisms: the “re-baptism” schism, pro and con; the so-called “pre-millennial break, pro and con (mostly con for *we* have never drawn the line), the “institutional” argument, pro and con. And so it will go on for ever—unless Christian love takes over! By this course of lovelessness and heresy of emphasis, the “Church of Christ,” by and large, became a sect among the sects—*excepting* only those congregations here and there (millennial or not) that—at the price of eternal vigilance—were able to maintain their freedom in Christ, escape “bossism”, and cling on to Jesus Christ only as Teacher, Master, and Lord.

LATER GREATS

McGarvey tried to cling to all his brethren of both “groups,” though he rejected instrumental music. Larimore, Hall Calhoun, and other greats evangelized and taught at first among the “Christian” churches: were they not Christians then? Were they not members of the body? Would they have been won to the simpler ways if their salvation had been denied? If they were Christians to be welcomed in, there must be others like that now; if not, why not?

M. C. Kurfees would not that the old church where he labored so long in Louisville should be called “Campbell Street Church of Christ,” but simply “Campbell Street church.” He reasoned that not all members of the Body in their area were in their fellowship, though no doubt he wished they were. He knew that there were others, and he didn’t mean the members of like and sister congregations either! Thus, he simply called the church “the church”, adding the street location.

R. H. BOLL

We come now, finally, to the prince of modern Bible teachers. When he saw the churches becoming more and more sectarianized, led away from the concept of autonomy and freedom in Christ, he wrote more and more to halt the sickening trend. During his ministry of more than 50 years at Portland Avenue, he received into fellowship scores of men and women who had been immersed in some denomination, but who had taken this step in all sincerity and faith toward God. He also baptized many from denominational churches who had learned the truth about believer's immersion in the meetings and classes that he conducted throughout our city. But one thing *that he did twice* will most quickly show his attitude and view on the point in question:

Twice he chose my little 4-page tract, "What It Means," for publication in this journal. We lift a few sentences from page 1:

"Many members of God's church are now members of something else also, and they have become sadly scattered abroad."

"Clearly these saved but scattered children of God ought to be gathered. That inward unity which already exists ought to be outwardly, visibly, and organically manifested, realized, and demonstrated."

"When I say I am a Christian only I certainly do not mean to say that I am the only Christian; and when those in the aggregate who have separated themselves from various sects in order to be members of no sect, profess to be Christians only, they do not profess to be the only Christians. They recognize that there are others who have not yet taken this independent stand, nor even supposed that it is possible."

Finally, referring to the custom of receiving into fellowship (with a hand-clasp) a man "who has been scripturally baptized", page 1 concludes:

This "simply shows that they recognized him as a Christian before he came. That is, they recognize that he was at least in position—if not in actual condition—a Christian before he took his stand as a Christian only."

We have dealt with "baptized believers" exclusively; but we have insisted that the *whole number* of those who have been "baptized into Christ" (Gal. 3:6, 27) in true faith, sincerity, and penitence constitutes the membership of the Church of Christ, and that it is to this "One Body" that we belong, and to no other.

That many congregations called by the Bible name have lost this New Testament concept of God's Church, and have given in to think of themselves—either as another denomination, or as "the only Christians," a group apart in one way or another, cannot be denied. Moreover, while restoring certain outward features of the original church, they have failed to restore the chiefest thing of all (1 Cor. 13:13), that virtue without which men are simply *nothing* in the eyes of God (1 Cor. 13:2). What a travesty, what a distortion! To think that this is "restoration"! The forms, the ceremonies, the ritual, the methods of the N.T. Church, without the heart, the love, the inward spirit of original Christianity! Were ever a people caught in a fallacy like this!

As Christians (Christ-ians), and Christians only, we belong to the *whole* Church of Christ, and not to any smaller "party," no matter by what name it may be called. We do not know the whole member-

ship, of course—not even all in our own immediate area; but He knows: “the Lord knoweth them that are his” (2 Tim. 2:19). This unsectarian concept of the church is a difficult position to admit and maintain (because of the mess men have made). It is an easy position to let slip; but it *must* be understood and maintained, and we let it slip at the cost of all our claims to non-denominationalism. Otherwise we become no more than another sect among the sects, and our “unity” witness becomes just another “lost cause.”



Missionary Messenger

"Greater things for God"

Robert S. Johnson

Brazil

December '87

The economic crisis in Brazil has had an adverse effect on our tract ministry. Beans and rice hold economic priority with our people over Gospel tracts. We are looking for some recuperation through the evangelistic Christmas card.

With the economic crisis, there seems to be more interest in spiritual matters among the general population. Our evangelistic efforts have been blessed. However along with a searching for the Gospel, large numbers are also looking to spiritism. Good and evil are becoming more sharply defined and the battle is becoming more intense.

James & Karen Ashley

Honiara, Solomon Islands

December '87

Thanks for praying for the things we mentioned in our last letter! Philip seems to be over his spells with malaria, and our transportation should improve dramatically due to our recent purchase of a 1985 Toyota Hilux pickup truck. The truck will solve some problems, but may give us others if people start asking us to run them here, there, and everywhere. We're happy to be helpful sometimes, but we can't afford to become a taxi service. Pray for God to help us handle this touchy area.

We'll be spending the next two and a half months in Sa'a, and we're looking forward to helping the village celebrate Christmas. We hear they *really* celebrate it—carolling all night long the whole week between Christmas and New Years.

Our language learning is progressing pretty well; in most conversations we can go back and forth several times before we get lost and have to resort to Pijin. We still have lots of holes in our vocabulary, so pray that we'll be able to set up a *regular* work schedule that includes both the old and young men. We need to work some with the old men since they are the ones who know the language best, but work goes *much* faster with the young men. They are better at explaining subtle differences of meaning because they've grappled with similar problems in their English classes in secondary school.

Several of the young men have shown an interest in typing lessons. We are hoping for at least one to stick with it enough to be of help to us when we start translating.

(This is the final article in a series of twelve that began in Jan. 1987. Sylvia Tester is a freelance writer and editor from Elgin, Illinois.)

EARLY RESTORATION LEADERS

John W. McGarvey: Teacher and Brother

Sylvia Root Tester

John William McGarvey was, in his lifetime, a teacher, professor, and president of the College of the Bible. He was also a preacher, writer, editor, and elder. He held many distinguished offices in the brotherhood, among them president of the Kentucky Christian Sunday School Association and chairman of the board of the Kentucky Female Orphan School. Yet the term of address he preferred was "brother." To all who knew him a teacher, colleague, or friend, he was "Brother McGarvey."

J. W. McGarvey was born on March 1, 1829, near Hopkinsville, Kentucky. His father died when he was four. His mother remarried after a time, uniting in one family her and her four children with a widower, Dr. Gurdon F. Saltonstall, and his nine children. These nine children were also her nieces and nephews, since Dr. Saltonstall had been married to her sister. The family grew in time to include six more children. When McGarvey was about ten, the family moved from Kentucky to Illinois.

McGarvey seems to have had a fear-some temper as a boy. He was often in fights with other boys, and one day his mother told him that she was fearful for him, afraid that in his anger he might someday kill someone. This thought so frightened him that he went to work on controlling his temper. He succeeded well. As an adult he was known for his calmness and self-control.

When McGarvey was eighteen, he enrolled at Bethany College. While at Bethany, he decided to become a Christian and was baptized. His best remembrances from his time at Bethany were the magnificent sermons of Alexander Campbell and the tender Communion meditations of W.K. Pendleton.

Despite his good grades at Bethany, McGarvey felt unprepared for the ministry. So he opened a school for boys in order to support himself, and in his spare time he studied, mostly the Bible, both in English and in Greek.

Two years later McGarvey was ordained and began to preach at Dover, Missouri. This was in 1853. That same year, in March, he married Atwayanna Francis Hix. On their honeymoon McGarvey and his new wife went to Louisville, Kentucky, to a convention held by Disciples and Baptists to discuss bringing out a new version of the Bible.

Brother McGarvey spoke once a month at another church in Missouri and held many evangelistic meetings throughout the state. He also began work, in 1861, on his first book, *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*.

CIVIL WAR PREACHER

The Civil War was approaching. Brother McGarvey's views, based on what he felt the Bible taught, were similar to the views of many in the brotherhood. He owned two slaves, who had been given to him as gifts. Yet he felt Christianity should be offered to everyone. The church at Dover had a large membership of black people, mostly slaves, who sat in the gallery and worshipped with the white people. Once a month McGarvey held special services just for the black people, in which the entire building was open to them.

Allowing black people to use the part of the church normally reserved for whites aroused such anger among some of the townfolk that they tried to stop the meeting. A town official and some of his friends threatened violence to any blacks who entered the church. J. W. McGarvey narrowly avoided the confrontation. He stepped between the two groups and persuaded the town official to leave him to his work. Perhaps his audacity was what persuaded the group, for he was a small man, about five feet seven inches tall, and known for his genial and kindly nature.

McGarvey felt the South should not secede. He felt neither side should fight and, if they did, Christians should not join the fight. He expressed these sentiments both in his sermons and in his writing.

In 1862 the McGarveys moved to Lexington, Kentucky. The move was due, in large part, to the Civil War. Because of the war, and because views were unpopular in Dover, the work of the church was falling off. McGarvey felt he would have to find some other job in order to support his family. Just at this time, an offer came from the Main Street Christian Church in Lexington. This church had both a Northern faction and a Southern faction to it. The previous minister had been sympathetic to the South and so had offended the Northern faction. Not wishing to split the church, he had resigned. Knowing McGarvey's pacifist beliefs, this minister recommended McGarvey as his replacement. He felt, and the church felt, that McGarvey would be able to hold the church together through the war.

They were right. McGarvey did hold the church together, and as the war came to a close, it grew to be the largest of the Disciple churches in the area.

McGarvey followed a course of action similar to that of David Lipscomb: he did his best to ignore the war. He went on with his work. He ministered to his church and worked on his book. The war did interfere occasionally. The church building was taken over by soldiers for use as a military hospital, so throughout the autumn and winter of 1862, the members met elsewhere.

The only time McGarvey was in danger was when he tried to attend the wedding of a friend. He had been asked to perform the wedding, but to do so, he had to cross the battle lines. He crossed through the Confederate lines without trouble, and they gave him directions for going around the Union troops. However, they mis-

judged where the Union troops were. McGarvey ended up right in front of the troops, instead of behind them.

The Union colonel was quite suspicious of McGarvey and questioned him thoroughly about the position of the Confederates. McGarvey answered his questions truthfully. The colonel set out, with his troops, to see if McGarvey had told the truth. They brought McGarvey along with them, guarded by a "big German with musket in hand."

When at last McGarvey was released, it was too late to go to the wedding, so he returned home. He later wrote, "This was the nearest that I came to being shot and imprisoned in those times of peril."

McGarvey completed his book, *Commentary on Acts*, in the fall of 1863. The Civil War was still raging, and he wondered whether it would be possible to have the book published. His friends at the *American Christian Review* came to his rescue. They published the introduction in their magazine and asked for advance subscriptions to the book. The result was astonishing. Sixteen hundred people subscribed. The book was published and became a classic in the restoration movement. It triggered a spate of other books of a similar nature, each being a commentary on a book of the Bible.

Finally the war was over. McGarvey went about the work of rebuilding his congregation. He bought land outside of Lexington and built a home there.

COLLEGE LEADER

In 1865 McGarvey began his work at the College of the Bible. He helped to set up the curriculum for the college, which was part of the Kentucky University (a private university, funded mostly by Christian churches.)

McGarvey drew from his own experience in developing the curriculum of the College of the Bible. He remembered what had been helpful to him at Bethany. He also remembered that he had felt totally unqualified to preach when he left Bethany.

The first requirement, McGarvey believed, was knowledge of the Bible. The second, was knowledge of the needs of the people. Third, but less important in his view, was a general education in literature and the sciences.

McGarvey was associated with the College of the Bible from this time until his death. Students there remembered McGarvey with great fondness. They said he had a "benign serenity," a "patriarchal dignity . . . tempered by a kindly smile and a gentleness in his heart."

McGarvey grew deaf with the passing years, and in time always carried an ear horn with him. Students would come to his desk and say their recitations into his ear horn. His biographer tells this story: One morning McGarvey's ear trumpet was absent from his desk. A student was called on to recite and supposing that McGarvey had not yet taken notice that his ear trumpet had been forgotten marched boldly to the front and saluted McGarvey with the words, "Good morning, John; how are you?" Imagine his confusion . . . when instantly the response came, "Very well, Hiram; how are you?" He had failed to notice that McGarvey was trying out an accousticon that was less conspicuous than his trumpet.

There were scandals and divisions and political maneuverings at Kentucky University, some involving the College of the Bible. At one

point McGarvey's criticisms of the president of the university got McGarvey fired, but later he was brought back. Through all this, McGarvey's view of what the curriculum should be was the predominant influence in the College of the Bible. Indeed, it set the tone and the emphasis for many preacher-training institutes that grew up after it. McGarvey's biographer felt that McGarvey's greatest legacy was his work at the College of the Bible and the pattern it set for other institutions.

McGarvey soon became so involved in the work of the college that he resigned as minister of the Main Street Church. He still preached, but now he preached at small country churches, because this did not require so much of his time. In 1871 he resigned from the country churches to begin a ministry at the Broadway Church, a smaller church begun by the Main Street Church. He continued as their minister for twelve years, and was an elder there for twenty more years.

He left this church when it decided to bring in an organ as an aid to worship. McGarvey had always felt that instruments should not be used in the worship service. He quietly moved his membership to another church in Lexington that did not use an organ.

For many years, then, McGarvey's work fell into three distinct categories. He was the professor of sacred history and later the president of the College of the Bible. He was a minister and later an elder. And he was a writer and editor.

In 1869 McGarvey and four other men began a journal called the *Apostolic Times*. This journal, they thought, would occupy middle ground in the controversies that were raging in the brotherhood. They were against using musical instruments in worship services, but in favor of missionary cooperation. McGarvey was associated with this journal until 1876. In 1875 McGarvey published a commentary on Matthew and Mark.

TRAVELING WRITER

In 1879 one of McGarvey's dreams came true. He had always wanted to go to Palestine, but had not had the money. Some former students offered to lend him the money. He could write a book about his journey and repay them from the proceeds.

McGarvey made extensive preparations for the journey. He took notes on everything he knew about various places in Palestine and surrounding areas, with special notations to himself on things he wanted to check out. On the journey he sent back long and detailed letters that were published in the *Christian Standard*, the *Christian*, and the *Gospel Advocate*. When he returned, he wrote the book *Lands of the Bible*.

In one of his letters, McGarvey wrote:

In order to transport us through the country, with our baggage, tents, furniture, food, and fuel, our dragoman had provided six horses, ten mules, two donkeys, and seven men besides himself. . . . The entire expense to us of living and traveling with this outfit was \$24 a day, or six dollars apiece for the four.

For months the letters continued in the three journals. When McGarvey returned home, he set to work on the book, which was published in 1881. It was minutely detailed, giving descriptions and

even measurements for buildings, places, wells, pool, etc. He described the road to Jericho, the setting for the parable of the Good Samaritan, in these terms:

After crossing the ridge . . . the road descends more rapidly, but the hills descend more rapidly still. All is wild and desolate. The road bed has been often shifted by the violence of the winter torrents, and, though often repaired, it is still in some places scarcely passable for loaded animals. . . . When within about three miles of the Jordan Valley you can see Wady Kelt, a deep, wild gorge, a short distance to left; and when within about a quarter of a mile of the valley you pass along the edge of the precipice which forms the southern side of this chasm. It is the darkest and most desolate looking gorge in all Palestine. On either side is a perpendicular wall of dark-brown rock, having a rotten and crumbling appearance, and the narrow bottom of the chasm lies more than 2000 feet below the road. . . . It is scarcely possible to conceive the wild and desolate grandeur of the place.

In short, McGarvey made it possible for many readers to know Palestine almost as if they had been there.

In 1886 McGarvey published the first volume of a two-part work called *Evidences of Christianity*. He was hard at work on the second volume when a fire destroyed his house, his books, and all his manuscripts and notes. So the second volume didn't come out until 1891. He also published other works.

CONSERVATIVE PROTECTOR

Biblical criticism was becoming an issue in the restoration movement. McGarvey became a chief spokesman for the conservatives, who believed in the full inspiration of the Bible. In 1893 McGarvey began a department in the *Christian Standard* entitled "Biblical Criticism." In it he took on the liberals. He contributed this column, often a full page long, for about nineteen years.

McGarvey wrote for the common person. He made the issues of Biblical criticism understandable. Sometimes he was witty, sometimes he was vituperative. He attacked people without mercy for views he felt were wrong. He made quite a few enemies with this column.

People often wondered at the vehemence of his attacks, for in person he was mild and gentle, kind and humorous. His biographer said of him that he could bitterly attack a person in one of his columns and then turn around and do a great kindness to that person, for in the column he felt he was attacking an untruth and the bearer of that untruth, while in person he was dealing with a friend. The two had nothing to do with one another.

James DeForest Much gave this tribute to McGarvey: "It was McGarvey, above all others in the brotherhood, who sensed the real issues at stake . . . and dealt effectively with them. Without him the conservatives would have been dispersed and overcome."

McGarvey died in October of 1911. He had founded and taught in a college that set a pattern for many other preacher-training institutions. He had preached and been an elder. He had done much to educate and shore up the conservative branch of the brotherhood in its battles with the more liberal branch. And to many, many people, he had been "brother."

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NEWS AND NOTES

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

14th Annual Tell City / Lilly Dale Workshop:

This will be held at Tell City on Feb. 26-27 (7:00 p.m. Fri. through 3:30 p.m. Sat.). The theme will be "Standing on the Promises." Topics include "If God is so Able, Why am I so Weak?", "Keeping the Saved Saved," "Overcoming Difficulties," and others of interest. Linda Easley will speak twice to women, and Nick Marsh and Steve Combs to young people. Other speakers will be Orell Overman, Fred Woolsley, Julius Hovan, Jim Atwood, and Jeff Monday.

For more information call Jerry Carmichael at 812-547-6778. You'll benefit from this good workshop.

St. Louis:

I am just home from the hospital after two strokes. God was good. They were not disabling at all. I was in for a week.

Nell, my wife, entered the hospital before I did and is still there on her third week. She had an aneurysm burst in her head and flood her skull with blood. She is a brave soldier and is overcoming it slowly. Pray for us.

—Carl Ketcherside

(Late news: Both are now home and active again! Praise God.)

Small Louisville Church Ministers to Ghana:

What started as a small beginning of sending a few Bibles to people in Ghana, West Africa has over the last several years made us who worship at the Shawnee Church of Christ very aware of the hunger the people in Ghana have for the Word of God.

After sending hundreds of Bibles we made contact with a young Christian man who works at the hospital. Through correspondence with him we found the great need for clothing. He was willing for us to send him clothing to distribute to those he came in touch with through his hospital contacts.

Through our years of corresponding with Bro. Baah, the young man mentioned above, we found he had a wife and two children. We sent several

sermon tapes to him that he shared with others. As these were shared the requests began to pour in for tapes. So now we are sending Bibles, tapes and clothing.

The Lord has blessed us here at Shawnee. Although our congregation is small in number we have been able to reach out across the seas to others. If you would like to have a part in this wonderful work write Bro. Bill Smallwood, minister of the Shawnee Church of Christ, for more information. Address: 3911 Alford Avenue, Louisville, KY 40212.

Thanksgiving Day Meeting:

The Kentuckiana churches' thanksgiving meeting was held as usual at Atherton High School auditorium in Louisville. Five hundred sixty-seven people gathered to praise the Lord. Vernon Lawyer gave a fine message, the Portland Christian High School chorus stirred us with their singing, and \$5,414 was given for Christian schools.

Viewing the News:

Jack Blaes, our writer of the "Viewing the News" column, has been unable to keep up his writing due to his teaching responsibilities at Portland Christian School. We hope he can resume the column in February. Pray for his health and strength.

Words of Life Radio Ministry:

Brother Cyrus Gesulga from Mindanao, Philippines, spent the entire month of November in the U. S. He spoke in 25 churches and traveled over 2,500 miles. It was a great experience for him and for all who were privileged to meet him and hear of the Lord's working in the southern Philippines.

PRICE INCREASE, BUT A small one!

Bad news: We must up our rates.

Good news: Due to individual donations, the increase will be just \$1, not \$3. Starting in March, W & W will cost \$6 yearly, with bundles of 10 or more to one address @ \$5.50.

Many thanks to our donors!

SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

2500 Portland Ave., Louisville 40212

Spring Semester 1988

| CLASS (Credit Hours) | TIME | INSTRUCTOR |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Personal Evangelism (2) | 1:00 - 3:00 (M) | Henry Ott |
| N. T. Survey (3) | 6:30 - 9:30 (M) | Jerry Carmichael |
| Christian Education (2) | 7:00 - 9:00 (M) | Joyce Zimpelman |
| Christian Ethics (3) | 9:00 - 12:00 (T) | Alex Wilson |
| Pentateuch (3) | 1:00 - 4:00 (T) | Bruce Chowning |
| Work of the Church II (2) | 7:00 - 9:00 (T) | Nathan Burks |
| Pastoral Epistles (2) | 7:00 - 9:00 (T) | Ray Naugle |

For further information call 502-778-6114 immediately.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

SAVE THESE DATES

The School of Biblical Studies will hold its annual lectureship on Thurs. night March 17 and Fri. night March 18 at Southeast Church of Christ, Jeffersontown, Ky. Theme: NO REVIVAL—NO SURVIVAL!

Speakers (2 each night) will be Robert Garrett, Earl Mullins Sr., Bennie Hill and Larry McAdams.

And on Friday the 18th, DAY sessions will be held at Portland Church in Louisville. These will be of urgent importance to all ministers, elders, deacons & other church leaders... for hints are blowing in the wind that we are an "endangered species—headed for extinction!" Let's say a resounding "No, by God's grace!" to such an idea. Topics to be studied, discussed & prayed about are the following: What objectives should we have as a fellowship of churches? How can we preserve church autonomy & yet increase our effectiveness thru congregational cooperation? What should be our strategies for the future? And how can we assist those churches which are declining?

Look for more details in next month's issue. But meanwhile set aside those dates.

Manila, Philippines:

The political situation now (Nov. 27) is a little bit calmer on the surface. While reports said that many NPAs (New People's Army, the Communists) accepted the offer of amnesty by the government and left the NPA, yet the number of their soldiers remains the same (23,000)! So, obviously, many are still joining them, either by force or for employment. Their recruits are paid 500 pesos (\$25) every month. In the rural areas where there is no source of employment, such an offer is attractive.

Central Bible Institute began the second semester with 151 students.

—Letter from Herman Moldez

Japan '88 (Summer Mission Project):

Brother Moto Nomura desires to host adults (high school students and older) who want to work during the summer break of the Japanese schools, July through August. The purpose of the trip is to work at his center in the mountains and also with the house church in Tokyo. Work would include physical labor, evangelism, teaching, camp ministry, visitation, etc.

Those desiring more information may write Earl Mullins, Sr. at Portland Christian School, 2500 Portland Ave., Louisville, KY 40212, for a detailed brochure.

Linton, IN.:

Several from this area and some from the Tell City area and from as far away as Winchester, Ky. were in attendance at the annual bean dinner and corporation meeting at Woodland Bible Camp on a rainy Saturday Oct. 24. Construction begins soon on a new bath house for boys there.

Sunday evening Steve Smith of Winchester, Ky., a board member of Maple Manor Christian Homes at Sellersburg, IN spoke to us and gave a slide presentation about Maple Manor. —Linton Bulletin

Gallatin, Tennessee:

IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO TEACH
—We will be offering a one-day Teachers Training Seminar. We want: 1) those currently teaching, 2) those who have taught in the past, 3) those who have never taught but maybe think they would like to do so, 4) those who would like to support this program. We believe Christian education is important enough to do this. I pray that you think it is important also. We need teachers. —Bulletin

COMING IN FEBRUARY:

- Am I above average but sub-normal?**
 - We need REVIVAL!**
 - Is mourning for sin out of date?**
-

Christ's Teaching On Prayer

R. H. Boll, a Bible scholar, goes straight to the gospels for the answers to effective prayer. Do you need these answers?

This is a practical book. You might use it as additional reading for your Sunday school class. Or your prayer group.

Sixty-four pages. You could read it in an evening.

\$1.25 per copy — 5 or more copies, \$1.00 each, postpaid

Kentucky residents add 5% sales tax