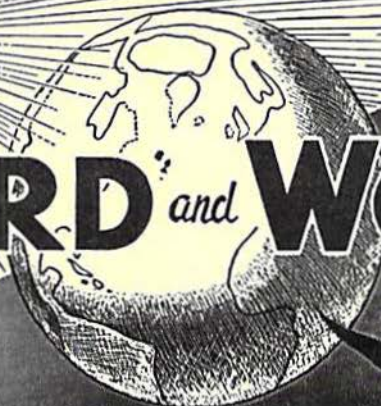


"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."



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



"Holding forth the Word of life."

JUNE, 1992

Your Church – **LOVE it, REFORM it.**

"This life, therefore, is not righteousness but **growth** in righteousness, not health but **healing**, not being but **becoming**, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be but we are **growing** toward it, the process is not yet finished but it is **going on**, this is not the end but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory but all is being purified."

—Martin Luther

"Preaching is deprived of its power if the local church fails to be a **nursery** for young converts, a **school** for growing Christians, and a **'military academy'** for budding warriors."

—George Carey, a church leader in England

"The church is not mainly an **athletic club** for the strong and healthy, but a **hospital emergency room** for the sick, broken, needy, battered and bruised."

—Richard Ramsey, exposition of 1 Corinthians

45th Louisville Christian Fellowship

AUGUST 3 - 6, 1992

Monday, August 3

7:30 - 8:00 P.M. Singing: Congregational and Special

8:00 - 8:45 P.M. Is It The Real Thing? Antoine Valdetero

Tuesday, August 4 **Following God's Plan**

9:30 - 10:00 A.M. Prayer

10:00 - 10:45 A.M. Exposition: "New Age Movement"
Earl Mullins, Sr.

11:05 - 11:50 A.M. God's Plan for the Church Bennie Hill

1:30 - 2:15 P.M. God's Plan for Women Bill Smallwood

5:30 P.M. School of Biblical Studies Booster Supper,
Hamburg Church]

7:30 - 8:00 P.M. Singing: Congregational and Special

8:00 - 8:45 P.M. God's Plan for the Mind Orell Overman

Wednesday, August 5 **God's Plan for Missions**

9:30 - 10:00 A.M. Prayer

10:00 - 10:45 A.M. Exposition: "New Age Movement"
Earl Mullins, Sr.

11:05 - 11:50 A.M. Home Missions Stan Broussard

1:30 - 2:15 P.M. Radio Missions Paul Kitzmiller

7:30 - 8:00 P.M. Singing: Congregational and Special

8:00 - 8:45 P.M. Foreign Missions Robert Garrett

Thursday, August 6 **God's Plan for Social Behavior**

9:30 - 10:00 A.M. Prayer

10:00 - 10:45 A.M. Exposition: "New Age Movement"
Earl Mullins, Sr.

11:05 - 11:50 A.M. The Christian and Government Kenneth Preston

1:30 - 2:15 P.M. God's Plan for Money David Johnson

7:30 - 8:00 P.M. Singing: Congregational and Special

8:00 - 8:45 P.M. God's Plan for Sexuality Ray Naugle

Day Sessions: Portland Ave. Church. Evening Sessions: Sellersburg Church.

Young People in grades 1 thru 6 will have special classes in the Christian Center. Grades 1-3 will be in one class and grades 4-6 in another class.

For more information, call Louis Schuler (502) 222-5556

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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In This Issue

Theme: YOUR CHURCH—LOVE IT, REFORM IT

| | |
|---|-----|
| Editorial—Alex V. Wilson | 162 |
| Journey Toward Spiritual Maturity—Joyce Broyles | 164 |
| Jailbreak! | 166 |
| Why Do They Leave?—Gordon R. Linscott | 168 |
| I Have Hope—Denny Boultinghouse | 169 |
| Do You Believe These Big Lies? | 172 |
| Thought Provokers from Here and There About God's Church and Our Churches | 173 |
| Excerpts from Readers' Responses | 175 |
| Questions Asked of Us—Carl Kitzmiller | 179 |
| Voices from the Fields | 182 |
| A Cappella Does Not Mean Unaccompanied—John Fulda | 183 |
| Missionary Work in Japan—Centennial Reflections, No. 4 —Harry Robert Fox | 185 |
| Cooperative Evangelism—Yes or No?—Alex V. Wilson, E. L. Jorgenson, Leroy Garrett | 187 |
| News and Notes | 191 |

THEME:

YOUR CHURCH— LOVE it, REFORM it

Alex V. Wilson

“Wounds from a friend can be trusted,” wrote the sage. He also observed, “Rebuke a wise man and he will love you; instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still” (Prov. 27:6; 9:8f.) Thus our theme for this issue. If you love your church, you will work for it, support it, defend it. But you will also criticize it, in love, and seek to reform and improve it, for Christ’s sake.

And so you will find in these pages words of commendation and condemnation. Some writers have gratitude and hope, others speak out with warning and rebuke. Some believe we have changed too much—others, too little. Some advise turning to the left—others, to the right. They cannot all be totally correct, since they contradict each other. But by weighing all these views, you may gain valuable insights. “Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.” The sage said that too (19:20).

And it is possible that church A in Texas needs Brother Y’s counsel, while church B in Indiana needs Brother Z’s conflicting counsel. Situations vary from time to time and place to place, so we need to wait upon the Lord for His specific directions to *our* congregation in its individuality.

This month, as you have guessed by now, we return to the questions raised and discussed in the January-March issues: *Can declining churches start growing again? How? Why have many congregations declined so much? What are God’s remedies for our problems?*

SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT CHURCH GROWTH

1. Does your church WANT to grow? That’s not as silly a question as it may seem. Some congregations don’t. “We don’t want *that kind* of people coming here.” Such an attitude has been shown to women wearing pant-suits back in the 60’s, or to Latinos or African-Americans or poor people. I’m glad for the sign outside our chapel at Portland Avenue Church. It has been there for decades, and it says “All Welcome Here, Especially the Stranger and the Poor.” I pray we will always live up to it.

I read of a man who had just joined a church. He said, “I’m glad I’m here, but let’s not add any more members because the church is just the right size.” That might be okay for the Rotarians or the Lion’s Club, but the church was never meant to be a social club.

Imagine that yours is a small, neighborhood church with members who share similar ideas, values and lifestyles. Harmony prevails. But then a housing project for poor people is built nearby, or a community made up mostly of immigrants from some distant land. (In the case of an Atlanta church, it was a Cambodian community.) After

quite a while some of those people start coming to your church. But they differ from the longtime members in dress ("They're so tacky"), the music they like, the food they enjoy, even their language. To what extent would you *welcome* them if they came? To what extent would you *seek* them if they didn't come (The Atlanta church has worked splendidly among those Cambodians.)

Do you really want to grow, to win the lost?

Mixed Motives

2. WHY do you want to grow? There are many possibilities. It's demoralizing if our auditorium is 2/3 empty, so let's put on a drive. Or, our reputation will suffer if we keep dwindling. People will keep talking about the good old days, and wringing their hands. Or maybe a major motive is, so our congregation will be bigger than others. Or, looking at the bigger picture, so our non-denomination will be bigger than other denominations. That is, so our Movement will be vindicated and our "stand" shown to be not only true but also better-than-others.

Friends, don't get me wrong. There is *much* in our historical heritage to thank God for, and to cherish and hold on to. Yet those motives at best are inadequate and at worst are unworthy of Jesus' disciples.

3. Why SHOULD we want to grow? Because (borrowing from some Bible-based songs) God loves His creatures, and Christ died for all humanity: He will forgive if they truly believe. Because folks are perishing, dying, erring, fallen. Because people are weak and weary and helpless and defiled—but God has a remedy for sin. Because the story of Jesus satisfies my (and others') longings as nothing else can do. Because that story did and does so much for me. And because we want to be a church strong enough to bring glory to our Great God and Savior, by working together to serve Him and help others.

May God give us high motives, focused not on ourselves, our reputation, or rivalry with others. May we focus on our Savior JESUS and on the lost sheep He loves and seeks.

Types of Church Growth

4. What are *VARIOUS KINDS of church growth*? Well, there is *biological* growth, which results from members having children. Thank God for that, but it does not involve reaching outsiders. May we never take the attitude, "God bless me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four, no more."

Then there is *transfer* growth, when saved members of other congregations switch to yours for some reason. Be grateful for that too, but realize that it's not catching fish from the lake but getting them from some other fishtank. When Jesus said to fish for men, He meant more than that.

Third, there is *conversion* growth, when people who are perishing receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. They might be insiders who have attended church for years, or outsiders who don't know Abraham from Judas Iscariot but realize they need Christ as forgiver, leader and helper. Praise the Lord for the conversion of insiders, but again

we must not be satisfied unless we are also reaching the unchurched, the needy masses of lost folks around us.

Evaluation: Facing Facts and Analyzing Reasons

5. How may we MEASURE a church's SIZE AND STRENGTH (those are two different things!), over a period of time? Over the past five years, for example.

Spiritual strength includes not just size but attitudes: love, faith, hope, worship, service, enthusiasm. These are not easy to gauge, but we ought to try. Discuss it in a leaders' meeting sometime.

To measure and also evaluate your *numerical* growth or decline, ADD biological growth plus transfer growth plus conversion growth to your original members. Then SUBTRACT those who have died, those who have moved away to other areas or churches, and those who have fallen away from the Lord. Analyze the converts: the number of insiders compared with outsiders. Then analyze your losses to other churches, also those who have quit following Christ Jesus. Try to discern reasons for your gains and for your losses. Where are you strong, where weak? How can you fortify the former and overcome the latter?

May we be ruthlessly realistic in examining ourselves. Then may we seek the Most High, expecting great things from Him and attempting great things for Him.

Journey Toward Spiritual Maturity

Joyce Broyles

Reared by a very conservative family in a very conservative church, I developed from both these sources a high sense of values and beliefs. I am proud of my heritage and appreciate all that it encompasses.

After marrying, I moved north and worshipped with a church family whose code of dress and behavior was slightly less strict than mine had been. I realized that what they were doing was not wrong, so after a while, I accepted it. That was the beginning of a lesson that has taught me much about being like Jesus.

Later, my husband and I moved to Saudi Arabia to work. We met other Christians and worshipped with them. We soon discovered that our views about Israel and future events were not shared by them. We could have withdrawn and worshipped in our home alone, but being nine thousand miles from America, we longed for Christian fellowship. We learned to expand our circle to include these dear saints who, along with us, made no apologies about beliefs. We agreed on God's plan of salvation and followed the forms of worship that the first century church used in Acts 2:42. We made no compromises. We just agreed to disagree agreeably. We studied with each other and learned from each other. Many had never heard our viewpoint before and eagerly asked questions about grace and other ideas.

After a year of worshipping with these dozen brethren, I learned about a conference in Athens each year. Eagerly I joined them and was asked where I was from. When I told them, eyebrows arched. Boldly, I told them that I had not come to stir up trouble, but rather, as a lonely Christian, I had come yearning for fellowship. As our 350 voices joined to sing praises, I wept from the beauty of it.

I have always been a good student, eager to learn all I can. I studied with the saints at Athens and explained some teachings I had received through the years. No one was thrown out of the discussion as we questioned each other. It was a time of building my faith and appreciating 1 Peter 3:15. Possibly because of the way I conducted myself and because of my cheerful attitude, I was asked to return the following year and was given a children's class to teach.

Seven years in the desert did things to me. I soon learned to travel much lighter than I did at first. I learned to drop much of the trappings of life, such as fine clothes, cars, furniture, and social engagements in order to appreciate cool, refreshing rain and time with my family and the church. We had no paid minister for our congregation, so each of us learned to share the responsibility of what needed to be done. We were so happy to finally be given a room at the school house to meet in that we never mentioned petty things like heat, cold, hard chairs, no parking space, nursery, etc.

In those seven years, although we could not advertise because of the strict Muslim government, our group grew from twelve to seventy souls. We had to tell others in order to let them know about us, so word of mouth was important. It was what Jesus had commissioned in Matthew 28:19-20, but we had not done it so well before.

Upon returning to the U.S., we found that we had to assure our local congregation that we had not compromised or changed our beliefs. However, our perspective had changed. No longer did we feel we had to draw a circle around us to protect us. We could knock down barriers and go out and tell others about Jesus and have fellowship with other Christians although we did not agree on everything.

We have not changed our beliefs about anything that is scripturally clear, but on matters of opinion where scripture is not clear, we feel that we should let God be the judge. We can benefit from fellowship with others. Some differences are traditions, which we can change or omit without guilt. Some are more important than others to congregations. We hesitated about instrumental music for a time. Now we agree that they can worship with us in our building as we are and we can worship with them in their building as they are. No one compromises. We just disagree agreeably and worship God together.

When Jesus taught his disciples in Luke 6, He spoke of loving enemies and judging others. If verses 37 and 38 go together, He is not referring to actual measures of grain or gifts for others, but of liberalness or bountifulness in our perspective and our acceptance of others. If we become so narrow-minded that we continue to shut others out and have no fellowship with them, how empty our measure will be! And, if our narrow-mindedness refuses to share the truth with others, how can we obey the commission in Matthew 28?

Even Jesus was accused by the Pharisees when He ate and drank with the sinners. How else could He show them the truth? Bank tellers are shown legal tender so that they will recognize counterfeit. If we have the truth and teach it *with love* as Paul points out in Ephesians 4:14-15, we can grow and help instruct them instead of rejecting them.

It was time for me to break with tradition and be more tolerant. Spiritual maturity means to have more of an individual relationship with God than to be held in check by authoritative or orthodox practices or leaders. Of course, there are limits. Those limits are the boundaries of our belief. It is what makes me say that I know that I am saved, because of whom my faith is in. I will not change my belief, but neither will I change others if I shut them out.

My attitude has changed because I have found freedom in my salvation. My roots go deep, however, and my beliefs have not changed. I pray that the reflection of Christ in my life mirrors His characteristics of love and grace. He has forgiven and saved me, and now I want to follow His example and lovingly urge others into the fold.

[Joyce Broyles is a member of the Jennings, La., Church of Christ, where her husband is an elder. She has written several articles previously for W & W.]

JAILBREAK!

Escaping From the Past

[Sometimes our present problems stem from misunderstandings, failures or sins that occurred in the past. Perhaps generations ago, before anyone now living was even born. Attitudes were formed, words spoken, decisions made, and actions committed—but not by us. We may not even know which version of the events to believe. But we are affected by them, seemingly locked into harmful results through no choice of our own. Is there any way to escape?

Yes! Just a few weeks ago a dramatic example of such a jailbreak occurred, and we want to share the good news with you. It occurred in Lubbock, Texas. With humility and creative love, the elders of the Quaker Ave. Church of Christ made efforts to tear down walls and build bridges to the elders of the Broadway Church of Christ. I know only one person in those congregations, Tom Langford, one of the elders who sent the following letter. But the letter speaks for itself, and I *heartily* recommend its spirit to all of us, whatever the particular jail-from-the-past we may seem locked up in.—W & W Editor]

April 12, 1992

To the Elders
Broadway Church of Christ
Lubbock, Texas

Greetings in the name of our common Lord:

We, the elders of the Quaker Avenue Church of Christ, have for some time been grieved over the separations within the Body of

Christ. While there have been steps taken in recent years to move away from the animosities of the past, there are still settled divisions among us. We, for instance, from those churches which do not favor or employ Sunday Schools, have not had much fellowship with those who do. We have frequently been regarded as "anti" brethren, and sometimes scorned as being backward and legalistic for a position we take on the basis of genuine concern for scripture. It is true that we differ in this respect from many other brethren, but we no longer feel that such difference should keep us from brotherly relations in the numerous areas where we hold mutual ground.

We are aware of the debates and strife of the past that often led to our divisions. Most of us were not here then and we do not feel we can appropriately judge just who was responsible for the division. But we are convinced that we the living are responsible for doing whatever is possible to bring about greater unity in our day. We want you to know that we all are genuinely sorry for whatever led to division. While we ourselves may not have contributed to the original division, some of us have, in our own lifetime, been guilty of attitudes that have maintained it. We repent of that and seek the forgiveness of God and all our brethren. As we look back and recall the rancor and bitterness that has often existed, we are grieved and to such extent as we and our brethren have been responsible, we seek forgiveness.

At the same time, we are thankful for many good things in our particular heritage, and the good men and women who engendered and cultivated our faith. They were not perfect, but they gave us much. In seeking closer relations with brethren who differ with us on the Sunday School, we do not renounce our fathers in the faith. We simply wish to acknowledge and embrace the whole family of God, and thereby renounce sectarianism and the party spirit. From this time forth we want to be known as a people who love *all* the brethren. We believe that honest differences need not divide us, that we can enjoy sweet fellowship in all that we mutually hold dear while allowing for some diversity in interpretation and practice. Our plea for reconciliation is not by any means a repudiation of our position on Sunday Schools, but a recognition that such issues are less important than the blood of Jesus that made us one. We are willing to discuss our understanding in these matters with anyone, but we do not intend to try to impose our views upon you or others. Nor do we feel it is necessary to wait until we reach perfect agreement to enjoy fellowship. The Apostle Paul tells us to "accept one another, just as Christ accepts [us], in order to bring praise to God" (Rom. 15:7). It is likely that when we walk together as brethren, we can discuss our differences in an atmosphere that is more conducive to understanding and agreement. Our divisions will never be healed if we continue to treat each other as enemies instead of as brethren in the same family.

What we are asking from you is the right hand of fellowship in the great work of the kingdom. While you may still regard us as a bit "quaint" in our views, let us at least be regarded as brethren.

Especially in this centennial year of Churches of Christ in Lubbock, let us proclaim together the grace that makes us one in Jesus. And let us together extend the same spirit of fellowship to all other brethren, all who in faith have been born of water and the spirit, and who seek to follow Jesus. May our rich heritage in the Restoration Movement, which began as an attempt to unite all Christians, be rekindled today in a new demonstration of the noble principles of our past. More importantly, let us fulfill the prayer of our Lord, who wanted us all to be one in order "that the world might believe" (John 17:21).

We have considered the prayer of Paul and we want to experience what he desired: "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:5-6).

We pledge you our hearts and our hands, as brothers in Christ Jesus.

The Elders
Quaker Avenue Church of Christ

Still valid, though penned in 1963

WHY DO THEY LEAVE?

Gordon R. Linscott

At year-end we sometimes look back with profit. Recently I've been looking far back into the past, in the bound volumes of the W & W from the twenties and thirties. I see the names of brethren still active for the Lord, but no longer "with us." From what I hear, these are yet highly esteemed for their faith. Why did they choose to disassociate themselves from us? What happened somewhere in these intervening years? In certain similar cases, I have heard 1 John 2:19 glibly quoted: "They went out from us, but they were not of us," etc. Of some this may be true, but what of those who seemed to be among our most zealous and fruitful workers? Why did they prefer the fellowship of others? It seems unlikely that the fault was wholly with them.

Without trying to analyze individual cases nor attempting "to bring them back into our fold," let's use this as a background for a look to the future. We expect that other young men shall develop into spiritually-minded workers for the Lord. Will the time come when some of the best of them will feel they should go out from us? What do we have (or not have) that sends them elsewhere? Does the atmosphere of the congregation stimulate real spiritual growth? Is our vaunted freedom in Christ a reality? Do we encourage our young people to be taught by the Spirit, or do we hand them a ready-made doctrinal strait jacket? Have they seen the working of God through our prayers? Whatever our answers, the problem is still with us.

The responsibility for its solution cannot easily be laid at the feet of a few selected individuals.

AUTOPSY OF THE PRAYER MEETING

What is the greatest challenge facing the Church today? It may well be this: *Is your God real?* Where is the evidence that He is working in the congregation where you worship?

The present condition of the prayer meeting in most churches is a fair indication that many who believe in "church" have little confidence in a prayer-answering God. A few still continue to pray on, but even among these few we do not hear many shining testimonies of answered prayer. In the prayer meetings themselves there is little air of expectancy. As A.W. Tozer wrote some months ago, "When Christians meet, they do not expect anything unusual to happen; consequently only the usual happens, and that usual is as predictable as the setting of the sun... Christian expectation in the average church follows the program, not the promises. Prevailing spiritual conditions, however low, are accepted as inevitable." Topics for prayer may rise but little above the mundane needs of the congregation, and the prayers are frequently more wishful than authoritative. Surely all this is painfully familiar to most of us. But it need not be so; prayer can be new and powerful—now, this month, this week.

A CITY WITHOUT CRIME

A few months ago, the city of Denver was deeply involved in a crime wave. Even the police force was implicated, and the whole nation was shocked by the scandal. According to one citizen, "Even the people in their own apartments weren't safe anymore." According to a report in *United Evangelical Action*, a Christian business man named Houston Gibson took the initiative that culminated in a city-wide week of prayer. The mayor gave his full support, as did the chief of police. Most of the churches joined in prayer for the city and its law enforcement agencies. A part of Chief Slavin's comments are worthy of quotation:

"I am certain that the Lord knows how much we in the police department need His help as we attempt to make Denver a safer and better city. You could not experience what the police do every day and not realize the need of prayer to maintain any hope... If our society has not become completely conditioned by cynicism, who is to say that through an earnest, sincere repenting appeal to our Father we may not witness a miraculous improvement in the moral standards and values of our fellow citizens and in each one of us who go to the Lord in prayer?"

The results were indeed little less than miraculous. For the five-day period (Monday through Friday) immediately following the week of prayer, Denver—the city of crime—reported only the theft of a bicycle!

Yes, God *is* real. He will yet hear from heaven and He does still manifest His power upon the earth. Try Him and see.

[Gordon Linscott edited W & W from 1962 - 75.]

I HAVE HOPE

Denny Boultinghouse

I realize that one always views the time in which he lives as the most critical time of all. In some ways, this is a constant with every generation. Nevertheless, it appears that the church in the 1990's is facing some especially critical challenges.

I am sure that in every generation since the first century there have been Christians who were disillusioned with the church in their time. Most of the disillusioned ones were those on the fringe. Here is where the current crisis in confidence differs. More and more leaders of mainline churches are becoming disillusioned with the Church of Christ. I am talking about preachers and elders. I am talking about people who have a several-generation history in Churches of Christ. Some are even wondering if this thing called "church" really works. Others have left us and become part of independent Bible Churches in their communities.

Some cannot make the emotional break, so they stay a part of our assemblies, but their heart is not involved. They are like people living in dead marriages who stay together for the sake of the kids. Emotionally and spiritually they are jaded. They are so numb that they are not even bothered anymore by their lack of spiritual growth. The number of people in this group is multiplying. Many have reached the stage of theological despair. They see no hope.

Is there hope for the Church of Christ? Are there reasons to be encouraged about our fellowship? Is despair the only option?

I affirm without reservation that there are reasons to have hope. I cannot mention all the reasons I have hope, but I would like to share a few things that make me hopeful about Churches of Christ. Accepting reality demands that I also acknowledge some things that do not provide hope for certain churches among us.

I am hopeful because I see more and more churches that are stressing Jesus Christ. They are tired of a sectarian message that postures "our church against someone else's church." They have not really changed any basic beliefs, they just realize that a sectarian message has no power to change lives. They realize that only Jesus truly brings life. More churches are stressing that Christians must have a *personal* relationship with Christ. More elderships want the focus of their pulpit to be Jesus Christ.

I am not hopeful for churches where the "issues" take precedence over Christ in the preaching. Where "threats to the church" dominate the preaching, the people will be spiritually undernourished and will not be able to grow. If Jesus, the cross, and what God has done are not the major emphasis, people will never be motivated to do what God wants them to do.

I am hopeful because of the many churches among us that are working to demonstrate that the Bible relates to all people in the church. These churches have youth ministers to assist parents in the spiritual development of young people. They have senior saint ministries to remind the older people of their vital role in the local

church. These churches have singles' ministries. They have marriage enrichment seminars. They strive to minister to those who have been through the pain of divorce. They have all sorts of support groups. These kinds of ministries provide hope, and I have hope for churches that develop such ministries.

I am not hopeful for churches that do not have small groups to support their people. These churches are quick to bemoan the rise in divorce, but slow to do anything to better marriage. They tend to view divorced people as unspiritual while doing nothing to heal those going through the divorce. They dismiss all youth ministry as mere entertainment. These churches do not equip their people.

I do see hope for churches that are active in feeding the poor and caring for those in prison—maybe even in some new ways. Serving people in the name of Jesus, not precedent, is their guiding principle. They remember their shut-ins. They serve the less fortunate during the holidays.

I see no hope for churches whose main benevolent principle is to "be good stewards of the Lord's money by making sure we don't help those who are unworthy." Rather than seeing the holiday season as an opportunity to serve, these churches have bulletin articles every December stressing that December 25 is not the birthday of Jesus. Rather than helping the less fortunate, they spend time answering questions that no one is asking.

I am encouraged by the many people among us who are willing to study anew the Bible. While they respect the study of those who have gone on before, they want to study the Bible and arrive at their own conclusions. What the Bible actually says is more important to them than "what we believe." They are even willing to restudy controversial subjects like divorce and remarriage. The guiding principle of their study is "What does God really say in this text? They are serious in this attempt to understand the text and its application.

I am not encouraged by churches where "what is believed" was determined by someone else years ago or where what revered brother "So and So" said is equated with Scripture; in fact, sometimes his word even supersedes Scripture. Some refuse to reexamine any verse of Scripture. Instead they conjure up a "conspiracy theory," suggesting that any willingness to study is paramount to destroying the church. They view themselves as part of the "faithful few."

I am hopeful for the churches among us where some of the bonds of tradition concerning our assemblies are finally being loosed. There is freedom to raise hands (as Scripture says) during prayers, and some churches are finally including "special singing groups" in their assemblies. Of course, no one wants special music to replace congregational singing, but the inclusion of special music can enhance praise and edification.

I am not hopeful for churches who have made special singing groups a major issue. In reality, the issue is not even "special music." The issue is what goes on between the "opening and closing prayer." (Most churches among us have always had special music; our tradition has just not allowed it to occur between the opening and closing prayer. We have always had special music at funerals, and we have

allowed Christian college choruses to sing following services—after the closing prayer.) The real issue is not special music, the issue is the binding of tradition. The mentality that binds tradition on the assembly restricts the edification potential of the assembly.

I see much hope for churches who are willing to be innovative in order to reach the unchurched. Such churches have a disposition toward change. They recognize the difference between the changeable and nonchangeable in Scripture. Such churches have a direction for the future and are excited about what God will do through them, rather than just what He has already done. They have high expectations.

I see no hope for churches that try to merely maintain the status quo. In reality, they will not even be able to do that. When fear of offending “dear old sister” becomes more controlling than Scripture, that church has no hope. When a church spends more effort trying not to offend brethren than it does in reaching the lost, there is no hope.

If a church will not allow God to work among them, then that church has no hope, it will not grow. There is no reason to be hopeful about those churches. God can only work in a church that is submissive to His will. When a church is submissive to Him, I have much hope for that church. Those who want to grow as Christians have no choice other than to be a part of churches that have hope. I rejoice for the many living demonstrations of hope currently among us.

[Reprinted by permission from **IMAGE** magazine, 3117 N. 7th St., West Monroe, LA 71291.]

Do You Believe These BIG LIES?

#1: “CHURCH IS NO PLACE FOR LOSERS AND STRUGGLERS.”

FALSE! A church that is true to Jesus is the **VERY** place for losers and for strugglers! Because when He walked this planet, they were the kind of people He sought out and befriended (and lots of “good” people criticized Him for it too). He became known as the **FRIEND OF “SINNERS”**—drunkards, prostitutes, tax-collectors who ripped off their own countrymen for the sake of a foreign government and to line their own wallets.

Jesus eagerly associated with such people, who were rejected by most of society, because He loved them and wanted to help them **ESCAPE** their hang-ups, loneliness, addictions and brokenness. As He said, “It’s **SICK** people, not healthy ones, who need a doctor, and it’s **BAD** people, not good ones, who need a Savior.”

So Jesus (and churches that are true to Him) care for strugglers—alcoholics, ex-cons, drug-addicts, immoral men, women who’ve had abortions, etc.

No problem is too big for the Son of God, **IF** you *really* want the freedom He offers.

#2: "CHURCH IS ONLY FOR PEOPLE WHO'VE GOT THEIR LIVES ALL TOGETHER."

FALSE! Church is not a society of perfect people. It's a group of very *IM*perfect folks who admit that because of their failures and sins they need lots of help!

And they have found that help in Jesus. He died that we might be forgiven. He guides us by His message, the Bible, and He keeps changing us from the inside out by the Holy Spirit He gives us. And He helps us help one another—which is what "church" is all about. Church isn't a place, a building. It's people—Tom with his allergies; Joy who is usually late; Richard who is fighting cancer; Abby whose husband left her; and others like that.

People who trust Jesus to do for them what they can't do for themselves. People who seek to follow Him, obey the Bible, and help others because Jesus loves them too. **THAT'S** what "Church" is meant to be.

#3: "THE BIBLE IS ONLY ABOUT PIE IN THE SKY BY AND BY WHEN YOU DIE!"

FALSE! Oh it talks about death, heaven and hell, sure enough. Because Jesus talked about them, and they are important and urgent. (You *will* die someday, won't you?)

But it talks about lots of other things, too—helpful, practical things. Such as . . .

- how to get along better with people;
- how to succeed more on your job;
- how to survive when disaster strikes;
- how to enjoy your family more;
- how to prepare for the future;
- how to forgive when people wrong you;
- how to be a better husband, wife, child, parent;
- how to break bad habits and start good ones;
- how to resist temptations.

God meets our needs by means of the Bible, **IF** we trust and obey Him. **JESUS IS A WONDERFUL SAVIOR! HE IS A LIVING LORD AND GUIDE!**

This article, with an invitation and list of meeting times added on, was printed as a handout and distributed throughout the Portland Ave. Church's neighborhood. Anyone who wishes may use it as-is or adapt it to your local situation.

Thought Provokers From Here And There About God's Church And Our Churches

"What is the Church of Jesus Christ? It has two aspects, commonly described as 'visible' and 'invisible.' *The visible Church* is so called because the marks by which its members are known are visible

and therefore easy to discern. They are such things as baptism, public worship and outward conformity to the rules of the Church. *The invisible Church* is so called because the marks by which its members are known are invisible and therefore hard to discern. They include such things as faith, spiritual worship, and inward conformity to the will of God. *The visible Church* is what men see, namely a company of people who profess Christ with their lips. *The invisible Church* is what God sees, namely a company of people who possess Christ in their hearts. What men see is those who have been baptized with water and whose names are placed on the register of a church; what God sees is those who have been born again of the Spirit and whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." —John Stott

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"Does your congregation consider itself to be *a field* for the preacher to work in, or *a force* for God to work through?"—selected

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"The Church's corporate life expresses its average, not its exceptional attainments. The Church in always leading men into a Christianity higher than that of the average Church life, and she often damps the enthusiasm of the men she trains. Indeed such men loosen themselves from her, and represent her teaching as individuals apart from her more truly than she herself does corporately. But it cannot be otherwise. For if the Church is to be really universal in her comprehensiveness, she must include in her embrace undeveloped and imperfectly developed people."—Quoted by George Beldon

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"We [in Churches of Christ] can believe we are right without having to believe that everyone else is wrong. . . . It is one thing for us to believe in absolute truth, which we all do since we believe in God, but it is something much different for us to presume that we have an absolute understanding of that truth. Truth is absolute, our grasp of truth is relative. One sobering truth speaks to that: 'For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known' (1 Cor. 13:12). So, we can surrender our claim to exclusive truth ('only we have all the truth') and still believe in absolute truth (which is a reality that is beyond our imperfect understanding)." —Leroy Garrett in Restoration Review

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The following is a letter by a Church of Christ preacher to a magazine, in response to an editorial. We commend the magazine for publishing the letter!

You wrote that "the path we are traveling is more nearly correct than that of any other religious group known to us." I am extremely uncomfortable with the self-righteousness of that claim. I believe that we have elevated certain aspects of church life into positions of prominence that are not to be questioned, when in fact other areas of church life may be just as important.

To claim that we are most nearly right ignores gaping deficiencies. We do not pray as often as some charismatic churches. We have virtually no stories of

prayer heroes. Is the question of instrumental music of greater importance than the prayer life of God's people? We are not as evangelistic as the Southern Baptists. Is the question of frequency of the Lord's Supper of greater importance than the task of evangelism? Your assessment that we are most nearly right only is true when we, arbitrarily and narrowly, define what constitutes the issue on which we need to be right.

I do not find a spirit of ugliness in most of our critics. I find a group of young men genuinely wrestling with identity, seeking to know the will of God as it is revealed in Scripture. Are we the first group in the history of Christendom that sees perfectly all things, or do we share a common sin problem with all generations of all peoples?

You clearly would have me resign from my pulpit and seek a position in the Christian Church. I respect your opinion. But I disagree. I do not want to leave this fellowship. I feel called to this fellowship. And my faith in God's use of this fellowship is deeper than any current deficiencies. It is not the deficiencies, but the ideal discovered over a century ago that beckons me to stay. We were built as a movement with genuine freedom: freedom to study the Bible for ourselves, freedom to renounce any attempt to make us agree with a creed. I believe that you, and others, would have me sign your creed. I will not do so. I must not do so. And the call to do so makes a mockery of what we proclaim, that each listener has the right and obligation to respond personally to God.

—Randy Mayeux, Dallas



During the 1970 Evangelism-in-Depth campaign in Ecuador, the handful of believers in one small town began to take seriously the biblical teaching regarding the unity of the Body of Christ. They looked about them and considered the sad spectacle of several minute congregations, belonging to as many denominations and mission groups, unable to fulfill their God-given functions for lack of adequate resources. One had a poorly paid pastor, another a small building, the others some other resources. Deciding that this was at best ridiculously inefficient, and at worst dishonoring to God, they decided to pool their resources and organized into one church, much to the horror of their parent organizations.

EXCERPTS from Readers' Responses

We are grateful that many readers responded to the issues about "Can We Grow Again? What Are God's Solutions to Our Problems of Church Decline?" Some responses we already ran in earlier months (Jan. - Mar.). Here are contributions from other readers. We are sorry we had to condense all of them, some of them drastically, due to lack of space. As usual, views differed widely. We leave it to you to read, ponder, evaluate, and act.—Editor

Is Your Church Alive, and Expressing Jesus Christ?

David Brown, longtime missionary to Africa, now living in Franklin, Ky.

The local New Testament church is the expression of the person and the power of Jesus Christ in this world.

The church is the expression of *His life*. His life had been implanted within them through the new birth. They were in union with Christ, dead to sin and the world, and alive to God in a total commitment to Christ as Lord.

The church is the expression of *His character*. They gave themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. They knew the call of God upon their lives to be like Jesus. Under the control of the Holy Spirit they were set free to do the will of God. The Spirit produced in them His fruit—the character of Jesus.

The church is the expression of the *attitude of Jesus*. His attitude was one of humility. He laid aside His position and became obedient to the Father, even to death upon the cross. The local church is to express that same lowliness of mind and sacrificial love. He also came to seek and save the lost, accepting them just as they were. The church should do the same.

It is the expression of *His power*, exercising His authority over the powers of darkness. Ministering as a body in the power of the Holy Spirit, it will witness supernatural things through trusting and obeying the Lord.

A church united with the Head in heaven, seeking to know His mind (in prayer) and obeying His will, is the expression of our risen Lord, growing into His likeness. A church like this is alive and well.

These principles are foundational. If the foundation is weak the superstructure will fail. Any church concentrating on the superstructure of its work and existence, while ignoring the foundation will die. Church life and growth are not found in new programs or gimmicks. They may be good in their place, but what counts is allowing the Holy Spirit to produce what God wants in the local body. That may not please some brethren who may feel threatened, but it will please God and make an impact on the world around us.

Being Right, or Being Grace-filled?

Michael Hall, Grand Junction, Co.

If the Restoration Churches want to renew their growth patterns and be on the cutting edge in the next century there's going to have to be a shift in our model, our goal. In the past our model was that of "being *right*." We have so over-focused on being right that we have become legalistic, snobbish, and un-fun to be with. We have not been known as a group who can face our wrongs gracefully. We have "preached other groups to hell," contrasting how we are better than they are. This has not made our churches places of compassion, grace, love, joy, or warmth. It has focused our energy on "intellectual rightness" to such an extent that we have become a divisive, confrontative fellowship who can't even get along among ourselves. And you wonder why people are not attracted to us?

The new model that I would suggest is that of "being Christ-like." Let Him be our *right-eousness* (1 Cor. 1:30-31) so that we can focus on "following in His footsteps" (1 Peter 2:21-24). Let the fruit of the Spirit become our criteria. Let us ask if we are becoming more

loving, joyful and peaceful. Let us build longsuffering, gentleness, and goodness into every class and assembly. Let us design into every program and project the focus on being more faithful persons who are as good as our word, more receptive and meek and capable of receiving correction, and who can control themselves (their emotions, their angers, their frustrations, their failures, etc.).

The model or pattern that will make us successful and attractive and productive must be a pattern that restores *the personal* to the equation. This means the leaders are those who can model and instill the high quality of the Spirit into others—it means that kind of servanthood.

Many of our people and churches suffer from the problem of "doctrine overload." They already know a whole lot more than they are doing (or have the capacity to do). Tell them more and they will either (1) fill up their heads with more details and leave it there; or (2) feel more "right" about their correctness and thus feel more smug (and rigid); or (3) feel more "guilty" about not doing more and avoid learning more. Most Christian people don't need more information, they need more practical, hands-on training in *how to apply. Implementation power*—that's what we need. And that's our part—truly "observing" all that Jesus commanded us to do (Matt. 28:20).

[Michael Hall works as a communications therapist and consultant. He produces a journal and can be reached at 1904 N. 7th St., Grand Junction, Colorado 81501.]

Biblical Truth Plus Contemporary Relevance

William Rinne, Bloomington, Ind.

In answer to your article, "Facing Some Hard Facts," I am enclosing a recent article from the local newspaper (*Herald-Times*) regarding the church here where I attend and also teach a Bible class. The key word here is *involvement*, by *many* people.

Bloomington Church Mixes Traditional, Contemporary

by Teri Klassen

At Sherwood Oaks Christian Church, where the message is traditional but the medium often is not, attendance has multiplied like the biblical loaves and fishes.

... Founded in Bloomington in 1963, Sunday morning attendance was about 100 in 1981 when minister Tom Ellsworth arrived. Growing at an average rate of almost 100 a year, average attendance now is about 1,100. In addition to Ellsworth, the church has five other full-time ministers—of youth, involvement, education, music and children.

Ellsworth said the church takes a "very conservative view of the Scriptures," but uses modern methods including marketing techniques from church growth institutes to reach people.

Words to songs and responsive readings are projected on the front wall during services. Rather than trying to do all the church's work themselves, the ministers help lay members apply their skills to the tasks at hand.

"We're trying to be faithful to the message but trying to communicate that message in ways that will reach Americans of the 1990s," Ellsworth said. "We have tried our best to be at the cutting edge on learning about the needs of our community."

In the past two years, the church has started two divorce support groups for adults and one for children, a chronic pain and disability support group, a grief support group, and a one-on-one support system for people in crisis.

New members cite the church's friendly atmosphere and responsiveness to their particular needs in explaining what attracted them to it.

Hunger for Reality, for Experience

W. L. Wilson, El Paso, Tex.

It seems to me that part of our problem is a lack of humility and a lack of *hunger and thirst* (Matt. 5:6).

The Stone branch of our movement was strongly anchored in *seeking* God and His will. Alexander Campbell was right in teaching that God *readily receives* the penitent—without undue begging, so to speak. Nevertheless he strongly taught repentance and did not reject Christian experience. He merely said it is faith and not experience that saves one. He probably did not appreciate experience as much as Stone, but he didn't *disbelieve* it as our movement came to do later.

Rest Home for Saints, or Hospital for Sinners?

Vernell Easley, Loranger, La.

Yes, our churches can grow again. But our members must get their act together. For years we have set idly by and made our church pews a haven and rest home of Saints. Our churches must return as a hospital for sinners. Parents must wake up and have the home life that we read about in the Bible.

Our churches will never be any better than our homes. We've allowed T.V. to bring the world into our children's lives. We have declined because love does not exist in our homes.

Every member must learn to pray the Bible way. We are admonished to pray without ceasing, pray one for another, love one another, fast and pray, to lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting, and confess our faults one to another.

Stress the First Principles, and that Real Faith Works!

Charles Kranz, Ft. Pierce, Fla.

I believe the reason that many people left our churches is because they had not been sufficiently grounded in first principles (how to become a Christian and how to worship). Therefore, they have no problem in worshipping where baptism is not for remission of sins, the Lord's Supper is partaken of periodically, the instrument is used, etc.

Because of my work, my wife and I have worshipped 30 of our 52 years of married life with 10 amillennial Churches of Christ. I heard of very, very few people who left those churches. Why? Because much emphasis was placed on *working* (not to be saved). All to a greater or lesser extent taught that we are saved by grace, through faith, and that *faith without works is dead*. Accordingly, baptisms, conversions and growth generally result from this emphasis on works. How long has it been since *you* have worked for the Lord in seeking to save the lost?

Are Our Views of Scripture Too Narrow? Are We Too Fearful About Its 'Silence'?

Name Withheld

Our congregation's and preacher's beliefs include a smaller view of the Church and narrower understanding about "fellowship" than I hold; also strong convictions against instrumental music in worship, and clear-cut stereotypes of men's and women's roles in the church. Sometimes I find myself very uncomfortable.

I feel really restricted by the narrow view of Scripture that characterizes most of the leadership among our churches: "Oh, look out! I don't know if we can do that. Is there Scriptural precedent for that? I don't know if that's authorized."

For myself, I see a lot of *governing principles* in Scripture to be applied to the New Testament church, but very few specifically "authorized" practices. I think that such a narrow view of the Bible which says that "silence" is prohibitive is unworkable, misguided, and hazardous to Christian freedom.

[*Editor's comment* about this last item: The writer is a zealous worker in his congregation, not an "armchair quarterback." His feelings remind me of a statement made by Alexander Campbell—"Many of our brethren are so afraid of doing something *wrong* that they don't do *anything at all*."

Similarly, D. L. Moody was once criticized by a Christian for some of his evangelistic methods. Moody asked the brother what *his* methods of spreading the Gospel were. When the man blushing admitted he didn't really have any, Moody said, "Then I like my way of *doing* it better than your way of *not* doing it."]

Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Our preacher makes reference occasionally to "the Restoration Movement." What is the Restoration Movement? (Continued from last month.)

Last month we attempted a brief survey of "church" history in an effort to lay some groundwork for the answer to the above question. In this article we will deal more directly with the question itself.

In the survey of history we have proceeded through the Reformation. Instead of reforming the Catholic Church, as the Reformers proposed to do, these efforts resulted in the formation of several parties or denominations. Several of the denominations of our day owe their origin to the Reformation and its aftermath. Those who protested the corruptions which had developed in the Catholic Church became known as Protestants. In the years since, the term has quite generally been applied to any professing Christians who were not

Catholic, but in the strictest sense it speaks of those who protested the corruptions of the Catholic Church and attempted to bring about reform. Much of the protesting in our day has fallen off to a slight murmur.

A major result of the Reformation was the creation of many different denominational bodies with a variety of doctrines, some very directly opposing others. In some matters the Reformation brought about a much more Biblically-oriented set of beliefs, but there were also many other matters which did not come in for examination or which received insufficient attention. The divisions that the Reformation brought stood condemned by the scriptures they sought to honor. The creeds or sets of beliefs that arose and the practices which grew up were often unscriptural or without basis in scripture at key points. Quite a number of the people who came to America were of religious groups created by the Reformation. Calvinism, a system of theology based on the teachings of John Calvin, one of the Reformers, had a very strong influence in early America. One of the practical aspects of this was the requirement of some kind of "experience" in connection with salvation. In order to become a part of some of the religious denominations, one had to be able to report an unusual event of religious significance in his life, a remarkable dream, a vision, or some such experience. The religious scene in America in the eighteenth century was one in which those professing Christianity were widely divided and the visible church was far from N.T. truth in many points.

In the late eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth, there arose several men, whose efforts were at first independent of the others, concerned about the false teachings and the divisions. These men realized that the Reformation had not succeeded in restoring the church to the purity of N.T. teaching and practice. These men and those who followed gave rise to what has come to be known as the *Restoration Movement*. It was so called because the emphasis was on restoring the N.T. church rather than simply reforming the churches as they existed. These men began to make a very strong appeal for Bible authority, for belief and practice, and to urge professing Christians to lay aside their denominational creeds in favor of a return to the beliefs and practice of the early N.T. church. They did not reach their conclusions all in one step, but all moved in the same general direction.

Those who have been influenced by the Restoration Movement have sometimes been called "Campbellites" in derision, the name being taken from Alexander Campbell, one of the early leaders in the movement. Alexander and his father, Thomas, had a strong influence on the movement, but they were far from being the only men to begin to seek the restoration of the N.T. church. Other names connected with the early days of the movement include: Barton W. Stone, "Raccoon" John Smith, Walter Scott, Abner Jones, and James O'Kelly. As these began to hear of the work of one another they began to influence one another and what had been independent efforts did indeed become a movement. The idea of "speaking where

the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent," the appeal of a return to the New Testament and the abandonment of human creeds and parties began to receive such a response that Alexander Campbell named a religious paper he published "The Millennial Harbinger." He (erroneously) supposed that the changes being brought about were such that they would bring in the millennium.

The efforts of these men did not bring the millennium (such is not by human effort but is to be ushered in by the Lord Himself at His return), but they did have a significant effect on the religion of nineteenth century America. The movement that resulted continues to be a significant movement today, both in the United States and abroad. Unfortunately it has not been the success that these early men envisioned. Instead of healing the divisions of Christendom, it has itself become fragmented and divided into parties. The introduction of instrumental music into some congregations about the time of the War Between the States led to a division that has continued to the present. Other issues have followed as churches have moved away from the distinctive plea of the movement. One can today find churches which trace their religious history through the Restoration Movement but which have abandoned most of the positions that were held. Others have held much more faithfully to the aims of the movement and still seek to be non-sectarian churches of Christ following the pattern and beliefs of the N.T.

We are not attempting in this article to speak of the relative merits of the several viewpoints which have arisen within the churches of a Restoration heritage. It should be evident, however, that even within the movement there has been a tendency to drift from what were once regarded as precious and important truths. The failure of Christians to achieve wholly the plea for the authority of the Bible, for non-sectarian Christianity, and the unity of the church should never keep us from realizing the rightness of the plea.

The term "Church of Christ" has been adopted by religious bodies which have little or no relationship to the Restoration Movement, so from the name alone one cannot always identify churches of a Restoration background. Out of the movement, however, have come those Churches known as "Churches of Christ" and the "Christian Church." Generally speaking, those churches designated as "Christian Churches" are more liberal in belief, some having drifted very far from the restoration plea [esp. "Disciples of Christ" —AVW]. The more conservative churches have clung to the name "Church of Christ." This latter name is used by the non-instrument churches but is not limited to them.

The Restoration Movement is indeed a movement, not an organized entity with governmental organization, officers, headquarters, creed, etc. While some who trace their roots through this movement have accepted a place in the world as just another denomination in the midst of denominations, and have created for themselves such organization, this represents a departure from the Restoration plea. Instead the movement is a recognized emphasis and set of values that have bound churches and Christians together with a sense of purpose. Whereas denominational churches tend to defend

denominationalism and to justify it, those churches which have followed the Restoration plea have condemned it and sought to be non-sectarian. Whereas tradition and the decisions of governing bodies have a very strong influence on some churches, those which have followed the Restoration plea have called for a strong emphasis on the Bible, "doing Bible things in Bible ways," insisting on Bible authority for belief and practice. Because of the Biblical emphasis, those churches which have followed the Restoration plea have stressed the role of baptism in salvation, the conduct of worship services according to the N.T. pattern, weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, and congregational autonomy.

In later years some have become members of churches with a Restoration heritage who have little concept of their "roots." As we mentioned in the introductory article, one can be saved without a knowledge of church history or any concept of what the Restoration Movement is. The essential knowledge has to do with the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation work. We live in a world of many conflicting religious teachings, however, and the issues that have been hammered out by godly men of old may serve to guide us. There is knowledge that is important because it helps us to know Bible teaching and helps us to avoid those things which may be false. Some knowledge helps us to know how to please the Lord and how to stay in the paths of righteousness. Churches of the restoration heritage have emphasized some very important truths with reference to embracing the Gospel, as to worship, and as to the church itself, truths which have not received proper emphasis or even acceptance by Christendom generally. Without an awareness of this need, people tend to fall into an acceptance of the rather common viewpoint that one church is about as good as another and that the differences are of little or no consequence.

When we realize how people have tended to drift away from scriptural positions and practices to such an extent that great movements have been necessary to call them back, we realize the importance of great care to avoid such drifting. To know this history ought to enable us not to keep making the same mistakes. To know what truths have been neglected ought to make us watchful that we do not let go of them all over again.

VOICES from the FIELDS

Mark, Candy & Kathryn Garrett Missionary Candidates for Senegal, West Africa

Laval University in Quebec City has accepted us for French language study beginning in August. August 24th we are scheduled to take a placement test to see what level we'll enter in the school. Of course we could save them the trouble—we know we'll be in the *totally ignorant* category! So we feel excitement and anxiety all at once; excitement at the prospect of another hurdle nearly crossed, and anxiety about the initial pain in language learning. Sounding like a child is hard on an adult ego; but perhaps it will teach us more about

the child-like faith God smiles on. Why learn French? This official language of Senegal will be our basis from which to learn Wolof.

We are still doing a lot of logging (miles that is, not trees) as we travel the Southeast. Since we last wrote, we've visited 8 churches in VA, NC, GA, and MD. Two have joined our financial support team and one is still considering us.

Looking ahead we're Kentucky bound in June and perhaps Tennessee in July. And we are excited because everywhere we go more of God's children are motivated to partner with us. Yes, God will use *all of us* to reach the Wolof; a people without even one church!

Our humble thanks to the many of you who've already given sacrificially to our ministry. We thank God for His confirmation through you. 51% of our monthly needs have been pledged and 50% of our estimated one-time needs are in hand! The remainder must materialize before we can go to Quebec for language study. Since that is just 3 months away it stretches our faith. What happens if we don't meet our target date? It means postponing language school till January '93 and obviously delays our contributing to the ministry in Senegal as well. There is nothing else holding us back. We are debt free and I could leave my framing job tomorrow. Will you pray with us?

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A CAPPELLA

does not mean unaccompanied

John Fulda

Well, today it does. But it first referred to a style, for it meant to sing like you would in church. Obviously most of early church singing was unaccompanied for practical reasons, and when it came to presenting the best musical setting for the early popes in their chapels it was men's choruses unaccompanied. Hence the style *a cappella* (as in the chapel) became synonymous with unaccompanied singing into our own time.

When anyone will listen, I will take the opportunity to try out this bit of information, and I like to add the following illustration: A barbershop quartet could sing "Rock of Ages" in their unaccompanied style, but it would not sound like it does in church. It would not be a *cappella*.

Everybody knows that *a cappella* has come to mean unaccompanied, but I inherited a stubborn streak from my German grampaw. I intend to use the word "unaccompanied" when I don't want instrumentation, and *a cappella* when I want "a chapel" style.

Since this sets the whole world straight (I'm joking), I would like to have my say about unaccompanied singing.

I learned to sing in church, but it was the public school band that taught me to associate symbols with sound (music reading).

By chance I found out you could match sounds to symbols with the voice as well as an instrument.

I pursued instrumental music through my third year in college. Then I went to K.B.C. and found myself (with the rest of the student body) in Dale Jorgenson's chorus (an unforgettable experience). Here I discovered that a vocal ensemble could be even more expressive and intense than a group of wind and/or stringed instruments. When I went back for a college degree I had a new interest—unaccompanied singing. L.S.U. had one of the best "a cappella" choirs in the south and it only enhanced my feeling for unaccompanied vocal singing.

I used to say that a chorus of voices should emulate the organ (the real kind, not the electric kind) or the stringed ensemble. But God made the voice. Now I say that the best trained orchestra in the world strives to (but cannot) attain to the richness of the blend and intensity of a chorus of instruments made by God—a vocal ensemble.

We have a great heritage. Why would anyone want to change it? We are in danger of losing it, however, and I want to tell you why. We lack intensity because we lack the training, and we don't have the training because we don't think it is important enough. And we are losing it. On page 196 in *Theology and Aesthetic Roots in the Stone-Campbell Movement* by Dale A. Jorgenson, we have a quote from Walter Scott that dates back to 1833. It was true then—now even more:

"It is a fact we can no more obey the command to sing unless we are at first taught to sing, than we can obey the command to read unless we are taught to read. Let us then try to fix the heart of God's young people by encouraging them to study sacred music; and of course love the exercise of singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, as they are commanded by the Holy Spirit."

In the old days there used to be "singing schools." These "schools" taught "ordinary" folks to read music in a very successful non-technical way. That is why the two or three generations before us could sing with four part harmony. However, there has been no effort by the church to encourage this kind of "singing school" since the time of our "grands" and "great-grands."

The central Kentucky churches, led by Ebenezer, realize how important this heritage is. They are in their third year sponsoring a week at camp where we "... try to fix the heart of God's young people by encouraging them to study sacred music; and of course love the exercise of singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, as they are commanded by the Holy Spirit."

It was not through the efforts of the church that I learned to read music and learned to appreciate the grand art of singing unaccompanied. We are to the point where there is little or no concern for the art of singing, unaccompanied or not. God says read the word so we learn to read. God says sing and praise— just opening our mouths won't do it.

[For more information on the music camp, see "News & Notes," last item.]

Missionary Work in Japan

Centennial Reflections, No. 4

Harry Robert Fox

We left off last time looking at some of the early efforts made by us in response to the wide open door the Lord gave us in post-war Japan. I wish space permitted a full description of all else that was done and by whom. Perhaps, Lord willing, some of us who participated in those efforts will be writing our "memoirs" and will provide readers with a fuller picture.

Meanwhile, I will enumerate a few lessons that may be learned from some of the efforts I have described. For starters, I will recount a personal prejudice I had as a boy in Japan. I remember saying to my dad, "Why are we wasting so much time on kindergartens? These kids are too young to understand the gospel." I got my answer 20 years later when I returned to post-war Japan and found that a large percentage of the people who responded to our "gospel invitations" were young people who had attended our pre-war kindergartens.

Ironically, others later asked me why we were wasting money and effort establishing a "Christian College" where there couldn't be the kind of constituency needed for such an enterprise. They went on to say that it was our business to "preach the gospel" and establish churches—not to go into the education business. To which I replied, "Yes, I am painfully aware of the truth of what you say, *but* my own personal experience of the tremendous benefits of a Christian college education are so great that I am constrained to help provide a similar opportunity to *today's* Japanese young people. *They* can't wait till later; it's now or never for them."

In retrospect, I still believe that those of us who prayerfully supported Brother McMillan in establishing Ibaraki Christian College did right. For every time I return to Japan (as I have done twelve times during the past 33 years) I run into men and women who attended ICC thirty and forty years ago who express to me their profound gratitude for the absolutely unique, otherwise utterly unobtainable Christian education they were given. Many of them were baptized during their student days while others were baptized later. But even those who have not accepted baptism thus far are singing the praises of God and exerting an influence for good all over Japan. And they are sending *their* children to ICC.

To be sure, we do not yet have a school in Japan comparable to Harding, Lipscomb, Abilene or Pepperdine—and may never have. But I believe that what the Lord has enabled us to build thus far is a lot better than no school at all. And who knows what the Lord may yet bless us with if we keep praying on behalf of what He has already given us?

But what about the local churches established by missionaries

during the past 100 years? Some of the churches have done well while others have done poorly or ceased to exist. At one time (during the 1950's) the number of churches had increased to about 70 with a total membership of more than 5,000. Today, the number of churches has shrunk to about 50 with a total active membership of less than 1,000. But before we allow ourselves to get discouraged over these figures we need to remember that all of the churches established by the Apostle Paul failed to survive to the present. Yet the worldwide church did survive and is flourishing into the 20th century.

If you can get hold of a copy of J. M. McCaleb's autobiography, *Once Traveled Roads*, you will find he devotes a lot of space to this same question of missionary efforts and results. He concludes that more often than not, what look like failures in the short run have some amazingly wonderful results in the long run.

And I would add that many of our "mistakes" are almost unavoidable due to our limited knowledge and resources. For example, I do not see how any of us post-war missionaries could have avoided giving so much of our time and energies to evangelism that we didn't do justice to *nurturing* the churches the Lord established through us. And why was this so? Because the evangelistic opportunities were of such magnitude and urgency that we simply could not have conscientiously devoted less time to them than we did.

But the unfortunate result is now staring us in the face, namely, a shortage of elders, preachers and teachers to carry on after the current generation of leaders is gone. Our Japanese brethren are working feverishly to make up for lost time—but since most of them are in their 50's, 60's and 70's one wonders if there is enough time in which to do what they want to do. Only God can answer this question—and I firmly believe with the Apostle Paul in Philippians 1:6 that "He who began a good work in (Philippi as well as Japan and elsewhere) will bring it to completion."

The most important lesson we who worked in Ibaraki learned was the need to *interact* with each other instead of *reacting* (to be subject to one another per Ephesians 5:21). We had come from so many different backgrounds that we initially reacted against each other. But when we found ourselves "forced" to work shoulder to shoulder with each other in the operation of Ibaraki Christian College we slowly learned not only to love each other but also to trust and respect one another. We slowly lost our pride and learned mutual humility. The experience was so unusual for all of us that we called it "The Omika Experience" (after the name of the subdivision where the college was located).

Let me conclude with this interesting exchange I had with some Japanese friends several years ago: I said to them, "How long is it going to take to get the church solidly rooted in Japan." To which they replied, "Give us 1000 years." To which I would now like to add Paul's wonderful reminder in 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

[End of Series]

COOPERATIVE EVANGELISM—Yes or No?

by Alex V. Wilson, E. L. Jorgenson, and Leroy Garrett

Next October a gifted preacher, John Guest, will hold a city-wide evangelistic crusade in Louisville. So the churches in our city have been urged to cooperate in backing this effort.

Leaders in our congregation checked and verified that John Guest believes firmly in the authority of the Bible, the deity of Christ, salvation by God's grace through Christ's redeeming death and triumphant resurrection, and the necessity for sinners to be converted. From all reports the evangelist has also proved himself to be a man of moral and financial integrity. So we weighed the pros and cons of supporting this crusade. After prayerful thought and discussion, we decided to participate as a church, though of course it is up to each individual member as to what he or she will do.

After our decision, the thought occurred to me to examine the 1956 issues of *Word and Work*. For during that year Billy Graham held a similar crusade in Louisville. I wondered if anything had been written then about the pros and cons of multi-church cooperation in proclaiming the Gospel. Sure enough I discovered not one but two articles by former editor E.L. Jorgenson. Because of their intrinsic value, and also because of the continuing relevance of this question, we present excerpts from those articles of thirty-six years ago. Long-time editor R.H. Boll had died just a few months earlier; Brother Jorgenson was probably his closest friend and confidante.

BILLY GRAHAM IN LOUISVILLE (1956)

[The Graham evangelistic crusade in this city is now history. One "Church of Christ" bought costly space in the *Courier-Journal* (our largest daily) to attack the teaching of the evangelist through the public press. The intention was good, no doubt, but the judgment used (as we see it) was bad. The display had many scriptures, all true of course, and many of them well applied; but resentment rose high—that this was done at the opening of the crusade! On every hand, members of our free Churches of Christ (for they too wear Christ's dear name) were being asked if they approved the attack, or if those churches were connected with, or represented by, the advertisement. Accordingly, on October 20, as the first half of E. L. Jorgenson's regular radio address on the "Words of Life" radio program the following script was read, and a copy was sent to Mr. Graham. —E.L.J.]

Just now, and for one more week, our city, or rather the evangelical churches of our city, are engaged in a great union effort to bring the unsaved amongst us to a definite decision for Christ.

It is indeed a thrilling sight, and a heart-warming experience "to those that love the Lord" to see the new coliseum at the Fair

Grounds filled to overflowing: rank upon rank, thousands on thousands; a veritable sea of faces, all upturned to the man who comes out to speak for God; to speak of faith and repentance; to call the sinful to repentance and surrender, and to call us all to a new and deeper dedication to the person and service of Jesus Christ the Lord.

The famous evangelist is, of course, a baptized believer—immersed, as he told us; and that he preaches the news of the gospel there can be no doubt—that is, if *the gospel* is what Paul says it is in 1 Cor. 15:3-5: namely, “that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas,” etc. You see, “the gospel” is not what *we* do; it’s what *He* did; it’s not what *we* have done; it’s what *He* has done—for us, His finished cross-work there on the skull-shaped hill. This gospel, thank God, we hear, in the union evangelistic meetings, and we do greatly rejoice to hear it.

Still—we add this in all love and candor—those Christians who have carefully read the inspired account of early conversions, as they are recorded in the book of Acts, can hardly feel satisfied until we hear some clear, New Testament word—either right out in public (as it was at Pentecost), or at least in the conference room—some word of instruction about the consummating act of salvation by faith, as it per-

The gospel is not what we do, it’s what He did for us — His finished cross-work.

tains to man’s part in the great transaction. There is such great need of some definite act of faith, some step on man’s part by which saving faith is tested, by which it is known and shown to be something more than a mere head belief (the devils have that, and tremble)—there is so great need of such a test, I say, that if God Himself had not provided one, we should almost have had to invent one (which God forbid!) The New Testament *provides* such a step; something more individual, more personal, more definite—perhaps even more difficult—than that good step of going forward with a crowd, *in a crowd*.

In Bible times, Old Testament and New, there was always some test of true faith, some river to cross (so to speak), some Red Sea to go through, with God. It was so, even in Abraham’s case, when he was first justified, as Romans 4:20 clearly (and strangely) shows. Such tests were never what the New Testament calls “works”: it cannot be a work of merit, for “works”, and all the boasting that goes with good works, are definitely excluded in God’s salvation offer (Rom. 3:27, 28; 28; 4:4, 5). It can be no more than some simple act of faith and trust, but ordained of God, and all-sufficient as a test of sincerity and faith.

The saved sinner himself will need it—that he may look back all his life (and especially if doubt should ever assail him), that he

may look back and say, "There! There was an hour when my faith rose up to meet the test that God had set."

The church will need it—that they may know, as surely as we can know in this world—whom to receive and fellowship.

And God will need to know—it is not too much to say that even God will look (officially) upon this consummating step of faith as evidence of good faith. *Of course*, God knows the heart beforehand and He knew Abraham's heart and purpose all the time, and before He asked Abraham to offer up his son; but it was not until Abraham had raised the knife to slay Isaac that God cried out: "*Now I know that thou fearest me.*" *Now I know!* God waits to see the action of our own free will.

Always, some positive step of commitment is necessary for the seeking sinner; some definite crossing, some line of demarcation between the world and the church. Therefore, some clear word is always needed, like that which the inspired apostle, Peter, gave out in his great model sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2:38-41); like that which Ananias brought to the praying, seeking Saul (Acts 22:16); or like that which Paul himself, in turn, wrote to the churches of Galatia, as to how they had got "into Christ," had "put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26, 27); or like Peter's word again, much later, in his First Epistle, 3:21.

But the historic churches, in their efforts to make it easy—or in hope of building up their numbers, and yielding to the eternal human tendency and wish to get around what is unpopular, and what may stand between them doctrinally—the churches, I say, have got themselves in such a fix that it is difficult for the union evangelist to speak fully and freely of that consummating act of faith—"even baptism"—its whole place and purpose in the divine plan.

What then? Shall we oppose the whole crusade? Shall we resort to half-page advertisements, to throw cold water on the effort although we know that thousands whom we could never reach will hear, out there, the great fundamentals of faith, repentance, decision for Christ, and confession of Christ—preached in mighty power? No, "we have not so learned Christ". In that sort of opposition, you may just "include me out." Is it not better, if the message fall somewhat short of Pentecost, to do what we may—in our pulpits, and in our person-to-person teaching to make up for any shortage, and to expound the way of God more *fully*, to those who care to hear, as we read that Priscilla and Aquila did for Apollos at Ephesus? This, I think, is the Christian's proper duty, and I am confident that the many free, independent, spiritual Churches of Christ that support and sponsor this broadcast would not only whole-heartedly agree with these sentiments, but they would be happy to have me *disavow*, on their behalf, any connection or sympathy with the type of opposition referred to—especially when it is exhibited before a scornful, unbelieving world! Yes, a copy of this script has been sent to Mr. Graham. [End of E.L.J.'s 1st article]

FEEDBACK: ATTACKS AND SUPPORT

Brother Jorgenson's article was attacked by many writers in various publications. Much of the criticism was unfair and bitter, for W & W in those days was hated in some quarters. But Leroy Garrett of Dallas wrote a reasonable response (the two men had never met at that time), and most of E.L.J.'s second article consisted of quoting that favorable review. We conclude by presenting less than half of that long quotation. Please understand that what follows is from Brother Garrett's article, as reprinted by Brother Jorgenson in 1957.

... Graham and his kind are here to stay, and we need to face that fact. So let us study ways and means of utilizing the *good* that men do for the sake of strengthening God's kingdom.

Most of our brethren refuse to accept the fact that men like Billy Graham do preach the gospel of our Lord, as Jorgenson has observed. While it is true that Graham does not set forth the terms of obedience to the gospel, which is of course very unfortunate, he does proclaim to a lost world that Jesus Christ is the victory over sin and death.

It is certainly true the gospel was often preached without reference to baptism (Acts 13 for instance), and it is also true that baptism was for believers who had already accepted the gospel. In other words, baptism is part of the *response* to the gospel rather than part of the gospel itself. Otherwise Paul would never have said, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

While baptism is essential to the obedience of the gospel it is not essential to the preaching of the gospel. Every gospel preacher should certainly inform his hearers regarding obedience to the gospel, and it is here we feel Graham errs, but the fact remains that Graham can *fully* and *completely* proclaim the good news of what God has done for sinners through Jesus Christ without a single reference to baptism. Paul did so in Acts 13. An evangelist should set forth immersion into Christ as the means of entering the kingdom, perhaps before he is asked or even if he is not asked, but we must concede that the gospel is preached when Jesus Christ is proclaimed as the means of justification from sin. This Graham does, and because of this he is a gospel proclaimer.

Jorgenson says we should start with Graham's converts where Graham leaves off. This is a very good suggestion. Yet we must not discount the power of the Bible itself. If Graham leads a man to recognize Jesus as Lord, it is likely that he will turn to the Bible for more light, and how many have there been who have *obeyed* the gospel by this means?

I want to go on record as insisting that we take advantage of any opportunity to supply what lacks in the work of the big evangelists who touch the lives of millions of people. I especially like the idea of working directly with his converts, not antagonistically of course, but as part of the answer to the great task of educating the world for Christ.

NEWS and NOTES

POSTSCRIPT TO THE ARTICLES ON JAPAN

The June Christian Chronicle points out that pioneer missionary J.M. McCaleb's "legacy of longevity on the field can be seen in the lives of others who followed him there. This month the Japanese churches celebrate not only the McCaleb centennial, but also the 75th anniversary of O.D. Bixler's evangelism in that nation. Bixler left behind the roots of such projects as a children's home, a home for the aged, Christian schools and many churches in Ibaraki Province."

Some of our longtime members will remember Bro. Bixler and his many ministries in Japan through the decades. Where are missionary candidates today for Japan (& elsewhere)? Almost every letter from Moto Nomura includes a plea for missionaries for that land of technological brilliance and spiritual darkness.

AMID CRISES, SPIRITUAL HUNGER

I read recently that 15 years ago there were 5,000 evangelical churches in the Philippines. Now there are over 25,000! By evangelical we mean Bible-believing, Gospel-preaching. Despite, or maybe because of, terrific troubles like drought (now in its 3rd year), excruciating poverty, political instability, earthquakes, typhoons, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves, etc., God has been working in that land. Pray for the people there, that the Gospel may keep spreading.

SORRY ABOUT THAT

Two churches mentioned that their W&W Sunday school quarterlies often arrived torn and otherwise mangled. They asked why we don't tie them up with string, not rubber bands, or put them in envelopes. I checked on this, and find that the U.S. Postal Service requires we use rubber bands and mail them as we do. If they arrive damaged, complain to them vigorously and ask them to change the system!

HONORS FOR GRADUATE FROM NIGERIA

Titus Awokuse is a Christian young man from Nigeria. His father Samuel

is a preacher at a Church of Christ in Lagos. In May Titus graduated from Berea College, Ky. and received some special honors. He was one of 11 Berea College students recognized for outstanding community service. He was awarded the E.R. Brann Good Citizenship Award, which is given to "students who have contributed to the Christian character of the campus." He also received the Chin-Wang Prize which is given annually to a senior of good character who has excelled in the study of economics and business administration.

Titus was president of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship chapter at Berea. In past summers he worked with young people at Portland Church and two other Churches of Christ in the Louisville area.

Lord willing, next fall he will start work on an M.A., probably at Murray State University in Kentucky.

HIGH REGARD FOR MAPLE MANOR

A high-ranking nurse at a Louisville hospital, when asked what senior-citizens' home/nursing home she recommended, replied, "Start with Maple Manor, and work down from there." That shows the high level of satisfaction that Maple Manor maintains. Thank God for this, and keep praying and supporting this important ministry. (The children's division too)

PRAIRE CREEK CHURCH, DALLAS

Donald Harris is now ministering at Prairie Creek. He and Delores have moved into the parsonage there.

MANY THANKS TO KEN

Ken Berggren, that is. He was our printer from last fall through the May issue. He also did other momentous things, like marrying Karen Leach, who taught kindergarten at Portland Christian School. Now they have moved to Princeton, KY to begin a pastoral ministry there. We pray God's blessing on them. Ken did a great job of learning from scratch how to become a good printer, in a very short time.

Please pray for every aspect of W&W—writing, editing, printing, cir-

culating. Pray for our printers at Heid Printing Co. too. And stay tuned for changes.

SOME STATS TO THINK ABOUT

Tom Bradshaw did his master's thesis for Emmanuel School of Religion on the topic of the so-called pre-millennial a-cappella Churches of Christ. According to his tabulations, gathered by survey, there are now 74 churches in 6 states: Alaska, Ind., Ky., La., Tenn. and Texas. The total number of members is around 6,750. The total average worship attendance is around 4,975. The average congregation has 91 members, with 67 attending the Sun. morning worship time.

It's time to reverse the downward spiral, isn't it? For our Lord Jesus' sake, not just to have more satisfactory statistics.

SERMONS BEING PREACHED

A survey of some church bulletins shows: At Buechel, Duane Smith has been preaching a series of sermons on the life and ministry of Elijah. At Southeast Church of Christ, Nathan Burks has been and/or will be preaching from the books of Moses, the writings of John, and the book of Ecclesiastes. At Borden, Mike Abbott preached through Ephesians, and a series on spiritual disciplines we need in our lives; also a series on the fruit of the Spirit. He also preached at least 3 messages on "Can We Trust...?" Can we trust Christ's teaching about Himself? ...the story of His resurrection? ...our Bibles? At Portland Ave., Alex Wilson is preaching an expository series on 1st Peter.

Pray for all who preach. Brother Boll once wrote, "Do you want a better preacher? Then pray for the one you have."

LOCUST STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST, JOHNSON CITY, TN

New Elders to be Installed Today...

Two additional elders will be serving the congregation in the future. Richard Lewis and Grover Queen are to be installed as elders in a service at the morning worship hour, bringing the number of elders to five. Present elders are William S. Corpening, James C. Lewis, and William I. Vines.

These men have accepted a very responsible position. It is the duty of elders as a body to oversee the congregation, pastoring (shepherding) the

flock. They are neither dictators nor figure-heads. They must sometimes make decisions which are difficult and which will not necessarily be understood by those less mature. It is their duty to oversee and direct the teaching program of the church. They are especially responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church. These men occupy the highest office in the New Testament church of today other than that of Christ Himself (the Chief Shepherd, Head of the Church).

MANILA, PHILIPPINES

An interesting letter came from David Moldez, dean and instructor at Central Bible Institute. He also shepherds one flock plus starting a new church near his home. He has 4-5 Timothys whom he is training in evangelism and church work. They study at CBI. In April he conducted 3 funerals. One was for a person so poor that the family could not raise money to pay for the burial for 2 weeks. So the funeral was delayed that long!

RALPH AVE. CHURCH OF CHRIST

We wish to congratulate Bro. and Sis. Noah Nickell of their 70th wedding anniversary. They were married seventy years ago in Morgan county near Liberty in eastern Kentucky on June 4, 1922. They have seven children, three sons and four daughters. Their sons and daughters have presented them with 16 grandchildren who have given them nineteen great grandchildren. What a wonderful inheritance! God has certainly blessed them abundantly. May the Lord continue to supply their needs daily. Our love and prayers go with them. Each member of the congregation send their congratulations.

JENNINGS, LOUISIANA CHURCH

Japan Calls for Workers. Several years ago Bro. Moto in Japan proposed that if we send some of our young people to help out in the work there, he would be delighted to use them. We have prayed about it and talked to some about the possibility. The Lord has answered those prayers in many ways. Our young Kent Bowers has made a commitment to join Bro. Moto in the work, planning to leave late May or early June and stay for up to six months. What a blessing for those of us who cannot go to help Kent

with our prayers and our finances.

We stay so busy here. We just had a very good meeting with Dr. Blythe Robinson from Youngstown, OH. Bro. Paul Estes and Bro. A.J. Istre begin meetings tomorrow at Alexandria and Glenmora. We're having a banquet for our graduates next week with Bro. Glen Baber speaking. Tomorrow a group of us are going to Turkey Creek's Ladies Day Conference. Next week we have a planning session for Vacation Bible School. It just never stops! But we enjoy the work and see results again and again. Quentin Quebodeaux was baptized Tuesday night by Doug. God continues to bless us.

Be sure we think of you and your work often and pray for all of you. We are continually blessed and stimulated by your magazine. Keep up the good work.—Joyce Broyles

A NEW SPEAKER FOR WORDS OF LIFE

Brother Paul Kitzmiller tendered his resignation as speaker for the Words of Life Radio Ministry recently. He requested to be relieved from this responsibility because of his current church duties with the Hamburg Church of Christ and his family responsibilities. With much regret, the WOL Committee accepted his resignation.

A vote of thanks is extended to Bro. Paul for his faithfulness in proclaiming the gospel over the air-ways. He will continue serving on the Board of Directors for Words of Life.

Lord willing, Brother Richard Ramsey will be heard regularly on the Words of Life Program. He is loved and appreciated by many, because of his ministry for our Lord. Our Bro. Richard is one of the gifted preachers from Louisiana. We are looking forward to sharing in the spiritual feasts, as he is led of the Lord, via Words of Life broadcasting. May God's blessing be with him in this dimension of his ministry.

GALLATIN CHURCH OF CHRIST, GALLATIN TENNESSEE

Wednesday night in our introductory study of Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-9 we gleaned the following. 1) Divorce is a devastating experience for all involved. 2) God hates divorce. 3) We should do all we can to prepare people for a life-long commitment in the marital relationship. 4) We saw there is the "ideal" desired by God in marriage

and there is the "real" in the experience of even Christians. This week we continue our study by including a look at Deuteronomy 22 and 24. Bring your Bible and help us learn about this vital issue.

A new class called Discover Your Spiritual Gifts will be starting soon. You'll be able to recognize the areas of Christian service for which God has gifted you, and also learn how your gifts are designed to serve your God by serving the Body of Christ. If you are interested please sign up on the bulletin board as soon as possible as we will be ordering the workbooks. This will be a fourteen week class.

SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY of the Mackville Church of Christ. Bro. Orell Overman preaching July 20-26. Friends, former members and ministers are welcome. Sunday, July 26, 2:30 p.m. Home Coming.

—Harry Coultas, minister

Debbie Gordon, Administrative Coordinator for the 3rd annual music camp at the Antioch Christian Camp July 19-26, announces:

John Fulda, who is choral director at the Amite, LA, high school, will be in charge, assisted by James Embry. Roc and Mona Moore, will be available to lead some of the newer praise choruses.

The music camp has three purposes: 1. To praise God; 2. To edify and inspire our young people; 3. To prepare our young people for greater service to the churches in the ministry of song.

Camp brochures with registration forms are available from Joe Strunk, Camp Manager. If you need more forms, you may call him at (502) 223-7056, or call me at (606) 734-7361.

We need financial support for the expenses of this camp including travel expenses and honoraria for John Fulda and James Embry. The Southeast Christian Education Corporation has made a grant to help us this summer, but this grant is contingent upon contributions from the churches helped by the camp. We need seven churches to make a gift of \$100 for this year's camp. Send your contribution to the Antioch Christian Camp, 355 Bark Branch Road, Frankfort, Ky 40601 with a note that your gift is for the 1992 Music Camp.

(John Fulda will also hold a singing school for adults at Ebenezer July 13-17, 7:00 p.m. each evening.)

Be Willing to Embrace Further Light

We call them "**the Pilgrims**," those settlers who came to America in 1620 searching for religious freedom. John Robinson was their minister in the Old World, and this was his memorable farewell message to them as they left for the New World: (**Mark it well!**)

"I charge you before God and His blessed angels, that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. If God reveals anything to you by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as you were to receive any truth by my ministry, for **I am verily persuaded the Lord hath more truth yet to break forth out of His holy word.** For my part I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of those reformed Churches which are come to a period in religion, and will go, at present, no further than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; whatever part of His will our God has revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it. And the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things. This is a misery much to be lamented, for though they were burning and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God; but were they now living, would be as **willing to embrace further light** as that which they first received, for it is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick anti-christian darkness and that perfection of knowledge should break forth at once."