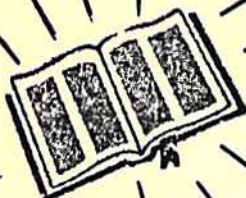


*"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."*



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

*"Holding forth the Word of life. "*



**AUGUST, 1992**

**MIRACLES NOW?  
OF COURSE!**

**"God is a bit sparing with His miracles. If there weren't any, we'd all be goners; but if there were too many, we'd all become lazy."**

**-Rufus Mosely**

# MIRACLES AND ENDURANCE

by Don Basham

Occasionally, even during the toughest of times, you may hear a word from God that makes all the difference--just the word you need to see you through. I recall a time when such a word came to me.

It had been a long week filled with nothing but frustrations and hassles. Too weary to pray and too bruised to be spiritual, my wife, Alice, and I sat together on the couch, numbly grateful for having slipped sideways through the day with no new crises erupting.

"Whatever happened to the victorious Christian life?" I wondered aloud.

Alice reached over and squeezed my hand. "Honey," she said, "*sometimes, just to endure is victory.*"

It was a truth so simple yet so encouraging I knew it had to be from God.

Too often we act as if being the right kind of Christian requires a string of answered prayers or a series of spiritual successes. But God has called us to be faithful, not successful. Although it is true that most Christian testimonies affirm God's power to bring us from sin to salvation, or from sickness to health, we need to keep in mind that an instantaneous transformation by His grace is more the exception than the rule.

My dear old friend Rufus Mosely used to say, "God is a bit sparing with His miracles. If there weren't any, we'd all be goners, but if there were too many, we'd all become lazy." *Some mountains are meant for climbing, not casting into the sea. Some of life's experiences are destined to be endured rather than enjoyed.*

So during those long and unyielding days when quick answers and happy solutions are nowhere to be found, why not lean into the Lord and accept the comforting reminder, "Sometimes, just to endure is victory"?

--from *New Wine*

**[The late Don Basham, a minister in the Restoration Movement, believed in and experienced present-day miracles, and even wrote a book about some of them. But his article above shows an important lesson God taught him about the other side of the coin.]**

# THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"  
Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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## In This Issue

**Theme: Miracles Now? Of Course!**

Miracles Now? Of Course! (editorial) --Alex V. Wilson	226
What Are These Things Called Miracles?--Alex V. Wilson	229
The Spread of Christianity In China Today --Alan Cole	232
How God Guided and Provided, Incredibly --C. Peter Wagner	234
A Closed Land Opened, A Bible-Seeker Guided--Brother Andrew	235
Rescued By "Angels" --A.P. Purviance	236
Divine Healings Throughout Church History --Jon Mayeux	238
The Other Face of Faith --Stephen Board	241
Latter Day Miracles --R. H. Boll	243
Pray For Miracles --Jack Mauley	245
Changing Times, Changing Churches --Bob Yarbrough	246
VOICES from the FIELDS	251
Jan Rake Shares Christ in Moscow	254
NEWS and NOTES	255

## THEME:

# MIRACLES NOW? OF COURSE!

Alex V. Wilson

The late, great writer A.W. Tozer made the following perceptive statements: "The whole truth does not lie in 'It is written,' but in 'It is written' and 'Again it is written.' (Matt. 4:5-7) The second text must be placed over against the first to balance it and give it symmetry, just as the right wing must work along with the left to balance the bird and enable it to fly."

In another place Tozer amplified the same point:

**I have often tried to make the point that truths that are compelled to stand alone never stand straight and are not likely to stand long....Scriptural truths are interlocking and interdependent. A truth is rarely valid in isolation. A statement may be true in its relation to other truths and less than true when separated from them.**

I make two observations based on the foregoing fact: First, it is wise to read more than one article on any subject you study, so you may gain differing perspectives on it. That is why I (and many of you, from your comments) like having some main theme in each issue of *Word and Work*. The various viewpoints increase our awareness and stimulate our thinking.

Second, that is why we need the theme of this month (and next, too)--to balance the truths that were emphasized on our May and July issues. *MAY*: Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers. David was a fugitive for years. Henry Brandt's wife died of inoperable cancer. Chet Bitterman was killed by kidnapers. Steve Largent's son was born with spina bifida. Paul faced staggering outer trials and inner stresses. Etc.,etc. *JULY*: Life totally crashed for poor Job. His wife lost her faith. Douglas' wife came down with cancer; he and his family were devastated when a drunk driver crashed into their car. Paul's afflictions "brought anguish to his heart, tears to his eyes, restlessness to his mind and groaning to his mouth (2 Cor. 2:4; 2:13; 5:2-4)."

What those articles said is true. But it is not the whole truth, thank God. Life often does confront us with sadness and tough circumstances, but there is also *Joy* unspeakable and full of glory. Again, God often does seem weak or absent or nonexistent, but there are also *Miracles* and *Healings*, sometimes.

**"But Didn't They Die Out With the Apostles?"**

Influential teachers have taught that the day of miracles is over. After the apostles' generation died out, or at least after the Scriptures became compiled

and distributed, there was no more need for miracles. At least three schools of thought take this position

First, there are the "Reformed theologians" such as John Calvin, B. B. Warfield and their followers. "Since the canon of Scripture has been completed, and the Christian Church fully founded and established, these extraordinary gifts have ceased," wrote Jonathan Edwards. Second, the "Dispensational" school of thought believes this. John Walvoord teaches that there were fifteen gifts of the Holy Spirit, but seven of them were temporary: apostleship, prophecy, miracles, healing, tongues, interpreting tongues and discerning spirits. Third, most people in Churches of Christ hold this view. A recent article in *Christian Chronicle* says, "We hold that miracles no longer occur because: (1) we do not see them anymore and (2) the biblically-stated reason for their occurrence (to establish the words of God's spokesmen) has ceased (Heb. 2:4)."

To be fair, we must add that all the above Christians do believe that God answers prayer, so long as it is not prayer for a miracle to take place! They believe in God's overruling providence, by which "He accomplishes His purposes acting within the laws of nature." That statement was written in the *Christian Chronicle* article, which concludes,

**While rejecting claims for biblical miracles today, we should maintain an active faith in the providential working of God's majestic power in our world. Our sense of confidence in the growth of God's kingdom (Dan. 2:44), the fulfillment of his promises in bringing about changes in human life (2 Pet. 1:4), his constant provision of our physical necessities (Matt. 6:26-30) and his sovereignty over nations (Acts 17:26) are all founded on the reality of his continuing power.**

### **The Swing of the Pendulum**

My article following this one explains more about differences between miracles and providence. But to continue: Because of the viewpoint just mentioned, I believe we often limit our faith and thus restrict God's working. "According to your faith be it done to you" is a vital principle in Christian life and service (Matt 9:29). The no-miracles-now view, strengthened by the unbelief in the supernatural which is still widespread in our culture ("Science has disproved all that supernatural stuff"), results in little faith and many doubts. I studied in a thoroughly evangelical college, but in class one day our professor chided us, "You all claim to believe the Bible, but most of you can j-u-s-t b-a-r-e-l-y squeeze a miracle into your view of life." We too easily absorb the unbelief common in the world around us.

But in the decades since then, the Charismatic Movement arose in the church and the New Age Movement outside it. And both of these movements believe strongly in the supernatural. So the mood of our era has changed in some ways, and many people are far *too* "believing," too gullible. Thus the pendulum

swings from one extreme to the other: beware! Beware lest we throw out the baby with the bathwater, true miracles with the phonies. We shouldn't be misled by the hoaxsters or hucksters, nor by real-but-Satanic miracles (see R. H. Boll's article this month). On the other hand we don't want our unbelief to rob us of rich blessings offered us by our Heavenly Father.

So how shall we proceed? How shall we find the truth between unbelief on one side and gullibility on the other? To the Bible! What does our Lord say there to guide us? Well, He does say that one purpose of miracles was to back up the preaching of the gospel. This is obvious. "This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will" (Heb. 2:3-4). We see examples of this in the ministry of our Savior and also of the apostles.

But is that the *only* purpose of miracles? No. While miracles were important to attract attention to preachers, and substantiate their message preached to the unsaved, they also played an important role in edifying the saved. That is, miraculous gifts were vital in helping the body-life of the churches as well as in evangelism. In 1 Cor. 12-14, the great emphasis is on the gatherings of the saints to be taught and edified (See 12:7, 12ff., 14:3, 12ff., 26ff., etc.). Winning the lost is barely in view at all (14:23-25). Spiritual gifts (whether "natural" or "supernatural") were essential for sustaining the life of the believers then. Why are they disposable now? True, we have the complete New Covenant Scriptures now, but even so our meetings, teaching and all our service for the Lord needs to be empowered from on high. "Having gifts that differ...let us use them" (Rom. 12:6, RSV), whether they seem quite ordinary or whether God from time to time uses us as a channel of His miraculous power. (As for 1 Cor. 13:10, to say that "the perfect" means the New Testament seems terribly unconvincing to me. As for the number and nature of gifts still operative today. etc. we have no time nor space to deal with this now.)

## AVOIDING THE EXTREMES

Personally I totally agree with these words penned by John Stott.

Are miraculous gifts still bestowed today?....A dogmatic "no," with perhaps the addition of "miracles don't happen today" or (worse) "miracles can't happen," is an impossible position for biblical Christian to hold. The God we believe in is the sovereign Creator of the universe. He not only *can* work miracles but *has* done so. Who are we to tell Him what He may or may not do?

"The opposite position seems equally untenable, however...that almost *everything* God does is miraculous. A miracle by definition is an extraordinary event, a creative deviation from God's normal and natural ways of working. If miracles were to become commonplace



they would cease to be miracles."--John Stott in *Baptism and Fullness: The Work of the Holy Spirit Today*

As for the Charismatic Movement, I often ponder a conversation between two of its godly, balanced leaders (for not all of them are extreme). Tom Smail spearheaded the movement in England (where some of our American excesses were avoided), and Arnold Bittlinger in Germany. In a moment of either cynicism or realism, Smail said to Bittlinger, "The charismatic renewal is two-thirds phony." The German replied, "Yes, but *one-third is a lot*." The charismatic author who quotes that conversation says, "Any thoughtful observer of the movement has easily discerned the spiritual hyperbole and outlandish tomfoolery that has gone on in the name of the Holy Spirit. Yet, as Bittlinger pointed out, *one-third is a lot*." (George Mallone in *Those Controversial Gifts*) Which is worse, some real miracles amid extravagant claims and false fire, or no miracles because wet-blanket brigades keep putting out all fires? Along with the fleshliness and confusion found among Charismatics, there are Christ-centered, zealous, Spirit-empowered disciples too. In fact, theirs is the fastest-growing missionary movement anywhere in Christendom. We need to learn some lessons from them there.

May God grant us discernment, love, faithfulness to His word, and the empowering from on high that we desperately need.

---

## WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS CALLED MIRACLES?

by Alex V. Wilson

Opinions about miracles are often a watershed. Did Jesus and the apostles really perform miracles nineteen centuries ago? Bible-believing Christians say yes; nonchristians say no. Do Christians ever perform miracles today? Some Christians stoutly affirm it; others strongly deny it.

### Biblical Terms and Modern Definitions

Three main terms are used in Scripture. 1) *Miracles or mighty works*: These are the usual translations of the Greek word *dunamis*, from which dynamite received its name. This term shows the *nature* of miracles; they are demonstrations of power. 2) *Wonders*: This term shows the *effect* of miracles. Because they are unusual, they produce amazement. 3) *Signs*: This shows their *purpose*. Miracles are *significant*; they have meaning. They point to someone or something beyond themselves. John brings this out repeatedly in his gospel: "These signs are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Son of God" (20:30-31; also see 2:11,23; 3:2; 4:54; etc.). So miracles are actions which demonstrate power, arouse wonder, and convey significance.

Various modern definitions are given. "Any amazing event; an event in the natural world, but out of its established order, possible only by the intervention of divine power," says Funk & Wagnalls dictionary. "An unlikely, highly improbable event that one cannot reproduce at will and that cannot be explained by known forces," writes John Brobeck, a Christian professor in medical sciences at the University of Pennsylvania. These definitions are good as far as they go, but lack the idea of being signs—having purpose and meaning.

In popular use the word is often applied loosely. People talk about the miracle of birth, or springtime, or of birds migrating for thousands of miles, etc. Such usage is inaccurate, and dilutes the meaning. Such events are God's working, yes—but His usual, *common* ways of working. We see a classic example of miracles in Acts 14, where Paul and Barnabas healed a man crippled from birth at Lystra and the crowds exclaimed, "The gods have come down among us!" Or take Acts 3-4, where Peter and John healed another man crippled from birth and the Jewish leaders expostulated among themselves, "What shall we do with these men—for everyone in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle and we can't deny it."

### Miracles, Providence, and Answers to Prayer

Not all acts of God's providence or overruling care are miracles. Daniel's safety amid the lions was an obvious miracle, but his physical robustness and mental sharpness recorded in Dan.1 were examples of what might be called non-miraculous providence. The three Jews' preservation the flaming furnace was indisputably supernatural, but the insomnia of Queen Esther's husband doubtless seemed to be a natural coincidence to any observers that night(Esth.6). God was at work in *all* these incidents; but not all were miracles.

Likewise not all answers to prayer are miraculous. Many are, such as when fire fell from heaven upon Elijah's sacrifice in answer to his petition. But many are not. David prayed that the Lord would overturn crafty Ahithophel's advice to the rebel Absalom. God answered, by having Absalom follow Hushai's suggestion rather than Ahithophel's; but it all seemed so ordinary that no one dreamed that I AM was intervening (2 Sam. 15-17)

I'm not trying to be picky on these points. No doubt the boundaries between miracles on one hand and providence and/or "natural" answers to prayer on the other are often blurry. (For example, was young David's killing of mighty Goliath a miracle or not?). To some extent "miracles" are subjective, and depend on the viewpoint of those who observe them (note John 12:28-29). The same event might be considered miraculous by one observer but not by another, except in overwhelming cases such as the "outstanding miracle" of Acts 4:16 and Paul's "extraordinary miracles" in Ephesus (Acts 19:11-12).

A skeptic asked a Christian who had formerly been a drunkard, "Do you believe that stuff about Jesus turning water into wine?" He replied, "I dunno about that, but I know that He turned whiskey into furniture at our house "



The main reason for making the above distinctions is this: If we refer to all answers to prayer and *all* providential acts as miracles, nonchristians will likely dismiss us as gullible nitwits and our claims as absurd exaggerations. Let's testify to the Lord's working, but don't throw around the word "miracle" too loosely.

### *Various Types of Miracles, with Some Examples*

1. *Miraculous healings*: Naaman cured of leprosy by Elisha; Aeneas' paralysis cured by Peter; etc. (Of course *God* healed them, but he used human agents.)

2. *The dead raised*: performed by Elijah, Elisha, Peter, and Paul, as well as Jesus.

3. *Demons cast out*: by Jesus, the twelve, Paul, and Philip.

4. *Deliverance from danger*: Israel when God parted the Red Sea; Peter's liberation from prison and guards; Paul's from a poisonous snake; Paul from his chains (Acts 16) but not from later long-term imprisonment (Acts 21-28).

5. *Miracles of judgment*: plagues on Egypt before the Exodus; King Uzziah afflicted with leprosy; Ananias and Sapphira struck with death and Elymas with blindness.

6. *Miraculous provision of needs*: manna for the Israelites; food brought to Elijah by ravens; Jesus' feeding the multitudes.

7. *Knowledge of secret events*: Elisha's knowledge of the Syrian king's top-secret military decisions; Peter's unmasking of Ananias and Sapphira's deception.

8. *Foreknowledge of future events*: Micah regarding Messiah's birthplace, Agabus about the coming famine in Judea; Paul regarding the survival of the inhabitants of the wrecked ships.

We've given just a sampling, of course, but even so the above list contains twenty-six different miracles. We mentioned only a few of those performed by Christ; almost forty of His wonders are specified in the gospels, plus numerous summary statements such as "and they brought multitudes of the sick and demon-possessed to him, and he healed them all." Similar expressions are used about the apostles too, in the book of Acts.

But what about since then? Did miracles die out along with the apostles and with the availability of the New Covenant scriptures, as some believe? Well, see what you think after reading Jon Mayeux's article on healings during the centuries since the apostles died. And check out other reports this month of mighty acts of God in China, Albania, Guatemala, and Alaska. Next month we'll continue to study this subject, especially as it relates to healing.

Many Miracles in a Land Dominated by Atheism

## THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA TODAY

Alan Cole

(Condensed from a report by a renowned Australian Bible teacher and careful "China-watcher")

One of the most remarkable Christian phenomena of the past few decades has been the rapid growth of the Christian church in China....The majority of these new converts were won to Christ during the worst years of the so-called Red Guard and Cultural Revolution, a time when terrible persecution overtook the Christian church (both organized and unorganized)....Much of the growth has taken place in villages and communes among very simple peasant people....

Can we draw these three points together to explain the way in which Christianity has spread so rapidly in China during these years? Of course, the faithful witness of countless ordinary Christians, by life and word, has been central. Wherever such Christians were sent--to prison, to labor camps, or to the depths of the country--they, like the disciples of Acts 8:4, "preached the word." But we also should not forget the prayer of Acts 4:29-30, which asks for boldness to preach the word, and asks that God confirm his word by healings and other signs.

At this point I can only state what many Christians in China have constantly told me, and in view of their known moral probity, I see no reason to disbelieve them. The sober report of these Christians is that, in many places, some remarkable instances of healing in the name of Christ have led people--sometimes whole families, sometimes even small villages--to turn to Christ. This conversion was not usually caused by multiple simultaneous healings but rather by one outstanding instance of healing. Nor was this initial healing necessarily followed by a sequence of such healings; if it was, my informants were either ignorant of it or did not think it worth mentioning.

A second clearly attested factor was what we may call visions or manifestations. In several instances, figures were reported to be standing guard outside the homes of Christians, deterring would-be attackers.

There are many stories of remarkable preservations of the lives of Christians, ranging from what we might call "miracles of timing" to the story of the Christian in a North China prison who was stripped naked one harsh winter day and thrown out into the prison courtyard with the gibe "See if your God can keep you warm." God must have done so, for the man is alive and witnessing today; he says, with some humor, that he has never suffered from a cold since that time. True, there are as many known instances in which Chinese Christians, like the martyrs of Hebrews 11:35, were delivered *through* death, not *from* it, by the hope of the Resurrection. Such preservations thus seem to have been unusual, and certainly not universal.

What are we to make of all this? On some occasions (but by no means every one), an initial work of healing led to conversion, but there is no evidence of a universal, ongoing succession of such acts. There may have been further instances of healing, but if so, none of the informants thought them significant enough to report. On some occasions, God's servants were delivered from death by either supernatural or at least remarkable means; on other occasions, they were not delivered. In these accounts I cannot trace any correlation between the healings and the belief or nonbelief of the participants. It seems that in some cases God was pleased to act so, while in other cases he was not. This would be a hopeless enigma were it not exactly the picture that we find in the pages of the New Testament. Thus they show that God is perfectly consistent in his dealings with the church down through the ages.

How can these accounts be explained, and why are there not an equal number of reports of such remarkable events from the cities, where the church has long been established? I can offer only tentative explanations that may be invalid. I am reasonably sure of the facts, but not necessarily of the interpretation. I can therefore only conclude that God often graciously gives such manifestations to witness to non-Christians--especially simple people--about the truth and power of the gospel, especially in the initial stages of its presentation. Without some such "signs," these people would not be disposed to believe at all. Even so, the response is not universal or automatic; all are impressed, but only some actually believe as a result of the manifestations. Further (as is sometimes the case in the mountains and isolated regions of Nepal, where such instances are chronicled), the new believers' faith may still be very imperfect: it is at first only a faith in Christ as a healer or protector, not a faith in Christ as the Savior from sins. At this stage, these newly won hardly ever think of the Cross. At most, they think of Christ as the victor over Satan--but then, this was a favorite view in the early church too.

Perhaps this kind of response explains why (contrary to those who believe differently) the Lord himself seems to have used healings selectively if not sparingly: he did not wish to be known and followed as a mere healer any more than he wanted to be made king as a mere bread-giver (John 6:15). Nothing else can explain his steady withdrawal from areas where crowds were flocking to him for healing (Luke 4:42). Healing may have been a sign, but it was not the heart of Christ's mission, which was to preach the Good News. True, he came in fulfillment of the Old Testament promise--to heal the sick and to set the prisoner free (Luke 4:18)--but he did not deliver John the Baptist from prison and death (Mark 6:27), and Paul's "thorn in the flesh" remained (2 Cor. 12:7), as did Timothy's weak stomach (1 Tim. 5:23).

Is the miraculous the spark that ignites faith for some, rather than the steady diet by which faith is nurtured? Is it the case that, just as marriage requires more than the fireworks of the honeymoon, so Christian faith cannot thrive on an exclusive diet of the spectacular? Perhaps these are conclusions to which we cannot give categorical assent or denial, but certainly they seem to me to be the conclusions pointed to by both the biblical evidence and the present-day experience of the church in China

[Reprinted by permission from the book, *God the Evangelist*, by David F. Wells. (c) 1987 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.]

# HOW GOD GUIDED AND PROVIDED, INCREDIBLY

C. Peter Wagner

Enrique Zone, a student of mine, is now president of the *Facultad de Teologia*, a training school for Hispanic ministers near Los Angeles. In his experience through-out Latin America he has often seen the power of God in full operation. One of the outstanding examples took place in the town of Santa Rosa in Guatemala.

Back in the 1960's a serious drought had come upon Santa Rosa. A state of emergency was declared. Horses and cattle were dying. The government sent special study teams to try to solve the problem. Wells were being dug all over, but they came up dry. The Roman Catholic church held special masses.

A small evangelical church called *Principe de Paz* was located in Santa Rosa. The believers also had a special prayer meeting to ask God for wisdom, since they too were being destroyed by the drought. The Holy Spirit's power began to operate in their midst during the prayer meeting, and they received a prophecy directly from God. It said, "You are to dig a well in the pastor's backyard."

If their faith had not been strong they would not have accepted it as a legitimate prophecy. It made no sense because the pastor's house was on top of a hill. Everyone knew that the last place to dig a well was on the top of a hill. But they launched out in faith and began digging the well.

The unbelievers gathered around and mocked them. They thought the evangelicals had lost their minds. After a few days of digging they struck a huge boulder, and they were discouraged. They wondered if they had interpreted the prophecy correctly. Some of the believers quit, but others kept working on the boulder. Eventually they were able to move it, and as soon as they did a strong stream of pure water gushed forth. They had struck an artesian well, and the village was saved!

From that point on, everyone in the village had to go to the pastor's house for water. There was always a deacon there to welcome the people and to say to them, "He who drinks of this water shall thirst again, but he who drinks of the water that Christ gives shall never thirst again."

It was the beginning of a great harvest. Hundreds were saved that year. The Catholic Church closed down for lack of members. The *Principe de Paz* Church has one thousand members, and water is still coming out of the well. [written in 1979]

[From *On the Crest of the Wave*. Peter Wagner teaches at Fuller Seminary in California]

# **A CLOSED LAND OPENED, A BIBLE-SEEKER GUIDED**

by Brother Andrew of "Open Doors"

For many years Albania had the reputation of being the most closed country in the world. I remember the day as though it were yesterday, when the news reached our office in Holland that Albania was opening her door to the West once again. True, it was only a crack, but it was an opening.

I remember, too, how excited our prayer teams were to go there and find out what was left of the church...in this nation that had tried to totally eliminate God. It was Spring 1990 when they arrived, and God had a special miracle in store for them.

Every restaurant they ate in, they prayed over their food to the astonishment of everyone in the restaurant. When they went to public parks, they sang praise songs. But...unfortunately, no one came up and said, "We're Christians too." Plus our team knew that within a few days they would be going back to Holland. However, on the next to the last night, God had saved a very special time for our team...one that gave them much encouragement!

One of the team members, having become restless in his small room, decided to go outside for a breath of fresh air. Others on the team told him that it was not wise to do so as it was dark outside. But he said he would remain in front of the hotel and not wander off.

As he arrived on the street, he looked at his watch and saw it was 8:55 P.M. Then he noticed a man--in his mid-thirties--standing under a street light about a half block away. The man kept staring at his watch and then back at our team member. Being curious to see if the man could speak English, he walked toward the stranger. When he got very close, the Albanian looked at him and asked: "Do you have Bibles for me?"

Our researcher was dumbfounded. This was not a Bible delivery trip, only a research trip. But, of course, our team never leaves Holland without some Bibles.

Still...this man was a stranger in a once hostile land, so caution was needed. Therefore, our team member replied, "Bibles...why would you think I have any Bibles?"

"Well," the man said, "You are from the West, and God told me two weeks ago that if I would come to this street light on this day at exactly 9:00 P.M. someone from the West would be there with Bibles for our church." Another miracle of God's? You better believe it is!...

Thanks to the prayers of many prayer warriors--God has opened the door to Albania, a land where all Bibles and Christian literature were confiscated and destroyed. Just a year ago this month, I spoke at the first evangelical crusade to be held in Albania since 1967. One man I talked to had walked six hours just to get one of the New Testaments we were handing out. Of course, I also knew he had to walk another six hours to get home again.

*What a hunger for God's Word that man had!*

And a fifteen-year-old boy received a copy of the New Testament one evening and was back *the next night* wanting to be baptized after reading it *from cover to cover*. He told the crowd: "I have accepted the Lord Jesus in my life and I want to be baptized today!" "I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it," said the Lord in Matthew 16:18.

Just as we were preparing this issue on miracles, this article arrived. It was unsolicited, and I do not know the author personally. But the timing! Was it miraculous, providential, or just coincidence?--Editor

## RESCUED BY "ANGELS"

A.E. Purviance,

1216 Ponderosa; Missoula, Montana 59802

The calendar insisted it was the middle of August. But the bone-chilling mist that hung in the air almost made me dubious.

I was traveling alone from the Alaska port town of Valdez to Fairbanks, my home, and 120 miles from the Arctic Circle. Alaska at the time was frontier and living conditions were harsh. My family's nine years in the Far North, while rewarding, were not without difficulties. Settlements were few and far between and as I covered the miles I came upon few signs of civilization. Roads were a disaster!

My frustration mounted as I encountered washouts my car could barely manipulate. And then it more than met its match. A washout a bit deeper than previous ones imprisoned the wheels of my car with an unrelenting grip. I decided I could not have chosen a lonelier spot for my encounter with Nature.

I revved the engine. First, forward. It was no go. Then, reverse. Still nothing gave.

I laid my plight in the lap of the Lord: "God, what do I do now?" Jesus' promise came to mind: "...lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). I smiled in spite of my predicament. "Lord, this certainly seems like the end of the world to me!" How long would I remain

mired? With little or no traffic it could be hours and who was to rescue me after night had fallen?

Yet, since I had placed the matter in God's hands I also should have placed my full confidence in Him. Hadn't the Apostle Paul declared concerning God's faithfulness, "But my God shall supply all your needs..." (Philippians 4:19)! and the writer of Hebrews shared his conviction that God "...will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (13:5).

True to His promises, God had a blueprint all prepared for my rescue, and seldom has a prayer been more promptly answered.

Out of the car window to my right I was greeted by an endless expanse of spindly birch trees taking on a ghostly appearance in the late afternoon gloom.

I hardly dared to believe a look to my left would bring even the slightest ray of hope. Yet, there it was--God's answer. Within a few feet of my car, nestled among the birches, rested an Alaska Road Department caterpillar. Lounging on the top of the big cat were two young men: GI's stationed at a military base somewhere up the road. How did they get there? They had no means of transportation. And why were they there? Neither of the two was prone to disclose those secrets. Somehow they were just "there."

Both without doubt were trained mechanics and one had had experience operating a cat. Realizing my predicament, the young GI's swung into action. The big machine came alive as my rescuer maneuvered it into position behind my car. I felt a grudging release from the mire as I was propelled to solid ground. In a matter of minutes the cat was back in its place and the GI's climbed in with me for a lift to their military base, a distance of perhaps 75 miles. I then pressed on alone.

As I drove I praised God for my release from the mire. But at the same time I laid before Him the question uppermost in my mind. I had to have an answer. "Lord, what just happened to me looked like a miracle. Was it, Lord?"

God reminded me that His ways are not our ways and that the day of miracles is not over.

I suspect that all too often most of us do not consider events in our lives as miracles. But why shouldn't we? In my critical situation perhaps God had appointed those young GI's to be His chosen vessels to perform His miracle.

And--who knows--perhaps it's within reason to believe my rescuers were angels in disguise.



# DIVINE HEALINGS THROUGHOUT CHURCH HISTORY

A book review written by Jon Mayeux as an assignment at the School of  
Biblical Studies

Sidlow Baxter is a veteran British preacher, Bible teacher, and author of more than twenty books. He is solidly evangelical, and has spoken at many major Bible conferences and Christian colleges and seminaries in the U.S. In 1979 he wrote the book being reviewed, *Divine Healing of the Body*. It was published by Zondervan Publishing House, and contains 296 pages.

There are three main sections in the book. The first part is entitled "Divine Healing Through the Centuries (Is the Testimony Reliable?)." The next part deals with "Divine Healing as Taught Today (Is the Teaching Scriptural?)." Here he writes about issues like, Is healing in the atonement? Should sickness be accepted as God's will or resisted as Satan's attack? Part three is "Divine Healing in Present Experience (Is the Evidence Conclusive?)." Since this book review was originally written as an assignment for a class in church history our study is limited almost entirely to the historical question set forth in part one of the book. But for your information we add here that Baxter does not fit neatly into either the Pentecostal nor the non-Pentecostal camp. He believes each of those viewpoints is guilty of some bending of Scriptures, and lovingly presents correctives to various teachings, attitudes and practices which seem sub-Biblical to him.

## HONEST DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

Few issues in all of church history have sparked such a controversy as divine healing has. Some have concluded that all healing ceased with the passing of the Apostles while others maintain that divine healing continues today. Who is right? History gives us remarkable examples for the examination of this question. Therefore, we shall study this issue carefully, travelling through the different ages of the church looking at specific examples of the miraculous and the testimony of outstanding church leaders.

As J.Sidlow Baxter states in his book:

**Divine healings of the body (or at least reports of such) are not a phenomenon of the twentieth century only. They have occurred, either actually or purportedly, from Apostolic days right down to the present hour. All amply validated divine healings today, if such there are, must be viewed as the latest link in a long chain stretching through the centuries; and from this chain we must not sever them, or else we shall be most liable to reach wrong or uncertain conclusions.**

Beginning with the earliest centuries of church history, let us consider what was said by some of the leading "ante-Nicene Fathers" (church leaders before

325 A.D.). *Justin Martyr* (100-165 A.D.) penned the following in his first *Apology*:

**That the empire of spirits has been destroyed by Jesus you may even now convince yourselves by what is passing before your own eyes; for many of our people, of us Christians, have healed and still continue to heal in every part of the world; and even in your city [Rome] numbers possessed of evil spirits [are healed] such as could not be healed by other exorcists, simply by adjuring them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate.**

*Irenaeus* (c. 125-200 A.D.) testified to the healing power of the Lord, stating: "Others still heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Yea, moreover as I have said, even the dead have been raised up..."

*Tertullian* (c. 160-220 A.D.) wrote of an incident of healing that resulted in great favor to a Christian named Proculus.

**Even Severus himself, the father of Antonine [the Roman emperor], was graciously mindful of the Christians. For he sought out the Christian Proculus, the steward of Euhodias, and in gratitude for his once having cured him by anointing, he kept him in his palace till the day of his death.**

Tertullian also mentions that "...many men of rank, to say nothing of the common people, have been delivered from devils and healed of disease."

*Origen* (c. 185-c. 254 A.D.), in his book *Against Celsus*, reported with clarity "...we too have seen many persons freed...from grievous calamities and from distractions of mind and from madness and from countless other ills which could not be cured either by men or devils."

Moving to the "post-Nicene Fathers" (Christian leaders after 325 A.D.), let us consider their testimony, especially that of Chrysostom and Augustine. *Chrysostom* (345-407 A.D.), in writing about the miracles recorded in the book of Acts, defends not only those past miracles but "those of the present day, which are calculated both to stop and put to shame the blaspheming mouth, and to check the unbridled tongue." Miracles were without a doubt occurring in his part of the world.

In the West we have the testimony of *Augustine* (354-430 A.D.) His opinion concerning miracles and divine healings changed from disbelief to belief as he witnessed firsthand many miraculous wonders. In *The City of God* he writes, "Even now miracles are wrought in the name of Christ...." He also describes an incident of a blind man's sight being restored:

**The miracle which was wrought at Milan when I was there, and by which a blind man was restored to sight, could come to the knowledge of many; for not only is the city a large one but the emperor was there at the time, and the occurrence was witnessed by an immense concourse of people.**

Then he also gives notice to another miracle healing at Carthage:

Who but a very small number are aware of the cure which was wrought upon Innocentius...a cure wrought at Carthage, in my presence, and under my own eyes?

In Augustine's day divine healing of the body occurred at a physician's baptism, relieving him of gout. The severe pain this man suffered from his illness never recurred and he "lived a long time afterwards." Augustine lamented, "What am I to do? I am so pressed by the promise of finishing this work [i.e. completing my book] that I cannot record all the miracles I know."

As we close ancient church history we would do well to consider the testimony of *Anthony*, a humble man of holy character. He lived from 251 to 356 and was credited with numerous healings, especially of those possessed by unclean spirits. The German scholar Neander in his book, *A General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, summed up the feeling of Anthony regarding the power to heal:

They were to know that the power of healing belonged neither to him nor to any other man, but was *the work of God alone, Who wrought it when and for whom He pleased.*

#### The Medieval Era (c. 500-1500 A.D.)

We now move to a more darkened period of church history which creates a more troublesome time in discerning true miracles from false. Ignorance of the Scriptures contributed greatly to this.

Reports about miracles (actual and counterfeit) were complicated by the fact that fantastic embellishments were added with each passing year. Baxter so rightly states this:

In those days the more miraculous stories were the likelier they were to be adopted. The ecclesiastical system helped in manufacturing and dissemination them. They fed the diseased appetite created by the misconception that religion is essentially magical. The miracle mania of the Roman church advertized itself practically everywhere....Amid such an ecclesiastical jungle, it is almost impossible to distinguish real miracles of divine healing from luxurious entanglements of fantasy and exaggeration.

One outstanding figure of medieval church history was the French monk and abbot *Bernard of Clairvaux* (1090-1153). Alexander of Cologne reported an incident when a mocker fell as dead and lost consciousness as Bernard was laying his hands on the sick. "I was close to him when the thing happened...and this poor man could not get up until Bernard came, made a prayer, and lifted him up." Earlier the man had scoffed at Bernard's preaching and said, "He cannot work miracles any more than I can."

During the last quarter of the twelfth century *the Waldenses* appeared on this turbulent scene of darkness as a ray of light. They were a back-to-the-Bible or "restoration movement." Looking at their records one seems awed with the simple faith they possessed and the respect they held toward Scripture. The latter can be seen clearly in their practice of *anointing* their sick.

**Therefore, concerning this anointing of the sick, we hold it as an article of faith, and profess sincerely from the heart, that sick persons, when they ask it, may lawfully be anointed with the anointing oil by one who joins with them in praying that it may be efficacious to the healing of the body according to the design mentioned by the Apostles; and we profess that such an anointing performed according to the Apostolic design and practice will be healing and profitable.**

(To be concluded next month)

## The Other Face of Faith

by Stephen Board

The "life of faith" is widely discussed in Christian circles. The models are available: Brother Andrew smuggling Bibles, David Wilkerson carrying the gospel into New York City, Corrie ten Boom concealing Jewish refugees, Hudson Taylor's accomplishment in China. But the dominant message about faith from these sources is only part of the story.

We seem to grasp the life of faith in our day as, primarily, the shaking-up of circumstances. This is the "parting of the waters" side of faith, from Moses' experience at the Red Sea. Faith moves the mountains. In our society this often means solving financial problems, since so many of our trials are related to financial insecurity. The exploits of faith that get prime-time attention tend to be power over circumstances. Therein lies the way of madness.

You see, it's just a matter of time until we encounter circumstances that won't budge. Then what? Do you stop trusting? Someday there will be a disease that will not, even by prayer and fasting, heal. At that point do we fold up our faith and walk by sight again? Brother Andrew, by faith, smuggled Bibles across hostile borders; in the same country Richard Wurmbrand was in prison for comparable Christian activity. Did Andrew have more faith than Wurmbrand? Hudson Taylor had a string of marvelous answers to prayer as he went to China. But he had a string of setbacks, too. In a priceless anecdote, he describes in his autobiography how he wasted several crucial days chasing his baggage all over one province of China, spending a night exhausted on a street but lying awake to watch out for pickpockets a few feet away--and none of the experience was of any detectible good for his work or God's kingdom. Sometimes the waters don't part.

Our problem is that we are looking at only one side of faith--the history of immediate outcomes. We read the list in Hebrews 11:33-38 and it sounds good, that part about "subduing kingdoms, quenching raging fire, stopping the mouths of lions, women receiving the dead raised to life again"--yeah, that's faith! Then you get to the part about people who by faith were "stoned, sawn in two, killed with the sword, destitute, afflicted..." So much for the happy ending.

The essence of faith, therefore, is not a batting average with answered prayers, but an attitude toward God's character and his word. That's why some subdue kingdoms, to use the language of Hebrews 11:33; others are subdued by kingdoms, to paraphrase the same passage. All can have authentic faith in God's purpose and ultimate triumph.

Understanding this other side of faith will make our believing more God-centered. For the character of God is what distinguishes Christian exploits of faith from occult exploits. Without that concentration on God and his goodness ("believing that he is and is a rewarder of those who seek him"), the quest for parted waters becomes a self-indulgent stunt--a gimmick on the order of table raising in occult circles.

This other side of faith (the endurance part) is finally more useful than one-sided talk about parted water because it has immediate parallel in everyone's experience. We can all endure in faith, confident of God's love; but we can't all smuggle Bibles. And we won't all be healed of all our ailments, though some of us will some of the time (Christ has not yet returned).

There's one other valuable dimension to the endurance side of faith. It involves us more with *ethics*. Maybe strong faith is demonstrated in your life, less by finding a marriage partner this year than by obeying God in chastity and patience for another year or two years or who knows how long? That may say more about your attitude toward God as the loving Father who meets all your needs. Hebrews 11:33 talks about some who by faith "enforced justice"; maybe your faith in God will be demonstrated less by praying for money than by pursuing a career that will "enforce justice." This side of faith won't give you a book to publish, but it will be more biblical. In the Bible the crunch of faith is obedience: the *faithful* man is one who keeps on obeying and, in that way, shows he is "full of faith." And he can do that because he sees him who is invisible.

The school of faith teaches us to trust God to solve our problems. And then, for a graduate course, it teaches us to trust God when he chooses not to solve our problems.

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# LATTER DAY MIRACLES

R. H. BOLL

The word of God predicts that the last days will again witness supernatural manifestations. "There shall arise false christs and false prophets, and *shall show great signs and wonders*; so as to lead astray if possible even the elect." (Matt. 24). To a people devoid of faith and certainty, nothing is so welcome and convincing as supernatural manifestation. It seems to offer something real and tangible when all else is enwrapped in a haze of doubt and uncertainty. And no generation has ever been more gullible than the super-educated, convictionless generation now living. No sooner does some alleged healer or miracle-worker appear on the scene, than the world goes wild over him; and people to whom the word of God in their Bibles is nothing, are ready to accept almost any absurdity that is accredited by a show of occult power.

## PAVING THE WAY FOR ANTICHRIST

The most fatal mistake possible in this matter is "*to confound the supernatural with the Divine.*" To be sure, people who scout the idea of the existence of Satan are bound to conclude that whatever is supernatural is of God. The more skeptical they may have been as to the possibility and reality of the supernatural, the stouter will be their conviction once they are compelled to acknowledge it; and having no other criterion, no standard of Truth to go by, they fall victims to whatever delusion may be imposed upon them on the strength of the miracle. Those also to whom Satan is only the symbol of vile immoralities, and who have never understood that he is "transformed into an angel of light"--will unquestionably accept anything he offers that seems good and uplifting.

Now the devil is able to work miracles. When the Man of Sin is revealed, the Lawless one, the Son of perdition, he who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God and above every object of worship--his coming (*parousia*) will be "according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness." By "lying wonders" is not meant fraudulent wonders, "fake" miracles (of which there have always been plenty) but *genuine wonders that support a lie*. These will not be few nor small. What, for example, the prophets of Baal could not do at the challenge of Elijah; what once God had reserved for His own sign, this "Beast" (rather his lieutenant, the "Second Beast") performs. He shall "even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men" (1 Kings 18:24-39; Rev. 13:13). The power of the consequent delusion is shown in its universal success, the only exception being those whose names are in the Book of Life. The power of that great one, thus backed up by supernatural demonstration, is the judgment of God upon a world that has exchanged the truth of God for a lie--a delusion coming with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie (literally, *the lie*, the supreme lie, which is the "divinity of man") that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. 2:3-12)

The context both in this passage and in Rev. 13 and 19 shows that this development belongs to the last days of "this present evil age." That the present super-wise, skeptical, conceited, godless generation is ripe for such a leader and such a delusion, no one who knows the facts and circumstances will doubt.

## MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN AND MIRACLES FROM HELL

The supernatural may come from God or from the Evil one. A miracle was never in itself conclusive proof of Divine mission. Israel was instructed to distinguish between the prophets: there were to be false prophets, messengers of Belial, as well as true spokesmen of God. How were the latter to be known? "If thou say in thy heart, How shall we know the word which Jehovah hath not spoken? when a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken." (Deut. 18:21,22) But another test must supplement this: "If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he give thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying "Let us go after other gods...thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet." (Deut. 13:1-5). When therefore any miracle, wonder, or sign, is offered to accredit a false doctrine, and to advertise a teaching subversive of the fundamental truth of God's word, the supernatural demonstration in question is certainly of Satan. And this is but another way of saying that not miracles but the revealed word of God, constitutes the final test of truth. If a prophet speaks not according to that Word there is no light in him. The Lord Jesus Himself, whose signs and mighty works surpassed all the prophets had done, or that Satan can duplicate, did not rest His claim upon His miracles alone, but appealed from them to the Scriptures, as the final and absolute vindication of His claim and mission: "Ye search the scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me." (John 5:36-39) If His life, works, claim and teaching had not squared with the Scriptures He would not have been the true Messiah.

## THE WORLD LOVES TO BE DUPED

How shallow and frivolous, in the light of the danger and the solemn warning of God appears the religious attitude of the public today! How ready humanity is to run after every semblance of the supernatural; how willing to follow after every uncanny will-o'-the-wisp. There is never a reputed healer but the pitiful multitudes, as sheep without shepherd, flock together at the stranger's call. What though the Word of God warns, teaches, remonstrates--it is looked upon as that much empty talk: this fellow can *do* something! If the Ouija Board mysteriously tells or seems to tell some secret, straightway whole nations go mad over the little plaything; so that even its friends and advocates become alarmed and try to restrain the insane fad. Let the Bible testify as it may the wrath of God against all forms of occultism--necromancy, divination, clairvoyance, hypnotism, fortune--telling, communing with the dead--not even professed Christian people are restrained from consulting the modern witch and wizard, and from attending the seance. If some pretended Elijah, or a Madonna of



Lourdes, or some cult as "Christian Science" (which is a 20th century adaptation of second-century Gnosticism) promises cure for bodily ills, the world makes a beaten track to their respective shrines. And have they no light, these multitudes? Is there no sure word of truth by which they might be guided? Yes, there is; and more widely diffused then ever before--and little regarded even among those who have it most abundantly!

### STAND BY THE BOOK

To those who will hear, God's word tells of a gospel which neither the apostles themselves, nor any other man, nor an angel from heaven can alter. (Gal. 1:8,9; 1 Cor. 15:1-4) Stand by that! It tells of "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 3) "As for you, let that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father." (1 John 2:24) This is our firm foundation from which none of the wiles or wonders of Satan must be permitted to lure us in these perilous times.

## PRAY FOR MIRACLES

Jack Mauley, Missionary Leader

[Interestingly--not a Charismatic]

Someone wrote recently: "We pray for miracles; but we don't believe in miracles." Is this true? It does seem that today we are overwhelmed by the inevitability of circumstances. We pray but seem to expect an answer only through some process working itself out. While recognizing fully the Bible's teaching regarding persistence and patience ("In due season we shall reap, if we faint not," etc.), one sees an immediacy in the Word of God of which we know little today. In the Gospels and the Acts, souls are saved suddenly and an immediate transformation becomes evident. Matthew, Zaccheus, the Ethiopian eunuch, Cornelius, Saul of Tarsus, the Philippian jailor and others are examples of this. Prayers too were answered in the same wonderful manner: the place was shaken where they were assembled; sick are suddenly restored to health; Peter is delivered from prison, as are Paul and Silas.

Can we not pray for a greater evidence of this kind of New Testament Christianity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit? These are the last times, and God has promised that in the last days He will pour out His Spirit.

# CHANGING TIMES, CHANGING CHURCHES

## Part 2

Bob Yarbrough

**[In the first part of this sermon delivered recently to a church in Dallas, the preacher described the *many* changes and the accelerating *rate* of change in our society in the past couple of decades. This affects the church, widening the generation gap due to differing desires, tastes and expectations re: the forms of our meetings, style of singing, etc.**

**Then he observed that the early church also had to wrestle with differences—between Jewish and Gentile Christians. The conference in Jerusalem (Acts 15) engaged in lengthy debate and dialogue before reaching its decision not to impose circumcision on Gentiles converted to Christ.]**

Let me tell you what happened at Jerusalem, and what is happening in our own world today. There is a shift going on in what the business world calls a "paradigm." That's a big word. Let me explain what it means. It is an idea that first began to be developed about 20 years ago to explain how scientific breakthroughs occurred. And they used this word "paradigm" to describe the way that we understand how a thing is done. For example if I were to say to you today, "Let's plant a church in the east end of Dallas County. What should go into that church?" Immediately, somebody would say, "What time are we going to have Sunday morning services, and the Lord's Supper? Sunday evening? and when will we do midweek?" Why would we come up with that scheme of the order of things? We would come up with it because that's our paradigm of how you build a church. That doesn't work in other countries where the culture is very different than our own.

In Greece, for example, missionaries have discovered that a Sunday morning service does not work for people. Their best bet is to have a worship time on Sunday evening. Also, 90% of the people are nominally Greek Orthodox and the laity never touch the elements of the Lord's Supper. It is handled entirely by clergy. So when visitors come into the worship service with that kind of culture and value system and they see members of the congregation breaking the bread and passing it around, it is so emotionally shocking to them that they will not come back. Visitors would come only one time and never come back. Missionaries had to find some way for people to feel more comfortable and become repeat visitors. So they announce to the community that the Sunday services are at 7:30 p.m., but to the believers there is the common knowledge that communion services are an hour earlier, and thus they do not run the risk of offending those who want to visit. Later they all gather for a time of songs and prayers, and teaching. Do you see how they have restructured in order to meet needs?

But can you imagine what might happen if an American Christian comes to Greece? What might he think? "This must be a bunch of strange people. I thought this was a church!!" But what that American has just experienced is that he has a model in his mind of what a church is supposed to be, and this doesn't fit that model, or his paradigm, so it therefore must not be the real thing. See my problem? And we all find it very difficult when we have to shift from one way of doing something to a different paradigm. But if we don't shift, in time we lose everything! I believe we are at that point, beloved.

The most famous failure in history to see a paradigm shift occurred in Switzerland in just the last few decades. In 1960, if you wanted to find the best place on earth where watches were built, you would clearly have gone to Switzerland. They were the pioneers. They had pioneered sweep hands, the use of jewels in the movement, the mainsprings, etc. They were the innovators. They built quality products, owning 90% of the world's market on fine watches. However, one of their research laboratories came up with a digital watch. The two guys who invented this first digital watch went to the Swiss watch manufacturers and said, "Look at our new watch! Here is the watch of the future!" Do you know what they were told? "That is not a watch! Because it doesn't have a mainspring, a sweeping hand, and jewels. I don't know what you call this toy, but it is not a watch." And they so dismissed this new thing that they didn't even patent it.

Those two men happened to be in New York a year later at a trade show, and displayed their new invention as an attention getter to people walking by. And it so happened that one of the senior executives at Texas Instruments, and a friend of his who was an executive with a then unknown company in Japan called Seiko, came walking by and saw it. They discovered it wasn't patented, and took care of that, and changed the history of watches. And in the years since, the Swiss have laid off 56,000 of their 62,000 watch makers. Today they only have 10% of the world's market. What had happened? There is a classic case of a paradigm shift. Because they had been conditioned to think that watches have sweep hands and jewels and mainsprings, anything else could not be a watch. They missed the opportunity of a lifetime.

What happens is that we do the same thing in all of our lives. It is necessary that we have these kinds of paradigms in our minds to make sense of things, to organize and to know how to go about things. The problem becomes that while those paradigms help us at first to understand how things work, when things change we sometimes fail to see the new thing that is emerging. Here in scripture we have people in Jerusalem who just knew that if you were a seriously spiritual person you circumcise your children and keep the law of Moses. Everybody knew that. "Our grandfathers have, and our great-grandfathers have and our great-great-grandfathers have, so it must be the right thing to do." Today, we preach that Jesus came along and brought something new, but Jesus never said a word about circumcision. They didn't have a word from Jesus about what to do about circumcision. And so, because circumcision had always been a part of their collective lives, they believed that anyone who was spiritual would follow

the practice. Now this works only as long as you are evangelizing Jews. That paradigm will function only as long as you are preaching in Judea.

But when you preach in Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, and the vast number of your converts are Gentiles, that's a whole new ball game. These people said, "Wait a minute, I don't see that Jesus said anything about circumcision. We don't have to do that." The other group says, "He didn't have to say anything because that's what we always had to do!" Now we've got a problem. One sees that Jesus' silence on the subject means that we are free from the former requirement. The other sees Jesus' silence on the subject as an imperative that things have not changed. And, interestingly enough, it was not immediately clear to the apostles themselves as to which way to go on this. They felt it necessary to bring everybody together in Jerusalem, and have some lengthy, interesting dialogue before they said, "You know, we've been functioning with a paradigm that's getting outmoded. We had better think about things differently." What we forget is how emotionally tough that decision was for many people who had always felt that a man who refused to circumcise his son was defying God's expectation. Those Jews who now accepted the decision--that circumcision was not part of the Christian Gentiles's experience--nonetheless when a Godly Gentile's child was born, something within them said that child should be circumcised. Emotionally, they were still living with the old paradigm, even though in their mind they had realized that a new era had come. And I am certain they got caught in the struggle between what they knew needed to be done, and the emotional conditioning of having done it another way for a long, long time. Just because we understand the need for change in general doesn't mean we will recognize it when the moment appears.

And that is why this is particularly relevant to your generation, because your generation is seeing the paradigm shift significantly. Your generation remembers when we filled this auditorium every Sunday morning with preachers like Frank Mullins, Kenneth Istre or Julius Hovan. But things have changed, and we are going to have to change if we are going to be affective. Or to put it another way, *where change is not occurring, churches are dying*. We have begun to slowly realize this here, but not entirely. Some are wanting to hang on to the old paradigms which are squeezing the life blood out of our congregation, our young people and young families. In Acts 15, it was the old paradigms that needed to give way to the new. In many of our churches, however, we are demanding just the opposite. A recent report says that churches in some of the mainline denominations, such as Churches of Christ, are in real trouble. But it wasn't so in the 1940's and 50's and 60's with your generation. As I read and keep up with membership statistics, I find the median age is 58 years in many of our churches, and there are few, if any, young people and young families being added. Any membership gains reported come from within the membership's existing families: children born and raised from within. But even many of these, as they get older leave and go elsewhere to meet their needs.

Churches are on the verge of dying out in many, many places. You have seen in your own experience in this city, many great churches of the past have simply died away. There are many and complex causes to be sure; but one cause is the manner in which one generation doesn't accommodate the next. I don't believe that you are willing to let die what you have given your life for--that is, the work of the Lord and the winning of lost souls to Him. But this work will die unless your generation and my generation learn how to be more comfortable with some things that will be different. Not because we are changing the *message*. Verse 11 says that best: "We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved." Not because we are abandoning the *essence of Christianity*. But because of the way we packaged that message to *meet the needs of today's world*. Of necessity, it must be different from the way we packaged it to meet the needs of the world of the 1940's and 1950's. Just as those missionaries are doing in Greece, they are not trying to be unbiblical. They are trying to be effective. And that's what Paul and Barnabas were saying to the Jerusalem church. And that's what I'm saying to you. They never thought about doing it differently in Jerusalem but when confronted with the facts, they had to face the problem head on.

So, what does the Holy Spirit seem to be saying to us in this matter? I believe that the danger in all this is that we slip into a WE vs. THEY mentality--generation pitted against generation. The first group seeing the second as a threat, the second seeing the first as "out of touch." And we simply cannot afford that. We already have had too many casualties with our children and grandchildren. We may have more very soon unless we wake up. Discouragement is on the horizon with many even now. We must be willing to try to find ways to accommodate different ways of doing things at times, even if it is not something that we are naturally inclined to do. Now let me tell you, I am not talking *at* you; I'm talking *with* you. Let me be honest with you about the struggle in my own life. I recently left a relative comfort zone to promote a merger of three congregations, a merger which many of us still believe is imperative for our survival, but which must be conducted in concert with some paradigm shifts. However, I have learned that church paradigms are difficult to alter. I have suffered extreme disappointment in this matter, yet I still believe that we must change or we will cease to exist in a very short while. We need to pray with the psalmist, "Renew a right spirit within me." He was praying for an attitude adjustment. So should we!

The Lord's work will continue because the Bible says that the gates of Hell will not prevail against it. But unless we change, we may not be a part of the church that is "marching on, on, on!". There is a certain amount of comfort for the moment with the tried and true traditions of the past, yet tradition is a subtle addiction which will eventually lead to our demise. As I talk with our younger generation, I am increasingly aware that we don't see things alike as far as the packaging of our service and ministry. Songs I thought were great, have little effect on others. Messages I thought were particularly effective were seen by others as irrelevant to meet their needs. You see, I'm dealing with it too. Some of you are dealing with it in greater extreme than I because of age differences.

I am starting to understand how differently people coming into this assembly react to the same experience. Things some think are tremendous, others think are irrelevant, even irreligious; and what some think we ought to do all the time, others think would be OK just some of the time. I want us to be able to work through all of this, but we have a long way to go. I want us to find a way for all generations to transcend their individual preferences and their sacred cows and be one body. But as we work toward that objective, we need to keep in mind that the shift that we are being asked to make sometimes is no greater than these devout people in Jerusalem were being asked to make. And they did it; verses 22 and 31 confirm the fact that they accepted the paradigm shift.

I conclude with this opportunity for you to reflect on something. You see, what is interesting is that these apostles and leaders of the early church had been around Jesus. They had seen time after time that He went about things a whole lot differently than the other people had gone about them in the past. Jesus was only 30 years old when he began, and 33 when he finished, and He was criticized by the religious leaders of the day. They had seen Jesus saying to the religious traditionalist of his day, "We've got to understand another way to go about this." Those disciples had been part of that over and over during the ministry of Jesus. Yet while they had been there with Him trying to get others to change their thinking about things, when these men became the leaders in Jerusalem, and the time came for them to stretch their thinking about a new way of doing things, they apparently had some trouble with it.

Friends, just because we understand the need for change in general doesn't mean that we will recognize it *when the moment appears*. That's the mistake the Swiss watch makers made. They understood the need for change. After all, they changed by putting sweep hands on and by putting jewels in them. But when the major change needed to be made, they didn't see the moment, and they lost their momentum to another. I believe the Lord has given us this window in time to move forward. For about nine months, the Lord has been working on many of our hearts. It is time to bring this work into being for the glory of God. Let us be patient with one another. Let us expect the best of one another.

Let us believe the best of one another, because there is no one in this congregation who wants to disregard Biblical authority, or the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, or the love of God, or the indwelling Holy Spirit in our lives. When changes occur, let us not slip into thinking that this is out of some disrespect for God or His word; or that those who are proponents of change are somehow deceitful, corrupt, or misguided. Let us instead continually reflect upon the fact that our way of doing things has had its day upon the stage, and other ways of doing things may now have their day upon the stage. Pray that God will give us the wisdom to know when the stage arrangement needs to be shifted for the next scene, and not stubbornly resist those rearrangement attempts.

# VOICES from the FIELDS

Robert Garrett

On furlough in Louisville, KY

As summer starts warming up here in the USA, winter comes to Zimbabwe. A dry winter. Blue, cloudless skies. Warm, sun-shiny days. Dry, cold, clear nights. Stars, countless pinpoints; the Milky Way - a great dusty swath across the heavens; all declaring the Glory of God.

Dry, cracked dusty earth. Parched gardens. Gaunt live-stock. Hungry people. For the second year the rains have failed. Two years ago the crops were very poor; not enough rain. Last year was even worse; crops withered and died, pastures shriveled, wells dried up. The time of the summer rains has gone. There is now no hope of rain till November or even December.

**PRAY:** May all who read this, pray fervently to our Lord that He might have mercy on Zimbabwe and send an abundance of rain in season.

**MALAWI:** Bro. Bob Morrow and Bro. Patrick flew to Malawi intending to spend a month there visiting some contacts made through Words of Life. They had to cut their visit short when thieves stole Bro. Bob's glasses, camera, money and Bro. Patrick's clothes.

**CAMP TIME:** Report from Rockwood Christian Camp tells of a good Junior camp in April with 60 children ages 9-12. Then over the long Easter weekend a grand "School Leavers" (Zimbabwe term for high school graduates) Camp, with 65 young people age 18 and over had a great time in the Lord with Bible studies led by Bro. Morrow. Zimbabwe maintains a long Easter holiday. Factories, businesses and shops all close down Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday--so it is a good time to hold camps for those who would otherwise be working. The churches in Harare have kept Bro. Bob busy and have been blessed through his meetings and Bible studies. The Morrrows will be returning to the States at the end of August.

Lord willing, Joy and I will be returning to Zimbabwe in November.

James Ashley

The Solomon Islands July 14, 1992

Greetings from Australia where I've been shivering in the winter weather this past week. I'm here attending the Pacific Area Conference of Wycliffe Bible Translators, and (aside from the weather) have really enjoyed my time. It's been good to see the broader work of Wycliffe in the region, but I've appreciated even more the contact with the godly men who are our leaders. Their vision and exemplary lives have really encouraged me.

When I get back to the Solomons tomorrow, I'll be taking the family out to Sa'a village for their first return home since we came back to the Solomons. (I already made one trip when I was out for a week checking the translation of the



book of Philippians.) We look forward to getting settled in own place and into the regular routine of translation.

Crystal (& Ted) Hardin

Pine Grove Academy, Honduras,  
C.A.

### **A Review of Last School Year**

We are thankful to the Lord that things went as smoothly as they did last year. We had teachers for all classes. There were no serious bus accidents. There have been no terrorist attacks or bomb threats, and no major illness among faculty and staff. There were discipline problems, but most were not really big, and students seemed to respond. We didn't even have to cancel school because of cold weather! Most of these are continually matters of prayer, and we thank the Lord for blessing us.

Several teachers have led some of their students to the Lord. Pray especially for the Russell family, as the mother also came to Christ and the father is an alcoholic.

The main idea we struggle against in the school is that mental assent to the truths of Christianity is sufficient. Most of the students think that they are Christians because they believe with their minds. Our task is to convince them that Christianity is a relationship, a commitment to the lordship of Christ that means laying down your own will and doing His. The strange thing is that this is the same struggle we had in Christian schools and churches in the States. I guess people are the same everywhere!

Another problem that has come up is that some of the Christian parents are concerned that their kids are exposed to too much garbage from other kids at school, and they want us to cut back on enrollment of non-Christian families. Having worked with Christian schools for years, we don't think that would help, especially since some of our problems have come from students with Christian families. We are encouraging those concerned to form a prayer group to pray for the atmosphere of the school.

The last special request for the school is to pray for teachers who are able to praise the Lord even when things aren't what they would like. We had some problems last year with complaining and negative attitudes. We are trying to work on some of the situations that caused problems, and we hope things will be better this year.

**EDITORS NOTE, Aug. 24:** A phone call from Ted last week said their landlord gave them one WEEK to vacate their house!! They were to be out by Aug. 21, and school was to begin on the 24th! (Ted is now principal of grades 1-12) Despite the time interval between my writing this and your reading it, please pray much for the Hardings.

I enjoyed a relaxing summer, working a little, travelling out West, and catching up with my friends. The summer sun is about to set and the school bell is about to ring again, and I will be returning to Tegucigalpa on Monday, August 17 for probably just one more year. The Lord has not seen fit to reveal to me my whereabouts this time next year. This last year I taught Bible classes to grades 9-12, but this will drop two Bible classes and pick up a history class. I would challenge any of you who might be thinking about going to seminary to teach high school Bible for a year or more. It will challenge you to really study! I was stretched, pulled, bent, twisted, and then stretched some more in my spiritual life.

It would be too difficult to tell you all about my experience in Honduras so I'll share with you some highlights:

Landing on the Tegucigalpa International Airport runway for the first time and understanding why most of the Honduran passengers like to get a little bit drunk first...Wondering what to do on the first day of classes...Making it through the first day of classes...Wondering what to do on the second day of classes, etc....Getting to know my students...Going to market and buying a bagful of fresh watermelon, cantaloupe, bananas, carrots, potatoes, beans, and wildflowers for the equivalent of \$2...GETTING LETTERS FROM HOME!...Holding a malnourished young boy at a children's hospital...Sharing the Gospel with and counseling some of my students...Wondering what to do on the 127th day of classes...Making it through the 127th day of classes (with God's help)...Having the opportunity to challenge the Seniors at the baccalaureate service...Successfully taking off of the Tegucigalpa International airport runway and arriving home.

I really feel God's providence supporting me during some very long days and I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that it was there because of your prayers. While there are several fine Christian students at Academia Los Pinares, and while some have been more open to the message of the Gospel, I feel a dark shroud hanging around many of my students as a result of wealth and worldliness and their being spoiled by their affluent parents. These Honduran high school kids listen to Madonna and watch HBO just like your neighbors' kids.

**Please pray for:**

(1) God to help the faculty to really live Christ's love for the students and for the Holy Spirit to tear down Satan's strongholds in their lives.

(2) For Jaime Chavez, a second-year student who is trying to decide if giving his life to Christ is worth it.

(3) For me to feed on God's Word daily, and to have victory over sin in my own life.

# Jan Rake Shares Christ in Moscow

[The following is condensed from an article in *The Winchester Sun*, the daily newspaper in Winchester, Ky. Jan now coordinates several home schools there, and is an active member of Belmont Church of Christ.]

"When we stood in the Kremlin, Satan's fortress for so many years, and sang 'To God be the Glory,' and then when we moved to Red Square and sang 'How Great Thou Art' within earshot of Lenin's Tomb, I truly saw the power of God at work in Russia."

With that statement, Jan Rake summarized her recent two-week trip to Moscow with a homeschool group from the Advanced Training Institute of America (ATIA). The 280-member group was divided into teams of approximately 40 members each.

Ms. Rake, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ben (Linda) Rake Jr., returned April 27. As a teacher at Portland Christian School in Louisville, Ms. Rake seized the opportunity to make the trip.

The purpose of the trip was not to spread a different religion, Christianity, because Russia is opening up to so many different religions, Ms. Rake said. "We were there to introduce them to the love that we had found through Jesus Christ. Our primary message was to encourage them to call out to God in their days of trouble.

"The people were very receptive, we were treated like royalty, despite the economic conditions. ATIA had shipped them tons of wheat and while we were there we helped distribute wheat and hand-mills that they use to grind the wheat into flour for bread."

Ms. Rake recalled her visits to the schools or orphanages. "My team would go to an orphanage or school and spend much of the day. We would go home with the students where we could talk one on one. They asked so many questions about our faith. I went home with three teachers one afternoon and through an interpreter we encouraged them to live according to the principles in the Word of God, the Bible.

"When I told one teacher that, she looked at me with very sad eyes and said that Bibles are so scarce in Russia and expensive, that when they find one they cannot afford it. I gave her a Bible as a hostess gift. The expression on her face was worth the whole trip!"

"We met the Russian people, from the very poorest to the very top leaders. President Yeltsin sent his greetings. We met two primary leaders of the educational department in Moscow and we also met General Bormoff, the one in charge of the entire judicial system in Moscow."

Ms. Rake said that one thing that developed while the group was in Moscow was that the Russian leaders requested one Christian family be placed in each of the 59 orphanages in Moscow. 70 percent of the residents in the orphanages end up in jail, shortly after they leave the orphanage. The leaders feel that if a Christian family can be found to work with the orphanages, the orphans can get some training in order to obtain work and turn their life around."

Ms. Rake said that she left part of her heart in Moscow and that she would like to return someday.

## NEWS & NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

### Alexandria, LA church of Christ

Recently we have been promoting the School of Biblical Studies here: its identification, purpose, financial support. We have been praying for it. I profiled the Mayeux brothers as current students, using biographical sketches and pictures.

Our financial efforts for SBS came up a bit short, due to some other pressing needs which came up unexpectedly. But in the future I hope we'll include SBS in our budget, supporting it regularly as our Bible School for Christian workers.--David Johnson, minister (& SBS alumnus)

### More About the School of Biblical Studies

The new school year will begin Aug. 31. More students have pre-registered, at least tentatively, than for the past couple of years. Three subjects are offered at night, and two during the day. The full schedule was in last month's W&W. For the first time in years a class is offered on Thurs. nights (Christian Marriage and Home, taught by Dennis Kaufman), in addition to Mon. & Tues. nights.

About 90 turned out for the SBS Booster Supper during the Louisville

Fellowship Week. Jeff Mayeux gave a strong message, and reports were made about SBS. Any congregation wanting SBS to hold an extension class may write us at 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville KY 40212.

### Manila, Philippines

The downtown church in Manila has started a daycare center. We have 50 children to both teach and feed. This is a joint venture with Compassion Philippines. I am the coordinator and teacher for this project. Please pray for us. The children who enroll must agree to attend Sunday School also, as part of the program's spiritual aspect. --Mrs. Josie Abella

### Old Hardbound Copies of W&W

I have 27 bound volumes of Word & Work, from 1929-1959, except for four missing years: 1937, '53, '54, & '58. I'll sell the 27 volumes for \$100; I'll pay shipping costs too. Anyone interested may contact me at (606)272-8094; 3496 Sutherland Drive, Lexington, KY 40517--Harold Preston

### Discount on Books - Big Savings

Pilgrimage of Joy is Carl Ketcherside's autobiography. Ruth & I read it recently; it's good! God converted him from a church piecemaker to a peace-

maker. 339 pages, hardback. Its regular price is \$16.43 including postage (but not including .6% tax if you order from KY), but for the rest of 1992 we offer it for \$13.00 including postage (but add the tax, Kentuckians)--a savings of almost \$3.50.

Also, a newly written book is Walter Scott, Frontier Evangelist, by Wm. Gerrard. 252 pages, paperback. Usual price is \$9.00 includ. postage but not tax, but for the rest of 1992 we offer it for \$7.50 post free. Take advantage of this sale.

**Re: Cooperating with Billy Graham (June)**

About 30 years ago I heard Billy Graham in Denver. He spoke on Philip & the eunuch. If you hadn't any idea who the speaker was, you would think he was a Church of Christ preacher: The lesson on salvation and baptism was exactly as we would teach it.

A few weeks later some of his crusade was televised. When that sermon was aired, the part of his message about baptism was omitted entirely! Satan had a heyday. "All" the Church of Christ people criticized him for not teaching baptism. Anything to keep us from cooperating with other Christians!--Sandra Rehorn Seitsinger, Dallas

**Linton (Ind.) Church of Christ**

Brother Baty Terhune was honored by friends and family on his 90th birthday with a get-together at Woodland Camp.

**THANKS LADIES:** A special "thank you" to our ladies who prepared 88+ Bibles to be sent to the mission fields in South America! God will bless you for your part in spreading the Word! Pray for those who will be receiving these Bibles that God will lead them in the way of salvation through His grace!

We were especially blessed with Brother Joe Overman and his family, and Brother Allen Borders from the Dugger congregation during Brother Jerry's absence (in revival).--Jerry Carmichael, Minister

**Locust Street (Johnson City, Tenn.) Church of Christ**

Three Japanese students at Milligan College were visitors in our services last Sunday. Several of our families have committed themselves to entertaining these students on weekends for about a month. We understand that this is sort of a trial session to see if they are able to handle communication during a regular school term.

## THANKS

... to Bob Singleton for filling in while our regular minister was on limited activity. Bob did a good job, as we all knew he would.

... to Grover Queen for taking charge of the Wednesday evening study on short notice. We heard several good reports concerning his efforts. Bro. Kitzmiller had hoped to be out of the hospital in time to handle this service, but a late discharge caused him to miss the service.

... to each one for the cards, gifts of flowers and fruit, phone calls, expressions of concern, etc., and especially your prayers, during his brief hospital stay.--Carl Kitzmiller, Minister

**Ralph Avenue (Louisville) Church of Christ**

July 19, 1992-Homecoming Day: we were very happy to have all those who attended. We pray that old friends were seen and many new friends were met.

**PRAISE THE LORD:** How thankful we were to have two baptisms last Sunday. Tommy Prinzo and Divida Burns accepted Jesus as their Savior. Welcome to the Kingdom.--Bill Smallwood, Minister

**Bryantsville (Mitchell Ind.) Church of Christ and Rose Hill Farms, Inc.**

**High Lysine Corn Project:** The prospect for the 1992 corn crop are excellent at the present time. We expect to have 9,000 to 10,000 bushels of high lysine corn available for November and December of 1992 and for 1993. We will need to send out a semi-trailer load of corn twice a month from March through August.

It would be most helpful if a congregation or a group of congregations would determine to send a load of corn to some mission group that they feel comfortable working with. It seems to be most effective when some of the congregation come and help with the bagging and loading and determine where the corn is to go. Some groups are including a Bible or New Testament or tract in each bag, printed in the language of the country to which it is going. This is "Hands on Missionary Work". We hope that your congregation can become involved.--Hollace and Ila Sherwood

**Southeast (Jeffersontown, Ky) Church of Christ**

All were impressed with how John Fulda and James Embree trained the teenage singers from Antioch Music Camp. The singers presented an inspiring program. Joann and I had a great time while there and hope many of our teens will attend the 1993 Music Camp.

It was such a blessing to hear Jim Embree and Tom Rowe as they gave us a challenge in missions. Our choir and our group of young women inspired us with their singing about missions.

Thanks to all those who provided food and set up the excellent displays about mission opportunities. We are also thankful for those many private gifts by Southeast folks that are given to mission efforts.

August 9th--Brother Doug Broyles from the Jennings Church of Christ introduced the Carlos Eglesis family from Mexico. We understand that they have a good work for Christ in Mexico.--Nathan Burks, Minister

**Tell City (Ind.) Church of Christ (Praying for a minister)**

**Welcome Home:** We would like to welcome Brent Heeke home from Australia. Brent went to Australia on a missionary trip. The trip was blessed with the largest attendance ever for the same type of campaign. Take time to welcome Brent home and ask about his trip!

**LARGE PRINT BULLETINS** (*Thoughtful of those whose eye-sight is "not what it used to be."*): There are 25 large print bulletins in the vestibule this week. If you need one or know of someone that needs one please take one. If you have any comments about these very attractive bulletins let Larry Bryant know.

**Christian Youth Encampment (CYE), Ingallwood Park, La.**

New officers for '92-'93: Antoine Valdetero, President; Junior Guillory (Turkey Creek), Vice-President; Douglas Broyles, Secretary; Tim Morrow, Treasurer

Adult Week Begins October 4. Adult week this year will be October 4-9 with Douglas Broyles as director.

Fall Retreat 1992 for Senior High Group is November 13-15. Work Day for fall 1992 will be November 21, 1992.



**We are sorry that this issue is late, and also that the past few months were quite late.**

**But as you can see, we are making some changes!**

**How do you like them?**

**As usual, when you start doing things differently, there are some bugs to be worked out.**

**Thanks for your patience.**

**Our circulation is growing.**

**Thanks for your help there.**

**Please pray for us and for this ministry, including our new publishing team,**

**George Fulda Jr. and Lewis Byerly;**

**also for Rebecca and Jane Heid of the Heid Printing Company, as they continue their longtime role of advisors and helpers.**

**We appreciate our readers.**

**And we thank the Lord for His upholding this ministry through the years.**