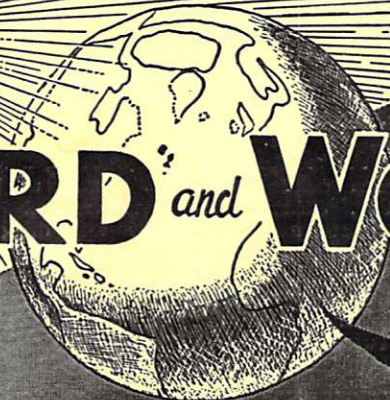


"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."



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



"Holding forth the Word of life."

APRIL, 1991

THE PSALMS— *Vehicles of Praise and Growth*

"Most of Scripture speaks TO us, while the Psalms speak FOR us," wrote Athanasius.

Most of Scripture tells us about God. The Psalms tell God about us—our feelings of rage, of pain, of gratitude, of praise. They express our human concerns and our requests for help. And they teach us how to talk to God.

NEWS AND NOTES

The Highway Church, Pekin, IN:

On March 10 Bro. Richard Paris was ordained as a minister. Bro. Orell Overman conducted the service, with Bro. Joe Phillips (an elder at the church) and Bro. C.V. Wilson assisting. Bro. Paris has been ministering at the Highway Church since the departure of Bro. Duane Smith, who now serves with the Buechel congregation.

In January, the church began serving hot lunches every Tuesday to anyone in need of a meal. So far about 25 people from the community have responded to this outreach, with an average of ten people eating at the church each week. In addition to food, the church has also been able to provide some clothing and a lot of much-needed love, caring and fellowship.

New Albany, Indiana

Four teenagers received Christ during the past month, 3 of them from unchurched backgrounds. Please pray for these who are young in years & young in the Lord.—Nick Marsh, Cherry St.

Cramer & Hanover Church of Christ Lexington, Kentucky

SPRING WORKSHOP

May 17, 18, 1991

Theme: "Contemporary Crises Confronting Christians"—Friday Evening: "Age of Stress"—Earl Mullins, Jr.; Saturday Morning: 9:00 Singing and Prayer; 9:30 "Christian Burnout"—Terry Morrison; 10:50 "When Anger Controls"—Bryan Whitehead; Afternoon messages: "Who's Depressed Anyway?"—Dr. Robert Ross; "Despising Not Thy Youth" (special youth session)—Mark Baker; "Releasing the Power in the Body"—Hall Crowder.

An Invitation to W & W Readers

Write for us! Our June or July issue will be on the theme of family living. Let's have a symposium like one I saw elsewhere, but with YOU contributing! Write out short answers to some or all of the following questions, and send them to us by May 20. (But do it NOW or you'll forget.)

The article will be called "WHAT MY PARENTS DID RIGHT." Specific sections will be about these questions: 1) What do you remember most fondly about your relationship with your parents while you lived at home? 2) Which do you remember most: family times

together or times alone with one parent? 3) Did you go through a rebellious period as a teenager? If not, why? If so, how did your folks handle it? 4) How did you react to your parent's failures? 5) What is the most important thing your parents taught you? 6) What did they do that was most important as successful parents?

Sign your name, and send them soon. We can't promise to use everything sent in, but we'll use as many as feasible.

Portland Church, Louisville

A presentation of "Meditations at the Last Supper" was given on Easter. Based of Jesus' statement, "One of you apostles will betray me," and their response, "Is it I?", it wove together songs, soliloquies, and Bible teaching to make the Last Supper come alive.

We have had a series of sermons from the book of Psalms, starting in Feb. and still continuing.

Portland Christian School has 3 students planning to go on summer mission work-projects. One will go to Papua New Guinea, one to Bermuda, and one to France. These have been very fruitful experiences in past years.

The Portland Christian High School chorus, led by Phyllis Mullins, traveled South during spring break. They sang at 3 churches in La. and in Gallatin, TN.

We were delighted to have Jon, Jeff and Julie Mayeux from Washington, La. worship with us on the weekend they visited Louisville for the S.B.S. conference. Their love for Christ and His word and service is exciting, and shows the good work done by Stan Broussard in discipling them.

An Available Teacher/Gospel-Preacher

Elmer Prout has been a preacher and also missionary to Japan for some years. In Japan he worked closely with bro. Moto Nomura to strengthen the churches there, promote more harmony and cooperation among the Lord's people, and reach the unsaved. His articles have appeared from time to time in W & W, including this issue! Recently he has ministered for churches in California, but is now seeking a place to re-locate. Anyone interested in more info may reach him at 3583 Windham Circle, Stockton, CA 95209, or call him at 209-478-4112 (or his daughter at 916: 661-9354).

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THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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** We strongly recommend that you read these articles with an open Bible. You will get much more out of them.*

THEME:

The Psalms

A Rich Goldmine

Alex V. Wilson

The book of Psalms is a fabulous goldmine filled with valuable treasures. Happy is the Christian who digs into the riches of this mine! It is estimated that the New Testament books quote from Old Testament books 283 times, and that 116 of those quotes are from Psalms—that equals 2/5 of them. So we should seek to “Go for the Gold,” to mine the precious nuggets of this part of God’s word.

The Layout of the Mine

In the Hebrew Bible this book was called the “book of praises.” It was Israel’s hymnbook; psalms were religious songs sung to accompaniment. The book actually was a compilation of five books (numbers 1-41, 42-72, etc.). The songs themselves were written by a variety of authors over a span of more than 800 years, from Moses (around 1450 B. C., probably) to the days of Judah’s deportation to Babylon (586 B. C.).

Seventy-three psalms are called “psalms of David” but some of those he may have compiled rather than authored. Nevertheless he is of course the main psalmist. What a poet and musician he was; read 1 Chron. 23:2-5, 28-32 for details of the choirs and accompanists he trained and equipped to lead the worship of the Lord in the temple. His was the heart not just of a poet and musician however, but of a worshipper who was thrilled by the greatness and mercy of his God.

Clearing away the Obstacles

In mining for precious metals, a lot of obstacles and debris have to be gotten out of the way. The same is true of Psalms. The modern reader may find some of the following obstacles blocking his enjoyment and benefit: 1) Some psalms contain curses against enemies, and/or boasting about the writer’s righteousness. This raises big questions. 2) The psalms are poetry! This turns off many people. 3) They contain many figurative expressions, and also references to historic events and geographic locations unfamiliar to many Christians today. This causes obscurity. Various articles this month and next will try to clear away such difficulties.

But perhaps the major barrier to enrichment from Psalms is the feeling, “Life here and now is so different from life there and then. The psalmist’s problems are not my problems.” For example, the main problem David faced seems to have been men who wanted to kill him. “How many are my foes,” he exclaimed in Psalm 3, and went on to mention my evil enemies (5); all my enemies(6); my enemies pur-

sue me (7); my wicked enemies (9); the evil oppress the righteous (10); the evil ambush the righteous (11); etc., etc. Such passages were very relevant to our troops in the Gulf perhaps, but seem distant and unreal to most of us.

The contemporary believer's biggest problems are some of the following: deadlines—too much to do... paying my bills... job insecurity... a negligent husband or nagging wife... disobedient children or a comatose grandparent... cancer... a grouchy boss or lazy employees or foul-minded co-workers... unfulfilled dreams: life seems to be passing you by... loneliness: no close friends or possibly rejection by someone you loved... etc., etc.

But while the two sets of problems—David's and ours—seem vastly different, the gap between the two is not nearly so huge as it appears at first. His enemies may have wielded sharp swords, but your sharp-tongued boss or spouse may be inflicting wounds nearly as deadly. The pain of a runaway son, a drunk dad or a daughter hooked on drugs may be as tormenting as the thrust of a spear.

Most of it boils down to the fact that sometimes we are almost devastated by our circumstances, and the psalmists certainly knew what that was like. For instance, the *seeming inactivity of God* ("Awake, O Lord! Why do you sleep? Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression?" 44:23f.); *the growth and strength of evil* ("How long will the wicked be jubilant? They pour out arrogant words, crush your people, slay the widows," etc. 94); *the prosperity of the ungodly and numerous trials of the righteous* (Psalm 37, 73); *loneliness, misunderstanding and scoffing* ("You have taken from me my closest friends and have made me repulsive to them; scorn has broken my heart—I looked for sympathy but there was none" 88:8; 69:20). This sampling of similarities is sufficient to show that the psalms *are* relevant after all, and that we can learn valuable lessons and valid principles for pleasing God from those ancient poets. "The more things change, the more they stay the same."

Moses never rode in a Mercedes. David's guitar was not electric. Asaph never heard a cassette. Solomon didn't own a VCR nor a fax machine. The Sons of Korah choir never won a Dove award for top hit of the year. Life in their days was different from ours, no doubt about it. Yet those psalmists knew God, struggled against sin, grew from little faith to large faith, rejoiced in hope, learned from their failures, and delighted to praise the Lord more and more and more. We can learn lots from them, if we dig in and go for the gold.

And as we immerse ourselves in Psalms, let's be sure to see our Messiah there. He loved these songs, quoted them often, saw himself in many of them, and lived them out in numerous ways. Ask yourself, "What would this psalm have meant to Jesus as he read it? And in this passage do I find predictions and/or 'types' of his life, love and ministry?" (Study Psa. 69, for instance.) To meditate on these poems of ancient Israel and not find Yeshua there would be like owning a goldmine and never even knowing it. Let's go for the Gold!

HOW I LEARNED TO STOP HATING AND START LOVING THE PSALMS

Philip D. Yancey

I have a confession to make. For years I hated the Book of Psalms. I knew that many Christians looked upon it as their favorite biblical book, and that the church had incorporated these poems into public worship. But, hard as I tried, I could never get excited about actually reading Psalms.

People around me seemed to use the book as a spiritual medicine cabinet: "If you feel depressed, read Psalm 37." "If your health fails, try Psalm 121." That approach never worked for me. Instead, I would with uncanny consistency land on a psalm that merely exacerbated, not cured, my problem. When feeling down I would accidentally turn to one of the wintriest psalms and end up frostily depressed.

More than anything, Psalms confused me. It seemed to contradict itself violently: psalms of bleak despair abutted psalms of soaring joy, as if the scribes had arranged them with a mockingly dialectical sense of humor. After a few minutes' reading, though, the poems would begin to sound boring and repetitious, and I wondered why the Bible needed 150 psalms—wouldn't 15 suffice to cover the basic contents?

I tried to address the problem by studying the book systematically. I learned to appreciate the poetic craft involved in Hebrew parallelism, and to recognize the different types of psalms. After acquiring all this knowledge, I read the psalms with a heightened sense of comprehension but, alas, with no heightened sense of enjoyment. And so for years I simply avoided the book. You can find a psalm that says anything, I reasoned. Why bother with them?

I now realize how impoverished I was. In my fixation with the details of the psalms—their categories, interpretive meaning, logical consistency, poetic form—I had missed the whole point, which is that *Psalms comprises a sampling of spiritual journals. They are personal letters to God.* I must read them as an "over-the-shoulder" reader, for the intended audience was not other people, but God. Even the psalms for public use were designed as corporate prayers: God was their primary audience as well.

I suppose I had been unconsciously trying to fit the psalms into the scriptural grid established by the apostle Paul. But these are not pronouncements from on high, delivered with full apostolic authority, on matters of faith and practice. They are personal prayers in the form of poetry, written by a variety of people—peasants, kings, professional musicians, rank amateurs—in wildly fluctuating moods. Sometimes the authors were vindictive, sometimes self-righteous, sometimes paranoid, sometimes petty.

Don't misunderstand me. I do not believe Psalms is any less valuable, or less authoritative, than Paul's epistles or the Gospels. Nevertheless, the psalms do use an inherently different approach. They are not so much representing God to the people as the people representing

themselves to God. Yes, they are part of God's Word, but in the same way Job or Ecclesiastes is a part of God's Word. We read the speeches of Job's friends in a different way than we read the Sermon on the Mount.

Understanding this distinction changed the way I read Psalms. Formerly, I had approached the book as a graduate student might approach a textbook: I skimmed the poetry in search of *correct and important concepts* that could be noted and neatly classified. Psalms resists such systematization and will, I think, drive mad anyone who tries to wrench from it a rigid organizational schema. I began to approach it in a very different way.

Let me illustrate. I own a worn, black Scofield Reference Bible that belonged to my father. Because he died when I was 13 months old, I have no conscious memories of him. Yet even now I can learn something of his relationship with God by reading the notes in the margins of that Bible, for he used the white space to record a kind of spiritual journal. Certainly, he never had me in mind when he wrote those notes; I did not yet exist. But years later I can be moved, challenged, and convicted as I read about his relationship with God.

The psalms are far more formal than my father's scribbled notes, of course. They came out of a common context, God's covenant relationship with Israel, and were expressed in beautiful, sometimes highly structured poetry.

But now, as I read them, I begin by trying to project myself back into the minds of the authors—just as I project myself back into the mind of my father who wrote those fragmentary notes. *Could I pray these prayers?* I ask myself. *Have I felt this peculiar anguish? This outburst of praise?* I come to them not primarily as a student wanting to acquire knowledge, but, rather as a fellow pilgrim wanting to acquire relationship. The first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and all our souls, and all our minds. More than any other book in the Bible, Psalms reveals what a heart-felt, soul-starved, single-minded relationship with God looks like.

Poetry works its magic subtly. In modern times, at least, we rarely seek out poetry in order to learn something. We turn to it because the poet's shaping of words and images gives us pleasure and moves our emotions. Yet if the poet is successful, we may gain something greater than knowledge; we may gain a transformed vision. And that is the magic the psalms have ultimately worked on me. They have transformed my spiritual vision and my understanding of relationship with God in these three ways:

First, the psalms help me reconcile what I believe about life with what I actually encounter in life.

When I was a child, I learned this mealtime prayer: "God is great, God is good. Let us thank him for this food." Its cadence has a certain incantatory charm, and indeed the prayer sounds as if it could have come from Psalms. What could be simpler than that prayer? Two foundational assertions of theology and a spirit of thanksgiving are all expressed in one-syllable words.

Yet praying that simple prayer with honesty and conviction has been for me, at times, an Abrahamic trial of faith. God is great?

Why don't we see more conspicuous evidence? Why is it that the scientists, who make their living studying the wonders of natural creation, are less likely than an illiterate peasant to attribute those wonders to God?

God is good? Why did my father, a young man with unlimited potential as a missionary, die before reaching the age of 30? Why did all those innocent Jews and Christians die without justice in the Holocaust? Why is the most religious portion of our population, inner-city blacks, the most poverty-stricken and hopeless?

Thank him for this food? I kept up that practice even through smartalecky days of adolescence, when I gave more credit to the abundance of American rivers and the wizardry of farmers. But what of the Christians in Sudan or Ethiopia? How can they thank God while dying for want of food?

If reading the last three paragraphs has made you slightly uncomfortable, perhaps you should read Psalms again. They are journals of people who believe in a loving, gracious, faithful God in a world that keeps falling apart.

The psalmists often expressed variations on the themes that I have mentioned. Why should those nasty Amalekites, Hittites, Philistines, and Canaanites, not to mention the juggernaut empires of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, take turns crushing *God's chosen people*? Why should David, anointed by God to be king, spend a decade hiding out in caves and dodging the spears of Saul, whom God had ordered to step down? How can they be thankful when there seems so little to be thankful for?

Many psalms show their authors fiercely struggling with such questions. Sometimes the psalmists are able to align the emotions of faith with the doctrines of faith in the very course of writing the psalm. But sometimes they cannot, and at this point the seemingly random ordering of the 150 psalms comes into play.

The most startling juxtaposition of psalms occurs early on. Psalm 23, that shepherd song of sweeping promise and consummate comfort, follows on the heels of Psalm 22, which opens with the words Jesus quoted from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Both psalms are attributed to David, but the two could hardly form a more glaring contrast.

True, David does find some sort of resolution in Psalm 22, by looking ahead to a future time when God will rule over the nations and the poor will eat and be satisfied. But he makes clear how he feels at the moment of writing: "I cry out by day, but you do not answer. . . . I am a worm and not a man. . . . Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me. . . . All my bones are out of joint. . . . My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth." Such sentiments are light years away from "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. . . . Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life."

Another juxtaposition occurs with Psalm 102 and 103. The first (subtitled "A prayer of an afflicted man. When he is faint and pours out his lament before the Lord.") eloquently expresses the despair of an aging, weakened man who feels abandoned by all friends, and by

God. It reads like a catalog of pain scratched out by a hospital patient in a feverish state. Yet the following psalm is a majestic hymn of praise that includes not one note in the minor key.

I doubt many pastors choose to preach on those two psalms together—one or the other, maybe, but not both. But I have learned to appreciate Psalms simply because it does encompass both points of view, often adjoined with no calming transition. "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," says Psalm 103. The author of its nearest neighbor is trying his best not to forget God's benefits, but that's no easy task in his condition, with his bones burning like glowing embers and his diet consisting of ashes and tears.

I, for one, am glad my Bible includes both kinds of psalms. A time may come when I will feel like the author of Psalms 22 or 102, and if that time comes, I will take comfort in the fact that spiritual giants—most notably, Jesus himself—have felt that way too. And although I may groan and cry out and resist the trial that has me in its net, I will also try to remember the wonderful message of Psalm 23 and 103.

Taken together, the 150 psalms are as difficult, disordered, and messy as life itself. Oddly, that fact gives me great comfort.

Second, the psalms teach me how to praise.

Americans are notoriously bad at adoration and praise. We have not the tradition of British subjects, who curtsy to the queen and wait for her to speak first. We feel more comfortable roasting our politicians in comedy revues than bowing to them.

Frankly, the whole notion of God asking us to sit around saying nice things about him can seem rather alien. Why does he need our praise anyway? As C. S. Lewis said in his *Reflections on the Psalms*, "I don't want my dog to bark approval of my books."

Lewis goes on to suggest that we might best imagine praise by thinking of our instinctive response to a great work of art, or a symphony, or extraordinary beauty in any form. The natural response is, first, to pause and enjoy the surpassing beauty—almost as if kneeling before it—and then to announce it to other human beings. Such a response of shared enjoyment works on many levels: "The Northern Lights were spectacular in the Boundary Waters!" "I wish you could have been with us in Venezuela—we flew up this canyon and suddenly the clouds parted and there was Angel Falls." "Weren't the Chicago Bears devastating yesterday?"

Praise takes the instinctive response of shared enjoyment (Ever try keeping a great joke to yourself, or the fact that you just got engaged?) and raises it a few notches. In praise, the creature happily acknowledges that everything good and true and beautiful in the universe comes from the Creator. That acknowledgement expresses our proper position before God. It works on us as well as on God, by reminding us of who we are with respect to him.

According to Psalms, praise need not be sober and reflective. The psalmists praised God with sensuous abandon, with loud musical instruments and dance and incense. Their worship services may well have been closer in tone to a sports pep rally than a sedate symphony concert.

Many of us stumble over how to express praise in a culture in which it seems alien. The wonderful contribution of the psalms is that they solve the problem of praise deficiency. They provide the words; we merely need to enter into them, aligning our inner attitudes with the content of the psalms.

Evidently, when the ancient Hebrews encountered something beautiful or majestic, their typical response was not to contemplate the scene, or to analyze it, but rather to praise God for it. Their fingers itched for the harp, their vocal cords longed for the hymn. For them, praise was joy expressing itself in song and speech, an inner health made audible. And because of them, we too can enter into that health.

Third, the psalms give me a model of spiritual therapy.

Not long ago I wrote a book titled *Disappointment with God*. The publisher worried over the title. It seemed faintly heretical to introduce a book with a negative title into Christian bookstores filled with books on the marvelous Christian life. But in the process of writing the book, I found that the Bible, and especially Psalms, includes detailed records of people disappointed with God (to put it mildly). Some psalms could be accurately titled "Furious with God," "Betrayed by God," "Abandoned by God," "In Despair about God."

It may seem strange for sacred writings to include such scenes of spiritual failure, but actually their inclusion expresses an important principle of therapy. A marriage therapist will often warn his or her new clients, "Your relationship may well get worse before it gets better." Grudges and resentments that have been covered over for years may resurface. Misunderstandings must be nakedly exposed before true understanding can begin to flourish.

The 150 psalms present a mosaic of spiritual therapy in process. Doubt, paranoia, giddiness, meanness, delight, hatred, joy, praise, vengefulness, betrayal—you can find them all in Psalms. Such stewing of emotions that I once saw as hopeless disarray, I now see as a sign of great health. From Psalms I have learned that I can rightfully bring to God *whatever* I feel about him. I need not paper over my failures and try to clean up my own rottenness. It is far better to bring those weaknesses to him, for he alone has the power to heal.

The odd mixture of psalms of cursing, psalms of praise, and psalms of confession no longer jars me as it once did. Instead, I am continually amazed by the spiritual wholeness of the Hebrew poets, who sought to include God in every area of life. They brought to God every emotion experienced in every daily activity. For them, there were no walled-off areas; God could be trusted with reality.

That process of "letting God in" on every detail of life is one I need to learn from. In the busy, post-Christian, industrialized West, we tend to compartmentalize our lives. We fill our days with activities—getting the car repaired, taking vacations, going to work, mowing the lawn, chauffeuring the kids—and then try to carve out some time for "spiritual" activities such as church, small groups, personal devotions. I see none of that separation in Psalms. Somehow, those people managed to make God the gravitational center of their lives so that *everything* related to him. To them, worship was the central

activity in life, not the thing to get over with to resume activity.

Psalms have become for me a stepping stone in the process of recognizing God's true place at the gravitational center. I am trying to make the prayers first prayed by the Hebrew poets authentically my prayers. The New Testament writers did this, quoting Psalms more than any other book. And the Son of God on earth did likewise. He too relied on them as the language of relationship between a human being and God.

I am sure that making the psalms my own prayers will require a lifelong commitment. I sense in them an urgency, a desire and hunger for God that makes my own spiritual life look anemic by contrast. The psalmists panted for God with their tongues hanging out, like an exhausted deer pants for water. They lay awake at night dreaming of "the fair beauty of the Lord." They would rather spend one day in his presence than a thousand years elsewhere. It was the advanced school of faith these poets were enrolled in, and often I feel more like a kindergartner. But now that I've started to read the psalms again, maybe some of it will rub off.

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* * * * *

Psalm 25:

WHERE A SINNER TRUSTED IN GOD

R. H. Boll

The Twenty-fifth Psalm is a psalm of humble trust in God; and not the sort of trust that comes of conscious integrity and a blameless record, but a sinner's trust in the unfailing mercies of the Lord. It is for that reason bound to be precious to the many who know only too well how they have sinned and failed. The trust in God's mercy and goodness which pervades this psalm is not unfounded or presumptuous; for was it not the very Spirit of God Himself that put those sentiments upon David's tongue? David himself said, "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and His word was upon my tongue." (2 Sam. 23:2) And the Lord Jesus Christ endorsed and corroborated the truth of David's claim. (Matt. 22:43). So the good words and the comfort of this psalm are not unwarranted; nor are those sentiments unworthy of the child of God today.

Sinful But Waiting

The keynote of this psalm is, "Wait for Jehovah." "None that wait for thee shall be put to shame," he says; and, "For thee do I wait all the day;" and again, "Mine eyes are ever toward Jehovah... for I wait for thee." The man who speaks is in trouble. He is surrounded by enemies who would rejoice and exult if he slipped (vs. 1, 19). His feet are caught, as it were, in a net (v. 15). He is desolate and afflicted, and the troubles of his heart are enlarged (vs. 16, 17). But it is not the suffering of the righteous for righteousness' sake, which carries its own sweet comfort with it. This man's affliction is embittered by the consciousness of guilt. The sins of his youth rise up

before him; his iniquity seems mountain-high, and as a heavy burden it has become too much for him (vs. 7, 11). Nevertheless—nay, for this very cause—he looks unto Jehovah. There are those who under the realization of their sin lose all hope and courage, and face away from God to flee unto a darkness which shall prove eternal. But not this sinner. He turns his eyes to the only source of help and light, to the one Refuge of the sinful soul: God. For God he waits. “I wait for Jehovah, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than watchmen wait for the morning. O Israel, hope in Jehovah; for with Jehovah there is lovingkindness, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities” (Ps. 130:5-8). Now “lovingkindness” is the Old Testament word for *grace*. Throughout his prayer David appeals to that free and abounding grace of God which covers all our transgression.

Facing To The Light

The one and the only thing David can urge in his favor (and in it is no merit) is that he has trusted in God for mercy and help, in the confidence that *none* that wait for Him shall be put to shame. He knows God well enough, however, to understand that God and sin can never dwell together. He does not ask to be saved in his sins, but out of them. He does not expect to be washed from his guilt while yet walking in the paths of iniquity. He wants nothing so much in fact as to be delivered from the evil way that his feet had entered. “Show me *thy ways*, O Jehovah; teach me *thy paths*; guide me in *thy truth* and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation; for thee do I wait all the day.” He feels keenly enough that he is asking here for something which in all justice he has forfeited. The man who has sinned against light and truth has nothing coming to him but a sentence of darkness and blindness. To the light and truth which he has despised he has no longer any rightful claim. David knows that His petition is not for what is due; but he appeals to the *grace* of God—that undeserved lovingkindness which to *us* has come so richly in Christ Jesus: “According to thy lovingkindness remember thou me, for thy goodness’ sake, O Jehovah.” Would God do so great a thing for the unworthy? But if He would not, why did God’s Spirit encourage David to ask for such a thing—yea and even put the very words of the petition upon his lips?

Building Upon God’s Character

One fact is notable in regard to the prayers of the Old Testament saints: they based their prayers upon their knowledge of God. When they found out, as did Jacob for example, that God was *faithful* to His word and promise they were sure to harp upon that fact when they cried to Him in the time of need. Or if, like Moses, they had learned that He was merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth, showing mercy to thousands, forgiving transgression and iniquity and sin—they did not fail to make that the ground of their appeal, whether for themselves or others. Now David had discovered that God was *good*. “For thou Lord art good and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness unto all

them that call upon thee" (Ps. 86:5). The quality of "goodness" reaches far beyond that of bare rectitude. Righteous and just our God indeed is; but He is more than that: He is *good*. Among men, Paul argues, who would so love his fellow-man for his righteousness' sake as to be willing to die for him? But for a *good* man some would even dare to die (Rom. 5:7). For goodness is above righteousness. A righteous man deals squarely and honestly; but the good man exceeds the measure of requirement: with him is sympathy and compassion, and kindness even to the unthankful and evil. Now this is the attribute of God. And in this twenty-fifth psalm Davids banks upon it. "Good and upright is Jehovah: *therefore* will he instruct *sinners* in the way." Those of them who are "meek"—humble, submissive, teachable—"will He guide in justice; and the meek will He teach His way." For this David hopes, and this he confidently asks and expects at the hands of his God—which is also an evidence on David's side of his sincere desire to walk in that precious light henceforth. "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me: *for I wait for thee.*"

* * * * *

Psalm 32:

The Forgiveness and Guidance of God

John R. W. Stott

The last two verses of this psalm form a good introduction to it. They contain the familiar, uncompromising biblical contrast between the *wicked* and the *righteous*, the believer and the unbeliever. The particular difference between them mentioned here is that, whereas *the woes of the wicked* are many, the *righteous can rejoice in the Lord and be glad*. It is further made clear that the ground of the joy of believers is that God's *unfailing love surrounds* them. Human joy arises from God's love, and the rest of the psalm unfolds it outworking in His forgiveness and guidance of the sinner.

God's forgiveness of the past (verses 1 - 8)

The psalm begins with two Old Testament beatitudes, affirming the blessedness not now of the person whose delight is in God's law (verse 1, 2), but of the person whose sins are forgiven. First, the facts of sin and forgiveness are described, in each case by three expressions. Wrong-doing is *transgression*, indicating a positive offence, a trespass, the stepping over a known boundary; and *sin*, a negative missing of the mark, an omission, the failure to attain an ideal; and "iniquity" (Revised Standard Version), that inward moral perversity or corruption of nature which we call "original sin."

Forgiveness is threefold too. The Hebrew word translated *forgiven* in verse 1 apparently means to remove or to lift. Sin is also *covered*, put out of sight; and therefore the Lord refuses to reckon it against the sinner. Forgiveness is thus regarded as the lifting of a burden, the covering of an ugly sight, and the cancelling of a debt. It

is these verses which the apostle Paul quoted in Romans 4:6-8 as an Old Testament example of God's justification of the sinner by His grace through faith, altogether apart from works.

From this general statement of the blessedness of being forgiven, David turns to a description from personal experience of the misery of refusing to confess sin. He has written of the person *in whose spirit is no deceit* (verse 2), but now he depicts the painful consequences of deceit.

The reference is probably to his shameful dealings with Bathsheba, since, after committing adultery with her and murdering her husband, it was almost a year before he was brought to repentance by the ministry of the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 11). During this period, while he tried to deceive himself and God, he had no peace. Indeed, long before the term "psychosomatic medicine" was coined, David tells how remorse and a tortured conscience resulted in alarming physical symptoms (verses 3, 4). But at last he gave in, acknowledged his sin to God and found peace through forgiveness (verse 5).

David's vivid experience of forgiveness through repentance and confession leads him to urge others to do what he did and so receive what he received. Humble prayer to God, at a time when He may be found, always brings relief (verse 6). Moreover, David resolves constantly to do the same himself (verse 7). He learned his lesson; he will not make the same mistake again.

God's guidance for the future (verses 8, 9)

David's expression of confidence in God to preserve him (verse 8) is immediately answered. God gives him a promise of personal guidance, for in His steadfast love He is concerned not only to forgive the past but also to direct the future. God's guidance, like His forgiveness, is expressed in four verbs: *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you* (verse 8). The picture seems to be of a mother teaching her child to walk. She never takes her eye off the child. Our God is just as tender and loving toward His people.

Nevertheless, it is important to see that verse 9 follows verse 8. God's promise of guidance is not intended to save us the bother of using our own intelligence. So to His promise he adds the command: *Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle*. The sensitive horse and the stubborn mule have to be controlled and guided by pressure, even by force, because they are irrational animals. But we have been given a mind; we must not expect God to use a bit and bridle in His handling of us. He will treat us like human beings, not mules.

Blessed indeed are those who are surrounded by the steadfast love of God, forgiving their sins when they confess them to Him, and guiding their footsteps when they trust His promises and obey His command to use their mind.

[Taken from FAVORITE PSALMS, by John Stott, © 1988 by Three's Company, and John Stott. Used by permission of Moody Press.]

Psalm 51:

THE FORGIVEN AND THE DEAD

Elmer Prout

The Bible study had gone well. The text had been Psalm 51. Every line of David's penitential song had spoken directly to each of us.

We identified with his cry for mercy (vs. 1). We stood with him in his plea for cleansing (vs. 2). His sense of sin was written in our hearts as deeply as it had been in David's (vs. 3-5). We prayed with him that God would hide his face from our sins (vs. 6, 7). We longed earnestly for the joy and gladness of salvation (vs. 8, 12).

As we read and prayed with the text we found ourselves carried along into David's experience. It was not merely an academic exercise we were doing—it was life with God. Life with God for us just as surely as it had been for David. No wonder, then, that we could hear Nathan's words echo down the centuries:

"The Lord also has put away your sin" (2 Samuel 12:13)

We were the redeemed of the Lord! We were eager to say so! (Psalm 107: 1, 2).

It was somewhere in the middle of that moment of glory that two words collided: forgiven and dead. David was forgiven. Uriah was dead. I tried to turn back to the unhindered joy of forgiveness, David's and my own. But the vision was gone. Right up beside forgiven David was Uriah—betrayed, tricked, carrying his own assassination message back to the battlefield. Sold out by the very king who depended on his loyalty.

How did it fit? How could the Forgiven and the Dead turn up side-by-side in the study of a Psalm designed to sing the praise of the Forgiving God? Didn't the fact of God's gracious forgiveness override the tragedy of Uriah's death? Once the confession had been made, wasn't forgetting the next gospel step? Wasn't it enough that God can be counted on to set everything right for Uriah "after a while?"

Perhaps it is better to leave matters there. Perhaps we should be content to sing, "We'll understand it better by and by."

Perhaps. But I wonder if we will deeply appreciate the cost to God of the grace which saves us, unless we look at both the Forgiven and the Dead? I believe that God is grieved at the injustice and inhumanity which people heap on each other. Can we not say that God's smile of forgiveness is accompanied with his tears of sympathy? God neither snaps his fingers nor winks his eye at our sins. The divine heart was not only broken at Calvary, it is wounded by the terror of our sins against one another.

I do not suggest that we attempt to balance the Forgiven and the Dead on a religious teeter-totter. That is not the point. Rather, we are asked to feel at least a little of the divine tension generated when justice, holiness, grace and mercy interact in the Divine Heart. Understand that? No. But we can experience a tiny bit of it. And, under the pressure of that tension, find a broader godliness growing within us. (From INTEGRITY, 4051 S. Lincoln Rd., Mt. Pleasant, Mich. 48858.)

THE VENGEFUL PSALMS

R. A. Torrey

A frequent objection urged against the Bible is some of the utterances in the so-called "Imprecatory Psalms." And many of these utterances have greatly perplexed earnest-minded Christians who have carefully studied the New Testament teaching regarding the forgiveness of enemies. Three passages in the Psalms are especially cited by a recent writer as showing that the Bible is not the Word of God. These are Ps. 58:6, "Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth." It is said that this utterance exhibits so much vindictive passion that it could not possibly have been written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The second passage objected to is Ps. 109:10, "Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places." The third passage is Ps. 137:8, 9, "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." What shall we say about these passages?

The first thing we have to say is that God oftentimes simply records what others said, bad men, good men, inspired men and uninspired men, etc., and in the Psalms we have sometimes what God said to man, and that is always true. And on the other hand, we often have what men say to God, and that may or may not be true. All of these passages cited are what men said to God. They are the inspired record of men's prayers to God. To God they breathe out the agony of their hearts, and to God they cry for vengeance upon their enemies. Judged even by Christian standards, this was far better than taking vengeance in their own hands. Indeed, this is exactly what the New Testament commands us to do regarding those who wrong us, Vengeance belongs to God and He will repay (Rom. 12:19), and instead of taking vengeance into our own hands, we should put it in His hands. There is certainly nothing wrong in asking God to break the teeth of wicked men who are using those teeth to tear the upright. This prayer is taken from a Psalm that there is every reason to suppose is Davidic, as is also the second passage quoted. But it is a well-known fact that David in his personal dealings with his enemies was most generous, for when he had his bitterest and most dangerous enemy in his hand, an enemy who persistently sought his life, he not only refused to kill him, but refused to let another kill him (1 Sam. 26:5-6). And even when he did so small a thing to Saul as to cut off the skirt of his robe, his heart smote him, even for that slight indignity offered to his bitterest and most implacable enemy (1 Sam. 24:5). How much better we would be if, instead of taking vengeance into our own hands, we should breathe out the bitterness of our hearts to God, and then treat our enemies in actual fact as generously as David did. While David prayed to Jehovah in Ps. 109:10, "Let his children be continually vagabonds and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places," in point of fact, when he was in a place of power, he asked, "Is there any that is left of the house of Saul, that I

may show him kindness?" He found a grandson of Saul's and had him eat at the king's table as one of his own sons (2 Sam. 9:1, 2, 11).

The utterance in Ps. 137:8, 9 does sound very cruel, but the utterance is a prophecy rather than a prayer. It is the declaration of awful judgment that will come upon Babylon because of the way in which Babylon had treated the people of God. Babylon was to reap what it had sown (cf. Gal. 6:7). They were to be served by others as they had served the people of God. It was a literal prophecy of what actually occurred afterwards in Babylon. We find a similar, but even more awful prophecy of the coming doom of Babylon in Is. 13:15-18.

So when we study these Imprecatory Psalms in the light that is thrown upon them from other passages of Scripture, all the supposed difficulties disappear and we find that there is nothing here that is not in perfect harmony with the thought that the whole Bible is God's Word, though in some instances, while the record of what is said is correct and exact, that which is recorded as being said may not in itself be right; but it is God's Word that man said it, though what man was recorded as saying may not be God's Word.

* * * * *

Psalm 13:

ALL BAD

Donald S. Ewing

Have you ever felt forgotten, neglected, deserted, left out? What did you do? Did you sing a lament? David did. He sang the How Long Song.

That is, he sang Psalm 13. First, he looked upward. "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? forever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" Then he looked within and outward. "How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? forever? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? forever?"

Have you ever felt that way? How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget me? Forever? How long will you hide from me? How long must I be overcome with sorrow every day? Forever? How long will my enemy be exalted over me? Forever?

It's a mournful song, this How Long Song of David's, and in it David did some bad thinking. He permitted his emotional states to distort his view of God. *Because he felt forgotten, he assumed that God had forgotten him.* He projected the loneliness of his heart into the nature of God. Yet if God had forgotten him, He would have ceased to be God, for a God who forgets is not God at all. David was petulant under his suffering. Instead of saying, "I've been hiding my soul and my life from God, I've been unwilling to submit myself to Him," he said, "O Lord, how long are you going to hide from me? Why don't you come out from behind the clouds and say something?" He thought God was playing hide-and-seek with him. *He assumed that since things appeared bad they were bad, and because they were bad they would always be bad.* This is unwarranted.

David was self-hypnotic. How long, how long, how long. Like a flat wheel on a train, he repeated his anguish over and over. And everytime he repeated it, he drove it deeper into his mind. We do the same thing by repeating the thing that bothers us. We see it as the only important thing, as David did in the first two verses of this psalm. How often we lay upon our souls the lash of desolation, stripe after stripe. We indulge in flagellation. David laid four strokes across his soul, and then a change occurs.

I want to say something about David and about all of us, something we easily overlook. *We live in at least two environments: one psychological, the other real. The psychological environment is the way we think things are, the real environment is the way they actually are.* Now it doesn't take a great deal of insight to know that we act on the basis of what we think the situation is. We're motivated by the psychological rather than by the real environment and *often the two differ greatly.*

We assume because of a few things that the situation is all bad, and then we determine our lives by that psychological environment. This is what David did. He was having difficulties; things didn't go the way he wanted them to. It seemed that many hands were set against him and so he cried out, "God, you've forgotten me." He spoke out of his psychological environment. For a moment he forgot the real environment, in which God never forgets.

God is omniscient, God is omnipotent, God is love, God is compassionate. But that didn't make any difference in the way David felt at this point because he thought God had forgotten him. He lived as if it were true and wouldn't have felt a bit worse if God really had forgotten him. It is a hard thing to push beyond the confusing elements of the psychological environment to the hard bedrock of the real one, but unless we do, we stand in a slippery place and our feet will go out from under us.

David, poor David, God had forgotten him—he thought. Have you ever thought that? Of course you have. You're no different from David, nor am I. *We've looked away from God and because we looked away, we thought God wasn't there any more.* Yet all we had to do was turn our eyes and see Him where He always has been. We take our hand out of His and then we think He's taken His hand from us. All we have to do is slip it back and there He is.

David looked back, he again slipped his hand into the Lord's hand. David knew a great deal more about truth than is revealed in these first two verses. Immediately after speaking them he prayed, "Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved." Two verses, but the heart of the prayer is contained in three words, "Lighten mine eyes." Because, Lord, if you don't do it, I can't see. I won't be able to walk through this bramble and tangle of experience. I'll be torn up by the thorns, my heart will be cut to pieces and destroyed, and life itself won't be worth living. Give me light for my eyes." David didn't pray to be taken out of the problem. He prayed for understanding.

Does this seem strange? It isn't at all, because if we know something about God and about the problem, we can face it, we can take it, whatever it is. We can stand in strength, in quietness and peace, if we understand. But if we don't understand, we are bound to go down. To escape without understanding isn't victory.

To be caught in a conflict and then lost to be snatched out of it leaves unanswered questions. We haven't faced ourselves, we don't come out of it bigger, we come out of it emptier. This is defeat, not victory. To defeat one's enemy and remain ignorant of the meaning of the conflict isn't victory. Not to know why there's conflict within myself and within the other person, just to have conflict and win, of what value is this? We aren't meant to go through life blindly, we're meant to know. And so David prayed for the best possible: he prayed for understanding.

"Lighten mine eyes that I may understand what this is all about, because if I understand, then I'll know its meaning and from this I'll have strength. Then I'll have peace and quietness. Then even if my enemy succeeds, it will make no difference. If I stand in understanding before God, nothing else matters."

So it is with us. If we know, if we really know the basics, we can never be defeated. If our feet are fixed upon an unmovable rock we can never be moved. It isn't the conflict, it isn't that at all. It's whether or not our feet are on the facts. When that's the case we can't be moved. It doesn't make any difference how the battle is pressed around us. It makes no difference how many rise up against us. If God is our refuge and strength, our present help in every trouble, then we can't be moved and we needn't fear. For we know that God is with us. We know that He'll help us. We cannot be moved. Of course, we may not ever know *all* God's reasons for facing us with problems, but we can understand enough about God, and ourselves to hold on.

David went from his prayer to his song, and his song is an expression of his belief in the basics. "But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me."

I have trusted in the Lord. To trust means to rest oneself upon. If we are busily running about like an ant in search of food, we find no comfort in the Lord. If we are leaping about like a cricket on a hot stove, we find no rest in Him. But when in complete trust we stretch ourselves out upon God and God's promise, we find rest for our souls.

David said, "I can remember the time when I stretched myself out upon the sure promise of God. I can remember when the almighty arms went underneath me. I have trusted myself completely into the hands of God."

God's mercy is a fixed point. It doesn't change. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. God is gentle and kind, compassionate and forgiving. He doesn't deal with us according to our sin but according to His mercy. God's hand is always reached out to lift us up, to pull us out of the well of our emptiness, to place our feet on high and solid ground. David said, "I have trusted in the mercy of the Lord; what can man do unto me?" He had trusted.

"My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation." In another time of stress, David said, "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord." Salvation is God's business. This is His specialty: redeeming us from the extreme position, the situation where we would be destroyed without Him. It is God's business to take the brokenness of our lives, and make it into something wonderful and good.

If you have trusted in Him, you can rejoice. If you haven't trusted, of course you cannot rejoice—because then you are like a window-shopper. You see wonderful things, including this pearl of great price, but none of it belongs to you. When you trust yourself in the hands of God this becomes your possession. Your heart ought to sing and rejoice and drive every shadow away. Every shadow of doubt, weakness, failure, suspicion: all of it should go. There should be room only for the glorious song of the redeemed. The doxology ought to echo from every wall of our heart and ring through every moment of every day as long as we live.

My heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation. When? Right now. This isn't part of the agenda for the future only—it's always current business. David declared that his heart was going to rejoice. The situation hadn't changed. His enemies hadn't been destroyed. Everything was the same, but instead of singing, "How long, O Lord, how long, will I be miserable?" he sang, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow." He even included that trial, and to be able to do that is one of the marks of the Christian. The Christian who has lived a bit can say in the shadowed experience, "I thank God for the shadows as well as for the sunlight, for only in the shadows do I learn really to see, to know, and to walk by faith." The Christian who ignores the shadows is the Christian who will stay a baby.

David didn't do that. "My heart shall rejoice now, in the midst of trouble, because now I see the salvation of the Lord at work. Because now I know He is working even in this experience to bless. I will sing unto the Lord because He hath dealt bountifully with me. Down across the years the Lord has held my hand. He has preserved me before the giant, and the wild beast. He has preserved me when my enemies have been stronger than I. I will sing because across the years He has been faithful, because He is faithful now and because He will forever remain faithful. I will sing unto the Lord."

David started out with a lament but he ends with a doxology. Because God never forgets, because God never hides, because God changes into joy the sorrow of every soul who believes in Him, because God never permits any enemy to be exalted over His children. Because God has redeemed, because God has dealt faithfully and bountifully through every day with every child and will continue to do so throughout every day throughout all of eternity—because of this, David sang the doxology. Now what about you and me? We can say, "David was certainly a fine Christian" (if we may push the term back that far). Yes, he was in many ways, but are you? Am I? Admiration for David is no substitute for our own dedication.

Are we living as Christians? You answer for you and I shall answer for me. It's better that way because we never get anywhere if we answer for each other, since then we just avoid the issue. As long

as we're judging each other, we're too busy to judge ourselves. And the only way we can grow is to judge ourselves before the Lord. Unless judgment begins at the house of the Lord, God's people will never have impact in a world like ours.

Are you singing a lament? Is the song of your life in a minor key? Turn from lament to prayer, open your heart to God's truth, to His understanding—and then join David in the doxology.

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VOICES from the FIELDS

Central Bible Institute
Virgilio C. Torrefiel, President

Manila, Philippines

February, 1991

We are truly amazed of the fact that CBI has been in existence for 35 years now. It was one of the Bible school pioneers in the Philippines after World War II. The long years of uninterrupted operations since 1955 proves the unceasing faithfulness of God and the wholehearted dedication of CBI to what God has entrusted upon her to accomplish for His glory. The Lord deserves all the honor and praise!

CBI has produced hundreds of graduates who are now in strategic positions of Christian leadership in various churches and Christian organizations. Furthermore, there is an encouraging number of laymen alumni who are serving as faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ and His Word to their immediate associates. Through CBI graduates, thousands of people have been blessed within and without the Christian community. Today, Christian workers produced by CBI continue to persevere in the front line of Christian ministry despite the crisis of the times. We are glad to see them tenaciously working for the Lord.

The school ministry is carried on by 20 people—all Filipinos—comprising the administrators, faculty and staff. They work together as a team with the common vision to train students and to equip them with skills in Christian service for the glory of God.

[See the article by Victor Broaddus also.]

Alaska Newsletter (via sponsoring Church, Gallatin, Tenn.)

March, 1991

We have gleaned the following information from recent letters from the Allens. This will help us all pray more intelligently and fervently and thankfully regarding their leaders.

— Brother Allen continues to make progress following by-pass surgery, but his chest and leg incisions are still very sensitive. He is scheduled for cataract surgery April 2nd.

— Recent visitors to Eagle River included Winston's brother Dennis and his wife, Betty. They were a great help at church and home during Winston's recovery.

— A future visitor will be Norman Allen, their son, who will relieve his Dad following the eye surgery. He will take his vacation to be with them April 5-23.

— Church attendance has been encouraging (upper 40's Sunday and 25 Wednesdays.) Some are driving long distances to attend. Tina Haught, 24 year old mother of two has started attending and states her desire to follow the Lord. Her husband Bill, an airman, shows no interest. Chris Beane and seven-year-old daughter attended recently. Winston baptized his wife two years ago and until now he has had little interest. All three in the family were back for Sunday night. PTL and pray for each of these.

— The weather changed briefly to above freezing temperatures which greatly diminished the amount of snow. Then twelve inches of very dry snow descended and sub-zero night temperatures returned. They now have 9½ hours of daylight.

— The finished building has truly been a joy and asset. As soon as weather permits, Rick Pitt will proceed with work on the parking lot and landscaping.

The Allens' address: Winston and Irene Allen, 12731 Spring Brook Drive, Eagle River, Alaska 99577

Joy Garrett

Ruwa, Zimbabwe

March 11, 1991

Yesterday (Sunday) we went to Kadoma (2 hours west). On our way there we dropped off our evangelist and teachers at EXE Farm. There has been a real revival there this year. Twenty-nine have repented and returned to the Lord and eleven were baptized. Our evangelists take turns visiting and teaching.

Saturday at Arcadia Bob taught at our monthly all Harare Bible study. It was his third two hour lesson on Love. The building was full of adults and outside under a tree our many children had their class.

Bob has been asked to do a series of lessons on the Second Coming at Highfields Wednesday night, and at Bulawayo March 13-17. Bulawayo is 6 hours travel west. All this travelling is expensive as our diesel price has doubled since the Gulf War.

Easter begins our first 1991 camp which will be for the men and on Leadership. Easter holidays begin on Thursday night and go thru Monday and we plan to use as much of it as we can.

Then in April we will have the Junior Camp and the last of April and first of May our Senior Camp. Pray for all these opportunities God has given us.

Earl & Ragena Mullins, Sr.

March, 1991

P.O. Box 212, 9000 Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao, Philippines

Do you ever long for the "good old days" when there were very few cars, no interstates, and a bus was the best way to get from "here to there," whether across town or the country? Where hotels cost under \$10.00 per person per night, and you could get an eggs and bacon breakfast with coffee and toast (or rice, if in Louisiana) for under \$2.00? Well, if you really want to experience that, just catch a plane and come to the Philippines. There may be a few other experiences you've never had which you will enjoy. Like a ride on a ship for three to eleven hours to get to where you need to be. Good eats await you also: shrimp, various kinds of fish, crabs, goat meat, and all

kinds of fruit, plus such drinks as coconut water. Your transportation will not likely be limited to buses and ships for you might find yourself as one of three on a motorcycle (as Ragna did recently), hanging on to the back of a jeepney (as Earl did recently), or with four or five others plus luggage on a motorized tricycle. These are some of the experiences we had on a recent trip to Dipolog with Cyrus and Lyrna Gesulga. Because of some potential problems along a stretch of road to Dipolog, it was decided not to take the van. Instead we took a boat to another island and from there a freighter-passenger ship to Dipolog. It was a good trip and we thank the Lord for the bonuses along the way.

In Dipolog we enjoyed the hospitality of brother Robin Parangan and met with fourteen brethren in a house-meeting. After an all day meeting on Friday with these brethren, we took a bus trip to Manukan where Brother Peter Comatura ministers to a congregation of about 200 each Sunday, except for the last Sunday of each month when four other congregations join the Manukan church in Sunday services for a total of about 500 who worship together. The brethren at Manukan are in the process of building a new and larger building. When Earl visited there in 1988, their small building was packed and folks were at every window and door three and four deep on a weekday morning! . . .

Back in Cagayan de Oro, we thank the Lord for working in so many ways in blessing us on the trip including protection from unexpected problems. Like the bus taking off in Cebu City as we were trying to get off, Ragna still on the second step with her luggage. She had to jump off into two lanes of moving traffic which she did like an "Ole pro" without a stumble. But with angels working overtime (Heb. 1:14), she was off the bus with it still on the go. We will be meeting Saturday (February 9) with brethren from Leyte, Bohol and from various places around the Cagayan de Oro Mountain area. Then on the 18th of February we will head for a meeting with representatives from Davao City, General Santos and Cotabato City.

In all of these places we are explaining what the ministry of Words of Life is all about, and seeking ways, as the Lord wills, to continue to be a blessing and a help in the furtherance of the gospel here and in the growth and development of believers. Keen interest exists in Bible prophecy, so somewhere between two and three hours are spent in Earl teaching and Cyrus "recapitulating." We covet your prayers for us, and for those who are laboring on behalf of the gospel in every place. We especially ask you to pray for the Gesulgas who have the additional burden of escorting us around.

Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Should Christians keep Sunday as the Sabbath and avoid working on that day?

The people of Israel kept the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week as a requirement of the Law (Exodus 20:8-11; 23:12; 31:12-17; Deuteronomy 5:12-15). It was a law given only to them, and

it had significance for them. It was a sign between God and the children of Israel (Exodus 31:17). On the Sabbath they were to do no work. Jesus showed that acts of mercy and certain necessary work were never forbidden by the Sabbath law (Matthew 12:1-14). But He lived under that law and kept the Sabbath. With the establishing of the New Covenant, the Law, including the Sabbath, was taken away (Colossians 2:14). In the New Testament church the first day of the week became a day set apart for worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2), this having been the day of the Lord's resurrection, the day of some of His significant appearances to His disciples, and the day on which Pentecost and the birth of the church fell. Christians no longer had any obligation to keep the Sabbath, although it is probable that many Jewish Christians may have continued to do so for a time. The Sabbath was never part of any commandment given to the people of the New Covenant, however; nor is there any indication that any of its features other than its use as a day of worship were "transferred" to the first day of the week.

In more recent times there have been many who have regarded the first day of the week as "the Christian Sabbath" and who have applied many of the old Sabbath regulations to Sunday. The two days should not be confused, however. The Sabbath is still the seventh day, or Saturday, and Sunday is not the Sabbath but the first day of the week. Our calendars still show this distinction, and the Orthodox Jew still observes the Sabbath (Friday sunset till Saturday sunset). Some of the modern sects are correct in insisting that Saturday, not Sunday, is the Sabbath, but they are incorrect in insisting that Christians have a responsibility to keep it.

The question becomes, then, how should one "keep" the first day of the week? The New Testament does not specifically say except to indicate that the keeping of days is not a feature of the New Covenant (Romans 14:5-6; Galatians 4:9-11), and that the first day of the week was used for worship by the early church. Certainly we should participate in the appointed times of worship on that day with the saints of God. One may conclude from the designation, "the Lord's Day," that it should be spent for the Lord as much as possible. Nor is it wrong for us *if we can and wish to do so as enlightened children of grace to refrain from most work and unnecessary activity on this day*. It is a recognized blessing when society as a whole observes this as a time of decreased activity, thus enabling the Christian to be free for worship and other Christian activity. The loss of this attitude toward the day in most urban areas is really no blessing. As a matter of mere human wisdom there is something to be said for the day "off" each week, the change of pace that such a use of Sunday provides.

We need to be careful that we do not reduce Sunday observance to a sort of legal matter and bind it upon ourselves and others, as some continue to do. On the other hand, the Christian who understands that he is not under the Sabbath law should realize that a somewhat modified observance for the first day of the week may be wise, even from the standpoint of avoiding offense to some who are not clear in their understanding.

God and Jonah—God and Me

How God Feels About Us

Florence Olmstead Collins

Part One

It all begins with how God feels about us. What begins this way? Our relationship with God—a life of meaning and reward for each of us begins this way. Our possessing this kind of life was not our idea—it was God's.

God searched for us long before we looked for him. Perhaps we have longed for something lasting to fill an emptiness within. Try as we will, that vast vacuum cannot be permanently satisfied by our performance, possession or pleasures. God didn't plan that we have this void, so why do we have it?

In the beginning, God breathed his own life into us (Genesis 2:7). When we, through Adam, disobeyed him, God's life departed from us and the principle of death ruled our bodies, emotions and minds (Romans 5:12). Only God himself can restore his life in us and fill that hollow space. Fulfillment happens when we accept his Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17).

Because God cared so much for the whole human race, as soon as Adam and Eve rebelled against him, he began his search to restore us. Although Adam and Eve hid from God, he walked through the garden calling for Adam (Genesis 3). When Adam replied, God, who knows all the answers, continued questioning, allowing these two disobedient people to communicate with him. He still calls us to himself. God sees our need and pursues us today. His search has been so broad, so deep and so all-embracing that it caused him to send his only Son "to seek and save the lost."

God loves even Ninevites!

Just as God initiated the quest in Eden, just as he sent Jesus Christ to earth, so he devised and executed the salvation of the city of Nineveh. If a single soul in Nineveh prayed God to send a missionary to them, we aren't told. God, himself, saw their need just as he sees our need today, so he sought the wicked people there.

That is because he wants all people to be what he intended humans to be. He wants us to be people like himself, as he made us in the beginning (Genesis 1:26).

The apostle Paul writes that God's purpose for us is that we be changed into the image of his Son (Romans 8:29). That is why God hates sin—it keeps us from becoming what we can be through faith in Christ. The Lord loves us too much to want any less for us.

Our perfect God sees us and sees our sins, but he doesn't overlook them. He does more—he forgives them if we trust in the cross of Christ. He understands and provides strength for us to overcome our weaknesses.

Prophet, missionary—and rebel

The Lord chose a weak man, Jonah, as missionary to Nineveh. It was no surprise to him that Jonah would go in the wrong direction. God was able to make him strong enough to accomplish the thing he told him to do.

From the beginning of his commission, Jonah rebelled. Why did he go as far as possible in the opposite direction from where God told him to go? The Lord had told him to go east to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Instead, he went west to Joppa, a seaport on the east end of the Mediterranean Sea. From there he embarked for Tarshish, a city at the west end of the Mediterranean Sea. Had he reached his planned destination, he would have been more than 2,000 miles from Nineveh.

We aren't told Jonah's reasoning when he ran away from God. The scripture doesn't state such, but since Jonah was angry when the Ninevites repented, many scholars think that it was because Nineveh was a Gentile city and Jonah was a Hebrew (4:1). If that is true, then Jonah mistakenly and selfishly wanted the worship of the God of heaven, Creator of the sea and dry land, to be for Israelites only. He told God he didn't want to live with the happy turn of events for the Gentiles after they repented. Anyone, including a Christian, can be a religious bigot. If our religion excludes those of a different race, social standing or intellect from ours it is not God's religion. He invites whoever will to come to him through Christ. A faith which excludes others is born of pride.

Jonah's excuse for not wanting to go to Nineveh may have had to do with more than that the people there were Gentiles. By *partially* quoting Exodus 34:6, 7 to God, he said that his reason was because God is gracious and merciful and repents of evil he has planned to bring upon people (4:2). Jonah spoke true words. God is forgiving. But since Jonah said that he knew God's lovingkindness at the time he was first told to go to Nineveh, we must ask, "Even before he tried to run away from God, had he thought that God would forgive his deliberate rebellion?" How ungrateful and foolish it is to try to take advantage of God's mercy! What a strange excuse for disobeying God: "Because you love me and are so good to me, I choose not to obey you."

When Paul writes in Romans 6 about God's wonderful forgiving grace, he asks and answers the question, "Shall we sin because we are . . . under God's grace? By no means!" We should also remember that God is not only forgiving, but has the right and the wisdom to punish. He said "Vengeance belongs to me, I will recompense. . . . It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:26-31).

Jonah's reason for not immediately going to Nineveh may have been that he preferred carrying good news such as he had delivered to Israel (2 Kings 14:24-27). That message prophesied that God would give success to Israel through King Jeroboam. Jonah may have feared that the warning message of doom he was to take to Nineveh would cause the people to dislike him. If so, that means he wanted the approval of people rather than the approval of God.

Perhaps Jonah just didn't want to get too deeply involved. If he stayed out of it and something were to go wrong, then he couldn't be blamed. And what might God ask him to do next? Jonah may have thought, "I don't have to run an errand every time God tells me to. I owe something to myself."

We must give Jonah credit for not pretending that the Lord's instructions were too complicated, so he couldn't be expected to understand them. That would be the same as accusing God of not knowing how to give instructions. We also must respect this prophet for not adding some involved spiritual interpretation to God's command, thereby manufacturing an excuse for not doing exactly what he was told to do.

The Holy Spirit doesn't tell us Jonah's thoughts when deciding to go to Tarshish, but he does tell us that at this time in his career Jonah attempted to flee from the presence of the Lord (1:3). The meaning of the Hebrew word translated "presence" is based on a word meaning "to face, look at." All things are naked and open to the eyes of God (Hebrews 4:13). Jonah was like a toddler covering his eyes with his hands and saying, "Now you can't see me." It is a blessing for the Lord to see us and supply our needs. There is no *good* reason to try to escape his view.

How wonderful it is that now we can have God's presence within us in the person of the Holy Spirit! Jonah didn't have God's Spirit in the way we who believe in Christ's sacrificial death can have him today (John 7:38, 39; 14:16; 16:7-11). We should thankfully sing with T. O. Chisholm the words,

"Be with me Lord, no other gift or blessing
Thou couldst bestow could with this one compare—
A constant sense of thy abiding presence,
Where e're I am, to feel that thou art near."
(to be concluded)

THE UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM

Alex V. Wilson

Prophecy and "providence" are like Siamese twins—hard to separate! We saw that fact last month from Isaiah. Now let us look at Daniel and Revelation. Notice first what God prophesied through Daniel about the future.

Daniel's Visions

In the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand for ever. (2:44)

I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days . . . and to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. (7:13, 14)

These and other thrilling visions of future glory were given to the seer. But perhaps they raise questions in our minds. After all,

people on LSD have visions too! Let's interview Daniel about this.

"Sir, how can you know for sure that these are not vain fantasies and wild dreams that you have had? How can *we* know that it is not just wishful thinking of 'pie in the sky by and by'? Evil stalks through the world like a bully sneering at his victims. Suffering springs up like weeds after a rain. Can righteousness really prevail? Will God really triumph? Daniel, have not your own people, God's people, been brutally assaulted and conquered by the heathen king of Babylon? Jerusalem lies in ruins, the temple is demolished, and many of the women of Judah are widows. What assurance is there, then, that your golden dreams are not delusions?"

The prophet replies with conviction. "I am confident regarding the future because of my experiences of God's present providence. Time and again I have seen God display His sovereignty. Sometimes He has done it "naturally" (as recorded in chapter one of the book that bears my name), and sometimes supernaturally (chapters two, three, four, etc). In fact, I believe one of Scripture's most striking passages is chapter four of my book. It was actually written by mighty Nebuchadnezzar, who tells how God humbled him down to the dust. Listen, here are his concluding words:

At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives for ever; for his dominion is an everlasting dominion . . . all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing; and he does according to his will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, 'What doest thou?' (4:34, 35).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The Bible's last book shows us history's last chapter. It centers around Christ's return. "I am coming quickly." "I will come like a thief." "Behold, he is coming with the clouds . . ." (3:11; 22:7, 12, 20; 3:3; 16:15; 1:7). And when He comes, the kingdom of the world shall become the kingdom of our Lord, and He shall reign for ever and ever (11:15). For this our hearts pant. For this we plead, "Come, Lord Jesus! Thy kingdom come. Take thy power, and reign."

But—and this is important—even *now* the Lord is reigning. John stresses this fact as well as the future reign. He loves to speak of God as "him who sits upon the throne." In fact he uses that word "throne" over and over. Leon Morris points out that "throne" appears in the New Testament sixty-two times, and forty-seven of those times are in Revelation (see chapter four, for example)! The book where the word is used the second oftenest is Matthew, where it appears only four times. John emphasizes God's present overruling in other ways, too. At least seven times he calls God "the *Lord God Almighty*." Jesus Christ is—note the present tense—"the ruler of kings on earth" (1:5). He holds the keys of Death and Hades (1:18). He breaks the seals of the 7-sealed scroll, thus summoning forth war, famine, death, and martyrdom. . . these awful horrors are under His control.

This assurance of God's sovereignty was vitally important to John's original readers in the Roman province of Asia. Tribulation had burst upon them because of their faith in Christ. The apostle

himself had been exiled to the island of Patmos. Antipas of Pergamum and perhaps other Christians had already been martyred. Some believers in Smyrna were soon to be imprisoned. (1:9; 2:13; 2:10.) Caesar's government was becoming more intolerant. Dark clouds were overhead. So the disciples needed to see by faith what John saw in actual vision: "Lo, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne!" (4:2). Don't we also need to see this?

PROBLEMS OF PROVIDENCE

The doctrine of God's providence or sovereignty presents difficulties to our minds. For instance, if God controls man and his choices, how then can He hold him responsible for his evil actions? How can He judge men? Our minds cannot now fathom all the depths of this problem, but we can at least say this: All men do God's will—His *permissive* will, that is. But some do it in true submission, love and cooperation, obeying Him gladly. Others, however, do His will—that is, fulfill His plans—unwillingly or perhaps unknowingly or perhaps even while resisting God and His commands. The latter are used by Him in spite of themselves. C. S. Lewis remarks, "The first man serves God as a son, and the second man as a tool. For you will certainly carry out God's purpose, however you act, but it makes a difference to you whether you serve like Judas or like John."

ANTICHRIST, GOD'S TOOL

Just as God's providence was in full effect when His Son was nailed to the cross (Acts 2:23; 4:27, 28), so it will be during the reign of the Antichrist or "man of lawlessness" or "beast." Second Thessalonians 2:9 says that his coming will be "by the activity of Satan." Yet verse 11 shows that *God* will use him to delude men who do not believe the truth but instead take pleasure in unrighteousness. Revelation 13:2, 4 says Satan, the "dragon" will give the beast his authority and power. Then in the following verses we read that the beast *was given* a mouth uttering blasphemy, and *was allowed* to exercise authority (v. 5). *It was allowed* to make war on and conquer the saints, and authority over all people *was given* to it (7). Then, regarding the "false prophet" or second beast of chapter 13, we read that it *is allowed* to work miracles and *is allowed* to slay those who won't worship the beast (14, 15). Who will give these powers and allow these activities? In other words, who will really be the director of the show? It might seem from verses 2 and 4 (quoted above) that Satan will be the one. And yet the final, ultimate permission for these things will come from God Himself. Daniel 7:25, 27 shows this, and so does Revelation 17:12-17. The latter passage tells of ten kings who "are to *receive* authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast; these are of one mind and give over their authority to the beast . . . for *God has put it into their hearts to carry out His purposes* by . . . giving their power to the beast, *until the words of God shall be fulfilled.*" Thus one commentator declares, "The sovereignty of God is never more apparent (to us) than during the rule of Antichrist!" (*New Bible Commentary*)

For us who love the Lord, the themes of providence and prophecy furnish great comfort. As the inspired writer says, "Let us be grate-

ful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe" (Heb. 12:28). *Look up into heaven* and behold the sovereign God upon His throne. *Look forward into the future* and behold the Lord Jesus returning with glory. This will strengthen our faith, stimulate our worship, and stir up our prayer.

God's Threefold Unity Plan

by J. R. Clark, 1946

First, God gave the *cross*, through which all Christians were to be reconciled in one body unto Him. The cross breaks down our stubborn wills and causes us no longer to live unto ourselves, but unto Him who for our sakes died and rose again. Thus genuine consecration to the Christ of the cross on the part of all will bring us to a common unity center, Christ, and thus together.

Next, He has given us His *Holy Spirit*, instructing us that "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" we should give "diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace." His Spirit dwells in the Christian and produces a disposition that in turn insures unity, for "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." With these characteristics one could but have the spirit of unity.

Chief among the Christian characteristics listed above is *love*, which deserves separate mention. In giving us the cross and the Spirit, God has also given us this divine spark, love, through which the objective of unity is in the immediate sense attained and maintained.

Thus when a better spirit comes among us we shall have a better unity.

We are all agreed that we should stand together on the fundamentals of the faith, on the conditions of salvation, and on the simple worship in order to have a basis of unity. *This basis we have already.*

As to other matters, such as prophecy, there must be allowed a certain amount of freedom. However, even here we have fundamental agreement. We all believe that Jesus is coming, that all will be raised from the dead, some to condemnation and some to life, that there is a future aspect to God's kingdom, and that all will come into judgment in one way or another, that the wicked will be condemned and that the righteous will be rewarded. Further than this, true unity will allow for our freedom in studying and bringing any verse or passage on this subject, even though we may not always see eye to eye as to details.

Unity which allows for freedom to study the whole Word of God without jeopardizing fellowship is rugged, strong and lasting, and will allow for growth in the body of Christ. Furthermore, it will tend toward bringing us all together in "the unity of the faith" while we maintain the unity of the Spirit.

This is the solution to the unity problem: Consecration to the cross, fulness of the Spirit, and the practice of love among ourselves.

40 Years of Ministry in the Philippines

Victor N. Broaddus

It was Sunday, December 9, 1951. The place was downtown Manila, Philippines on the edge of Chinatown. A small "store-front" church first opened its doors to proclaim the Good News of Jesus our Savior. Except for Victor and Mae Broaddus and their one year old son, Richard, everyone present in the filled auditorium were Chinese. All teaching was done by Victor in the Cantonese Chinese language.

Five weeks prior to that opening date, Victor and Mae had arrived in Manila to pioneer a new mission in the Philippines. Within a few days, they met the Lee family. Together they began visiting homes in the area, announcing their presence and purpose, along with invitations to attend meetings.

On that opening Sunday, the little auditorium was full—of children. The only adults present, besides the Broaddus family were Mrs. Lee, her daughter Lily, and Mrs. Kong. Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Kong were already immersed believers. Lily was immersed into Christ not long after.

By the second Sunday, two sessions were held: one class for the children, and preaching/worship service for adults. Early in January, a Filipina believer who worked in an office nearby was contacted. Mrs. Benavides was interested in having English Bible study and worship services. About that same time, three American Christian families arrived in Manila to build a pipe foundry for a local company. Together, they formed the nucleus for an English language congregation. In time, this grew to be a fairly large congregation made up almost entirely of Filipinos.

Attendance of Chinese children kept growing. By March of 1952 the first Daily Vacation Bible School was conducted. The little store-front was no longer adequate. A larger place for rent had to be found. About two blocks away was an old two story building which at one time had been the mansion of a provincial governor. Parts of the building on street level were occupied, the rest was available for rent. With minor renovations and many gallons of paint, the place served very well for the two growing congregations.

Within that first year, the Sunday schedule included Sunday School classes in two languages, followed by preaching and worship in English in the morning, and Chinese services in the afternoon. Evening was reserved for young people. This group later gave themselves the name "Soldiers of Christ."

Other American missionaries came to assist in this ministry. Dennis Allen arrived in 1954. He was married to Betty Knecht in Manila in 1956. In 1957 the Allens went to Hong Kong to work with the Chinese church there. The Harold Preston family arrived in Manila in 1958. They later moved to San Jose, Mindoro province in 1961 to join the nationals in an expanding ministry. They returned to the U.S.A. in 1966. Alex and Ruth Wilson went to Manila in 1962 and stayed there for about 20 years working mainly with high

school and college young people, and teaching at the Bible Institute. Billy Ray Lewter and family transferred from Hong Kong to Manila in 1968, staying for two years.

CENTRAL BIBLE INSTITUTE

In 1955, Dennis Allen and Victor Broaddus began what is now called Central Bible Institute. This was (and is) a three-year Bible training program to help develop church leaders, preachers, as well as strong Christians in all levels of society. There were nine students that first year, but within a few years it grew to around 25. First to graduate was Pat Arana, one of the original nine. The following year there was another graduate, Arsenio Eniego. Arsenio and Pat later became husband and wife, and continued at Central Bible Institute on the staff for a while. They moved to San Jose, Mindoro where they helped set up and direct Bethany Bible Institute. Presently, Arsenio and Pat are back in Manila as leaders of the church in downtown Manila.

It soon became evident that the old rented building was no longer adequate. Besides the two congregations meeting there, space was needed for more class rooms and dormitories as some students came from the provinces. Besides, that old building (built 1914) was only rented, and the owners were considering tearing it down for a high rise condominium.

After much prayer and seeking, a property for sale was found. The buildings on this property were very old and required much repair and remodeling. (The main part of the building had been a karate gymnasium.) The location, however, was excellent and it provided the space needed. The price was very reasonable, but, where was the money? It was felt that only a miracle from the Lord would make purchasing this property possible. *The Lord provided!*

After extensive repairs and remodeling, Central Bible Institute and the two congregations moved to the new location in 1967. Immediately the enrollment at C.B.I. doubled, and has continued to grow until it now ranges between 135 and 150.

Today, all teachers and staff of C.B.I. are Filipinos. The curriculum still consists of all Bible and Bible-related subjects. Not only do Christians come to study, but many others have come and learned about the Lord and His gift of salvation. Some come out of curiosity or other reasons, then accept Christ while there. Besides the college age students, there have also been school teachers, at least one principal, lawyers, policemen, office works, laborers, etc.

STRATEGIC LOCATION

The apostle Paul, in his missionary journeys, went to major centers of population. By teaching in such places as Ephesus, he and his co-workers were able to reach all surrounding areas with the message. Likewise, the downtown Manila church is central and strategic. It is within easy walking distance of several large universities, which have combined enrollment of well over 100,000 students. (A rich harvest field indeed!) Metropolitan Manila now has a population of about six million—a large proportion being mi-

grants from the provinces. Members of the church and Bible Institute in Manila represent a cross cut of almost the entire nation.

Emphasis has been put on planting and growing indigenous and autonomous churches. As a result of the work begun in Manila forty years ago, the Gospel has been proclaimed in many areas of the country. For instance: Jim Yee now leads a congregation of 200 and has planted three "daughter churches." Nemesio and Myrna Auxtero have planted 15 congregations, established Maranatha Bible College, and started a Christian school on the island of Bohol. Bro. Crispin Carado has pioneered three churches in Bulacan Province. In Occidental Mindoro there is now a Bible Institute and ten congregations. Churches have also been planted in Tarlac Province. Congregations have also been established by Filipino missionaries in some of the tribal areas of North Luzon.

The influence of C.B.I. has reached not only to many parts of the Philippines, but also around the world. One former student is now with Operation Mobilization in England. Another is with Child Evangelism in Cyprus. In spite of the extreme poverty all over the nation, the brethren have given sacrificially to the spread of the Gospel message.

TEACH THE BIBLE BETTER:

CHILDREN OF DIVORCE— CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS MUST RESPOND

Approximately 70 percent of divorcing couples have children under the age of 18. As Sunday school teachers, we must reach out to those children, providing loving and healing within the Family of God.

In *Surviving the Breakup* by Judith S. Wallenstein and Joan Berlin Kelly (Basic), the authors report that in their study of California single parent families, only 5 percent were counselled or sustained by a church congregation or minister. In the next decade, we must do better.

Jim Dycus, author of *Children of Divorce* (Cook) and *Not Guilty* (Harper), gives Sunday school teachers insight on how to help these children in their classes.

The child will often feel guilty: "I caused it."

Most children find themselves wishing harm to their parents—if only for a minute. When a divorce occurs, the children believe their wish caused it. Parents have represented stability and strength. Mom and Dad were always right and strong. Suddenly Mom and Dad can't handle something, and the child may think, "This must be my fault, since I'm the only one who does wrong things."

One three-year-old girl, for example, caught her divorced mother crying. The child ran off and returned with a big rock. Thinking she had caused her mother's pain, the girl said, "Here's a rock you can 'frow' at me, Mommy!"

A wise teacher will suspect the guilt exists, and talk with the child about it, helping the child recognize that the divorce belongs to his or her parents. It is a grown-up problem. The parents may say the same thing, but the truth rings stronger when it comes from an outsider.

The child may act as though she or he doesn't care about the divorce.

Divorce may be so traumatic that children protect themselves from hurting by adopting a noncaring attitude. When this happens the child needs help finding an outlet to express feelings. As a non-threatening third-person, you can ask "feeling" questions that encourage the child to express those deep feelings of loss he or she has held in—often for years.

The child may refuse to face the reality that one parent is not coming home again.

For many children, the hope for remarriage between Mom and Dad will continue long after all actual possibilities have faded. The parents were the child's security blanket and it has been removed.

Give the child time to get rid of this security blanket of false hope. A new relationship and a new life-style will take getting used to before the child's sense of belonging and security return. Provide as much security in your relationship as possible. Spend time with the child. Let him or her know that you care. Talk about God's special love for children and the security they can feel in that love.

Parents may worry that the child will not understand his or her role as male or female now that the same-sex parent is missing.

This worry should be a high priority for Sunday school teachers. Give the little boy or the little girl an appropriate hero to look up to. To begin this kind of role modeling, Sunday schools might explore Christian "Big Brother" and "Big Sister" programs. Consider having both a man and a woman in each Sunday school class, even if one takes the primary teaching responsibilities.

There are 1.25 million divorces and 1 million desertions every year—approximately 3,562 divorces every day, 148 a minute. Preparing to love and effectively teach the child of divorce is a priority of the Christian education program of the 90's.

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NEWS AND NOTES, cont. from inside front cover

Huntington, WV

At our church we have implemented a program of praying daily for certain people. Our elder of evangelism asked the members here to sign a card promising to pray for at least one person every day for a year. Over 40 people have taken up this challenge and are praying faithfully for God to lead others to Christ before the year is over. This elder, in turn, promises to pray for all of those who promised to pray

for others—on a daily basis also.

Praise the Lord, it is working! God is giving the increase because we are committed to prayer. In the past year we have seen 36 additions to the body here, 14 by immersion. And we have become a more caring, loving body of believers too.

Thank you for **Word & Work**, especially the Feb. issue on prayer.

—Larry McAdams, P.O.Box 3067,
Huntington, WV 25702

Re: our Feb. issue on Prayer

Last night as part of his sermon, our pastor read the entire article "Will and Emotions" by Sidlow Baxter. He also wants to have copies made of Bro. Olmstead's article, "Pray for Preachers," for the entire congregation.

—Lydia McCauley Waters, Cleves, OH
(Her minister first learned of W & W and then became a subscriber because she had shared copies of the magazine with him! Dear readers, why not go and do likewise—to the leaders and members of your church, and other friends. Verily, that would be a good work!—the Editor)

Dugger, Indiana

The Greene and Sullivan County, Indiana Churches of Christ (Dugger, Sullivan, Linton, Jasonville, Pleasant Grove, Somerville, Shiloh) joined forces to minister to teens March 9, 1991. 27 teens were in attendance. "Teen Meetings" are now being held every other weekend. We expect great growth from this ministry. —Dan Ford

Buechel Church, Louisville, KY

There are a lot of reasons to be excited about what God is doing at Buechel these days! Consider these:

1) Attendance is up about 50% from last summer on Sunday mornings, with 111 here last week. This is great, but I am also thrilled at what is happening at our other services. Sunday school has nearly doubled, Sunday night has over doubled, and Wednesday night is up almost 300%. Praise God!

2) We are becoming more "missions conscious." People are talking about missions, asking prayer for specific mission interests, etc. It was voted at business meeting this week to take up a special mission offering once a month. The promise of God to provide all our needs in Phil. 4:19 was made to a church that supported missions! Praise God!

3) The choir is up and running and improving week after week. Their special singing will add a lot to our worship together. Praise God!

4) Finances have been improving.

5) There is an increasing amount of fellowship among the folks here. We are learning how to love and care for each other. Praise God! —Duane Smith

Borden Ind.

Sunday, March 17, has been set aside as **Bring a Friend Sunday**. Be praying and preparing to invite someone that does not go to church, and especially those that are not Christians. Bringing people to the Lord is our main mission. If you invite someone, let me suggest the following things. Invite them early in the week and remind them later on in the week. Since they are not in the habit of attending worship services, they will need to be approached early and reminded later. Next, wait for them outside before services begin and save a place for them to sit by you. They may be uncomfortable with just showing up, and then to have to sit by themselves. Stay with them after the service is over and introduce them to a few people and the minister. It would be great if you could invite them to eat with you at home or out. This gives then a chance to ask you questions about the service while it is still on their minds. But even if they don't ask questions, sharing with them will show your concern for them is more than just getting them to church. Finally, but so important, pray for them and your witness. You will find the Lord will help. Let us make March 17 a great Sunday! —Mike Abbott

Denham Springs, Louisiana

Please find enclosed a brochure on the Stephen Olford Center For Biblical Preaching in Memphis, Tenn. I attended the March Institute on "The Essentials of Expository Preaching" and found it to be exactly what I needed. Because some of my brethren have expressed concern over some of the same challenges I was beginning to notice, it seems to me that they, too, could benefit from the Institute.

Our elders and congregation were very supportive of the trip and agreed to pay all expenses—institute and personal—for which I certainly thank the Lord. My plans are to attend the Nov. 11-14 institute also. —Don McGee

[Anyone wanting to know more may write bro. McGee at 128 St. Louis St., Denham Springs, LA 70726, or write the Center for Biblical Preaching, P.O. Box 757800, Memphis, TN 38175. Julius Hovan also has attended sessions there, and highly recommends it.]

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