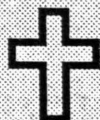
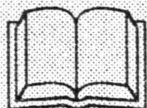


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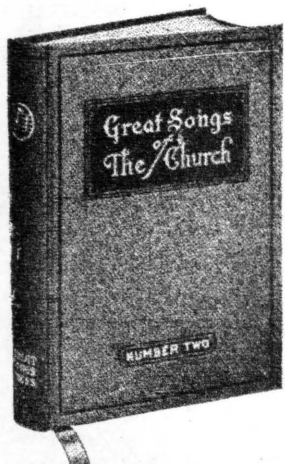
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THEME:

STRONG FAMILIES, Because of a RISEN CHRIST!

He Arose! And He Can Resurrect Your Family

Alex V. Wilson

Nails For The Door

He sang at His bench in Nazareth
While His strong young hands took hold
Of plank and nails to broaden the door
For a shepherd neighbor's fold

Into His hands on Calvary
He took the nails again,
To make the door which leads to God
Wide for His fellowmen. --Copied

The Sad News

"One of the most solemn sentences in the New Testament reads: 'The high priest then asked Jesus about his disciples' (John 18:19). With Peter denying all knowledge of Him even to the length of oaths and curses; with the kiss of the renegade Judas still smarting on His cheek; with the memory still fresh in His mind of His other followers disappearing into the dark shadows of the olive-trees--then, at that most awful moment of His loneliness, Jesus was asked about His disciples. What could He answer?" (Hugh Evan Hopkins)

The Glad News

Our great and merciful Savior and Leader **forgave** those miserable disciples of their wretched failures, and **restored** them to their high status as co-workers of Messiah, and **used** them in His service, for His glory.

And He still does all that today-- for US! Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Those earliest disciples

came to believe in the RESURRECTION
not because they could not find His dead body,
but because they did find the living Jesus--
or rather, HE found them!

"You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart!"

(A. H. Ackley)

Christ Lives! So What?

So He's present and active now in our circumstances, our hearts and our families--this month's theme. He can produce strong families, preventing them from falling apart. And He can repair and heal families that are bruised and breaking down, or teeter on the edge of chaos.

I have a questionnaire to use with troubled families in which lack of good communication between spouses is a major problem. That's a common blight, even in good families to some extent. So you may want to commit yourselves to ask, answer and discuss the following questions every month for the next half year.

1. What do I LIKE AND APPRECIATE about my partner? (At least three things.)

2. What do I wish were DIFFERENT in my partner? That is, what CHANGES in my partner would improve our marriage? (3 - 4) (During your discussion afterwards, the two of you should decide which two of these irritants are the most important.)

3. What problems in our marriage need to be ACCEPTED, because they are probably UNCHANGEABLE? (Some things, like past experiences, for instance, are clearly unchangeable. But other things which might seem that way are not really so, and can be solved by Christ's transforming power.)

4. What PRACTICAL STEPS can I take during this next month towards CHANGING the 2 areas in me which my partner feels need it the most?

5. How can we develop more AREAS OF COMMON INTEREST -- things we could enjoy doing together?

6. Are there any RECENT ENCOURAGEMENTS in our lives or relationship, which provide HOPE as we seek more improvement?

7. Does GOD'S WORD have any Encouragement or Instruction for us as we seek to improve our relationship?

May God give us Christ-strengthened homes.

He's Killing His Family!

Rubel Shelly

It was a horror story in real life. A 28-year-old father of three became the object of a West Coast manhunt in the wake of seven murders. Among the dead were his wife and two of his three daughters. The surviving three-year-old daughter was alive only because her body was rescued from a trash dump where she had been left with a slashed throat.

Captured in Mexico, Ramon Salcido confessed to the murders in a television interview. He said he has no regrets about what he did.

How could anyone kill his own family? Feel justified in doing it? Deny any regret over it?

Yet there are other versions of this horror story which are acted out every day. And the wrongdoers are respected. Honored. Imitated.

- + A too-busy father never makes it to his children's ballgames, plays, or school open house events.
- + A philandering papa destroys his marriage, teaches his daughter to distrust men, and his son to doubt the viability of marriage and family.
- + An always-too-tired dad doesn't have the energy to play with his children or to help them with their homework.
- + A career-driven father forgets that he has a wife and is married to his desk rather than to her.

These men are not arrested. They are promoted! They are not punished for their neglect. They are featured in the company newsletter as examples of devotion and efficiency! They are not reprimanded. They get raises!

In the meanwhile, they are killing their families. A wife is starved to death emotionally. Children grow up as strangers to the males who sired them. A therapist may become the wife's confidant and helper. A coach or teacher may fill the parental role which belongs to a father.

Families die in the process. Disintegrate. Lose their identity.

Those of us who have children might ask ourselves occasionally: If I live to be 70, what will I consider the most significant achievement of my life? Judging by today's emphasis, the answer might be diplomas, impressive resume, salary, or awards for community service.

Most of us would probably say, however, that we would like to look back over a loving, secure marriage and know the joy of being close to children and grandchildren.

If it is to happen, we must stop killing our families.

[Rubel Shelly is a teacher, author, editor, and the preacher at Woodmont Hills Church of Christ in Nashville.]

Making Your Marriage Divorce-Proof

James E. Kilgore

"I thought my parents would always be together. Now it makes me wonder if my wife and I will make it." John, who is 24, had been married only two years when he heard that his parents were divorcing. His 20-year-old wife, Jill, came from divorced parents too. "I don't want this to happen to us, but I'm scared," John said. "When we argue, I wonder if our marriage will last."

No marriage can be made absolutely divorce-proof. Honest marital partners recognize that strong relationships result from real tests in living. Intimacy may be built on surviving crises, pain, suffering and trials as much as it is built on happiness, romance and sexual ecstasy. The following seven steps could be called seven stones in the altar of marriage and may be helpful in avoiding divorce:

1. Build each other up--others will do the tearing down.

Practice complimenting your spouse. Nobody ever gets too much genuine praise. Some marital partners seem to feel obligated to keep their mates "humble." To do this, they refrain from praise but pour on criticism. One wife said, "Everybody else tells him how wonderful he is. Somebody needs to keep his head small!"

Unfortunately her criticism and antagonism helped drive her husband toward another woman. In a confidential session he said to me, "I want to be important only to her, but it seems that nothing I do pleases her." He didn't love the woman with whom he was having an affair, but he felt like a failure at home.

A wife tends to be as beautiful as she is told she is. A husband will do almost anything to live up to the compliments and pride of his wife. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." (Prov. 25:11)

Never make your mate the object of jokes. Sarcasm is the cancer of marital communication. Everyone may laugh, but the tears fall on the inside. Behind most jokes which are humorous at the expense of

your partner is the spirit of malice and bitterness. Don't put each other down; build each other up. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." (Prov. 18:21)

2. Share honestly with each other--the world is a lonely place.

When God created woman, he said, "It is not good for man to be alone." What makes marriage unique is the special intimacy involved. How tragic then to be shut out by the one you love. Yet so many husbands and wives brutally hurt each other by shutting the other out when they face conflict. Keep your heart's door open to the one you love.

Admittedly, sharing is risky business. There are no guarantees that the other will accept us, but in marriage we commit ourselves to seek each other's welfare. Practice listening to each other, observing behavior, clarifying what you hear and responding with your own feelings. Avoid walking out or "clamming up" as a way of controlling arguments. That behavior strikes a deep blow: "A wounded spirit who can bear?" (Prov. 18:14)

Privacy remains important. One may well negotiate for a more appropriate time to discuss his own feelings. Certainly I need to discipline my own thoughts toward understanding before trying to share them. "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." (Prov. 25:28) If, however, that becomes the style of avoidance toward my mate, I defraud him or her just as though I refuse to give myself sexually. The Apostle Paul clearly instructs the Christian couples in Corinth not to refuse each other sexually. (I Cor. 7:1-5)

Recognize the meaning of intimacy. We need each other.

3. Use conflict realistically--disagreement is not a sign of weakness in marriage.

Marriage mixed two lives which are different. Becoming as one does not mean total dominance by either partner, but instead involves a series of compromises. Here are six steps to managing conflict:

- a) Handle the conflict as it arises.
- b) Confront each other courteously.
- c) Stick to the issue.
- d) Listen as much as you talk.
- e) Seek compromise.
- f) Look forward to reconciliation.

Life involves conflict. The mature couple learns to manage it and respond in appropriate ways. In Proverbs we read, "It is an honor for a man to cease from strife; but every fool will be meddling." (Prov.

20:3) Husbands and wives need time for settling differences and to work together to diminish the negative effects of conflict. Intimacy can be created by sharing the same goal -- we together can handle our problems.

There is a particular caution. No argument should be severe enough to threaten each other with the word "divorce." Too many couples wind up in divorce court because of their pride. Having challenged each other, they are too proud to back down. The book of Proverbs is clear: "Pride ends in a fall, while humility brings honor." (Prov. 29:23) Having made the commitment to be married, never use the word "divorce" as a threat. Once the seed is planted, it grows as tenaciously as weeds in a garden. Promise yourselves you will plant the crop you want to harvest in the garden of your relationship.

4. Learn how to say, "Forgive me."

The fourth principle in making your marriage strong against the threat of divorce is learning how to say that you need forgiveness. In lecturing on human relations I often say that the five most important words one can learn are: "I am sorry, forgive me." The thought, "Love is never having to say you're sorry," has been widely disseminated. Nothing could be farther from marital truth. Love is being able to confess and forgive as well as to hear and be forgiving. The Scripture is clear: "When you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive you your sins, too." "If ye do not forgive, neither will your Father. . . forgive your trespasses."

Forgiving means accepting what has happened, accepting the apology and pledging yourself to live in the present and the future, not the past. To forgive means to forget. The husband or wife who recalls an incident and exacts "a pound of flesh" has not forgiven the spouse. The difficulty really lies with the offending party. The wise man said, "It is harder to win back the friendship of an offended brother than to capture a fortified city. His anger shuts you out like iron bars." (Prov. 18:19) However, the ability to forgive is an appealing trait: "Kindness makes a man attractive." (Prov. 19:22) Only God's grace gives us the strength to forgive: To err is human, to forgive divine.

Husbands and wives who have learned to forgive have accepted their partnership with God in the adventure of relationships. The Apostle John says, "We love him, because he first loved us."

5) Loving breaks the limits in our lives -- don't be jealous.

Commit your loving to God and don't be jealous of your spouse. The wisdom of the ages reminds us that limits hamper growth.

Look at these two attitudes: Howard, married 35 years, said, "I consider that my major life assignment is to create a home in which my wife can become all that God put within her to be. When she reaches her potential, I will be fulfilled. I've discovered that she wants God's best from me too."

Jane, with her marriage of ten years in trouble because of her jealousy, said without recognizing her implied judgment toward her own attitude, "I should be the most important person in his life. I want most, if not all, of his attention and time. Isn't that what I'm entitled to as his wife?" She communicated her demands rather than her support. Her husband felt restricted and not appreciated. He could not be free to give because anything he offered was expected. His incentive was therefore crippled, and her demands seemed to increase. If you really love, give your love to God and each other. Set it free and it will return in multiplied form.

6) Discover how to have fun with each other.

Good marriages involve having more fun with each other than with other people. This is a relationship built on friendship. Learn to enjoy each other by sharing the important things in life. This means feelings as well as tasks. Too many relationships become dull and routine because couples allow themselves too few opportunities for play. Children may be important, but poor parenting is done by unhappy people.

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." (Prov. 17:22) Practice the discipline of scheduling time to be alone with each other in enjoyable activities. If you don't, the happy moments will be shared in other relationships. Sometimes those situations can temporarily become more meaningful than the marriage. On occasion this leads to sharing affection and even adultery. Commit yourselves to being or becoming "best friends" in marriage. Third parties will not be a threat to you if you enjoy each other more than you enjoy anyone else.

7) Share your faith positively.

As you grow closer to God, he will draw you closer to each other. There is no more positive force than a common commitment to Christ. This cannot be considered a guarantee of no problems. Christian couples have the same kinds of problems others face; they simply have an added Resource in coping with them. Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always." Commit your marriage to Christ.

--from **DECISION**

Teach Your Kids to be More Responsible

Bill Denney

"Dad, Dad, you've gotta come," pleaded my ten-year-old son.

"Don't bother me. Can't you see I'm trying to say good-bye to Mom?"

My four sons, along with my brother-in-law and his three children, had met at the airport to see our wives off to a Christian music conference. The two women were about to board the plane when my son arrived breathlessly on the scene.

"But Dad, it's important! You have to come see what David and I did," he insisted.

The airport was undergoing a major renovation, so as Bruce and I walked down the makeshift plywood corridor with its small windows, he tearfully explained. "David and I were taking turns jumping up to see who could touch the highest spot on the window. I hit it too hard and it broke."

After checking to see that he was not injured, I lost my cool. "For pete sake," I yelled, "we're here to see Mom off on her trip, and you guys are running through the airport breaking windows. Now get back with the rest of us where you belong, and when we get home I'm going to give you a spanking."

The car was unusually quiet as we drove home, and as my anger began to cool, I had time to think. Why had I gotten so angry? Why had I told Bruce that I was going to spank him? What would spanking teach him in this situation? How could I redo the whole situation in such a way that my son would learn something? What could I do with all my anger at him?

At the house, Bruce went up to his room and shut the door. I went to my room to think and pray a bit more. I emerged shortly and headed up to Bruce's room.

"Bruce," I said, sitting down on the edge of his bed, "I'm sorry I got so angry at you. I was out of line and I'm sorry. Will you forgive me?"

"Sure, Dad," he quickly replied. "Are you still going to spank me?"

"No, I was wrong there, too. You see, it was an accident. Breaking the window was wrong, but it was not intentionally disobedient. You know," I continued, "if I had broken the window, no one would have yelled at me, and no one would spank me. I would just have to pay for the damage I had done. That's how it is in the world. When you break or destroy someone else's property, you have to be responsible and pay for it. I have decided that is what you can do. When we go back in a few days to get Mom, we will stop at the security guard's station, and you can tell him what you did and offer to pay for the window."

I was amazed to watch his expression as I talked. It all made sense to him. Of course, he was delighted to learn that the spanking would not be forthcoming, but it was more satisfying to him to have me take a rational approach in his discipline. He was more than happy to go along with my plan.

I even teased him a little by telling him that after we discovered how much the window cost, he could break all of them that he wanted to pay for. "That's okay, Dad," he quickly responded, "one will be enough for this time."

Teaching children responsibility at an early age is not the easiest job in the world, but it certainly is easier than trying to reach them when they are older. Not only is the teaching job more difficult, but the consequences the individual suffers for lack of responsibility get increasingly severe as he or she gets older. The consequences that a three-year-old experiences when he does not pick up a toy when asked is certainly much less than the consequences suffered by a sixteen-year-old girl who finds herself pregnant due to wrong and irresponsible behavior.

Children can learn to be accountable and trustworthy. If we produce little robots who are merely conforming to parents' demands, we are not teaching our children to assume personal responsibility for their actions and choices. Children can learn to obey parents because they want to, and because they have discovered that it pays to obey and costs to disobey.

Here are some ideas you might find useful.

1. Set guidelines and limits.

Let your children know exactly where the boundaries are, when curfew is, what is meant by "pick up your room" and what is acceptable behavior with the cat.

Often as parents we don't give very clear guidelines, and then we get upset when the children don't read our minds and fall into line. That produces great frustration for both the parent and the child. In-

volve the children in the process of determining the rules that they are to live by. They will be more apt to go along with them because they own them.

2. Establish a consequence for violating a rule.

One of the biggest mistakes parents make is that they often give rules, but they don't, at the same time, give the consequence for any infraction of the rules. That leaves the child with a great dilemma. The child doesn't know exactly what will happen if he or she breaks the rules, therefore the child can't make a clear choice to "obey" or "pay."

This is the way God deals with us as His children. He does not force us to obey Him, but He does tell us that if we do, we will experience His blessings; and if we don't, we will suffer the consequences.

Make the consequence fit the behavior as much as possible. When Bruce broke the window, the consequence was to pay for the window. If your son's irresponsible behavior involves the car, some loss of car privileges for a specified time would be appropriate. Yelling at the kid and telling him what a jerk he is will only provoke him to anger, and the cycle of disobedience builds.

3. Model responsible behavior.

When you are stopped by the police for speeding, don't try to con the officer by giving him all the excuses for your irresponsible behavior. Let your children see that you pay for your wrong choices, just as they do.

4. Give choices to the children.

Let your children know that they have a choice to either obey and experience the joy in that behavior, or disobey and suffer the consequences. Both choices are open to them.

As parents, you probably will have a difficult time forcing your children to stay inside the boundaries. That will run you ragged. Rather, spend your energy setting up the family rules, establishing the consequences, and then carrying out the consequences. You can do that. If you do, you will have a much greater sense of being in control of the children. Your own anger and frustration, and theirs, will also be less.

5. Do not protect the child from the consequence.

Let the kid experience the full effect of the preestablished consequences. If you shield him or her from the consequences, you might as well not have any. Then both you and the child lose.

6. Give the child freedom to blow it.

Can you give your child the freedom to fail? Ouch! That hurts, doesn't it? Let him or her fail and pay the price. Start early on simple

things. Then, with the Lord's help, you will experience the joy of having an older child who learned in the early years the lessons of assuming personal responsibility for behavior--lessons that can last a lifetime.

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Building Communication With Your Teen

Robert Laurent

The quieter you become, the more you can hear.

Before a teen can receive spiritual truth from his or her parents, communication lines usually need to be restored. Following are some practical ideas on how to do that.

1. Don't jump to conclusions

If you're suspicious about a certain situation, make a sincere effort to gather as much information as possible before drawing any conclusions. Parents have a tendency to overreact on the basis of insufficient evidence and they "fill in the gaps" by assuming the worst.

2. Respect your teenagers' privacy.

You have no more right to read their personal letters, listen in on their phone conversations, or search their rooms to satisfy your suspicions than they would have to violate your privacy. Your rationalizing devices may tell you that it is your responsibility as a parent to know everything you can about your teen, but God never does a right thing the wrong way. Knowledge gained deceitfully will solve nothing and only further alienate your teenagers.

3. Try to retain a sense of proportion.

The son who does not sit in the front pew taking notes in not destined to be an atheist. The daughter who has not done daily devotions for months will probably not turn out to be a drug addict. There is no need for you to panic or exaggerate the situation. Both time and God are on your side.

4. Avoid asking rhetorical questions.

Communication stalls when teens have to deal with a question that, even if taken seriously, can elicit only an impudent reply. If you were a teenager, how would you like to answer, "How many times do I have to tell you to stop that?" or "Why won't you ever listen?"

One question that teens dread the most is, "What do you think you're doing?" If parents could detect their teenagers' thoughts when asked such a question, they might hear: *What do you mean, "what do I think I'm doing?" I know exactly what I'm doing. The problem is "what do you think I'm doing?" It doesn't matter what I'm actually doing, I'm in trouble because of what you think I'm doing.*

5. Dispense discipline that fits the offense.

Teenagers have an inborn sense of justice and are quick to recognize when they don't receive it. Few things block the lines of communication like parents who are overly severe with punishment. The father who grounds his daughter for six months because she came home an hour late is asking for the silent treatment.

6. Recognize their limited verbal skills.

Teens can be intimidated by parents who use their facility with words to win verbal confrontations. Wise parents speak on their teenagers' level (without talking down to them) and understand that most adolescents, particularly boys, have difficulty describing their emotions.

One father found that by simply asking a question like "How do you feel about . . ." opened up new dimensions in conversation. He tried this technique with his ninth-grade son, asking him about his feelings regarding a situation at school. To the father's amazement, the son answered on that level--talking about feelings.

"It was wonderful!" said the father. "We talked for two hours! That's never happened before."

7. Make bedtime a sacrosanct occasion for communication.

The parents who decided that there would be communication time--regular, consistent, and (barring flash floods or nuclear holocaust)--guaranteed, must still find an interval during the day for communication.

Our family ties up a lot of loose ends at bedtime. It may take more than an hour for my wife and me to go from room to room, almost like psychiatrists getting the day's rundown from our patients, preparing each child's path to sleep. During that time, when our children lie like small patients in the semi-darkness, a great deal of what is going on their minds and hearts, which the busyness of the day has kept suppressed, gets released. Each child knows that we are his or hers to talk to, without competition from siblings. It is important to know what is on their minds--it helps us to know what should be on ours. Perched

on each other's beds, we discuss the issues that we never seem to find the right time or atmosphere for during the day.

8. Keep listening.

One of a parent's hardest tasks is to sit and listen to outrageous accusations. "You're only happy when I feel miserable!" "If you and Mom are right, you're the only parents who are!" Your instincts tell you to get defensive and engage the emoting teen in battle--but discretion keeps you from blurting out words that later you would wish you could retrieve. The onus is not on you to agree with the accuser, just to listen.

Communication between parents and teens is not the piling up of words; it is more of an attitude. When you resolve to do your best to understand who they are and why they act the way they do, when you decide to trade in your critical spirit for restraint and a listening ear, when you learn that nothing they say or do is important enough to cause you to withdraw your love, then communication that might lead to their salvation has begun.

From **Bringing your Teen Back To God** by Dr. Robert Laurent, copyright 1991; used by permission of David C. Cook Publishing Co.

Thursday at 5:00 p. m.

Peter W. Morris

The nurse was businesslike, yet nice in a "we would like to have your money" sort of way. "Don't worry about a thing," she said. "The baby isn't even formed yet, and the uterus contains only some bloody material."

We were in one of Florida's newest abortion clinics. My wife and I had decided to look into the possibility of an abortion. Our first pregnancy was somewhat unplanned and neither of us felt ready to become parents. We were both engaged in jobs which had become lifestyles.

Actually we were somewhat divided on the abortion issue. While I personally did not like the implications, I tried to retain an open mind concerning the procedure. My wife knew nothing of the "right to life" movement and therefore viewed the process as little more than contraceptive.

Now that the abortion issue has again warranted front-page headlines, the reality of abortion is once more thrust into our consciousness. While one group is blasting the "legal murder" concept, another is proclaiming the rights of the impoverished to have tax-paid abortions.

While the battles rage, I remember the issue on a far more personal level. Three weeks remained in which we could legally obtain the process of "life termination" outside of the confines of a hospital environment. As the date drew nearer, the idea of killing an unborn child grew more and more real to both of us. We were besieged by friends who called the process murder. Others said it was merely a minor operation that involved "the sucking of the uterus."

We knew that we could not afford the costs a child would bring; we realized that neither of us was emotionally capable or fully able to take on the responsibilities of parenthood. Reluctantly, a date was set.

"Thursday at 5:00 p.m." The nurse routinely gave us our appointment. "Plan to take a day or so off from work, Mrs. Morris."

The days were long prior to our scheduled time. Few words were spoken on any subject: the issue of abortion was almost totally cast from our limited conversation. Talk of abortion only prolonged the agony, and the less said about it, the better. It was a joint decision after much soul-searching and deliberation. We had made up our minds.

Thursday dawned clear and began as usual. Both of us headed to work, although we had arranged to leave early to attend to "special business." Almost angrily we drove ourselves, hoping that unlimited activity would shorten the day and make it end more quickly. It was strangely like the night before Christmas when you're young, and can't wait for the morning to come. Except that it was the evening we desired.

Mercifully, our appointed hour came.

Several years later we were to view some rather sobering photographs. The "bloody mass" we had heard so much about was before our eyes. . . except that something was definitely wrong. From the red, chewed-up pile of unborn humanity protruded arms with tiny hands. Each hand was complete with the most perfectly formed fingers. Legs and feet were also evident in the dismembered obscenity.

We looked at the photographs, actually taken of recently aborted children during perfectly legal abortions. Tears filled our eyes. No one had ever told us the truth. . . least of all those who were so willing to "help out" at our local abortion clinic.

We just never knew. . .

How thankful we were when we looked up from the pictures that were laid before our eyes and beheld our beautiful blond-haired, blue-eyed daughter. How thankful we were that we had changed our minds.

[--From a tract published by *Herald Press*, Scottdale, PA 15683]

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE:

A MORAL CHALLENGE

J. Robert Ross

A popular song preaches: "Don't lay your morality on me," which made me wonder how the song writer could be so dogmatic about the immorality of telling someone what is right or wrong. The truth is that when it comes down to the business of living, or acting instead of just shooting the bull, a thorough-going ethical relativism falls apart for the simple reason that every one of us feels indignant when we are treated badly by others.

The church should begin to take seriously the call of the Gospel for a discipleship that leads both to personal holiness and to social responsibility.

Take the problem of divorce, which God says he hates (Mal. 2:16). Surely we need a ministry of compassion for those who have been through a divorce, and admittedly there was a time when many churches did not exercise a ministry of grace for divorced persons. However, because most churches have so many divorcees they have been forced to develop ministries to them. Now the time has come for the church to exercise a prophetic ministry in a strenuous effort to maintain marital and family stability.

My own ministry is directed to helping people with all kinds of emotional, marital and family problems. Or trying to help. Frankly, I cannot do much to help the survivors of divorce, especially the children, who don't have the option of divorcing one set of parents in order to adopt another.

Sometimes a parent intent on getting a divorce, often after initiating an affair, and obviously expecting my support, will ask, "We should not stay together just for the kids, should we?" To which I reply, without a lot of soul searching, "Why not?"

Yes, drug abuse, spouse abuse or abandonment sometimes necessitates a marital separation. But most divorces occur for reasons far more petty than these. The argument that a bad marriage hurts children more than a divorce is mostly wishful thinking by those who find marital vows too constraining.

"Dan Quayle Was Right" was the title of an essay in the *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1993, in which Barbara Dafoe Whitehead reviews the data from social science research, and the inescapable conclusion is that although divorce and remarriage and the increase in single parent

households may be a way in which adults can achieve personal happiness, the dissolution of two-parent families is terribly harmful to children. Murphy Brown notwithstanding, children do not dream of having a single parent or a step-parent family. Some of the more sobering observations made by Whitehead include the following:

Across time and across cultures family disruption has been regarded as an event that threatens a child's well-being and even survival. This view is rooted in a fundamental biological fact: unlike the young of almost any other species, the human child is born in an abjectly helpless and immature state.

Each year a million children go through divorce or separation and almost as many are born out of wedlock One of every four children growing up in the 1990's will eventually enter a step-family. Contrary to popular belief, many children do not "bounce back" after divorce or remarriage.

Family disruption is best understood not as a single event but as a string of disruptive events: separation, divorce, life in a single-parent family, life with a parent and live-in lover, the remarriage of one or both parents, life in one stepparent family combined with visits to another stepparent family; the breakup of one or more stepparent families. And so on.

Fewer than half of all adult Americans today regard the idea of sacrifice for others as a positive moral virtue.

All too often the adult quest for freedom, independence, and choice in family relationships conflicts with a child's developmental needs for stability, constancy, harmony, and permanence in family life.

I understand very well how these statements provide scant comfort or help to the families already broken by divorce or to devoted single parents, many of whom live what can only be called heroic lives in order to make a living and care for their children.

But perhaps speaking the truth out loud will encourage some parents to think of their children before they file for divorce. Perhaps it will encourage a teen to wait before having sex or before getting pregnant. Or perhaps it will encourage our churches to do something, for example, like developing a community marriage policy to interrupt the chain of disasters that cascades from one generation of broken families to another.

Michael McManus in his book, **Marriage Savers: Helping Your Friends Stay Married** (Zondervan, 1993) calls on the church to initiate a campaign to save marriage with a two parent family to nurture children. Obviously there are other kinds of families, but the point is that it takes both a man and a woman to bring a child into the world, and the child thus conceived deserves the love and nurture of those two

parents. McManus recommends a three-pronged strategy to achieve this objective.

ONE: Teach A Clear Sexual Ethic

Sex education or the increase of knowledge about sex, which is appropriate and desirable, does not by itself prevent sex or sexual activity. Teens should understand how the reproductive system works just like they should understand how the circulatory or digestive system works, but they need and deserve a lot more than the mechanics. They need moral instruction --not just "values clarification"--they need wise parental rules and discipline, they need examples of unimpeachable behavior in their parents and other role models, and they need support from their peers.

Studies show that premarital cohabitation increases odds of divorce 50%. McManus reports that, "Of one hundred couples who begin living together, forty will break up before marriage. And of the sixty who marry, at least forty-five will divorce. That leaves only fifteen intact marriages out of the original one hundred couples" (page 23). We seem to have forgotten that a trial marriage is a contradiction in terms. Either marriage is "until death do us part," or it is just shackling up.

TWO: Provide Increased Legal Protection Of Marriage And Of Children

(1) We need some legal restrictions on divorce. It is now widely recognized that the prevalence of no-fault divorce laws has encouraged the breakup of marriages.

(2) We should increase fiscal support for children and custodial parents.

(3) The sale of a family home to settle property rights should be deferred if children are involved.

(4) Mediation should be required to resolve disputes over visitation rights.

(5) Counseling of the parents should be required if there is evidence that children are being triangulated into the marital conflict.

(6) We need a change in the welfare system that is prejudicial to the presence of a man in a household. The law should reward couples who are married and who stay together.

THREE: Provide Prevention, Enrichment And Reconciliation Programs Including The Implementation Of A Community Marriage Policy.

Our goals should be, first, to avert bad marriages before they begin; second, to improve existing marriages; and third, to save a significant percentage of troubled marriages and restore them to health. For example, churches in a community can develop a policy which requires that couples wishing to be married by clergy meet the following minimum requirements: (1) A four month waiting period; (2) premarital counseling using PREPARE, probably the most valid instrument available today to determine which couples are unsuited to each other; (3) several sessions with a mentor couple; and (4) a follow-up check up and /or enrichment program after two to three years of marriage.

McManus reports that clergy in Peoria, IL, signed a similar policy in 1991 when there were 1,210 divorces. A year later divorces dropped to 947. Although more study will be required to demonstrate the effectiveness of these programs, the church cannot wait until social science has completed its research in order to be faithful to the command of Jesus: "Feed my sheep."

[Robert Ross is a marriage counselor in Lexington, Ky.]

What the Bible Teaches...

III. ABOUT GOD THE FATHER

Alex V. Wilson

"The Father is Greater"

While Scripture clearly reveals the tri-unity of God (see the January article), we should recognize that in some unexplained way, the Son and the Spirit are subordinate to and dependent on the Father. Jesus repeatedly said that the Father *sent* Him, gave Him *commands*, and *sustained* Him. Ponder these references: "He who receives me receives the one who sent me." "The Father has sent me...." "I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say... Whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say." "The living Father sent me and I live because of the Father." "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me." (Matt.10:40; John 20:21, 12:49-50, 6:57, & 12:44-45.)

Notice how that last quotation combines the ideas of Jesus' deity with the Father's headship as the sender. The same combination is strikingly made in John 5. The Jewish leaders became furious because

Jesus called God "his own Father, making himself equal with God. Jesus gave them this answer: "...The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing....Just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father...has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him....My judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me." Reviewing these excerpts from John 5:16-30, we discover five indications of the Son's deity and exaltation (can you find them?), along with four or so indications of the Father's supremacy and Christ's glad subordination to Him. That latter attitude was perhaps most wonderfully demonstrated in Gethsemane, when our Savior in anguish, earnestness, loud cries, tears, and reverent submission prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:41-44; Heb.5:7).

At the "last supper" Jesus had said, "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). And that statement seems to refer not only to the time of His incarnation. For *after* His ascension--when He received again that glory which He had with the Father before the world began, but which He willingly and temporarily laid aside (John 17:5, Phil.2:5-7)--Paul wrote, "The head of Christ is God" (1 Cor.11:3). Paul also wrote, looking to the future, "Then the end will come, when [Christ] hands over the kingdom to God the Father....Then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all" (1 Cor.15:24-28). Again, in both Eph.1:3 and 1 Pet.1:3 praise is given to "*the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" And this agrees with Jesus' own statement, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, *my God and your God*" (John 20:17). Notice how His statement sets Christ apart from other men--for He does not say "our Father and God"--yet it also shows the Father's supremacy as His God!

Those cults which deny Christ's deity due to such verses are in error: see evidences of His deity given last month. Yet we must face up to the teaching of these passages. James Packer gives this explanation: "It is the nature of the second person of the Trinity to acknowledge the authority and submit to the good pleasure of the first....It is natural to Him to play the Son's part, and find all His joy in doing His Father's will, just as it is natural to the first person of the Trinity to plan and initiate the works of the Godhead and natural to the third person to proceed from the Father and the Son to do their joint bidding" (*Knowing God*, chapter 5).

We summarize: The Son and the Holy Spirit share deity with the Father. They are as fully God as He is. We repeat, lest we be misunderstood: God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are *equally divine in being and nature with the Father.* Yet within the Triune Godhood, the

Son and the Spirit are not equal with the Father, but *the Father ranks supreme.* The Son and the Spirit are not inferior in nature, but are gladly subordinate in rank--acknowledging His supremacy: "The Father is greater."

God's Greatness and Grace

God the Father is glorious in all His attributes. But the crowning attribute is His **HOLINESS**, for it embraces all the others. God is fully Holy (or "separate" or "distinct"--the root meaning of "holy") in two ways. As the Creator, He is **Distinct from All Creation and Creatures.** He is Eternal while we all had a beginning: we owe our very existence to Him. He is fully Self-sufficient (not needing any of His creatures) while we are dependent on Him and other creatures of His (air and food, parents and fellowmen, etc.) and could not exist for a moment without them. This is God's "natural" holiness: as Creator He is exalted above all people, angels, and other "gods." He is supreme in Power and Might, Knowledge and Wisdom, Splendor and Majesty.

His "moral" holiness refers to His character. He is not only great, but good! He is **Distinct from All Sin and Sinners.** He is totally "pure": in Him there is no gap between the ideal and the reality. (How different that is from us humans, with our contrasting schools of "idealism" and "realism," and between them an unbridgeable gap!) He acts righteously, and judges others justly. Yet, though He totally opposes all wrong, He is also full of Love, Grace, Mercy, Forgiveness and Kindness. It is His heart's nature to share, give, stoop and sacrifice on behalf of His creatures, even when they are sinful and deserve His judgment.

His is a tender heart, best pictured in the story of the prodigal son and the gracious Father. Jesus' highest revelation was of God as **Abba-Father**, who not only forgives but eagerly *adopts* sinners into His family. More than that, He *begets* us by His Spirit and thus makes us partakers of His own divine nature. The difference between these two aspects of our salvation--adoption, and new birth--can be illustrated from the true story of Eric Fife, a missionary leader in the 1950's. His father died shortly before he was born. Yet every once in a while as he was growing up, his mom would comment, "Eric, the way you smiled just then reminded me very much of your dad." Or, "Your gestures while you spoke in church were just like your fathers." Or, "When you phoned me today, your voice sounded exactly like your dad's." But how could that be? He couldn't imitate his fathers' gestures or voice, for he had never seen or heard him. Ah, but the genes of his forebear were in him, imparting his nature spontaneously. In the same way, when we're spiritually born (or more literally, begotten) from above, God's "seed" (1 John 3:9) or "divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4) is imparted to us. As a result, it becomes natural for us to resemble our father (though it takes effort too!).

A child who is adopted into a human family does not have this privilege of inheriting his parents' nature, though of course he can imitate their example. Yet sometimes the adopted child has an advantage over the natural born one. He knows he was freely chosen by his parents. They wanted him, in contrast to some cases where the natural-born child was an unwanted "accident"! We Christians know that we were wanted and freely chosen by our Heavenly Father: "He chose us in Christ before the creation of the world . . . He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will" (Eph. 1:4-5). More than that, we were also begotten by the Father! "To all who received [Christ], to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God--children born not of natural descent . . . but born of God" (John 1:12-13). Thus we were given His life, His very nature, as mentioned above.

As a good father, God does so many favors for us: He preserves and protects and provides for us; guides and teaches us; trains and disciplines us; and prepares for us a future of unimaginable glory. As our savior said, "If you, . . . though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!" (Matt. 7:10)

This is our awesome God, "the high and lofty One...who lives forever, whose Name is holy." He lives in the "high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isa. 57:15). How breathtaking He is in majesty and mercy, in sovereignty and sympathy, in terror and tenderness!

More scriptures for study: Gen. 1. Ex. 15:11-13 Ex. 34:1-14. Psalms 19; 34; 86; 95; 99; 103; 139; 145. Isa. 40. Jer. 10. Ezek. 18:20-32. Mic. 6:8. Zeph. 3:17. Matt. 6:5-15 & 25-34. Luke 15:11-32. Acts 17:24-31. Rom. 1:16-2:16; 8:28-39; 11:33-36 Eph. 1:3-2:10; 3:14-21. Heb. 12:5-13 1 Pet. 1:14-21. Rev. 21:1-8.

[See also the article in January, on our One-in-Three God.]

The Year-Round Meaning of Immanuel

Brent W. Rogers

"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us." Matthew 1:23 (NIV)

In the beginning

From the beginning, God has been trying to forge a relationship with His people. In the cool of the day, He would come and walk with the first couple. Man rebelled and broke that fellowship. But God did not give up. He continued His quest for fellowship with earthlings.

Enoch was a man who walked with God and one day God just took him on home to His house.

In the dance of the centuries that followed, God continued to extend His hand of grace; man continued to turn his back and close his eyes. You might say God tried it all. He didn't just give a second chance. He gave innumerable chances. He sent prophets, wise men, and teachers. They were mistreated and ignored.

God had one plan left to try. In his desire to BE WITH man, He stopped short of nothing. He was willing to give His one and only Son.

In the second beginning

"The child would be called Immanuel, which is GOD WITH US." Man would never understand the fullness of what that meant. Some would believe and to them would be given the right to become children of God.

The grown up Jesus is also Immanuel

Jesus often made the point. He said He and His Father would come and live with us (John 14:23). He told the eleven as He was leaving, "I will be with you always. . ."

If we believe it

If we believe in the year-round meaning of Immanuel, our lives can change in several dramatic ways, both individually and corporately.

If we believe it, *we need never be lonely*. The quietness in a house after visitors leave is something we have all experienced. We may relish the hours we can spend reliving the events and the conversations of the visit, but there is still that emptiness and quietness. Jesus and the Father, however, are not coming to visit. They want to live with us. They are our constant companions. Our prayer need not be for their presence, but for open eyes to perceive their presence and for tender hearts to appreciate the fullness of the fellowship they offer.

If we believe it, *our leadership crisis is over*. Jesus is our leader. What can men do, really? They can explain and remind; they can cajole and push. They serve as targets of our criticism and objects of our blame. Let us remember to follow the One who can neither be criticized nor blamed. Even Paul said, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ." We decry the need for a pope on earth. Let us not excuse our individual neglect or laziness by complaining about poor leadership. Modern management and marketing makes much of leadership; Christ came seeking followers. We have our Leader clearly revealed in the Scripture and living in our hearts. If we are all following THE LEADER

WHO IS WITH US, His ministers on earth will not have so much trouble and we will not be so quick to blame those who lead us so imperfectly.

If we believe it, *we are free from the crippling fear of financial ruin*. Because life consists of time and time spent is represented by money earned or spent, all life's decisions are inextricably bound up with our attitudes about money. Money is also the means by which we acquire the necessities and the luxuries of life. Every aspect of our life is connected with money. When we hear the call of Christ, we have to sit down and count the cost. Usually, to answer the call of Christ, something has to be risked. Often it is present income or future financial security. How often have you heard of a prospective missionary not able to go because of a "huge house payment" every month that has to be made or fringe benefits that might be given up or retirement plans that might not be funded. And how many preachers and their wives in their latter years are wondering how they will be supported in the coming years? If we can believe that God meant "... be free from the love of money. . . I will never leave you or forsake you," then we will make decisions based on the security found in God's promise rather than on the uncertainty of money.

If we really believe that God is with us, *our quest for personal holiness becomes more earnest*. If we begin to visualize Jesus as our daily companion, we will certainly become more acutely aware of choices that might compromise His holiness, as well as ours. Are there places we go where we would not want to take Jesus? Do we see Him listening to each word we say?

If we really believe it, *our thirst to evangelize is unstinted*. We serve a risen Savior. He wants us to tell everyone about Him. But more than that, He is there with us to supply all the resources we need to do all that He asks us to do. When we say we can't . . . , we deny the promise He made to be with us and to supply all of our needs.

If we really believe it we need never fear anything. "What then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:32 (NIV)

In India, we were puzzled to see a "Church of the Infant Jesus." Maybe we, too, sometimes find it easier to worship and understand a baby Jesus than to accept the realities of, and to live in the promise of, Immanuel the whole year.

Michael Card, in his song, "Immanuel," expresses the thought we should carry with us, rejoice in, and live out the whole year:

Immanuel, our God is with us.
And if God is with us, who could stand against us?
Our God is with us, IMMANUEL.

IMMANUEL -- ALL YEAR!

* * *

[Brent W. Rogers, former missionary to India and minister in Pittsburgh, CA, is teaching English at Eiken English Center in Kurashiki, Japan.]

God Said No

I asked God to take away my pride, but God said "No." He said it was not for Him to take away, but for me to give it up.

I asked God to make my disabled child whole, and God said "No." He said her spirit is whole, and her body is only temporary.

I asked God to grant me patience, and God said, "No." He said patience is a by-product of tribulation. It isn't granted, it's earned.

I asked God give me happiness, and God said, "No." He said He gives blessings, but happiness is up to me.

I asked God to spare me pain, and God said "No". He said suffering draws me away from worldly cares and brings me closer to Him.

I asked God to make my spirit grow, and God said, "No." He said I must grow on my own, but He would prune me to help me be more fruitful.

I asked God if He loved me, and God said, "Yes, I gave my Son for you. He died on a cross for you."

Then I asked God to help me love others as much as He loved me, and God said, "Ah, finally, you have the idea."

--edited by Joyce Broyles from an anonymous poem

VOICES from the FIELDS

George Galanis Piraia, Greece February 15, 1997

I am sorry for not being able to communicate with you for so long a time. A lot of serious troubles happened in our family during 1996.

My wife's health condition is getting worse [Parkinson's Disease]. She complains that she feels pains all over her body, particularly her muscles. She however still is able to move around in the house and can cook our meals and clean the house some. I take her to our church meetings rather regularly in the car, but when we come home she is exhausted. Three months ago our son, Kostas, felt a constant pain in the periphery of his brain. He has a tumor. The specialist told us that it is a non-malignant adenoid. And the neurosurgeon told us that it has to be taken out.

In June our grandson George Daniel Galanis, nine years of age, underwent a very serious operation which lasted five hours. The surgeon struggled very hard to detect a tumor under the lungs of the boy. But thank God it was not malignant either. Finally on the 25th of June I had an operation to take out my prostate. The operation was very successful and now I feel very well, thank the Lord.

Our address is still 126 Erythrou Stavrou St., 186 48 Drapetsona

Robert and Joy Garrett Ruwa, Zimbabwe Feb. 5, 1997

January has been one of the rainiest months we have ever had. This rainy season finds travel not easy. Roads are full of potholes. Mud is everywhere. Grass and weeds grow tall and thick. Crops have had too much water. Accidents increase. Building activity stops. Cars and roofs spring leaks. Our wells are full of water.

There were two men baptized at Kadoma when we visited there in January. The building was full. After feeding the crowd, the people went to visit a faithful brother who is very ill. The afternoon service was held there. He was so happy to see us all.

Moto. Namura Japan February 20, 1997

Last night a young girl came to our Wednesday night class. She has been with us for about six months, in and out. She told me for the first time that her Dad, 55 years old and a factory owner, is in a Catholic hospital near Tokyo for a cancer of the esophagus.

Living in an ultra feudalistic mountainous rural community like ours makes people's heart and mind self-secluding and skeptical toward each other or toward people's good will. It took her some time to see that we are a bit "different people" to reveal her inner heart. We were glad she started opening her heart toward us. Kiyoko is her name. Please pray for her.

We told her that we can pray. She has met Paul Clark, the president of Osaka Bible Seminary, and his wife last Christmas in our Bethany Home. She did not tell us of her father then, but she came to trust us and respect us so that she revealed it to us last night. We decided to invite her to an evening meal and then to pray for her and her Dad.

I think she has come to realize for the first time in her life that there is a "different world" in our life, that is, our spiritual world where such vocabularies as love, prayer, God, salvation, eternal life. . . etc. are needed to open its door to enter in, an area she has never been introduced to.

So we will pray for her more and hope to help her understand her spiritual need and her real answer that she can find in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. It was about 20 degrees last night when she was driving back home, but we prayed that the visit was a good beginning of her new or different life with a Christian love, prayer and message.

Mark and Candy Garrett February 18, 1997
399 College St.
Winchester, KY 40391
New Number:(606) 737-3425

When a satellite first reenters the Earth's atmosphere the friction of the air produces a lot of heat. Our reentry to life in the USA has been somewhat like that. It was bewildering at first, but we are getting used to the American atmosphere. Supermarket shopping took hours because we were "boondoggled" by all the choices: Eight brands of peanut butter; dozens of breads; not to mention biscuits in a can?

'Are you going back to Senegal?' many of our friends ask. "Yes!" We are here for a year of home service and then plan to resume our work in Senegal. "How long do you foresee working there?" It may take a lifetime to see the Wolof church established and growing strong. We are staying in this work until God plainly shows us otherwise.

"I could never do what you do!" some say. Well, the truth is, most of us Americans could learn a foreign language and adjust to a different lifestyle if we had to. If God calls you to work in another culture, He will help you through it, too. We are grateful for so many of you

who have kept in touch and prayed diligently for us during this first term.

"So, why do you want to go back?" It only takes thinking of 3.5 million Wolof without one church. (There are only a handful of Wolof believers scattered about the country.) It only takes thinking of many of our Senegalese friends who we know are headed for a Christless eternity. It only takes thinking of the excitement on the face of a new believer learning to read, or of a new church in its forming stages. Now can you see why we are compelled to return to Senegal?

Our year of home service enables us to see family and friends we've missed a lot during our time in Senegal. It also gives us time to report back to all the churches and individuals that partnered with us this first term. I, Mark, have already been able to participate in a church planting course in January, taught by a missionary to Muslims. In addition to homeschooling Kathryn, Candy hopes to do some initial independent study in ethnomusicology. Also during this home service, we hope to encourage a new missionary family or two to join us in Senegal. and we hope to find new churches in which we can share our vision of establishing strong churches among the Wolof people.

Believe it or not, lots of people in Senegal want to learn English. Many see it as a language that can help them gain an "edge" in the world of commerce since it is the international language of business.

Our team started a pilot project in November to explore whether we could get a hearing for the Gospel using English conversation classes for adults. We provide this service for people and they use the English Bible as one of their texts. This way we can introduce them to Christianity and then encourage them to continue to read the Bible in their mother tongue. The first sessions went well and now we are looking for short term missionaries to help us with this program for one or two years. Does this sound intriguing to you? Pray about it and contact us!

Important and Joyful Last-Minute News re: Russia:

See our News & Notes. Also, Earl Mullins Sr. & Dan Wilson will spend much of April in Russia. Pray for God's blessing

To: Vernon Lawyer, King's Palace, Heaven

Dear Vernon,

Amid the joy and jubilation of heaven, you may remember us. We want you to know that we miss you greatly, but we are proud of your promotion to glory.

Of course the Lord Jesus welcomed you with His commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

Who among the saved was first to greet you? Was it Grace, who longed to see you again these many years? Or, your own father and mother, who loved their illustrious son? Or, the many converts who are in heaven because you told them of the Savior?

We remember your friendship and encouragement when Virginia and I were honeymooning at Harding College 51 years ago. You took us on Sunday preaching trips and encouraged me to preach. Later I had the privilege of being your treasurer for missionary work in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). And over the span of the years our contacts from time to time brought warmth of love and strength of faith to our ministry. You were always my "Barnabas" to encourage me, my "Jonathan" to fight with me in the battles for the Lord.

I miss you, Vernon. But, don't come back. Just wait for me. I hope to see you soon.

Your devoted disciple, Richard Ramsey

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

Goodbye To A Dear Brother

Vernon Lawyer went to be with His Lord on Feb. 21. He was 72 years old. We will not speak here of his various ministries throughout the years, as a fuller report will be run separately. We'll simply say Amen to the remarks made by various ones at his funeral. They pointed out

his tremendous love for the Lord, his family, the church, world missions and the people of Israel. He was a man of faith, prayer, sacrificial love, generosity and humor. And we shall miss him greatly, while praying "Maranatha." We pray for Pauline, and all the family members. ---AVW

Cramer & Hanover Church of Christ

Ron Powell (1944-1997) . . . This was the week for our Bro. Ronnie Powell who was called to be "at home with the Lord." As he rejoices in the presence of His Lord and in the absence of his body, we are saddened at the great loss our church family will suffer knowing how we will miss him.

As a husband and father, he will be missed. He loved his family and inspired in them his love of life.

As an elder and church leader, he will be missed. He was willing to . . . direct the affairs of the church and . . . held firmly to the trustworthy message, encouraging others by "sound doctrine." In Bro. Ronnie, Cramer had a strong supporter. He was always outspoken in his love for Cramer.

As a Bible teacher he will be missed. Whether in the pulpit, in the classroom, or in his home, he was a ready handler of the Word of God. He approached God's Word with a simple faith and direct style, always raising questions and seeking answers.

As a Children's Church director, Camp director, and Teen Sunday school teacher, he will be missed. His care and personal concern endeared him to each of our kids.

Being an overgrown kid himself, he shared his faith and love of life in a very practical way and down-to-earth manner. His teasing and joking were his special marks of caring.

As a friend and brother in Christ, each of us will miss him. When I became his minister over twenty years ago, our hands and hearts were united. We have laughed together and wept together.

Today each part of the body at Cramer suffers because of the loss of one part. But we rejoice in the hope that soon "we who are still alive will be caught up together" with Ronnie in the "clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I Thess. 4:17) --Bennie Hill

A Quote of Encouragement #1

"Grace is not God's reward for the faithful; it is His gift to the empty, the feeble and the failing." --Roy Hession

A Quote of Encouragement #2

"The last few issues [of W & W] have been exceptional. The issue on persecution was a masterpiece, not only because it treated a neglected subject, but that it was done so well, addressing heart as well as mind. . . . It is understandable that martyrs have a special place in God's glorious rewards." --Leroy Garrett

The Hurrier I Go, The Behinder I Get

An apology and explanation from Alex Wilson: I was reminded recently of a brother who sent us articles for consideration. But they were not printed, nor even acknowledged. I'm sorry for that, especially the lack of acknowledgement. But a number of factors enter into this situation.

If someone writes for help, we try to get to it right away: a woman recently requested information about the Masonic Lodge; a librarian needed information in tracing some books; a college professor requested facts for a research project he is engaged in; etc. But with preaching, co-shepherding a flock, & teaching at SBS, I can't answer all the mail sent in nor acknowledge all who send in articles. We are GLAD to get articles - - don't misunderstand! Some we use soon, some get used 1-2 years later, some never get printed at all. Some almost make it but get bumped due to unforeseen obituaries or emergency news, etc.

I use a filing system. ("A filing cabinet is a device for losing things alphabetically.") But I also use a piling system; and, sad to day, if something gets buried in a pile it may never emerge till some archeologist digs in decades from now. By the way, the first article I ever sent in to W & W was rejected! So don't give up; try again if you have something worthwhile to share with us.

And while we're apologizing: I'm sorry we haven't gotten Tom Bradshaw's thesis about R.H. Boll into print as a book yet. In fact it's not certain we'll get it out at all! If someone has time available to help, maybe we'll make it. If we don't get it done by the end of '97, we'll offer to return the money which some of you donated and others of you sent as down-payment on the book. Please PRAY for W&W: wider circulation, wisdom in decisions, sufficient funds, & for the Lord to

be glorified. Many thanks to you, our friends.

Amite Church of Christ

The Amite church is still in the process of seeking a Youth Minister. Our church has never had such a position and everyone is excited about the prospect. One candidate was interviewed in December, and two more will be interviewed shortly.

Bro. Don McGee will take a trip to Israel in June. It will be a 17 day study trip associated with Trinity Seminary. The work will be at the archaeological dig going on at a recently discovered site which may be ancient Ai. There has been some disagreement as to whether the accepted site is actually Ai, and this dig should clear up the matter. The evenings will be devoted to lectures and classes with several trips to other sites. A few days will be spent in Galilee and Jerusalem.

Attendance has gone up noticeably since our first "Friends Day" last November. Some of our visitors are now regular attendees and other first-time visitors from the last two weeks are making appointments to talk about the work. We have our share of challenges to be sure, but spiritual stamina is exercised and strengthened in the process. God is richly blessing.

A Note Of Thanks

Dear Friends in Christ,

Our heartfelt thanks go out to each of you who have been remembering our daughter Sarah in your prayers since her diagnosis

of leukemia in July of '96. We are confident that your prayers have made a difference during the past few months. We are very thankful to be able to report that Sarah is in complete remission, she has finished all of the chemotherapy treatments requiring hospitalization, and she has been allowed to return to school. However, she will continue to go to the hospital clinic every Thursday for two years for out-patient treatments. Each Thursday she will have blood drawn to check her counts and she will be given a low-dose chemotherapy shot. Once every 2 or 3 months she will have a spinal treatment.

God has blessed us graciously during the months since Sarah's diagnosis. We may not know why she became ill, but we do know that God has carried us through the hard times. It has been amazing, yet humbling, to see the many ways He has provided to meet our every need. And, He will continue to carry us all the way.

Thanks again for your continued prayers. May God richly bless each of you. --Warren and Rachel McReynolds

Jubilee (July 2-5)

This annual event in Nashville, Tenn. brings to one location thousands of our brethren from Churches of Christ around the country. Outstanding preaching and teaching is featured from some of the most well known proclaimers of the Gospel in our brotherhood. Add the Christian music, the dozens of booths showcasing Christian Ministries

and missions, and the exhilarating atmosphere of Nashville, and going to Jubilee can become a high priority on your summer schedule every year. This year's Jubilee may well draw the largest group ever to assemble among Churches of Christ as it will be held for the first time in the new Nashville Arena (with a seating capacity of 20,000). Max Lucado will be the keynote speaker each evening this year. If you would like more information, call 1-800-382-5004. --Gary Pearson, Maryland

Gallatin, Tenn. Church

Last Sunday we put forth a special effort to increase attendance during our Bible study hour. As a result we had an increase of 35% over our average. As a result worship attendance had a similar increase. Several classes had near perfect attendance.

Words of Life

"In November our speaker, Bro. Carl Kitzmiller, had suffered a stroke; . . . Bro. Carl has made outstanding progress in his recovery--this we attribute to God's working and blessing. Week by week he improves; he is regaining strength and has progressed from bed to wheelchair to walker to cane. Furthermore, through his own initiative, he has resumed writing and recording sermons for "Words of Life." As things stand now, there will not even be an interruption in our broadcasting schedule."

The Words of Life newsletter, available from P.O.Box 18092, Louisville 40218, con-

tains excerpts from letters sent in from Kuwait, Nigeria, Japan, Liberia, Zambia, Philippines, Kenya, Uganda & Zimbabwe.

From Eagle River, Alaska

After being with us for 16 years, the Gould family has moved back to Oklahoma. Ronny has been like a substitute son to me and a great helper in the church, so they will be greatly missed.

A nineteen year-old youth recently experienced the newness of life and has been bringing his girlfriend to church. "We have seen disinterest change to interest and then faith developing. Yesterday she made the good confession and asked Ronny to baptize her. Needless to say, this is a joy to all our group."

The church has been ministering to a former "cult" girl. Heather, 21 years of age, "has suffered abuse from her boyfriend and even her mother, and is now in Intensive Care from broken ribs and punctured lung, having twice been near death. The church family has committed itself to supporting her until she is strong enough to get back on her own. Recently when she thought she was dying, she wrote a short resume of her abusive home life and how much the Lord had sustained her since she had accepted Him." -- Irene Allen

Tell City Church: Good News

Following regular services at Tell City Church of Christ, on Sunday, Feb. 2, the ordination of three elders and three deacons was held.

J.R. Satterfield and Bruce Chowning, elders of Cherry Street Church of Christ in New Albany, conducted the ordination of Michael Elaman, Frank Heeke and Allen Goffinet as elders. Homer Groves, Herman Epple and Larry Bryant were ordained as deacons. Ray Naugle of Sellersburg, former minister of the church, delivered the message concerning duties and responsibilities of elders and deacons and of congregation members. After the ceremony, the congregation filed by the inductees and extended the right hand of fellowship to indicate their support.

Crowley, La.: Good News

Bro. Val reports that in the first 2 1/2 months of '97, ten people have been brought to the Lord Jesus. All are in their 20s or 30s except one 14-year-old boy. So he had to order more copies of A NEW CREATION, the booklet by Dennis Allen which they (& other churches) give to each new convert. (Do YOU need to order some to have on hand?)

Lilly Dale Church, Gatchel, Ind.: Good News

The Lilly Dale Church of Christ hosted a Night of Praise on Friday evening, Feb. 28.

Special songs of praise were presented by the Utica Singers Quartet, Dan and Tammy Miller of Kentucky, Tell City Chorus, Lilly Dale Quartet and congregational singing.

Mike Abbot of Borden delivered a special message entitled "Praise Attitude."

Karen Johnson leads the Tell City Youth and Adult Chorus and Anne Taylor, the Lilly Dale Chorus. The Lilly Dale Quartet consists of Sam and Joan Marsh and Bill and Anne Taylor.

Following the praise session, a fellowship and refreshment time was held in the church basement.

Goin' Fishing Ministry: Good News

"When we are walking, there are times . . . we have to take a bigger than usual step to . . . continue toward our goal. Such a step has been taken in recent months by two couples. During the GFM Missions meeting at Sellersburg last August, it was announced that an invitation had been given to place someone in

Kineshma, Russia, to teach English using the Bible. Right after that meeting Cecil & Betsy Garrett let it be known they were interested in such an opportunity. Soon after that Cecil began studying the Russian language at the U. of Ky.

"A short time later Paul Kitzmiller let it be known the Lord had really challenged him with the open door to Kineshma. He and Virginia now are committed to be there by the middle of Jan., '98"

(The exciting item above is adapted from the GFM newsletter sent out by Earl Mullins Sr. To get these newsletters, write 4136 Hickman St., Louisville KY 40213. We hope to tell more re: these prospects next month, DV.)

Louisville Christian Fellowship, Aug. 4 - 7

To help commemorate our 50th year, the planning committee would like to encourage each of our churches to take the time and complete the "Historical Sketch" which was sent to each congregation. This will be helpful in keeping a record of our churches and enable us to print a commemorative booklet containing the information.

Join John Fulda in a "Jubilee Choir" that will provide special singing on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Rehearsal will be each afternoon at 5:30 p.m. Anyone desiring to be a part of this addition to the Fellowship week needs to start making plans.

Questions regarding these two announcements can be directed to Bro. Bennie Hill at office (606)269-1312 or home in the evenings:(606)299-9358.