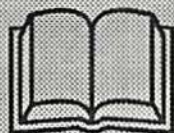


"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The *Word and Work*



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

JUNE, 1993

THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE GOOD NEWS

Your church may be dwindling and discouraged. **Many** churches in the U.S. are that way. Yet look at the **Big Picture**, and become excited and joyful! Worldwide, the church of the Lord Jesus is **growing faster than it ever has before!**

- **Evangelize the world by 2000 A.D.? (p.166)**
- **A fantastic response to radio preaching (p.169)**
- **Take heart again, & expect great things (p.173)**
- **Uphold missionaries by prayer (p.177)**
- **Rescue station or social club? (inside front cover)**

When Vision Becomes Dim

On a dangerous sea coast where shipwrecks often occur, there was once a crude little life-saving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea, and with no thought for themselves they went out day or night tirelessly searching for the lost. Many lives were saved by this wonderful little station, so that it became famous. Some of those who were saved, and various others in the surrounding area, wanted to be come associated with the station and give of their time and money and effort for the support of its work. New boats were bought and new crews were trained. The little life-saving station grew.

Some of the new members of the life-saving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and so poorly equipped. They felt that a more comfortable place should be provided as the first refuge of those saved from the sea. So they replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in an enlarged building. Now the life-station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they redecorated it beautifully and furnished it exquisitely, because they used it as sort of a club. Fewer of the members were now interested in going to sea on life-saving missions, so they hired life-boat crews to do this work. The life-saving motif still prevailed in the club decoration, however, and there was a liturgical life-boat in the room where club initiations were held. About this time a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in boatloads of cold, wet, half-drowned people. They were dirty and sick and some of them had black skin and some had yellow skin. The beautiful new clubhouse was considerably messed up. So the property committee immediately had a showerhouse built outside the club where the victims of shipwreck could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's life-saving activities as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal social life of the club. Some members insisted upon life-saving as their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a life-saving station. But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the lives of all the various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own life-saving station down the coast. They did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old. It evolved into a club, and yet another life-saving station was founded by the dissenters. History continued to repeat itself, and if you visit that seacoast today you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore. Shipwrecks are still frequent in those waters, but most of the people drown!

--Theodore Wedel; adapted

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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In This Issue

***Theme:* "The Good News About The Good News"**

Editorial -- Alex V. Wilson	162
World Evangelization By The Year 2000? -- David J. Hesselgrave	166
Radio: A Tool Sent From God	169
The AD 2000 Movement -- Rick Wood	171
To Dream Again -- Lynn Anderson	173
How To Pray For (<i>Women</i>) Missionaries -- Mrs. Ruth Wilson	177
Michael Jackson vs. Mohammed -- Bob Hitching	182
Are Missionaries Unbalanced? -- Dr. T. Norton Sterrett	183
VOICES from the FIELDS	184
Searching Questions -- Bill Butler	187
Elmer Ringer -- David Ringer Memories by Bruce D. Chowning	189
NEWS and NOTES	190

Theme: THE GOOD NEWS

ABOUT THE GOOD NEWS

COULD WE FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION SOON?

(The Answer May Surprise You!)

Alex V. Wilson

I started to entitle this editorial "What in the World is Happening for God's Sake?"--but then felt that might seem flippant. Instead, it is *urgent* that we know what trends and movements are occurring both among the unsaved and the people of the Lord. Because spiritual conditions in the U.S. are deplorable in many places, and because many churches we know are dwindling and depressed, it is all the more important that we get the Big Picture and see the glorious accomplishments happening in many places. Oh, we know there are numerous heartbreaking needs and problems in the Lord's worldwide harvest field. Last month's issue dealt with some of them: population explosion, cruel persecutions, masses of homeless kids, difficult fields like Alaska, etc.

But innumerable bright spots glow and radiate amid the darkness. Let's realize our Captain's thrilling victories, and take fresh heart. Lift you eyes, then, and see what is happening around the world, among Bible-believing, Gospel-preaching disciples of various names, backgrounds and countries.

The Gloom-&-Doom Prophets were Wrong

Going back a bit, notice what happened after World War Two. In 1973 Warren Webster wrote:

*"A great many Christians seem paralyzed by a spirit of defeatism. Ralph Winters has written a most interesting book, **The 25 Unbelievable Years, 1945-1960**. In August 1945 when that hideous mushroom cloud over Hiroshima ended World War Two, 99.5% of the non-Western world was under the political or economic domination of the West. Twenty-five years later when man first stepped on the moon, 99.5% of the non-Western world stood free and independent.*

"In 25 years, 400 years of Western colonial expansion were rolled back like a rug. Many observers prophesied that as the West retreated politically the Christian faith would decline in influence and impact on the Third World. Yet exactly the opposite has occurred. In most lands from which Western powers retreated, the Church of Jesus

Christ has made significant advances in these "25 unbelievable years." Today in many parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America, congregations are multiplying as never before. The Church of Jesus Christ has never been as widely planted or deeply rooted among so many peoples as it is today." (Christian Reader, Feb./Mar. 1973)

One of the giant leaps forward during that period was the Evangelism-in-Depth movement which was carried out in various mission fields. Kenneth Strachan was the main initiator of this method. In the late 1950's I had heard him at a great "Urbana Missionary Convention." He spoke to thousands of us students with pessimism that was near despair, saying "At our present rate, we shall *never* fully carry out the Great Commission. We are not progressing, but falling farther behind." But a year or so later the Lord used him to lead in a bold strategy: If ALL the born-again believers in any region or land will work *together*, prayerfully and under Christ's leadership, with each evangelical congregation reaching out to its own neighborhood and with cooperative efforts to reach churchless communities and people in prisons, nursing homes, etc.--then ALL the unevangelized people of that region or land can indeed hear the saving Gospel. And in almost all the Central American countries, plus a few countries or large regions in South America, Africa and Asia, it worked! Through faith, prayer, planning, hard work and a public demonstration of the unity of all born-again Christians, the Good News that Jesus saves was made known to multitudes who had never heard.

Other breakthroughs took place at an accelerating rate. "In 1964, World Literature Crusade began an Every Home Crusade program in India. Indian evangelists were commissioned to distribute gospel literature to every home. Eleven years later, they had finished the first distribution of literature to every home in India. So complete was their approach that they discovered 126 villages that the Indian government didn't even have on its books. Though India is, at best, only 4% Christian, a printed gospel message has been taken to most homes in the country." (Jay Gary in *World Christian*, Jan./Feb. '87) The same article points out that in 1970 only 64% of the world's population had some kind of minimal opportunity to respond to Christ," but by 1986 the proportion had risen to around 72%, a dramatic improvement in only 16 years.

Only Guesstimates, of course--yet Great Progress

Obviously statistics in cases like these have a wide margin of error. Only God knows human hearts and can discern who are counterfeit Christians (deceivers or deceived) and who are genuine. Christ foretold of many weeds among the wheat. Nevertheless, while making allowance for all this, the fact is clear that God's truth is marching on at an unprecedented rate. Around the world, He is working through

His followers to convert more people, establish more new congregations, translate Scripture into more languages, penetrate more "unreached peoples," transmit more Christian radio and TV programs, and distribute more literature *than ever before!*

And notice how God has shown His sovereignty by acting sometimes apart from missionaries. Don't get me wrong--missionaries are important and still desperately needed. But reflect on these cases: In the 1930's when Mussolini conquered Ethiopia and missionaries had to flee, they were despondent. They knew of only 42 born-again Ethiopians in the whole country, and who could tell if they would remain faithful to Christ amid hardship. God must have laughed, for when the doors opened again after the war, it was found that there were 10,000 baptized believers who had been converted during the 7-year period!

Again, gloom filled the Christians' hearts when in 1949-50 Chairman Mao's Communist regime deported all foreign missionaries from China, the most populous land in world history. How could God allow it to happen? But watch: In 1949 there were an estimated one million evangelical Christians in China. The bamboo curtain descended for decades, and lo and behold, when it lifted again it was discovered that the church had grown at least 20-fold. As more reports came in, estimates rose to 50 million or even more. But listen to this news item hot off the press (quoted from Open Doors *Newsbrief*, April '93):

China's government has long placed the number of Christians at around five million, while outside researchers have projected ten times that number.

Now after a 2-year project by the State Statistics Bureau, the government's figure is 75 million . . . and growing. While not formally published, these results, like so many of China's state secrets, have been widely leaked. Among the youth, religious belief equals or exceeds belief in the Communist Party, the study showed.

Is China therefore more open to Christianity? On the contrary, the government continues to tighten up, with arrests, beatings, raids on training sessions and the closing of house churches. Border crossings seemed more relaxed in 1992, but only because police are following Westerners to the Bible delivery points in an effort to capture the local Chinese distributors.

Did you grasp that? All missionaries expelled four decades ago. Fierce tribulation strikes believers repeatedly. Result: 50- or 60- or 70-fold multiplication in the number of disciples. Praise God!

Read on, and Shout for Joy and Excitement!

From various sources we share more great news.

*In the past 10 years or so, Iranian Christians distributed hundred of Russian Bibles to Russians (and others from the former USSR) who work in different parts of Iran. Most of them return to Russia and others are sent to replace them. So even before the Iron Curtain fell, Bibles were getting into the USSR via Iran, of all places.

*More Muslims in Iran have come to Christ since 1980 than in the previous 1000 years combined. *In 1900, Korea had no Protestant church; it was deemed "impossible to penetrate." Today Korea is 30% Christian with 4,000 churches in Seoul alone. *In Indonesia, a Muslim country, the percentage of Christians is so high the government won't print the statistic--which is probably nearing 25% of the population! *God is creatively sending Chinese believers to reach Tibetans, Hondurans to North African Muslims, Japanese to Bangladesh and Navajos to Laplanders and Mongolians! (All this paragraph, and the next, are from *Paraclete* magazine.)

****"The population of the world's mega-cities is exploding. Remember, MORE THAN HALF OF THE 10 BILLION PEOPLE WHO HAVE EVER INHABITED THIS PLANET ARE ALIVE RIGHT NOW. And half of that majority of all human beings are concentrating themselves into urban areas, where they are easier to reach. God is setting the stage for the most remarkable urban mission effort in history!"**

*There were more Christians in the USSR at its demise than there were in 1917 when the Communists seized power. After 70+ years of persecution, the blood of martyrs again turned out to be seed for the church. * The evangelical movement in Nicaragua was ten times as large when the Sandinistas were voted out as it was when they first took over that country.

*Christianity in Africa has grown from 3% of the population in 1900 to about 50% today. "Africa is the first continent to become majority Christian in a single century. This means that half the people in Africa are professing Christians." (Homer Duncan)

*The evangelical movement in Latin America is growing at three times the general rate of the population. About 100 years ago there were around 50 *thousand* Gospel-believing Christians in all of Latin America. Today it is estimated there are fifty *million*, and this number is expected to double in the next decade or less.

***Asian Christianity has grown from 16 million to 75 million in just the last nine years: an increase of over 450%! And that figure may be too small in light of church growth in China.**

***The number of Gospel-believing Christians worldwide during this century has grown from 40 million to 540 million. That is more than a 13-fold increase, while world population has increased less than 4-fold, according to Ralph Winter. *"The increase in the number of evangelical Christians in the Third World countries is most encouraging. In 1900, ninety-nine percent of the world's evangelical Christians were in what we call 'the west.' Only one percent were in Third World countries. However, by 1985 thirty-four percent of all evangelical Christians were in 'the west' and sixty-six percent were found in Third World countries." (Duncan) *More people have been converted to Christ Jesus during the past thirty or so years than during all of church history up till that time (30-1960 A.D.)! Glory to God, who is doing great things. (Re-read those last two sentences with joy.)**

O Exalted Jesus, Mighty Lord and Gracious Savior: We are thrilled that many people for whom You died are becoming Your worshippers and servants. May we not by unbelief or laziness miss out on Your wonderful workings in our day. Lead us, use us and find us faithful, Lord, whether You place us where there are "great" results or hardly any. Glorify Your Name in all the earth. Amen.

WORLD EVANGELIZATION BY THE YEAR 2000?

**David J. Hesselgrave,
Professor of Missions, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School**

World evangelization? By the year 2000? Or even in a generation? These are challenging concepts. They speak of a gigantic task.

Christians have heard the challenge to evangelize the world "in this generation" for almost a century. In this decade we will increasingly be challenged to evangelize the world "by the year 2000." This is as good a time as any to consider what is involved, what an evangelized world would "look like," and whether or not it is realistic to speak in these terms.

For too long too many Christians have focused on "our mission fields," "our missionary friends," and "our missionary projects." Many have lost sight of the "big picture."

Christ not only commanded that we "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). He also prophesied that the Gospel must be preached to all the nations (Mark 13:10). That was almost 2000 years ago. With more or less dedication, the Church has been involved in that task for all these centuries.

If the Lord tarries, we will soon look at a calendar that reads "A.D. 2000." How far will we have come on our mission to evangelize the world? If we are serious about our mission in the world, no consideration could be of greater importance to true Christians today.

In This Generation

[In the late 1800's a new slogan was coined: "Evangelize the world in this generation."]

This phrase, which became the watchcry of the great Student Volunteer Movement, is generally attributed to Arthur T. Pierson, editor of the *Missionary Review*, who was invited by Dwight L. Moody to Mt. Hermon, Massachusetts, in 1886. Pierson challenged 251 students from 87 colleges with the word, "All should go and go to all." However, most recently, Ralph Winter has researched that history and has discovered that the original challenge was to evangelize the world by the year 1900. Only in the mid-1890's, when it became apparent that the task could not be accomplished by 1900, was the emphasis changed to the evangelization of the world in a generation.

This history is very important to us because the emphasis is now shifting back from world evangelization "in this generation" to world evangelization by the year 2000! Is history simply repeating itself? Has anything changed? Is this challenge anything more than rhetoric? Is world evangelization by the year 2000 a realistic goal?

The Status Today

When we stop to look at the "big Picture" it becomes apparent that, from the perspective of world evangelization, things have changed dramatically in the last 100 years.

First, we now have a much better idea of what an evangelized world would look like. This may sound rather simple and humdrum. Most Christians probably assume that to evangelize the world means to preach the Gospel everywhere to everyone in every way possible. but when one carefully examines recent events and literature dealing with "evangelization" and related terms, such as "people groups", "hidden" peoples and "unreached" peoples, it is clear that the concept is not easily defined.

Out of all this discussion (which has included some rather preposterous notions!) somewhat of a consensus is emerging. People are "reached" (or evangelized) when, (1) they have had an understandable hearing of the Gospel, and (2) when they are geographically and culturally accessible to a viable evangelizing church. Some experts stress only one aspect while others stress both. Personally, I think the bringing together of the two ideas represents a "marriage made in heaven" because it is altogether too easy to settle for preaching the Gospel and assuming that it has been understood.

Emphasizing establishment of a church assures us that at least some have understood the Gospel and also makes possible continuing evangelization. Of course, we still do not know what God's definition of "reached" might be, and will not know until after world evangelization has been accomplished on His terms.

Second, we have now described the "world" in a way that makes world evangelization more "do-able." No longer do we think of the world as composed of five-billion-plus widely scattered individuals. Rather, we think of the world as composed of people groups--people closely related to each other on the basis of common language and interests. The most widely accepted conclusion is that there are about 17,000 people groups left to be reached. Reaching them is a gigantic task, but manageable.

Never before, including the last decades of the nineteenth century, has there been this kind of understanding and consensus as to what world evangelization entails and how to go about accomplishing it.

Is It Realistic?

Now we come to what my generation called the \$64,000 question: Can it be done? Let's look at the facts.

First, we have made great progress toward world evangelization during this twentieth century. The percentage of the world which is evangelized is rapidly increasing. The editor of the World Christian Encyclopedia, David Barrett, calculates the percentage of the world that has been evangelized as follows:

Year	Percentage Evangelized
1950	51.3%
1970	61.4%
1980	68.4%
1986	72.7%

Second, churches in the Third World have raised up many missions and missionaries to join us in the task of world evangelization.

Overseas Crusades coordinator for emerging missions, Larry Pate, estimates that at least 20,000 non-Western missionaries belonging to 380 different agencies are now working in scores of countries. Furthermore, he estimates that, at the current rate of growth, the size of the non Western missionary force will increase to 100,000 by the year 2000!

Third, Ralph Winter and his associates at the U.S. Center for World Mission report that the majority of the unreached people groups have already been targeted for Gospel penetration.

So, back to our questions: Is it realistic to think of accomplishing world evangelization by the year 2000? In one sense, the answer is no. World politics, economics and ideologies are becoming more challenging than ever before. Opposition from other religions and Satanic forces is mounting. Missionary giving and involvement would have to increase significantly, and when adjustments for inflation and short-term involvement are taken into account it is evident that this is not happening.

In another sense, yes. World evangelization by the year 2000 is a realistic goal. There is no indication that it will become easier to evangelize the world in the more distant future. Unlike a century ago, the vision for world evangelization is accompanied by information as to what it entails and how to go about it.

Actually, if all that God has placed at the disposal of His Church were to be marshalled for the effort there seems to be no reason why the whole world could not be evangelized by the year 2000.

Perhaps to a degree that has never before been true in history, the Church possesses the potential to accomplish world evangelization within a very limited period of time. It is realistic to think of world evangelization by the year 2000 if that potential is released in obedience to Christ's command to disciple the nations?

Radio: A Tool Sent From God

Far East Broadcasting Company first learned something unusual was happening from a story that appeared in a major Communist newspaper in Vietnam. The story appeared in Hanoi's Nhan dan Daily (People's Daily) in April, 1991;

" . . . Enemies have made up a story about some 'King', and tell the people he will appear. . .

" . . . This is causing a lot of serious damage against the security of the country. Many people are stopping their work . . . leaving their

own religion, selling buffalo, cows, pigs and poultry to get the money for a radio so they can listen to the voice of 'Vang Chu' (God)."

The "people" are the Hmong--more than 500,000 of them--who live along the North Vietnamese borders adjoining China and Laos. The "enemy" is FEBC's Hmong broadcaster John Lee, formerly from Laos, who has been beaming the gospel to the isolated farmers and mountain dwellers of that region for years.

In 3 Years, 330,000 (Out of 500,000) Have Become Believers!

In a little over three years, two thirds of the Hmong population along the Laotian/Chinese border in North Vietnam have turned to Christ! That's over 100,000 new believers each year! What an amazing turn of events, in a region that before 1989 apparently had not seen anyone responding to the gospel!

There is consternation among the Communists. In October of 1992, the same newspaper again published an article about this phenomenon, calling for government action to counteract the "foreign propaganda."

In recent weeks FEBC's Hmong broadcaster, John Lee, received an important letter from a Hmong listener. It confirmed the effectiveness of the radio programs.

"We were listening to your broadcasts and heard about the gospel of Jesus Christ in 1989. We then decided to accept Him as our Lord and personal Savior that year . . . All of our Hmong people are becoming believers . . . 333,000 altogether.

" . . . Now we have found some other Christians in the province of Son La. We walked for four days to meet them . . . We talked to them and discussed how we can grow in the Lord, but they didn't know how to help us because they also depend on your broadcasts.

"Please send some Hmong Bibles and hymn books . . . We also need some Scripture teaching tapes on how to grow in the Lord . . ."

This Is The Hour Of Harvest

This has to be one of the most inspiring stories in FEBC history! It is remarkable when you consider that the total time of John Lee's daily broadcast is ONE HOUR!

Imagine it. People are selling their cows, pigs, and chickens--to earn enough to buy a radio so they can listen for just ONE HOUR each day!

This is the miracle of radio. It can go where no Christian worker can go, and present the gospel in a clear manner to people who do not even have to know how to read to understand the message!

The third world takes the lead...

THE AD 2000 MOVEMENT

Rick Wood

Many people, especially in America, think of missions and world evangelization as an American led and promoted enterprise. But today in our time God is doing some earth shaking things around our world that are breaking down the usual stereotypes about missions. Today the number of missionaries from the third world is growing rapidly and far outstripping the number of new missionaries from the U.S. heading to the field. *It is estimated that there will be 160,000 missionaries from the third world by the year 2000. That is almost 4 times the current number of U.S. missionaries. Hundreds of new third world mission agencies have sprung up in the last 20 years.*

The AD 2000 And Beyond Movement, led by third world leaders, is bringing the third world and American mission efforts together under the banner of "A church for every people and the gospel for every person by the year 2000." The AD 2000 Movement is a unique international organization involving thousands of the world's pre-eminent mission and church leaders who are working together as never before to see the world reached in the next nine years.

ITS ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

The AD 2000 and Beyond Movement grows out of a desire to respond both to the imperative of the Great Commission and to the unique opportunity to mobilize all of God's people to reach the unreached by the year 2000, as God's people everywhere have established unprecedented faith goals for AD 2000. By July 1990, researchers reported more than 2000 evangelization plans focused on the year 2000. One third of these are from the two-thirds-world.

With all the interest in the year 2000, it became apparent that the worldwide body of Christ needs to coordinate its efforts for world evangelization. It is exciting to realize that much of the AD 2000 goals can be reached by mobilizing people in existing ministries without adding another complex and expensive infrastructure.

The following purpose statement was developed in consultation with around 350 Church leaders from all over the world. The overall purpose is stated as follows:

In a spirit of servanthood the people involved in the AD 2000 Movement seek to encourage, motivate and network men and women

church leaders by inspiring the vision of reaching the unreached by AD 2000 through consultations, prayer efforts and written materials. The intention is to encourage cooperation among existing churches, movements and structures to work together towards this same vision. The expected result is the establishment of a mission-minded church planting movement within every unreached and unevangelized people and city by AD 2000, so that all people might have a valid opportunity to experience the love, truth and saving power of Jesus Christ in fellowship with other believers.

The focus of this movement is on reaching the approximately two billion unreached people who are not within reach of Christians of their own ethnic or people group and do not yet have a vital, indigenous church movement.

IN CONCLUSION

The AD 2000 Movement is a dynamic institution tailor-made to meet the latest trends in missions. It is tapping into the tremendous surge of interest around the world by giving all people everywhere the opportunity to receive Christ as savior by AD 2000. It is also a movement that is raising up international leadership from dozens of countries. AD 2000 is a unique global mission enterprise motivated and carried forward at the initiative of thousands of people from all over the world who have God's heart to see all peoples reached. These are people who desire to work together to see the job completed more rapidly and easily than if they worked separately. It is important for the western church to take this movement seriously as the third-world begins to take over the leadership of the mission movement to penetrate every people group with the gospel by the year 2000.

But it is still not too late for the church in America to get mobilized into this world-wide movement. *Some 170 countries at Lausanne II in 1989 expressed in the final paragraph under the 11th affirmation of the Manila Manifesto—"We commit ourselves to evangelize the world during the last decade of this millennium. There is nothing magical about the date, yet should we not do our best to reach this goal? Christ commands us to take the gospel to all." And certainly if D.L. Moody were in our midst he would add; "It can be done, it ought to be done, it must be done!"*

(Excerpted by permission from **MISSION FRONTIERS Magazine**)

TO DREAM AGAIN

Lynn Anderson

After 55 years of living, 35 of them in ministry, I know plenty of shattered dreams first hand. Have you noticed how few of my age peers are still preaching? Some say they were driven out; others, burned out. Maybe. But as William Willimon says, "Burn-out in ministry is not usually from over-work, but from under-meaning." A lot of us simply lost our dream. We can live with the work, the flack and the frustration, but we can't live without dreams.

Somewhere along the way our fellowship lost its dream. Our dreams began early. In 1865 The Baltimore American said of us, "They had their origin in this country only about forty years ago, but they number now, in the United States alone, over six hundred thousand communicants." Just think--from zero to six hundred thousand in only forty years!

Up until the 1960's we believed it could be done again. We said we were still the "fastest growing religious group in the country." My buddies and I dreamed of "taking the world." Our missionaries were on the march.

Somewhere around 1965 our statistics flattened, then headed down hill on a collision course with oblivion, until a slight upturn around 1986. Rather than changing the world, we fell behind population growth and weren't even keeping our own kids. Our dreams were shattered.

I spotted an old friend leaning against the wall, alone in a crowded room, staring at the floor, his eyes as vacant as last year's bird's nest. He slowly dragged his eyes up from the floor to mine. Then he spoke for a lot of us, "Lynn, I've lost my dream. What do you do without dreams?"

What Went Wrong?

Whatever it was, it is not just a problem with our fellowship. Lyle Shaller says that fewer than five percent of all local churches in America which are 25 years old are growing by evangelism.

Some of our wrist slashing is misguided. "We are too narrow. Too broad. Too materialistic. Don't love the lost. Lost our distinctiveness. Too sectarian...." Whack! Slash! While there may be some truth in this, not all the good Christians lived in Bible times, or in the

'50s or whenever the golden age was. Lousy Christians lived a long time ago, too. For starters, check Corinth! No! I believe something more recent and pervasive lies behind our declining growth and shattered dreams.

The wine of the gospel didn't run out. The wineskins quit stretching. We froze and the culture moved off and left us. Or, as someone has said, "They put my church on auto-pilot in the '50s and haven't been back to the cockpit since!"

In his book *Unleashing the Church*, Frank Tillapaugh reminds us that prior to the American Revolution, churches in this country were mostly cultural branch offices of European denominations, clustered on the eastern seaboard. They did not connect with the new culture. With the Revolution, America headed west. New churches sprang up all across the new frontier. Baptist plow preachers knew how to communicate with the pioneers. Methodists employed effective "methods." These pioneer church planters were strategists who designed ways of "doing church" that connected with the culture. Growth exploded!

Then, frontier communities evolved into cities. The grandchildren of the pioneers graduated from the universities, settled in the cities and brought their faith with them. However, in so doing they transported rural, frontier church styles to modern, urban settings. After all, these formats had worked back in Farmerville and "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

But urban culture kept changing radically and swiftly. And those strategies which served so well in the rural nineteenth century, simply did not fit today's cities. For example, I used to "hold gospel meetings" in rural churches and baptize 10 or 20 people a week. Few city churches attempt this strategy today, however. They understand it was designed for a cultural setting that no longer exists.

However, not all "strategies turned to dogma" die so easily. Old wineskins resist stretch. What the plow preachers designed as "strategy" became "event." "Event" became "tradition." "Tradition" became "dogma," and in our fellowship "the biblical pattern."

Sure we are hampered by narrowness, legalism and loss of commitment on the one hand and materialism, secularism and liberalism on the other. But I believe our greater problem has been our preoccupation with the past--attempting to duplicate nineteenth-century (or first century) church patterns, rather than projecting the biblical Christ into twentieth-century experience.

Did I hear you shift in your chair and ask, "Lynn, why call this article 'To Dream Again?' Sounds more like The Doom."

Good. Now we are ready to talk hope! I am more excited about the future of our fellowship now than I have ever been in my life. If the Lord would let me choose any slice of history in which to live my life, I'd choose now, with our people.

Why? Because of some specific, observable realities going on right now.

Global Action

First, the Global Action. In 1974 Billy Graham and John Stott, alarmed at cut-backs in world missions, called a global congress of 2,500 Christian leaders in Lausanne, Switzerland to address the crisis. Fifteen years later, 1989, they convened Lausanne II in Manila, to assess progress. Over 4,000 delegates attended Lausanne II, including seven of us from Churches of Christ. Progress was astounding. *The global "Christian community" had more than doubled, nearly tripled in 15 years.*

The numerical locus of the Christian faith has shifted from North America to Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa. For example a math teacher from Ghana who attended Lausanne I, went back home and started a Bible study in his house. Now it is a congregation with 50,000 members which has started approximately 1,000 daughter churches.

Great things are happening globally in our movement, too. In Ethiopia, despite Communism, civil war, persecution and famine, and no on-site missionaries, the membership in Churches of Christ has grown from roughly 15,000 to 50,000 in the last 15 years! In Kenya, Nigeria and Zambia growth is amazing. Malawi has nearly 1,000 congregations. Solid growth flourishes in Brazil. And watch Eastern Europe!

North American Action

Second, the North American Action. You might say, "But nothing much is happening here." Wrong! Many churches in this country are growing at record rates, mostly through new church plantings. The Southern Baptists have started several hundred churches per year in each of several states. And look at the Bible Church and Community Church movement.

Upon examination of a number of these growth stories I've been amazed at the substance of these churches. Most claim the Bible as

their only rule of faith and practice, require baptism, and follow scripturally qualified leaders. They call people to high levels of moral, financial and ministry expectation. Most expect accountability and practice firm church discipline. Of course I don't agree with all I see, but my point is this: nothing in the message or demands in our congregations would make them any less "marketable" than the message and demands in their congregations. In fact, a lot of our folks would scream bloody murder if called to similar standards.

I am convinced that it is not our message, but our methods and models that "market" so poorly. There is no inherent reason why Churches of Christ cannot reach people with amazing effectiveness. I sing in the shower thinking about what is ahead.

Leadership Action

Third, the Leadership Action! I love our older preachers. Fact is, I am one of them. But it's our growing army of young ministers who lift my hopes. In the last decade or two, our rapidly improving schools are turning out preachers who are light-years ahead of where I was at their age. They come out with academic tools for Bible study far surpassing mine and most of my preaching peers. They love the Lord and the Bible and preach expository messages. They walk in the spirit of the early restoration leaders by being in touch with the culture. They know the times. Most of them read widely and many are trained in more than one field.

Also, our younger ministers are earning deep respect outside of our fellowship. An organization called Leadership Network hosts cross-denominational resource retreats for ministers. A number of our finest have participated in several of these conferences. Twice I have heard executives of Leadership Network say, "After visiting with all kinds of ministers, I think the guys from your fellowship are among the brightest and the best."

Church Plantings

Fourth, church plantings. Some of our older churches definitely are changing format and strategies to be more effective, and some are showing signs of new growth as we are learning how to manage change without splitting churches. In one graduate class I taught recently, well over half of the 19 students aspire to be church planters. This is a new and exciting trend. We are dreaming again!

I expect to see dozens of new congregations planted in the next few years--churches which will be rooted firmly in scripture but at the same time connect with our times.

A God Of Surprises

Finally, my optimism is rooted in our God of Surprises! All of God's major movements in history have been surprises. The people of God could see no way out of Egypt. But God surprised them and parted the Red Sea. Who would have planned this route or anticipated this mighty act of God? Again, in the first century A.D., Israel lost hope under the iron heel of Rome. But God surprised them with a manger, a cross, a resurrection and Pentecost--and scattered hope across the world.

Only Rip Van Winkle could miss the most recent surprises of God: the Berlin wall scattered to knickknack shelves around the globe; the spread of the gospel in Eastern Europe; the spectacular and swift dissolving of the Soviet Union. Surprises! But then God is full of surprises and capable of anything! What next?

Who knows what the God of surprises will do around our next corner? Who will be the next Moses, or Paul, or Luther, or Campbell! Maybe he or she is sitting in your Sunday school class. Maybe it is you! To paraphrase Joshua, "consecrate yourselves and tomorrow the God of surprises will blow your doors off!"

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How to Pray for (*Women*) Missionaries

by Mrs. Ruth Wilson

"Alex, there are WEEVILS in this flour! Yuck!!" I suppose I must have yelled that the first time I found myself staring down into an "occupied" bag of flour. But, after so many times, I *did* get used to it and learned to expect to pick out what I could and cook the rest for "extra protein". And there was the missionary in a remote area who found her last box of powdered sugar so full of moving black specks that she had to make *chocolate* icing for her son's birthday cake to cover up the evidence!

Yes, being a missionary in less developed countries of the world does have its special problems. And, having been there I can say that prayers of God's people surely helped me through *some* of the rough spots. But perhaps I should share with you who are intercessors for missionaries some of the difficulties that face workers on foreign

fields -- some that you may not have even thought of. Some pertain especially to women, but many are common problems of both male and female missionaries. My perspective, of course, is from the view point of a missionary wife.

Usually, the first hurdle for the new worker in a foreign land is "culture shock". This is defined as "a state of bewilderment in an individual suddenly exposed to a cultural environment radically different from his or her own" (*The Random House Dictionary*). Culture shock hits after the first few weeks, when the newness has worn off and you suddenly realize you're here to stay and can't run home to the conveniences you left behind. The telephone has no dial tone about half the time; electricity goes off often and without warning (usually when you feel your life depends on the electric fan!); a meeting is set for three, but everyone except you arrives 45 minutes late without apologies; you totally miscommunicate with your helper, who puts all the onions in the stew instead of just two. And you want to scream and go home--quick! Pray extra hard for new missionaries.

If the new recruit has gone to an Asian city, one of his or her first impressions is of the vast number of people. City streets flow with throngs of humanity, and the thousands of narrow residential streets are virtually the only playgrounds for the countless children. It might sound exciting to go as a missionary into such a ripe field. But what soon happens? the new worker begins to feel simply overwhelmed--a flame to faint as to be practically useless in such darkness.

Furthermore, after a hard day of striving to accomplish something, she longs to be alone, in the privacy of her home. But there is scarcely any real privacy in such a crowded society. Our last home in the Philippines was some 15 feet from our next-door neighbors' --and windows must be kept wide open because of the intense heat, except during the most violent squalls! Furthermore, these dear neighbors had very different tastes in music from our own--and loved to listen to their records many hours of every day, at top volume! (In fact, many Filipinos feel it is only polite to share their music with as many of their neighbors as possible!)

The newly arrived white person must also get used to being stared at--endlessly--whenever she goes out of the house. This is especially difficult for children, whose light skin is often a great temptation for the national to touch (or even pinch!). I well remember how the beautiful little blond and redheaded children of Billy Ray and Mary Lewter suffered through many a pinch.

But perhaps worst of all for the newcomer, especially if English is scarcely known in her adopted country, is the inability to make even a simple purchase because she doesn't know the right sounds to make.

At first she may not know how to say "bread" or "please" or "how much?" Gradually, with long, frustrating hours of drill, she can carry on simple conversations. But does she dare try to teach a class or even share the gospel with anyone? Oh no, she knows her mind would go completely blank, and she would probably make a complete mess of it. I remember attempting to tell a class of children that they needed to receive Jesus into their hearts - but, alas, the word for "heart" in Tagalog is "puso" and the word for cat is "pusa". Guess what I said to them! (And imagine how they laughed at that what-should-have-been solemn moment.) Learning to communicate in another language than your own often causes a tremendous emotional upheaval, which gets worse the older a person is. Pray for any missionary you may know who is working on a language.

Food problems can get much worse than weevils in flour! We learned that because of our sensitivity to certain bacteria, we must never eat raw vegetables (except for a few that grow above ground and can be peeled) and even some fruits. The bacteria must first be killed by cooking. Water is an even more frustrating problem. How can you refuse a glass of apparently clean water offered to you by a kindly national in a provincial area? You know that if you drink it, you may very well come down with typhoid fever, or at least intestinal problems. And if the water is dangerous, what about the dishes washed in suspect water? Most missionaries simply must take some risks, and we must not forget to intercede for their health.

Speaking of health, our daughter Joy experienced the following illness during her 18 years as a "missionary kid": primary complex (first stages of TB), mononucleoses (twice), gastroenteritis, typhoid fever, hepatitis (the latter two during the same year), and the usual childhood diseases. We took inoculations for typhoid (yearly) and cholera (twice yearly). Once when the cholera serum was unavailable, Joy had a real emotional struggle, fearing that she would surely get this disease too! (Incidentally, her typhoid would surely have been much more serious, even fatal, had she not had the shot shortly before contracting the disease.) Life in the tropics lowers resistance to disease - and life in the far north is hard on the respiratory system. Consider the location of missionaries as you pray for them.

Rearing children on the field is one of the missionaries' biggest challenges. Yet I have discovered that it had not even occurred to some intercessors to pray for the kids of the family! How much should these children be protected from exposure to the nationals? Isolating them too much could cause misunderstanding on the part of the people with whom you work. Yet overexposure could put them too much in the limelight and be harmful to their normal emotional development. How can you prepare them for American culture (or

whatever the home country may be)? It would be unfair to the children to rear them as if they were foreigners to their own home culture. Missionary schools are a tremendous boon to families on the field, for they provide an atmosphere similar to schools at home. But many families must part with their children for long periods of time so the children can live in boarding homes at those schools. And many other families must "make do" with international schools or other unsatisfactory conditions, or even teach their own children (which takes much of their precious time). And that difficult day will surely come when teenagers must go thousands of miles away to take up their college studies.

But more important than these cultural and educational needs of the children are their spiritual needs. Sometimes missionaries neglect their own children, feeling that their real call is to the nationals among whom they work. Pray that all such parents will realize that their own children are also "field of service".

Joy Turner Tuggy says in her excellent book, **The Missionary Wife and Her Work** (Moody Press, 1966):

It may be stated categorically that the presence of a loving, friendly, well-behaved missionary child is one of the greatest possible blessings in missionary work. Conversely, a missionary child who is not born again, or who has not continued to grow in grace, is a veritable weapon in the hand of the Enemy for the undermining of a Christian work. Every one of the lovely babes given to missionary parents is a potential Hophni or Phinehas or a Samuel."

Pray that all MK's (missionary kids) will turn out like Samuel, not like the sons of Eli!

And what about the missionary's own spiritual life? Does going to the field make him or her a spiritual giant, invulnerable to sin? Of course not! Seeing those great masses of people mentioned earlier may drive her to work herself to emotional and spiritual exhaustion, making her fully open to Satan's attacks. She may find it even harder than the ordinary wife in the homeland to find time for daily Quiet Times with her Lord. She knows that her first human responsibility is to her husband and children (and in fact, the husband has a like responsibility to his wife and children). Yet she sees so many things needing to be done on every side, to reach the nationals for Christ and to help the needy. Yet just how much time should she give to teaching, visitation, etc.? Each individual must decide, with God's special guidance. Do you pray for this aspect of missionaries' lives? Or can you only imagine them out preaching the gospel, tending the sick,

etc.? Do you begrudge them hours of recreation, or do you see them as just as human as yourself?

Joy Tuggy says of missionary couples: "The various facets of their individual responsibilities are closely interrelated. If she be a faithful woman, not given to spreading news, she will serve as a repository of problems, opinions, counsel, and help" to her husband. I have often related to Paul's last lament in his long list of difficulties he had faced as a missionary, found in 2 Cor. 11:23-28. In verse 28 he says, "Besides those things that are without, there is that which presses upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches." If the minister of a church in the home country needs his wife's encouragement and listening ear when difficulties face him, how much more the missionary husband, to whom the problems of many churches are brought? Are there tensions among the leaders in a far-off church? The missionary must be told and is expected to solve the problem! Are there financial crises? These will be brought to him too. Sad to say, some marriages can hardly bear the strain of missionary life. We have known of couples who had to give up the effort because their marriages suffered so. Do you pray for this need?

There is more: missionaries must be (almost) always available to receive visiting nationals and to counsel with them. Their lives are a constant example of good or bad, either upholding or downgrading the gospel they preach. They must constantly decide whether writing letters of information home to their prayer partners is more important than the work at hand in the field. So, don't fault them for infrequent writing--just pray that they will have the wisdom to make the right decisions in this as in all other matters.

Though the list could go on, I can fully agree with a paragraph in a tract called "Praying for Missionaries", published by Moody Press:

Most missionaries don't feel sorry for themselves. Not at all. Says one: "When we hear talk of our giving up so much, we think of the poor folks at home who have to stay in the homeland when we have all the privileges of bringing folks to Christ."

Sometimes I long to go back to the field because, though needs are great in this country, there are vast numbers out there who have not even had the slightest chance to hear the gospel, while Americans are surrounded with it. But I pray that many new "recruits" will go out as the Lord of the Harvest leads. Will you pray for this -- and will you pray more specifically than you ever have before for those who do go?

[Mrs. Ruth Wilson and her family were missionaries in the Philippines from 1963-83.]

MICHAEL JACKSON VS. MOHAMMED

Bob Hitching

I climbed up a steep mountainside to a small village nestled in the rolling hills between Istanbul and the Black Sea in Turkey. I was greeted by a friend and taken into a house about the size of a small garage in suburban America.

Stepping into this little habitation gave me the feeling of a 19th century missionary. No electricity, almost no furniture and the most austere of living conditions. Then it struck me. A television. Right in the center of the room. Visibly shaken, I asked my host where it was plugged in. He replied that the cord went out the window, around a tree and down into the valley and then plugged into someone's house.

Still somewhat disoriented, I sat down and we went halfheartedly through the usual Muslim greetings. My host had other things in mind. "Dallas" was coming on, dubbed into the Turkish language.

Perhaps one of the most shocking aspects of the Muslim world is the rampant modernity that has swept through it. Urbanization, mass media, and a general trend towards secularization have turned this otherwise closed community into an open opportunity for evangelism.

The average Muslim is no longer the man with a turban standing next to a camel but rather an urban teenager wearing a "Just Do It" t-shirt.

The traditional image of a Muslim has passed. About 60% of all Muslims are teenagers: 43% are under the age of 15 years. Nearly 50% of all Muslims live in cities. The implications for missions are vast. If ever there was a time when young Westerners could be mobilized to reach young Muslims it is now.

Today's Muslim youth seem to be grabbing at anything western. Needless to say, it is our popular trash culture that is meeting that demand. This was recently reflected in Indonesia when a journalist was put in prison for publishing his research that showed Indonesian youth are more interested in Michael Jackson than Mohammed.

Perhaps the new missionary to Islamic youth will be the person willing to shake off the cultural misconceptions. Someone willing to bring true testimony to the fact that sinful men and women can be reconciled to a Holy God by Jesus' shed blood on the Cross of Calvary.

ARE MISSIONARIES UNBALANCED?

Dr. T. Norton Sterrett

Are missionaries unbalanced? Of course they are. I'm one. I ought to know.

A missionary probably began as an ordinary person. He dressed like other people, he liked to play tennis and listen to music. But even before leaving for the field he became "different". Admired by some, pitied by others, he was known as one who was leaving parents; prospects and home for--a vision. He seemed to be a visionary.

Now that he's come home again he's even more different. To him some things--big things--just don't seem important. Even the World Series and the Superbowl don't interest him especially. And apparently he doesn't see things as other people see them. The chance of a lifetime--to meet Rick Pitino personally--seems to leave him cold. It makes you want to ask where he's been.

Well, where has he been?

Where the conflict with evil is open and intense, a fight not a fashion--where clothes don't matter, because there's little time to take care of them--where people are dying for help he might give, most of them not even knowing he has this help--where the sun means 120 in the shade, and he can't spend his time in the shade.

But not only space; time too seems to have passed him by. When you talk about Barney the dinosaur he looks puzzled. When you mention Billy Ray Cyrus he asks who he is. You wonder how long he's been away.

All right, how long has he been away? Long enough for thirty million people to go into eternity without Christ, with no chance to hear the gospel--and some of them went right before his eyes: When that flimsy riverboat overturned; when that cholera epidemic struck; when that Hindu-Muslim riot broke out.

How long has he been gone? Long enough to have had two sieges of amoebic dysentery, to nurse his wife through repeated attacks of malaria, to get the news of his mother's death before he knew she was sick.

How long? Long enough to see a few outcaste men and women turn to Christ, to see them drink in the Bible teaching he gave them, to struggle and suffer with them through the persecution that developed from non-Christian relatives, to see them grow into a sturdy band of believers conducting their own worship, to see this group develop an indigenous church that is reaching out to the community.

He's been away a long time.

So he's different. But unnecessarily so now, it seems. At least, since he's in this country, he could pay more attention to his clothes, to what's going on around the country, to recreation, to social life.

Of course he could. But he can't forget--at least most of the time--that the price of a new suit would buy 3,200 Gospels; that while an American spends one day in business, 5,000 Indians or Chinese go into eternity without Christ.

So when a missionary comes to your church or your Christian group, remember that he will probably be different. If he stumbles for a word now and then, he may have been speaking a foreign tongue almost exclusively for several years, and possibly is fluent in it. If he isn't in the orator class, he may not have had a chance to speak English from a pulpit for a while. He may be eloquent on the street of an Indian bazaar.

If he doesn't seem to warm up as quickly as you want, if he seems less approachable than a youth evangelist or college professor, remember he's been under a radically different social system since before you started high school, and maybe is unfamiliar with casual conversation.

Sure the missionary is unbalanced.

But by whose scales? Yours or God's?

From HIS Magazine, January, 1967; adapted.

VOICES from the FIELDS

Mark Garrett

Quebec, Canada

April 30, 1993

With one semester of French completed, Candy and I no longer feel like total idiots. We had two professors who were absolutely incredible! They were patient, witty, caring and innovative. We now can communicate in *simple* French. But we still make plenty of mistakes. Last night I got a strange look from a neighbor. I tried to tell

her about a leak in our car. But instead of picturing a problem when it rains, I described a car full of fruit! Our francophone friends have told us that French is the language of heaven because it takes an eternity to learn! After only 4 months, we can relate.

One of our classmates is Yeusef, an Iranian Muslim. Over the last two months we have built a friendship. He is very interested in Issa (Jesus) and once even asked to go to church with us. We gave him a Bible in Persian and he has been reading in Genesis and Luke. He has lots of questions and is wrestling with the differences between the Quran and the Bible. Please pray that God would use us to teach him the truth about who Jesus is. We will continue to pursue our friendship at least until September, when we will leave Laval University for other studies. We now realize more than ever that learning a language is not something we do in "preparation" for ministry. *It is ministry.* And we know that this is a prelude to what we will encounter in Senegal when we study the Wolof language.

It's crazy how our bodies can adjust to extreme temperatures. After a Quebec winter, any temperature above 32 degrees Fahrenheit seems like a heat wave. Now I understand why Canadians go south to Myrtle Beach, SC, and sunbathe in 50 degree weather! It's all relative. We saw our last (I hope!) snowfall of the winter on April 20! (Not a misprint!) But, convinced that Spring has now finally arrived, Candy has planted flowers next to our patio. Frost, stay away!

[Condensed from their newsletter. If you want to be put on their mailing list, write to Mark and Candy Garrett Newsletter, c/o 399 College St., Winchester, KY 40391.]

Crystal Hardin Academia Los Pinares, Honduras May 1993

We have had a much more positive attitude among the teachers this year. I think most people would do better if things were really rough here. It would be easier to be strong if this weren't an almost modern city with things almost the same as home. If we were in the jungle with a tribe, we would expect inconveniences, delays, inefficiencies, no electricity, no telephones, etc. This is near enough to civilization to compound frustrations. Teachers here have done well this year, but we can tell it's nearly summer.

Several of our teachers came for only one year, so Ted faces the hiring of 8 new teachers this summer. We also have one couple expecting their first baby down here in July. We are praying for some mature teachers who will be willing to stay a while. Our school will be better if we don't have such a large turnover each year.

Some of the students have made commitments to Christ this year, and they need discipling. We have been praying especially for a group in 7th and a group in 12th who seem quite hard. All the spiritual life activities of the school are pretty well attended, but the groups seem to be coming just to have something to do. When they are juniors and seniors they don't show much interest any more. We are praying for a breakthrough. I don't think the Christian students are really challenged to exercise their faith and to grow in the Lord. We also see the breakup of several student's families every year, and it is so frustrating not to be able to help these parents, most of whom are not Christians.

We have a committee working on choosing a Bible curriculum. It is really a difficult task, as not many are written for kids who don't come from Christian homes. This is of vital importance for our school, so please pray for wisdom for us. Please pray also for our Bible teachers, as their job is really difficult when students have little or no interest in the subject.

We try to teach Christian morality and ethics, but they see a whole other world on television and in many of their own families.

Ted is wrestling with two jobs. He is rector over the whole school, and also functions as elementary principal. He has an assistant half of the day, but there seems to be more to do than he can get done. He is getting more exercise this year and feels better, but it doesn't add hours to the day.

We will be saying farewell to Tabitha in June as she goes to a summer job before entering Taylor University in the fall. Taylor is a Christian school in Indiana, about three hours from Louisville, and several of our missionary friends have sent their kids there. It is really hard to send her off. She was president of her class this year and did a good job with their activities, and we can tell she is maturing, but it's still hard.

Robert S. Johnson

Maputo, Mozambique

June 6, 1993

We thank God that the peace in Mozambique is still holding. The task now lies in reconciliation and development. How do you integrate thousands of opposition soldiers, who for fifteen years have ravaged the country? What do you do with three million refugees and displaced persons, who return to start a new life from nothing? Thank God for rain. The rain brought food to alleviate the hunger. . . but also brought mosquitos to escalate the malaria. In spite of all that the churches and relief agencies are doing, the task will take a very long time.

We thank God for good progress in the student work. Last December, I went with some students to attend an international conference where ten movements from southern Africa met for five days. In answer to prayer, new student groups have been formed this year in Boane, Nampula and Xai-Xai. We now have seven groups across Mozambique. I am personally responsible for the group at Boane where I meet with students on each of two campuses. A year ago, we only *dreamed* of meeting on campus.

Revival, Our Greatest Need--

Searching Questions

Bill Butler

I vividly remember my arrival in Uganda over 40 years ago, when as a young missionary I first became acquainted with some of the African brethren who had been so greatly blessed in the early days of the East African Revival. I had heard a good deal about them, and greatly looked forward to meeting them. I was taken aback when after the preliminary greetings they asked me what I felt was a surprising question to a newly arrived missionary. The question was, "Are you saved?"

I was amazed that they should ask a missionary that question, but was able quite happily to reply in the affirmative. Upon which they then asked me a second question: "When were you saved, and how?"

Again, though somewhat surprised, I was able to give them an answer, telling them that my parents had been missionaries in India and had introduced me at an early age to Jesus. Moreover, at the age of six, I had quite definitely and consciously given my heart to Jesus and accepted him as my personal Saviour. We were getting along happily so far, but then came a third question which, I must confess, completely overwhelmed me. This time they wanted to know, "And what's happening now?"

I don't think anyone had ever asked me such a question before. In the evangelical circles in which I had moved, if a person had a clear testimony that he was saved and that he knew Christ as his personal Saviour, that was enough. But here were these men asking me what was happening now, what was my up-to-date testimony? The honest answer, I am afraid, would have been that I hadn't got one; that I had been living on past experience, that underlying an apparently keen ex-

terior lay a great deal of hidden sin and defeat, particularly in the area of my thought life.

How I praise God for the love and concern which constrained those brethren to ask those three questions! In time the Holy Spirit was to show me practically what I already knew in theory, that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin; and where the blood has cleansed, the Holy Spirit can fill.

It was not until nearly two years later that some of my African brethren asked me a fourth and more searching question, which was to lead to a totally new dimension in my spiritual life. This time the question was, "Is your cup running over?" It was asked by some Africans who had just returned from a convention in Western Uganda, attended by over fifteen thousand people. They had been reminded of Christ's words in John 7:37, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

They had been invited to hold out their hands as though they were the cups of their lives, and picture Jesus in their midst with the Water of Life, the thirst-quenching fullness of his Holy Spirit. They were reminded, however, that the Holy Spirit could never fill vessels that were unclean. Only as they were cleansed could they be filled.

Then they were reminded of another cup, the cup of which Jesus spoke when his sweat was at it were great drops of blood as he knelt in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." They saw that cup as the conglomerate cup of all the sin and the failure and the backsliding and disobedience of Christians, as well as pagans. They were reminded that Jesus tasted death for every man; that on the cross He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Such a simple picture and yet so profound! I saw my African friends with their cups manifestly running over with the fullness of the Holy Spirit, rejoicing in the power of the blood to cleanse and set them free, not only from the guilt and penalty, but from the power and dominion of sin. And I realized that I too could have a cup running over, not as a once-for-all crisis only, but as a continual and continuing process.

How I praise God for those questions which have meant so much to me and which I believe are so relevant to every Christian believer, Are you saved? When were you saved? Are you sure about it? What's happening now? Is your cup running over? And if it isn't, why not?

ELMER C. RINGER

October 13, 1909-April 30, 1993

Elmer C. Ringer was born in 1909 near Dugger, Indiana. As a teenager he accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. On May 12, 1929 he married Frances Roberta Abram, beginning a marriage that lasted almost 64 years. As he grew in Christ, Dad became aware of the calling of God upon his life to give himself to the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. Obedient to that calling, he and Mom moved to Louisville in the early 1930s for Dad to finish high school at Portland Christian School and to study with R. H. Boll. On January 3, 1935 he was ordained at the Dugger Church of Christ. At that time he was preaching at the Borden (Indiana) Church of Christ, where over a period of some 58 years he would eventually spend a total of 34 years. In addition to preaching at Tell City, Indiana for 16-17 years, Dad spent shorter times preaching at Lily Dale, near Tell City, and in various churches in Kentucky and Louisiana.

Besides regular preaching he frequently spoke at fellowship meetings, held revivals, and taught at Bible camps. He served for many years on the boards of the Woodland Bible Camp and the Maple Manor Christian Home.

Dad was preceded in death by a son, Stephen and a daughter, Suzanne. He is survived by his wife, Frances (Bobbie) R. Ringer of Sellersburg, IN, a son, David of Dayton, OH, three sisters, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Memorial gifts may be made to Maple Manor Christian Home-Adult Division.

--David Ringer

Memories, by Bruce D. Chowning

He often told folks, "I've known Bruce all of his life," and what a blessing it has been for me to have had Bro. Elmer Ringer as my friend and brother in the Lord all of my years. The Ringers and I are natives of Dugger, Indiana, and when I left home in 1934, I came to Louisville with them and lived with them for a period of time while attending classes at Portland Avenue Church of Christ. Eventually, our ministries led us to Southern Indiana, he in Borden and I in New Albany, and we have had close fellowship for many years.

Only eternity will tell the blessing he and his dear companion, Bobbie, have been to a great number of Christians whom their ministry in various places has touched. Elmer was an avid fisherman who had many fish stories to tell, but the most sublime is that like some of

the disciples he followed Jesus to become a "fisher of men," and in this he had great success, as many who read this will testify.

We thank the Lord he is now with his Lord and Savior, has joined many of his loved ones and friends "over there," and now awaits the eternal reunion with the faithful who still await that promotion to glory.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

Sorry About That

We regret that last month no author was listed for the article "Transformed or Conformed?" It was written by Leroy Garrett in the occasional newsletter he now writes as a follow-up to his former magazine *Restoration Review*.

Bro. Garrett, by the way, will be speaking in the Louisville area on April 19 next year, D. V. He will be the main speaker at the 2nd Restoration Lectureship co-sponsored by the School of Biblical Studies.

Mackville Church of Christ

Bro. Joe Settles was ordained as an elder of the Mackville Church of Christ. Surely this is an answer to many prayers, and a great step forward for this congregation as we seek to do God's will in His church here. — Harry Coultas, Minister

Antioch Music Camp, Frankfort

The fourth annual music camp will be held at the Antioch Christian Camp July 11-18. The music camp has three purposes: 1. To praise God, 2. To edify and inspire our young people, and, 3. To prepare our young people for greater service

to the churches in the ministry of song.

We have some special people coming to help teach and lead groups this week. John Fulda, who is choral director at the Amite, La. high school, will be in charge. He will be assisted by James Embry, who is well known among Louisville-Southern Indiana churches for his many musical gifts. In addition Roc and Mona Moore, a couple from Harrodsburg with a moving testimony of God's saving grace, along with Brian Morrison.

Please promote the music camp among your youth ages 12 thru college. Camp brochures with registration forms are available from Joe Strunk, Camp Manager. If you need more forms, you may call him at (502) 223-7056. Also we need financial support for the expenses of this camp including travel expenses and honoraria for John Fulda and James Embry. Send your contributions to the Antioch Christian Camp, 355 Bark Branch Road, Frankfort, KY 40601 with a note that your gift is for the 1993 Music Camp.

A concert tour gives our youth an opportunity to show what they have learned and to praise the Lord in song. We will be in concert on

July 16th, 12:00 noon, at Fort Harrod "Picnic in the Park"; July 16th, 7:00 pm, at Bohon Church of Christ; July 17th, 7:00 pm at Cherry Street Church of Christ; July 18th, 11:00 am at Antioch Church of Christ; July 18th, 6:00 pm at Fisherville Church of Christ.

Ladies Overnight Retreat

Ladies, save the last weekend of Sept. for the annual overnight retreat. This year it will be at Camp Kavanaugh in Crestwood, Ky.--in nicer facilities than last year's retreat. And the cost is only \$10 for Fri. night and Sat. morning and afternoon. Stay tuned.

Newly Improved S.S. Quarterlies

The Word and Work Sun. School quarterlies for adults and teens are now IN LARGER PRINT, easier for the eye to read. And starting next quarter the text used will be the New International Version, easier for the mind to grasp. Also the NIV is more readily available than the ASV, which many bookstores don't carry anymore.

You may order the quarterlies from our office. The price now is \$1.00 per copy, including postage.

From Japan To Dallas

On May 31st, Teruko Nakahara left Japan to move to Dallas, where she will live near one of her daughters. The work in Shizuoka City will continue under the leadership of her son Michiya and his wife Tomoko. Teruko writes, "God has really worked and helped them through the work here in encouraging members to cooperate. In numbers we haven't grown much but there is a good spirit among us."

Write For Us: Testimonies Wanted

We have suggested that if our writers will share testimonies of answered prayer, we will put out an issue on that theme. So far only one reader has responded. We're standing by the mailbox waiting for your articles, folks, so come on and send them in--to the glory of God.

Available To Preach

Two men have given me their names, to notify you of their availability to preach. They are Bill Allen, who lives in New Albany, Ind.: (812) 948-2351 (office) or 945-9300 (home) and Jerry Overman who lives in Louisville: (502) 491-7412.

SBS Booster Supper

The annual School of Biblical Studies booster supper will be at the Hamburg Church of Christ on Tuesday, August 3 during the Louisville Christian Fellowship. The meal will be catered and reasonably priced under \$5.

At this meeting you will be updated on the prospects of the '93-94 school year. You will meet former students and current students and hear of the good things God is doing at the Portland Christian School of Biblical Studies. Bring your family and share this time with us. You may register for the meal and meeting on Monday night and until Tuesday noon at the Louisville Christian Fellowship. -- SBS Newsletter

Southeast Church of Christ

April 25: All of us rejoiced as we witnessed the ordination of Bob Williams & Robert Istre as Elders and Frank Pace & John Seay as Deacons last Sunday. Pray for them as they assume their duties. David Taylor and Gene Heid challenged us to take seriously our commitment to the Lord's work at Southeast.

I really enjoyed the program presented by the 6th grade class of Portland Christian School last Sunday evening. "Good Things are goin' on there!"

From The Pulpit Committee . . .

The unanimous decision of the Pulpit Committee and the Elders was to extend a call to Alan Woodward to come to Southeast to serve in capacity of Associate/Youth Minister.

This invitation has been communicated to Alan by phone, and has been accepted with much excitement. Alan and Deana will make the move from Virginia to Kentucky within the next 2-4 weeks. --Nathan Burks, Minister

Portland Christian School, Louisville

April 8 was a special day for eight students from our Christians In Action group. They had volunteered to work a day with Habitat for Humanity as a result of Missions Emphasis week in January. The students were told to be prepared to do anything from digging ditches to painting walls. Well, surprise! They spent the day digging foundation ditches for a new house. It was hard work but they did it without one complaint.

The days of April 26-29 were also days of volunteer labor. Each day I took a different high school class to Mitchell, Ind. to work with Bro. Hollis Sherwood on the High Lysine Corn Project. In a period of 4 days, we bagged and loaded 545 bushels of corn, weighing nearly 33,000 pounds. The corn was headed to Sudan as part of a relief effort directed by International Aid.

These two activities were part of the overall effort of the school to get our students involved in being of

service to others less fortunate than themselves. Proverbs 19:17 is the theme Bro. Sherwood has used for the corn project, and I believe it is a good attitude to instill in all of our students.

Our students have just finished taking the annual Stanford Achievement Tests. While test-taking is probably not among a student's favorite activities, these tests allow us to get a comprehensive look at how our students are progressing. Each year the test results show that as a whole, we are doing far better than the public schools. This is encouraging to us in light of the fact that we have decided to maintain a "traditional" school despite all the clamor about reform.

Speaking of achievement, this year I took a group of eight students to Eastern Kentucky University to participate in the annual Science and Math Achievement Program. Students could test in one of five areas: earth science, biology, chemistry, physics, or mathematics. There were forty schools present and the students who scored in the top 10% of each area were recognized. We were very proud to have Philip Heid recognized for his performance on the earth science test.

The basketball season has entered the history books. The varsity boys finished 11-13, the varsity girls finished 4-15 and the boys junior varsity finished 9-7. While it may not have been a great year in the won/lost category, it was a very good year in other respects.

We thank God that we made payroll every week this school year. A few times the staff were paid on Fri. instead of Tues., but we didn't miss a week! It continues to be our prayer that the teachers may receive a pay raise this year, perhaps by receiving pay during the summer months. -- Don Rucker, Principal

46th Louisville Christian Fellowship Week

August 2-5, 1993

Theme: Worship--Man's Relationship to God

Monday, Aug. 2

7:30-8:00 Singing (nightly)
8:00- 8:45 What the Church of Christ Needs to
Hear about Worship -- Carl Kitzmiller

EVERY MORNING:

9:30-10:00 Prayer Time
10:00-10:45 Exposition: Godly Worship in the
Book of Revelation -- Vernon Lawyer

Tuesday, Aug. 3

11:05-11:50 a.m. The Unknown God -- Harry Coultas
1:30-2:15 p.m. The Great "I Am" -- Mike Abbott
2:30-3:15 The Great "I" -- Nick Marsh
5:30 School of Biblical Studies Booster Supper,
Hamburg Church of Christ
7:30 p.m. The Divine Nature of God in Christ -- Paul Estes

Wednesday, Aug. 4

11:05-11:50 Individual Worship --Bennie Hill
1:30-2:15 Home and Family Worship -- Sam Marsh
2:30-3:15 Public Worship --Louis Schuler
7:30 Mission Field Worship -- Earl Mullins Sr.

Thursday, Aug. 5

11:05-11:50 Purposeful Worship -- Cleo Russell
1:30-2:15 Sacrificial Worship -- Tim Morrow
2:30-3:15 Worship in Spirit -- Orell Overman
7:30 Worship in Truth -- Paul Kitzmiller

Housing Committee: Dale Offutt, (812) 246-2694
Paul Heid, (502) 239-3886

Youth Activities: Young people in grades 1-6 will have classes in the
Christian Center.

SEE BACK COVER FOR SCHEDULE OF **Goin' Fishing MISSION
SEMINAR** TO BE HELD THE NEXT DAY, FRIDAY, AUG. 6.

Day Sessions: Portland Church of Christ
2500 Portland Ave., Louisville KY 40212

Evening Sessions: Sellersburg Church of Christ
211 South New Albany St., Sellersburg, IN 47172

GOIN' FISHING MISSION SEMINAR

Friday, Aug. 6, 1993

Sellersburg Church of Christ Christian Center

8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

8:30 a.m. **REGISTRATION:** Coffee and Donuts; View Displays

9:00 **WELCOME AND PRAYER**

9:30 - 11:45 a.m. **AN OVERVIEW OF SPECIFIC
AREAS OF THE FIELD**

There will be a question and answer period after each session.

9:30 - 9:55 a.m. AFRICA
The Robert Garretts in Zimbabwe
Words of Life

10:05 - 10:30 ASIA
Presentations of the work associated with:
Japan -- the Nakaharas and the Nomuras
Philippines -- Central Bible Institute, Manila
Words Of Life, Mindanao, etc.

10:40 - 11:05 a.m. NORTH AMERICA
Presentations of the work associated with:
the Winston Allens in Eagle River, Alaska
Words of Life in areas without a fellowship congregation

11:15 - 11:45 a.m. RUSSIA
Presentation of the work associated with:
the Moscow area, ACSI Convocations, Summer Camps

WORKING LUNCH 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.:

"Where To From 1993 to 2000 (or the COMING OF THE LORD)?"