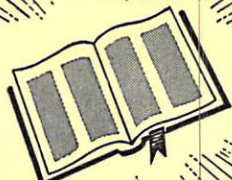
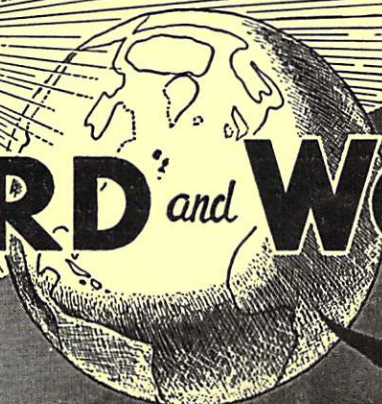


"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."



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



"Holding forth the Word of life."

AUGUST, 1990

Balanced Churches, All-Around Christians

WORSHIP: "Knowing God is the reason we were created. It should be the central aim of our lives. It is the very best thing in life. . . . Do we worship God when He takes away, or allows the Devil to destroy, every earthly dream we hold dear?"

—Joyce Overman Lyon

STUDYING GOD'S WORD: "With God's sacred words we nourish our faith, animate our hope, make our confidence more steadfast, and . . . confirm good habits."

—Tertullian, 200 A.D.

FELLOWSHIP: "All now were their brother's keepers; all helped to heal the wounds of sin . . . and however painful were temporary defeats, the note of triumph prevailed."

—J. W. Brady re: Fellowship Groups

NEWS AND NOTES

School of Biblical Studies, Louisville, Ky. (502:778-6114)

Schedule for Fall 1990 (Starts Sept. 4)

Work of the Church	Mon. 1 - 3 p.m. (2 hrs.)	Nathan Burks
Greek I	Mon. - Wed., 8 - 9:15 (4 hrs.)	Dennis Allen
The Pentateuch	Mon. 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. (3 hrs.)	Jerry Carmichael
Hermeneutics (How to Interpret the Bible)	Tue. 9:30 - 12:30 (3 hrs.)	Vernon Lawyer
Christian Doctrines	Tue. 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. (3 hrs.)	Alex Wilson
Epistles of Peter/John	Tue. 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. (3 hrs.)	Dennis Kaufman

Retreat at Woodland for "Mid-Lifers"

If you are anywhere from 18 to 40-something years old, you will profit from the 2nd annual young adult retreat at Woodland Camp, near Linton, Ind. Dates: Fri. evening Aug. 31 thru afternoon Mon. Sept. 3 (Labor Day). Themes include holiness & witnessing. A mission leader in European work will also speak. For info call 317-298-4730 or 502-538-3094.

Earl Mullins to hold Meetings before Departure

Before he and Ragena leave for Asia, Earl Mullins will hold a series of renewal-meetings at Portland Church, Louisville. They will be Sun. Sept. 9-Wed. Sept. 12. Sun. nite will be at 7:00, other nites at 7:30.

Other Events at Woodland Camp:

Senior Citizens Week, Sept. 9-14.
Junior & Intermediate Campers' Retreat, Sept. 14-16. Senior Campers' Retreat, Sept. 21-23.

Nick Marsh, 93, Goes To Heaven

Bro. Nick Marsh, a preacher of the Gospel for many, many years, after long illness fell asleep in Christ on Aug. 8 and was buried on the 11th. We hope to tell more of his life and ministry next month.

Louisville Fellowship Week

This was a time of refreshing fellowship and upbuilding. Visitors attended from as far away as Fla., La., Tex., and Oregon. The brother from the West Coast, attending for the first time, said he was deeply impressed by the spirit of love and also by the prayer-times. We should count our blessings, while seeking revival amid declining numbers in many places.

Hearty thanksgiving to Bennie Hill and all others who labored with him to make the Fellowship Week uplifting and profitable. It was delightful to

see some attending and participating who had not been with us for several years.

Read the Saturday Evening Post...

...and you'll see an article about the high-lysine corn project for poor countries. This fine ministry, spear-headed by Hollace Sherwood and backed by the Bryantsville Church of Christ, raises and ships many tons of this extra-nourishing food to lands including Haiti, Honduras, Mexico and Guatemala. It is then distributed by Christians to poor people, along with the Gospel of Jesus the Bread of Eternal Life. This is a splendid way to fight both physical & spiritual malnourishment.

It usually costs more to transport the bag of corn from Mitchell, Ind. to the hungry person than the market value of the corn. Wouldn't it be great if every Christian reading this would either buy a bag of corn (\$3.00) or pay for transporting a bag (\$5.00) for hungry people in poverty-stricken lands. Donations may be sent to The Corn Fund, Bryantsville Church of Christ, Wm. Hopkins, treas., R.R. 1, Box 271, Mitchell, IN 47446. For more information: Hollace Sherwood, 812-849-2640. Mention this to your church leaders.

Earthquake in the Philippines

From a letter from a churchmember in Manila, written about 10 days after the quake: "The earthquake has a message from God for us Filipinos. I praise Him that we are still preserved here in Manila. But I grieve with those who suffered from this calamity. We trust in the Lord as the Blessed Controller of everthing. The event was an opportunity to share the gospel to an officemate of mine here in the central Bank. She panicked during it but noticed that I was calm. I was silently praying and did not panic. She later

Continued on page 256

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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No. 8

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THEME:

A Balanced Diet, or Malnutrition?

Alex V. Wilson

Imagine a little boy six years old who just loves candy but hates to eat anything else! If his parents let him have his way, he would have nothing but candy at every meal, and many other times a day, too. If he did this for very long, his health would be wrecked. He would be weak and sickly, and his teeth would rot. In due time the result would be *death*. Our bodies need a balanced diet.

Our spirits also need a balanced diet. If individual Christians or congregations are to grow and be vigorous, they will need at least four different ingredients in their diet. A study of Acts and the epistles reveals these four essentials to spiritual health: instruction, worship, service, and fellowship. Let's analyze each of them, and then evaluate ourselves and make some practical applications.

INSTRUCTION involves the mind. It includes not only the learning of God's word but also encouragement to do it—for we often need to be reminded and exhorted about truths that we already know but are not fully practicing. **WORSHIP** involves the emotions and the will, as they respond to the knowledge we learn. It includes meditation (a lost art in these time?), thanksgiving for what God has done for us, and praise and adoration for what God is. It is the cry of the humble heart, "You, Lord, are worthy." **SERVICE** involves our abilities and God-given power. There are many kinds of work needed in the Lord's army: soldiers need to be trained (Christians strengthened) and then enemy territory needs to be invaded (witnessing to the lost). Service includes not only public ministries like preaching, teaching, and song-leading, but also private ministries like visiting the sick, sharing the Gospel with the unconverted, handling finances, filling communion cups, welcoming visitors, and sweeping the floor. **FELLOWSHIP** involves our sharing God's blessings with others in His family. We read that the earliest disciples had all things in common, and while the passage refers primarily to sharing their material possessions, certainly it would also include sharing of joys and sorrows. Bearing one another's burdens, confessing our sins one to another and praying one with another—all of these make up "the fellowship of kindred minds" which we love to sing about.

There is a cause-and-effect *relationship between instruction, worship, and service*. Worship results from instruction, as our attention is centered on God and His grace. And worship, if sincere, will create within us a desire to serve God and do the work He wants us to do. The first relationship—between instruction and worship—is important in the Lord's Supper. Merely taking the emblems is valueless unless the mind sees beyond them to Him whom they represent. The Lord's Supper is no more than a mockery unless we take *time*

to let our *minds* dwell upon the Lord Jesus and our hearts offer Him the *worship* which He is due.

The second relationship—between worship and service—is well expressed by A.W. Tozer:

The work of Christ in redemption is to bring men to be admirers and lovers of the Triune God. God saves men to make them worshipers. This great central fact has been largely forgotten today. By teaching, story, example, and psychological pressure we force our new converts to "go to work for the Lord." Ignoring the fact that God has redeemed them to make worshipers out of them, we thrust them out into "service."

This is not to say that there is not work to be done; most certainly there is, and God in His condescending love works through His redeemed children. What we are overlooking is that no one can be a worker who is not first a worshiper. Labor that does not spring out of worship is futile. It may be set down as an axiom that if we do not worship we cannot work acceptably.

No one can long worship God in spirit and in truth before the obligation to holy service becomes too strong to resist. Fellowship with God leads straight to obedience and good works. That is the divine order and it can never be reversed. (—Born After Midnight)

What about *fellowship*? It overlaps the other three: we can be instructed together and worship together and serve God together. Nevertheless, the fact that a number of Christians are engaged in some Christian activity together does not automatically mean that there is fellowship. Fellowship is deep unity of heart, being knit together in love, being "of one heart and one mind in the Lord." The nearer the spokes of a wheel are to the hub, the nearer they are to each other; likewise, the nearer that Christians are to their Lord, the nearer they will be to each other.

What about *singing*? It may be either worship or instruction. "A hymn is addressed to God in praise or prayer; a gospel song is addressed to the people in testimony or exhortation." Do you ever notice to whom you are singing, and study over the message of what you sing? It will transform your singing if you will. Which of the following would you classify as instruction (exhortation or testimony) and which as worship (praise or prayer): Soldiers of Christ, Arise; Holy, Holy, Holy; A Wonderful Savior; We Praise Thee, O God; If I Have Wounded Any Soul Today; Take Time to Be Holy.

What about *prayer*? It should certainly contain worship, and praying together with others in oneness of heart is fellowship. It is also service, for the work of the Lord depends on prayer more than anything else.

Is your spiritual diet well-balanced? Examine your life: how much time daily or weekly do you spend in each of these activities, not only in meetings but also privately? I imagine that most of us are sadly deficient in the areas of worship, fellowship, and service, and overfed in instruction. Take an interested teenager in a typical church, for example. Sunday school: he comes, sits, and listens. Morning service: he comes, sits, and listens. Young people's meeting: ditto. Evening service: ditto. In the four meetings during the day, maybe four-fifths of the time is spent in listening to the preacher or teacher talk. Now perhaps your congregation is not like that; I hope it is not. Perhaps the Sunday school teacher promotes a lively discussion; and enough time and heart-yearning are put into the

Lord's Supper to make it an effectual meeting with the Savior; and a number of Christians are active in visitation or other evangelistic outreach; and there are opportunities sometimes for sharing your experiences with each other. Be thankful if this is so, for it is rare.

Friends, if spiritual anemia is prevalent among us, a poorly-balanced diet might well be a cause of it. This month and next we look at some possible remedies for this malnutrition. In this issue we first focus on *congregational meetings* of various kinds, and especially on "open" or "sharing meetings" for mutual edification. Then we emphasize *worship*, with Joyce Lyon's excellent article not about worship *per se* but about the grandeur of the One we adore. Next month we concentrate on *fellowship*, primarily via small-group meetings. And both months have needed articles on *instruction*, written by Joyce Zimpelmann. Read and heed; think, pray and obey. May the Lord make us strong.

* * * *

Strong Church Rescues Hurting Couple!

Philip Yancey's excellent book, *After the Wedding*, gives a clear example of some of the principles spelled out in our editorial. The importance and inter-relatedness of worship, fellowship and service are shown in the experience of John and Claudia Claxton. This Christian couple had been happily married for exactly one-and-a-half years when disaster struck. Claudia was found to have Hodgkin's disease—cancer of the lymph glands. For the next two years fears, grief, "doubts and uncertainty traveled with us like a thundercloud." But Christ upheld them through His body. John tells about it:

"Psychologically, we received the biggest boost when we found a supportive church. The church was unlike any other we'd been to. The service is not spectacular; it contains the usual prayers and sermon and Scripture readings. But the focus of the service is on **WORSHIPPING** God. So often churches work at entertaining, or capturing interest, or using congregational-oriented gimmicks. This church is constructed to turn attention to God. Through the worship service we began to get our eyes off ourselves and our problems and learned to meet with God.

"And the people were fantastic. When we joined, the elders lovingly asked us about all we'd been through and explored with us ways in which they could help us. All of us were crying. We were swept up in their Christian **LOVE AND SUPPORT**. A weight was lifted from us when we realized other Christians were willing to share our hurts, that our well-being was important to them. They prayed for us regularly and encouraged us share our trials with them.

"As we became involved in the church, we found ourselves putting more of our energies into **SERVING**. We moved to a rundown area of Philadelphia, and began working with tutoring programs. I accepted a group within the congregation as mine to minister to."

CHRISTIAN GATHERINGS (or Church Meetings) IN THE EARLIEST CENTURIES

For our information, and to stimulate our thinking about our gatherings now, let's examine a few of the earliest descriptions outside the New Testament of how the disciples met and what they did. We shall quote from Pliny, Justin Martyr, and Tertullian.

Pliny, the Governor

Our first description is given by a heathen, not a Christian. The Roman Emperor Trajan had sent Pliny to be governor of the province of Bithynia (now northern Turkey). William Barclay explains, "Pliny enjoyed the friendship of Trajan, and it was his custom to seek directly Trajan's advice on any problems which arose. One of the problems was what to do with the Christians, whether or not to treat them as criminals, law-breakers and evil-doers." The Christians had been growing in numbers so much that the sale of idols and attendance at temples were declining. Some of the heathen, threatened by all this, became extremely upset and angry. They started agitating the government to clamp down on this dangerous movement.

So Pliny cross-examined some believers, using torture in the case of some slaves, to learn the truth about what Christians believed and did. Then he wrote the Emperor, telling what he had discovered and asking for advice. The year was 111 A.D. Here is an extract from his letter:

They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath—not to commit any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, nor deny a trust, when they should be called upon to deliver it up. After that it was their custom to separate, and then to reassemble to partake of food but food of an ordinary and innocent kind.

Justin, later Martyred

Next we see an excerpt from a defence of the Christian faith written by Justin to the Roman government, around 150 A.D. (or about forty years after the earlier quote).

On the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. Then, when the reader has ceased, the one who presides verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we said before, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine are brought, and the one in charge in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability, and the people assent, saying "Amen." There is a distribution to each, and a participation in that over which thanks has been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well-to-do and willing to do so give what each thinks fit. What is collected is deposited with the

presider, who gives help to the orphans and widows, and to those who through illness or any other cause are in want, and to those who are in bonds, and to the strangers among us, and to all who are in need.

Tertullian Provides More Details

The third description was written sometime around 200 A.D. by Tertullian, another great defender of the faith. He writes:

We meet together as a congregation, in order that, offering up prayers to God as with united force, we may wrestle with him in our supplications. This violence God delights in. We pray too for the Emperors, for their ministers, and for all in authority, for the welfare of the world, for the prevalence of peace, for the delay of the final consummation.

We assemble to read our sacred writings, if any peculiarity of the times makes either forewarning or reminiscence needful. However it be in that respect, with the sacred words we nourish our faith, we animate our hope, we make our confidence more steadfast; and, no less, by inculcation of God's precepts we confirm good habits. In the same place also exhortations are made, rebukes and sacred censures are administered. For with a great gravity is the work of judging carried on among us, as befits those who feel assured that they are in the sight of God; and you have the most notable example of judgment to come, when anyone has sinned so grievously as to require his severance from us in prayer, and the meeting and all sacred intercourse.

The tried men of our elders preside over us, obtaining that honor not by purchase, but by established character. . . .

On the monthly collection day, if he likes, each puts in a small donation but only if it be his pleasure, and only if he is able; for there is no compulsion; all is voluntary. These gifts are, as it were, piety's deposit fund. For they are not taken thence and spent on feasts and drinking bouts, and eating-houses, but to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined now to the house; such too as have suffered shipwreck; and if there happen to be any condemned to the mines, or banished to the islands, or shut up in prisons for their fidelity to the cause of God's Church, they become the nurslings of their confession.

He then describes the "Agape," or love-feast. Many early Christian congregations had on the Lord's Day, a communal meal, "to which those who had plenty brought much, and to which those who had little brought what they could, and to which the slave must often have brought nothing but his hunger, and in which all shared in joyous fellowship":

Our feast explains itself by its name. The Greek word means love. . . . As it is an act of religious service, it permits no vileness or immodesty. The participants before reclining taste first of prayer to God. As much is eaten as satisfies the craving of hunger; as much is drunk as befits the chaste. They say it is enough, as those who remember that even during the night they have to

worship God. They talk to those who know that the Lord is one of their hearers. After they have washed, and after the lights have been brought in, each is asked to stand forth and sing, as he can, a hymn to God, either one from the Holy Scriptures, or one of his own composing . . . As the feast began with prayer, so with prayer it is closed. We go from it, not like troops of mischief doers, nor bands of roamers, nor to break out into licentious acts, but to have as much care of our modesty and chastity, as if we had been at a school of virtue rather than a banquet.

[These quotes may be found in *A Plain Man's Guide to Ethics*, by William Barclay.]

* * * * *

Recipes For A Balanced Diet

Alex Wilson

How do you do?—your congregation, that is. How balanced is the spiritual diet you have there? Do you and your fellow-Christians provide each other with a wholesome amount of the four essentials (see the editorial): instruction, worship, service, and fellowship? Or are you in a rut, bound by traditional practices? Are most of your members mere spectators rather than participants? Here are a few examples to stimulate the thinking of us all.

(1) In evangelism often the message and the audience don't fit each other! Sometimes the sermon is meaty teaching for grown-up Christians, and unsaved visitors—to whom that message is meaningless—drop in. At other times the message is evangelistic, but not one lost person attends. For this reason a church in England has regular "GUEST SERVICES": the first Sunday morning and the second and fourth Sunday evenings of each month are evangelistic in purpose. The preacher naturally adapts his message to the occasion, and all the members make special efforts to bring their unsaved acquaintances at those times. Special prayer is made, also plans for follow-up.

(2) TESTIMONY MEETINGS sometimes reach the unsaved better than sermons do! And they are refreshing to Christians too—or else they show up our spiritual barrenness, if that is our condition. (Is that why we rarely have them?) The Psalmist said, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord . . . Oh magnify the Lord with me."

(3) A friend of mine once attended a Quaker meeting. There was a Bible lesson given by a teacher, followed by a period of at least 30 minutes of SILENT MEDITATION, nobody saying a word! While we might think that extreme, we would nonetheless receive rich dividends from occasional unrushed periods of silent prayer, contemplation, and communion with the Most High.

(4) Several times I've heard or given "messages" which were almost 100% scripture. After a few introductory comments, the speaker READ RIGHT THROUGH AN ENTIRE BOOK of the Bible, such as Philippians, 2 Timothy, or Esther. In this "telescopic method" of Bible study you often notice things which you miss if you use only the "microscopic method" (studying just a chapter or shorter portion

at a time). The themes and emphases of the book stand out, and the relationship between various parts of an epistle, for instance, becomes clearer. Telescopic study is the best way of preparing for microscopic study of a book, just as observing a forest from the air helps you when you want to go through that forest on foot.

(5) Being a member of a large congregation often makes one feel lost in the "lonely crowd." This is especially true now because many people commute long distances to church, and never see their fellow-members except at church. This is a big hindrance to intimate fellowship. Christians who have been members of a congregation for years may hardly know anyone else there. Thus they may be in a spiritual vacuum, not feeling really close to any other Christian. One church combats this tendency by having part of their weekly prayer-meeting spent in PRAYING TWO-BY-TWO. At that time the members scatter throughout the auditorium in twos. Then quietly each one shares his thanksgivings, needs, and burdens with his regular prayer-partner, to whom he probably feels free to confide matters too personal to be mentioned in a large group. Another advantage: think how many more items can be prayed for in this way than is possible in the usual type prayer meeting! Other churches at times DIVIDE INTO AGE GROUPS OR INTEREST GROUPS (such as African missions or Asian missions) for praying. Yet this idea of dividing up into smaller meetings for prayer (or other activities), with all its advantages, can be overdone. Sometimes it leads to having more loyalty to your own group or class than to the whole congregation. For example, some young people come to their Sunday school class and to young people's meetings but never to general meetings of the church. This should be guarded against.

(6) From time to time we have stressed the importance of "MUTUAL EDIFICATION." Gordon Linscott explained,

"If the Holy Spirit is in charge—and all are waiting expectantly on Him to direct—He will make it plain enough who is to speak and who is to pray and who is to sing. There may be times of silence—a thing most unbearable to the children of this age of noise and hurry—but hearts that are conscious of the presence of God do not need musical background to their meditation. Instead of a single sermon by one preacher, one brother may present a fine study from the Word and another rise to add suitable words of exhortation (Rom. 12:8). Such I have witnessed many times, and the discourses of the two or three brethren fit together as nicely as if they had all studied together the whole week before!

I too have been in congregations where this is done regularly. They hold an entire service for remembering Christ's death and resurrection; it centers around the Lord's Supper. The meeting is open for any brother who wishes to take part, in calling for or leading a hymn, in praying, reading a scripture passage, or giving a short message. In the places I visited, *a whole hour is spent entirely in worship*. All hymns, prayers, and messages are about Christ and what *He* has done for us, rather than about what *we* ought to do for Him. The other meetings on the Lord's Day are for instruction and service, but this one is for worship alone. Such times are very refreshing, doubly so because a number of brethren participate in offering praise to the Worthy One.

We have seen six or seven ways of bringing variety to our meet-

ings so that we might have an adequate supply of instruction, worship, service, and fellowship. If these suggestions can be helpful to us, let's use them. But we must never forget that no method, technique, or type of meeting in itself will profit us unless the Holy Spirit of God is working in our midst. Skillful organizing, well-planned services, a perfectly balanced diet—these things by themselves are nothing. Power is needed to make them effective, and "power becometh unto God."

* * * * *

A SYMPOSIUM ON "MUTUAL EDIFICATION" MEETINGS

THERE IS MORE TO CHURCH THAN SERMONS

We usually think "the main purpose for which Christians meet is to listen to sermons. Most of the time the audience is largely passive. We have tended to see ministry almost exclusively in terms of preaching and teaching. This naturally limits the scope of ministry to a few people. Since many people judge the effectiveness of a church almost entirely by the minister's performance in the pulpit, the every-member ministry is restricted."

The above is a quotation from Michael Harper of England. Its truthfulness is verified by the common response if someone asks, "How was church today?" "Bad—it was a lousy sermon," might be the reply. Or, hopefully, "Excellent; the preacher really gave us something to think about and apply." But both responses treat the congregational singing, praying, the reading of Scripture, the Lord's Supper, etc., as just preliminaries—to be rushed through while waiting for the main part, the sermon.

What a lopsided approach! 1st, it minimizes important elements of a balanced diet. 2nd, it produces passivity, and people learn and grow far less when they are passive than when they participate. 3rd, it makes too much of a church's success depend on only one man, the preacher. If he is mediocre, the congregation's progress will probably be slowed to a crawl.

Here is one possible solution or at least a partial solution: Have an "open" or "mutual edification" meeting regularly. Once a week, or month, or two months, allow *a number* of the brothers to teach, exhort or testify.

Ponder the following excerpts for more about this. Since we include quotations from various writers there is unavoidably some overlapping, and even some differing views. But that should merely stimulate our personal study.

SERMONS, YES—BUT TESTIMONIES TOO

"Prepared addresses must continue to be the prime source of teaching, but those who reject the practical teaching of sharing-times are standing in the way of men and women who need something beyond sermons to keep them in victory. The ordinary members, if encouraged, will by their testimonies and life preach greater practical

sermons than the preacher's sermons from the pulpit." (Quoted by Dale Bruner in *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*)

A COMMON PUZZLE

"I had read about spiritual gifts in 1st Corinthians, Romans and Ephesians many times, always with a half-conscious puzzlement. Paul emphasizes spiritual gifts, but there seemed to be no application of this teaching to the contemporary church. Then slowly it dawned on me: the contemporary church in its institutional form makes little room for spontaneous spiritual gifts. Worse yet, often it does not need spiritual gifts to function. In most modern churches, spiritual gifts are replaced by aptitude, education, and technique." (Howard Snyder in *The Problem of Wineskins*)

OPEN MEETINGS: MUTUAL EDIFICATION

When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.—1 Cor. 14:26.

It seems evident that the meetings of the early church were on the order of 1 Corinthians 14, or what has been called "open meetings." Older brethren tell us that the meetings in early days of those who gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus alone were open meetings for "prayer, praise and prophecy" ("prophecy being understood for today in the general sense of being the Lord's mouthpiece and messenger to His people that they may be edified"). One has said that as the power diminished these assembly meetings lapsed. It is to be regretted that in many places such a meeting has been relegated to the meeting for the Breaking of Bread, which meeting is of necessity restricted in its character.

A (recent) writer has advocated the advisability of groups gathering together without any platform or chair suggestive of a chairman, with no one coming to that meeting expecting to speak and no one determined to keep silence. He suggests that when such a meeting is too large for this face-to-face gathering there should be the formation of smaller such meetings.

W. Hoste says, "To make up our minds not to take part is as unscriptural as coming with our thumbs in our pet hymn, or the leaf turned down at our favorite chapter, determined to have our say. In the first case we fail to edify; in the other we tempt the wordy to take part to no profit. I believe that clericalism has arisen as much from the laziness of the majority as from the ambition of the few. Unless there be more energy of faith and more preparedness of heart, we shall run high and dry on the reef of ministerialism. Already ominous bumps are felt."

Such open meetings may assume a different character in keeping with the exercise of the saints and the leading of the Holy Spirit. At times, particularly at times of trial, a burden of prayer may be manifest. At other times much time may be spent in ministry of the word. (William Pell in *The Christian Assembly*)

NEW TESTAMENT MEETINGS WERE OFTEN EXCITING!

It must have been exciting to attend this type of meeting. You never knew what was going to happen next. A person may have

bègun the service by requesting a psalm to be sung. Then you would wonder what would be next. Will it be another psalm? Will someone pray? Perhaps five or six will pray one after the other. One of the brethren could give a word of exhortation from the Scriptures. Or will it be the exposition of a passage? It may be a word of testimony or a prayer request. Perhaps someone will give thanks for the bread. There was no possibility of boredom because everyone was involved.

IT CAN HAPPEN TODAY TOO

[The same writer continues:] Following the pattern of the New Testament church, in our Sunday evening meeting at _____ Chapel there is just such freedom. There is always opportunity for the discovery and continuing development of spiritual gifts. Just a few weeks ago, one of the highlights of our Sunday evening meeting was when a high school lad read the first three verses of Psalm 1 and shared with us some thoughts from the Psalm. . . .

Sometimes I leave the Sunday evening service elated. I see a man who has become a Christian and then he stands up and he gives out a hymn or he prays. It thrills my heart because here I see a man who is growing. He has taken his first public step and it is a sign of spiritual growth. Men talk to me about wanting to discover their spiritual gift, wondering how to discover it and how to develop it. My response is: in the [open] meeting of the church. One major purpose of it is for the Spirit-led exercise of spiritual gifts.

PREPARING FOR SUCH MEETINGS

[The same writer continues:] Participation in the meeting demands preparation of heart. That is what makes it so different from every other service. You could come to the Sunday morning service with no preparation of heart, but the effectiveness of the Sunday evening service, humanly speaking, depends upon your preparation. I generally spend many hours preparing for my Sunday morning message. If it is delivered in the energy of the Holy Spirit, then it is a blessing to God's people. But in the Sunday evening service, when we gather together the effectiveness depends upon the preparation of every "priest" that attends. . . .

But *how*? We will want to come in full fellowship with our Lord. That means with our sins confessed and cleansed (1 John 1:9). We may come with a hymn on our mind for meditation or for giving out. We may have a particular portion of scripture on our heart to teach or to meditate upon. We may come with an experience that God has brought in our lives this past week and be ready to share it in the service. Can you imagine what would happen at the service if we all came ready to give? . . . That is what the meeting of the church should be. It comes only by preparation of heart.

The final phase of our preparation should be those five quiet minutes just before the service begins. To say then: "I am available to You, Lord; I have something to give You and to Your people. Lead me to give it if it is Your will"—that is to be prepared. Finally, it requires the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is a Spirit-led meeting. We are dependent upon Him to lead, and we can be sure He will not fail us.

“But,” you ask, “how can I know He is leading me?” Some simple suggestions may help. First and foremost, come prepared. Then, make yourself available to the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the meeting. A strong desire in your heart may indicate the Lord is leading you to take part. I have often prayed, “Lord, if this desire is from you, intensify it just now.” The direction or mood of the meeting may confirm your desire to participate. Often I have come prepared with a verse or a hymn and found it fits perfectly with what someone else says before. That is a great encouragement to take part. (William J. McRae, in *The Meeting of the Church*)

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GUIDANCE IN OPEN MEETINGS

We speak frequently of the leading of the Holy Spirit in relation to church life, and yet this is a much misunderstood subject. Many minds are in complete confusion as to the precise meaning of the term and still more as to the recognition of His leading when the church is met together. How are we to discern His leading? How do we differentiate between our own desires and the promptings of the Holy Spirit? Is any person who so wishes at liberty to participate in ministering in the church?

The clue is to be found when we observe, firstly, that the Holy Spirit is not once mentioned in the whole chapter dealing with the gathered church (1 Cor. 14). He has been spoken of earlier as the One who has been behind the distribution of spiritual gifts, but here, when it comes to the actual exercise of gift, prominence is given rather to the personal responsibility of the brethren. With primary reference to praying or singing (v. 15), the principle is shown by the words “with the spirit,” and “with the understanding also.” Spirit allied to understanding (or intelligence) is our guide here. The believer who habitually walks in the Holy Spirit's power will be brought under His influence almost unconsciously when in the church. There is to be the use of the reasoning faculty, the intellect, when gathered together, as to the fitness and general suitability of any part that might be taken in the meeting. To hear a hymn quoted is not sufficient reason, of necessity, to announce it to be sung by all. At all times we should use spiritual judgment as to our participation before hastily making any contribution. This will ensure that decency and order will distinguish all the proceedings of the church though there be no presiding personage. The open meeting is not for an any-man ministry, but is subject to godly order at all times. . . . The one essential is that believers should be under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit in their meetings. A Spirit-controlled gathering becomes its own evidence of the presence of the Lord and onlookers will confess “that God is among you indeed” (ch. 14:25). (G.C.D. Howley in *The Church: A Symposium*)

SOME CAUTIONS TO HEED

One item being recovered today is an emphasis on mutual edification. Frequently this includes a Bible study in which everyone is encouraged to share his own thoughts about the passage. However, we need to be careful that our practice does not nullify the Scriptural function of teachers. While all are to teach one another (Rom. 15:14;

Heb. 5:12), not all are to be teachers (1 Cor. 12:29; James 3:1).

Mutual edification is not a new discovery. Around 1800 Wm. Ballantine and some others in the Independent churches of Scotland and England urged that "mutual exhortation" was not only the privilege but the duty of the members in general. Labelled as "church order," this practice resulted in many divisions and much disorder. It has allowed anyone to speak who wanted to do so, leading some very incompetent members to become "public teachers and exhorters." Robert Richardson observes that "in these cases the most ignorant are generally the most forward" (*Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, I, 180-81*).

Alexander Campbell favored mutual edification, even to the point of preferring small congregations in which it could be best practiced (II, 599). However, many of the churches of the movement which he led also fell into an abuse of the principle. Debates and dissensions frequently arose, and also numerous occasions of discipline, due to the excessive "watching-over" and admonitions which almost amounted to an Inquisition. Fully admitting that all members are equal and at liberty to speak in the congregation "at proper times and under proper regulations," Campbell and Walter Scott insisted that the gifts of all members should be properly directed and that only those capable of edifying should teach publicly (II, 126).

While we are not bound to the opinions of tradition, we do need to learn from history so that we will profit from rather than repeat the mistakes of others. —C. Ernal Allen

UNPROFITABLE MEETING? WHO IS TO BLAME?

[In such gatherings] of the Church there was a full recognition of the priesthood of all believers. . . . The fact that every one, from the youngest to the oldest, is responsible for the ministry in the meeting produces a different attitude. If there is lack of liberty and power, none can say, "The pastor was not at his best today." It is realized that the fault is in the congregation, and the matter will be taken to the Lord in prayer in the following prayer meeting.

Usually, the whole service is of a piece, all the prayers, readings, hymns and messages fitting together in one clear message from the Lord in a way that makes it evident that the Holy Spirit is in control. But there are occasions when it is not so. *This meeting is a true barometer of the congregation's spiritual state.* The spiritual life cannot wane without it being evident in this gathering. Thus the Lord can deal with His people.

We have seen newly baptized converts greatly blessed as they have had some passage to read or word to give in the first communion service in which they participated. They have found that from the very beginning the way was open for them to enter into their responsibilities as members of the Body of Christ. (Alex R. Hay, in *The New Testament Order for Church and Missionary*)

A PRACTICAL WAY TO START

How can a church which has never practiced mutual edification meetings get started? First, with prayer and teaching by the leader(s) —to impart a vision. Then a simple way to proceed might be for him

or them in prayer to pick a Biblical subject—maybe faith, or prayer, or the example of Christ. A week or two before the open meeting will be held, explain its procedure again to the members. Then announce the topic and ask the brothers prayerfully to ponder it and come prepared with a scripture, or a song or poem, or an illustration or personal experience related to the topic.

After doing this for a number of times, they may progress to the point described above, of not having a prearranged topic but of *everyone* in prayer seeking direction from the Lord about the part each one should contribute in the gathering.

* * * * *

An Encounter With Almighty God

Mrs. Joyce Overman Lyon

If we consider having an encounter with God, it seems valuable that we first of all understand why such an encounter is important. Why do Christians need to see the glory and majesty of our Heavenly Father? The answer is simple. We need an encounter with God Almighty so that we can really *know* Him. Knowing God is the reason we were created. It should be the central aim of our lives. It is the very best thing in life. It brings us more joy, more delight, and more contentment than any other thing. It should be our main glory.

Now an obvious question comes to mind. Don't we know Him? Yes, of course we do; but the story of Job gives us good reason to believe that every Christian can come to know God in a much deeper sense than ever thought possible. In the first two chapters of Job, we are told exactly what God thought of Job. God said that Job was perfect, and upright, that he feared God and turned away from evil, and that there was none other like him in the entire earth. If this is God's opinion of Job, then surely Job was a very great man. Yet, as we read all the way through the book of Job, we find that this "perfect" man still lacked something. What was it? Job simply needed to know his own God better. He needed to have his eyes opened spiritually so that he could see God as God really is. It is safe to say that few, if any, of us would dare compare ourselves to Job. We would not dare claim that God thinks that highly of us. Surely then, it is important that we, like Job, come to know our God better.

Knowing God better is not something that can be accomplished by reading this article. It cannot even be accomplished by listening to marvelous sermons by great men because it involves more than head knowledge. In Job 42:5, Job sums things up by saying, "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." Until now Job had heard about God with his physical ears. Now Job is seeing God with his spiritual eyes. Job has had an encounter with God and God has revealed Himself. What is it that Job finds out about God? The most valuable thing Job learns is that God is much, much greater than Job ever imagined Him to be. Job has a God that he

cannot begin to comprehend. Indeed, Job does not need to comprehend God. We do not need to comprehend God. We simply cannot anyway. No matter how long we have been Christians, we find that we are just beginners. In this life, we will always stand on the edge of this great mystery. Our God is and will always be greater than the greatest thought we could ever have of Him. God told the great prophet Isaiah, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8, 9).

AWESOME ATTRIBUTES

The first attribute of God that we will consider is God's *independence*. God is self-existent, self-sufficient. He exists by Himself and He does not need anyone else for Him to survive and survive perfectly. Therefore it would be sheer folly to suggest that God Almighty *needs* us. How marvelous it is then when we understand how much God really *wants* us. He has chosen to know us and to have a love relationship with us.

Our God is *immutable*. He is entirely free from change. He cannot and will not ever change. This means that for all eternity—past, present, and future—God will want us. For all eternity, God will want to know us. He will never write us a "Dear John" letter.

God is also *omnipresent*. He is everywhere. David could not find a single place where he could flee to escape God's presence. Everywhere David ran, God was there. Everywhere David hid, God was there and always had been there. Jeremiah 23:24 tells us that our God fills the heavens and the earth. Solomon tells us in 1 Kings 8:27 that God is so big that heaven and earth cannot contain Him. It is a great comfort to know that when God speaks of His presence, He uses a term that refers to His face. God's presence is more than God just being everywhere I am. It means, instead, that Almighty God has turned His face personally toward me. He is looking right at me. He is there for me. And He constantly invites me to turn around—to turn my face toward Him.

Our God is also *wise*. In scripture, wisdom is always a moral issue. It is God-given. Wisdom has been described as the power to see, the inclination to choose, and then the surest way of attaining the very highest goal. This means that God will always see what is best for us, always choose what is best, and always know the best way to achieve that goal for us. God says that our highest goal is to know Him. We can be sure that God will skillfully use every single thing that happens to us—good or bad—to perfectly accomplish that goal.

Next, let's consider the fact that our God is *truth*. He is the standard, the plumb line against which everything must be measured. He is trustworthy. He will never lie to us. He will keep every part of every promise He has ever made. And He will never deceive us. Can we believe it when we hear that God wants us to know Him? Can we trust Him to bring it about? Absolutely!

One of the greatest examples of God's *power* is found in the story of the creation. The Bible tells us that our God is so powerful that

all He had to do was speak. When God said, "Let it be," it simply was. And God tells us that all this power is available to bring us close to Him. Is this enough power? Could we possibly need more? It would be utter folly to think so. Yet, we can easily hinder all this power with a lack of desire on our part. We can hinder God's power if we don't want to be close to God. He will not force us.

THE ALL-HOLY ONE

The next attribute that we will look at is probably the one we would consider to be the most important. Our God is *holy*. In Isaiah chapter six, we can read a description of God's holiness. Whatever Isaiah saw and whatever Isaiah heard, it was so awesome that it marked the rest of his life. After this encounter with God, Isaiah called Him "The Holy One of Israel." Isaiah tries to describe this revelation. He says:

"... I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:1-3).

The word *holy* has the idea of being separated. In Isaiah's mind, the seraphim were actually crying, "Separated, separated, separated, is Jehovah of hosts." Isaiah sees a great gulf. On one side of that gulf is God, and on the other side stands poor, pitiful Isaiah.

First of all, Isaiah seems to be impressed with a God who is "way up there"—*lofty and exalted*. God is separated in the sense that He is high above His creation. In Isaiah 57:15, God informs us concerning His dwelling: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place..." God is telling Isaiah that God Almighty does not dwell only in the minds of man. Man didn't create God. God does not dwell merely on that speck of dust called earth. He doesn't even dwell simply in the heavens that man can see. God's dwelling place is outside of man's time and knowledge.

Second, Isaiah seemed to understand that God being separate involved *glory and splendor*. Isaiah saw a vast difference between the glory of God and the terrible drabness of fallen man. God's beautiful robe filled the temple, and His glory filled the whole earth. The entire earth is covered with the radiant glory of God. It is there simply because God is there.

THE GRAND CANYON

The third thing that impressed Isaiah about God's holiness is that God is separated from us by His *absolute purity*. He is without sin, He is entirely separated from it. It isn't hard to imagine the sheer terror that must have gripped Isaiah. He had seen a vision of a pure and spotless God. How could He survive? He was stained with horrible sin. How could he live in the presence of such a God? Surely God would be forced to slay him. We see Isaiah crying out to this holy God, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts."

What did Job say at the end of his encounter with a holy God? "Now mine eye seeth thee: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).

What did Moses do when He encountered God at the burning bush? He hid his face from God. Over and over again throughout the Bible, whenever they meet and see a holy God, men hide, fall on their faces, and make their bodies as low as humanly possible. This gulf that separates God from man is so great that it just blows their minds. God becomes someone too awesome to grasp. They can only bow down thunderstruck.

Their immediate response is to see themselves accurately for the very first time. They see their own smallness. They become nothing before a God so big. They respond by trying to make the distance between themselves and God even greater. They know for the first time that they have no right to be near God. Man finds himself in a pretty bad place, and strange to say, that is just the place where God wanted Job to be. *God spent several chapters in the book of Job getting Job to the place where he would abhor himself. Why?* What is the value of such an experience? The very *first* value of this type of experience for any of us is that it brings us to salvation. We will never see the need of being saved and we will never appreciate the salvation we do have, unless we come face to face with the great gulf that separates us from God. Until we see how little and dirty and helpless we truly are, we will never call out for help from the only One big enough to help us.

After we become Christians, we *still* need to see this gulf. God states that His desire for us is that we know Him. It is in this gulf that we find our first definition of God—a very important definition. It tells us that it is an utter impossibility for us to know God from our side. If we are to know Him, we must let Him teach us. We must let Him reveal Himself to us. Our only way to deal with God is to have absolute faith in a God big enough to reach over that gulf to us.

A *third* reason the gulf is of value to us is because in the very act of seeing and experiencing that gulf, we turn and worship God. Worship then can be defined as the automatic response when we understand our smallness compared to a God who is just too big. The word *worship* means bowing low. We worship when God's bigness forces us low.

WORSHIP EXCEEDS THANKSGIVING

It is a sad state of affairs that we often equate worship with thanksgiving—thanksgiving resulting from the fact that God has given us the answer we want without any real concern for the will of God. Instead of worshipping God, we thank Him for living up to the expectations of our small brains and hearts. We thank Him for being the kind of God that we think He should be. And when we do that, we drag God down and make Him so that in our own minds He is no better than we are. The truth of the matter is that we usually make Him our slave. That is not worship. Can we worship God when He fulfills all our dreams and desires, and we are thankful?

Yes, of course. The important question comes next because in its answer we must test our worship. Do we worship God when he takes away, or allows the Devil to destroy, every earthly dream we hold dear? Job did! Job 1:20 tells us, "Then Job arose, and rent his robe, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped."

How could Job worship God under those circumstances? He wasn't happy. He wasn't pleased with the way his life was going. He had lost almost everything dear to him. His heart was broken. Yet, Job worshipped God. What if God should slay him? It really did not matter. There was one thing that Job knew that outweighed every other thought. Job had seen God—and Job had a God that was so big and powerful, so sovereign and mysterious that it was imperative that Job fall to the ground and, in essence say, "Wow, what a great and mighty God You are!" Maybe God considered Job such a great man because Job knew something of true worship even before God revealed Himself. Worship can only be equated with thanksgiving when we are thankful that we have a God who is worth worshipping.

FAR, and NEAR!

While it is important that we see and experience the distance that is rightly between God and mankind, it is also important that we believe God when He tells us that He desires to draw us to Himself. God desired this so much that He sent Jesus to die on the cross. Holy God could then declare that Jesus had met all the legal demands of such a terrible gulf. Now God could reach down and pick us up from our low position. Now God could hold us close to His holy self. This brings us to our last attribute of God—*love*. This is love: that God gave His Son. In the Bible, love is an action that does perfect good toward others. And what does God say is good for us? God says that it is good that we know Him. This means that God's love action toward us is first, and best of all, the giving of Himself. God gives us Himself. In Psalm 34:8, God gives us the invitation, "Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good." Isaiah says that if we do taste God, our souls will delight in the richest fare possible (Isaiah 55:1-2).

Why should we taste Him? Why should we come to know the nature of our God? First, we need to know His nature because whatever it is His nature to be, that is what He will be to us. If God is love, then He will be love to us. If God is truth, then He will be truth to us. If God is power, He will be power to us. God will always be true to His nature in the relationship He has with us. Second, we need to know God's nature because there are certain aspects of it that God will channel through us. Through us and to the world around us, God will channel such things as His love, power and wisdom. Third, we need to know God's nature so that we will see how good His nature really is and desire it for ourselves. We can not be self-existent, self-sufficient, immutable, or omnipresent. There is, however, much of God's nature He will share if we so desire it. God has promised to give us His nature, as fast as we can take it, so that one day we will stand before Him and be like Him. What joy! What delight! And what contentment!

[This message was delivered at the 1990 Ladies Inspiration Day in Louisville.]

THE EFFECTIVE BIBLE TEACHER

Part 1: Be Prepared

Joyce Zimpelmann

Then Jesus came to them and said: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age."

SCENE ONE:

As eighteen year old Mary was leaving the Wednesday evening service, the Sunday School Superintendent approached her and said: "Mary, I've watched you with the young children. You're very good with them. We need a Sunday School teacher for the three and four year olds. How about taking the class?"

Mary was caught off-guard. She was flattered by the superintendent's comments. She did enjoy looking after the younger children; but—teaching them? She hesitated before responding: "I love the children; but I don't know anything about teaching them."

"Don't worry, Mary," replied the older man. "You'll do just fine. They're young and the material we use is very good. Just follow the lesson guide and you will do well."

Reluctantly, Mary agreed to take the class.

SCENE TWO:

John and his family were returning from a Saturday outing when his friend, Bill, telephoned. John knew that Bill was under a lot of pressure. Bill wasted no time in telling John his reason for calling.

"John, I need some relief from teaching Sunday School for a month or so. How about taking the Senior Adult class for awhile?"

John was startled over this request. He wasn't a member of the class and didn't know what they were studying. Right then all he wanted to do was finish unloading the car and take a hot bath; but Bill was a good friend who needed help.

Sensing John's hesitancy, Bill continued: "Don't worry about the lessons. Just read the quarterly. Someone is always ready to start the discussion. . . . Just go with the flow."

Were Mary and John going to be successful teachers? While enthusiasm and a concern for others is important, positive *preparation is essential* for teaching to be effective.

A. *An Effective Bible Teacher Must Be A Worthy Example*

None of us is worthy before God; but we are admonished to live exemplary lives so that we can encourage and build up one another in the faith and lead the unsaved to Christ

Each Christian teaches by example—by what we say and do daily. In Titus 2, Paul admonishes us: "Teach what is in accord with sound doctrine." He then enumerates what must be taught to each age/sex group. For example:

"Likewise teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live—to

teach that which is good—then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children,” etc. (Titus 2:3-5)

Although all Christians are teachers by example, some are more formally involved in the teaching ministry of the congregation. How prepared are they to teach?

The teaching ministry should not be taken lightly since those who teach “will be judged more strictly” (James 3:1). However, since Christians are specifically charged to teach, some means of preparation must be provided within the church. Effective teachers change lives—for better or for worse.

Knowledgeable, dedicated Christian teachers are needed in all facets of the teaching program. It is just as important for preschoolers to have committed teachers as it is for senior adults. The Wednesday evening and VBS teachers should be as well qualified as the Sunday School teachers. In the hands of exemplary teachers, preschoolers learn about their relationship with God; elementary students learn of their need of a personal Savior; teenagers find strength and support to overcome negative peer pressure; young adults learn to depend upon God in making career and marriage decisions; and older adults grow in their ability to lead, teach and adjust to life’s changes. Far too often, we fail to recognize the important role that dedicated, qualified teachers play in the spiritual development of our congregations. Too often, we underplay the importance of *being prepared*.

B. An Effective Teacher Must Be Knowledgeable Of What He/She Is Teaching

Paul wrote to young Timothy:

Do your best (study) to present yourself to God as one approved; a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15)

The effective Christian teacher:

- knows *what* he/she believes, and *why*
- is secure in his/her relationship with God
- is knowledgeable about the Bible
- remains a student of the Word.

The admonitions of Paul and James quoted above may serve to discourage some from using their God-given talents to teach; but those who become discouraged forget that God provides a way for them to become successful teachers.

For the Lord gives wisdom and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding . . .

For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. (Prov. 2:6,10)

C. An Effective Teacher Must Be Knowledgeable About The Students.

It is imperative that the teacher understand the needs and interests of his/her pupils so that the lessons may be presented in such a way as to change lives. While much good literature is available, it is only effective if it is adapted to meet the needs of the students. The teacher must be able to determine what the students *know* and what they *need* to know. The teacher will then teach to bridge the gap between the known and the unknown, the familiar and the unfamiliar.

Further, the teacher must capture the students' attention and interest. This implies some understanding of the developmental characteristics of students of certain ages and stages—their interests and concerns, their goals and expectations, and their ability to learn. It further implies the need to use a variety of teaching techniques and materials to help the students grasp the meaning of the lessons.

Jesus, the Master Teacher, knew the hearts of His students and their unique needs. While we cannot look into the hearts and minds of the students as Christ did, through our prayer and meditation the Holy Spirit will give us insight.

Jesus used familiar objects and everyday experiences to teach divine truths. (See Matt. 5, 6, and Luke 15:1-10.) He used various teaching methods to capture the interest of the hearers and to introduce new, often controversial concepts. (Note John 4:4-26, Mark 10:13-16, etc.) Our Lord adapted the lessons to meet the unique needs of His students. (Matt. 13:10-15; Matt. 21:18-22, etc.) The effective teacher today will follow His example, and will grow in ability as he/she prayerfully, carefully studies the students as well as scripture.

D. *An Effective Teacher Will Display Enthusiasm For God's Word And Maintain A Positive Christian Attitude.*

Sometimes it is difficult to maintain enthusiasm and freshness when burdened down with responsibilities or physical and mental exhaustion. Bible teachers must be encouraged and lifted up by the congregation.

Enthusiasm and excellence can be revived when teachers are given opportunities to share ideas and concerns with one another; learn new teaching techniques and participate in selecting or developing teaching materials. Such activities renew and refresh individuals for the task.

It is also important that each congregation have a corps of prospective teachers ready and willing to teach. Teacher training courses should be offered periodically so that new teachers are ready to step in when needed. On-the-job training can be valuable to novice teachers by allowing them to observe and practice under experienced teachers. The enthusiasm and eagerness of the new teacher can revitalize the class as well as the experienced teacher. Enthusiasm is contagious!

E. *An Effective Teacher Has Goals For the Class*

The main goal, of course, is to help individuals know the Lord and develop into mature Christians. Paul summed it up in Colossians 1:28: "We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ."

With this *overall* goal in mind, *specific* goals for each class and each series of lessons should be developed.

ARE WE PREPARED?

Parents send their children to school with certain expectations as to their conduct and academic growth. They are concerned about the school's standards and the teachers' expertise. When choices of schools are available to the parents, they often spend much time poring

over the curriculum offerings, conferring with the staff and, if feasible, visiting the classrooms. Parents expect their children to be given a quality education. They expect their children to demonstrate progress.

What are our expectations for our congregation's teaching program? Do we expect the students to grow in faith and knowledge of the Lord? An effective teaching program just doesn't happen. What does God expect us to do?

Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Why do we use the New Testament instead of the Old Testament when discussing questions such as how to be saved?

This question comes from a young person who has "grown up" in the church and who knows that in his experience a good bit of emphasis is put on having a N.T. answer to many questions. However, when challenged during a religious discussion as to why a N.T. passage was any more significant than an O.T. one, he found himself at a loss to explain. Perhaps he has not used many of his opportunities for growth and for being informed in this matter, but we suspect there are great numbers of older people who if challenged could not give a satisfactory answer. They have accepted a practice more on the basis of custom than from understanding the reason.

First, let it be pointed out that it is in the matter of the covenants that the N.T. takes supremacy over the Old, not in all matters. All of the Bible is inspired, and in many ways the O.T. is of great importance. The history found in the O.T. is true and reliable. We have information given there which is found nowhere else. The *prophecy* which is found therein is of great interest, both as to that which has been fulfilled and that which is yet to be fulfilled. What God has spoken is certain of fulfilment. The revelation of God's character as found in the O.T. is never changed by the N.T., because God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The O.T. is rich in *examples* of God's dealings with mankind. The N.T. often *alludes to or quotes* much given in the Old, so that a good understanding of the New requires an understanding of the Old. No one should suppose that the O.T. is to be written off, ignored, left without study, or even despised, as some have done. It belongs to God's inspired record. But while all of the Bible is God's word, we have to make distinctions as to what part directly applies to us.

The writer was most blessed of the Lord in that a small booklet was put in his hands about the time he became a Christian. This was to greatly help in sorting out the very matters which are of a concern to the questioner. The booklet was "How to Understand and Apply the Bible," by R. H. Boll. I had done a good bit of Bible reading but knew very little about the basic divisions of the Bible. This helped me to some basic knowledge which was taken for granted as being

understood by most of the preachers and much of the preaching I had heard. The booklet is still most timely and relevant and is available from the publisher of this magazine. In developing the answer to this question I will quote several times from the booklet.

Suppose we begin reading the Bible and, as we do with other books we begin at the first to read through it. We will find Genesis, the first book, very interesting, but if we are trying to discover how to be saved or how to worship God we will be puzzled. As Bro. Boll says:

"Has God told me here how to serve and worship Him? Shall I offer up animals upon an altar like Abel and Noah? Shall I circumcise my children like Abraham? If not, why not? Or, if yes, why is there not some clear indication that this is applicable to me, and that I am to follow it?"

"You are ready to see a second important truth; namely, that although all the Bible is God's word, some distinction must be made between what directly applies to you and what does not. Looking over the index you become aware that the Bible is really a library—not simply one book, but a collection of books, sixty-six in number. These were written by the inspiration of God, by different men in different portions, during a period of 1,600 years, to different peoples in different languages (the Old Testament in Hebrew and Aramaic, the New in Greek), and covering in extent of its application all time, from the dawn of creation to the 'ages of ages.' Different methods of worship and service, arranged by Jehovah, succeed one another. We would like to go patiently from book to book and watch the development of God's plan until it reaches us—but is there no readier way for me to learn God's will concerning me today? The study of all else in the Bible must be profitable, but tell us how to be saved now, and then at our leisure we will return to trace the paths of God in past and future."

A key verse is Heb. 1:1, 2. Here is a divine division of the Bible. Here we discover that is these last days God has spoken to us by His Son. A little further digging will show that it is the New Testament which reveals the Son. The first four books of the N.T. give His earthly story. The remainder of the N.T. gives us His teaching as it has been passed on to us by His apostles (Matt. 28:20). Of Christ, the Son, the Father said: "Hear ye Him!" (Lk. 9:35). This was said in the presence of Moses and Elijah, representatives of the O.T. Not Moses, but Christ. Quoting again from "How to Understand and Apply the Bible":

"This one, first, simple rule God gave for the division of His word (Heb. 1:1,2) will, if kept in mind and faithfully applied, solve a lot of problems and correct many of the errors of the discordant religious doctrines and practices today. When any question pertaining to our duty toward God in worship or service arise, Jesus must be consulted. Moses cannot settle it, the prophets have not told us. They spake to the fathers. But unto us God spoke through His Son."

Most of the O.T. is taken up with material dealing with the Israelites and the covenant God made with them at Mt. Sinai. Jeremiah, one of the prophets of the O.T., spoke of a new covenant Jehovah would make (Jer. 31:31ff). In the N.T. book of Hebrews we have these covenants discussed (Heb. 8 & 9). The covenant at Sinai is referred to as the first covenant and the one established by Christ as the second or as the new. With the death of Christ the first covenant was removed (Heb. 10:9; Gal. 4:21-31; Col. 2:14) and the new covenant came into force. Quoting again:

"But now, this death having taken place, and Jesus risen from the dead, may we not look for the announcement of the new covenant? Even so. Jesus after his resurrection, met His disciples in Galilee, and said unto them. 'All

power is given unto me in heaven and in earth: go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.' Matt. 28:18-20. It is now no longer 'what Moses commanded' but 'what I have commanded.' He is the sole spokesman of God now. Once those who would enter into covenant relationship with God had to come to Moses, for he was the mediator of the old covenant; but now Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant, and no one cometh unto the Father but through Him. (John 14:6)."

"... Attention is now called to the fact that this is the announcement of the new order, the new covenant, under which we must be saved, which came subsequent to the death and resurrection of the Lord. This is the 'continental divide' of the Bible, the watershed between the two covenants."

As we become more familiar with the Bible we will realize that much evidence is to be found therein that the multitude of laws relating to atonement for sin and worship as given in the O.T. have been superseded by the great atonement made by Christ in His death. This forever freed us of the need of animal sacrifices, the need for a special priesthood, and made obsolete many acts of worship as taught in the O.T. The basis of salvation is no longer human works and animal sacrifices. The N.T. contrasts the works of merit of the O.T. with the salvation by grace through faith under the new covenant. So the distinction between the two covenants is seen in the N.T., leaving no doubt that Christ fulfilled the old covenant (Matt. 5:17-19) and took it away, giving the new covenant to those who have lived since that time. This is why, therefore, in matters of salvation, worship, our relationship with God and what He requires in obedience, we are careful to discern N.T. teaching.

Because God's character does not change, many moral regulations of the O.T. remain virtually the same in the New. Even some of these, however, were given new meaning by Jesus. Because so much about Jehovah has been revealed in the O.T. it is an important source of knowledge about Him. It is important, therefore, that we do not reject the O.T. or fail to study it. It is at the same time very important that we learn to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). For any who need further help in understanding these issues, we cannot recommend the little booklet from which we have quoted too highly. You may order it from the Word and Work [@ 25¢ + postage].

VOICES from the FIELDS

David Brown

P. O. Box 787
Scottburgh 4180
Natal, South Africa

July 5, 1990

The Mvuzane building was dedicated on the 18th of March, while Bro. Prough was here visiting the work. The week-end of the 18th was set aside for a revival meeting in conjunction with the dedication. It was a time of joy and gladness and a number of visitors came from the surrounding villages to hear the Word of God. During that week-end eight people were baptized in a river about four miles away.

During this past month, seven people in Eshowe who had ac-

cepted Christ were baptized. The Eshowe work is growing, and it is in need of a building to meet in. At present the church meets in Bro. Zulu's house but it has become inadequate.

South Africa is going through a time of great uncertainty at present. Evil forces are at work to bring in a Marxist government, it appears to us. Mr. Mandela still stands on Marxist principles in spite of all the dust that the U.S. fanfare may have created. The political struggle in some areas has hindered the work. We had hoped to start some churches not far from Scottburgh. This is the area we have been hindered in working. Many people have been killed, and intimidation is rife. We wonder if there can be a fair election in the future. Pray for South Africa. We are living in dangerous days of the end time. With joy we wait for our Lord's return.

Ted Hardin

Academia Los Pinares
Apartado Postal No. 143-C
Tegucigalpa, D.C., Honduras, C.A.

As Principal of Academia Los Pinares located 6 miles outside Tegucigalpa, the capital city of Honduras, I have the opportunity to see what life is like for people in a third world country. "Third world" essentially means poor. There is a very real and hard felt economic class system here which deprives most Hondurans from the opportunities I took for granted as I was growing up in the United States.

The education we provide at ALP would not be considered expensive in the U.S. But since we import materials, equipment, and personnel from the U.S., it is very expensive for most Hondurans.

Those who can afford to pay tuition are not always the ones who could benefit the most from the high quality Christian education which we offer. For this reason we do our best to give scholarships to as many deserving families in the evangelical churches as our budget will allow. However, we never have enough to cover all those who need help. If anyone wants more information about scholarships for children of needy Christian workers, you may write to me or Bro. Jim Goodwin, 3011 Brian Drive, Jeffersonville, IN 47130.

P.S.:

Since writing the above, I was in a school bus wreck. We transport over 400 children up and down non-guard-rail *mountain* roads twice each day. Our buses are old. Pray for us and the safety of all our children. Praise God, no one was seriously hurt in this accident. *Moments* made the difference, and our God has time in His hands.

Re: Missionaries & Churches in Zimbabwe, Africa—

We have received a report from Bro. Harold Prough, minister of the Eastern Heights Christian Church, co-sponsors (with Highland Church of Christ in Louisville) of Bro. David Brown in South Africa. He visited David there, viewing the ministries among the Zulu nation. Then the two of them made a trip to Zimbabwe (where David labored in former years), meeting Bro. Robert Garrett and African church leaders. Bro. Prough reports that he saw something of what some Churches of Christ have accomplished in the past few years:

"I was able to see the buildings and grounds of the Waterfalls congregation, and was thankful that David was able to help in having the property returned to the congregation after their preacher had sold it to a denomination. I also had the privilege of both teaching and preaching at the Hatfield congregation and of sharing with the men 'under the trees' as we waited for dinner. I was very impressed with all that I saw, including the fine youth camp that is under construction. However, I was most impressed with the quality of the African leadership that I observed at Hatfield. These are educated professionals who are well versed in the Scriptures and very qualified to lead the church. I also was able to meet Bro. Robert Garrett and am thrilled to report that a few of the Hatfield leaders and I were able to witness the reconciliation of Bro. Robert and Bro. David over an issue of long standing. While some details may yet remain, the differences appear to be basically resolved."

Bro. Prough also mentions these challenging facts about the Eastern Heights congregation in Ponca City, Oklahoma: "Our church currently gives 41% of all offerings for mission work and most of this is directed to foreign missions. We support Bro. David and two Zulu evangelists and also a missionary in Thailand. This is why I am so excited when I see mission endeavors that are producing 'good fruit.'"

James Ashley

Solomon Islands

July 29, 1990

We've been doing well for the most part. I've not had malaria since I took the eradication course—nor has anyone else in the family. Praise God! Karen did get sick for three days at the end of May, and I got so worried I chartered a flight to take her to the doctor in Honiara. The doctors said it was a bacterial something which, although painful, usually went away by itself.

Then we came back to the village and got settled here again. The boys have begun to do better in their school work these last couple of weeks. Karen is working on producing some literacy books so that children here will be able to learn to read in their own language before having to learn to read in English. She is also continuing to teach a women's Bible study every week, so she has her hands full.

For myself, I am working on checking Matthew with David, and entering corrections of Matthew and Mark into the computer. I am also collecting texts for analyzing in our upcoming discourse workshop in late August. We'll be studying the differences between narrative, dialogue, song, sermon, genealogy, history, night-time story, etc. to see what are the distinctive and/or common features of each.

Please continue to pray for our transportation situation. The sea was very rough last week. At a minimum, this means the inconvenience of a 5 kilometer hike to a better harbor (usually carrying 5 gallons of gasoline). It can also be dangerous, especially when one spark plugs dies—which happened to us Tuesday, or when you run out of gas—which happened to the other canoe I had hired. And to top it all off, it takes the fun out of the trips by ruining our chances of catching any tuna.

Hosea, The Heart and Holiness of God

"Eyes That See Not"

(Hosea 9; read the chapter first)

Ernest E. Lyon

I have mentioned before that at this time Israel was prosperous. Apparently Israel was looking at their prosperity and deciding that that was a sign of their being what they ought to be. And they were attributing the prosperity to a false God. When any nation looks to its prosperity and rejoices in it instead of in the true God, then that nation is in for trouble. Before getting into this chapter, then, let us think how true this is of the U.S. The "American dream" is a combination of words that is bandied about a lot and everyone thinks it is the ultimate sign of things being right that we are able to grow in possessions more than any other people who ever lived. There is no question but that we have prospered, a fact that I have discussed before and pointed out that that was because we more than others had given religious freedom and patterned our government after Biblical things. But what a rude awakening it will be when God says, "Enough," and brings upon us the judgment due for our neglect of Him, our rejoicing in possessions rather than in spiritual riches. And in spite of all our prosperity, there is such a lust for more today that lotteries and other kinds of gambling are becoming a national passion—and a national disgrace. And all along God is being neglected, and taking of lives of both the living and the unborn increasing, the use of drugs is multiplying, and we could go on with a long list of wrongs that I am sure you can figure out for yourself.

In this chapter Hosea lays out before the Israelites the result of *their* sins. I would like to look briefly at the entire chapter, showing five developments that spell trouble and then come back to concentrate on the third one of those. In meditating on these things, please bear in mind that God will not excuse these sins in us any more than He did in them.

DEATH OF JOY (9:1, 2) is the first of these five things coming on them. Rejoicing is to cease. They were acting like the nations around them were acting. Their ill-gotten gains were the cause of their rejoicing and those would fail them, leaving them, as a result, to the judgment of the God they had been unfaithful to. Since they were looking to their possessions for their joy instead of to Him, He would take them away.

EXILE FROM THEIR OWN LAND (3, 4) is next pointed out as coming. Not only would they lose their prosperity, they would have to leave their land, the land God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and which they were to have forever if they obeyed Him. But because of their disobedience some of them would return to Egypt (which God had warned them against) and others would not be able to get the food they wanted to eat according to the Law—

the first fruits could not be offered to God and the prescribed rituals could not be done, so it would be "unclean." In addition, they could not pour out offerings or make sacrifices pleasing to God. They would not have the temple they treasured so much.

LOSS OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT (5-9) is discussed next. To tie it in with the second problem, and to be a background for the third one, Hosea points out that they could not keep their appointed feasts or the festival days. They would be buried in a foreign land, their treasures would be lost and the days of punishment and reckoning for their sins were sure, and they should have known it. Then comes that third great statement at the end of verse seven—"the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired man a maniac" [more literally, "the man that hath the Spirit is mad" (ASV)]. They had lost all sense of discernment in spiritual things. So the prophets that God sent would be looked down on with great hostility—like Jeremiah and all the prophets.

FALLING BIRTH-RATE (10-14) was considered a great problem in Israel and Hosea tells them that that is coming. God had blessed them and built them up, but they had forsaken Him, so their "glory would fly away like a bird"—and that accompanied by a falling birth-rate. But even when they reared children, they would be bereaved of them by God.

ACTUAL EVICTING (13-17) is finally predicted by Hosea, telling them that because of their wickedness, God hated their "sinful deeds" (not them) and would Himself drive them out from His house. In comparison to what He had done for them before, He would no longer love them. And for emphasis He repeated that He would slay their offspring. And then the dismal chapter closes with His statement of rejecting them and a final reminder of why—"they have not obeyed Him," as stated in verse 7).

Now, let us go back to the third of these calamities as stated in verse 7. They had lost spiritual discernment so much that they considered a prophet of God a fool and a man that had the Spirit as mad. By the way, that attitude reached its climax in Jesus' day when they accused Him of being out of His mind and Festus joined with them in telling Paul he was out of his mind in speaking of Jesus' rising from the dead. Now notice why the people of Israel had lost their discernment—because their sins were so many and their hostility was so great. The prophets were God's appointed watchmen over them, but they laid snares to catch them—as they did for Jeremiah, for example. In calling a prophet a fool, they were saying he was inane, silly, and in saying he was a maniac, they were saying his emotional utterances of warning were simply "raging" or "raving." Not only did they speak that way of the prophets, their spiritual descendants of all countries have treated God's servants likewise—the pope said Luther ought to be in Bedlam, the English charged the Wesleys with madness and that William Booth was "not all there," and Americans thought of Billy Sunday in the same terms. That is the way of those in the realm of darkness when they look at those walking in light. As G. Campbell Morgan said, "Misapprehension of God is at the root of all hostility to God in the human soul." Like

Ahab hating Micaiah because he always prophesied evil concerning him. All these, instead, were the fools—they had a wrong view of life. To conclude with, then let us make an observation about these things.

UNBELIEF IS THE MOST IRRATIONAL ATTITUDE POSSIBLE TO MAN. To believe in this ordely world without someone to make the order is as irrational as to believe that a tornado sweeping over a junk yard could assemble a DC-10. The man of faith is not the one who is the fool—quite the opposite.

But let us add another one as a question—“**HOW MUCH DO CHRISTIANS REALLY BELIEVE WHAT THEY SAY THEY DO?**” William Booth, the great founder of the Salvation Army was a really flaming prophet. He heard an infidel lecturing and laughing at Christianity. The man said, “If I really believed what you Christian people pretend to believe, I would not rest, day or night, telling men and women about Jesus.” Booth said, “The man is right.” And he did not rest, day or night. G. Campbel Morgan said, “The Christian Church today has largely become—‘faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.’” Why aren’t we any longer called mad?—because we are not on fire like those prophets and like the early church. Let us repent and pray for true revival. How badly we need it!

Do You Realize the War Has Begun?

Randall A. Terry, July 1990

Did you happen to see the C.B.S. 48 *Hours* piece which aired recently on June 27th, entitled *Going Too Far?* It was an absolute masterpiece of anti-Christian propaganda. It methodically pitted the viewer against the Christian community.

The show began by focusing on 2 *Live Crew*—the rap group from south Florida that prides itself in violent and sexually explicit lyrics, combined with simulating sexual acts on stage during concerts. Then the show focused on an international pornography distributor who used some of his profits to distribute condoms to poor people in third world countries. They made him out to be a hero. Next they showed video store owners in central Florida who were being prosecuted by a godly district attorney for renting out X-rated pornography—the stuff that the Supreme Court ruled could be made illegal by a community.

They proceeded to some godless teachers on the west coast who were trying to get a “New Age” curriculum into elementary schools—*materials that included demons, witchcraft, and out of body experiences*—pitting them against some godly parents who were seeking to prohibit this demonic trash. Then on to Oregon, to a stripper bar located in a nice residential neighborhood, focusing on a Baptist preacher seeking its removal. Finally they went to a bizarre dance troupe, who was in danger of losing N.E.A. funding (because of a homosexual connection). All of these godless “champions” of free speech had one thing in common—in every case save one, the lawyers, the parents, the activists who are laboring against their filth in courts, the school board meetings or in the streets were “born-again Chris-

tians," "right-wing extremists," "religious zealots," who were seeking to "oppress" freedom of speech.

Who are Today's Nazis?

The laborers for righteousness were portrayed as the bad guys who sought to destroy the First Amendment; while the promoters of violence, witchcraft and vulgarity were portrayed as champions of freedom, true Americans exercising their "Constitutional rights," persecuted for their beliefs.

C.B.S. capped off the show by proving its undying allegiance to child pornography. They did a positive report on a man who photographs nude children and teenagers. He was portrayed as a caring, thoughtful, child-loving ("I've known some of those kids all their lives") "artist" who is being harassed by archaic fools.

The closing of the broadcast clarified the anti-Christian design of Dan Rather's "objective reporting." A museum director was interviewed who showed two paintings that Hitler and the Nazis considered "disgenic". The paintings were banned in Nazi Germany. As the interview progressed, the point was crystal clear: *C.B.S. believes that Christians are the heirs of Hitler's ideology, who will oppress the innocent and ban all art they don't like unless they are stopped.* Godly citizens who oppose violent, filthy lyrics, the exploitation of women and children in pornography, witchcraft and astral projection being taught to children, tax dollars funding homosexual art— *we are the Nazis of today.*

Overall, it was an alarming piece of anti-Christ, anti-Christian propaganda, that vilified the Christian community, and deceptively portrayed godly citizens as the enemy of freedom. We and our principles were trampled. Even now my mind goes to Matthew 5:13. "Ye are the salt of the earth. And if the salt has lost its savor, it is henceforth good for nothing, but to be thrown in the street and be trampled under foot of men." God help us!

Increasing Mockery of Christian Principles

So why am I writing about this? Because we are in jeopardy. *The Church is in great danger, and most Christians don't even remotely recognize the coming crisis.* A show like this on *48 Hours* is not some annoying piece of journalistic trash; it is another dose of poison against Christians in the minds of millions of people, another hurdle for our children to overcome in the exercise of their faith, another brick in the wall of freedom's tomb. Remember, ideas have consequences. More and more, Christians and Christian principles are being mocked, scorned, and attacked in magazines, newspapers, television shows, movies, classrooms, the American Medical Association and the American Bar Association. *And sooner or later this barrage of anti-Christian bigotry will take its toll—on us— in the form of severe persecution. We will become the whipping boy, the fascist, the cause of our nation's ills; and we will pay for our "crimes."*

Do you think I'm mad? Or perhaps overstating the problem just a bit? Consider this: no group of people is suddenly singled out and persecuted overnight. First, they are mocked; then discredited; then vilified; *then* there are social, financial, and/or physical manifestations;

i.e., persecution. Moreover—and this is why I can proclaim to you without doubt that we and our children are in great danger—*God is handing us over to be oppressed.*

Psalm 106 says:

They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons,
And shed innocent blood,
The blood of their sons and their daughters,
Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan;
And the land was polluted with the blood . . .
Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against His people,
And He abhorred His inheritance.
Then He gave them into the hand of the nations;
And those who hated them ruled over them.
Their enemies also oppressed them,
And they were subdued under their power.

(vs. 37-42, emphasis added)

Churchills or Chamberlains?

So what do we do? We must recognize the great danger we are in and adjust our lives accordingly. We must continue to *repent, intercede, and act*. Therein lies our hope. Tragically, however, many Christians steadfastly refuse to see the danger we are in. It reminds me of the conflict between Winston Churchill and Neville Chamberlain (then Prime Minister) in the late 1930's in England before WW II broke out.

Churchill was steadfastly crying out, warning the nation that they were in great danger, that Hitler was a madman, a tyrant bent on oppressing all of Europe. He gave facts, figures, hard-core proof in his claims, but people mocked him, vilified him, ignored him. Chamberlain, on the other hand, steadfastly refused to see the obvious. He felt Hitler could be worked with, trusted, perhaps could even be an ally! He ignored all facts that pointed to the impending danger.

Hitler invaded the Rhineland, then Austria, and set his sights on the Sudentland in Northern Czechoslovakia, yet Chamberlain was not alarmed. Instead, he followed the course of *appeasement*, the course that nearly destroyed England and helped plunge Europe into a war that claimed tens of millions of lives. *Appeasement* was his game plan, and it was nearly England's epitaph. But before the war, the English people liked appeasement and Chamberlain. They gravitated toward him. Chamberlain was "good ol' Neville." Churchill was a "scaremonger," a "warmonger." Churchill would *go too far*.

Churchill wanted to stop and, if necessary, destroy Hitler while England and France were stronger. Chamberlain wanted to keep backing up, appeasing Hitler at every turn, giving him all he wanted.

Who will we be like, Churchill or Chamberlain? Will we acknowledge the data we have—the growing tyranny in the courts, the harassment of our families, the betrayal of parental rights, the mockery and vilification of Christians in news and entertainment media; the growth of violence against our people (death threats, mail bombs, pro-aborts beating our people)? *Will we cry out warnings and fight, or appease our mortal enemies and keep lying to ourselves, saying it's alright?* Which message will we gravitate to? Which will we base our children's future well-being on?

We know victory can be ours when we pray and work. *In Long Island, a Christian activist almost single-handedly got Planned Parenthood kicked out of the public school system.* He relentlessly exposed their "here's a condom and we'll help you get an abortion if this fails" agenda, and through dogged perseverance got them and their program removed. That's exciting!

Remember, beloved, everything we hold dear is on the line. The Scripture and the signs all point to severe oppression coming against the church unless we repent. If ye do repent, bathing our actions in tear-stained prayers, I believe that God can bring revival and reformation. He did it for Gideon. He did it for Deborah. Perhaps He'll do it again for us.

—From O. R. newsletter, by permission

NEWS AND NOTES, cont. from inside front cover

asked me what's in me that keeps me at peace in such a time. She is a Catholic but is now interested in studying the Bible—unlike before. Pray for my country, that this event will bring a deeper spiritual awakening."

—Linda Alquino

URBANA '90 IS COMING!

Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) sponsors a missionary convention of strategic importance to world evangelism once every 3 years. Urbana 90 is scheduled December 27, 1990 - January 1, 1991, in Urbana, Illinois (on the campus of the University of Illinois).

Anyone giving serious consideration to missionary service needs to be there! Registrations postmarked by June 30, 1990, receive an early registration discount! Hundreds were turned away from Urbana '87. Call IVCF at Madison, Wisconsin, for additional information and registration forms (608-274-7995). Anyone in the Kentuckiana area interested in going may contact Victor Broaddus re: transportation: 606-253-9834 (evenings).

From the Henryville Herald, Ind.

"To look is one thing. To see what you look at is another. To understand what you see is something else. To learn from what you understand is something different yet; however, to act on what you learn is what really matters.

"All our knowledge of God should be turned to practical use. Few things injure us more than to seek knowledge for its own sake. Know, that you may do." —F. B. Meyer

ACLU Wants to Legalize Polygamy

The American Civil Liberties Union says it will try to overturn laws forbidding polygamy. ACLU officials say society today is more tolerant of alternative lifestyles and that now is the time to strike down the prohibitions against polygamy. Michele Parish-Pixler, executive director of the ACLU of Utah, said: "I can't see that there's any rational justification for prohibiting it. As long as it is between consenting adults, it ought to be permitted."

The ACLU is also supporting the legalizing of marriages between homosexuals and legalizing child pornography."

—from the Phoenix Gazette, 4/6/90, in the AFA Journal

Impressions Gained on the Summer Mission to the Orient, 1990, Led by Victor Broaddus:

"My first major impression, which was repeated over and over again, was how those who knew the Lord were indeed part of a worldwide family no matter what the language, cultural, political or economic barriers were..."

—Alice Mullins

"This tour forced me to stop and take stock of my priorities as an American. Not only am I wealthy in money and natural resources, but I am also scandalously wealthy in Christian teaching, fellowship and heritage. Just as I take running water for granted, I also have tended to take my Christianity for granted, assuming that both would always be there whenever I reached out for them. On my tour I saw how pre-

cious the things I had taken for granted are . . ."—Estelle Moody

Michiya Nakahara Visits Churches

Bro. Michie, son of the late Shichiro Nakahara, spoke and showed slides in various churches and at Louisville Fellowship Week. He helps lead the church in Shizuoka City, Japan, while also studying at Osaka Christian Seminary. He expressed gratitude for the help given to build the new chapel & rectory in Shizuoka.

Earl & Ragena Mullins to the Philippines, D.V.

The Words of Life committee is sponsoring the Mullinses, who hope to leave within a couple of months to minister mainly in the southern Philippines for maybe as long as a year. Hopefully they will have opportunities to encourage believers in other parts of Asia too.

Pray for the finalizing of their plans, & that many will back them in regular intercession and finances (some support is already promised, but more is needed). Also for their health, strength, safety and adaptability when they go.

Buechel Church, Louisville

Duane Smith began working as youth-and-discipleship minister at Buechel in August. And Earl C. Mullins Jr. will soon serve as pulpit minister there.

Financial Needs Worldwide

We recently learned that gas costs about \$6 per gal. in Honduras, and diesel fuel is "only" \$4 per gal. And we think we have it bad! New from Nigeria is that rides on public transportation that formerly cost about 10-15 ¢ now cost close to \$10, as the economy has collapsed. Pray for these lands & other like the Philippines & Hong Kong.

Locust Street Church of Christ, Johnson City, Tennessee

Our 1990 V.B.S. was closed out on Friday evening with a picnic at Rotary Park. It was a good week, with encouraging attendance, a dedicated and hard-working staff, and seems to have been well received by the children. A special thanks from each one of us should go to Mike and Cheryl Pitts for a super job of organizing and directing. It was a joint effort, with good cooperation. The average for the week was 47. These figures include children and adults.

Henryville, Indiana

This being the first Sunday Night of the month, we will have a question/answer-open forum time. Come with a question, doubt or fear, etc. We will look into the Word of God and through prayerful discussion find help in our time of need. This has proved to be a very enjoyable, edifying time when the Spirit can move among us as we think, discuss and look into the Scriptures. You ought to be ashamed of yourself for even thinking of being somewhere else!

Tell City Church of Christ

Today is known as "Children's Sunday" on the church calendar and we want to give thanks to God for our children today when we worship. Our message today will be directed to the young people. We have had a challenging time working with them this week in V.B.S. God gave us a wonderful V.B.S., with an average of 110 each night and about 140-150 for our closing program. We hope that you were blessed by our 1990 Bible school! Again a special big thanks to our teachers for the job they did! Thanks to the young adult class for the picnic, to Mark Williams for the decorated bulletin board last week in the back, and to others who had a part in our V.B.S.

Mission Conference

October 19-21, 1990 at Belmont Church of Christ, Winchester, Ky. Theme: "Home Missions". Special Music: Louisville/Winchester area chorus ("Over 45"), Portland Christian School Chorus. Featured Speakers: Julius Hovan & Tom Telford. Many workshops will be included too.

Southeast Church of Christ

I was so pleased at how God used our Mixed Choir last Friday night at the Area-wide Song Rally. Keep this Music Ministry in your prayers. God's Holy Spirit continues to work among us as we witness more commitments to Christ. —Nathan Burks

Linton Church of Christ

Bro. Glenn and Sis. Opal Baber of Turkey Creek, La. were here at our church Saturday August 11 to conduct at Teacher Workshop. Various topics included Why Teach . . . Who Teach?, Teaching with Sandorama and Flannelgraph, To Babies with Love, Memory Work Made Easy, Flip Charts & Visuals, and Your Room Says What?

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