

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

FEBRUARY, 1997

THE UNFINISHED TASK

2 UPCOMING CONFERENCES TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM

SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES SPRING SEMINAR

March 13-14 (Thur./Fri. Nights), 7:00 - 9:00
Southeast Church of Christ
1261 Taylorsville Rd., Louisville, KY

CHRISTIANS AND CURRENT MORAL ISSUES

Thurs. March 13

How Involved should I be & How should I be Involved? --Julius Hovan

Abortion: Who should Live? --Dr. Jim Broaddus

"Mercy Killing": Who should Die? -- Dr. Tom Schreiner

The Portland Christian High School Chorus will Sing.

Fri. March 14

How can we Minister to Prisoners? -- Chris Wood

Can we Minister to the Needy without Hurting Them?-- Bud Ridgeway

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RESTORATION LECTURESHIP of the Kentuckiana Consortium of Restoration Colleges

Tuesday, April 15, 1997
Louisville Bible College
Snyder Freeway at Beulah Church Road

NEW CHURCH EVANGELISM

10:00 Biblical Model for New Churches

11:15 Contemporary Church Planting

12:00 Lunch (freewill offering taken)

1:00 Applicable Church Growth Principles

Speaker: Ron Scott, Director, New Churches of
Christ Evangelism

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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THEME:

THE UNFINISHED TASK

Dennis L. Allen

The task of world evangelization is so great that it is obvious that no one group can carry it out alone. It was given to the whole church of the Lord and will only be carried out by Christ working through His whole body. . .

When we speak of "the unfinished task" what specifically do we mean? Jesus commanded us to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He also said this gospel of the kingdom would be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations before the end comes. It seems obvious that if there are people on earth of the age of accountability who have never heard the message of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ that our task is not yet finished, and yet it is not possible for us to say when the message has been fully preached. In the final analysis it is the God of the universe who does all things right who will decide. However, in the meantime we have been given the Great Commission and it is imperative that we work toward specific goals. The Lord Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

At present Satan holds whole peoples in bondage. Think of the Tibetans, the militant adherents of Islam, and on and on. There are those who need to devote themselves to reaching Muslims, others to Hindus, and still others to Buddhists. No one group can reach the whole world and certainly no one person. I cannot carry that responsibility. But I do have the responsibility to do what I can and to support and encourage others. God's heart is big enough to take in the whole world. As we become more like Him we will find our hearts being continually enlarged and our love will "abound more and more."

The vast complexity of the world today when we look at it realistically staggers the imagination. Think of the 6,676 languages of the world. What a vast debt we owe to the translators who have gone before us and the thousands who are now engaged in putting into writing for the first time languages of unreached people! Christian radio has also reached millions in closed countries who otherwise would not have heard. There is the ministry of Gospel Recording, prison ministry, and many others. We can thank God for each of them and rejoice in the manifold ways God is using today through His servants to make His Name known.

Modern technology is being put to use today in so many ways to speed the spread of the message. Computers are being effectively used to shorten the time required for translation projects. Through E-mail messages can be conveyed from remote outposts in seconds. Movies, TV, and videos are being effectively used to open new doors for the Gospel. Transportation and communication advances speed the progress of the good news. There is no place in the world today that you cannot reach in a relatively short time.

How should we view the efforts of others to accomplish this goal of completing the unfinished task? We may not agree with every method, approach, or emphasis, but we like Paul can rejoice that Christ is proclaimed and look for areas where we can cooperate with others. When we open our hearts to other believers and really get to know them we find much more common ground than we supposed when we remained aloof.

The largest network of Christians, Christian organizations, and Christian churches in the world today is an organization still unknown to most American Christians. It is not the World Council of Churches. It is rather the AD2000 and Beyond movement. It is better known in the two-thirds world than here in the USA. It is bound together by the goal, "A church for every people and the Gospel for every person by the year 2000." This goal was first proposed at a world level conference in Edinburgh in 1980. This slogan does not mean simply for one symbolic church to be established among every people group, but rather a church movement capable of propagating and edifying itself. The second half- "the gospel for every person"- means that every person within that people group has a reasonable opportunity to know Christ.

Because the term AD2000 is used, it should not be concluded that AD2000 is being set as the year of Christ's return. That day we cannot predict. Not is it being said we are sure the task will be finished by the year 2000, but rather by faith saying it can be done. This is harvest time. May we not be found sleeping when the fields are ripe.

The charts and figures on the following two pages reprinted from Mission Frontiers are worthy of careful consideration. They show the amazing growth of Christianity as well as what remains to be done. With God all things are possible!

THE GROWTH OF THE GOSPEL!

God Is Building His Church--Rapidly

Across the centuries, Bible-believing Christians have become an ever-larger proportion of world population. In AD1430 only one in one hundred was a Bible-believing Christian. Today, one in nine is. This huge body of real believers is growing at a rate of more than three times that of the world population!

Christianity is by far the fastest growing global religion--IF what is measured is Christianity's most significant type of growth--the growth in the number of those truly believing.

These figures do not indicate the level of penetration into the still-unreached peoples. They just report the overall progress of Christianity as a percentage of total world population.

Milestone Dates in the Growth of True Christianity

--At the dates indicated, a comparison of

- 1) the number of Bible-believing Christians and
- 2) the total number of people in the world:

One per hundred (1%) by AD 1430 (One to 99 after 1430 years)
Two per hundred (2%) by AD 1790 (One to 49 after 360 years)
Three per hundred (3%) by AD 1940 (One to 32 after 150 years)
Four per hundred (4%) by AD 1960 (One to 24 after 20 years)
Five per hundred (5%) by AD 1970 (One to 19 after 10 years)
Six per hundred (6%) by AD 1980 (One to 16 after 10 years)
Seven per hundred (7%) by AD 1983 (One to 13 after 3 years)
Eight per hundred (8%) by AD 1986 (One to 11 after 3 years)
Nine per hundred (9%) by AD 1989 (One to 10 after 3 years)
Ten per hundred (10%) by AD 1993 (One to 9 after 4 years)
Eleven per hundred (11%) AD 1995 (One to 8 after 2 years)

Bible-Believing Christians

This phrase refers to those people who read, believe, and obey the Bible--whether or not they are yet as active as they ought to be in helping out with world evangelization.

Where do these amazing numbers come from?

Major milestone dates down through history were supplied by Lausanne Statistics Task Force, headed by David Barrett, Ph.D., author of the World Christian Encyclopedia. The intermediate values here were then calculated (exponentially) for these specific milestone dates.

--AMAZING GROWTH--

All other types of statistics fall to the ground before the simple fact that, across the centuries, the number of humble people committed to God have continuously grown faster than the general population. Today, 600 million out of 5.7 billion people in the world are Bible-believing Christians. With the rapid increase in world population, many people cannot believe that the Kingdom of Christ is expanding even faster at over three times the rate of world population growth.

This amazing growth will gain even greater speed if just some of these 600 million Christians, located to about five

million congregations, would urge their congregation to "adopt" one of the 10,000 unreached peoples for prayer, giving and sending of missionaries. Five million congregations amount to at least 500 for each of the remaining unreached people groups! Although still unreached, work begun or is about to begin in well over half of these. Specific adoptions are being pursued by more and more congregations all over the world. Don't be left out of what God is doing through the growing Adopt-A-People movement. Call 818-398-2200 for information on how you can be involved.

God's Symphony of Effort

What CAN be done:

"A Church for Every People by the Year 2000"
and (in that sense) the Gospel for Every Person"

Communication Tools Employed	The Total Original Task as defined by tool used	=	Progress as of January 1995	+	What is left to do!
Satellite TV	7 "World" Languages		One "World" language now (English)		6 more languages to be on satellite
Major Missionary Radio	372 languages spoken by over 1 million people		170 major languages now broadcasted		202 languages yet to be broadcast
Film Ministry Campus Crusade's Jesus Film	1,154 languages spoken by over 50,000 people		315 sound tracks now		839 sound tracks to go
Scripture in Print Wycliffe and others	6,676 "Visual" languages		2,961 either have some scripture or don't "probably" need it		1,200 do need 2,513 possibly need Scripture (on paper)
People Lists Lists of names (sometimes "clusters" of unreached peoples)	12,000 "Ethno-politico-linguistic" peoples		9,500 no unreached peoples remaining within		2,500 yet to be approached
Audio Cassettes Gospel Recordings and others	14,000 "Audio" languages		4,588 now on cassette		9,412 yet to be put on cassette
Church Planting within Unreached Peoples--15% of missionaries involved	roughly 24,000 needing Church movements		roughly 13,000 now possess church movements		roughly 11,000 needing a church movement

These figures were checked as of January 1, 1995. Wycliffe's were published as of April 1994.

1. Note that all seven rows above are ways of looking at the tasks that are of real value. Nevertheless, it would be a great mistake to assume that any one row is THE answer to the Unfinished Task.

2. None of the "Task Remaining" numbers in the final column are exact. They may be exact quotes of someone else's guesses, but only as work with a given group actually gets going can we accurately assess how many sub-groups a given group may include.

However, all numbers are conservative. For example, only as clusters of unreached peoples are actually penetrated can anyone know the possibility of divergent sub-groups.

Therefore, along with the Lausanne Statistics Task Force, we list 11,000 in row 7 to make sure we do not underestimate what is left to be done. However, we agree with the AD2000 Movement's Assessment Task Force that a procedural goal of about 2,500 a "clusters" of groups still need to be approached! (see row 5)

Finally, while no one row can do the job all by itself, God is effectively using all rows at the same time. There is still the possibility that all seven goals may be attained by the year 2000. Mobilization is the primary issue.

--Ralph D. Winter, Ph. D

THY KINGDOM COME

Ralph D. Winter

There is a great deal of meaning in the purpose statement of the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement:

A Church for Every People and the Gospel for Every Person by the Year 2000

--No one can guarantee that this WILL happen.

--No one can guarantee that this WON'T happen.

But, it is still possible to say that this CAN happen!

AD 2000 leaders are truly sorry if some find it difficult to believe "it CAN happen." The end of the second millennium, December 31, 2000 is five years beyond January 1, 1996. A lot can be done in that amount of time, especially with God in charge.

However, just what are we talking about? Is it the completion of the Great Commission? No, no, no.

Is it the Return of Christ? No, no, no.

What kind of an achievement does this purpose statement imply?

AD 2000 and the Return of Christ

The AD 2000 Movement and Beyond is one organization girdling the globe speaking boldly about the purposes of God and the year 2000. But, this Movement does not pretend to suggest when Christ will return.

On that issue, the Bible clearly teaches that His Return will be unexpected for everyone. The good news is that to believers that Day won't be a damaging event--like a robber at midnight. But even for believers that Day will be unexpected (I Thess. 5:2). Jesus compared His return to "the days of Noah," and those will be the days of unanticipated terror for many, while the precise timing will be unexpected for everyone. Thus, the AD 2000 movement does not attempt to predict the unpredictable.

The Great Commission?

What about "The Completion of the Great Commission?" Is that the goal of the AD 2000 Movement? This, too, is off limits in official AD 2000 Movement documents. Of course, to complete the Great Commission is what we are all working for. But no one in AD 2000 is

bold enough to say for sure just what is implied by the completion of the Great Commission.

The AD 2000 Movement has wisely chosen a purpose statement which is eminently measurable--A Church for Every People and the Gospel for Every Person. As this booklet will show, this statement ought not to be torn in two--as if you can get the Gospel to every person without planting a church movement which is meaningful to every person. This booklet will show that goal to be as precise and measurable as possible. Thus the AD 2000 Movement's goal for the year 2000 is something which will be clearly evident--or not--by December 31st of AD 2000.

Let us not argue the wrong cause!

Meanwhile we must guard against emotional or illogical thinking.

What about those who scoff at the AD 2000 movement because they think we are talking about the Return of Christ? Tell them we are very excited about the Return of Christ, but that we are not confusing His Return with our measurable goal.

What about those who scoff at the idea of completing the Great Commission by the year 2000? They too misunderstand the specific goal definition of the AD 2000 Movement.

But some may still be confused. We simply must guard against saying, "We are sure it will be done." We must also recognize the folly of anyone unwise enough to say, "I am sure it won't be done." But we can still say, in faith, "I am sure it can be done."

By saying that we mean that our goal has never been a sure thing, and we also understand that reaching this goal will naturally get less likely as time passes. After all, what we have in mind that God wants to accomplish by the year 2000 may be close or far from His actual purposes. Yet, what he may decide to do by that time--or at that time--will to some extent depend upon what we and others do in his Name now and between the year 2000.

What CAN Happen In Five Years?

In our day, more can be done in five years time than in 20 years back in the time of the Student Volunteer Movement at the beginning of this century--if only because travel time is less than one thirtieth of what it was then. Other things are in our favor, too. A hundred years ago it was impossible to pick up the phone and call across the world. It was unthinkable for one person to talk to one billion people simultaneously--as Billy Graham has done.

Not only that, but the peoples of the world have been massively shuffled. They now have links to other peoples through an unprecedented amount of dispersion and mixing. Almost no one in the world today is completely cut off from Coca Cola or flashlight batteries or Singer sewing machines--or even VCRs--or the Gospel. Someone has figured that there may only be 200 peoples in the world where there are no believers at all. There may be almost no groups within which there are not key "bridge"-bilinguals.

At the closing meeting in Korea it is expected that after years of previous preparation 100,000 Korean young people alone will volunteer to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Even if there were 10,000 still-unreached people groups, that would mean ten missionaries for every one--sent from Korea alone.

Furthermore, our plans cannot even begin to predict or control revival fire. Is it not likely that the God Who has often blessed this world with revival in the past will employ that kind of fire again? It has been said that in a true revival God can do in 20 minutes what might otherwise take 20 years. Are we praying for revival? As I write this we are hearing reports of revival fires on dozens of college and seminary campuses as well as in many cities and in other places around the world.

Let no one scoff at what God can do!

GOD'S PURPOSE THROUGHOUT HISTORY REVEALED

John Holzman

Abraham's call in Genesis 12 is the first appearance of the Great Commission. Revelation tells the final outcome. Furthermore this activity of God is the major thread of all human history.

Some time ago John Holzman, better than anyone else, summed this staggering idea up in a brief, marvelously readable form. His Kingdom is coming. The meek will inherit the earth. --Editor

Don Richardson, the former missionary to Irian Jaya, found himself stuck in the middle of a hot debate a few years ago when he went back to visit his former home.

The Indonesian government is trying to ease the overcrowded conditions on Java by offering Javanese families who are willing to resettle in Irian Jaya a new home, two-and-a-half acres of cleared land, and seed for first year's crops.

The Irianese are understandably unhappy about the policy. The Javanese speak another language, and they are of a different race and religion (most Javanese are Muslim; Irianese are either Christian or animist). In order to soothe the anger of the Irianese, the Indonesian government said that, for every three Javanese families who moved to Irian Jaya, it would give one Irianese family a home, a parcel of cleared land, and seed.

The Christian leaders in Irian Jaya asked Richardson how they should counsel their people: "Should we encourage them to accept the government's offer?"

Richardson had the pastors turn to Acts 17:26 and 27: "From one man God made every nation of men that they should inhabit the whole earth. And He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live."

Richardson stopped reading at that point. "Gentlemen," he said, "who is moving these Javanese Muslims to Irian Jaya? Is it the Indonesian government? Is it Satan and the powers that control the Islamic faith? Is it God?"

The pastors didn't want to answer, but finally had to admit, "It is God."

"All right," Richardson said. "Continue reading. Acts 17:27. 'God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him.'

"Gentlemen, why are these Javanese Muslims moving to Irian Jaya? Is it so that they can convert you to their Islamic faith? Is it so they can steal your land and impoverish you? Is it so they can become Christians even as you are?"

The church leaders again were reluctant to admit the answer, but finally they said, "It's so they can become Christians."

"Gentlemen," Richardson concluded, "what should you say to your people?"

The church leaders decided they had to train their people and encourage them to be effective missionaries to Muslims. If they would take the government up on its offer, they would be planted in the midst of the Javanese Muslims and could pursue their missionary goals at government expense!

Don Richardson answered the Irianese Christians' question about what they should do by answering the prior, and perhaps more impor-

tant question of why--for them: Why are the Javanese Muslims moving into our territory?

We, too, must answer the question why as we are faced with decisions because of personalities, events, and realities that surround us.

God's Purpose in World History

Why are there wars, famines, ethnic cleansing, rockets, missiles, computer, and automobiles? Why are some people rich and other poor? Why are Christians in China, the Sudan, the Philippines and elsewhere being tortured for their faith? Why doesn't God simply put an end to this mess right now and rapture us out of here? Is there an underlying purpose to what happens in our world?

The Scriptures answer that last question in the affirmative. We are taught that, from the beginning, God's purpose has been to "bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ" (Eph. 1:10). Why? "That God might be all in all--that is, be everything to everyone, supreme, the indwelling and controlling factor of life" (I Cor. 15:28, Amplified).

The purpose of everything that happens, of every world ruler who has ever lived, of everything that has ever been invented and everything ever made is to exalt God "far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come" (Eph. 1:21).

God's purpose is to make His name known, to reveal His glories and to establish His kingdom among all peoples.

This purpose is something God wanted to fulfill through His people of the Old Testament; it is something He still wants to fulfill through His people today; and it is something He will yet fulfill through all events in history. Once we understand this and take it to heart, it will transform every facet of our lives.

God's Purpose in His Old Testament People

Genesis 12:1-3 is a foundational passage, a constitution, if you will, of God's people throughout the ages.

In it, God lays out for Abraham great blessings: a blessing of land (v.1); a promise of many descendants (v.2a); and a great name (v.2c). God also states in the most general terms possible: "I will bless you" (v.2b).

As we read further through the Bible, it becomes clear that this intent to bless really entails God giving Himself to Abraham to be his God: "I will be your God," He says, "and you will be My people."

"I will be with you." "I will never leave you or forsake you."

Most of us who have been brought up in Bible-believing churches know about these blessings God promised to Abraham and his descendants. We may not think of the specific blessings mentioned in Genesis 12, but we know that as Abraham was blessed, so are we blessed--and more.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ we are children of Abraham and heirs of the promises made to him. With all our knowledge of the blessings, however, our tendency is to forget the responsibilities that go along with blessings.

God states very clearly, "I will make your name great and you will be a blessing" (v.2). More specifically (v. 3): "I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

God blessed Abraham and His people of the Old Testament for a purpose: that they might bless others--"all nations."

Reading what many Bible scholars say, you'd think Abraham's blessing to the nations consists solely of his being the forefather of our Lord Jesus: "Abraham, eventually all the nations will be blessed through you because you're going to have a descendant 2000 years from now who will be the savior of the world."

The question is, is that truly all God had in mind?

Knowing God's character and the things He reveals about Himself throughout the rest of the Bible, I find that hard to believe.

Forgetting the Covenant

In Genesis 12:10-20, the very next section of Scripture, we read about a famine in the land of Canaan. Abraham decides to go down to Egypt with his wife Sarah.

What was Abraham doing in Genesis 12:13 when he told Sarah merely to indicate her blood relation and not her marital relationship with him? Was he trying to keep a blessing for himself or was he trying to give one away? Does the fact that he sought to deceive the Egyptians alter our view of the results in verses 16 and 20?

And what about verse 17? What about the "serious diseases" Pharaoh and his household suffered "because of Abram's wife Sarai"? Was it God's intention to curse Pharaoh through Abraham? "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse," said the Lord in verse 3. Had Pharaoh cursed Abraham that he should receive a curse?

I believe it was because Abraham failed in his responsibility to God that Pharaoh was cursed. It was Abraham's responsibility to bless the nations, but he was more concerned about keeping a blessing for himself: he didn't want to lose his life.

And so, instead of being a testimony to Pharaoh of God's grace, mercy, and truth; instead of showing forth God's glories, by fear and lack of faith, Abraham brought God's wrath upon the Egyptians and testified to Pharaoh that God was untrustworthy.

Ironically, Pharaoh, the Godless one, became an example of righteousness to Abraham the believer. "What have you done to me?" he said (Gen. 12:18). "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife?"

(You have done something that even we pagans do not do!)

Abraham's responsibility toward Pharaoh, the Egyptians, and, indeed, to all nations with whom he came into contact, was to bless them as he had been blessed--to make God's name known, to reveal His glories, and to establish His kingdom among them. In Genesis 12:10-20, he failed in his responsibility.

Paying Closer Attention

In Genesis 14, happily, Abraham paid closer attention to God's call upon his life. After returning from the battle in which he rescued his nephew, Lot, from Kedorlaomer, Abraham was given the opportunity to bless himself, to acquire wealth and fame at the expense of the Sodomites. He refused. Instead, he said (Gen. 14:22-23), "I have raised my hand to YHWH, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to you . . . so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.'"

What better testimony could be given concerning God's greatness, His glory, and His sovereign rule over the earth? Abraham testified concerning God's name ("YHWH") and his glories ("God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth"), and by his oath he testified that God is able to reward those who seek Him and, indeed, that His reward is more to be desired than anything a man might offer.

God's purpose for Abraham and His purpose for His Old Testament people as a whole was to make His name known, to reveal His glories, and to establish His kingdom in all the earth, among all nations.

God's Purpose in His New Testament People

In Matthew 28:18-20, a very familiar passage, we find what we might call the constitution of God's people of the New Testament. Yet though it is new, it is, really, merely a restatement of God's Old Testament constitution.

As with Abraham's covenant, this covenant contains a blessing and a responsibility. Jesus sandwiches the responsibility in the midst of the blessing.

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me," says Jesus. The portion of the blessing is the bottom slice of bread. The top slice is this: "I will be with you always even to the very end of the age."--It's the same blessing God gave Abraham and His descendants: "I will be your God and you shall be My people."

Sandwiched in the middle of this two-part blessing is the responsibility with which Christians today are so familiar. We are to make disciples of all "nations" or "peoples." The word for "peoples" in Greek is *ethne*. Ethnic is what we say today--ethnic groups.

Jesus says we are to baptize the peoples in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Put it this way: we are to help bring them into relationship with God by making His name known and revealing His glory among them.

It is God's purpose that, with the blessings He has given us, we are to make His name known among the nations.

But there is a second part to our responsibility. We are to teach the nations to obey everything God had commanded us. In other words, we are to establish God's kingdom. His rule, among them. We are to help the nations see that they are already subject to His authority; they must now acknowledge and submit to it with all their hearts.

God's purpose for us is that we will bless the nations by making His name known, revealing His glories, and establishing His kingdom among them.

History Prolonged to Bless the Nations

According to Revelation 5:9 and 7:9, God is actually prolonging history that His purpose may be accomplished. Revelation 5:9 describes the day Jesus brings His people to heaven. On that day there will be some from every tribe and language and people and nation blessing God, having been purchased to be His servants.

The Lamb is sitting upon His throne when the four living creatures and twenty-four elders fall down before Him and sing: "You are worthy to take the scroll . . . because . . . with our blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."

In 2 Peter 3:9 we are told God is holding back the day of judgment "not wanting any to perish but everyone to come to repentance."

And in Matthew 24:14 we read, "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations (all ethne) and then the end will come."

God is actually holding back the return of the Lord that he might save for Himself some from every tongue and tribe and people and nation.

God's purpose in His people of the Old Testament, His purpose in His people of the New, His purpose in all of history is that He might bless all nations, all peoples, all tribes, and all tongues. So what's the upshot? What difference do these insights make? I believe there are at least four things that each of us must do differently once we understand God's purpose in world history.

Blessing or Curse? A New View of Scripture

First, we will look at Scripture differently. As we read through all the accounts of the people of God of the Old and New Testaments we will ask a question: Are God's people here blessing the nations or cursing them? Are they trying to keep the blessing for themselves, or are they trying to give it away? And ignoring what His people are doing, what is God trying to do. Take the story of David and Goliath, for example. I heard a sermon not so long ago in which the preacher said something to the effect that, "God enabled David to kill a giant. God wants you to be able to kill the giants in your life too."

As far as I can tell, that preacher missed the whole point of 1 Samuel 17. Why did God tell us about David and Goliath? Was it so we would be unafraid to tackle the giants in our lives?

In 1 Samuel 17:45-47, David says to Goliath: "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of YHWH Almighty This day YHWH will hand you over to me . . . and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that YHWH saves, for the battle is YHWH's"

David's concern wasn't merely to slaughter a giant. He was concerned that God's name should be glorified in all the earth.

There are dozens of similar well-known passages that are commonly misinterpreted because God's purpose in world history is not taken into account.

David with Goliath, and Abraham with the Egyptians are only two examples. I discovered only a year or so ago that the book of Daniel is a missionary biography through and through. I would have never guessed it from the stories I was told in Sunday school.

But consider the stories of Jonah and Samson, Naaman's servant girl, and the Israelite people in their Babylonian captivity. They are all the stories of missionaries when read in the light of God's purpose in world history. Would you have ever guessed that from the things you've been taught? I wouldn't!

We need to ask ourselves as we read: To what lengths is God going to enable His people to fulfill their responsibilities? What means does He use? What attitudes do God's people show in response?

We need to look at Scripture differently.

A New View of History

After Scripture itself, we need to look at history and current events differently. We need to ask not, who won? and Who lost? Our concern must certainly extend not merely to Who may currently be in danger?

Instead, we need to focus upon God's purpose: What is He trying to accomplish? What does He want to achieve through this battle? What does He want to happen as a result of this famine or war? Why has He set this leader in charge of this nation? What is God trying to do? How is He seeking to bless the nations?

Take the news items you read about in the newspaper. Can you see God's hand at work? What is He trying to accomplish? Are you willing even to look for His hand?

What about the Islamic revolution that took place in Iran, for instance. Why would God raise up the Ayatollah Khomeini and allow this Islamic dictatorship to continue? All that suffering! Why?

A leader of a mission to Muslims went through Iran a few years ago. He spoke to the Christian leaders in that country and could not believe what they were saying.

"Khomeini is the greatest blessing we've ever experienced!" they said. The mission leader heard this comment not just once, but many times--in widely separated parts of the country.

Khomeini is the greatest blessing the church in Iran has ever experienced. WHAT?!?

"Yes!" said the Christians. "He has shown Islam for what it truly is--and Muslims are turning to Christ in greater numbers than ever before in the history of Iran."

There are now churches in Iran with 50 and 70 percent of their members being converts from Islam. Never before has that occurred. More people are becoming Christians out of the Islamic religion than from those who were born into Christian families! We need to look at history from a different perspective.

Transformed Prayers

Our prayers should be different if we understand God's purpose in history. As we look at international crises and terrorism; as we look at Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq and Iran; as we look at oil prices and inflations; as we consider what to do about depressions, murders, rapes, and whatever else in the world bothers us, we should be praying not, "O Lord! Save us from these troubles!" But rather, "Father, may Your name be glorified, and your kingdom established in all the earth. Use this event--use these people in this situation--to bring glory to Your name."

Just days before Saigon fell, a pastor in South Vietnam said to a Christian missionary who was preparing to leave, "Praise God, the Communists are coming!"

"What?!!" said the missionary. "Praise God the Communists are coming?!! Do you know what you're saying? You're likely to be slaughtered!"

"Yes," said the pastor. "But I have prayed for years that I might have the opportunity to witness to these people and God has kept me from going to them. Now He is bringing them to me."

Praise God the Communists are coming!

Can you pray like that? To be honest, I have a hard time even imagining myself doing that. But God wants us to be looking to see what He is about in our world. And as we look at what's happening, our prayers need to be transformed.

A New View of Life

The story is told of a man who walked into a quarry. "What are you doing?" he asked one of the workers there.

"Can't you see?" the man replied. "I'm chiseling stone."

And another stonecutter: "What are you doing?"

"Just trying to make a living."

A third man was asked, "What are you doing?"

"I'm building a great cathedral."

On the surface, each of the workmen was doing the same thing. Underneath, they were engaged in very different enterprises! We need to see our lives from a new perspective.

You're involved at home with children. What are you doing? Washing diapers? Caring for your family? Trying to give them a better future than you had? Raising up soldiers for Christ, world-changers, future blessings to the nations?

Dr. Walter Frank tells of a businessman in the Midwest. On the wall of the lobby as you walk into his company there is a large map of the world. Above the map it says, "The Great Commission is not an option. It is a command." On that map there are 42 lights placed in strategic locations around the world.

A visitor asked this businessman, "What is the meaning of your map?"

He replied, "Each light represents one of my field representatives. I'm out to change my world. This business supports 42 missionaries. They're my field representatives."

What difference could such a perspective make upon the work we do! How differently would we approach our jobs, our families, our homes, schools, and churches! What is God's purpose in your life? Are you going to merely try to make a "success" for yourself and keep the blessings with which God has blessed you? Or are you going to give them away?

God's purpose in His people of the Old Testament; His purpose in His people of the New; His purpose in all the events of history--in raising peoples up, in casting them down, in moving them from one part of the world to another; His purpose in your life is to make His name known, to reveal His glories, and to establish His kingdom among the nations.

Is that the purpose for which you will live your life?

"Whoever finds his life will lose it," Jesus said, "but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Mt. 10:39).

Reprinted from the June 1987 issue of **Mission Frontiers**.

WORSHIP OF THE NATIONS

John Piper

God's great goal in and throughout all of history is to uphold and display the glory of His name for the enjoyment of His people from all the nations. The question now is: why does God pursue the goal of displaying His glory by focusing the missionary task on all the peoples of the world? How does this missionary aim serve best to achieve God's goal?

The first thing we notice in pondering this question is how the ultimate goal of God's glory is confirmed in the cluster of tests that focus missionary attention on the people groups of the world.

For example, Paul said that his apostleship was given "to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of [Christ's] name among all the nations" (Romans 1:5). Missions is for the glory of Christ! Its goal is to reestablish the supremacy of Christ among the peoples of the world. Similarly in Romans 15:9 Paul says that Christ did his own missionary work and inspired Paul's "in order that the nations might glorify God for His mercy." So the goal of Christ's mission and ours is that God might be glorified by the nations as they experience his mercy. Accordingly, the consummation of missions is described in Revelation 5:9 as persons from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation worshipping the Lamb and declaring the infinite worth of His glory. All of this is in accord with the repeated Old Testament calls to "Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples!" (Psalm 96:3) Truly, the goal of missions is the glory of God!

Intended and Eternal Diversity

We also need to notice, as we ponder this question, that the diversity of the nations has its creation and consummation in the will of God. Its origin was neither accident nor evil. Its future is eternal: the diversity will never be replaced by uniformity. The evidence for this is found in Acts 17:26 and Revelation 21:3.

To the Athenians Paul said, "[God] made from one every nation of men (pan ethnos anthropon) to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation."

This means that the origin of peoples is not in spite of, but because of God's will and plan. He made the nations of men. He set them in their place. And He determines the duration of their existence. The diversity of the nations is God's idea. Therefore, for whatever reason He focuses the missionary task on all the nations, it is not a response to an

accident of history. It is rooted in the purpose God had when He determined to make the nations in the first place.

God's purpose to have diversity among nations is not a temporary one only for this age. In spite of the resistance of most English versions, the standard Greek texts of the New Testament now agree that the original wording of Revelation 21:3 requires the translation: "and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, Behold the dwelling of God is with men, and He will dwell with them and they will be His peoples," and not "His people" [singular].

What John is saying here is that in the new heavens and the new earth, the humanity described in Revelation 5:9 and 7:9 will be preserved: persons ransomed by the blood of Christ "from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." This diversity will not disappear in the new heavens and the new earth. God willed it from the beginning. It has always had a permanent place in His plan.

How Diversity Magnifies God

Now, we can ask the question: How does God's focus on the diversity of the peoples advance His purpose to be glorified in His creation?

As I have tried to reflect Biblically on this question at least four answers have emerged.

First, there is a beauty and power of praise that comes from unity in diversity that is greater than that which comes from unity alone.

Psalm 96:3-4 connects the evangelizing of the peoples with the quality of praise that God deserves. "Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. He is to be feared above all gods."

Notice the word "for." The extraordinary greatness of the praise which the Lord should receive is the ground and impetus of our mission to all the nations.

I infer from this that the beauty and power of praise that will come to the Lord from the diversity of the nations are greater than the beauty and power that would come to Him if the chorus of the redeemed were culturally uniform. The reason for this can be seen in the analogy of a choir. More depth of beauty is felt from a choir that sings in parts than from a choir that only sings in unison. Unity in diversity is more beautiful and more powerful than the unity of uniformity. This carries over to the untold differences that exist between the peoples of the world. When their diversity unites in worship to God, the beauty of their praise will echo the depth and greatness of God's beauty far more exceedingly than if the redeemed were from only one or just a few different people groups

Second, the fame and the greatness and worth of an object of beauty increases in proportion to the diversity of those who recognize its beauty. If a work of art is regarded as great among a small and like-minded group of people, but not by anyone else, the art is probably not truly great. It's qualities are such that it does not appeal to the deep universals in our hearts but only to provincial biases. But if a work of art continues to win more and more admirers not only across cultures but also across decades and centuries, then it's greatness is irresistibly manifested. Thus when Paul says, "Praise the Lord all nations, let all the peoples praise Him" (Romans 15:11). He is saying that there is something about God that is so universally praiseworthy and so profoundly beautiful and so comprehensively worthy and so deeply satisfying that God will find passionate admirers in every diverse people group in the world. His true greatness will be manifest in the breadth of the diversity of those who perceive and cherish His beauty. His excellence will be shown to be higher and deeper than the parochial preferences that make us happy most of the time. His appeal will be to the deepest, highest, largest capacities of the human soul. Thus the diversity of the source of admiration will testify to His incomparable glory!

Third, the strength and wisdom and love of a leader is magnified in proportion to the diversity of people He can inspire to follow Him with joy. If you can only lead a small, uniform group of people, your leadership qualities are not as great as if you can win a following from a large group of diverse people.

Paul's understanding of what is happening in his missionary work among the nations is that Christ is demonstrating his greatness in winning obedience from all the people of the world: "I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has wrought through me to win obedience from the nations" (Rom. 15:18). It is not Paul's missionary expertise that is being magnified as more and more diverse peoples choose to follow Christ. Rather, it is the greatness of Christ that is magnified. He is showing himself superior to all other leaders.

The last phrase of Psalm 96:3 shows the leadership competition that is going on in world missions. "Declare his glory among the nations . . . because in this way He will show His superiority over all other gods that make pretentious claims to lead the peoples. The more diverse the people groups who forsake their gods to follow the true God, the more visible is God's superiority over all His competitors!

By focusing on all the people groups of the world, God undercuts ethnocentric pride and puts all people back upon His free grace rather than any distinctive of their own. This is what Paul was emphasizing in Acts 17:26 when he said to the proud citizens of Athens, "[God] made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation." F. F. Bruce points out that "The Athenians . . . pride themselves

on being. . . sprung from the soil of their native Attica . . . They were the only Greeks on the European mainland who had no tradition of their ancestors coming into Greece; they belonged to the earliest wave of Greek immigration."

To this boast Paul countered: you and the Barbarians and the Jews and the Romans all came from the same origin. And you came by God's will, not your own; and the time and place of your existence is in God's hand. Every time God expresses His missionary focus on all the nations he cuts the nerve of ethnocentric pride. It's a humbling thing to discover that God does not choose our people group because of any distinctives of worth, but rather that we might double our joy in Him by being a means of bringing all the other groups into the same joy.

Humility is the flip side of giving God all the glory. Humility means revelling in His grace, not our goodness. In pressing us on to all the peoples God is pressing us further into the humblest and deepest experience of His grace, and weaning us more and more from our ingrained pride. In doing this He is preparing for Himself a people--from all the peoples--who will be able to worship Him with free and "white-hot" admiration!

Conclusion

The ultimate goal of God in all of history is to uphold and display His glory for the enjoyment of the redeemed from every tribe and tongue and people and nations. His goal is the gladness of His people because God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.

Delight is a higher tribute than duty. The chief end of God is to glorify God and enjoy His glory forever. Since His glory is magnified most in the God-centered passions of His joyful people, God's self-exultation and our jubilation are one. The greatest news in all the world is that God's ultimate aim to be glorified and man's aim to be satisfied are not at odds.

Therefore the church is bound to engage with the Lord of Glory in His cause. It is our unspeakable privilege to be caught up with him in the greatest movements in history--the ingathering of the elect "from all tribes and tongues and peoples and nations" until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and all Israel is saved, and the Son of Man descends with power and great glory as King of Kings and Lord of lords and the earth is full of the knowledge of His glory as the waters cover the sea for ever and ever. Then the supremacy of Christ will be manifest to all and He will deliver the kingdom to God the Father and God will be all in all!

[This article is the compilation of excerpts from John Piper's book, **Let the Nations Be Glad** Reprinted by permission of *Baker Books*.]

"To Be Or Not To Be . . ."

Richard Ramsey

"To be or not to be--that is the question." Thus did Hamlet, prince of Denmark, begin his famous soliloquy on death in the Shakespearian tragedy that bears his name.

Hamlet weighed the certain troubles of life against the unknown risks of death. In addition to the uncertainties of life beyond death there was the added fear of a guilty conscience that makes us dread facing the consequences of our sins.

Sooner or later all of us will have to face the decision: is life preferable to death? If not for ourselves, at least for a loved one, most of us have already had to decide whether to "pull the plug", and let a loved one die, or to keep on adding machine after machine in an effort to postpone the funeral a few more days. And for those of us with a terminal and painful illness it is a daily decision, "to be or not to be . . ."

The Apostle Paul found no difficulty with this question. He preferred death: "to depart and be with Christ is far better." Yet he chose to continue living in order to be of help to others. See Phil. 1:23-24.

But, how can we end this life? To most of my readers there is a horror of euthanasia, murder, abortion, suicide, or other forms of killing people. But we make allowance for war, capitol punishment, heart transplants, and various forms of death by default (as not treating hopelessly deformed infants). Nor can we draw dogmatic conclusions from the four cases of suicide in the Bible. And we hurriedly pass over the cases of human sacrifice (princes of Israel in time of Moses, Abraham's offering of Isaac, Jephthah's daughter, seven descendants of Saul in time of David).

No, this article is not dealing with those acts of death by the hand of man. Our question deals only with the question of whether or not it is desirable to withhold medical treatment from a dying person. We would not take upon ourselves the "coup do gras" and be responsible for ending their suffering. But, why not let God and nature bring an end to the patient's suffering?

A few months ago an internationally famous clergyman chose to forego medical treatment for cancer and to die at home. His end came fairly fast and peacefully serene, "death with dignity"--in contrast to the months of agony that would have been his if he had chosen to prolong this life on earth by the usual procedures of chemotherapy, radiation, blood transfusions, and, perhaps, bone marrow transplants. His answer to the dilemma "to be or not to be" was "not to be".

Question: Was his refusal to take medication the brave act of a hero of the faith, who faced death without flinching--or was it the despicable act of a cringing coward who could not endure the suffering of this present world?

Three times in the past year I have faced the question of "to be or not to be". The latest test was that I ushered in the New Year 1997 by going to the hospital for three units of blood. Without the blood transfusion my life expectancy was two months. By accepting the blood and further chemotherapy I have "contracted", so to speak, for a further extension of life on earth, with its increasing pain and frustrations, when I could be enjoying the bliss of being at home with Jesus.

"To be or not to be?" I cannot answer that question for myself, much less for you. I will simply say "Amen" to Paul's words in Romans 14:8. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

[Note from the editor: Bro. Ramsey's personal reaction may have aroused in our readers an experience or opinion which you would like to share with us. If so, send your response to W&W and let us know what your answer is to the question, "To be or not to be?" Anyone wishing to correspond with Bro. Ramsey himself may reach him at P.O. Box 2491, Hammond, LA 70404.]

PRAYER AND PRAISE

Robert & Joy Garrett, Zimbabwe

Thank God for:

- The spiritual growth in our young people through the work of the Bible Camps
- For the abundant rain of the past season

Pray for:

- The completion of Kuwadzana church building
- The brickmaking for the boy's dormitory of the Rockwood Park
- For a proper church site at Epworth and Zengeza
- Mature Spirit-filled leadership in all the congregations
- The Lord to raise up more full time evangelists
- For the believers to grow in the Lord, to be filled with his Spirit, and to evangelize their country

- Repairs and maintenance of the trucks-busses
- God to use the camps at Rockwood Bible Camp to bring believers closer to him and to reach the unsaved
- God to raise up the resources needed to begin a bible school where leaders can have more intensive Bible training. Teachers are especially needed for this. Teachers could be staffed by persons on short tours of two to three months or longer.
- God to send witnesses of His Gospel to the leaders in Zimbabwe's Government

Michiya Nakahara, Shizuoka City, Japan

Thanksgivings:

Having the pavement completed on the church alley. It has cost us about \$2,000.00, but our senior Christian sisters now feel much more safe walking in the alley. (The church building sits off the street a good ways since land is at a premium. The only access to it is through an alley. This alley has now been paved.)

The daughter of one of our oldest members has returned to church for the first time in 20 years. Pray for her.

We now have a brand new toddlers class during the church service and have three regular attendants.

A seminary student from Evangelical School of Japan in Tokyo has chosen our congregation to work as an internship placement. We are very excited and we are expecting him to join us in August.

Prayer Requests:

We are planning our annual church seminar again to be held on August 4. The theme for this year is to find the best methods of evangelism unique to our members and our Church. Please pray.

We are still very prayerful about purchasing a piece of property about 500 sq. ft. in size. By having this small piece of land, we will be able to make limited parking space for our members. We have none at present and this presents a real problem. However, land is very expensive. Pray with us about what to do. This land has recently become available to purchase.

Central Bible College, Manila

A fire caused by faulty electrical wiring at Quiricada was fortunately put out before it got out of control. Electricity has now been restored after several months without power.

The building is in such bad condition that a new building is imperative. It is hoped that construction can start on the first phase soon, using the back part while construction is going on. Pray that needed funds may be raised up locally and abroad as needed and that wisdom will be given in all decisions.

Pray for Roberto Abella, CBC's president, and all faculty and board members. Pray also for the Christian Magazine brother Abella edits.

Nemisio & Myrna Auxtero, Philippines

The Auxteros at present work in Manila, but still supervise the work in Bohol where there are 25 churches and outreaches including a small Bible college of 20 students and two Christian schools. In Manila, prayer is requested for the following outreaches:

1. Las Pinas - a relocation site for squatters. 10 faithful mothers attend our Bible studies; also visitors from time to time. They are experiencing persecution for their faith. They would like to construct a small meeting place there.

2. We have two home Bible studies in the vicinity of the church

3. We teach God's word before distributing food to the poor, three times a week

VOICES from the FIELDS

George Galanis

Greece

November 12, 1996

I apologize for not having written to you earlier. I felt unable to sit down to write due to my wife's serious crisis of her disease.

I have had an operation on my prostate on June 25, 1996. I feel very well now. All the problems are gone. My wife's health condition is going from bad to worse. Every morning both of her feet hurt very badly for thirty minutes and we cannot help her. We have to wait until it gets released by itself. May God have mercy on her and me.

Robert And Joy Garrett Ruwa, Zimbabwe January, 1997

New Year's Day, 1997: The Harare area churches started the new year with a great day of worship and fellowship. Despite our transportation difficulties, some 500 made it to Rockwood for an all day celebration in sermon, song, prayer and a fellowship meal. I was asked to bring the message. We have a speaker system, but halfway into the message it started to pour rain, the electricity went off and we were reduce to the old fashioned lung power. Because of the sound of the rain, those in the back of the hall could not hear very well.

Worse yet, the downpour disrupted the preparations for the meal. It is not easy to cook for 500 people over open wood fires in a tropical downpour! We do have a propane gas stove in the kitchen so that saved the day. My next project must be to erect some type of permanent open-sided shelter for the outdoor kitchen. They much prefer to cook over the open wood fire. I had made an enormous iron grid on legs for them to cook over. It is three feet three inches wide and seven feet long. It stands up about 16 inches from the ground so there is room to push logs under. It looks like an iron bedstead without headboard or footboard. We call it King Og's Bedstead (Deuteronomy 3:1-11) even though his bedstead was twice as big. Although the cooks were drenched, they still managed to prepare a good meal for that crowd.

We were thankful for the rain. So far the rains, although starting late, have been very good. The rains last season also started late but were enough to keep the wells through the dry season. We were able to make brick-and that takes a lot of water with the pump going most of the day.

The foundations have been completed for the boys' dormitory. Trenches were dug, concrete footings poured and the brick foundation walls built up to floor level. Backfilling is now in progress and as soon as that is completed we can pour the concrete floor slab. Because of the slope of the ground--almost two feet from back to front--it will take much fill. From previous experience I have found it wise to have the floor level at least four inches above the existing ground level at its (ground level's) highest point.

Today's newspaper reported a massive price increase on cement. We were paying \$6.00 per bag. Now we will have to pay \$8.00. It will require 50 to 60 bags for the floor slab, another 50 for the brickwork and another 60 for the floor finishing and plastering, plus another 20 for the septic tank. So, 190 bags at \$8.00 is \$1,520 for cement alone.

Fortunately, we are able to make our own bricks. We made 26,000 bricks last year. The cost of labor plus coal to fire the bricks brought the cost to near \$25.00 per thousand. Commercial bricks would cost us

\$85.00 per thousand, before the cost of delivery is added in. Delivered cost would be somewhere more than \$110.00 per thousand.

Bro. Khumalo and his wife came down from Bulawayo for some Bible instruction. He had said he wanted teaching, so I invited him to come and stay for a while and I would give him some lessons. He is a secondary school teacher. They received over a week's instruction from Priscilla (Joy) and Aquila (Robert). Joy taught them around the dining table in the afternoons while I had more formal sessions in the mornings. We were joined in the morning sessions by several others from Harare. They requested lessons concerning the coming of our Lord and other unfulfilled prophecy. They demonstrated a great thirst for the Word that made it a pleasure to teach them.

Polding & Grace Jabian, Mindanao, Philippines

[Polding graduated from Central Bible Institute in Manila, and has been a missionary to tribespeople for many years. Recently they began work among the Subanen tribe.]

May we share with you our endeavor to evangelize the Subanens of Misamis Occidental, Mindanao. The Subanens of Misamis Occidental are semi nomadic. They transfer from one place to another in search for virgin land and forest for livelihood. Most of them are extremely indigent. They live in very remote areas where only humans and animals could pass the foot trails. (No cars) They exist through small farms planted with rice or corn. Their second means of livelihood is basket-weaving.

At the time our ministries among the Subanens (Visayan-speaking) and Visayans are yet very few. Home bible studies have been started in three villages. Home evangelism has also been done in Sitio Tipan. Lord willing we shall visit another remote village called Penacio where most of the residents are still Subanen-speaking. But a friend of ours informed us that there are rebels in that village. How we pray for God's special protection.

Although summer is fast approaching it still rains almost everyday here in Misamis Occidental, Mindanao. In fact, it rained overnight one Sunday, January 12, which caused a flood resulting in the death of some victims while others are homeless because the flood drifted their houses away. Prior to this event, sometime in December another big flood coupled with a high tide destroyed 7 small houses in the Subanen village of Catadman, Ozamiz City. Until this moment the residents in that village are still in need of some assistance. We have three families as Bible Study contacts in the said village.

Looking back over 1996 we praise the Lord for:

1. Continuous protection and provision for us in the field.

2. He enabled me (Pol) to travel to remote Subanen areas.

3. He enabled us to hold Bible studies and make more contacts both near and far.

4. He enabled us to adjust to very tough situations.

5. He protected our kids from physical illnesses.

As we look ahead to 1997 it is our prayer that:

1. We may have a renewed spiritual upliftment.

2. We could meet our goals in evangelism by much prayer and dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

3. We may double our Bible studies and make more contacts.

4. We would be able to study, research and prepare for mass evangelism which would be conducted within our first term.

Dave & Linda Moldez

Novaliches, Philippines

There is indeed a great harvest still in the Phil. Last Sunday we organized teams to do house to house evangelism. As a result 14 accepted the Lord as their Savior and Lord and two houses were open for Evangelistic Bible Study.

I feel that there is a great need to train more workers. Every Sunday evening, at least 20 students attend our Training by extension here at Novaliches. This is credited at CBC too.

My brother-in-law, Romeo Cadut went to be with the Lord lately. He left two local churches that needs pastoral ministry and a family of three children. One stays with us most of the time now.

My two children are growing and thank God that they do not follow the ways of the world. They are also active in the local church especially in the music ministry.

Please pray for us physically. Though the inner man is renewed daily yet sometimes we can not cope physically the many works we have to do for the Lord because of physical weakness and sickness. For sure he will raise others when our works are finished.

The mission fund helps our bible and literature needs. We are praying that we can buy Tagalog books and training materials for workers who do not understand so much English.

It also helps the need to get more bibles from the Bible League. Praise God it is of a low price. As we go out we also buy Tagalog Christian tracts to give to people on the streets. Next month we hope to saturate an area with gospel tracts and offer correspondence and bibles to homes.

For the last two months, we have the opportunity to meet more people and share to them the message of salvation. At least 30 people have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord as we share to them the gospel. This month I was able to conduct three funeral services and challenge people to receive Christ as Lord and Savior. There's also a girl who seemed to be bothered by an evil spirit. Praise God that after praying for her and leading her to accept Christ, she became normal.

Praise God also for 30 homes that are open. Once a week, groups meet in these homes for worship, witness and study of God's word. It is a joy to visit these homes and give encouragement and training for the cell group leaders from time to time.

Praise God also for we are able to finish another semester at Central Bible College. Praise God for students who have grown in their faith and knowledge of Christ and now are more equipped for the ministry. One of them is Brother Andy whom I am presently training to become the pastor of another local church that was planted at Calocan.

Tim, Dawn, & Lauren Yates

Malawi, Africa

What a fantastic way to celebrate our first year in Malawi. On August 10, 1996 we celebrated our one year anniversary of arriving in Malawi and on August 15, 1996 we picked up Mom and Grandma (Tim's side) from the airport in Blantyre. While I write this, they are on their third week of a three week visit.

It has been really encouraging to us to have visitors from the States, especially when they are of our own family.

Living in Malawi, has taught me many things. I have grown to appreciate the hard work these people go to just to survive. I have not once heard anyone complain about it. We have had a good first year here in Malawi and we are looking forward to the wonderful things God will do here this year.

I would like to mention again the need that the churches here have for roofs. The rainy season is upon us and many buildings are in danger of falling down.

If you or your church would like to help a church or group of churches, please contact Don Dugan at the address at the end of the newsletter. Each church roof is about \$500.

Malawi Christian Mission
P.O. Box 4186
South Daytona, FL 32121

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

Ladies, Plan Ahead

The annual Ladies Inspiration Day will be held on April 26th at Borden, IN this year. Set aside that time, sisters, and stay tuned for more information.

Letters of Interest From Overseas

From New Zealand: "I am the minister at the South Auckland Church of Christ. As a young minister of the gospel I have found Word & Work both insightful and interesting. I would like to subscribe for the next two years and also purchase the July - Nov '96 issues. Robert McIntosh, Auckland."

From India: "I am a Bible college graduate and working as a Lecturer in English department. . . and also a faculty member of Christian Bible College. . . I am pleasantly surprised to see your ad in the Christian Chronicle. I thought you belong to the "Pre-millennial" group. From various

brotherhood publications I had learnt. . . that the premil churches are not fellowshipped by the "mainstream" churches of Christ. I have not read any material vindicating the premil. position. . . "

Both these and a number of other letters resulted from our offer (in an ad) to send 2 free copies of W&W to anyone requesting them. We'll be glad to send them to anyone whose name and address you send us.

50 Years Ago in Japan

"Sorry I have to miss the Pepperdine Lectures in April; I am scheduled to be in Japan that same week participating with my Japanese brethren in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the resumption of missionary work in Japan [after WWII]. . . Jeri and I accompanied brother O. D. Bixler to Japan in Oct. 1947. It's hard to believe that was almost 50 years ago! --Harry Robert Fox

Editor's Note: It was a joy to resume contact with Bro. Fox at the '96 Pepperdine Bible Lectures. Ruth and I will attend this year, too. I have even been asked to teach a class session, on the topic, "Should Doctrinal Differences Divide Christians?" We hope to see a number of you readers there at Malibu from April 29 - May 2.

December in Japan

Bro. Moto Nomura sends thanks to all who prayed for him re: his recent surgery. He is recovering fairly well, though there are still some annoying aftereffects. He also will need another operation later, this time for gallstones, if my memory is correct.

While in the hospital he was refreshed and touched by listening to Handel's Messiah, especially "His Yoke is Easy and His Burden is Light." "On Christmas day they sang Jingle Bells at the hospital, but no one here knows Jesus as their Saviour. I must tell the people here that His Yoke is easy & His burden is light."

Promise Keepers in '97

During this year the Promise Keepers movement is committed to hosting up to 22 men's conferences, with the theme The Making of a Godly Man. On the Friday of each conference they will host special sessions for ministers, with the theme How to Become an Agent of Revival. All this will culminate in a gathering in Washington D. C. on Oct. 4: "Stand in the Gap." A PK letter concludes: "We believe that God is calling the Church to

come together on our knees in humility, demonstrating our poverty before God. If we repent of our personal and corporate sin, God may have pity and even leave a blessing for us (Joel 2:14)."

Bulletin Bloopers (Not ours, of course!)

"Next Sunday we will have Brother ----visiting while our minister is away. It will be a real treat to hear a good sermon."

"Remember to pray for those who are sick of our church."

On "Furlough" from the Solomon Islands

James & Karen Ashley, and Kent, Philip and Susan are staying at 3380 Lakeview Rd., Midlothian, TX 76065. Both James and Karen taught various courses to Wycliffe Bible Translators' prospective missionaries last semester. Karen teaches this semester too (phonetics & phonology!) but James has returned to checking their translation into the Sa'a language. His goal is to get John's gospel and the Epistles revised before June. Their Sa'a co-translator David, in the Solomon Islands, is working on the rough draft of the book of Psalms, while another helper works on Acts and I & II Timothy.

The Ashleys hope to visit the Kentuckiana area during June, and return to the Solomons in late summer, probably. They ask prayer for an important decision: should Kent, their oldest son, be home schooled during the next 2 years there (as he has till now),

or go to boarding school? He's in the 10th grade this year.

Youth Seminars with Sonny Childs

The Sellersburg Church of Christ, in cooperation with the Sonny Childs Ministry, is conducting a series of seminars for the youth. We invite any youth of our fellow churches to come and hear Brother Sonny and the message he has for our young people. Below is a schedule showing dates for March - May, and the topics to be covered.

March 8th -Movies, Music & Main Street The Selections, Standards

April 12th --Drugs The Good Side, The Bad Side

May 10th -- Is There a God? Scientific Evidence, Prophetic Evidence

All Sessions Will Have An Open Discussion Time.

The location is the Christian Center at the Sellersburg Church of Christ, 211 South New Albany Street, Sellersburg, IN. The seminars begin at 9:00 am and will end around 1pm. Following the seminars there will be an ice cream social and activities in the gym & youth center.

If you want the topics and dates for June - December, call Brother Dale Offutt at (812) 246-2694.

From Ingallwood Echoes (Dec. 1996)

An echo worth repeating. Following are some excerpts of

testimonies from a forty-two year, always faithful supporter of Christian Youth Encampment.

"Thank the Lord for CYE and for Dick and Myrtis Fontenot's dream that came true. *(I feel that there is a story in that line that needs to be told to our churches. --JB)*

"I was at the first camp meeting at Bayou Chicot in 1954. I served as counselor of senior girls and helped in the kitchen. My son, Carroll Weatherford, was there Junior Week and was at camp every summer.

"One of my special memories was a testimonial service at one of the evening chapel times. Ten or twelve men, maybe more, gave their personal testimonies. Some of them were joyful while some were sad. One that was especially sad was that of Shichero Nakahara. I do not think there was a dry eye in that assembly.

". . . Bro. and Sis. Ingalls offered fifteen acres of their property for a youth camp in DeRidder, La. After many prayers and much planning, Ingallwood Park came into being in 1958.

"After each meal, two groups of boys and girls would do the dishes, singing as they worked. Their voices were beautiful, and we enjoyed it.

"CYE is a great place for young people. I hope and pray more of them will take advantage of it. CYE has been a blessing to me. As a single mother with two children. Carroll and Kaye, I

was helped through some lonely times. It also gave me strength to continue to walk with the Lord. My children and grandchildren are still going and working at the camp." --Sadie Weatherford Johnson

Sister, you blessed my heart.--J.B.

Christian Youth Encampment Schedule:

Junior Week (ages 8-11) June 15-20

Junior High Week (ages 12-14) July 6-11

Senior High Week (ages 15-college age) July 20-25

Young Churchmen Receive Honorable Awards:

Beaty Brothers Excel -- Congratulations to Eric Beaty who was awarded the highest award given to one Gallatin High School football player each year. The award is for dedication, ability and leadership. And to Seth who was on the all-tournament team in a recent basketball tournament.

Thank you for sending in news reports. They are encouraging both to those who send them in and to those who read them.

BOOKS MAKE GREAT GIFTS

Express your love to Christian friends by giving them stimulating spiritual books. Show your appreciation for your preacher, Sunday school teacher and elders by means of some of the following reading material.

Supplies are limited, so hurry! All books are paperback unless designated **HB**.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE, by John Stott \$8.00
A helpful guide by a great Bible teacher.

THE STONE CAMPBELL-MOVEMENT, by Leroy Garrett HB: 25.00
An enthralling, thorough history of a reformation.

DISTANT VOICES, by Leonard Allen 10.00
Provocative, little-known aspects of the Stone-Campbell movement.
Men and women who walked with God.

SERMONS AND SPEECHES OF H. L. OLMSTEAD 5.00
Insightful messages by a preacher known to many of Work & Work's readers.

GLORY OF THE IMPOSSIBLE, by Florence O. Collins 8.00
Valuable, often humorous anecdotes from the lives of H. L. Olmstead and his family. Very enjoyable.

FOR FREEDOM, by L. C. Sears HB: 9.00
Biography of J. N. Armstrong--godly leader, evangelist, teacher, and founder of several Christian colleges.

PILGRIMAGE OF JOY, by Carl Ketcherside HB: 13.00
Exciting autobiography of a destructive "piecemaker" who became an extraordinary peacemaker. Many lessons.

AM I NOT FREE?, by John S. May HB: 6.00
A commentary on the entire New Testament.

Above prices do not include postage. Kentucky residents add 6% tax.

Questions? Call Louise Wells: (502) 775-8243.

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