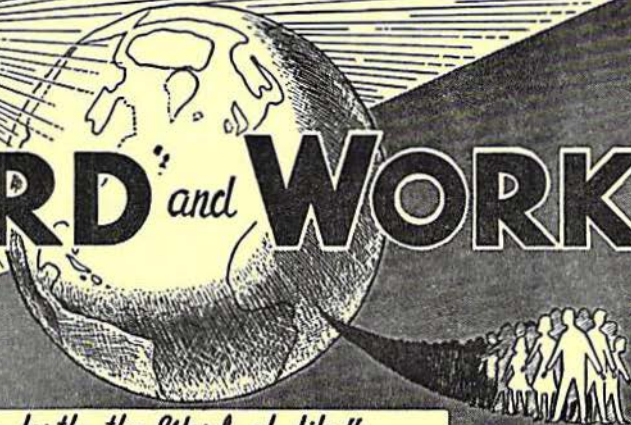


"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."



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

"Holding forth the Word of life."

MARCH, 1992

Let's Go!
Let's GROW!

**"EXPECT great things from GOD;
ATTEMPT great things for GOD."**

— William Carey, pioneer
missionary to India, 1792

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THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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MARCH, 1992

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THEME:

Let's Go! Let's GROW!

Alex V. Wilson

Once more we focus our attention on the problem, "How can we grow?" The "we" in this question is not just a particular group of so-called Churches of Christ. I read somewhere that 80% of U.S. congregations of *all* types and brands are either declining in size or at best are merely holding their own. But since most of our readers are members of Churches of Christ, naturally our thoughts have been mainly about them.

One in-depth study indicates that among "mainline" Churches of Christ, the average congregation baptizes only seven people a year. Four of those are children of members; only three are "outsiders." And when you subtract the members who die, and converts who don't stick, and members who either move away or fall away from their commitment... the result in most cases is loss, not growth. There are happy exceptions, of course, but that is the general trend.

Prayer has been promoted,
accompanied, we trust, by hope.

So let's arouse ourselves, seek the Lord Christ for the wisdom and power from on high that we desperately need, trust Him to answer our cry (surely He wants to), and then step out to obey, sacrifice and serve. May Christ move us to "rescue the perishing, care for the dying... tell them of Jesus the Mighty to save."

VARIOUS FACETS OF GROWTH AND COMMITMENT

Inward, spiritual growth is a prerequisite to the outer, numerical growth we yearn for. Read what former editor R. H. Boll says about recovering our first love, our commitment to *our Savior Himself*. Then Bob Ross calls us to practical commitment to *our brothers and sisters* in His family. That too is essential, and yet we must not stop there lest we become all wrapped up in ourselves. So Hollace Sherwood prods us to stretch helpful hands to *outsiders*, especially the poor and needy. Then Harry Robert Fox reminds us to share the Gospel of salvation with *those in distant lands*: our commission extends to all peoples everywhere. Yet if we are to send out mature workers, we must *train them* first. Earl Mullins Sr., Dennis Kaufman, and an example from Manila elaborate on that need.

These three issues of *Word and Work* (plus "Should Churches Merge? Should Churches Close?" in Dec.) have not solved all the problems nor answered all the questions we raised—"Can we grow again? Why have we declined? What are God's remedies?" Of course we never expected them to. But based on many comments and notes from readers, we believe some helpful results have taken place. Thought, study and discussion have been stimulated. Doubts and questions have been brought out into the open—a necessary but often painful prerequisite for progress. Prayer has been promoted, accompanied, we trust, by hope. We have enough materials on hand to continue these subjects for another month or two, but instead we shall switch to other topics for several issues. Lord willing, later on this year we shall return to these questions. So keep thinking, studying, discussing, and writing about them. And remember to be thankful for the good as well as seeking to change the bad. Please send us reports about GOOD THINGS GOD IS DOING TODAY. It will encourage others as they soldier on for Christ.

Above all, let's pray more. Several weeks ago in a sermon I mentioned a preacher in southern Kentucky in the late 1790's, named James McGready. He was deeply burdened because that region was infested with thieves and murderers, and ungodliness was rampant. So he made a covenant with the Lord to set aside one

Join us at the Throne!

Saturday monthly to fast and pray for spiritual awakening. The results were amazing as believers were aroused from apathy and many sinners repented and turned to Christ. In fact, his meetings were the origin of the "camp meeting" movement that swept the frontier for decades. There is a direct connection between McGready on his knees and Barton Stone/Cane Ridge/the western Restoration Movement. I am delighted that a number of believers at our church responded to those facts by saying, "We too need revival; let's fast and pray for it." We have set aside the second Saturday morning of each month to seek God for revival. Join us at the Throne!

THOSE OUTSTANDING '92s

The '92 years have often been very significant. No need to remind you of 1492 and its impact on history. In 1792 Kentucky became the fifteenth state in the U.S.A., but more important than that, it was the year that William Carey of England went forth as a missionary to India. His writing, preaching and example spear-headed the "modern missionary movement," and it is hard to improve on his motto: "*Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.*" Then in 1892, J. M. McCaleb began a long and fruitful missionary career in Japan, briefly described in this issue. O Lord, make 1992 also a great year for Your purposes and glory!

The Loss of First Love

R. H. Boll

A GOOD CHURCH'S FAULT

The church at Ephesus had, as the Lord viewed her, but one fault, and that fault only in its first beginning. Ephesus was a church that worked—nay, she *toiled*, and that with endurance and in steadfastness: she bore burdens for His Name's sake and did not grow weary. Moreover, she had a determination to keep herself pure: whole lump: she could not bear evil men. She knew the truth also, and could and did test certain pretended apostles and convicted them of fraud. The works of the Nicolaitans which the Lord hated, she hated as heartily. For all these things the Lord commended her, and had He stopped with this praise Ephesus would have been a model for all other congregations of Christ. But there was one thing the Lord Jesus had against her: "*Thou hast left thy first love.*" If we think the criticism but a slight one; if we estimate that her labor and toil and rectitude and doctrinal soundness would make up for a lapse so slight, it would only prove the falseness of our own standards. This was so serious a failure in the Lord's eyes that unless remedied, despite *all* her work, toil, strictness in morals and doctrine, the Lord must remove her candlestick.

WHEN LOVE FAILS

The first love of the church at Ephesus was gone. It ought to have remained and grown broader and deeper. All love had not vanished, of course, but an awful meaning lay in the fact that love was going. The farmer who sees his crop shrinking, shriveling, withering, gets little comfort from the fact that all the green has not disappeared. The end and issue of it is all too certain. Thus it was with the church at Ephesus. The decline once begun and unchecked, would gain speed till love was lost. Then only a certain sort of works, toil, endurance, discipline, and "sound doctrine" would remain. Moreover, these had also begun to lose their value and were becoming wholly worthless. For "if I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2, 3). It has been said that you cannot love without giving; but it is as certainly true that you can give without loving—yes, and work, and toil, and preach, and contend against error, and fight sin: all this and much more commendable work can be done, and often is done, from motives other than love for God and for men. And what is it worth? For without love nothing is right, nothing is done as it ought to be, nothing is real and genuine. Into the work and labor creeps self-righteousness and legalism; into the discipline mingles hatred and prejudice; zeal becomes mere party-interest; contending for truth is turned into proud contempt and condemnation of others, bitter denunciations of offenders, or even of such as have been less

avored than ourselves in their opportunities to see and know the truth. In any case, when love departs all things spoil. Christianity itself loses its distinctive nature, and ceases to be Christianity. Like the conclave of the Pharisees (for Pharisaism in its bad sense is religion without love) so the professed church from which love has fled, becomes but a synagogue of Satan.

THE REMEDY

The Lord's remedy for the restoration of love is this: "Remember whence thou art fallen;" "Repent;" and, "Do the first works." The first reminds and recalls the first devotion to Him who loved us and redeemed us. The contrast between the then and the now may bring the yet tender heart down in shame and humble penitence. Was there not a time when we sang,

"How happy are they who their Savior obey,
And have laid up their treasures above;
Tongue cannot express the sweet comfort and bliss
Of a soul in its earliest love."

Have times changed since then? Has a sense of distance, of coldness, of estrangement come over us? Has the joy, the sweet confidence, the unquestioning hope, the tender piety vanished? We are apt to think He has withdrawn His face. We may yet sing, but in the minor keys.

"Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His word?"

But there is help already in this step. Just as the Prodigal son's recollection of the good home he had left was the beginning of his restoration, so if this sense and pain of loss is duly followed up by a return to Jesus, it means healing. For there has been a departure somewhere. Some earth-born cloud has risen up—alas, by our permission!—and has hid His face from us. Search now and see what is the sin, what the wrong, what the doubtful thing, you have tolerated in your life, or what new and unworthy affection of things below has crowded out the love of Jesus. Put it away. Repent. Come back to Jesus your Lord. Tell Him all. He will not look in anger upon you nor upbraid. And then—start over. "Do the first works." Works they had in full plenty at Ephesus; but the Lord brushes them aside. He wants a new beginning. He wants new works of the old sort—the first works done in the simplicity of the first faith and love. Back of these is the first of the first works: "This is the work of God that ye believe in him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29).

WHY THE CANDLESTICK MUST GO

The failure of the church to return to the first love would result in the loss of her candlestick, the Lord declared. This was not arbitrary; it was inevitable. The candlestick represents the church's testimony to Jesus Christ in the night of this age. A true, loving

church; a true loving Christian—these are proofs to the world of the life and character of our Lord. In us only can the world see Christ. The church's life and conduct in love is the gospel translated into action; the testimony of Christ in living pictures. It is the living representation (and therefore the offer) of Christ to the world: it will attract all who will be attracted by Christ. The church shows forth Christ, manifest in men. For He alone is the Light of the world; it is only as *He* shines in the church and in each of its individual members, that the church can shine. She has no light of her own; she is only the lampstand—the light-holder. It is inevitable therefore, that when the church declines in love she must lose her candlestick. An unloving church cannot represent and exhibit to the world the Lord whose mission, life, and death, is summed up in the word Love; who Himself is Love. She can only misrepresent Him. Whether it is love to God, to Christ, or to the brethren and the world, they hang together. "We love because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19.) His love for us returns in our love to Him, and flows out in love to those whom He loves. Do not tell me you love man unless you love God *first*; nor tell me you love God if you love not men. And without this love you can shed no light for Christ. Your works may compel the world's notice and applause; and your learning and eloquence command its admiration. Your scripture knowledge, according to the letter, may be as amazing as that of the scribes in Jesus' time. Yet for all that you do not shine for *Him*; and except for the scripture words abstracted from the lips that spoke them, and considered apart from the unloving personality and motive back of them, you shed a false, delusive ray; and those that follow it will be like unto you.

DOING RIGHT IN A WRONG SPIRIT

Speaking of the situation at Ephesus of her commendable works and failing love, a noted writer says: "I am quite sure that there may be right things done in a wrong spirit. I seldom find men strenuously fighting . . . heterodox teaching, and in bitter language denouncing false doctrine, without being more afraid for the denouncers than for the denounced. There is an anger against impurity which is itself impure. There is a zeal for orthodoxy which is most unorthodox. There is a spirit that contends for faith which is in conflict with faith. If men have lost their first love they will do more harm than good by their defence of the faith. Behind the denunciation of sin there must always be the tenderness of the first love if that denunciation is not to become evil in its bitterness. Behind the zeal for truth there must always be the spaciousness of first love if that zeal is not to become narrowed into hate. There have been men who have become so self-centered in a narrowness that they are pleased to designate as 'holding the truth,' that the very principle for which they contend has been excluded from their life and service. All zeal for the Master that is not the outcome of love to Him is worthless . . . It is impossible to witness for Christ in the darkness of the world except in the power of first love. It is the first love of the saints that is the true light that shines in a dark place."

And how we have been anxious and exercised over many points, and lost view of the one thing needful!

TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH

The Lord's final word to Ephesus is a gracious promise "to him that overcometh." Overcometh what? Even this fatal, all too common tendency to decline in love. Be sure there will be a pull here. The enemy knows too well the importance of this point not to concentrate his utmost power on it. "Because iniquity shall abound," and on account of unbelief and carelessness and the deceitfulness of sin—"the love of many shall wax cold." I fear there are some in the church who have never become so acquainted with Jesus as to let their first faith deepen into personal love. I fear there are others who once loved and let the cares of this world and the lust of other things entering in obscure His image in their hearts—perhaps forever. Remember—repent—do the first works. To him who overcomes—in the garden of God with his Lord he shall walk and eat at Jesus' hand of the fruit of the Tree of life forever. For where love is there is life, and life worth living for evermore. There is no love in hell. But those who have tasted the love of Jesus here, and in whose heart sprang up the response of true love to Him; those who have found love here, and have labored and suffered in love, love will be their portion and inheritance unto the ages of ages.

Which Way for the Church?

[Conclusion]

J. Robert Ross

In last month's article we saw that each generation of professing Christians must decide whether it will be a religious circus or the servant body of Christ. Will it exist for itself or for others? Now we look at a second serious option that confronts us.

A COLLECTION OF FREE-LANCE CHRISTIANS, OR A COMMITTED COVENANT COMMUNITY?

Either the church becomes a covenant community or else it will lose all hope of affecting and transforming the loneliness, isolation and alienation which torments modern man. This is a special challenge for the conservative, doctrinally orthodox church, which has boasted of its faithfulness to the Word of God. For as Francis Schaeffer has reminded us there is an orthodoxy of practice as well as an orthodoxy of teaching. "In the 20th century people all over the world will not listen if we have the right doctrine, the right polity, but are not exhibiting community."

We have distorted and forgotten the biblical meaning of *ecclesia*, which is usually translated "church." We have almost completely restricted the church to the congregation, the collection of people who gather on Sunday mornings to observe the weekly performance of their preacher. The New Testament *ecclesia* was a community

of believers who were joined together in heart and soul by one Lord, one faith, one baptism, etc. (Eph. 4:4-6). In other words, the *ecclesia*, although it was perhaps most visible in its assembly, nevertheless in its essence was not an assembly; it was a *koinonia*, a sharing of a common life in Jesus Christ. And until we recover this unity of life and purpose and until it is expressed in a life and death commitment to one another we cannot claim to have restored the New Testament church.

Today we have reduced the biblical *koinonia* to "fellowship;" and that is something we reserve for a "fellowship supper" which we eat in a "fellowship hall" on one night a month. And this really is nothing more than a few likeminded friends socializing on the same level as the Thursday afternoon bridge club.

ACCEPTING OTHERS, AND SERVING THEM

But the early church knew *koinonia* as a sharing of one's entire life in Jesus Christ. This meant, first of all, an unconditional acceptance of one another without regard to social, economic, racial or religious origins. The church was the *only* place in the first century where slave and master, man and woman, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, Pharisee and publican all received one another as brothers and sisters in one family—and only because they had all been adopted by one father through his Son Jesus Christ. The church today has a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate the power of the love of God through the mutual acceptance of the many antagonistic groups which are at enmity apart from the reconciling deed of Christ. Would not the world sit up and take notice, if we were not look alike, smell alike, dress alike midwesterners, but if we were one body of blacks and whites, Anglo-Saxons and Poles and Italians, if our fellowship included some released convicts, and working men and corporation executives? Yes, the world would notice such a church. They would wonder with eyes wide open that such people could love one another, pray together, sing together, and laugh and cry together. But the sad fact is that we have not demonstrated such unity, and so the world does not pay us much attention.

In the second place biblical *koinonia* means mutual submission to and service of one another. The model for such self-giving is the Lord of the church, who girded himself with a towel and got down on his knees to wash the feet of his own disciples. To know Jesus, to have him wash our feet, is to learn to wash one another's feet, to "love one another with brotherly affection" and to "outdo one another in showing honor" (Rom. 12:10). It means that each of us counts the other better than himself and that we look out for our brother's interests, not our own (Phil. 2:3,4). I do not say that this does not happen today in the church. I only say that it happens too rarely and that the very being of the church depends upon it happening more and more. Submission is not something we emphasize in modern America, especially to people who are rich or

powerful. But the submission which is the essence of the church has the master serving the slave, the man serving the woman and the "righteous" serving the "sinner."

DISCIPLINE, AND SHARING

In the third place, biblical *koinonia* means discipline. To be committed to one another means that we really care about one another. So we have to care when a member of our family is messing himself up. Divine discipline is a sign of genuine sonship (Heb. 12:7-8). Not to correct and chasten a child implies that we have no special relationship to him or that we have rejected our commitment for his welfare. Likewise in the fellowship we must learn anew the meaning of "church discipline." This will not be as hard as we think if we have met the first two criteria of Christian fellowship: unconditional acceptance and mutual submission and service. It is obvious today that discipline in the average church would be almost meaningless. To refuse fellowship to a member for committing adultery would predictably have little effect because the fellowship which is withdrawn from him means so little to him. And the fact that we have been so little concerned with his ongoing life before the act of discipline means that we possess little or no authority to interfere in his life at the point of his sin against God and neighbor. When we learn to love one another, to become deeply involved in every dimension of one another's life, we will discover that we have achieved a moral authority over one another. Discipline from those who have given their lives to us is meaningful. And best of all, it is redemptive.

In the fourth place, biblical *koinonia* means a sharing of our lives on the material and economic level. In the early church this economic interdependence led to a common treasury, and those who had property gladly sold it in order to share with their fellow believers who had any need (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32; 6:1ff.). This economic fellowship in the church at Jerusalem is usually interpreted as a rather unusual, even aberrant, practice which was soon discontinued and, therefore, has no relevance for us today. However, a close reading of the Corinthian correspondence demonstrates that the Apostle Paul took it for granted that Christians would always share with one another. The Apostle expects that "as a matter of equality" those who had plenty should share with those who had little (2 Cor. 8:14). And it is not as though he were introducing some radically new economic principle, for even the Old Testament had laid down the principle of equality among the people of God: "He who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack" (Ex. 16:18 quoted in 2 Cor. 8:15).

Our lack of true biblical fellowship is most clearly and damagingly manifested in our economic independence. I do not wish to lay down rules here for the exact manner in which we must begin to demonstrate true fellowship in this level. (Can fellowship be legislated?) But I suggest as a bare minimum that we begin with

financial disclosures. Let us at least trust one another with how well or how poorly we are doing and how we are spending the money which passes through our hands.

The alternatives which the church confronts here have the potential for either the saving or the losing of her soul. *The Church is covenant community*, and we must make that real. And if someone asks how to start, here is Francis Schaeffer's suggestion:

Don't start a big program. Don't suddenly think you can add to your church budget and begin. Start personally and start in your homes. Begin by opening up your home for community.

I want to ask you something if you are white. In the past year, how many blacks have felt at home in your home? On the basis of Scripture, open your home to the blacks, and if they invite you, go with joy into their homes. Have them feel at home in your home. Then you will be able to begin to talk with them and your church can jump across this division as it should, but not before.

How many times have you risked an unantiseptic situation by having a girl who might easily have a sexual disease sleep between your sheets? We have girls come to our homes who have three or four abortions by the time they are 17. Is it possible they have venereal disease? Of course. But they sleep between our sheets. How many times have you let this happen in your home? Don't you see this is where we must begin? This is what the love of God means.

[*The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*]

OUR HIGH CALLING

Perhap the most awesome, the most humbling aspect of redemption is the way God has focused his eternal purposes in the church—of all things. According to Ephesians the eternal purpose and wisdom of God are now made known to the universe in and through the church (3:9,10). In other words, God intends to draw us together here in Detroit—or Chicago, or Los Angeles, or Bone Gap, Ill.—in order to demonstrate his power to overcome the social, political and spiritual sickness which afflicts the human race. Just like industrialists often construct small pilot plants to demonstrate the methodology and feasibility of a new manufacturing process, so God through Christ calls together a people, a colony of heaven on earth, to embody the reality of the New Creation right now on this old, sin cursed globe called Earth.

Fantastic! A privilege that none of us could ever have imagined in our most ambitious dreams. To be the servant body of Christ, to be a covenant community with a life and death commitment to each other—this is our opportunity, this is our privilege. This is God's gift to us through the victorious, reconciling deed of Jesus Christ.

"Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, to him be the glory in the church" (Eph. 3:20,21).

A Missions Project Might Help Your Congregation

Hollace Sherwood

We have read in *The Word and Work* that some Churches of Christ are closing. We have been asked to offer suggestions. Perhaps a missions project might help your congregation. The High Lysine Corn Project has helped the Bryantsville, Indiana, congregation.

Please do not misinterpret that statement. The Bryantsville church is small and has its problems. However, some good things are happening.

The High Lysine Corn Project has allowed the congregation to look beyond themselves and to consider the needs of others. Everyone knows that the work and the money spent on corn for hungry people in Central America, Mexico, or Haiti can never be repaid by those individuals that receive it. The work and the money must be given to the Lord in a spirit of helpfulness, and thankfulness, and neighborliness. This attitude was summarized last October when the churches in the Mitchell area participated in a "Crop Walk" in order to provide corn to hungry people in Mexico. The minister in charge began with a prayer and started the walk with the cry: "We walk for Others!" That cold, windy Sunday afternoon walk sent 1100 bags of corn to Mexico.

The Corn Project has allowed young and old to work together. Young men and women from junior high school work together with senior citizens and have a good time while they are doing it. "Refreshment Time" becomes "Fellowship Time" as men and women, young and not-so-young, take a break.

There have been spin-offs from the Corn Project. Some of the women at Bryantsville are meeting on Wednesday mornings for a Bible Class and to sew for children in Haiti. They are making new outfits which will be sent along with the corn when a way is found to get the corn to Haiti. The Gospel of John in Spanish has been included in some of the bags of corn going to Mexico and Honduras. A Baptist Church near us in their own project sent Spanish New Testaments in every bag. They put the corn in 30 lb. bags so they could send more New Testaments. (Praise the Lord.)

Vacation Bible Schools have used the project for their mission offerings. Sunday school classes have used the project for their specials offerings. One church in Terre Haute let the children put money in a "piggy bank" in the shape of a pig and generated enthusiasm as they "fed the pig."

Perhaps the most important aspect of a Mission Project is the cultivation of fellowship between churches. Churches may differ on theological grounds but all agree on helping those who are in

need. This particular project has broadened the fellowship between churches. We have found Christians where we did not expect them. It has been important for us to realize that Christians working together do indeed make up the Lord's Church.

Not every congregation could have a corn project but every congregation could have a mission project. Find one that fits your congregation and then get everyone involved.

CENTENNIAL REFLECTIONS

On Missionary Work in Japan

Harry Robert Fox

During 1992 millions of people will be marking the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas; thousands of others will be observing the 100th anniversary of J. M. McCaleb's arrival in Japan as one of the first missionaries sent to Japan by Churches of Christ.

Brother and Sister McCaleb together with several others, went to Japan in 1892. From then until World War I a few others went. After the war a second group of missionaries went, mainly in the years 1918, 1919 and 1920 when the E. A. Rhodes, O. D. Bixler, Harry R. Fox and Herman J. Fox families went, followed five years later by the B. D. Moreheads. During approximately that same period five single women also went: Sarah Andrews(1916), Lillie

He stayed in Japan
for almost 50 years. . .

Cypert(1917), Hettie Lee Ewing, Clara Kennedy and Emma Beach. They were followed in 1928 by the Carl Eppers and in 1937 by the Elbridge Linns.

Since I was born in Japan to the Harry R. Fox family in 1921 and have been involved in the work off and on for the past 70 years, I would like to do some reminiscing to see if anything can be learned from that 100-year mission effort. First, I want to focus on Brother McCaleb. It is doubtful if many of the others would have gone had it not been for him. He stayed in Japan for almost 50 years and spent all of that time in Tokyo where he bought a large piece of land on which he erected his own residence, a church building and

a men's dormitory to accomodate students attending nearby universities. He also founded a monthly church paper entitled "Michi Shirube"—or "Way Show-er" in English.

Brother McCaleb was the first American I remember meeting (other than my parents). I was about three. We were seated at his breakfast table eating oatmeal. Whereas I finished eating in just a few minutes it seemed like an eternity before he finished. Of all the people I have met, Brother McCaleb came closer to personifying slow motion than anyone else. He believed it to be essential to chew every spoonful of oatmeal 40 times!

Slow motion aside, Brother McCaleb was a great man of God who was a pillar of strength to his fellow missionaries. He was friendly, congenial, courteous and, above all, dignified. In addition to establishing and ministering to the Zoshigaya church next door to his home, he made himself available to missionaries and Japanese co-workers for consultation. He believed in taking care of himself by getting adequate Sleep, Air, Food and Exercise which he summarized under the acronym SAFE. Living that way he lived to be 93.

After the McCalebs had served in Japan for 15 years, Sister McCaleb and their three children returned to the United States. Brother McCaleb decided to remain alone in Tokyo. Sister McCaleb died in the early 1930's and Brother McCaleb returned to Los Angeles in 1941 at the age of 80. Soon afterward he married Elizabeth Reeves and spent the remaining 13 years of his life in Los Angeles near the Pepperdine College campus. He taught a course on Missions at Pepperdine which I took and thereby was given an opportunity to know him further.

In addition to his missionary work in Japan, brother McCaleb wrote some 400 poems, the best known of which was a missions hymn entitled "The Gospel is for All." He also wrote seven books, the two best known of which were published by the Gospel Advocate Company in Nashville, entitled *Once Traveled Roads* (1934) and *On the Trail of the Missionaries* (1930). The first is an autobiography and the second is his report of a round-the-world tour he took in 1929 to visit missions of his American brethren.

If Brother McCaleb had not gone to Japan, my parents probably would not have gone and I would not have been born there. So what I want to do next month is to reflect back over the influences which led me back to Japan.

What's a Saint?

Why were the saints, saints? Because they were cheerful when it was difficult to be cheerful, patient when it was difficult to be patient; and because they pushed on when they wanted to stand still, and kept silent when they wanted to talk, and were agreeable when they wanted to be disagreeable. That was all.

It was quite simple and always will be.

Central Bible Institute

—A Strategic Ministry—

Surely a *geographic* priority in world missions today is Asia, for OVER HALF of earth's population lives there (that's not a misprint)! And a *strategic* priority in missions is the training of local workers and leaders: missionaries should seek to work themselves out of a job. Paul told Timothy to give special attention to training men who were faithful and also capable of teaching others (2 Tim. 2:2). That is, don't just teach people to learn, but teach them to teach—pass it on!

One example of such a ministry for over 35 years is Central Bible Institute in Manila, Philippines. Of course I am biased in its favor, having been privileged to teach there for years. But in preparing this issue on *Let's Grow*, and wanting to give some special attention to missions, I felt the following excerpts from a CBI newsletter were very fitting. From small beginnings (once or twice I taught a class with only one student enrolled), it has grown by God's blessing to have an international influence. —Alex Wilson

Exceeding Our Goals

Virgilio Torrefiel, CBI President

When CBI was founded in 1955 by American missionaries, the primary objective was to equip laymen who would assist their churches in ministry. But graduates found the quality of training they acquired was adequate for the level of the "clergy." It is not surprising therefore that alumni occupy the pulpits of churches in Metro Manila and some parts of the Philippines to proclaim the whole counsel of God in the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 3:2).

In CBI, students increasingly catch the vision for fervent evangelism and persistent missionary work. Deeply motivated to heed God's calling, a number of alumni boldly abandoned their professions and high paying jobs in favor of God's missions. Some of them are serving as missionaries to foreign lands such as Sri Lanka, Cyprus, Micronesia, Europe and England. Others have been called to church planting in Metro Manila and the provinces. Consequently, new local churches emerged. In the light of the impressive outcome of its alumni and the vision to enhance its academic excellence, CBI now offers the degree of Bachelor of Theology (it started in 1983). New and relevant subjects are also integrated into the curriculum. As of now, we are offering B.Th. in Pastoral Studies, Christian Education and hopefully in Missions.

[In addition to the four-year Bachelor courses mentioned, there is also a one-year course in discipleship, and a three-year course in "lay ministries." —AVW]

The Importance of Training "Laymen and Laywomen"

Herman A. Moldez, a longtime teacher at CBI

CBI emphasizes lay training. Its basic philosophy is to teach the Bible to anyone who is interested in studying it. Unlike other Bible schools (which chiefly prepare students for pastoral ministry) CBI aims to equip the laity to be effective servants of Jesus Christ wherever they are and whatever profession they may have.

Equipping the laity is a very challenging task facing the Church today. The laity is the greatest force in reaching the world for Christ. Living and working in a secular setting, it is in strategic contact with non-Christians.

In one of the plenary sessions in the Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization held in Manila, the participants who were converted to Christ through lay-witness were asked to stand up. My estimate was that more than 80% stood up. Most of the leaders of local churches and parachurch organizations became Christian through the witness of ordinary Christians.

CBI is not just a lay Bible school. It is also geared towards training future church workers and missionaries.

CAN WE GROW?

Earl C. Mullins Sr.

Let me say first that our *primary* interest should be in the proclamation of the Gospel and the promotion of the church-at-large, not just "us." Also we should be in fellowship with all those whom we acknowledge to be saved, not just those who agree with us within some set of limits. Too often we set doctrinal limits far narrower than the teachings having to do with the person of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Plus in many cases these limits are narrower than the question of "What must I do to be saved?"

But we turn now to the questions being raised in this special series of articles about the decline in our churches. We find that the reasons for decline are not so easy to put a finger on. The answers are neither obvious or simple. However, I believe, there are some identifiable contributing factors.

One major factor has to do with our lack of interest in supporting quality education which is Biblical and academically sound. That is, we have not as a group been behind Christian education at any level. This is true whether you are talking about Christian schools and colleges or whether you are talking about the Sunday school level of Christian education.

Certainly there are congregations and individuals who are very interested, involved and supportive of all levels of Christian education. However, as a fellowship in the past 90 years we have been able to keep only one school (elementary through high school) going,

though at least three others have been established. On the level of higher education, we have been unable to have even one four-year Bible college or training school much less a liberal arts college at any time through these years. Also our efforts with a junior college, Bible institute and training school have not been smashing success stories. Along this line we have been able to maintain only one adult Sunday school publication and one monthly publication. Yet most of the Restoration groups have several such educational entities and many publications, and there is more to this than the difference in the size of the groups. (Zechariah 4:6-10)

Due to the lack of support for Christian education institutions of our own, we have not had many young people who are trained at the post-college or even college level with the Biblical doctrinal emphasis of "our" fellowship.

Also those who have been interested in teaching at the college level in Christian institutions have had to "leave" our fellowship. I personally struggled with this decision off and on for several years. Weighing the giving up of a goal to teach in a Christian college against staying with this fellowship is not easy. But through the years the result of decisions on the part of several has drained us of many well-trained leaders, and over the long haul has had devastating effects. One such effect has been that many young people interested in the Lord's work are forced to go to colleges of other groups, with many ending up working with those groups. We have likewise turned to other groups for materials, publications of all kinds, and for "experts" in various areas because of the limited scholarly endeavor within our own ranks.

Another characteristic which has contributed to the lack of academic Christian works and other endeavors for the Lord is our inability to work together. Much of this is due to our not practicing what we preach. For a group who has placed so much emphasis on the grace of God and freedom in Christ, we have been most "ungracious" toward those within our fellowship. Grace and freedom in Christ are probably two of the most difficult concepts to put into practice in one's relationship with others. Such passages as Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians are easier to practice in dealing with those "outside" our fellowship because we understand (a) we differ with them, and (b) we know our working together or our drawing on their resources is only within limits. In many instances we extend grace to others, but demand exactness of agreement from those within our own ranks.

A third factor which has contributed to our lack of reaching out is that we have had very few who are willing to run the faith-risk of living beyond the security of our culture, and of learning to depend on the Lord to meet our needs through His people. Paul found this to be a very difficult way of life (Philippians 4, etc.). But this is related to freedom in Christ and the grace of God.

What we mean is, under our American business system or law, "A laborer is worthy of his hire"—here and now. It is the "right" of

the laborer to be secure. That was not the demand of the New Testament leaders, even though it was the goal of the law and of the teaching of the inspired New Testament writers for each believer as they grow in Christ. But those leaders "launched out" believing the promises of the Lord were still valid, and that He would keep them. He would meet their needs in His own time and way.

SOME SOLUTIONS

The pin-pointing of the Lord's *solutions* to our needs is as difficult as knowing the real *causes* of our present dilemma. But there are some matters which need our prayerful and studied attention.

It will take a consciousness on our part of the difficulty of maintaining a fellowship within the Body of Christ without it becoming in practice an independent entity. The so-called interdenominational and independent groups are themselves very much "quasi-denominations."

It will mean a conscious return to the New Testament reality, that the claims of the Christian world of "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, I am of Christ" is not of Christ today any more than it was in the first century. The use of the name of Christ to exclude others in Christ rather than include them is not acceptable to Him.

The goal to be "just a Christian" and at the same time have an identifiable fellowship within the Body of Christ will require a true working of the grace of God within us, and an exercising of freedom in Christ (per 1 Corinthians 8 and Romans 14) toward one another that is beyond much of what we see in Christian ranks today.

Also along this line there is a need to recognize that the concept of congregational autonomy is not as explicitly taught in the New Testament as is the fellowship and unity of believers within the framework of "one body" that stretches across geographical boundaries. Our working together in identifying and encouraging the use of talents and skills for the body as a whole is necessary. Thankfully, this is being done to some degree in lectureships, seminars, publications, and educational activities.

Equally the need for every believer to run the "faith-risk" in every aspect of life regardless of what vocation or avocation the Lord may lead us into is essential. The Lord has blessed this country with more than material goods. There are talents and skills of his people which are being used both directly and indirectly in furthering the American enterprise while only "tipping the hat" to God on Sunday a.m. I am not talking about more church activities, but more involvement on the part of the various "body members" with the Word first of all (Hebrews 5:14). Then the allowing of the Living Word freedom to live out His life in every situation of our lives. Leaders can encourage, and demonstrate this way of living but they cannot do it for the various members of the body.

As we interact with the written and living Word, we will be forced to exercise grace toward others in giving them the freedom in Christ to be different as we grow with them in Christ.

"Just a School," or "OUR School?"

C. Dennis Kaufman

Over the last two years, I have had the opportunity to be more involved with the Portland Christian School. This has included having two daughters who attend, teaching a senior psychology class, and the privilege of doing both individual and group counseling with some students. Being true to my analytical self, this involvement has yielded a number of mental notes which I now feel a need to put on paper.

As with other of our brotherhood efforts, we have many people of deep faith and commendable dedication within the Portland School. I would like to personally affirm the staff, and in essence, publish this article as an advocate for you who serve there.

I suppose my greatest concern revolves around the "oppression" that can occur to any mission effort within an ailing brotherhood. As the base of support for PCS has shrunk, the budget has been trimmed again and again. Even if salaries were doubled, it would not catch the staff up with average income levels in our community. Now please understand, I have heard all the arguments about our reward being in heaven and low pay being a sign of sacrifice. But, what we need to realize is that the staff serves a student body that no longer interprets things that way. I have overheard students laughing about what teachers work for. It is no longer viewed as a loving sacrifice, but rather a lack of dignity and self-worth. That, my friends, becomes a resounding blow to school morale and spirit. Also, space does not allow a discussion of how many fine teachers/helpers/staff are lost or unobtainable because of insultingly low salaries.

Another facet of this oppression is the burnout factor. When the squeeze is on, and full staffing is a pipe dream, people end up in positions they are not trained for, and with responsibilities they separately do not want. This can be deadly to a person's spiritual and emotional well-being, but often there seems no way out because "somebody has to do it." There is a certain sense of prophetic rage that I feel when I watch a system trap people like this. Again, staff (or students) functioning in areas they are ill-prepared for negatively impacts and zaps the strength of an institution, often pushing it into a downward spiral that is difficult to reverse.

So what do we do? The answers are difficult, and certainly not of the magical variety that we often ask God for. I believe the first step involves determining whether we really want a school. Nothing in Scripture says we must, but if we choose to have one, we are accountable to support the workers. It is not the purpose of this article to beg for funding. The support I am talking about goes much deeper than that. It's about our consistent, personal interest in the people at PCS. Without a significant number of people willing to give that, we may end up doing more harm than good.

The other practical way I think we can most benefit the school is by sending our children, grandchildren, and neighbors there. The two biggest obstacles I have witnessed at PCS are low enrollment (half empty classrooms), and not enough young people from solid, healthy, Christian homes. I commend the fact that Portland has often been a mission to youngsters from all walks of life, but if PCS is to be a college preparatory school with high ethical values, kids from healthy Christian families will be required to set the tone and direction. Thus, we must each become student recruiters.

The next 1-4 years will be crucial in determining whether PCS rises above the challenges facing it, or is swallowed by the same unhealthy patterns that are devouring our brotherhood. Right now the school is continuing to do a very good job in many different areas, including academics and extra curricular activities. I am grateful for the positive impact the school has had upon my daughters. Enrolling them at Portland has been a wise investment—all of this in spite of the obstacles faced. Thus, it behooves us to act now.

May the Lord guide each of us as we prayerfully consider our role in Portland's future. If there is to be victory, it will not come from the super-efforts of a handful of people, but the joined hands of a long line of believers.

May Evangelism Be Reborn Among Us!

Randy Mayeux, Minister in Dallas, Texas

Let me begin my story in 1968. In June-July, immediately following my graduation from High School, I met Jesus Christ. He came into my heart, granted me forgiveness and acceptance, and forever redirected my future. He called me to minister, and what he called me to was to repeat the ministry that I had received—to take the wonderful news of a Savior, of a living active Lord who could and would snatch people from a life of misery and bring them into a life of hope. It is called evangelism. It is called outreach, church growth—but what it is, is hope for hopelessly lost people.

In my own life, that gift has demonstrated itself graphically. I have two step brothers, with a total of four divorces between them. Their lives have been filled with misery and pain. I have one half-sister, who while pregnant with her second child, within the last year, has gone through a divorce. Her pain is deep. And though my life has been filled with difficult painful moments, I am convinced that if my life had not been touched by Christ, my life would have turned out to be more disastrous than any other in my family. I was literally destined for a life of hell, and He snatched me from such a destiny. He saved me.

But now, I am a full-time, located minister. After serving in such a position for nearly fifteen straight years, I am ready to make some observations that I believe are quite accurate. The ministry almost seems to have become a box, keeping the minister from doing any evangelism. The ministry seems to tear the minister away from the very desire of snatching people from misery and from hell itself.

And so the ministry begins to zap the vision, the energy, the hope of the minister. And ultimately, what was once a fire ablaze from gratitude becomes a distant memory.

I am certainly not the first to bemoan the institutionally destructive nature of the church. But it is rearing its ugly head with increasing frequency in my own heart and life.

And so I am in the midst of a dilemma. *Do I become a chaplain, an institutional caretaker for church of Christ people who want a church of Christ done in church of Christ ways*, attracting and accepting and putting to use only other church of Christ people? That is what I am becoming. And I don't like it.

I don't like it that I have lost some of my personal fire for evangelism. I don't like it that our churches are attracting very few people who have not yet walked with Christ.

But the issue is not what I like or don't like. The issue is far more basic. The issue is precisely the issue of the mission of the church. And as I see it, it is so very hard to find a model that is pointing a way out. The traditional churches, for the most part, are getting older and smaller. The most progressive churches, at least many of them, are so fixated on their own freedom that that becomes their reason for being. ("Look at how open we are.") None of these provide visions that call people to heights that I want to spend the rest of my life ascending.

So our current situation seems to be in absolute shambles. The Boston movement, founded on the most legalistic, graceless foundation of all, is attracting people who want to do evangelism because there is no where else to go.

The traditional churches have lost so many of our younger people that they end up saying no to any step that might attract more younger people for fear of losing the faithful core group that is left. The most progressive churches are still mired in such delicate tightrope walking that they too spend an inordinate amount of their emotional energy on who can we keep, rather than how can we or who can we attract.

So I and a host of others of my generation are wondering if we have signed up for a ministry that we never intended—a career as an institutional chaplain to church of Christ people.

Some will object to this assessment. But after fourteen years in the Los Angeles area and after four years in Dallas and after conversations with people in Lubbock, Nashville, Houston, Minneapolis, and many other cities, I am ready to state the obvious. We are losing masses of our younger adults. We are attracting few seeking hearts. And we are insane because we clearly expect that we ought to keep doing what we have been doing, while expecting a different set of results. It will not work!

What are the results of the way we have been doing it? Let me mention a few.

- 1) We have lost many, many fine preachers from the preceding generation. Just read a list of speakers from the Abilene Christian Lectures over the last twenty years and tally up

the number that chose to leave full-time, local work. Whatever we are doing, we are losing some very good preachers. Consequently, men my age have very few mentors.

- 2) We have not found a way to help our churches cope with the real problems they face: the loss of young adults, neighborhoods that change in ethnic make-up; building bridges between the more traditional members and those who want to go away from some of these traditions.
- 3) We are simply not evangelistic. As I heard Ray Fulenwider summarize it: "If you are not *born* into the church of Christ, or if you do not *marry* into the church of Christ, you will probably never *get* into a church of Christ."
- 4) Our children, as they become teenagers, get involved in the abuse of alcohol and drop out of church at a pace that matches most other religious groups. We have not learned how to adequately instill spiritual-rootedness in our kids.
- 5) Because of our desperation, we end up jumping at faddish solutions to our problems. The real world of longing to reach people makes us susceptible to all sorts of counterfeit answers.

What do we do?

I confess to some deep, personal fear here. I want to be part of the churches of Christ. And I want to reach lost people for Christ. And I am afraid that continuing to do church as we do it makes it virtually impossible to reach people for Christ. I don't want to lose my dream. I want to do the will of God. But how? What do I do? What do we do?

Let me suggest a starting place. Start with yourself. Regardless of your role, find out how others are reaching seeking hearts. Somebody near you is succeeding. Go study them. And then, start... If you can't start in the Sunday morning service, then start Sunday night. If you can't do it Sunday night, then do it in a class. If you are not allowed freedom in class, then do it as an individual. Find somebody who is miserable because of their pain. Point them to Christ. And keep looking and keep pointing. And tell them that you know of the failures of the church, but bring them to church, and plead with them to help you make the church better. Start men's groups for the spiritual formation of the hearts of your husbands, your fathers, your single men. Start women's groups for the shaping of the hearts of wives, mothers, and single women. Start prayer groups, beginning with parents in your church, praying for their children. And for yourself, pray and read your Bible. Beg God to shape your heart into a heart of compassion for the lost and for the saved who are blind. Ask God for incredible energy, especially emotional energy, that he will sustain you through the toughest times, so that you will not give up.

If God has called you to serve a group of people and he has not called you to go after his lost sheep (and he does give different

gifts), do so. It is a wonderful ministry to choose to serve church people.

But it is not my ministry. Though I love to preach to and teach believers, and though I love the people of the Preston Road Church, I have a fire in my gut for the lost. And I believe that God would have the Preston Road Church reach out to lost people. I believe that God, if we could interview him, would say: "Go and announce the news—love them, serve them, deliver them from the hell of their lives, in my power. Do not serve yourselves, but give yourselves away. And if it takes giving away some of your traditions and some of your comfort and some of your money and some of your time, then give it away! *What does it profit a church if it keeps all its traditions and keeps its people happy, but loses its very soul of compassion and consequently never touches the souls of hurting, lost people all around them?*"

If God has called you to help people out of their misery into Christ and if you can't do it with the restrictions we all face and if you reach the end and your dream is gone and you simply cannot survive any longer—don't sell out. Don't become an institutional caretaker. Leave that church and start one—in your home, on the street corner, in a school. If necessary, go find a group of people that will let you soar with His dream. But remember that there may not be such a group—yet. You may have to grow it! So go grow it!

And if you are one bothered by the changes, if you are worried that the church of Christ you know and love might be changed by this new group of dreamers, or renegades (pick your vocabulary), then I applaud your conviction. But make sure that your conviction stems from your own study of Scripture, and make sure that you are absolutely in line with God's will before you condemn new steps being taken. And make sure that you are keeping your young adults, and reaching out to those who are miserable without Christ. And if you say that people simply don't want to listen to the truth anymore and are rejecting the pure ways, then ask yourself this question—is it possible that you have so packaged it that they can't even hear the truth?!

And for the people in the middle. Find a way to be a bridge between those who hunger for something different and those who are frightened, and bring them together.

For us all, I suggest we read and live the words inspired by the Holy Spirit, words that stand as the model and the method for all time. Read Philippians 2:5-11 and 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

We will not win anybody if we become any more like church of Christ people than we already are, we must become like non-church of Christ people in order to win them.

May the Lord grant us all a clearer vision of His call, and the courage to follow, and the power of His Spirit to say yes, and may evangelism be reborn among our people.

—Condensed; reprinted by permission from IMAGE magazine.

The Day of CHEAP CONVERSION IS OVER!

Rubel Shelly

Time was that a church could generate a number of "cheap conversions" through techniques you would recognize.

Spread a few tracts around. Invite a powerful evangelist for a week-long gospel meeting. Set up a series of one hour Bible studies with "prospects," and "reap a harvest of souls" in a flurry of passion and excitement.

We really thought it was a legitimate way to evangelize. Nobody meant to be doing anything other than the will of God. Yet, most people knew all along that something wasn't right. The only ones who "remained faithful" within three or four months of the great revival were the children and mates of people who were already members of that local church. So, we learned something.

We learned that most genuine conversions require time and patience. We found out that one week of intense involvement with someone could not sustain him or her for the remaining fifty-one weeks of the year. We discovered that something had to be done to integrate new converts into the existing body of believers.

What we really learned is that evangelism is harder work than most of us want to do. A week or two a year for winning souls is a cop-out. Soul winning has to occur within the context of a life-style which communicates the meaning of Christ to people.

I used to marvel at "two-week wonders" who could go out-of-state or out of country for a couple of weeks and come back with tales of evangelistic zeal, six or eight or a dozen converts, and a contented look of achievement on their faces. Yet, those same people could not win people to Jesus in their hometown.

Then, it all became clear. It is easy to be evangelistic for a week in a place where nobody knows you. You can pray, as if it were natural. You can talk of Jesus with whomever you meet, as if you were accustomed to doing that. And, most of all, you could let people tug at you and impose on you—for you knew you were going to be headed home in a few days.

Those were, for the most part, cheap conversions. And their day has passed. Thank God!

From now on, more of us are going to have to realize that we can evangelize only in the context of involvement. We will have to know people—not bombard them with an hour-log sales pitch for Jesus. We will have to care about them, bear some of their burdens, rebuke their sins, confess our own.

This new way is really the oldest way. It was Jesus' method among men, and we must learn to do His work by His means.

Major Lessons from Minor Prophets

"Woe to Him..."

Ernest E. Lyon

(Habakkuk 2:4 - 20; read the passage first)

In my second article on Habakkuk I treated briefly of the first part of verse 4 and spent most of the time on the second half of that verse. This time I wish to take up with the first half of verse 4 and finish the chapter.

Verses 4 and 5 show the character, not only of the Chaldeans but of mankind in general without the Spirit of God. Notice the things that are said. The list is long: "He is puffed up," "His desires are not upright," "Wine betrays him," "He is arrogant and never at rest," "He is greedy as the grave," "Is never satisfied," "He gathers to himself all the nations and takes captive all the peoples." That primarily, of course, is referring to the Chaldeans, but much of it applies to all people by nature, including you and me. Note that the Lord starts His list with pride, which, in many ways, is the fundamental sin. Out of it rises a lack of faith and all the things listed. Truly the Chaldeans were a people to be feared by all who are not under the wing of the Lord. On the other hand, many of these things would cause their downfall—wine, arrogance, greed, forever seeking to put another people under their dominance. It was wine that led to the downfall of the Medes and Persians, wine drunk partly from the vessels that had been made for the temple of the Lord (Daniel 5:3,4).

As a result of all these evil tendencies on the part of Chaldea (Babylon) the nations taken captive would be able to taunt the Chaldeans with five cries of "Woe." As you read them, see how modern the accusations are. The first of these is about those who acquire goods dishonestly. That may not describe our government, but we must admit that it describes a great many people in our country who have gotten great riches, and some who have gotten less. In the case of Babylon, those who had been plundered would rise up and plunder them. The Bible does not describe what happened at the downfall of Babylon except in the city itself, but you can imagine what happened in many of the countries when they found that their captors had fallen to another strong kingdom. The sacking of Babylon must have been terrible to witness, at least for the inhabitants. Just think of the countless times that governments have fallen after oppressing their people. Some of the things done to former rulers were even worse than they had done to others. And some of it was just retribution, if there is such! I particularly think of the terrible things done in times like the French revolution to those who had "shed man's blood." The guillotine was used for those publicly executed, but how many others were killed otherwise by the people?

The second woe has to do with building the realm by "unjust gain" and the efforts to put themselves out of harm. As the Lord told Habakkuk, the Babylonians were "ruthless and impetuous" in their campaigns and showed all the faults described in verses 4 and 5. As a consequence of subjecting people better than themselves, they were to meet a terrible fate. As a result, even the stones of the wall are imagined as crying out and the beams of the woodwork echoing that cry. The Babylonians were in for a very bad time, richly deserved.

The third woe starts at verse 12. It concerns the one who "builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by crime!" The Lord (Yahweh of hosts in Hebrew) has determined that such action would be repaid in kind or worse. Verse 14 gives the great hope to those who worship the Lord. The day would come when "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." As a consequence those who have built their empires the wrong way will find themselves out of the picture. The earth will not be able to put up with people with such desires and such actions. This speaks, of course, of the day when God will intervene and take charge of the earth He had made for different kinds of treatment.

Have you ever truly considered why God made the earth and what He would have men do with it. Genesis 1 tells us that God said He planned for man to "rule over" all these creatures He had made, and that they were to "be fruitful and increase in number" and to rule over all of it. He then put man in the Garden of Eden "to work it and take care of it." Instead think how we have destroyed it. It is a shame that Christians have let non-Christians take the lead in watching after the environment.

The fourth woe (verses 15 - 17) begins with a heartless group of neighbors who pour wine from wineskins and give it out till the drinkers are drunk, just to gaze on "their naked bodies." I can't imagine such depravity, but if it didn't exist it would not be mentioned. The "tables will turn" on them for they will have the same thing happen to them. It reminds us of when Ham saw Noah lying naked in his tent, but at least that was not planned, though he did go tell his brothers, presumably for them to take a look too; fortunately they did not do so, but covered Noah without looking at him. When the Lord permits (or even orders) them to receive the same, it was truly just punishment, and so, "disgrace will cover your glory." It is interesting in the light of the events of our day that verse 17 speaks of Babylon's violence done to Lebanon. It was a vastly different country from now, famed for her vegetation and majestic forests. Babylon not only did violence to the people, but "destroyed lands and cities." Maybe I should mention that some depraved men in our day get women drunk just to look at their naked bodies. What a shame!

The form of the fifth and last woe is different from the others. The word "woe" itself does not occur until verse 19, but the entire woe uses verses 1 through 20. It starts with the worthlessness of idols that men have carved, which are like the ones that Babylon depended on. It is strange how many people have thought that

their own creation could be a god to help them, but it has happened to millions. The first two verses simply state the problem and ask questions showing the foolishness. Then, the woe and the chapter in verse 20 with a statement that has been quoted many times and applied to many situations, most of them probably foolish: "But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him." That is an admonition that applies at all times and should be heeded. Here, I presume, Habakkuk was told this to indicate how makers of idols should act, realizing that there is one God and we need to bow before Him and wait on His action. Oh, if every Christian would truly worship Him as they ought. We should never forget that Jesus said, in John 4:23,24, in His discussion with the Samaritan woman at the well: "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father *seeks*. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." Let us all give heed to this, instead of just looking down on idolators. We need to worship Him and tell idolators about the true and living God.

VOICES from the FIELDS

Winston and Irene Allen

Eagle River, Alaska

Jan. 1992

As this is being written, Jan. 2, '92, the pressures of the Christmas season are behind us and the challenges of a new year are ahead. So far this past fall and this winter the Anchorage-Eagle River area has experienced the second greatest amount of snow (around 60") since record keeping was started in 1915. Snow plowing, shovelling paths and removing snow-load from roofs has been very demanding. Alaskans always get a mental lift on Dec. 22 knowing that the short days start getting longer and the long nights are a little shorter each 24 hours. The very high crime rate here in the Northland dramatically and tragically increases in the winter months. This is partly due to very high unemployment and high cost of living, compounded by the depressing mental and physiological condition commonly called "cabin fever." The scientific name for the condition is "seasonal affective disorder" or SAD. It is caused not only by cold but mainly by lack of sunlight which effects the endocrine glands, particularly the pineal gland. Each winter we wonder if we can make it through till Spring and realize that the main secret of victory is abiding in the Lord one day at a time.

After the worship service Sunday morning, Jan. 5, I am scheduled to baptize Larry Dale Emery (a husband and father).

Recently a husband and wife team, R. C. and Annie Cromwell joined together in teaching the Primary Sunday School class of around 10 little ones, and it is working out very well. Another one of our members, Pam Hourihan, is taking responsibility for Children's Church as often as she can (she and husband Dan have four children and Dan is the Supt. of the Wood-Tikchik State Park in S. W. Alaska, the largest state park in the U.S. We have no plans for a furlough this

year. So far as we know there are no prospects at this time for a younger couple to take our place.

Report on the NAKAHARA MISSION, Shizuoka City, Japan Jan. 1992

Michiya and Tomoko Nakahara will finish with their school work by the end of March, 1992. That long road of formal preparation is about to come to an end for both of them. Michiya will earn a bachelor degree in Christian Ministries and Tomoko will earn an associate degree in Christian Education. Both have prepared themselves well for the work they plan to do with the church in Shizuoka City. They will plan to move into the living quarters at the church building after graduation. They will be glad that the travel on weekends will soon end. The trips from Osaka to Shizuoka are long and costly. But that is what they have done as they continued to work with the church there.

With Michiya and Tomoko moving back home, Teruko Nakahara has been very concerned about her role there or elsewhere. She rightly desires that Michiya assume a leadership role, but wonders about the wisdom of her presence, since many of the people would still come to her with concerns because of the many years that she and Shichiro labored with the people. She does not want there to be a problem in this matter. She is wondering if her time in Japan is finished, and that the mantle must be completely passed on from parents to son. Further, Teruko, now in her sixties and experiencing some major health problems, is contemplating the wisdom of moving to the states to be near her girls. She covets your prayers deeply.

—Bob M. Yarbough, Treasurer

Myrna Auxtero

Bohol, Philippines

The swelling in my shoulder bone, which the doctor said might be a malignant tumor, turned out to be arthritis instead, Praise God. But my lungs are also weak and I was advised to cut back on activities and get rest.

We desperately need rain... Our graduation will be the first week of April. After that we will have 3 camps, a conference and at least six VBS's.

Let me reiterate the importance of prayer. Missionaries are not superhuman. We have more of the devil's attack because we are a threat to his kingdom. We are only as strong as the prayer of God's people.

Moto Nomura

Yamanashi-Ken, Japan

Feb. 1992

It is warmer this winter, which saves us oil consumption as well as dangers on the icy roads in the mountains. Travelling to Tokyo thrice a week takes much time and costs me a lot. I teach church history at Japan School of Evangelism on Fridays and teach at American Christian College on Thursdays usually.

Writing articles each month for our magazine takes much of my time too. Plenty of research is needed before writing each article (on the history of churches and missionaries in Japan). This April I am

expecting a group of three Americans, all descendants of Brother McCaleb. They are from Memphis area.

The ministries in the mountains where we live go on slowly but well in His care. We hope and feel we must reduce our going to Tokyo on Sundays and need to concentrate more in our mountain ministries. My wife, Yoriko, needs your prayer as she is not so strong physically. But she does her part in the ministries quietly and with a smile. She needs a vacation and rest.

If the readers of *Word and Work* have any spare books to share, or Bible-related video tapes, they will be a great help to our ministry among the students and in the mountains.

"A Cheerful Heart is Good Medicine"

Proverbs 17:22

Florence O. Collins

(H. L. Olmstead was well known for his pleasant personality and his sense of humor. We conclude our excerpts from his daughter's book (see the previous two issues) with two examples of his humor.)

In Gallatin, a male quartette sang at many funerals. On one occasion, the man who sang the lead part was unable to be present. Since Pa was going to be there to preach, the other three members asked him to sing the lead part with them. As soon as the casket was lowered and Pa finished reading the scripture, he went over and took his place with the other singers. He was handed a hymnal and the song *Rock of Ages* was pointed out to him. They began singing and as they were singing the last verse, the grave not yet being filled with soil, one of the quartette members turned to another page and pointed to *Jesus Savior Pilot Me*. Understanding that they would sing that hymn also, without so much as a pause Pa started singing the first verse of it. That is, he sang the words of that song, but used the tune to *Rock of Ages* which they had just sung. The others followed and harmonized without a hitch, and all three stanzas were sung to the *Rock of Ages* tune.

Pa closed his hymnal, and handing it to the others, with a solemn face befitting the occasion, quietly said, "I can sing any song in the book to that tune." Knowing that Pa was jokingly admitting his mistake, the other singers hid their laughter with muffled coughs as Pa walked to the flower-strewn grave, faced the crowd and gravely invoked God's benediction on them. . . .

Once when traveling to Kansas by train, Pa went by "sleeper." One passenger—an older lady—had not reserved a berth and all of them were taken. Pa let her have his and he remained in the coach overnight. The next day when he arrived in Wichita he sent a telegram to Munna [his wife]. As was the custom in Gallatin the operator telephoned Munna and read it to her: "Gave berth to old woman last night. Feel fine this morning. signed, 'Harold'."

—*The Glory of the Imperfect*

(This book available from W&W)

Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

What is there in the Bible either for or against reincarnation?

Webster defines reincarnation as the belief that the souls of the dead successively return to earth in new forms or bodies; hence, a rebirth of a soul in a new, especially a human, body. Some views would limit this to human bodies, while others believe reincarnation may be as an animal, even of very low order, with the good or evil of the previous life determining the kind of body received. Reincarnation is a basic part of Hindu and Buddhist belief. (The student wishing to consult reference material should see "Transmigration" and "Metempsychosis.") In many cases this belief includes the teaching of *karma*, which has successive reincarnations taking place until one has been purged of evil and has reached the high plane where no further reincarnations are necessary.

This belief was held by a few digressive groups in the days after the apostles and is also held by some of the "Christian" cults which have come into being in modern times. So far as we can tell, it has always been regarded as error by the main body of those professing Christianity.

In our own country, as Hinduism and Buddhism have been an increasing influence and certain features of these religions have gained some popularity, literature and movies have been instrumental in making the average person more aware of belief in various incarnations. There is a certain snobbishness or sophistication that sometimes seems to be associated with such beliefs, and some may have adopted reincarnation views for this reason. Others may be ignorant of the implications so far as the Bible is concerned and are influenced by the rather subtle influence of exposure to these beliefs and by their own fleshly reasonings and feelings. There are individuals who claim to remember former lives, especially under hypnotism. Such claims, no matter how sincere, really offer no proof of reincarnation, because the human mind is not always aware of the difference between dream and reality or between fantasy and fact. Perhaps most of us have had "flashes of recognition" when we seem to have just gone through an event that has happened to us before, but this is likely nothing more than a trick of memory. A mere human intuition that such a thing as reincarnation might take place can hardly be considered proof.

I can think of nothing in the Bible that lends any solid support for reincarnation, but there is a good bit that would oppose it. One of the most direct statements showing reincarnation has no basis in fact is Heb. 9:27: "And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment..." Rather than several lives and deaths, man has only one. Paul's prayer that

"your body, soul, and spirit" be preserved entire at the return of Christ loses all meaning if several bodies are involved. We are to be judged for deeds done in the body (not plural, bodies), per 2 Cor. 5:10. Moreover, instead of offering many lives—with second, third, or many more chances for salvation—the N.T. declares this to be the day of grace and "now" the time of salvation.

Reincarnation is contrary to many of the principles of N.T. truth. If seen as a series of rebirths based on good or evil and with the desired end achieved by one's merit, then this is a "works" salvation, which is contrary to N.T. teaching. Jesus never hinted at a return to another life but spoke of men dying and going to "Abraham's bosom" or "torment." The resurrection of the body is seen as the prospect of those who die. For the Christian death means to be "with Christ" or "absent from the body and at home with the Lord," not the prospect of another life on earth.

It is sometimes thought that Jesus' disciples believed in reincarnation since they asked concerning the blind man of John 9, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" If his blindness was because of his own sin, it would seem to have been in a previous life. But notice that Jesus specifically declared that his blindness was not because of his sin. It might seem to us that this would have been a good time for Jesus to have corrected the implied error of his disciples, but this was not always His method. He spoke concerning the problem at hand. It is not unusual for any of us in our dealings with men today to ignore some misconceptions so as to deal with a more pressing issue. It is not even certain, however, that reincarnation was in their minds. They were aware of the foreknowledge of God and may have viewed the judgment as being on sin that would be committed after the man's birth.

Jesus implied a certain connection between Himself and the promised coming of Elijah. He did not say that He was Elijah in another incarnation, however. He was "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17; cf. Matt. 11:14; 17:10-12). To say that He was Elijah in another incarnation would stand in contradiction to His unique position of being the Son of God. In such a case the real Jesus was once a mere man and not always the Son of God, for Elijah was a man of like passions with us (Jas. 5:17).

We must distinguish between reincarnation and the fact that Jesus, acting in His power as God, could present Himself to men in certain appearances. A theophany, or visible manifestation of God, is not to be confused with men in the flesh. Neither does the fact that demons are able to inhabit human bodies offer evidence for reincarnation. In the N.T. demons are seen in some cases as dominating the individual, but the essential human personality was still there and could once again surface when the demons were cast out.

In the N.T. it is clear that a person may exist apart from the physical body. This happens to all of mankind between death and the resurrection of the body. But there is no *Biblical* reason for believing in a series of rebirths in different physical bodies. Only one physical death is appointed. The second death is eternal condemnation (Rev. 20:14 - 15), not just a repeat performance of the first death.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaas

Helping Train Filipino Preachers and Missionaries

Elsewhere in this issue is an article about Central Bible Institute in Manila. The missionaries who founded CBI (Broaddus, Dennis Allen) and others who taught there (Preston, Wilson, Lewter) by and large refrained from asking Christians in the U.S. to support Filipino ministers/pastors (i.e. located preachers). They feared such regular support would hinder the churches from learning to trust God and give generously. However, they felt that asking aid for special inter-congregational ministries like CBI was OK, especially in the light of the terrible poverty in the Philippines.

For your information, the cost of training one student who carries a full load (24 units a year) is about \$120 a year. Only \$10 monthly! Any individual, church or class wanting to support some CBI students could send donations via Victor Broaddus, P.O. Box 54842, Lexington, KY 40555. Make checks out to Church of Christ Worldwide, and tell Victor they are for CBI. Jerry Carmichael to Linton

Jerry and Martha Carmichael and their family are now living in Linton, Ind. Jerry began to minister at the church there in mid-March.

The Tell City church, where they ministered for the past 7 years, is seeking God's will regarding their need for a minister. You may contact Allen Goffinet, 836 29th St., Tell City, IN 47586.

Church Leaders Luncheon

1st Wednesday of each month at 11:30 A.M. Come to the north campus of Portland Christian School.

"What a Fellowship. . ."

What a joy divine" I experienced several Sundays ago. A stranger attending the morning gathering at Portland Ave. Church turned out to be Thomas Langford from Lubbock, TX. I had read excellent articles he wrote in *One Body*, and even reprinted one, but never met the author before. Brother Tom teaches and is assistant dean at Texas Tech, and is a leader among Churches of Christ which teach God's Word but don't believe in having "Sunday School" as a special organized institution. Decades ago many of these churches were uptight about that issue, but they have learned that God's grace and the loving unity of His people are much more important. As I understand it, there are about 500 congregations from this background which work together, mostly in the South and West.

Brother Tom sent me a copy of *Gospel Tidings*, a monthly magazine which is popular among them. It's good, and I was delighted to see an article by J. Miller Forcade, on family living. You may get a sample by writing P.O. Box 4355, Englewood, CO 80155

When we had dinner together, brother Tom and I discovered we have many things in common. We have the same Savior, many similar experiences, joys, concerns and problems, and several favorite authors. The ties that bind Christ's people together are precious indeed. —Alex Wilson

From CHRISTIAN STANDARD . . .

"As a brotherhood, we need to pray more and fight less; to pray more and worry less; to pray more and brag less; to pray more and love . . . even more."
—Sam Stone, editor

Congratulations to Dennis Knuffman!

This month he was received into full membership by the American Association of Pastoral Counselors. This is no easy accomplishment, and Dennis worked long and hard to reach this goal while also preaching at Ky. Ave. Church in Louisville—where he still serves—and teaching at SBS.

Ladies, Remember the LID

The Ladies Inspiration Day is an annual highlight for ladies in Kentuckiana. This year it will be held at the Southeast Church of Christ, Louisville on April 25. The ladies of Buechel Church are taking the lead in planning the program, and it looks excellent. Theme: "Be still and know that I am God." Time: 9 a.m. - 2:30. Fee: \$3.00, including lunch. Spread the word, and don't miss it.

Congratulations to Ray Naugle too!

He is now fully certified as superintendent at the Senior Division of Maple Manor Christian Home having passed the Indiana licensing examination. Reports are that all 24 beds in the hospital wing are occupied, and 12 of the 14 rooms in the self-care section.

Robert Istre reports that there are 11 children in the Junior Division, with 3 sets of houseparents. Pray for these valuable ministries.

News from Portland Christian School

We are so grateful to God for our splendid staff and faculty. Pray that we will have 100 more students next year! —the right ones, of God's sending.

The Kroger receipts program continues; please keep sending them to PCS, they are worth money. Also plastic bags from Kroger and other groceries are worth \$1/lb. to PCS. Campbell Soup labels are valuable too. Call (502) 778-6114 for more information.

From the School of Biblical Studies

Randy Coultas, a part-time student of the School of Biblical Studies for the past three years, accepted the invitation of the Oak Grove Church at Independence, Louisiana to minister with them. Randy, Jill and their three children, Joseph, Audrey and Tyler moved to Louisiana on January 10 to begin their ministry.

God has confirmed their move by giving a large increase in attendance. Two accepted Christ on February 2.

Randy and Jill grew up in the Church at Lilly Dale where they were both

very active in the Lord's work. Let us all pray for this young family in their new adventure in the Lord.

Why I came to SBS

My minister in Louisiana, Stan Broussard, recommended Portland Christian School of Biblical Studies as a college to be considered for those interested in the preaching ministry. Having come to Louisville in the late 40's to study the Bible under Brother R. H. Boll, Brother Stan felt that the school would provide excellent teaching of the Bible. After receiving an SBS catalog, I felt that a visit to the campus would be necessary.

In March, 1991, I read in the Word and Work that SBS would be holding its annual lectureship. My wife, Julie, brother Jon and I made the 850 mile trip to Louisville from "Cajun Country" in Louisiana. We were impressed with the school and the faculty.

During the next few months, the Lord put on my heart a growing dissatisfaction with my job as a respiratory therapist and gave me a deepening need to preach His Word. My wife and I then made plans to follow our heart and pursue His Will. We decided to go to SBS as part of His plan to train for the ministry. In late December of 1991, we arrived in Louisville.

—Jeff Mayeux

(Jeff and Jon are taking every course offered at SBS this semester.)

Locust Street Church, Johnson City, TN

In case you had not heard, your minister has resigned. This was discussed with the elders following the evening service on Jan. 25 and announced to the congregation last Sunday. I will continue to fulfill the basic work of teaching and preaching until a suitable replacement is found, as long as a determined effort is being made to secure the same.

A chief factor in the decision has been the condition of my knees. I am not able to pursue as active a role in several areas of the work as the congregation needs and as you have a right to expect from a full-time minister. Some other factors have influenced me to make this decision at this time, but you should know that these are not any personal conflicts, clashes with the leadership of the church, "hard feelings," or such like. I have tried to take the action that will best serve the church and my own personal needs.

Have I retired? Yes and No. I have not retired from being a Christian nor from such activity in preaching and teaching as opportunity affords. I will continue to write the Lesson Quarterly. At a later date we hope to have more freedom in assisting other churches in our fellowship. We have entered a new phase in the work with the church and in our personal lives, but maybe retirement is not the word!

Tell City Church, Sam Marsh

SBS class, "The New Testament Church" will be taught at Lilly Dale on Tuesday evenings beginning March 17th. This is an extension class of SBS, being taught by Nick Marsh. The cost for auditing the course is \$12.50 to help defray the expenses. The class will be held from 7-9 p.m.

**Cramer & Hanover Church of Christ,
February 16, 1992**

In just two weeks our next Sunday School quarter begins with three new adult classes. You may choose any of the three.

Victor Broaddus will be teaching "Survey of Bible Prophecy." This class will provide an overview of God's Prophetic Word.

Amy Reeves will be teaching "Avenues of Service for Women." This class will provide a challenge for women to become more aware of specific areas of service.

Bennie Hill will be teaching "Leadership Development." The primary purpose in this class is to provide a challenge to the men of the church who represent prospective leadership.

Alexandria Church, Alexandria, LA

Camp news: The new boys' cabin is roofed in, and the boys' bathhouse has been enclosed. New water lines need to be run for showers and sinks. Another Work Day will be announced! Money has been donated to tile the cooks' and nurse's cabins. Please PRAY for this ministry which has benefited Youth for many years! Consider working for the Lord at Camp this Summer!

Project "USA TODAY" is an attempt to place a weekly Bible Teaching ad in our nation's most widely read and only national newspaper. The ads appear in the "Life" section of the USA Today Newspaper. This project is sponsored by the University church of Christ in Monroe, LA. An ad which ran Feb. 27, 1992, dealt with immoral behavior, illustrated by the Mike Tyson Rape Case.

Borden Church, IN Mike Abbott

A new Sunday School class is born! Recently, we added another adult class to our Sunday School program. That means we now have three adult classes targeted at 3 different age groups. The first class is for those that are 60 or older; the second is for those 45 years or older; and the third for those that are 20 years or older. While these age groups are not binding, any adult can go to any class that they choose.

Several of our members had the privilege of being featured in articles in the Courier-Journal this past month. Brent Weatherford, a junior at Borden High School, was profiled for the role he plays on the Borden Braves basketball team. Keep up the good work, made the front page of the Indiana Weekly with their new joint business Brent! April Sosh and Sherry Abbott venture, "The Covered Bridge." We hope the Lord will bless and prosper their endeavors. And our Sister Mary Abbott earned a well-deserved spot in the "What's Cookin'" feature of the Indiana Weekly. In that publication, she graciously shared several mouth-watering recipes, as well as some of her views on food. Thanks, Mary!

Gallatin Church Gallatin, TN

You might find it interesting that from 1976-1991, your minister (Julius Hovan) has conducted at least 210 funerals (that's 13 plus a year.) There were 21 in 1988 and thus far in 1992 he's had 7. During that same period, he has had 155 weddings.

A Six-week Adult Study designed for new Christians and for those who have recently become members of our congregation begins Sunday February 23rd. We will meet during our 9:30 Sunday School hour. Brother Hovan will be the teacher and any interested adults may attend. See him for more details.

"...I've always been good at keeping secrets. It's the people I tell them to who can't."

Southeast Church, Louisville, KY

A group of students from Harding College will be going on a mission trip to Australia this summer. Brent Hecke is part of this group. Brent has been at Southeast and has quite a witness for the Lord. Our Missions Committee will be donating the first \$10 to get this effort off the ground.

Passing Through

*When thou passest through the waters; they shall not
overflow thee – Isaiah 43:2*

“When thou passest through the waters,”
Deep waves may be, and cold,
But Jehovah is our refuge
And His promise is our hold;
For the Lord Himself hath said it,
He the faithful God and true;
“When thou comest to the waters,
Thou shalt *not go down*, but *through*.
Seas of sorrow, seas of trial,
Bitterest anguish, fiercest pain,
Rolling surges of temptation,
Sweeping over heart and brain,
They shall never overflow us,
For we know His word is true;
All His waves and all His billows
He will *lead us safely through*.
Threatening breakers of destruction,
Doubt’s insidious undertow,
Shall not sink us, shall not drag us
Out to ocean depths of woe;
For His promise shall sustain us,
Praise the Lord, whose word is true!
We shall not go down under,
He hath said, “Thou passest *through*.”

— ANNIE JOHNSON FLINT