

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The **Word and Work**



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

JUNE, 1996

THE BIG PICTURE

WHAT GOD IS DOING WORLDWIDE

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**Changes At Word And Work:
Missionary Editor Added**

SPEAKERS AT THE LOUISVILLE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP WEEK

August 5-8, 1996

Each will speak four times. See inside Back Cover for schedule.

Julius Hovan: Bro. Hovan is the minister of the Gallatin Church of Christ in Gallatin, Tn. The Gallatin Church is involved in many "non-traditional" avenues of evangelism that allows them to reach people for Christ that they would otherwise never have a chance to witness to.

Earl Mullins, Sr. : Bro. Mullins is currently Minister of the Ky. Ave. Church of Christ in Louisville, Ky. and the Director of Goin' Fishin' Ministries. He is also the Director of the Association of Christian Schools International's mission efforts. He is involved in mission efforts to Russia.

Marvin Phillips: Bro. Phillips is the minister of the Garnett Church of Christ in Tulsa, Ok. The Garnett Church of Christ has been very successful in reaching the lost for Christ. This year the church held their 21st Annual International Soul Winning Conference. Bro. Phillips is a respected and much sought after speaker.

Joseph Shulam: Bro. Shulam is the Director of the Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry in Jerusalem, Israel. He is a Jewish Christian who is effectively spreading the gospel in the nation of Israel and around the world. Bro. Shulam has an inspiring personal testimony.

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Jack Blaes, News

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS ISSUE

By Alex Wilson

With this issue we make a change which I am very excited about. Dennis Allen comes on board as an assistant editor, especially related to world missions. Challenges and opportunities being what they are in our day, nothing--absolutely NOTHING!--is as important as completing our Lord's Great Commission given to His disciples.

Last year I realized that with my ministry at Portland Ave. Church and the School of Biblical Studies, editing eleven issues of *Word & Work* yearly had become too heavy a load. I considered several options, one of which was to reduce the number of issues to only eight per year. Then, at a meeting regarding world missions held at Earl Mullins Jr.'s home, an idea solidified in my mind: A.V.W. take responsibility for eight issues yearly, and ex-missionary Dennis Allen take charge of three issues--mainly on missionary themes. That would give our readers their 11 W&Ws annually, increase our missions emphasis, and reduce my work load . . . all at once!

After prayerful consideration, Brother Dennis accepted. And here we are, our first issue under his editorship. This is not, of course, our first issue on missions; there have been a number. And in "his" issues there will still be articles on other subjects, just as in "other" issues there may still appear items on missions.

Dennis Allen is no stranger to our longtime readers. Numerous articles on various subjects have appeared under his byline through the years. And his experience well qualifies him as a missionary editor. He grew up in a godly home (his brother Winston was for over three decades a missionary in Alaska before his recent Homegoing). They did their undergraduate work at Harding College, then Dennis got an M.A. at Wheaton College. He taught Bible and Greek at Kentucky Bible College from 1948-54 and at Southeastern Christian College (actually the same school) in 1971-2.

He was a missionary in the Philippines from 1954-7. While there he helped found Central Bible Institute, and also married Betty Knecht. They were missionaries in Hong Kong from 1957-75, except for a few years in the U.S. during the grave illness of his father. They also spent 1984-5 in Communist China, sharing the Gospel covertly while teaching English in school there. Except for that year, Dennis taught at Portland Christian School in Louisville from 1975-90. The Lord has used him in these various ways through the years, and we look forward to his co-working with us in the ministry of *Word and Work*.

THEME:

THE BIG PICTURE

Editorial

Dennis L. Allen

We are living in difficult and yet challenging times. Just to be living in the closing years of the 20th century is momentous, but to realize that it is also the end of the second millennium since the birth of Christ is almost overwhelming. Truly upon us "the ends of the ages are come." This realization should affect all of our thinking, our priorities, and our decisions.

Jesus said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." It is our purpose that the missionary editions of the *Word and Work* may be an instrument to help us see more clearly what God's program is for these last days and how we can together enter into it.

We know so much more of what is going on in the world than we did in simpler times. The major newsworthy events (usually bad) of the whole world are immediately displayed on our TV screens. But the tragedies of the whole world are sometimes too much and can weigh us down and discourage us. How should we process this information? We don't want to become hardened. Some react by refusing to listen to the news. A lot of it is slanted anyway. On the other hand, if my brothers and sisters on the other side of the world are undergoing famine or persecution should I close my eyes and ears? If Christians don't pray and respond to those who are hurting, who will?

In today's world we can easily enlarge our borders and our usefulness. We need not be limited by our location. We can become a part of the ministries that are reaching out to the far corners of the earth. We may not be able to preach to the multitudes in China, but we can help support the gospel programs that are being beamed every day into the interior of that great country. These broadcasts through the years are one of the primary reasons for the amazing growth of the church in China. Even if you are not able to give you can uphold this ministry in prayer.

God's heart takes in the whole world. As His children should we not endeavor to see as He sees--to let our hearts be enlarged? When we begin to see the church worldwide our perspective changes. Our values and priorities will also change.

We tend to think that the USA is the hub so far as the church of our Lord Jesus Christ is concerned--that the best leadership and strongest churches are here. That may no longer be true. The Gospel is having phenomenal growth in many areas of the world today. It is our purpose to highlight some of these developments. We also want to examine afresh God's missionary program for His church.

INSIDE OUT

Richard Sharp

I've had the opportunity to travel all over the world and visit all kinds of churches. I've preached in churches that are so lively everything seemed to be moving and in churches where nothing seemed to be moving. I've preached in churches that are cathedrals and in others that are mud huts. But whatever the style of worship, whatever the size of the building, there is a common characteristic of most churches--they are inward-looking. You know why? They are made up of people who are inward-looking.

Let me ask you--is yours an inward-looking church? Second question: Are you an inward-looking person?

I heard a statement a few years ago that hit me between the eyes. It left me staggering, and I hope I never recover.

"We will never turn the world upside down until we turn the church inside out."

Interesting! That phrase "turn the world upside down," is found in Acts 17: 6 (AV version). It's the statement some non-Christians made about a small missionary band of believers. These followers of Jesus had no budgets or buildings, no colleges or conferences, yet the locals said these people "have turned the world upside down."

Do you know why that was said about them? I believe it was because they were inside-out people. They were not caught up with themselves but with Jesus. They were not into maintenance but into mission. They were not living in their comfort zone, but living in the combat zone.

We need churches today that can have the same said of them. May we look outward not inward. May we seek to turn the world upside down. Where does that start? It starts with you and me saying, "Lord, turn me inside out."

From **Indeed**, published by *Operation Mobilization*

WHAT GOD IS DOING WORLD-WIDE

D. L. A.

When we see the world through the eyes of the secular news media it is easy for us to conclude that the church nationwide and even world-wide is largely ineffective and that Satan and the forces of darkness are the ones making great strides. Most of what God is doing in the world through His chosen ones is ignored.

There are many indications that we are in the midst of the greatest spiritual harvest the world has ever seen. Consider the following:

- After 70 years of oppression and persecution under the communist regimes in the Soviet Union, Christians are said to number now about 100 million.
- 3,500 new churches are opening every week worldwide.
- 28,000 become believers every day in the People's Republic of China. When China closed to foreign missionaries in 1950, there were one million believers. Today it is conservatively estimated that there are over 60 million.
- 20,000 become believers every day in Africa. In 1900 Africa was 3% Christian. Now it is estimated to be over 40% Christian.
- 70,000 people become Christians every day in the world.
- In Latin America Evangelicals have grown from an estimated 200-300,000 in 1900 to 46,000,000 in 1990. Brazil has twice as many Evangelicals as there are in all of Europe. It has become the third largest Evangelical community in the world.
- A little over 100 years ago there were no Protestant churches in Korea and the "hermit nation" was deemed "impossible to penetrate." Today Korea is 30% Christian with 7,000 churches in Seoul alone. Ten of the twenty largest churches in the world are in Seoul. The Korean church has the goal of sending out 10,000 missionaries by the year 2000.
- In Indonesia the percentage of Christians is so high the government won't print the statistics. It is estimated to be about 25% of the population. By 1979 it was estimated more than two million Muslims had turned to Christ.

- In Iran, before Khomeini's revolution there were about 2,000 believers. Now after increased persecution there are more than 15,000.

- In AD 100 it is estimated there were 360 non-Christians in the world for every true believer. Today the ratio is seven to one. That is, Bible-believing, Christ-committed disciples now make up 1/8 of earth's population. (Nominal Christians make up 1/3, but that doesn't mean much.)

These statistics gleaned from several sources point up the fact that as individuals we see only a very small part of what God is doing. Just as in Elijah's day there were 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal, yet Elijah was unaware of the fact and thought he was standing alone. Our hands are strengthened and our hearts encouraged when we learn of what God is doing in the world today. It is true that the church is experiencing decline in England and on the Continent and in some areas of the U.S., but these facts show clearly that Christ is still building His church.

QUESTIONS ASKED OF US

Carl Kitzmiller

Please explain "indigenous churches."

As the term is used with respect to missionary work it speaks of churches which are established in such a way as to take root rapidly and grow without continued foreign support, domination, and control. These churches begin to develop in the culture where they are planted in such a way as not to seem a foreign thing but as native to that culture.

The pattern of foreign mission work which prevailed in the beginning of the modern missionary movement (which dates from around the early part of the nineteenth century) is known as "paternalism." The missionary went out, established a mission station (often consisting of a church building, missionary houses, a school and/or a hospital, and possibly surrounded by a wall or a strong fence), and served as a sort of "father" over the work that developed. In most societies the mission station long remained a sort of foreign cell which was largely isolated from the culture where it existed. When converts were made, these as a rule became employees of the mission station. Some became preachers to their own nationality, but on a payroll of the missionary or foreign church. Experience has shown that many of these were rather low characters--hirelings--attracted by the material things the missionary could offer (job, clothing, medical aid, education, etc.) more than by truth. Because they had "sold out" to foreigners these were often despised and ineffective with their own people. The missionary tended to regard these converts as children, not to be entrusted with some of the greater responsibilities, and the churches that developed continued to look to the

missionary for guidance and even finances. If the missionary died or had to leave, generally the whole work crumbled and little remained.

Examining the missionary methods of the New Testament and aware of the failings of the paternalistic system, some missionaries began to realize the need for making Christianity seem much less a foreign or Western religion and the mission churches much less dependent on foreign control and support. This has become known as "the indigenous method." Many of the best authorities today advocate this type of work as opposed to the old paternalism, though paternalism is far from dead. Simple New Testament churches, operating under the pattern of independent congregations even in the home land, have a distinct advantage over those peoples under a missionary society or unwieldy denominational machinery in being able to adopt the indigenous method.

Although there are no hard and fast rules, the indigenous method is somewhat as follows. The missionary goes into a foreign land, contacts and converts a few people, who may meet in a home until they become more numerous. He tries to teach in such a way that when a forward step is taken (building, school, etc.) it is prompted by the people rather than an act of his own. They build their own buildings when they are able, largely or altogether without foreign funds. Meanwhile, being forced by necessity to assume responsibilities, they tend to "grow up" more rapidly and learn to depend on themselves and the Lord. Having no regular foreign funds to be shared, there is less occasion for jealousy and covetousness. They "preach" to others, not as an employee of a foreign mission station but as concerned Christians. Sincerity and dedication to truth are greater requirements. Developing along lines natural to their own culture in those matters requiring no specific Bible pattern, the church that results seems less foreign. (For example, if the local people plan the church building, its architecture will not be foreign but typical of the culture; songs may be written in their own language and idiom rather than being merely foreign songs translated and sung to a foreign tune.) Instead of being a "father" the missionary is considered more as a brother; instead of creating his own little empire, he is constantly working toward making his presence unnecessary.

Although the initial growth may be slower (or at least may seem so without the influx of "loaves and fishes" Christians, the hirelings seeking personal gain from "rich" foreigners) the development of the indigenous church is on a much more solid base. Sustained growth is more likely. And it is evident that truly indigenous churches have a much better survival rate if something takes the missionary from their midst.

[Since the preceding topic is important, and sometimes hard to understand, we follow up Brother Kitzmiller's very good explanation with excerpts from a letter written from a mission field. The writer was Victor Broaddus, the field the Philippines, and the date 1961. But the principles illustrated here apply to all places and times, though there may be variation in details.]

THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH

Victor N. Broaddus, Manila, 1961

[See preceding article & note]

A certain brother recently wrote that he had thought the word "indigenous" was somehow related to Indigo, Indiana, Indianapolis and other things Indian. "Indigenous" simply means that which is native to a certain area. As applied to the church and missions, it means a church which can stand on its own feet. It means the church which is (a) Self supporting, (b) Self governing and (c) Self propagating.

It has been our aim from the beginning to plant only indigenous churches in the Philippines. This means that no church or local preacher is subsidized by funds from abroad. We realize that this method moves slowly, but the results are more solid. The heavily subsidized churches and preachers on the other hand can report great and wide-sweeping results in a short time; but our observation has been that in the long run, the foundation tends to be the dollar rather than Christ. The experience of many missions over the past century has shown that the indigenous church is the surviving type as well as the most spiritual. The subsidized churches on the other hand, have tended to die easily when difficulties and hardships arose, and when foreign money failed. Particularly was this seen in World War II. By the end of the war, many subsidized churches were practically dead, while the indigenous ones were carrying on as before, or even stronger than before. We can cite you numerous examples of this.

What is wrong with subsidized churches? In the first place, it is not the pattern given us in the New Testament. While churches did send support to the Apostle Paul (eg. Philippi to Paul), we never find them supporting the other churches or local preachers. Instead, the mission churches actually sent material aid to the famine-stricken Christians in Jerusalem. Secondly, while preachers subsidized from abroad begin with much sincerity and earnestness, they often drift into a sort of professionalism, and their preaching becomes merely a means of making a living. The local congregation does not begin by feeling any responsibility toward the support of their preacher, and to later teach them such responsibility is difficult, to say the least. The preacher himself begins to feel his obligation toward the source of income rather than to the local congregation, and therefore finds himself on a different plane than the members. Where a missionary or board is in charge of dispersing such funds, the subsidized preacher soon feels he has lost his freedom in Christ and is "under" that missionary. He cannot afford to offend that missionary in any way, and will even cater to his peculiar whims in order to stay on the good side. Whether that missionary knows it or not, whether he likes it or not, he holds much

power over the churches and the preachers. He becomes virtually a dictator in time.

Let me elaborate on this further. Support for local preachers is made possible by the missionary's report. Quite unintentionally, the missionary may say more about one preacher than he does about another. The result is more support for one than another. This places the missionary in the position of one who plays favorites. A preacher doing a commendable work in a more remote area, and therefore not in close contact with the missionary will seem to be left out. Out of this arise feelings of jealousy. Even among the best, it seems that Satan uses such an opportunity to tempt people into jealousy.

Some will say, "the people are poor, and cannot support their own work." Yes, on the whole, the people are poor; but it is still theoretically possible for ten families to support one preacher living on their same level. Furthermore, there are churches all over the Philippines who are doing it. The main problem is that those who have started native evangelists on the subsidized basis find it extremely difficult to change over. Many have given up, thinking it is impossible. It is therefore best not even to begin on that basis. When funds from abroad support local workers, the congregation soon sits back and does nothing, complaining of how poor they are. Their attitude becomes: "let our rich Uncle Sam do it."

Our policy for the Philippine mission field has been to never appeal for funds to support native preachers or local congregations. Up to now, no Filipino preacher working with us has been on U.S. subsidy. Bro. Estalilla has even turned down offers of such "salaries" from some "church of Christ" brethren in order to keep his freedom in Christ and not be "under" anyone but the Lord. We can say that no preacher is "under" us! because we do not support any preacher financially. We do encourage the local congregation to support their evangelists, and to build their chapels. When we mention any native preacher in our news letters, it is for the purpose of informing our brethren in the States of the work being done, and not to raise money. Imagine our embarrassment when brethren note that one among their number has been mentioned in a news letter and he suddenly gets money from abroad. Why were their names not equally mentioned? Of course, such words were not actually spoken directly to us; but an undercurrent soon develops which can be felt. We do not wish to be misunderstood here. We are not saying that local preachers and evangelists are not deserving. Actually, all of them deserve more than they receive, and could well use more.

How can the brethren in the U.S.A. help in regard to mission work? There are certain areas which the native congregations are not able to do much about. These are projects like radio programs, printing

projects, and the Bible school for training local leaders. These are projects that extend beyond any single congregation's ability to perform.

Up to now, [1961] the Bible school has operated without any special funds for that purpose. All teaching was done by donated time on the part of missionaries and native teachers. All books were the personal libraries of the missionaries and Bro. Estalilla, who have made them available to students for study. Dormitory furniture, desks, etc. were paid for out of the personal living expenses of the missionary. We have reached a point now, however, where we hardly know which way to turn. We need teachers, and have teachers who are capable and willing to serve without any promise of compensation but they do need to live somehow. Our library is really in sad shape. Nearly every preacher in the States has a better library in his study than we have for the school. We thank the Lord that Southeastern Christian College is sending a few books now to add to our little stock. With the school growing there is a need for more beds, closets, etc. Here is a real need which is not being met. [Actually the great need in Manila now, in 1996, is the downtown Bible College's building program. The original building has terribly deteriorated with age, and needs replacing. --Editor]

Those who are moved of the Lord to help in mission work may be able to contribute toward Bibles, the printing of literature, and the school to train more local workers and leaders. These church leaders in turn, go out to teach and convert people, and teach them to share in the responsibilities of spreading the Gospel.

Book Review

THE CALLING

by Brother Andrew,
247 p.; published by Moorings

Brother Andrew's book, *God's Smuggler*, has already sold over ten million copies. If you were blessed by that book as I have been, I'm sure you will want to read his latest book entitled *The Calling*. In his first book we were taken behind the iron curtain and allowed to glimpse the lives of believers in Russia and Eastern Europe and how God led him to minister to their need. In *The Calling* we meet believers from other parts of the world that are suffering for their faith, and see how Open Doors is being used to bring encouragement to them and strengthen their hands. Brother Andrew also points out ten steps that will lead us into active involvement in what God is doing in the world today. Included are many exciting accounts of the way God is working to open up closed doors and closed hearts.

-- D. L. A.

I STAND AMAZED!

Dennis E. Free

God told His prophet Habakkuk, "Look at the nations and watch--and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told" (Habakkuk 1:5, *New International Version*). Nothing will drive away our despair more quickly than surveying what God is doing in the world. He is the God of history, and He is doing amazing things.

Every time I gather with world Christians in our conventions I hear fresh accounts of what God is doing around the world, and I am amazed. This amazement compels me to worship Him who does things I thought impossible, and encourages me in my efforts for Him.

Victories

We were appalled by the "killing fields" of Southeast Asia several years ago. Things were totally out of control, it seemed. Later thousands came to know and to love our Lord in makeshift refugee camps. One Cambodian woman who was a part of a 2,000 member refugee fellowship in Thailand has since returned to her homeland in southeastern Cambodia where she shared the gospel with her non-Christian neighbors. She was instrumental in the conversion of fifty-seven persons who were baptized in a lake near the Vietnamese border. Who but God can give new life in the "killing fields"?

India has been known for its spiritual darkness and violent religious conflicts. Believers in the center of this great land have banded together to let their light shine in their communities where it is not uncommon for children of impoverished Indian families to be sold to Arabian countries. Many of these child slaves are used in camel races. The small children are tied behind the camels; their screams drive the camels to race faster and faster. The children often do not survive or suffer severe mental handicaps. Loving Indian Christians have administered regular help in the form of food, medicine, education, and clothing to hundreds of poor, needy, and orphaned children who otherwise might have suffered horribly.

At a recent Christmas celebration in a church planted by this group, 1,000 persons were in attendance including a large number of Hindus and Muslims who came to express their gratitude for the team's ministry in their community.

Albania, a Muslim country, was until recently governed by the most atheistic, repressive communist system in the Eastern European block. While other communist governments were failing, Albania held.

Today, this formerly “resistant” field is one of the most responsive places in the world to the gospel. One worker in Albania recently related that the greatest problem he faces in reaching Muslims for Christ is the presence of twenty-five Muslim missionaries from Saudi Arabia in his village who are actively working to see that this Muslim nation remains faithful to the Prophet Mohammed. Even Muslim leaders are amazed by what God is doing in this land!

Marxist rule held an iron grip on the nation of Ethiopia for seventeen years. Anti-religious propaganda and stern measures against Christians were practiced. Missionaries from our brotherhood have returned to find that their churches have grown from less than 4,000 to approximately 30,000 members.

Marxist officials had persecuted the Ethiopian church, while allowing Islam to bolster its position by building more than 2,500 mosques and spending millions of oil dollars. In this poor country, it is now reported that \$600 has been offered as an incentive to any convert from Christianity to Islam. In spite of all this, membership in the churches has increased sevenfold in seventeen years. Who would have believed that God was doing such a thing?

One mission worker has said of the situation in the former Soviet Union, following the demise of the communist system, “The toughest challenge turned out to be finding a way to say no to so many invitations!” An American Christian worker has said of his short-termed Ukrainian ministry with Christians in Nikolayev, “They really made an impression on us. They kept us panting, trying to keep up with their evangelistic efforts.”

An American visitor asked an articulate former Marxist why she became a Christian. She responded by telling how she had been inspired by Marx and his philosophy of caring for all people. After the demise of the communist system she discovered that the kernel of good in the teaching of Marx had come from the gospel. “We went back to the source,” she proclaimed. She is not alone. God is doing marvelous things in the lands we long regarded as perhaps the major operation center of the archenemy.

Until 1990 being a Christian or proselytizing was strictly forbidden in Nepal. Hundreds of Christians were incarcerated, accused of crimes against the Hindu kingdom. A Christian worker after a recent trip reports that the story is changing, as nearly 1,000 churches can be identified throughout the country today. Thousands are being baptized each year and new churches are planted each week in the rural areas where persecution is feared daily. A brotherhood of churches similar to the Restoration Movement exists with more than 350 evangelists and 500 churches.

Recently a patriarch from a great missionary clan reflected on his family's flight from China in 1949 and later harrowing escape from Burma. He said "Don't refer to such things as tragedies. God is in charge!" He reports that the number of believers in Burma has tripled since the missionaries were forced to evacuate. Of the work in Asia he added, "There is an absolute explosion of growth. There is such a massive ingathering that you would not believe. This is being done entirely by the national ministers themselves, not by missionaries. We need to be praying for them."

Vision

Seventy-five percent of all evangelical Christians are now located outside the United States and Canada. God is doing marvelous things among the nations!

At the combined North American Christian and National Missionary Conventions in Indianapolis in July '95 we heard more and more amazing things that God is doing in our world. These reports called for our participation so that His will may be done on earth!

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COMING SOON: URGENTLY IMPORTANT MEETINGS ABOUT WORLD MISSIONS "Goin' Fishing' at Sellersburg

For the fourth year in a row, an enlightening missions conference will be held in Sellersburg, Ind., the day after the Louisville Christian Fellowship Week. The format will be a little different, however.

This year's conference will not *end* with a meal, but *begin* with one the night before! On Thursday night a dinner will be held introducing the missions themes which will be amplified on Friday morning. The meal will be at the Fellowship Hall, then folks can attend the closing session of Fellowship Week at the church building. More details will be forthcoming during the meetings earlier that week.

These missionary meetings are always stimulating. They provide up-to-date information about the Lord's work in various regions of the world--the joys and advances, also the heartaches and difficulties. They supply fuel for prayer. They impart vision and a burden for the entire World for whom Christ died!

Church leaders, take advantage of this conference! If we lose our burden for the people overseas we usually lose our burden for the lost

here at home too. And **ENCOURAGE YOUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO ATTEND WITH YOU.** Most of those attending the previous conferences have been over 50! We need to ignite greater faith, love and enthusiasm in our young folks for world missions. Ministry trips to Honduras, Russia, etc. can help do this. A conference like this can also spread the flame. So take advantage of the missions *dinner* on Thursday, Aug. 8, and the *presentations* on Fri. morning Aug. 9.

Another Opportunity, in Oct.-Nov.

A report in *Christian Standard* shows how missions conferences through the decades have helped impart zeal to reach all nations. Here are some excerpts from an article by Walter Birney. He describes the impact made on the conservative Christian Churches as our Lord's Great Commission has been emphasized.

The meeting that developed into the National Missionary Convention began in 1948 to give overseas missionaries a national platform from which to speak to U.S.A. Christians. When it began there were approximately one hundred missionaries from Christian churches/churches of Christ overseas in the U.S.A. That number has now grown to more than 2,000. If you count benevolent works, it would likely be well over 2,500.

Telling U.S.A. Christians about lost people around the world and getting them to do something about it is the purpose of the National Missionary Convention. In recent years that purpose has developed into two major goals:

1. The recruitment of new missionaries, and
2. Mobilizing churches for world evangelism.

To reach their potential, churches need to know what the situation is, what the opportunities are, and the best way to proceed. Some are satisfied with their present missionary program, but do not really know there are still two billion people who do not have a chance to hear and understand the gospel.

This major thrust involves getting missionaries, recruits, and church leaders together for the purpose of developing strategies that will result in the best possible way (or ways) to get the gospel into unreached areas of the world and to unreached people groups. That is why it is important for preachers, elders, mission committee members, and other church leaders and members to be vitally involved in the convention. It is not just for missionaries. It is for all those who have an interest and a responsibility in fulfilling the Great Commission.

This year's National Missionary Convention will be held at LEXINGTON, KY. from Oct. 31-Nov. 3. There's much we can learn from these brothers and sisters when it comes to worldwide mission work. Stay tuned for more information.

GOD'S HEART FOR KURGAN, RUSSIA

By Lauren Bloom

Introduction by Earl Mullins Sr. :

School had been called off because the temperature outside was minus 30 degrees celcius. Inside the Children's Palace the outside was forgotten by my brother, Eugene, and myself along with the sixty other North Americans who were in Kurgan, Russia in March of 1993. The warmth of the reception shown us by the 400 Russian educators outdid the winter weather.

The Americans and Canadians were part of a CoMission Convocation to introduce a curriculum of Christian morals and ethics to elementary and secondary school teachers and administrators. The three major points of the curriculum are the Bible is the Word of God, Jesus is the Son of God and every individual is responsible to God.

Lauren Bloom, author of the following report, was responsible for setting up such convocations in Russia. She was part of CoMission, a loosely formed organization of over 75 Christian colleges, churches and other Christian entities, established to get the Word of God into the countries of the former Soviet Union. The initial thrust of CoMission was to conduct educational lectures and workshops where the Christian worldview was presented and the curriculum mentioned above was introduced. In Russia this was part of a five year agreement with their Minister of Education. The agreement ends at the close of this calendar year. Christian men and women, such as Lauren Bloom, devoted full time to this project. Having been involved in seven such convocations, I can testify that their task has not been an easy one. In addition to the work they were involved in overseas, they had to raise their own support in order to be involved in this outreach.

We left the Kurgan (Russia) Convocation in March of 1993. The spiritual warfare in Kurgan had been significant, yet God broke through and the response to both the curriculum and personal spiritual interest was great. We left filled with joy at what God had done in the hearts of so many, yet heavy-hearted over not knowing when or if a follow-up team would go back to continue the work. The teachers begged for us to send someone back to help them. For nearly two years the teachers waited for someone to come to answer their questions and teach them more.

Bruce and Carolyn Brantley and Lydia Pugh had a heart to bring encouragement, support and training to those cities who had never had an ongoing CoMission team. They were the first of several teams to head out to do just that. Their first stop was Kurgan in spring of 1995. When

they arrived for their three month stay, they were surprised by what they found.

The teachers had not been sitting around idly waiting. When the Convocation team left, they realized they didn't have anyone to answer their questions, so they figured if they worked together they could learn from each other. They decided to study the same passage of the Bible and meet weekly to discuss it. Each of them would gain a little different insight and as they would share, they would all learn. Soon several Bible studies were going strong. Teachers were meeting weekly to study the Word and to have fellowship. As time went on there ended up being a small core group of teachers and interpreters who wanted desperately to spread their knowledge to others in their city. They were having great success with the curriculum in their classrooms, but they wanted more.

Eventually they rewrote the curriculum for both kindergarten and college levels so all levels of education would have the opportunity to learn Christian Morals and Ethics through the life of Christ. They started a weekly television program where they filmed a part of a lesson being taught to the children and then did a question and answer section with the students. This was interspersed with scenes of the "JESUS" film and shown on a city TV station each week. The enthusiasm of this core group grew as they started seeing lives around them change as colleagues, friends and family started coming to Christ. Each time they got together they would bubble over with excitement as they brainstormed new ways to reach others for Christ.

Once the follow up team arrived they were able to take these teachers to a much higher level in personal growth and plans to further their ministry. Though they had created a tremendous ministry without the help of westerners, they still needed help to take it a step further and to deepen their own spiritual knowledge. With the help of their follow-up team they gained the vision and encouragement and skills needed to continue to grow spiritually and expand their ministry in their own city. The investment that Bruce, Carolyn and Lydia made in the lives of these teachers was crucial.

In the summer of 1995 eleven of the Kurgan "champions" came to the Leadership Development Conference (LDC) in Kiev, Ukraine. Though the conference was tailored to teachers who had been actively working with CoMission teams and had shown themselves to be leaders in their schools or communities, the Kurgan team fit right in. In some ways they had made the same kind of progress with the Holy Spirit as their guide that the teachers in other cities had made through the help of CoMission teams.

During the conference they soaked up every word and were greatly challenged by the teaching. They spent their evenings and free time

meeting together to brainstorm about new ideas to reach their city or talking with teachers from other cities to share ideas and to discuss the challenges they faced.

By the end of the conference they had made the same progress as many of the other teachers who had one to two years of training by CoMission teams. They had visions of writing new curriculum lessons and training other teachers in other schools to teach the curriculum. They desired to write a training program based on the curriculum for the Pedagogical school. Their vision was to see new teachers come out of their training already prepared to teach the curriculum.

Through the input they had received at the Leadership Development Conference they had gained a vision for not only reaching their own city, but for how God could use them to help reach their country. When asked how they would encourage teachers in other cities who have not and may not ever have any kind of follow-up team, they began to talk amongst themselves about partnership and supporting one another in their goals and visions. Then Luba summed it up for the whole team;

"I guess I would have to say they should come to us for help and support. No, I think we should go to them. That should be our job. Every teacher who has had training from a CoMission team or follow-up team has the ability to reach out to other teachers who have not had such help. We can help reach other cities and villages. That is our responsibility now!"

The vision that we had all dreamed but had not yet verbalized to them was being birthed right before our very eyes. Nationals taking what they have learned and transferring it to their own people. In the end it is the Russians who will best reach other Russians. If the doors close to western help, they will still be there to carry on the ministry that God has prepared them for and called them to fulfill.

Only God knows what the future holds for teachers in cities like Kurgan. Cities that are still waiting for a follow-up team. The seeds have been planted and in many places active ministry has sprung up. But they still need to be fed and encouraged to go the next mile. Receiving the new curriculum and further training could provide them with everything they need to continue to pursue growth in Christ and to minister to their people. The time is short. The time is now. The Russian Presidential elections in June 1996 could greatly hinder our potential to reach these cities one more time. Urgency now has a face. The face of a teacher who is waiting for someone to come back to help them. The face of a teacher spilling over with joy as the love of Christ works within her, yet longing to have one more chance to learn more. Will it be you? Do you hear the Lord saying "Whom shall I send and who will go for Us?" Will you stand with Isaiah and say "Here am I, Lord, send me!"

Drugs and Missions . . .

“LOSE VISION, SELL SOUL.” AMERICA, YOU’RE DOING IT!

Ralph D. Winter

Christians in America are aware of many things. We bemoan the criminal drug trade, for example, and its connections to political leaders in Panama and Colombia.

Yet, what is all this nonsense about the big, bad drug runners in Colombia, if in fact we ourselves kill FAR MORE people per year with nicotine grown right here!

There is a parallel between illegal drugs like crack and drugs like nicotine. For example, how in the world did all those Cadillacs and Mercedes-Benz and BMW’s begin to flood the ghetto street of our cities. (Many owned by kids too young to drive legally!) Where did those suitcases full of \$100 bills come from? And those submachine guns in their hands?

That’s easy! Rich kids are trading their parent’s money for crack. Ghetto kids (who by law are too young to get a job) are trading the crack for money. (Is this the “trickle down” theory?) But note: Don’t think all this money comes from ghetto families drawing out their savings to buy drugs! *That money comes from somewhere else, from the middle and upper classes.*

And tobacco? What’s a parallel?

In 1863, the Northern armies did not realize that the real enemy in the South was not the Southern army but a nicotine industry which the North would eventually pay for very dearly--with far more lives than were killed in the Civil War on both sides. No, that’s an understatement. Nicotine has drawn more Americans to their graves than all the wars our country has ever fought. **BUT HOW LITTLE IS OUR AWARENESS OF THIS.**

What a blessing that some people are getting on their high horses about smoky airplanes. But at the same time, others are poisoning their lungs with little sign of change. **LACK OF AWARENESS, LOSS OF VISION** is the problem!

A thirteen-year-old with a submachine gun, backed up by \$40,000 hidden under his bed, is not the picture of perfect safety. Neither is a wealthy, well entrenched, *perfectly legal* nicotine industry, which to this day is subsidized with federal tax funds! But whether it is nicotine or crack (a very tiny problem compared to the former), there is *big*

money in drugs. And whether it is notable families with high motives who profit from culturally approved drugs, or poor families in a Detroit ghetto or in Medellin, Colombia who profit from other drugs, the victims are legion.

They say that half of the *hundreds* of people being shot down by teenage drug runners in South Los Angeles are perfectly innocent bystanders. OK, half of the *hundreds of thousands* who suffer from the ravages of nicotine are the wounded widows, families, children left behind. LACK OF AWARENESS IS THE PROBLEM!

These are not isolated examples. A few weeks ago in Thailand I was confronted by a ghastly evil. There on that beautiful tropical seashore are towns that "buy" teenage girls by the thousands from all over Thailand, to have them ready to exchange for the money American tourists and servicemen can offer them. Who pays for this? We do. We Americans. Two large American naval vessels sent word ahead when they arrived for a ten-day stopover off-shore. They disgorged several thousand pathetic Americans who paid \$10 million in those few days for this kind of pernicious flesh trade. (I am talking about a real, not a hypothetical, situation.) Do we need to wonder why the Thai government would prefer American missionaries to American tourists and armed forces?

We don't often stop to think that the entire drug trade--that monstrous, malignant, international evil, powerful enough to topple governments and corrupt the entire civil apparatus--would drop dead tomorrow if there were not just lots and lots of "respectable" people who are willing to pay for its services and thus fund its activities, and in effect *create* its existence! VISION, AWARENESS, WHERE HAS IT GONE?

But if we do stop and think about it, *it is overwhelmingly obvious: if society will pay only for respectable things, only respectable things will be for sale.* There simply won't be any flourishing market for anything else. We must face the fact, that the flesh trade, the mafia, the pornography industry, the alcohol and nicotine industries--as well as the other much smaller (but unapproved of) narcotic industries-- are not merely to be thought of as "evils" in themselves, but must be understood as infallible measurements of the wayward appetites of the middle and upper classes, or if you dare, evidences of the world's "most Christian country." As Billy Graham has said, "If God does not judge America, He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah!"

But all of this is merely an extended illustration of the truth: "Where there is no vision the people perish." So let's talk about vision.

Is it not a measure of the folly of Americans that while a fanatic minority of "mission minded people" dutifully, believingly fuels a relatively tiny missionary movement, lavishly giving \$2 billion per year, our uncommitted majority of Americans allows itself to be taken to the cleaners for \$177 billion a year for alcohol alone? Add nicotine (\$70 billion), hard drugs (another \$50 billion), and we could add the bill for pornography, prostitution, whimsical divorce, not to mention the resulting court costs, police costs, prison costs, medical costs, welfare costs. (More of this money is going out of the country than our balance of payment deficit with Japan!)

This is what is happening: apparently masses of Americans are lavishly giving billions upon billions to pernicious drugs, trivialities, or other unrewarding pursuits, while only a very tiny minority of envisioned people are excitingly and intentionally AWARE of the great things God is doing around the world, and are giving just as lavishly to this REAL cause. *Yet we CAN do a whole lot about this.* Huge numbers of Americans are simply paralyzed by unwise choices and priorities--*which in many cases can be reversed!* This is where "Regional Mobilization" begins to make very strategic sense. **VISION, AWARENESS IS THE NEED!**

Such a staggering lack of AWARENESS is the reason so many glorious potentialities remain devastated by the paucity of funds available for mission. (Even the churches only pass on about 1% of their income to cross-cultural, *pioneer, unreached-people* mission--a few churches give a lot, most of the rest practically none.)

Meanwhile at least 35,000 young people in America today are, right now, willing to go to the ends of the earth. Yet they do not have the slightest chance of getting there so long as the number of Americans who are solidly AWARE of God (and HIS plans) on a daily basis is so small.

The answer is not to flail the saints who are already giving lavishly, but to assail the saints who have lost their way in the American rat race, gently and yet firmly confronting them with the brutal tragedy of their present priorities.

Many families are financially devastated simply because they have chosen the most costly schools for their children, thinking this will ensure quality results. But the results are children in debt for years to come, who can barely meet their own needs, much less give lavishly or actually go to the fields of the world.

That's right: of the estimated 35,000 American young people who have felt drawn to a missionary commitment, *at least 70% are*

so deeply debt-ridden that there is no obvious solution to their problem.

What went wrong? It was not that committed evangelical families wasted their money on prostitution or pornography or hard drugs. Rather, they have gotten accustomed to choosing the highest priced alternatives in education, housing, clothing, vacations, weddings, everything, and have willingly pawned their own and their childrens' future for many years to come. They have opted for bondage and futility, grasping for achievement. **LACK OF AWARENESS** is the problem!

How, in the midst of all this colossal bogging down of the evangelical movement, can we expect very many people to think clearly about the possibility of completing the Great Commission by the year 2000? Or to seek optimistically to discover the unprecedented flurry of evangelical and mission breakthroughs around the world? Or, indeed the possibility that "Jesus May Come Today?"

How, indeed, is it possible to arouse our wayward evangelical generation, whose appetites must be measured by the kinds of books that 9,000 Christian bookstores sell (and can't sell)? Leighton Ford has observed that more than 80% of all the books in the average Christian bookstore are focused on **SELF-FULFILLMENT**. Are we all Buddhists by now? That is a religion of self-fulfillment, of achievement. Where is the uniquely Christian faith that recognizes that "He who seeks to save his own life shall lose it, but he that will lose his life for my sake and the Gospels, will find it"? How can we help more people to discover this urgent and carnality-threatening truth?

Let us lift up our eyes to the harvest! Let us not say, "We have plenty of time." Do we suppose God is waiting until all social problems are resolved? In many ways things are getting worse. (Were you thinking about the spreading of AIDS when I mentioned those thousands of Thai girls? Are we proud of that kind of gift to the nations?)

It would not be patience on God's part, but callousness, if He simply sat back and waited while things get worse. Jesus' first coming was not based on some great breakthrough in social justice. He **CAME** to warn His people of the destruction to come. Today He wants every nation warned. *And that is possible by the year 2000.*

It is not as though we must lay aside social problems to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Announcing the Kingdom of God is itself a call to justice. As with Paul, we are sent "to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations" (Rom. 1:5). I just happened this morning to be reading in Isaiah 3 and 4 that judgment would begin with unjust leaders grinding down the poor, and will proceed with haughty women heaping up ornaments and costly attire. The Good

News is especially significant to the poor and defenseless, not so significant, it would seem, to those rich who misuse their privilege.

We must pray daily, "Thy Kingdom come," whatever the consequences may be, to ourselves, our people, our country or to any nation anywhere. His Coming will not be so much a reward for anyone's good behavior as a hastening of justice. He wants all men to be saved. That is why He sends us to the ends of the earth to warn all people, *without exception*, of His coming--and to win those who respond to His Kingdom. But he is not waiting on the United Nations Children's Fund nor any other benevolent organization to achieve its goals. We must remain open to the possibility that He just may have a more drastic (and merciful) FINAL SOLUTION to human problems. And it is not at all impossible that that DAY is at least as near as the year 2000. It may be some kind of humanistic arrogance to suggest that it is extremely unlikely--as in the case of the Government of China, vainly trying to prohibit the mention of the return of Christ, it would be a frustration of their plans!

Let us "work while it is still day" and be open--open to whatever HE has in mind. Being "open" surely does NOT mean to lightly dismiss the potential nearness of the Greatest Event this side of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The apostles lived in the expectation of His imminent Coming. Are we not surely as close as they were?

Matters For Prayer:

Hong Kong reverts to China June 30, 1997. In spite of promises of "one country, two systems" for the next fifty years, recent actions indicate that the communists have little interest in freedom. A recent poll taken of 1660 young people aged 15 to 24 revealed that 43 percent would like to emigrate before the takeover. Pray that the Christians in Hong Kong will be strong in the Lord to face the challenging times ahead.

Since March the brothers in the congregation at Spring Brook Drive, **Eagle River, Alaska**, have been taking the leadership responsibility for the church there. Things have gone well thus far. Pray that they may be guided by the Lord for the future. Irene Allen has been back there since April. Pray for her also; she'll spend the summer there.

Central Bible College, Manila, Philippines. Pray for the ongoing financial and spiritual needs of this important ministry. Graduates from this institution are now serving the Lord in many areas of the Philippines.

VOICES from the FIELDS

Mark Garrett

Senegal, W. Africa

April 27, 1996

Nightmares often plagued her sleep. During the day, she had trouble concentrating. Things were becoming very fuzzy. Why was this happening? Then one day she noticed that her pillowcase needed washing. When she took it off, she saw that a corner of the pillow had been opened. Inside she discovered a charm. It is usually fabricated by a "marabu" who writes verses from the Koran to place inside the charm. Some charms like these are for protection but this particular one was put there for harm. She suspects that her mother was the culprit. Her mother hates that she follows Jesus now. This is typical of the kind of persecution believers face here. After disposing of the charm, she has a clear mind and the nightmares have stopped. She says her God is stronger than black magic.

This young lady (Yacine B.) has just started a children's club in her neighborhood. Pray that God may grant wisdom and protection as she begins this new ministry.

Candy and I are in the same ranks now. We each teach one student to read. Candy has Kathryn and I have Aliu S., one of our new believers. This young man is really motivated. He is thirsty for spiritual truth and wants to be able to read the Bible in Wolof. Susie Murzynski, our literacy specialist, keeps me on track in teaching him. Aliu speaks very little French so he always stretches my Wolof. I can't fall back on French if I forget the Wolof word for something.

My larynx is "on strike." As part of the new Wolof songbook project, we recorded all 175 songs on cassette. This joint effort took a week at Wycliffe's recording studio in Dakar. Groups from each assembly involved came to record the songs most familiar to them. The teaching cassettes will go with the songbook which is rolling off the presses as I write.

Last month marked two years for us on the African continent! It is amazing how time flies. Some children "climb the walls," some cause their parents to, but Kathryn climbs door frames! She wedges her feet on each side and goes to the top while Bryan runs underneath. They both love to climb. I think there is a little acrobat in each of them. Or maybe it's just monkey! Bryan, now 22 months old, is beginning to speak intelligibly. Eventually he will sort out the three languages being thrown at him [English, Wolof & French].

How very much we have appreciated our furlough. It was great to see our family and friends.

We have travelled thousands of miles in many states. Bob has held 21 meetings teaching on the "Mysteries of the Kingdom." Almost every Sunday was spent showing slides of Zimbabwe and the Lord's work there.

Meanwhile in Zimbabwe our brethren there have reported things going well at camp. They have had 76 at School Leaders camp (ages 18 and over), Senior high--56, and 14 couples at the young families camp.

The Women had 176 at their camp. Two women were baptized.

God has answered prayer for rain in a big way. May is not usually a month in which we see much rainfall, but this year they had two days of rain every week. Lord willing we will leave for Zimbabwe August 19, arriving there on the 20th.

We are thankful to God for the opportunities we both have had to teach the word--both in the U.S.A. and in Zimbabwe.

THE PEARL OF GREAT VALUE

Robert L. Garrett

**“The Kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls:
When he found one of great value,
He went away and sold everything he had
And bought it.”
Matt. 13:45, 46**

Salt water dripped from the cage as gnarled hands reached in and took out an oyster. Carefully, those cruel hands opened the oyster--revealing its pulsing pain-racked flesh. Then, swiftly picking up a sharp instrument, the hand stabbed deep into the oyster's side to insert and leave there a pain-inflicting foreign object.

“One of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.” (John 19:34.)

The task completed, the cage of captive oysters was lowered once more beneath the waves.

The poor oyster has no means of plucking out the offending object. In the months ahead the oyster would issue from its own life-force a fluid to cover that offending object. This secretion would harden into a

smooth covering around that grain of sand. Day by day, month after month, layer after layer, until a beautiful pearl is formed.

“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have **clothed** yourselves with Christ.” (Gal. 3:27.)

“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being **transformed into His likeness** with ever increasing glory.” (2 Cor. 3:18.)

The day comes when the cage is raised again from the ocean and the oysters taken out. Now, for the last time, the oyster is forced open. Its flesh is cruelly gouged out and cast into a bucket to make its way to the dining tables of fancy restaurants. Through it all, the oyster makes no sound, no cry to reveal the terrible pain it was forced to suffer.

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.” (Acts 8:32)

And the pearl? The pearl is sent to the jewelers where it is finally sold to be worn by women as a thing of beauty.

Why Did Our Lord Use The Figure Of A Pearl?

Why not diamonds? Are they not of much more value than pearls? Why not rubies as in Proverbs 31:10? The answer is found, not in the relative monetary value, but in the *nature* of these things. Diamonds and rubies are dug from the ground. Pearls are made by a living animal.

More specifically, pearls are the result of an *injury* to the living animal. **Pearls are created through suffering and released through death.** That sin-ugly grain of sand is converted into a thing of great beauty only because of its long and intimate relationship with the oyster. The pearl is formed through suffering and pain. It is released through death.

The oyster gives its life to form the pearl.

“Christ loved the church and gave **Himself up for her** to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing of water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” (Eph. 5:25-27)

The Seeker of the Pearl is Jesus. The Pearl represents the Church.

Away with the idea that the seeker of pearls represents the lost sinner who is searching for truth, or salvation, or the true church! Scripture itself has no patience with that. The church belongs only to Christ. It is His body. It is --"the church of God which He bought with His own blood". (Acts 20:28)

Salvation and eternal life are not for sale.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the **GIFT** of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23)

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the **GIFT** of God--not by works so that no one can boast.” (Eph. 2:8,9)

But the buyer of the pearl has much to boast! He sold everything he had to buy the pearl!

“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross.” (Phil. 2:6-8)

“Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor.” (2 Cor. 8:9)

“Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” (Eph. 5:25)

When Jesus gave us this parable, He said it was a “secret (“mystery,” KJV, NASB) of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 13:11). He informed us that He was revealing something about the kingdom that had not been prophesied in the Old Testament, a great truth that had been “**hidden** since the creation of the world” (Matt. 13:35). Here is a wonderful truth about the formation of the church and its relationship to Christ that was not revealed to previous generations. [See also Eph. 3:4-6; 3:9; 1:9,10; Col. 1:26; Rom. 16:25,26.]

And there is more! The creation of Eve from the side of Adam and the ordination of marriage held another mystery.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church.” (Eph. 5:31,32)

Our interpretation of the Pearl of Great Value is harmonious with this mystery-truth hidden in the creation of Eve from the side of Adam. Eve was formed from an injury to the side of Adam. The church is formed, as it were, from an injury to the side of Jesus--the second Adam. Marriage, as ordained by God, is because Eve was formed from the injury to Adam's side.

Those Nail-scarred Hands.

After His resurrection when Jesus appeared to the disciples, “He showed them His hands and side” (John 20:20). But Thomas had not been there, and so declared, “Unless I see nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nail marks were, and put my hand into His side I will not believe it.”

Later, Jesus came among them, and said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side." (John 20:24-28)

In Revelation 6:6 our Lord is seen as "a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain."

Have you ever wondered what Adam experienced and felt? When he woke up after God had cut that bone from his side, did he experience any pain? Was there no scar on the first Adam's side as a constant reminder to Eve of whence she had come? Paul, speaking of this formation of Eve from the wound to the side of the first Adam, says, "This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church."

The pearl of great value, then, is the Church, exceeding precious to Him, purchased by His blood; formed as it were, from His very side.

However, there are some important differences between us and a grain of sand. First, the grain of sand has no control over its own destiny. But we can choose the right or the wrong. "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:15). "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb. 4:7).

Second, the grain of sand is completely passive in accepting the covering which converts it into a pearl. But we must be active. After our initial putting on of Christ when we were baptized into Him--after that has been accomplished, we are exhorted to be continually putting Him on day by day!

"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to **put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be **made new** in the attitude of your minds; and to **put on the new self**, created to be **like God** in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4:22-24).

"Put to death, therefore whatever belongs to your earthly nature . . . since you . . . have **put on the new self**, which is being renewed in knowledge in the **image of its Creator** . . . Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves** with compassion, humility, gentleness and patience. (Col. 3:5, 10, 11).

Finally: There are uncountable millions of grains of sand in the ocean; lost, ugly, unloved. Only the grain of sand that comes into intimate contact with the oyster becomes a pearl, a thing of beauty and value. Just so. Only those souls who come to Jesus and remain in close fellowship with Him can be saved and transformed into something fit for heaven and eternity.

(Scripture quotations from the NIV. Emphasis added.)

William C. Cook

1921-1996

Bill Cook was born August 10, 1921 and went home to be with the Lord he loved April 12, 1996. I have known Bill since 1938 when he was in high school. At an early age he accepted Jesus Christ as savior and Lord and served Him all his life thereafter.

Bill attended Portland Christian School, graduating in 1939. Later he earned a business degree at the U. of Georgia, and studied theology at Emory University. He was a life long student of God's Word.

At a very young age Bill became minister of Baird Street Mission. Then he served Highview Church until he was drafted into the army in 1943. While in the military, Bill met Agathia Hendricks, an army nurse, from Palmyra, Indiana. After discharge they were married and settled in Atlanta, Georgia.

In Atlanta Bill served as minister of the Hapeville Church. After this he served the Brook Valley Church in various ministries until his home-going. At the time of his death, Bill was Benevolence Minister at Brook Valley Church. He was an active worker for the Telephone Pioneer of America; he was a retired employee of South-East Bell Telephone Co. Bill was active in his local Kiwanis Club, in which he also served as President. But first of all, he was a Christian.

He is survived by his wife, two sons, a daughter, eight grandchildren, two brothers and a sister. He will be missed. We remember him with joy and thanksgiving.

I recall what was perhaps Bill's first sermon. As a teenager, at Rowan Street Church, to a good sized audience, he gave a clear exposition of the Return of Christ as presented in First Thessalonians, all five chapters, in 35 minutes! Not too bad for a high school student.

Early in Bill's ministry at Hapeville Church, an elder named Dan Flynn was pronounced by several doctors to be dying with an incurable cancer. Bill advised him to follow the teaching of James, Chapter 5. Brother Flynn asked Bill to bring him to Louisville to Portland Ave. Church, saying that he knew of no elders in Atlanta who accepted the "anointing with oil" as in effect today. After coming to Louisville and being anointed by brothers Tona Covey, A.C. Reader and others, Dan Flynn returned to Atlanta and served God and raised his children until about 1990, when God took him home--over forty years later!

Agathia and Bill's family and friends were planning to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary this May 25th.

--James S. Hardison

Allie Love Smith Gruver

(Sept. 23, 1904 - April 1, 1996.)

Jack Blaas

"Miss" Allie or "Aunt" Allie. The memorial service was at Wasson Memorial Chapel, Siloam Springs, Ark., April 5. Don Carlos Smith, a nephew, officiated. Don's opening remarks were, "I feel we are assembled here to honor the life of Allie Gruver rather than to mourn her death. She was an unusual person and lived her life on a higher plane than most."

Allie's father, Jacob Franklin (J.F.) Smith was a "pioneer" church of Christ preacher, and her mother, Maggie Garrison Smith was a faithful Christian wife and mother whose steadfast love supported her husband and children throughout her life. Living as one before the Lord, they imbued their children with the supreme importance of loving and serving Him with all "heart, mind, soul, and strength."

Many *Word and Work* readers will remember her husband, Brother Charles Gruver, for many years Christ's missionary to China. He fell asleep in Jesus a number of years ago. To them were born two sons, Charles and David. Charles now lives in New Mexico and David has preceded his mother into Christ's presence. The survivors are Charles and Cynthia Gruver, Beverly Gruver (David's widow), and their children Beth, Kara, and Benjamin. Also a brother, Virgil Smith, missionary in Brasilia, Brazil, S. America. And, of course, a host of friends whose lives have been blessed by having contact with Allie.

As a young woman, surrendered to Christ, and having heard the call of God, she came, in the '20s to serve Him at Portland Christian School. Though she was quite young, every pupil soon concluded that she *belonged* in the class and that that class *belonged* to her. She was a positive force for God to fulfill Christ's mission on earth through spreading abroad His Word, and was a great addition to the faculty at Portland where she taught 12 years. She aimed that each pupil under her stewardship be so taught and influenced as to find that "good and perfect will of God" for himself and to waste no time in beginning to walk in it. The Lord gave her favor with her students. They were motivated and learned to love the Word of God. Many of them became leaders in our churches, influencing others to follow Christ.

God used her to teach in numerous places. Her early years in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kentucky. After her marriage, she and Bro. Gruver taught in Africa: Haille Salassie's Ethiopia, African Inland Mission near Nairobi, Kenya; and Southern Rhodesia in mission schools. Another interesting time was when she taught Cherokee Indi-

ans near Talequah, Okla. She said, "It was like teaching in a foreign country!"

Finally, something like 30 years ago, she and Uncle Charles went to the Cookson Hills Christian School in Okla. close to Siloam Springs, Arkansas. This was a work of faith and labor of love for children who had very bad experiences in life with no way nor anyone to turn to for help. It was just the place for the Gruvers, and for many of the youth who turned up there. God's divine life and power became a reality to many of them through Charles and Allie's ministry. Several of the former residents and students testified at the memorial service how God's Spirit had ministered to them through Allie's earnest witness. NOW SHE'S HOME!

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

Be Sure To Read . . .

p.173 regarding the Goin' Fishing conference at Sellersburg.

Hardback Bound Volumes of W&W

For many decades at the end of each year all the W&Ws for that year would be bound into one volume. A few people have every volume from 1916 till now! But the costs of binding have skyrocketed so high recently that we are thinking of doing this only every other year, combining 2 years into 1 volume. Do you know of a good but inexpensive bookbinder?

Gems From Church Bulletins (not ours, of Course!)

"Don't let worry kill you--let the church help."

"On Thurs. nite there will be a potluck supper. Prayer and medication will follow."

"For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs."

"The Jones family will attend the funeral of Sue's brother, who died in Flint, Mich. tomorrow."

"Today there will be a meeting in the South and North ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends."

Then there was the little boy who was heard singing, "Microwave the boat ashore, alleluia."

Of More Than Passing Interest

Pornography is a very real threat to the future of our children and the nation. The American Family Association's new publication, God's Quiet Voice: John's Dilemma, a 16 page, 4-color comic book (includes a discussion page and puzzle) teaches youngsters how to make right decisions about pornography. It also focuses on the family/church relationship. The price scale for this booklet is: one copy \$2.00, 2 to 9 copies \$1.50 each, 10 to 49 \$1.00 each and 50 or more \$.75 each.

Other resources regarding pornography includes the following all for the price of \$2.00.: Intervention Brochure--how to help a porn addict who won't help himself; Outreach bookmarks--scripture references to help the addict; Resource list--book list and articles about porn addiction; Outreach Brochure--overview of mission of OutReach Divisions; and Edu-

ational Publications--Literature concerning porn addiction.

Order from: **American Family Association**, OutReach Division, P.O. Drawer 2440, Tupelo, MS 38803

PCHS Graduation

Sixteen young people graduated from Portland Christian High School in Louisville on May 31. Of the 16, twelve finished with academic honors, meaning that for the 4 years of high school they averaged 2.6 or higher on a 4.0 scale. And 4 of those 12 had high honors (an average of 3.51 or higher).

Even more important, there was a good spirit in this class & the whole school. 3 of the seniors received Christ as Lord and Savior this year, and a 4th was also immersed (he had turned to Christ earlier at his church but had not been taught about baptism). Many students engaged in various forms of Christian service activities, and several are going on a work-trip to Honduras this June. In addition, several of our faculty will return to Russia to lead workshops for teachers there on how to impart Bible teaching and Christian values in their subjects.

Your prayer & financial backing are appreciated & needed.

Excellent Film, Urgent Topic

Open Doors, a ministry that specializes in helping Christians in lands lacking freedom, has produced an outstanding video drama, **BEHIND THE SUN**. 56 minutes long, it presents vividly what it's like to convert from Islam to Christ in Muslim lands.

You may borrow this film for 30 days by writing P.O. Box 27001, Santa Ana, Ca 92799 or calling (714)531-6000. There is no set charge; you may distribute literature (supplied by Open Doors) to all who attend, or take a freewill offering. We showed it at Portland Church & also

in a history class at P.C.S. Many were stirred.

Pray For Hollace Sherwood,

who suffered a stroke in May. The last we heard, he still is not talking. For years he has spearheaded the High-Lysine Corn Project, sending high-nourishment food to poverty-stricken areas around the world. Pray for him, and his wife Ila, & this vital ministry.

More Info Re: "Christian Art" Bulletins

An order form for these weekly, full-color bulletins is found on our back cover. You may copy it or cut it off, fill it out & mail it to us. We'll take care of the rest. This will provide you with good bulletins, & provide us some income too--for W&W gets a commission on orders sent thru us. Here is what the bulletin publisher says about Front Page Imprinting Service: "For a very moderate cost, you can add a Personal touch to your Bulletins! Up to first 1,000 at \$7.50; additional 50s at 60 cents. For example: 100 bulletins each week for 13 weeks=1300 total. Cost \$7.50 for the first 1,000; \$3.60 for next 300; total imprint cost=\$11.10 for the 13 weeks. Minimum charge for 3 mcs.=\$7.50. THESE CHARGES ARE IN ADDITION TO THE SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE. Imprinting is limited to a maximum of 4 lines. Information submitted within 6 weeks of the beginning of the new quarter will not become effective until the following quarter."

Bulletin service is available only in the 48 contiguous states. Bulletins are not returnable for credit. Write us or call Louise Wells for more information: (502) 775-8243, evenings.

Locust St. Church

We wish to recognize two graduates this year. Lindy Covington who was baptized at Locust Street in Feb-

ruary received her B.S. in Early Childhood Development from E.T.S.U. on May 4th. Lindy will be returning home to Mississippi to await word about a teaching job for the fall. K.C. Richardson received a Masters of Divinity degree from Emmanuel School of Religion on June 6th. K.C. and his wife Angela have been attending Locust Street for several months now and have served the church in many ways. They will be headed back to California after graduation where K.C. hopes to begin his preaching ministry and Angela hopes to find a teaching job. We will miss these young people and all that they brought to our church! Keep all of them in your prayers.

Jennings, La.

Family Life Center Opens. Last week the keys to the new addition were given to us and just in time! Yesterday it was put to good use for the reception following the Jones-Cooper wedding. The contractors did their job well and now we must do ours--paying the loan. You are urged to take pride in this facility and remember that the Lord has given us the means to pay off the indebtedness. You may earmark your gifts for the Building Fund.

Maple Manor, Adult Division

Want List:

1. A gardener for our Courtyard and around the building. We have promise of some flowers being donated from a Nursery in the area.

2. A sound system for the Gathering Place, where we have church services.

Piedmont Church of Christ

Good News From Dallas! Mark Yarbrough has been known for many years as the young man that sang with the Revelators and 4 for 1, but now he has a new title, Dad! On April 19,

Mark's wife, Jennifer, gave birth to their daughter, Kayla Marie Yarbrough--their first child. Mark has also just completed his Master of Theology degree from Dallas Theological Seminary. He plans on starting his Ph.D. studies in about a year. Starting in the fall he will be teaching a few language (Greek) and Bible Exposition courses at Dallas Christian College. He is presently teaching night classes at D.C.C., as well as serving here at the Piedmont congregation. We rejoice in these blessings, and thank God.

Update on Richard Ramsey

Dear friends,

Thanks for the hundreds of cards, phone calls and gifts you have sent me. Your love and prayers have sustained me and Virginia in this stressful time.

Last November the doctors dropped a bombshell on me when he diagnosed me as being in advanced stages of multiple myeloma (bone cancer) with very little chance for treatment. I spent Christmas day and all of January in bed, in constant pain, praying to die. But the fractured bones have healed somewhat and I am now able to walk around the house some and sometimes can make it out to church services.

My medical treatment has included chemotherapy pills by mouth, radiation treatment and blood infusions. These have not stopped the cancer, which steadily eats away at my bones and blood. Radiation doctor says I could live two years. Chemo-therapy doctors won't speculate.

Thanks for your prayers and concern. Pray that the Lord use me to his glory whether by suffering or service.

-- A sinner saved by grace,

Richard Ramsey

49th LOUISVILLE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP WEEK

August 5-8, 1996

"MAKING CONNECTION WITH THOSE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH"

MONDAY, AUGUST 5

7:30 "Am I Buying Satan's Lie?" --Earl Mullins, Sr.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6

9:00 "Understanding The Non-Believer" --Earl Mullins, Sr.

10:20 "Preparing For Personal Soul Winning" --Marvin Phillips

11:20 "Shall We Go Forward Or Backward?" --Joseph Shulam

1:15 "Becoming A Contagious Christian" --Julius Hovan

7:30 "My Personal Responsibility To The Lost"--Marvin Phillips

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7

9:00 "What Shall We Do Now:?" --Joseph Shulam

10:20 "Lifestyle Evangelism" --Earl Mullins, Jr.

11:20 "Conversational Evangelism" --Julius Hovan

1:15 "Attitudes That Make Soul Winners" --Marvin Phillips

7:30 "Do I Really Believe The World Is Lost" --Julius Hovan

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8

9:00 "The Church The Lord Blesses" --Marvin Phillips

10:20 "Going Through The Open Door At The
End Of The Age With Israel As A Key" --Joseph Shulam

11:20 "The Place Of Prayer" --Julius Hovan

1:15 "Congregational Involvement In Evangel-
ism Using Both Traditional and Non-Trad-
itional Methods" --Earl Mullins, Jr.

7:30 "Jerusalem, Judea, The World; What Does
It Mean Evangelistically To Restore The
First Century Church?" --Joseph Shulam

**DAY SESSIONS: Portland Church of Christ,
2500 Portland Ave., Louisville, KY 40212**

**NIGHT SESSIONS: Sellersburg Church of Christ
211 South New Albany St., Sellersburg IN 47172**

Prayer time daily at 9:45 am. Lunch daily at 12:05.

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