

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

MAY-JUNE, 1995

I PRAYED, GOD ANSWERED

25 or so specific answers to prayer
are recorded in this magazine in some detail--NOT
counting the THOUSANDS of times the Lord answered
George Mueller's prayers!

(And more of such testimonies will appear in next
month's issue.)

**THE MOST IMPORTANT PAGE THIS MONTH
MAY BE PAGE 151.**

Remember this is a 2-month issue.
Our next one will be out in July, D.V.

48th Louisville Christian Fellowship Week

August 7-10, 1995

Theme: Spiritually Making Connections

Day Sessions: Portland Church, Louisville

Night Sessions: Sellersburg Church, Sellersburg, IN

Monday, Aug. 7, 1995

7:30 p.m. "Vital Connections" Earl C. Mullins, Jr.

Tue., Aug. 8, 1995

Theme: Individual to Individual

9:30 a.m. "Exposition on 1 John" Paul Kitzmiller

11:15 a.m. "Development of Christian Friends" Ken Istre

1:30 p.m. "One on One Discipling" Harry Coultas

2:20 p.m. "Sharing/Caring for Burdens" John Fulda

[SBS Dinner, 5:15; Graduation, 6:30—Hamburg Church]

7:30 p.m. "Everyone Needs a Paul,
a Barnabas, a Timothy" Barry Sanford

Wed., Aug. 9, 1995

Theme: Individual to Congregation

9:30 a.m. "Exposition on 1 John" Paul Kitzmiller

11:15 a.m. "Focusing on People" Rick Murphy

1:30 p.m. "Commitment to Worship and Work" Nick Marsh

2:20 p.m. "Using Their Gifts" Paul Estes

7:30 p.m. "Vision For the Future" David McReynolds

Thurs., Aug. 10, 1995

Theme: Congregation to Congregation

9:00 a.m. PRAYER TIME

9:30, 10:25 and 11:20 a.m. 3 Group Sessions:

- "Teamwork Vs. Competition"
Leaders: Sam Marsh & Tim Hill
- "Different Needs, Different Talents, Different Places"
Leaders: Doug Broyles & A. J. Istre
- "Leadership Fellowship"
Leaders: Nathan Burkes & Joe Blansett

1:30 p.m. GROUP SESSION SUMMARY

2:15 p.m. "Exposition on 1 John" Paul Kitzmiller

7:30 p.m. "Independent, but Dependent" Alex Wilson

For Housing call Emory Grimes, (812) 246-2280

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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THEME: I PRAYED, GOD ANSWERED NO KIDDING, GOD DOES ANSWER PRAYER

Alex V. Wilson

What is more exciting than seeing God at work, seeing lives changed and "coincidences" called into being? Nothing else strengthens our faith more than experiencing the Living God's activity among us, answering prayer as He promised.

We need to encourage one another by sharing testimonies about such answers, past and recent. Folks, our churches need to arrange times and places for such sharing. Without them we deprive ourselves of a valuable weapon in the spiritual arsenal. Somehow, sometime, somewhere we need chances to hear what the Lord is doing among us--some kind of testimony meetings. Yes, for women too: a testimony is not a sermon, nor doctrinal teaching, nor usurping authority. It is simply recounting what God has done for you, and since He doesn't restrict His working to men we shouldn't restrict testimonies to men either. Whether at fellowship-meals, or home cell-groups, or at camp outings, or during Sunday School classes, or whatever, let's encourage one another by telling what our great Savior is doing among us--current events as well as ancient history.

Treasured Memories

We should never minimize long-ago blessings, but remind ourselves of them. In our family that means recalling how God healed Ruth of osteogenic sarcoma, an incurable cancer, 40 years ago. (Every doctor we've ever told about that, even Christians, have responded at first with, "I can't believe that!" But solid evidence exists.) Then there was that time in Manila when my sermon preparation was getting nowhere. Things just wouldn't come together, and Sunday morning was breathing down my neck. Finally, despite several days of intense study, I gave up on that topic and preached instead a re-run on the passage in the Sermon on the Mount about going the second mile and turning your other cheek if someone strikes you. A week later a church member informed me that just 2 days before I preached on that text, one of his subordinates at work had literally and humiliatingly slapped him in the face! I had known nothing about that, but the Lord had, and led me to the very text needed by that brother at that very time.

But testimonies should be about current events too, not just ancient history. Our Father is not God, emeritus! Three exciting an-

swers to prayer in Africa were recorded in a newsletter of Mark and Candy Garrett:

"What do you do when your son throws a rock which breaks the headlight of a late-model car, and the cost of replacing it takes 3-4 months of your salary? You pray. The owner forgave the debt! (It happened to a believer in Senegal.)

"What do you do when your last two years of university study have been voided because the institution wants to rid itself of some of your classmates who have staged strikes and violent protests? You pray. The university reversed its decision!

"A Christian couple had their marriage threatened by neighborhood gossip. Accusations of infidelity didn't help matters and soon the wife's family convinced her to leave her husband. He wasn't sure where they had taken her, but tried contacts through letters and phone calls for weeks on end, all of which were apparently diverted by family members. Finally he went and found her and they are reunited. Because of a job transfer, they live in a different city now. The resulting lack of gossip seems to be easing the tensions in their marriage. It is so good to see them at peace with one another. God answers prayer in Senegal!

More Examples

From a grand old book, *The Kneeling Christian*, here are three cases from foreign mission fields:

"Dan Crawford told us that when returning to his mission field after a furlough, it was necessary to make all possible haste. But a deep stream, which had to be crossed, was in flood, and no boats were available, or usable, for that matter. So he and his party camped and prayed. An infidel might well have laughed aloud. How could God get them across that river! But, as they prayed, a tall tree which had battled with that river for scores of years began to totter and fall. It fell clear across the stream! As Mr. Crawford says, 'The Royal Engineers of heaven had laid a pontoon bridge for God's servants'" (p. 102).

A lady in India was cast down through the failure of her life and work. She was a devoted missionary, but somehow or other conversions never resulted from her ministry.

The Holy Spirit seemed to say to her, "Pray more." But she resisted the promptings of the Spirit for some time. "At length," said she, "I set apart much of my time for prayer. I did it in fear and trembling lest my fellow-workers should complain that I was shirking

my work. After a few weeks I began to see men and women accepting Christ as their Savior. Moreover, the whole district was soon awakened, and the work of all the other missionaries was blessed as never before. God did more in six months than I had succeeded in doing in six years. And," she added, "no one ever accused me of shirking my duty." Another lady missionary in India felt the same call to pray. She began to give much time to prayer. No opposition came from without, but it did come from within. But she persisted, and in two years the baptized converts increased sixfold! (p. 28)

A Barber in Need

Famous modern author C. S. Lewis of England tells this from his personal experience:

"Some years ago I got up one morning intending to have my hair cut in preparation for a visit to London, and the first letter I opened made it clear I need not go to London. So I decided to put the haircut off too.

"But then there began the most unaccountable little nagging in my mind, almost like a voice saying, "Get it cut all the same. Go and get it cut." In the end I could stand it no longer. I went. Now my barber at that time was a fellow Christian and a man of many troubles whom my brother and I had sometimes been able to help. The moment I opened his shop door he said, "Oh, I was praying you might come today." And in fact if I had come a day or so later I should have been of no use to him. It awed me. It awes me still"

Keep A Record

Over a year ago I discovered a prayer-list I had used about five years earlier. It started in the spring of 1989, but had no ending date. It was interesting to analyze. There were unconverted people, and folks with cancer; those addicted to smoking, and others needing renewal in Christian service. Some needed to establish loving personal relationships. A home needed to be sold--but neither too soon nor too late. There were problems related to family matters and to health. There were people with troubles at church and at work. And looking back five years later, what about answers? God had answered YES 27 times and NO eleven times. (That's YES 71% of the time, for those who are statistically minded.) In other cases I still do not know what happened. No doubt some of them God answered yes also. Many times He answered in "natural" ways, but sometimes quite dramatically. He does hear. He loves to answer. He responds wisely and in love.

EXPECTANT PRAYING

Gordon R. Linscott, 1963

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

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

Autopsy of the Prayer Meeting

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

The present condition of the prayer meeting in most churches is a fair indication that many who believe in "church" have little confidence in a prayer-answering God. A few still continue to pray on, but even among these few we do not hear many shining testimonies of answered prayer. In the prayer meeting themselves there is little air of expectancy. As A. W. Tozer wrote some months ago, "When Christians meet, they do not expect anything unusual to happen; consequently only the usual happens, and that usual is as predictable as the setting of the sun . . . Christian expectation in the average church follows the program, not the promises. Prevailing spiritual conditions, however low, are accepted as inevitable." Topics for prayer may rise but little above the mundane needs of the congregation, and

the prayers are frequently more wishful than authoritative. Surely all this is painfully familiar to most of us. But it need not be so; prayer can be new and powerful.

A City Without Crime

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

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

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

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

DIVINE "COINCIDENCES"

Sandra Seitsinger, Dallas

Over the years, we've had many answers to prayer. Since I'm sure your space would be limited, I'd like to mention only two of the more "spectacular" answers to prayer.

About five years ago, I lost my job. From a human view, this was a "major disaster": My daughter had three semesters of college left with no regular job, I was past 50 and "unhireable" (in spite of age discrimination laws), the department manager's "brag" was that no one ever received unemployment from that company, etc. The Lord took care of us, using the following ways:

1. My daughter got a job in one of the hospitals for the summer between her Junior and Senior years. This was a job that formerly had not been open to students. She was also able to work school holidays, during her Senior year.

2. I received unemployment. I did not use all I was eligible for.

3. I was asked to take a temporary job, to last 6 weeks maximum. It lasted nearly 18 months, with a few gaps of two to four weeks in which I received unemployment.

4. This temporary job helped me get the job I have now.

5. I received \$1700.00 retirement benefits from the job I lost.

There are many details that have not been mentioned that underlined God's answers to prayers in this "disaster."

About 25 years ago, we were taking furniture from Ohio to Colorado. We were pulling a trailer behind a station wagon that averaged less than 12 miles to a gallon under normal circumstances. In Kansas, we ran low on gas late our last evening before we were to reach home. In those days, service stations closed around six in small towns or away from Interstates. We drove more than 250 miles AFTER the gauge registered empty. (Yes, the gauge was working. Even if it weren't, we averaged close to 45 miles per gallon on that last tank of gas.) After stopping for the night, we finally reached a gas station, and THEN ran out of gas, coasting to the pump. It was a station that didn't take credit cards of any kind, so we scraped up enough cash for three gallons of gas--still 80 miles from home. The Lord got us home (more than 25 miles to a gallon this time), with enough gas to return the trailer and reach a station that would take our credit card.

I get excited, and thankful all over again just remembering how *gracious* and *caring* and *merciful* the Lord has been to us.

Call on me in the time of trouble.

*I will deliver you,
and you will honor me.*

-Psalm 50:15

GOD ANSWERS SPECIFIC, UNITED PRAYER

Lavern Houtz, 1965

"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 18:19)

Through the years this scripture has become more and more precious to me, especially since my greatest experiences of God's promises have been in connection with that work of the Lord nearest my heart--Southeastern Christian College.

My first serious acquaintance with this scripture was made in the summer of 1943, when I myself was a student in a Christian college. As a student, I was greatly impressed by my Christian teachers, and especially the vast influence for good they had in touching the lives of so many young people.

Most inspiring among our teachers was Brother J.N. Armstrong, who continually emphasized to us, both through word and deed, Matthew 6:33. His students were taught to seek first Christ's will and then implicitly trust the Lord to bless us as we walked in that will. Such teaching and example inspired me to aspire to the field of Christian education.

I confided this desire in the summer of 1943 to a friend, the late Mrs. J.D. Allen. Contingent with this, I expressed a dream of a college in which the prophetic scriptures, as well as others, could be studied and taught, and the hope of the premillennial coming of the Lord could become as dear to the hearts of others as it was to us.

At this point Sister Allen confronted me with Matthew 18:19, asking me if I believed it. Upon receiving my assent, she proposed that we band together on this promise as a prayer-team to pray for a specific location and a specific faculty for the college. We prayed that the college might be started in Louisville that our students might have the advantage of Brother R.H. Boll's Bible classes. We prayed that, besides myself, Dennis and Winston Allen, Miss Mona Belle Campbell, and Dale Jorgenson might be on the faculty.

In the summer of 1944 I received an invitation to teach in Portland Christian School. Viewing this invitation as God's initial answer to my prayers, I accepted. Soon after the opening of school, the PCS Alumni Association began promoting the erection of a new school building. In October, 1944, Brother Robert Boyd held a meeting at the Highland Church. While in Louisville he attended an area

preacher's meeting in which he suggested that a junior college be included in Portland's expansion program.

Many thrilling details could be related, but suffice it to say that in 1949 our college opened in Louisville, and Dennis and Winston Allen, Mona Belle Campbell and I were among the charter members of the faculty. Dale Jorgenson joined us at the beginning of the second term. Thus God granted specific answers to specific prayer.

Later I was thrilled to learn that others also had been praying for the establishment of the college while it was yet but a private dream in our individual minds and hearts. Brothers Willis H. Allen and John Adams in Florida had so banded together to pray in 1943. Brothers N. Wilson Burks and H.N. Rutherford had even earlier so prayed. Perhaps there were others of whom I am yet unaware. Surely God was putting His will in the minds and hearts of his people that this great work might be wrought of Him as an answer to prayer!

Such has been the continued experience of Southeastern Christian College. Just as thrilling an account can be given concerning the acquisition of the Winchester campus, its subsequent renovation and equipping and most recently the college's regional accreditation.

The going has not been easy. Satan has certainly made felt his opposition to the work, and God in his wisdom had allowed us to face many emergencies. We have not always understood the reason behind these trials, but perhaps God has chosen this means of strengthening our faith and character that we may be prepared for greater things for him. In all our emergencies God has sustained us, and to him we give our praise.

[From SCC News, 1965. Though S.C.C. closed in 1980, God used its 30+ years of ministry to equip many young people with a Bible-based education. Many Christian homes resulted, and many devoted workers for the Lord too.]

"Where Are Our Prayer Warriors?"

I once spoke with Dr. Paul Y. Cho, South Korean founder and minister of the world's largest church (over 600,000 members). Dr. Cho made an accurate critique of American churches when he said, "You people love to sing. You can sing all day and all night, but you cannot pray for even five minutes." He added, "I pray for my church three hours every day. Our members fast and pray every Friday. We believe God answers our prayers."

Where among us do such leaders exist? Where are such members? Who are our prayer warriors?

--Stephen Meeks in *21st Century Christian Magazine*

GOD MOVES IN REMARKABLE WAYS

Instances Selected by Homer Duncan

I had forgotten the exact details of the following account and wrote to Dr. John F. Walvoord. He sent me the following information.

"There are numerous answers to prayer in the history of Dallas Seminary. I recall when I was a student, on one occasion Dr. Chafer came into chapel and asked the student body to pray for a gift of \$3,000 which they very much needed. When he returned after chapel to the business office, a letter mailed three days before and containing a check for \$3,000 had just arrived from Detroit, Michigan.

"The prayer meeting you refer to with Dr. Ironside was one of the memorable points in the history of the Seminary. In the early years they had a great deal of difficulty financially, and they decided to close the school and announce it on commencement day if they did not receive at least \$10,000 by 9:00 A.M. on the morning before commencement.

"Nothing seemed to happen, and they assembled in Dr. Chafer's office before 9:00 A.M. on that day. At 8:45 A.M. a special delivery, registered letter arrived containing a \$10,000 government bond. It was from an uncle of Dr. Charles Ryrle who lived in Illinois. He testified he had been disturbed about the financial needs of Dallas Seminary for some time and finally woke up in the night and promised the Lord he would send the bond as soon as he got to the office, which he did. It seems that on the same day he mailed the bond, Dr. Chafer woke up at the same time in the morning as the person was directed by the Lord to give the money, and was moved to prayer for our financial situation. At the same hour in the morning several students were awakened and inspired to pray. Dr. William Anderson who was vice president and pastor of the First Presbyterian Church also testified that he woke up at the same hour and was moved to pray.

"It was of course a very memorable answer to prayer because apart from the \$10,000 gift Dallas Seminary would not be in existence today. As far as I know, these are the true facts about these two particular instances."

A Broken-down Bus and a Lone Taxi

Carl T. Knott, Jr. records the following in *"Does It Pay To Pray"*:

It was many years after George Verwer's conversion. He was racing to the airport in Kathmandu, Nepal to catch a flight to London. When he jumped out of the taxi, he left his shoulder bag in the trunk. As the plane took off, he remembered that the bag contained his Bible and some very important files. So he shot up a prayer to God, asking that somehow the bag be recovered. It wasn't likely, considering the number of taxis, and the dishonesty of many of the cabbies.

The next day Ron Penny, one of George's colleagues, boarded a dilapidated bus in Kathmandu for India. After a few miles the bus broke down and was given first aid. A few more miles and it quit again. Helpful souls administered some baling wire. When it broke down the third time, Ron Penny correctly concluded that he would never get to India at that speed.

He persuaded two other missionaries to return to Kathmandu, Ron with one tote bag and the missionaries with two large suitcases. They finally hitched a ride on a large gravel truck. However, it terminated its journey on the outskirts of the city, a long way from where they wanted to go.

Right where the truck stopped was one lone taxi. Had Ron been alone, he would not have opened the trunk of the cab, but because of the other missionaries' suitcases, he had to. There was George's shoulder bag in the floor of the trunk.

How wonderfully the Lord works. A long, involved series of events had led up to the recovery of the bag.

Does it pay to pray? The record speaks for itself.

A One-in-a-Million Encounter

This account of answered prayer was taken from *Daily Bread*, Radio Bible Class:

While Josh McDowell was attending seminary in California, his father went Home to be with the Lord. His mother had died years earlier, but Josh was not sure of her salvation. He became depressed thinking that she might be lost. Was she a Christian or not? The thought obsessed him. "Lord," he prayed, "somehow give me the answer so I can get back to normal. I've just got to know." It seemed like an impossible request.

Two days later, Josh drove out to the ocean. He walked to the end of a pier to be alone. There sat an old woman in a lawnchair fishing. "Where's your home originally?" she asked. "Michigan--Union City," Josh replied. "Nobody's heard of it. I tell people it's a suburb of--" "Battle Creek," interrupted the woman. "I had a cousin from there. Did you know the McDowell family?" Stunned, Josh responded, "Yes, I'm Josh McDowell!" "I can't believe it," said the woman. "I'm a cousin to your mother." "Do you remember anything at all about my mother's spiritual life?" asked Josh. "Why sure--your mom and I were just girls--teenagers--when a tent revival came to town. It was the fourth night--we both went forward to accept Christ." "Praise God!" shouted Josh, startling the surrounding fishermen.

If we are obedient to God, He delights to give us what we ask when it is in His will. Let's never underestimate God's desire to respond to our prayers. A surprise answer may be just around the corner.

If you get definite with God,
He'll get definite with you.

AskSearchKnock

Even though you're evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. So how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

Luke 11:9,13; God's Word (a new translation)

Of Course Prayer is More Than Asking

"We utter our adorations, confessions, thanksgivings, petitions, and our unconditional submission to the will, authority, wisdom and goodness . . . and love of him 'who is, and was, and evermore shall be!' Thus our spirits ascend to the heavens and commune with God. This is the delightful fellowship which the *Christian indeed* has with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ; 'praying *always*, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit,' in the closet, by the way, in the field, morning, noon, evening, he prays 'without ceasing.'

"This is the spirit of the spirit of true religion. Without communication with God, there is nothing gained by faith or hope, by promises or commands, by professions, confessions or institution. This is the . . . holy of holies, the inmost temple of religion."

--Alexander Campbell

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF ANSWERED PRAYERS

Does God really hear and answer your prayers? Take a look at God's dealings with George Mueller, a man who said, "I have joyfully dedicated my whole life to the object of showing how much may be accomplished by prayer and faith."

One of the main works of his life was the establishment of a large orphanage at Bristol, England. In sixty-four years from the outset of this work, Mr. Mueller cared for 10,024 orphans; established seven day schools which 81,501 children attended; founded twelve Sunday schools which instructed a total of 32,944 children; and aided twenty-five Sunday schools in England and Wales. He contributed large sums of money to foreign mission work, distributed 1,989,266 Bibles and parts thereof, circulated 3,101,338 books and tracts, and traveled in forty-two countries preaching the Gospel to three millions of hearers. In all he received from and gave back to God \$7,500,000, at no time asking any one for so much as a penny.

He was a man who knew by experience what it is for God to "give us this day our daily bread." He remarked, "From August, 1838, to April, 1849, . . . we had day by day, almost without interruption, to look to Him for our daily supplies, and for a great part of the time, from meal to meal."

Materials were not the only thing this man of God received in prayer's answers. He made this statement. "Thousands of souls have been saved in answer to my prayers."

What was the secret of Mueller's power with God? He took time to be alone with God in prayer, meditation and Bible study. He would study the Bible on his knees. He spent hours every day on his knees in prayer. He said, "I live in the spirit of prayer. I pray as I walk, when I lie down and when I rise. And the answers are always coming. Tens of thousands of times have my prayers been answered. When once I am persuaded a thing is right, I go on praying for it until the end comes. I never give up!"

Conditions of prevailing prayer which were always before his mind were:

1. *Entire dependence upon the merits and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ*, as the only ground of any claim for blessing. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13, 14).

2. *Separation from all known sin.* "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18).

3. *Faith in God's word of promise.* "But without faith it is impossible to please him: . . . he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6).

4. *Asking in accordance with His will.* Our motives must be godly. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3).

5. *Impunity in supplication.* There must be waiting on God and waiting for God. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them" (Luke 18:7).

729 Conversions

From George Mueller's Journal

The spiritual condition of the Orphans generally gave us great sorrow of heart, because there were so few among them who were in earnest about their souls, and resting on the atoning death of the Lord Jesus for salvation.

This our sorrow led us to lay it on the whole staff of assistants, matron and teachers, to seek earnestly the Lord's blessing on the souls of the children. This was done in our united prayer meetings, and in secret also. In answer to these, our secret and united prayers, in the year 1872, there were more believers by far among the Orphans than ever.

On January 8th the Lord began to work among them. In the New Orphan House No. 3, it showed itself least, till it pleased the Lord to lay His hand heavily on that house by the small-pox. From that time the working of the Holy Spirit was felt in that house also, particularly in one department. At the end of July, 1872, I received the statements of all the matrons and teachers in the five houses, who reported to me that they had good reason to believe that **729 of the Orphans** then under our care, were believers in the Lord Jesus.

This number of believing orphans is by far greater than ever we had, for which we adore and praise the Lord! See how the Lord overruled the great trial, occasioned by the small-pox, and turned it into a great blessing! See, also, how, after so low a state, which led us to prayer, earnest prayer, the working of the Holy Spirit was more manifest than ever.

A MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE

Robert K. Smith

One afternoon as we journeyed by truck through the game-infested area of equatorial East Africa, toward a tribe of people who had never yet had the true Gospel preached to them, we were halted by the tremendous downpour of a tropical rain. In the midst of the rain, and drenched to the skin, we set up camp, for we knew darkness would fall a bit earlier than usual and our party needed rest. My wife, a son born in America before we went to Africa, my little daughter born on the shore of Victoria Lake, an African helper, and I made up the party.

As we slept the rain ceased and the tropical moon came out in all its glory. There is no difficulty to see at long distances distinctly by moon light. I've often seen Victoria Lake at a distance of sixty miles by moonlight. Too, one can read print as fine as in one's Bible. About fifteen minutes before midnight we were suddenly awakened by a strange motion of the ground and tent. It seemed to be rising and lowering under us, and in perfect rhythm with this was a swish, swish sort of sound as though some large animal was walking through the tall, wet elephant grass which was all about us. We knew that the rhinoceros were very numerous in this area as well as were elephants and lions, and I supposed that a large rhino was approaching our tent. Knowing that it might pass right through our tent and kill us all, I slipped quietly from my cot, took my rifle in my hand and slipped just as quietly through the flaps of our tent.

Seeing that there was nothing directly in front I peeked around the corner, all the time with a finger on the trigger of my rifle, expecting to see the large brute near at hand. But to my amazement just twenty-three normal steps away stood fifteen elephants. They had been traveling single file, head to tail. Seeing our camp they had stopped to look it over. They undoubtedly saw me, even though I had come into the scene as quietly and as cautiously as I could, for immediately their trunks went into the air in a trumpet, as is customary before a stampede of these brutes. My first thought was to fire but good judgment checked me, for I knew that if I were to fire every shot in the magazine there would yet be enough of them left to utterly destroy our camp.

I did not fire, but settled back a bit and in so doing I unintentionally bumped the table upon which were stacked our cooking and eating utensils of tin. To my horror, the table tipped over spilling the pans with a clatter. I thought for the moment that all was ended for us but, to my amazement, they all trumpeted again, threw their trunks

down, their heads back into line, and away they marched in double quick time. They were an angry bunch of elephants as they went on down the way pushing over trees, breaking limbs off trees, and rolling rocks down the hillside.

We went on into the country of the tribe toward which we were headed. One day an ivory hunter came into our camp, and I told him of our experience. He said, "Smith, you did the only known thing that will frighten away elephants. Beat on a pan or piece of tin and they will always run. Shoot at them and they will always charge." I didn't know that fact that night, but God did; and He caused me to dump all the tin in the camp on the ground. Some unbelieving or unknowing one might say that it was merely coincidental. But God wanted this experience for His glory.

We had rejoiced over this marvelous deliverance while we were in Africa, but God let us go home to get the better half of the story. After speaking on one occasion, shortly after our return to the homeland, the lady who was entertaining us asked if we had had any unusual experiences while in Africa. We smiled, for we had had several. She then related an experience of hers when she was washing windows in her home. God spoke to her and called her to pray for us over there. She hesitated, as one so often does, feeling that her duties were so pressing and her work very important. But God showed her that we were in desperate circumstances and in grave danger. She knelt down by the window where she was and poured out her heart to God asking Him to spare our lives and deliver us from this danger. God lifted her burden.

This experience was so unusual with her that she wrote down the time on her calendar, and now she brought it before us. As we checked it with our own diary, taking into account nine hours difference between the time here and the time over there, we were amazed to find that this lady was on her knees interceding for our deliverance while the elephants stood outside our tent. She was twelve thousand miles away from us, but close enough to God to be used in our behalf.

Friends, God depends on us in intercession to pray down conviction on the sinner, to strengthen the weak knees, encourage the faint-hearted, and bear one another's burdens. God uses us, from our nearest neighbor to the far ends of the globe. Let us get into and stay in the place where He can bless us and use us as instruments for the administration of His marvelous grace. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name. ask . . ."

--Call to Prayer

MUSING AMID THE GARBAGE

John White

There's been a dreadful mistake and I must do something about it.

Let me explain. I am a piece of paper, just the shabby kind people write prayer letters on.

Right now I'm propped up against an old apple core at the bottom of a wastepaper basket. A broken light bulb sits forlornly beside me.

What am I doing here? Brother, I wish I knew! After they put me through the machine they told me I was a little prayer letter. I was covered with words about a couple of missionaries in some place with an unpronounceable name in a country miles away.

I don't remember all that happened after that. For a while I nearly suffocated under a growing pile of letters. Later on, without so much as a glance, nimble fingers creased me, folded me and tucked me into an envelope. Thereafter I lost track. I went through at least one other machine and felt myself flung here and there.

Suffer? Sure I suffered. But in my mind I pictured all that was going to happen when I reached the Christian family I was being sent to. Eager fingers will pull me out of the envelope. Keen eyes would devour the words that covered me. Perhaps someone would say, "Why don't we pray for them right now?" Or maybe they'd take a pen and underline parts of me. Perhaps I would go to prayer meeting and be read aloud.

I reached my destination in the company of a mail order catalog. They opened us both at the same time. Everyone gathered around the *catalog*.

"Hey Chuck, just look at that!"

"Here, leggo! I'm looking at this!"

"Just a sec, I want to check the price of that transistor radio in here."

They did read me (eventually), but it was too soon after the catalog. All of them seemed to be lovingly nursing one of its pictures in their minds. They prayed at lunchtime, "Undertake for Freda and Bud Smith in Copacabamba, and use them to win souls . . ." That was all. Better than nothing, I suppose, but I could see I hadn't re-

ally stirred them up. I couldn't blame them, I guess; what chance did I have against a catalog?

But I've been thinking. There must be reasons why Christians with a real interest in missionary work forget to use the prayer letters missionaries send. Here are several possibilities:

Undramatic

Maybe the prayer letter was dull. Dull, that is, to the person who read it. But not to the missionary who wrote it. It is surprising how easily his yearnings and heartaches can get fouled up in the typewriter keys and never reach the paper.

Ask God to remove the scales from your eyes so that you can see the drama behind the dullest prayer letter. There's nothing dull about a roaring lion, or the fact that hell's legions have sworn to wrestle against, tempt, deceive and mock the missionary and send him home in defeat. And what could be dull about the dynamic spiritual message released. Satan dreads it and does all he can to prevent the missionary from getting the message out.

Vague

Maybe the letter contained nothing concrete for you to pray about. But no matter how indefinite the letter was, there are always some things you can pray about.

You can pray for the missionary's personal fellowship with God. If this fellowship isn't right his whole work will be affected. Missionaries sin. They may not always sin big sins (usually about the same size as their prayer partners'), but they're big enough to affect their relationship with God unless the sins are confessed and dealt with. Pray for this relationship.

You can also pray for the missionary's fellowship with other Christians, both missionaries and national Christians. Quarrels, divisions, jealousy and suspicion play havoc with fellowship on the mission field just as they do at home. When this happens the demons seem to whisper to the unbelievers, "See how these Christians hate one another!"

You can pray that the missionary will be able to rejoice in all circumstances. It's more important that the missionary be joyfully victorious when he is ill, than that he have good health. It is more important that he be content with what he has than that his material needs be met.

Of course, the prayer partner is a hypocrite if he prays, "Lord, help Bud and Freda to rejoice even if the supplies are running low," when the prayer partner himself is living for money and things. God doesn't have two standards.

Money Centered

The prayer letter may read more like a request for funds rather than for prayer. Perhaps it says, "We need \$500 for transportation. Please pray with us that God will provide it," when all the time the missionary was secretly hoping and expecting the prayer partners would give as well as pray.

It may not have been a hint though it looked like one. Even if it was, there is a simple rule for dealing with hints that please God and help missionaries. Don't take the hint, but do pray. God knows how necessary that transportation is and how He wants to supply it. He'll let you know what to do about it. We can ignore a missionary's hints, but we mustn't ignore the Holy Spirit's hints.

On The Other Hand

Maybe the letter was fine, but the prayer partner just didn't have the burden to pray. This is, perhaps, the most common problem of all. Most Christians agree that they all want to pray and will feel guilty if they don't. This is good, except that such prayers are mechanical parrot-talk, and parrot-talk even when uttered in a kneeling position, achieves nothing.

When Christians don't feel like praying, they need the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In particular let them pray, "Lord, please make heavenly realities more real than earthly realities." When the invisible becomes more real than the visible, you won't need to work up a praying mood.

A famous Norwegian prayer warrior once said, "To pray is to let Jesus come into our hearts It's not our prayers that move Jesus, it's Jesus who moves us to pray."

Real prayer results when a man lets God have His way in his heart. It will begin when the readers of the prayer letters have an open Bible in front of them and say, "Lord, I don't feel any burden for Freda and Bud just now. But I know that You are concerned, and I want to do Your will. I open my heart to You."

I haven't mentioned time, because I don't believe that time is a problem. Nobody has time for everything, but everyone has time for the absolutely essential things (like watching television). Everything depends on what you regard as absolutely essential.

I'm thinking right now of all my fellow prayer letters. Some of them are not yet born. Others are still in the press; yet others are spreading across the continent by mail.

But some, I'm sure, are in homes and dormitories. They are lying between the covers of Bibles and the pages of notebooks; they're stuffed with a wad of papers in a letter rack.

A sense of desolation grips me as I stare up the steep sides of my wastebasket prison. Maybe I was destined to live out my life in company with an apple core and a broken light bulb. But I don't think so. Honestly, I believe I was meant for better things.

Sincerely Yours,

An Unused Prayer Letter

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THE USE TO BE MADE OF OUR FAULTS

Jean Nicolas Grou

This is a very important point in spiritual life; God intends even our faults to set forward the sanctification of our souls, and it rests with our souls whether they do so or not. (Not infrequently we suffer less real injury from a fault itself than from the way in which we deal with it.)

I am not now speaking of people who give themselves grudgingly to God and so commit numberless deliberate faults which can in no way be turned to good account. The souls to which I refer are those who in spite of all their resolutions against sin, are continually committing faults through impetuosity, weakness or inadvertence. Such people are wont to be greatly surprised and troubled at their faults; they give way to false shame and become fretful and disheartened. But these are so many signs of self-love, more hurtful to the soul than the original fault.

You are surprised at you imperfections--why? I should infer that your self-knowledge is small. Surely you might rather be astonished that you do not fall into more frequent and more grievous faults, and thank God for His upholding grace. You are worried when you de-

fect a fault, you lose your inward peace, and your disturbance lasts hours or days, as the case may be. This is not right. You should never allow yourself to be disturbed but when fallen you should rise up quietly and turn with a loving heart to God for forgiveness.

The worst evil, however, is when we grow vexed at our faults; as Francois de Sales says, "We are angry because we are angry; impatient at having shown impatience. But this is sorry work, and if you will be honest with yourself you will see that is altogether pride; you are mortified to find yourself weaker, less holy than you fancied yourself to be; perhaps too your aim was self-satisfaction, you wanted to be able to congratulate yourself on having spent a day or week free from faults. Then you grow discouraged, you relax your devotional exercises and begin to look upon perfection as unattainable."

"What is the use of such perpetual self-restraint and watchfulness?" you ask. "What good does all my recollection and mortification do me, if none of my faults are corrected and I grow no better?"

This is nothing more or less than a snare of the devil, and if you would escape it you must resolve not to be disheartened; but even if you were to fall a hundred times a day, determine to rise up each time, and go onwards. What will it matter though you have fallen in the way if you find your journey's end safely at last? God will forgive the falls: they often are caused by undue haste, which prevents us from taking fitting precautions, or with timid souls from a perpetual looking around for imaginary dangers which causes them to stumble.

Perhaps the holiest men are not always those who commit fewest faults, but those who have most courage, most love and the most free spirit; those who make the heartiest efforts for conquering self, and who are not afraid of a stumble, even of a fall, so long as their progress is certain. St. Paul says that "all things work together for good to them that love God"; and we may be sure that even their faults are included. God permits them to cure our vain presumption and to teach us our true measure. It was so with David. "It is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I may learn thy statutes." Peter fell before he learned to know his own weakness. Paul remained humble amid triumphs granted to his eloquence. Remembering that he had been "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," he proclaimed himself the "chief of sinners" bearing a "thorn in the flesh"--all his days, "lest I should be exalted above measure."

Who can doubt that in like manner God will help us to use our daily faults for greater sanctification? All the masters of the spiritual life have observed that God permits the holiest men to retain certain

defects, never wholly overcome, in order to teach them how weak they are without His grace, to check any pride because of His gifts, to destroy the lurking remains of vanity which beset the soul, to keep up constant watchfulness, dependence on God and unfailing prayer. The little child who falls as he is learning to walk clasps tighter hold of his mother after he has hurt himself.

Then, too, our faults sometimes lead to opportunities of good which would not else have arisen. Some outbreak of temper or harshness or impatience leads you to humble yourself in reparation. The fault was sudden and not premeditated; the reparation is deliberate and hearty, though it cost you no small effort. Hence it was more acceptable to God than the fault was displeasing.

Again, He sometimes veils real holiness under external imperfections, which readily meet the eye of our neighbor, so as to prevent the praise of men from tarnishing true humility. God is a mighty Master of souls, be it ours to let Him work His way in us. By all means let it be your great object never to offend Him in anything, but when you have committed a fault, strive to be sorry, not for your mortified pride but because you have displeased Him; accept all inevitable humiliation, ask God to turn it to His glory, and you will make greater progress in holiness than by the most precise and outwardly well regulated life if it leads to self-love.

If God requires anything of us we have no right to draw back under the pretext that we are liable to commit some fault in obeying. It is better to obey imperfectly than not at all. Perhaps you avoid the society of certain persons because they make you cross or impatient. How are you to attain self-control if you shun all occasions of practicing it? Is not such self-choosing a greater fault than those in which you fear to fall? Aim at a steady mind to do right, go wherever duty calls you, and believe firmly that God is an indulgent Father and will forgive the faults which take our weakness by surprise in spite of our sincere desire to please Him.

Revival, Church History and Prayer

The history of the Church of Jesus Christ on earth has been largely a history of revivals. When you read many of the Church histories that have been written the impression that you naturally get is, that the history of the Church of Jesus Christ here on earth has been largely a history of misunderstandings, disputes, doctrinal differences and bitter conflicts. But if you will study the history of the *living* Church, you will find it has been very largely a history of revivals. Humanly speaking, the Church owes its very existence today to revivals.

Time and time again the Church has seemed to be on the verge of utter shipwreck; but just then God has sent a great revival and saved it. And if you will study the history of revivals you will find that every real revival in the Church has been the child of prayer. There have been revivals without much preaching; there have been revivals with absolutely no organization; but there has never been a mighty revival without mighty praying.

—R.A. Torrey

* * * * *

Showers of Blessing

In recent months the Lord has been stirring and reviving believers in various colleges across the U.S. From Texas to Massachusetts, in Illinois, Kentucky and Louisiana come well-authenticated reports of contrition, repentance and confession of sin. "The schools say students are repenting of pride, lust, materialism, bitterness and racism. Southwestern President Ken Hemphill called the awakening 'a genuine moving of God and the beginning of authentic spiritual revival,'" according to *Moody* magazine.

* * * * *

Christianity Today comments, "A growing number of schools have reported impromptu meetings where students have openly confessed sins, cried, and prayed for one another while discarding items such as pornographic magazines, illegal drugs, compact disks, tobacco, romance novels, and credit cards. So far, meetings exhibit no signs of orchestration or planning There was not a display of emotional exuberance or sensational demonstration, but the reverent, quiet moving of God's Spirit."

"Some renewal meetings have been significant in size and scope. Attendance numbered 900 at Wheaton College's initial March 19

gathering, which lasted more than 12 hours. Students conducted nightly meetings for the next four days, culminating in an audience of 1500. [A professor of evangelism commented,] 'This bears all the marks of being a deep and genuine work of God.'

[May 15, 1995 Christianity Today]

Friends, let us search our hearts, seek God with contrition, thank Him for what He is doing, and pray that revival may spread. We need a great awakening; let's pray for it! --AVW

"Pray One for Another"

VOICES from the FIELDS

Alex Paris PHY 0201 Venezuela, P. O. Box 02-8537

[Alex is helping tribal missionaries and the school for their children, as a helper/handiman for a year. He is from the Highway Church in Pekin, IN. Here are a few excerpts from his letters home.]

10/9/94--This week I have worked for a couple of days wiring the tractor shed. It will be nice to have lights down there. I will mow grass tomorrow.

10/23--Today I had a restful day but tomorrow we will make up for it. The supply boat has come in with 400+ bags of cement and propane gas bottles which weigh around 150 lbs., and some 55-gallon drums of fuel. So I will for sure wear my back brace.

12/11--Hey, guess what? I'm growing a beard! Joe Coe grew his this past spring and said it helped to keep the gnats off his face. Well, I didn't think it was worth it, seeing how hot it is, but I think the gnats have convinced me otherwise.

1/17/95--A church group from Wisconsin came down in November and we worked on the gym. The slab for the gym is all poured now, praise God! Kent wore his bee suit to keep the gnats off. It worked, but was too hot for me and you couldn't see well through it. Temperatures have been 120 degrees in the shade. You can't work for very long at a time, have to take frequent rest breaks and be sure to drink a lot.

To All Friends: Thank you for your many prayers. Your prayers for safety have been answered so far. I haven't even gotten a scratch or serious illness.

[Editor's Note: Such letters provide us with clues for specific, practical requests when praying for our missionaries. So does the following.]

Corinne Johnson, Caixa Postal, 1616, Maputo, Mozambique, April 10, 1995

These months of 1995 have been very full, encouraging, and energy consuming. Our annual conference was January 10-15 with 14 delegates traveling by bus to reach Maputo. This was a first time event as in the past the roads were dangerous. Still the trip was long and hard over the terrible roads (some took 3 or 4 days), but all rejoiced at the arrival and fellowship. The studies and instruction of the able leaders gave the whole group of 40 students new vision and ideas to carry to their schools. Three places will be working and leading Bible studies without an advisor this year.

Our visiting leaders, Dr. Ross Douglas and Marcos Costa, stayed on after our conference and helped us here in the town for ten more days. Their experience in Brasil gave new outlook and views to our university students. I am hoping the discussions of Marcos about the student work in Piaui will bear fruit here. He stressed the activities they planned and carried out without funds from the outside

In the middle of February, I received a Fax of a visitor coming for a month in March. The rush was on to get the necessary visa, and here that means days and many trips back to that department. Then Eduardo Kitoko came and livened our days. His time here was very helpful in visiting different schools, leaders and students. In fact, several places asked if Kitoko would give some lectures when he returned. He stayed very busy these days here and we had some rewarding discussions on future work and programs. The different departments are considering him for the staff position here in Mozambique. He is from Zaire, studied in Angola three years, and for eight years has been studying and teaching in Brasil. He finishes his Masters in Old Testament Studies (Sao Paulo) in June and will return to Zaire for his wedding. He will be available to come here in August. Please pray with us about this important matter.

My time here depends on so many events, but I am planning to come home the end of August for a visit. I may need to return here to finish some projects. I do not plan to travel around. The Lord is working here in Mozambique and we do see His handiwork. People do move slowly at times and I want to rush them on. In my daily readings, I am reminded to have patience and listen. In all the unrest, struggle, hunger, and corruption around us, we do need to listen to His voice to guide our daily steps.

THE LOGIC OF THE BIBLE

Paul S. Knecht
5th Installment

The first Thessalonian letter is an encouragement to stand firm in the face of affliction. Paul points forward in every chapter to the return of Christ. It is note worthy that these Christians were so oriented to the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom that they supposed that those who died had missed out! The gospel Paul preached was not death-and-heaven oriented. Rather in the mainstream of Old Testament expectation, he pointed to the imminent return of the Christ and His reign over the nations (Note "Kingdom" in Col. 4:11b; 2 Thes. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:12;4:1). Because of this, Paul is able to urge not just that they hold on under affliction, but that they more vigorously pursue their commitment to Christ.

The second letter finds the Thessalonians growing spiritually though still suffering, and now troubled by false information about "the day of the Lord." This day, forewarned of by the prophets as "the great and terrible day" of divine retribution, is to occur only after Satan's ascendancy in human affairs has reached its zenith. The Thessalonians had just been informed by someone that that day was "already present" and were naturally quite distressed. Paul reminds them of his earlier teaching on this subject, reviews the correct sequence of events leading up to the Day of the Lord, and sets their minds at ease on the matter. Then he admonishes them to make their lives exemplary in everyday affairs including the business of earning a living.

Paul sent his first letter to Timothy to show "how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God . . . until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,; which in its own times he shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords..."

Paul's second letter was written as his own ministry was drawing rapidly to a close, and he saw increasing adversity ahead for the gospel. He identifies specific sources of difficulty charging Timothy with a great sense of urgency to preach the word.

Having left Titus in Crete to complete the organization of the church there and protect it through its infancy, Paul writes follow-up instructions for the accomplishment of that task.

Philemon is a small personal letter which exemplifies the Christian response to a social problem. The runaway slave, converted to

Christ by Paul, is sent back to his master whom Paul had earlier won to Christ -- no longer as a slave but as a Christian brother.

The subject of Hebrews is the priesthood of Christ and we are driven quickly back to the Old Testament as it becomes clear that Israel's prescribed instruction for worship was deeply symbolic of spiritual truth and reality. The Old Testament promise of the regal aspect of Messiah is bold and straightforward, in language readily understood. But the priestly ministry of Christ is conveyed for the most part in the symbolism of temple worship, a language understandable only as God made it so to the penitent heart. As pointed out before, some were penitent and did understand.

While the greater part of most of the epistles is given to practical implications of belief in the gospel, it is James who forces the issue that unless one truly acts on those implications, his claim to believing is of no value. James' emphasis on "works" may seem to be in conflict with the doctrine of justification by faith but the problem is only a semantic one. We can readily distinguish between two kinds of works: works of the law and works of faith. "Works of the Law" refers to keeping the commandments given through Moses, each of which faithfully kept contributes to one's moral stature. But as James makes clear, to fail even on a single point leaves one a lawbreaker, guilty and punishable before God. The law was God's answer to man's supposition that he is independently adequate to God's moral requirement, and it was intended to bring man to his senses by showing up his failures. Some, like David, got the message and came to God for mercy, establishing a new relationship of dependence and trust. This relationship is effected and demonstrated by works of faith which contribute nothing to the justification of a man as they have no inherent merit. Sometimes they appear utterly foolish except that God instructed they be done. Their value lies exclusively in the fact that they demonstrate a proper attitude toward God in response to which God goes to work for man. The Bible offers innumerable examples of such works of faith. Peter's reluctant compliance with Jesus' instruction to cast his net on the other side of the boat is one example. *God* worked, and the net was filled with fish.

Peter's first letter is addressed to Christians who have been uprooted and scattered and who because of their nonparticipation in the idolatry and excesses of their neighbors, face ostracism and persecution. Peter reinforces their call to holiness, and gives them the Christian strategy for survival: accept abuse patiently and let your life-style compel your neighbors to glorify God. Elders are admonished to meet their responsibilities and all are encouraged to be steadfast until Christ comes again.

Peter's second letter warning against false teachers is even more strongly worded as in the face of impending execution he determines to remind these believers of the sure basis of the truths they had received. Peter was himself an eyewitness of all of Christ's ministry including the majesty and power of His second coming, a preview of which certain disciples were privileged to witness on the Mount of Transfiguration. Referring especially to this experience, Peter says we have the word of prophecy made more sure, specifically the prophecies of Christ's return and of new heavens and a new earth. And, characteristically, this outlook of hope in Christ and His Kingdom is Peter's basis for urging them on to godly living.

The first epistle of John is written to believers who need convincing reassurance of their salvation. John tells us that we can know we are saved, and he tells how we can know, e.g., "we know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren." John gives a whole set of such evidences of the transforming power of Christ in the lives of believers.

John's second letter is a very short admonition to love, and a warning against false teachers. Anyone who denies that Jesus Christ has and shall come in the flesh, John says, is a deceiver and should be refused.

John's third letter, like the second, is short and personal, commending Gaius for his good work and noting the unchristian attitude and conduct of Diotrophes. Both of these letters look forward to an impending visit.

Jude writes an exhortation "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints," cautioning against false teachers and describing them in some detail.

The last book of the Bible is an unveiling of things to come, but the unveiling is for those who have a good understanding of all that precedes it. This book of twenty-two short chapters contains some *five hundred quotations* and/or allusions from virtually every book of the Old Testament. They are all integrated into a narrative describing the end of this age, and the ushering in of the kingdom of God. Much of the language is symbolic but the symbolism is developed in the Old Testament: Jesus is the Lamb of God, the veil of the temple, etc. If books like Revelation and Hebrews are particularly difficult it is most likely because we have not taken the time to discover the Old Testament source and meaning of the terms and ideas all finally related in the grand drama that witnesses the fulfillment of God's purpose for man.

In conclusion, the N.T. letters usually open with a concentrated comprehensive review of what God is doing in the world but they are addressed to people who have understood and believed and made a commitment to the Christian gospel; and that is presumed in the writing of them. The letters then go on to treat topics of importance to the spiritual growth of young converts. We have completed a brief look at the Bible in terms of the diagram presented in the first installment (Jan.): that the theme of the O.T. is, "The Christ will come," and the theme of the N.T. is, "Jesus is that Christ"--with all of its implications. This analysis is a simplification created deliberately to identify those underlying themes around which the whole body of Christian truth may be related. No claim is made that this perception of the Bible is "the inspired truth of God," for while we hold that the Bible is inspired, all theologies are necessarily incomplete. It is the apostle Paul who reminds us that "we know in part," and "we see in a mirror darkly."

But we cannot leave the structure just yet: Hebrews and Revelation are just not the same as the other "letters." When we come to these books, it is as though we had been mining some precious mineral from a well-defined seam near the surface, which suddenly breaks through to an underlying deposit of a rare and exotic form of the treasure. Having looked at the Bible from a straightforward grammatico-historical approach, Hebrews and Revelation drive us back again to the Old Testament to discover its deep truths of allegory and symbolism. The doctrine of the atonement and God's provision for us to worship Him in spirit and in truth, the great drama of the end of the age, the "meat of the word," is hidden in the temple and its priesthood, its sacrifices and its feasts. So *under* the structure we diagrammed and discussed, there lies another structure to be explored--and who knows what else might be discovered?

The End

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ONE POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO TWO COMMON PROBLEMS

Alex V. Wilson

Common Problem #1: Several congregations lack preachers. This is a chronic difficulty. Not enough godly and gifted men are available to fill the empty pulpits of existing churches--much less reach out to start new ones.

Common Problem #2: Many congregations that have preachers expect or even demand too much from them. Too often most members want to sit back and do as little work as possible, but they sure want the preacher to do a lot of it. They are quick to criticize but slow to serve.

Praise God there are exceptions to the problems just mentioned. Most churches have the faithful few (with emphasis on the few) who do the vast majority of the work. Yet since they are few, conditions in many locations have reached crisis proportions.

The main solution must be spiritual, for that is the heart of the problems. Prayer, repentance and dedication are desperately needed because of apathy and fleshliness. Nothing else will help apart from renewed commitment to our Lord Christ. Yet while realizing that the root of our troubles is inner and spiritual, it is also true that outer, organizational matters play a part as well.

Some Examples . . . and Solutions?

I had a friend who was a preacher in Hawaii. In fact he regularly preached at four different congregations! The 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month he preached for churches A and B. The 2nd and 4th Sundays he preached for churches C and D. On 5th Sundays and also midweek meetings he rotated from place to place, I believe. This enabled him to exercise his spiritual gifts of preaching and teaching. It also made his job somewhat easier because often he could preach the same sermon at the various places. Sermon preparation time was thus less than if he preached every Sunday for the same church. (Most "laymen" don't realize how much time is required to prepare meaty, relevant messages.)

But the beauty of his situation was this: his rotating system kept the four churches from becoming overly dependent on him. They had to work too! Because someone(s) in each place had to preach every other Lord's Day, they learned to dig into God's Word for themselves and not just be passive hearers. Because Brother Kalili was present only half the time, they had to deal with at least some of the

problems and also make plans and decisions in his absence. He came around often enough to advise them and handle major problems, yet they were forced not to sit idly and say, "Oh just let the preacher handle those matters--that's his job anyway."

As they dug into the Word and also shared in leadership responsibilities, at least some of them grew and matured. Deacons, elders and more preachers too will result when folks start exercising their spiritual gifts. Faith and prayer are deepened also.

I have another friend who preaches and leads two churches in southern Kentucky. He teaches a class and preaches at church A in the country. Then he drives to church B in town and preaches for them that same morning and again at night. That helps solve Common Problem #1, filling pulpits. It also helps financially, for neither small church by itself could probably afford a regular preacher. But since he goes to both churches every week, I'm not sure it solves Common Problem #2.

We need to help spread the work around. Every disciple is called to minister in some way, though not all in the same way. But to break out of the deeply entrenched over-dependence on one man may require drastic measures! Maybe like a preacher saying, "I'll preach for you two Sundays monthly, or possibly three, but the other Lord's Day(s) I'll be preaching elsewhere."

Of course there are other possibilities. "Mutual edification" meetings is one. Regular small group meetings, ideally in homes, is another. Whether in these or in other ways, let's pray, consider and act to break the stranglehold that spectatoritis has in so many places. Let's pray for the Lord to raise up more godly and gifted preachers too. But if our churches were as strong as they ought to be "by reason of time," some of those preachers would be sent out to establish new congregations in virgin territory. Revive us, O Lord!

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

Antioch Music Camp
June 11-18

Touching Young Lives in 1995

Dates of our concerts: June 16--Fort Harrod, 12:00 Noon, June 16--Harrodsburg Community, 7:00 p.m., June 17--Borden Church of Christ, 7:00 p.m., June 18--Antioch Church of Christ, 11:00 a.m., June

18--Oakland Christian Church (Frankfort), 7:00 p.m.

Christian Youth Encampment
720 Ingallwood Park Rd.
DeRidder, LA 70634

Junior Week, (9-12 years old),
June 18-23, contact Douglas

Broyles, P.O. Box 36, Jennings, LA 70546 or 1-318-824-5966.

Junior High Week, (12-14 years old), July 9-14, contact J. C. Guilory, Jr. at P.O. Box 400, Turkey Creek, LA 70585 or 1-318-461-2768.

Senior High Week, (ages 14 and up), July 23-28, contact Earl Johnston, P.O. Box 164, Denham Springs, LA 70726 or 1-504-665-5249.

Woodland Bible Camp

1995 Schedule

May 1- June 10. . . . Workers Month
June 11-17 Junior Week #1
June 18- 24 . . . Intermediate Week #1
July 9-15 Junior Week #2
July 16-22 . . . Intermediate Week #2
July 23-29. Senior Week
August 12 . . . 41st Banquet For All
Sept. 1-4 Young Adult Retreat
Sept. 10-15. . . Senior Citizen's Week
Sept 22-24 Senior Retreat

Cost: The price of camp is \$40.00 per person. The fee is to include an insurance policy which protects each person while traveling to and from camp and covers sickness and accident during the week. Mail Registrations to : Woodland Bible Camp, Inc., 110 "B" Street N.E., Linton, IN 47441 (812) 847-9248.

Gallatin Church of Christ, TN

In the New Testament the word "modest" comes from the Greek word "Kosmos." You might recognize this as the word "kosmos" which is translated "world." The idea behind the word is harmonious arrangement, adornment.

The word is used in the New Testament in two main ways: 1) one of the qualifications of an elder (1 Tim. 3:2), that is, he is to be orderly or well behaved; 2) the way the church members should be mod-

estly and appropriately dressed. (1 Tim. 2:9)

We can conclude that the Bible calls for a well-ordered inner life that expresses itself in outward behavior. Such behavior would include being modest and appropriate in the clothes we wear. May each of us accept this admonition of scripture to both behave and dress properly. As warm weather approaches, let us not be tempted to be too informally or scantily dressed when we attend our church services.

Facts published by Open Doors

*Almost two-thirds of the world's population live in areas where preaching the gospel is restricted.

*More Christians have been martyred for their faith in the 20th century than in all of church history.

*On average, 150,000 Christians die each year as a result of persecution.

*The best way to evangelize in restricted areas is to equip and encourage the church there to do the work, standing with them in the persecution they face. They are God's Special Forces working behind the enemy lines!

*God is moving in miraculous ways in many of these areas!

Bulletin of Locust Street Church of Christ

A presentation of the Jewish Passover will be presented by Old Testament scholar Dr. William Gwaltney. The meeting will be in the Fellowship Hall. He will be dressed in the traditional attire and will bring foods prepared in the Jewish manner to demonstrate the Passover and its foretelling of Christ as the Passover sacrifice for the sins of the world. Don't miss this wonder-

ful opportunity to learn and grow in the Lord. --Richard Lewis

The Mountain View Church of Christ is 49 years old and observed Anniversary Day. Several from the Locust Street church were helpful in getting this congregation started and some present Locust Street members have worshipped there for a period of time. Our congratulations go to this sister congregation! (Paul Clark ministers there.)

Mackville Church of Christ

We all rejoiced when Stephanie Moore accepted Christ as her Savior and was baptized into Christ by her grandfather, Bro. Granville Moore. Let's all pray for and encourage Stephanie in her new life in Christ.--Harry Coultas, Mackville, KY

From Somewhere out West

"You might be interested to hear that the minister of the amill Church of Christ where we attend is teaching prophecy to a study group of "Restoration" preachers. He's trying to bring about a fresh, unbiased examination of the subject."

Encourage Some Veteran Workers

Vernon and Pauline Lawyer moved from Ky to Ind. to be near family members. They are able to get to church on Sunday mornings, but that's about all they get out. Cheer them up; drop them a line. Their new address is 508 Dodge St., Cannelton, IN 47520.

Inside-Out Christianity by Florence O. Collins

"Too often from our human vantage point we get the very heart of Christianity. Christianity is not an "outside-in" reversed education and training of a person. It is instead an "inside-out" life: Christ

living within us influences the whole person--spirit, soul and body. . ."

This book by our long-time and most cherished friend, Florence Olmstead Collins, will make a most excellent spiritual gift to yourself, a family member or friend. When you "treat" yourself you will order more copies for the same refreshment of the soul for others. It is a study of Colossians, contains 119 pages, is published by 20th-Century Christian (Nashville), & may be ordered through your Christian bookstore. --J.W.B.

Ways to Know That You Are Not Reading the Old Testament Enough

*Your pastor announces that the sermon is from the Book of Genesis and you have to check the Table of Contents to find the book.

*You think Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had a few hits during the sixties.

*You open Ecclesiastes and a World War II bond falls out.

*Your favorite O.T. Patriarch is Hercules.

*You become frustrated because Charlton Heston is not listed in the concordance.

*The kids ask too many questions about your usual bedtime story, "Jonah The Shepherd Boy and His Ark of Many Colors"

*You think the Minor Prophets worked in coal mines.

*You keep falling for it every time the pastor says to turn to First Condominiums.

--From Gallatin Bulletin

If you flunked the above test, you ought to read or re-read the March and April '95 Word & Work magazines. Both aimed to help us grasp the Old Covenant scriptures more fully.

Be Careful What You Pray For!

Days were difficult for the young couple as they sat down to eat the barest of meals. Each had but a hamburger patty and a glass of milk. The husband's college bills had piled up and neither had been able to find work. Their last few dollars were spent that morning at a nearby market to purchase the milk and the meat.

With his voice cracking, the young husband offered thanks, wondering if sayin grace was even in order since they had so little. After stuttering through a brief thank you, the husband added a simple petition: "Lord, we're not asking for much, just enough to get by—and this is hardly enough." With tears in his eyes he added, "At least, Lord, give us the staples we need to go with what little we have. That's all we ask for Lord, just the staples."

As they began to eat their modest meal the husband winced with sudden pain. He had bitten into a sharp object that was hidden in the meat. Fishing the object from his mouth, he stared in amazement at a small metal sta-

ple that had been in the meat. Both husband and wife began laughing as the husband joked, "That's not what I meant, Lord!"

Neither, of course, was able to finish the meal for fear of finding more staples, so the husband promptly headed back to the market with the uneaten patties in hand. The young couple was concerned that others might encounter the same problem and possibly experience a serious injury.

Naturally the store manager was deeply worried, and, although the young husband made no threats at taking legal action, the manager immediately sought to make amends. "Sir," the manager blurted out, "if you'll be so kind to forget this ever happened, you can fill up one of those shopping carts with all the groceries you can use for a week. They'll be on the house!"

--Jack Hayford