

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The ***Word and Work***



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

MARCH, 1999

**The Year 2000 has come and
Gone!**

**Christ's body has both left &
right hands**

Is your God alive and active?

**The Day of the Lord is at
hand!**

Need we prepare for Y2K?

Back to China

What if God had an Answering Machine?

I've learned to live with answering machines as a necessary part of modern life. But I've often wondered, "*What if God had an answering machine?*"

Imagine praying, then hearing this: "Thank you for calling My Father's House. Please select 1 of the following 4 options: Press 1 for requests. Press 2 for thanksgiving. Press 3 for complaints. For all other inquiries, press 4."

What if God used the excuse: "All the angels are helping other customers right now. Please stay on the line. Your call will be answered in the order it was received."

Can you imagine getting these responses: "If you'd like to speak with Gabriel, press 1. For Michael, press 2. For any other angel, press 3. If you'd like King David to sing a psalm for you, press 4. To find out if your relative is here, enter his/her date of death and listen for the list that follows."

Or maybe the following: "For answers to nagging questions about dinosaurs, the age of the earth, or where Noah's ark is, wait till you get here!"

"Our computers show that you have called once today already. Please hang up immediately."

"This office is closed for the weekend. Please call again Monday."

Thank the Lord, you can't call Him too often! You only need to ring once, and He hears you [if your trust is in Christ's death & your motives are sincere]. Because of Jesus, you never get a busy signal. God takes each call and knows each caller personally. His Word says,

"Then you will call and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here I am." (Isa. 58:9, NIV)

--Author Unknown

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Bennie Hill, New & Notes

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Theme:

LOOK OUT!

Alex V. Wilson

Our Lord said, "Look out so no one will deceive you" (Mt.24:4). He was referring to future events, specifically the demolition of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 A.D. but also-- beyond that--to His coming in power and great glory.

We still need to heed His warning. For as 2000 A.D. draws ever nearer, far-out predictions and rumors are creating hysteria of all kinds. Remember how many examples we mentioned (back in Oct. '95) of date-setting, which Christ forbade: David Webber thought "the tribulation" would start between 1981-85 but later amended it to 1988. Edgar Whisenant presented 88 reasons why 1988 was when Christ would return. Salem Kirban thought it would be in 1989. Mary Stewart Relfe forecast the Great Tribulation would begin in 1990. D. A. Miller thought the rapture would occur in September 1992. *When will folks ever learn?*

Harold Camping wrote in a popular book, "When September 6, 1994 arrives, no one else can become saved, the end has come." Lester Sumrall predicted that starting in 2000, Christ will reign from Jerusalem. On Paul and Jan Crouch's TV show, among others, it has been confidently claimed that the rapture will definitely take place by 2000. Earlier they set June 9, 1994 as the day for "the most cataclysmic experience that the world has ever known since the resurrection." That doesn't inspire much confidence in their prophetic gifts, does it? *And the list goes on and grows longer, other "prophets" adding their dogmatic forecasts, especially regarding 2000. When will they ever learn?*

You see, not only did our Lord forbid us to set dates. In addition, if 2000 A.D. is taken to mean 2000 years after Christ's birth, then that date has already passed. It has come and gone. For errors were made in 532 A.D. when our present calendar was established. Jesus' birth-year was miscalculated by 4-7 years. Christ was born at least four years "Before Christ"! Thus the real year-2000 was approximately 1996. And neither Christ nor Antichrist has appeared yet. Don't get me wrong. If we believe God's Word we'll believe both that Antichrist will arise and Christ will appear. But we won't know ahead of time when these events will occur.

Notice something else. In this year's Jan. and Feb. issues of W&W we have said a good bit about the Y2K problem or "year 2000 bug." And in this and coming months we shall continue to write about

it. But please, *Please notice what we have Not said and are Not saying!* We have not once related it to Christ's return or any other Biblical prophecy. Our concern with Y2K is that it may, possibly, have devastating effects on health, safety and economic conditions worldwide. But for that very reason it may also, possibly, give us unprecedented opportunities to demonstrate Christ's love and help others in their troubles. If we are not ready, though, we shall miss that chance. Dear friends, please study, think and pray about these 2000 matters.

Ila Reish Sherwood

by Dale A. Jorgenson

A Celebration of Life in memory of Ila Jane Reish Sherwood was held at the Bryantsville Church of Christ near Mitchell, Indiana January 27, 1999. Sister Sherwood slipped from this life into Eternity on January 25, having been diagnosed with cancer some months earlier and cancer of the liver only a few days before her death.

Ila Sherwood, the wife of Hollace D. Sherwood, was raised in the Francisville community near West Lafayette where she attended church and school and imbibed deeply the Christian faith of her family. While she was attending Purdue University as a biology major she met Hollace Dan Sherwood, and in her relationship with that committed family put her roots down deep in the Mitchell community. Her activities as wife, mother, daughter-in law, leader in church and community activities, and teacher of science in the Mitchell schools attest to her great energy and desire to serve the Lord in every dimension He opened for her. Her spirituality and yet great practical sense define her deep understanding of Paul's letter of grace to the Romans (she was among the first to memorize all of Chapter 12 when we studied the letter together back in the nineteen fifties), and yet to live and to work with the intensity described in the Book of James. A scientist by training, she also had a great appreciation for music and for the tender things of life in the Spirit. Books were a vital part of her life, a commitment demonstrated by her several-year service on the Library Board of Lawrence County.

The three children of Hollace and Ila, with their devoted spouses and their own children, "rise up to call her blessed." At the service for the celebration of her life several of them witnessed to her love and effectiveness as a mother and grandmother, both in song and word. As a teacher, many former students bless her memory for both the content of the subjects she taught and for the lessons of life she shared with them. She was in every sense a true helpmeet for Hollace: farmer's

wife, homemaker, leader and encourager in the work of the Bryantsville Church. Since both Ila and Hollace had pursued graduate studies in science at the University of Michigan, they were called on after their "retirement" from the Mitchell schools to teach at the Jasper campus of the University of Vincennes, a weekly trip during which they obviously enjoyed getting away with each other, both to teach in their areas of expertise and to merely be together.

Retirement from regular teaching schedules brought new challenges and honors. Having read of the need of hungry children for a stronger diet than could be provided by regular corn in a 1085 article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, they began to cultivate a crop demonstrated at their Alma Mater, Purdue University, to meet the needs of starving people all over the world. Raising ever-larger crops of High Lysine Corn on their farm, they called upon their own church, then on many other churches around them and even civic organizations, to help in getting the precious food shipped to areas of great need. The Sherwoods traveled over large parts of the American continent to interest more churches in participation in this work, where people received saving food for their bodies and the saving Gospel for their souls. On a given day at the Sherwood farm, people from a wide variety of denominations might be found loading trucks, sacking corn, or preparing the precious commodity for shipping to Central America, the Carribean area, eastern Europe, or needy places in the United States.

In 1994 Ila and Hollace were named Grand Marshalls for the famous Mitchell, Indiana Persimmon Festival, in recognition of the work they had done in feeding the hungry and in uniting Christian people of differing backgrounds, and of course their lifelong service to the community as teachers and mentors of children and young people.

Ila love the Appearing of Jesus, and was acutely conscious of His words: "I was hungry and you gave me meat, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you took me in." The prayers of many of God's people are now with Hollace, the children and grandchildren together with the larger family, and certainly with the Bryantsville Church. Our prayer is that sorrow may be tempered with the knowledge of Christ's invitation, now accepted by this Mary-Martha Christian lady, who has surely heard Him say, "Enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

THE BODY OF CHRIST HAS TWO HANDS

Harry Robert Fox, Jr.

The way some of us in the church are acting it would seem that we think that the body of Christ should have only one hand. There are others who act as though they thought the body should be a torso without any limbs.

What did I mean by these statements? Simply this: from as far back as I can remember, we in the Restoration Movement have found it virtually impossible to acknowledge our need for each other if we happen to be opposite types. We tend continually to polarize into "right" and "left" sides and cut each other off. Thus, in spite of Paul saying in I Corinthians 12:21 that the eye cannot say to the hand that it has no need of it, we go right ahead and act as if the right and left hands should say they have no need of each other! Moreover, some members who are caught in the crossfire begin to wish that the church had no right or left hands at all but that it simply be a body without limbs.

Why are right and left sides so afraid of each other? Mainly because we fear that if opposite types are allowed to remain in fellowship with each other they will tend to "contaminate" each other and one or the other will go to an extreme and take the church with it into error.

It seems to me, however, that a hundred and fifty years of history have shown that just the opposite is true: when opposites have RE-ACTED to each other instead of INTERACTING, they have driven each other to extremes which were both erroneous. The resulting divisions, therefore, could not be characterized as one side being wholly right and the other side wholly wrong, but rather both sides being partly right and partly wrong. If they had stayed together instead of polarizing and cutting each other off, each side would have contributed toward correcting the erroneous tendencies of the other and saved it from going too far.

Another way of looking at this is to notice that when "right" and "left" sides have emerged in our history we have failed to see that they were usually "polar" opposites, that is, opposite ends of a "pole". By definition, polar opposites belong to each other and must not be separated. There are, of course, some opposites which are not polar, such as "right" and "wrong", which do not belong to each other. But it is of the very essence of a "pole" that it have two ends (just as it is essential that a "body" have two hands). Since we have often failed to recognize this fact we have tended to "solve" the problem of opposites among us by cutting our "pole" in half and dividing the body. In so do-

ing it was our purpose to rid ourselves of error. Ironically, such action has not accomplished what we intended because what we had after dividing has been not one pole with only one end, but two poles, each with two ends! This has led us to cut the resulting two poles in half and to find ourselves with four poles with eight "ends" of left and right! And so on endlessly.

It ought to be clear enough by now that we are never going to solve our existing divisions by endlessly dividing. Rather, we are going to have to learn to do what Paul told the "meat eating" and "vegetable eating" brethren in Rome to do: to quit despising and judging each other and receive one another as Christ has received both "to the glory of God" (Romans 15:7). But that is going to take some doing! We have such deep antipathies for each other that it almost makes us sick to think about loving and respecting each other. But whether we like it or not we are going to have to learn to INTER-act instead of RE-act; to approach each other with humility and genuine appreciation in the realization that we really do NEED each other. With such an attitude we will be able to see that those on "the other side" are not simply wrong about some things but are also right about other things on which we have been mistaken. Thus we will progressively teach and correct each other until we will both be closer to the truth than if we had remained divided enemies.

By deciding to interact we will quit "writing off" each other as being impossible to deal with and will begin to patiently learn from each other until we have all together come to a full-orbed knowledge of the truth. In this way we will begin to discover the unity of the Spirit which Paul said we are to maintain (Ephesians 4:3) until we all attain the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:13). Too often we have gotten this backwards by insisting that we must attain the unity of the faith before we can have the unity of the Spirit. But the first sixteen verses of Ephesians four would seem to suggest that only to the extent that we remain united in the Spirit can we ever come to the unity of the faith. Apparently God has so arranged things that it is impossible for us to come to a full knowledge of the truth while separated from any of our brethren, it takes all of us working together.

Part of what this means is well expressed by Paul in Ephesians 5:21 when he admonishes us to "be subject to one another". This is the only foundation on which healthy inter-personal relationships can be built, whether they be those between husbands and wives, parents and children or employers and employees as well as brothers and sisters in the church. The least this can mean is that we listen to each other and be willing to learn from each other. Thus we will see ourselves as supplementing each other rather than as adversaries.

Installment #4

R.H. Boll as a Writer, Editor, and Christian

Part 4

Alex V. Wilson

G. He was More Expository than Theological

By this we mean that he much preferred to study and explain protracted Scripture passages than to reach doctrinal deductions by taking a verse here, another there, and a third one from back yonder and fitting them all together. The latter approach can be dangerous unless done very carefully, so he emphasized the former. For example, of the twelve books he authored, seven are expositions of books of the Bible--Daniel, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, 1st/2nd Thessalonians, Hebrews, and Revelation. And he was working on an eighth--on 1st Peter--at the time of his death.

Boll deplored the common tendency to become firmly loyal to one or another school of theology--Calvinist, Arminian, Campbellite, a-mill or pre-mill. He believed that when that is done, people close their minds and jump to conclusions about Bible texts without careful personal study.

His critics call him a "theory spinner." If he was, he did it un-awares; for he repeatedly opposed such a practice. He wrote, "There are few things that hinder the truth more, that darken counsel, warp the eye, and sustain error so effectually as theory spinning and system building." He went on to give a vivid description of what he meant:

A passage here and a passage there--the two fit admirably. Another passage or two--that is enough for the underpinnings. Upon that we build. Sleepers and joists of plausible conclusions and logical deductions come next. We reason of what can and cannot be, granted this and that. On hypothetical premises we rear proud structures of absolutely certain conclusions. It could hardly be claimed that the building goes forward without sound of saw or hammer, for there is much work to be done. Contrary texts have to be spliced or sawed off, according as they are too long or too short to fit; rebellious passages must be hammered into submission...That which God has not joined together must be united with the glue of human reasonings...and that which God has joined together must be put asunder...

He also deplored the way listeners often pigeonhole preachers into this or that school of theological thought--and thus approve or disapprove of their sermons without giving them a fair hearing. In an article he shared an example of this from his own experience:

When expounding Romans 5:1-11 in a western city it chanced that I heard of three different comments on the lesson by three differ-

ent men. One said, "He is a once-in-grace-always-in-grace man." Another sized me up as a "faith only" preacher, while a third was sure I must be a "holiness" advocate. [He was none of these in the meanings intended.--AVW] Yet I had only endeavored to bring out the meaning of Paul's inspired words in this passage. Whatever inferences, false or true, may be drawn from it, the words of the text are God's words, faithful and true. We shall do well not to becloud it with captious questions, or lose its precious teaching by having our attention diverted from it to doctrinal polemics. Let us take it all as it stands--not to the exclusion of other truths of God's word--but let us take *this*, believe it, treasure it, and rest our hearts upon it.

His beliefs on these matters influenced his approach to Bible study and also preaching. Here is his advice on those subjects:

The fundamental method of Bible study is the reverent, patient reading (and re-reading) of its books and its chapters in order and connection, always with prayer and a heart surrendered to do the will of God. And the sort of preaching...which will best bring hearers into contact with the mind and truth of God and the real teaching of His word, and which will do most to build up Christian faith and to break down sectarian prejudices and barriers, is the careful, faithful expounding of the scriptures in their connection. There is great need of that sort today."

Having seen Boll's attitudes and policies in writing and editing, we now move on to the content of his teaching. Let's examine some of the subjects he emphasized, and what he taught about them.

II, SOME SUBJECTS BOLL EMPHASIZED

A. The Living God, Our Heavenly Father

To Boll, God is big and active. He is not God, emeritus! The Bible reveals His wonderful deeds in the long ago. But in it He also declares, "I the Lord change not" (Mal.3:6). Yes, His methods of working change as He chooses--we now don't feed on manna. But His character is immutable. He is still the living God, as church history and personal experience demonstrate.

Two of Boll's favorite modern-day heroes were James A. Harding, who taught him in Nashville, and George Muller of Bristol, England. Both trusted the Lord to the utmost, and both experienced wondrous answers to prayer. Their influence can be sensed in the following statement by Boll.

What a God some Christians have! A God who does not know them or care for them in particular; a God who cannot or does not interfere on their behalf; a God who can do no good or harm, except as the laws of nature bring it about in the course of cause and effect; a God not to be reckoned with--a dummy, a figurehead; a God named "Father" who leaves them mere orphans; a God who cannot fulfill his

promises, whose love we have to buy with good works and service; a God who bids us go through the motion and mock works and prayer, when it is understood that it can have no vestige of effect anywhere, except on the one who offers it; a God unfaithful, untrustworthy, malicious; a God who, if he were a man, would not pass for a gentleman! No wonder they do no more for him! The wonder is they do as much as they do. How densely, deeply ignorant we are of him, because we "know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God;" no, nor yet his goodness, love, faithfulness; his dread holiness on the one hand, and his tender compassion and grace on the other. For to know him aright is eternal life; to know him is to love him, and to love him is to serve him, and to serve him is peace past all understanding and joy unspeakable and full of glory.

B. Jesus Christ

In his recent biography, Thomas Bradshaw wrote that RHB firmly believed that "one who rejects Jesus has no one else to turn to, because He alone has the words of life. . . No other religion can provide a Savior." to illustrate this point, Boll used a parable written by a Chinese student:

A traveler in the night lost his way and fell over a precipice, and lay mortally injured and broken at the bottom. Along came Gautama Buddha--a kindly, sympathetic soul, and said to him, "Son, it grieves me to see you in this miserable state. But all I can tell you is that you must gather yourself together and climb out of this pit; then take the path that leads to yonder blue hills far away, and ascend them step by step. when you have reached the highest crest, you will pass Nirvana, where never pain shall trouble you again nor fears molest. Behold, that is the way of the Karma. Good bye." Next came Confucious. He was a dry and dour sort. "Ah," he said, "I see waht has happened to you. did I not warn you of this? If you had followed my teaching, you would not be where you are. Well, son, you have made your bed, and now you must lie in it. Good bye."

Then came Mohammed and viewed the wreck. "Too bad, too bad," he said, "but it could not be helped; it had to be so. That is Kis-met (which means Fate). Good bye."

At last came the Lord Jesus Christ, and saw the wretched helpless victim. He tenderly lifted him and healed his wounds and bade him stand upright; then led him by the hand and set his feet upon firm ground and lovingly said, "Come follow me." None other can do that, but He can and does, and a myriad of witnesses do testify to the fact.

Here is another highly significant statement about the Lord Jesus. Boll did not author it, but he included it in his magazine. It is by his co-worker Jorgenson, and perfectly expresses Boll's convictions too:

Among the many heresies, there is "the heresy of emphasis." wrong emphasis; and of this heresy, too many Christians of our kind have been guilty. If we aspire to be "New Testament Christians," a people after the pattern of Paul, Peter, James and John, we must put

the emphasis where they put it. Christ is central. Jesus Christ Himself--HE is our main concern. It is quite possible, in fact easy, to become taken up with "movements" and subjects good as they may be, more than with Him, our only Lord and Savior.

THE GREATEST LOVE STORY RETOLD

Joyce Broyles

Last week in one of my Bible classes, I told the students about Ruth, the greatest human love story. I read the well-known verses that are often recited or sung at weddings. "Where you go, I'll go, where you lodge, I'll lodge, your people shall be my people, your God my God."

Those verses are especially dear to me because they were sung at my wedding. After 30 years of roaming the earth, Douglas and I are still sharing our lives, our families, and our God.

One day this week, Nicole, one of my students, said to me, "Ruth really is a great love story. I read it last night."

Noting her interest, I hugged her and said, "Yes it is. It's a wonderful story!" Then I began to tell her another love story.

After more than a decade of marriage, my friend's daughter-in-law Betsy collapsed one morning, remaining in a coma for several months because of an aneurysm. At the core facility, Betsy's husband saw many patients whose mates had left them because of their impairment. Some friends suggested that he might want out of this situation, since his wife probably would not get better. His answer was, "I married her for better or for worse. I will not leave her now or ever."

Betsy did get better, although she is not exactly as she was before. Because of Bobby's answer about staying with her, Betsy loves him now more than ever.

I could see that Nicole was touched by this love story. I told her that Bobby's parents had taught him as my parents had taught me. When I began a project, Mom and Dad insisted that I finish it. If it were embroidering a scarf, sewing a dress, or painting my room, I could not quit before I completed the work.

As I got older, those lessons carried over. If I gave my word that I would head a committee or teach a class, then I had to do the work and

be there each time, prepared. If I started reading a book, I usually finished it, whether it was interesting or not.

When I made a promise, I was obligated to keep it. When I considered marriage, I knew it would work because that was a "project" I could never quit. When I vowed a vow, especially my wedding vow, I knew it was "until death do us part."

Like Ruth, like Bobby, and like many other couples celebrating years together, the vow to stay with one partner is considered important enough to keep until the finish. Like Ruth, Bobby, and those others, difficulties are stressful at times; however, with the inner strength that God gives us and with the love we have from the beginning, we can complete this proposal, together, although we have differing personal expressions.

Just WISHING for Heaven? Or SURE of It?

Someone said that people can be divided into 4 kinds:

BELIEVERS,
UNbelievers,
MAKEbelievers,
& HALFbelievers.

It's sad when a person is only a HAIF-believer, not really sure of what he believes, or trying to pick-&-choose which teachings of Scripture he believes and which he doesn't, or just floundering around in uncertainty.

Decades ago in a sermon Brother Boll said that once, to his dismay, he heard a member of his congregation say, "IF I HAVE THE GOOD LUCK TO GET TO HEAVEN. . . ."! What a sad, unbiblical statement, for if we belong to Jesus we can KNOW that by God's great grace we are Saved Now and Heaven-bound forever!

Brother Boll's reaction to that man's statement was, "WHEN GOD WASHES YOU, HE DOESN'T LEAVE YOU SPOTTED AND STREAKED." No, thank the Lord, when a person entrusts himself to Christ as Lord and Savior, he is washed whiter than the snow.

Are you saved, and sure?

What The Bible Teaches:

The DAY of the LORD

Alex V. Wilson

Have you ever wondered, "Why doesn't God DO something? Why doesn't He deliver me from my troubles? He seems to be sleeping!" The Psalmists felt that way too: "Rouse yourself! Why do you sleep, O Lord? Awake! Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction?" "Arise, O Lord...awake, O my God." (Psa. 44:23,24; 7:6.)

How does God answer such complaints? Something like this: "I will 'awake' indeed--at the right time. Even now, while seeming to be asleep, I am at work behind the scenes in what you humans call 'the providence of God'--**overruling** evil. But the time will come when I will act **publicly and powerfully--destroying** evil--and a dreadful time it will be."

Scripture often refers to that period as the **DAY OF THE LORD**. When it comes, He will intervene in history **openly and overwhelmingly**. It will be His mighty invasion of human affairs. At least 7 prophets mention this important time. Through Malachi, the Lord twice mentions "the day when I act" (3:17 & 4:3, RSV). Now, in a sense, is the day of man, when God leaves us free to exalt Him or shake our fist at Him. As far as "success" in this life is concerned, it seems to make little difference whether we are godly or not. But the day of the Lord shall come, and "then...you shall distinguish between the righteous & the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him" (Mal.3:18).

Dress Rehearsals of the End

The prophets often described the nearer future and the distant future as if they were one event, especially if there were similarities. For instance some passages refer to both the first and second comings of Christ, with no indication that a long period would elapse between them: see Zech. 9:9-10. In the same way, prophets sometimes warned that the endtime Day of the Lord (D-L) would occur immediately. It was not indefinitely remote, but "near--close at hand": see Joel 1:15; 2:1. Thus a D-L fell upon Judah in Joel's time in the form of a devastating plague of locusts (1:4, 2:25). Again, Isaiah 13 warns of the D-L "as though the historical overthrow of Babylon by the Medes would be the end of the world. The historical event is described against the background of the final end-time drama; both are visitations of the one God in the accomplishment of His redemptive purpose" (Ladd).

Thus some past catastrophes were called the D-L because they were foreshadowings or "dress rehearsals" of the final, climactic Day that shall occur in the future. Evil nations were punished and sometimes overthrown at those times, just as all evil will be punished and totally overthrown at the End. A third example of this is seen in Ezek. 30:1-26. The Lord says, "Wail and say, 'Alas for that day!' For the day of the Lord is near...A sword will come against Egypt....Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his army will draw their swords against Egypt and fill the land with the slain" (2-4; 10-11). Thus a Day of the Lord came upon Egypt in the form of Babylon's army. It has come in various forms at various times. But The Day is still to come.

Doomsday

The D-L will be frightful. Zephaniah piles up one grim word upon another in his description. He calls it a day of wrath, distress and anguish, ruin and devastation, darkness and gloom, clouds and thick darkness, trumpet blast and battle cry (1:14-16). Through Malachi, God speaks thus about the "great and terrible day of the Lord": "For behold, the day comes, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch" (4:5,1).

But Isaiah gives the fullest descriptions. Read his woeful warnings in 2:10-12, 17-22; and 13:6, 9-13; also 24:1-6, 19-23.

With Joy they acclaim the Lord's Majesty

But the picture is not totally gloomy. Rays of light gleam through the dark clouds of the D-L. God's judgments will purge away the rottenness of evil. Jewish rabbis referred to those judgments as the birth-pangs of the Messianic age--the travail from which the kingdom of God would be born. The Day will bring forth righteousness, and worship for God, and resurrection. Joel declares not only that the Lord will judge the nations, shake the heavens and earth, and avenge the blood of His oppressed people, but also that He will be a refuge to His people, and will make Jerusalem holy and His land fruitful and pleasant (3:12-21).

Isa. 24-27 is called "the little apocalypse," for it portrays the Day when the Lord will come "out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins." He will "lay waste the earth and devastate it." (26:21; 24:1.) Yet we find scattered through these chapters such joyful refrains as these: "They raise their voices, they shout for joy...they acclaim the Lord's majesty....From the ends of the earth we hear singing: 'Glory to the Righteous One.'" "When your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness." "Your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake

up and shout for joy." "The Lord Almighty...will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces... 'This is the Lord, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.'"

Thus, while the emphasis in the OT's portrayal of the D-L is on the terrors of judgment and destruction, God's people will rejoice at the triumph of righteousness. See Mal.3:16-17 & 4:1-2 for another sample of this jumping-for-joy delight. There will be a great Day in the morning!

A Repeated Theme in the New Testament as well

Since the OT mentions the D-L so much, it is not surprising that the NT does too. **Our Lord Jesus, and the apostles Paul, Peter and John all teach about it, though they call it by various terms.**

Paul speaks of it the most. **The Day of the Lord** will bring His destroying wrath upon the unsaved, surprisingly--like a thief, and inescapably--like birth-pangs. (1 Thes.5:1-4 & 9; this term is also found in 2 Thes. 2:2 & 2 Pet.3:10.) Paul looks forward to the mutual approval he and his converts will enjoy on **the Day of the Lord Jesus** (2 Cor.1:14; also 1 Cor.5:5, RSV). He says our Savior will sustain us to the end, so we may be unreprouvable in **the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ** (1 Cor.1:7-8). He repeats this assurance to the Philippians: He who began a good work in them will bring it to completion at **the Day of Jesus Christ** (1:6). Yet, though he is confident this will happen, he continues to pray for its accomplishment! He prays that they will abound spiritually, so they might be blameless in **the Day of Christ** and he (Paul) might glory in them--that his work was not in vain (1:10; 2:16). Similarly, he says that when the Lord comes, "**the Day** will bring to light...the quality of each man's work" --of service done for Him. Each true believer will either receive a reward or suffer loss of reward (though he himself will be saved)--depending on how faithfully he served (1 Cor.3:9-4:5). In his last letter he mentions "**that Day**" three times, without naming it more specifically. He is persuaded that Christ is able to preserve him and/or the Gospel message "until that Day." He prays that Onesiphorus will receive mercy from the Lord "on that Day." And he is confident that "on that Day" the Lord will reward him and others who have loved His appearing (2 Tim.1:12, 18; 4:8). Obviously that Day meant much to Paul.

Our Lord Jesus speaks repeatedly of **the last Day** (4 times in John 6:38-54 alone, all referring to the resurrection of the saved). Peter writes about the Day of the Lord, which he also calls **the Day of God** and **the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men**. Even our present heavens and earth will be destroyed and then renewed as the

home of righteousness. (2 Pet.3:3-13.) John in Revelation refers to the **Day of God's wrath** (6:17; compare Rom. 2:5,16). He also writes of the "war of the great Day of God the Almighty which occurs at Armageddon (Rev. 16:14-16).

Wow--we have mentioned 12 different terms and over 20 NT passages where they are found! And even then we have not given a complete list. But based on those verses in the two preceding paragraphs, we see that the **Day of the Lord Jesus Christ is a period that includes the following: For the unrepentant, there will be divine judgment, wrath and destruction (as the OT also emphasizes). And Armageddon, "the last battle," occurs then too.**

But for those who are **new creatures in Christ**, due to His mercy we shall be raised up from death and He will complete in us His good work of salvation (no doubt referring to the glorifying of our bodies and minds: Phil.3:21, 1 Cor.13:12). Yet "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Cor.5:10); and at that time "each of us will give an account of himself to God" (Rom.14:10-12). That must be when our conduct will be found either blameless and approved, or be reproved, as mentioned above. Our service for the Lord will also "be shown for what it is" (2 Cor.5:13), and we shall accordingly either receive a reward or lose it though still gaining eternal life by God's grace. (Salvation is by His grace through repentant faith, but our rewards will depend on our faithful service.) And the time when all this will occur, according to the above passages, is the Day of the Lord--our Lord Jesus.

Events that Precede the Day

Scripture teaches that several events will precede the Day of the Lord. 1) **The Falling Away or Rebellion**. Paul says that the D-L "will not come, unless the falling away (KJV, ASV) or rebellion (NIV, RSV) comes first" (2 Thes.2:3). The Greek word used here is apostasia, from which "apostasy" comes. It may mean a great religious falling away, as mentioned in 1 Tim. 4:1, "In later times some will fall away from the faith." As Brother Boll wrote, "**Apostasy** is something more than mere error in doctrine: it is a renunciation of the truth, a complete abandonment of the faith, a sweeping denial of Christ, of the Cross...in short of the entire gospel and of all God's revealed word. And that not by ignorant heathendom (for one cannot fall away from something he has never had)...but on part of those who have had the truth, and once professed to believe it." In this case, it is dead "Christendom" which falls away.

On the other hand, apostasia "does not in itself imply religious apostasy. The word itself means a departure in a hostile sense, a rebellion" (Buswell). Thus it may refer to the Man of Lawlessness in his political as well as religious revolt against God, for he will be both world-dictator and "deity." If this is true, then this point and #2 both refer to the same thing.

2)The Day of the Lord "will not come, until...the Man of Lawlessness is revealed....He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, and even sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God" (2 Thes.2:3-4). No doubt this self-deification is the same thing as the abomination of desolation mentioned by Daniel and referred to by Christ. It marks the kick-off of the Great Tribulation period (Matt.24:15,21; Mark 13:14,19).

3)"The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord" (Acts 2:20). Peter made that statement on Pentecost, quoting Joel 2:31. Several other passages mention God's turning out the lights of heaven. Sometimes such expressions were merely symbolic ways of predicting drastic "earthshaking" events like the fall of empires which occurred in the prophet's day (Ezek.32:2,7-8; Amos 8:9). But when referring to Christ's glorious return they may well be literal, for Jesus predicted "the heavenly bodies will be shaken" (Luke 21:26). For further study, see Isa.13:9-13; Joel 3:14-16; Matt.24:29-31; Luke 21:25-27; & Rev.6:12-17.

These three horrors, then, precede the Day of the Lord: 1)the apostasy from God's truth and revolt against Him, His truth and His people; 2)the enthronement and worship of the Man of Lawlessness; 3)"signs in the sun, moon and stars," as they are darkened. Jesus said that when those latter signs (#3) "begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near....you know that the kingdom of God is near." Then He warned, "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with...the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap" (Luke 21:25-34). As Paul said, "The day is almost here...put aside the deeds of darkness" (Rom.13:12).

The Day of the Lord draws nearer. For you, will it bring Morning or mourning?

Into His Strength

Joyce Lyon

In Isaiah 27:2-5 (KJV), we see God the Father as the keeper of a pleasant vineyard. God does three things in these verses. He cares for His vineyard, He waters it, and He guards it night and day lest anyone damage it. Then in verse four, we notice a strange statement. Suddenly, God informs us that "fury is not in " Him. Why such a statement there? I believe that it is there because the intention of God is to issue an invitation. He wants to celebrate. He hopes to invite those who are outside the boundaries of His vineyard to enter in. God longs to share His vineyard and all are welcome, so, it's as if His invitation reads, "Come in, please, come in." In such a host, there simply is no fury or wrath.

The same good will cannot be found in God's neighbors. It seems that they have built a fence of briars and thorns between their vineyards and God's. They have no desire to enter into God's vineyard, and He had better not step into theirs.

The reaction of His neighbors prompts God to put forth two questions. In effect, He asks, "Why do you want to battle against Me? I desire peace. I want to be friends." Secondly, "Why in the world would you set up such an unequal contest? Are you stupid enough to believe that you can win a war against Me? I am God. Briars and thorns are nothing to Me. I can go right through them."

The last section of this story (v.5) is of great importance. God has had His first invitation rejected, yet, look what He does in mercy and grace. God offers another invitation in the form of instruction for His enemies. He tells them how to gain strength. In present day language, God is extending this invitation, "If you really want to be strong, come into My vineyard, come to Me, take hold of Me, take hold of My strength, and be at peace with Me!"

Here we have a glimpse into the heart of God. It's as if God is crying out to us, "Don't you understand? There is nothing to be afraid of. There is only love in My heart for you." God seems to be explaining, "I don't want to use one ounce of My strength against you. I get no pleasure out of your destruction. My strength is not made for destruction but to bring you close to Me."

George MacDonald argued years ago that, "This is and has been the Father's work from the beginning--to bring us into the home of His heart. This is our destiny."

Why does God need to cry out to us? Why do we need to understand His heart? It is because God created us for an eternal purpose. He created us for a love relationship that would never end, and in that father-child relationship we would abide and draw our every breath.

While on earth, Jesus called God, "Abba." By doing so, He sought to tell us how close and tender His relationship to His Father was. "Abba" is an intimate term, a term used by small children when they crawled upon their daddy's lap. Israel claimed that this was blasphemy. Jesus could never be that close to God. Yes, Jesus took it a step further. He insisted that the Israelites could also be that close to God. God could be their "Abba." Not only was it their right, but it was the greatest desire of God's heart that they exercise that right. I can almost hear the words Jesus must have used, words that were surely in His heart as He pleaded with Israel, "Don't you understand at all what is in your Father's heart? He wants you to crawl upon His lap. He longs to put His arms around you. How He yearns for you to call Him, 'Daddy.' His heart will never rest until you do."

Not only did Jesus come to change the relationship that we have with God, but He came to show us why we should change that relationship. Jesus is the perfect image of His Father, and Jesus lived on earth to convince us once again that God is really good. He is a god worthy of being called "Father."

At one time, Adam knew that God is good. As you read the first two chapters of Genesis, notice how often the word, "good" is used. Goodness is the very nature of God, and because He is good, everything He does is good. Life in the garden was a life of constantly receiving good from the hands of a loving Father. Yet, the best gift of all was the gift of God's own heart. As Adam and Eve's hearts touched God's heart, life was exactly as it was meant to be.

In chapter three of Genesis, Adam and Eve sinned. God did not change. He was still perfect goodness. Man changed. Because man was no longer good, he could no longer recognize the goodness in God. With two vicious lies, Satan had convinced Adam and Eve that God was not worthy to be a father. Satan's first lie was the lie of independence. Satan suggested to Adam and Eve, "You don't need God. You don't need a father to care for you. You are not children anymore. Get rid of God and do exactly as you wish." As soon as mankind accepted the first lie, the second lie was easy. The second lie told by Satan was that God was a father to be feared. The Devil must have shouted, "Have you sinned? Have you made God mad? Well, God is certainly going to punish you. Run! Hide from Him! When God calls out to you, don't answer."

I can remember the first time I was afraid of God. I was five years old, and I had somehow been confronted with the idea of becoming a missionary to China. Now, I really did not mind being a missionary, but not to China. I hated Chinese food, and I most certainly did not want my head chopped off. Looking back, I'm not sure that heads were rolling at that time in China, but at five, I believed they were.

I was so sure that these two things were the absolute worst that could ever happen to anyone that I saw my Heavenly Father in a new light. Of course, He had the perfect right to send me to China. He was God. But now, I believed that He might really be mean enough to do just that. So, I rebelled. Someday, I might become a missionary, but I would never go to China.

Satan had sent fear into my young heart. I no longer trusted God. I no longer believed in His goodness. I no longer dared obey Him. I was even afraid to pray to Him for several months, because if I did, He might just tell me to straighten up and get myself on the next boat to China.

The sin of Genesis chapter three destroyed God's perfect plan for mankind. Man had taken himself away from God's heart and out of God's arms. Now, God had to begin His work to bring mankind back--back to the position of a true child, back to fellowship with a father, and back into a father's arms. Everything in the Bible after chapter three was written to show us that our God is a good father. It was written to show us how much God desires, how much God will do, and how much God will forgive in order to bring mankind back home to His heart. He will even forgive sins.

I don't believe that it is the doing of individual sinful acts that bothers God. He can forgive any sin. He can and does forgive thousands and millions of sins. What tears out the heart of God is that by our sinning we show Him the condition of our hearts. We tell Him that we don't see His love. We don't care if He loves us. Our relationship with Him is not important. and what does it matter, if our hearts touch? Our sinning proves what could hearts we have, and with our cold hearts, we break His.

We are all familiar with the story of the prodigal son. As the father watched his son go out the front door with a bag full of money and his suitcase, do any of us honestly believe that the father was concerned about the money? Nor do we believe that the father was overly concerned that his beloved son would be caught in dire physical straits--with no home, no clothing, no food, no money, and no friends. What the father was deeply concerned about, what broke his heart and dev-

astated his being, was that now he knew for sure that his heart and the heart of his son had never really touched.

Even as the son woke up in the pigpen and decided to return home, the son still did not comprehend his father's heart. The son did know that he was in a terrible fix, that he had done wrong, and that he needed to go home. He knew his father was a kind and generous man who treated his servants well, and that his father would at least let him be a servant.

He did not understand that his father's concerns centered around a relationship. The son did not realize that the father had spent his life building and nourishing a heart relationship with the son, that the son had spurned the relationship as if it meant nothing, that the father yearned with an aching heart to restore it, and that his father could forgive the unthinkable in order to do just that.

The older brother was no wiser. He stayed home. He never left his father's side, but neither did he comprehend what was in his father's heart. He thought his father to be unloving, stingy, and unfair. As the father looked into his son's eyes, can't you hear his whole being cry, "Don't you know that you could have had anything of mine that you wanted? Don't you understand that you have my whole heart?"

We all understand that this is a story about God and a story about us. We are both sons. It does not matter what sins we commit--whether we go or stay, whether we spend money wisely or not, whether we work or play, whether we have friends who leave us or make friends at all, or whether we eat at a fancy table or in a pigpen. None of these matter if our hearts never touch the heart of our Father in Heaven--if we never see or believe the height, the length, or the breadth of His desire for us and His love that keeps us.

So we have a choice. Will we let God be a father? Will we believe that He is the One who loves us utterly, He is the One who promises to do everything in His power to convince us of His heart's desires, and He is the One who asks us to believe that there is no fury or wrath in Him? He invites us. He surely can be seen once again pleading, "Come to My vineyard, come to Me, take hold of Me, take hold of My strength, and be at peace with Me." And God, our Father, guarantees that we will be at peace, because that is exactly what God promises that His strength is for--to bring us home to His heart.

Y2K UPDATE

(Be sure to read this month's editorial)

WHAT and WHOM Can You BELIEVE?

With some experts saying the 2000 Bug is going to cause hardly a ripple in its effects, and others predicting the breakdown of civilization worldwide -- what's the truth? Well, nobody knows for sure. But *one hopeful indicator* is that airline reservations into the year 2000 have not caused travel agencies' computer networks to break down.

Here's another thing. This year, April 1 is not only April Fool's Day. It also is when New York (the U.S.' financial center) and Canada and Japan will begin their *fiscal year extending into 2000*. What occurs that day will be another indicator as to what may happen on a much larger scale on 1/1/2000, and whether what occurs will be just a minor nuisance, or a monstrous disaster, or in between.

What's the worst-case scenario? Michael Hyatt says he is "stubbornly optimistic that Y2K will be between a brownout and a black-out, not a total breakdown." Yet he imagines for us a possible extremely bad scenario in state (not national) governments. He puts it like this: What might happen? "Consider...date-sensitive state government contracts as just one prime example. When state government mainframe computers begin to misread the dates on independent vendor contracts, thinking them to be over 100 years old, they will simply consider the contracts expired, invalid or obsolete, and will automatically cancel them. Since many mainframes are programmed to automatically delete out-of-date files, these contracts will simply no longer exist....There will be a sudden disappearance of all data on literally tens of thousands of state government contracts, nationwide. Vendors will not get paid, and services will grind to a halt..." [Of course the contracts could be drawn up anew in a matter of days, weeks, or a month or two. But what effect would this have on the stock market in the meantime? And we've been considering only state governments, not national ones. --avw. Hyatt continues:]

"Imagine the utter chaos that could break loose in the...financial markets, as tens of thousands of state government contracts around the country are erroneously canceled and deleted. Will this send the private sector markets crashing?..."

"[Also] think about the effect of this snafu on the state you live in -- law enforcement, fire fighting, transportation. We take most state government services for granted. And remember, this initial failure is going to happen [IF not fixed ahead of time -- avw] ...well *before* the year 2000 ever gets underway. [So put] your house in order now."

Days, Weeks or Months? Electrical Blackout, and/or Longterm Recession?

I respect Hyatt as a sincere Christian and a thorough student of Y2K. But I was especially eager to learn Larry Burkett's view. He is a godly and mature financial advisor who over a period of decades has helped numerous Christians follow biblical principles of stewardship. As a professional economist he made a painstaking study of Y2K before taking a public stand about it. Just this month, March '99, he published these points:

"Y2K is going to be more than a bump in the road, but I don't believe, as some people do, that [it will] shut down the entire world for weeks, months, or even a year.... Based on the evidence I've examined, I believe serious physical disruptions will be confined to days or sporadically to weeks, not months. However, even a few days' disruption is significant in a nation where we're used to things working most of the time.

"Make no mistake: The calendar rollover from 1999 to 2000 will create some serious situations, just as tornadoes or ice storms do. Some Y2K-related problems could potentially endanger health and safety, especially in other parts of the world. But I don't believe [they] will cause 'the end of the world as we know it.' Once the physical disruptions [like possible loss of electricity, etc.] are past, however, we'll still face the longer-term concern of the economic impact of Y2K...."

Burkett goes on to predict that some businesses, especially small and medium-sized ones, will not survive. That unemployment will rise. That both government and churches will see their income go down even as the need for services and practical ministry goes up.

"What I am describing is what happens in a recession. In my opinion, which I realize runs counter to the opinions of many of the world's top economists, the year 2000 problems will make a...recession all but inevitable. We have a choice, however, about how we *respond* to the turmoil. My hope and prayer is that Christians will begin to think of Y2K -- and its aftereffects -- as an *opportunity*, rather than as a calamity.

"The fact is that in difficult times the Lord gives His people an even greater platform on which to demonstrate the wisdom of His Word, to show that our trust is in Him, to reach people with the Gospel...[and] be the hands of Jesus in practical ministry to others." (from *Money Matters*, March 1999)

Larry Burkett, continued

Apart from the above, Burkett was interviewed by Christian Book Distributors on the internet. He told them, "Y2K is not a thing to Fear, it is a thing to Prepare for." (That is what W&W has been saying too.) Here are some other excerpts:

When asked about the outlook for *the power industry*, he replied: "I don't think it's going to be critical but I think there are going to be periods where the power in some areas will be off for 2 or 3 days, maybe 4 or 5 days. In general you'll have a lot of brown outs and rationing...."

Asked *what the Christian community should do to help people prepare and not panic*, he said: "We don't know what Y2K is going to look like; we should make an educated guess, that's all. I would say, if you keep 2 weeks of food on hand that's probably not enough. If a panic ensues in this country, and that's not impossible. . . it may not be 10 days to fill the stores back up, [but] could easily be 3 weeks. My recommendation would be to increase your supply of food gradually. Just increase your normal food supply from 2 weeks, which most families have in their home, to 4 or 5 weeks."

CBD: There are so many people that live paycheck to paycheck to make ends meet. The specter of stockpiling food and purchasing alternative energy is a problem that is too large when they are trying to figure out how to eat this week.

Burkett: "The thing I would say is that it is up to the rest of us. If I think it will take 4 weeks for my family then I ought to put in 8 weeks. If somebody else needs some food then I can certainly help. In addition, what we can not do individually we can do collectively. *You ought to have lights on in the church [from a generator], have blankets there, food there, and with a little bit of effort we could stockpile those things in the church....*

"The thing that we do know is *there is no way we won't have some disruptions with Y2K*. You'll have utility companies that have made a mistake and their power is going to drop off for awhile, you can have telephone companies that have made mistakes and the telephones either aren't going to work or are going to be disrupted. Even banks have made mistakes. You just have to accept, "Okay I can live through that." If I've got a month's worth of cash on hand and my bank isn't open for three days it doesn't bother me -- they're not going to close and never open again. [I wish we could convince people] the power is not going off and staying off. It's going to be erratic, sporadic, you'll have brown outs but it's not going to stay off. Food is not

going to disappear and never come back into the stores....People are not going to freeze to death. Even if your power goes off for 5 days, there are churches and government agencies that are going to take you in. They will have generators and heat....

"[Y2K is] not a problem that does not exist. It's going to exist. I just disagree with so many of the people that think it's going to be far worse than what the evidence shows. Now if the evidence gets worse as we go farther in I'll change my evaluation but so far I've not seen anything that would warrant the kind of alarmism that I've heard coming from a lot of people."

Grim Prospects for People Overseas

The *Christian Chronicle* of July 1998 had a helpful article on Y2K, especially in relation to missionaries and overseas Christians:

"Brett Young, a Partner in Set Solutions Inc., and a specialist on the Year 2000 computer crisis, says this:....The cost in manpower and fixing...computer systems will exceed many developing countries' ability to pay. Young cites Nigeria as an example of this. Nigeria derives 95% of its income from the sale of petroleum products. This process involves production, refining, transportation, shipping, marketing and receipt of payments via worldwide banks. Each of these steps in the process is very computer-dependent. Yet there is no evidence that any Nigerian group...has done anything substantial to prepare for the year 2000. The collapse of any one of these steps in the industry can cause the entire process, and the nation as a whole, to collapse. The failure of any one component, such as the banking system, can bring catastrophe to a nation or city...."

"How might this affect missionaries and their work? If the banking system, say, in Nigeria fails due to this crisis, missionaries will be unable to transfer funds, neither for their own family expenses nor for their program. Schools, hospitals, children's homes, printing organizations and a host of other mission programs on the field would be stopped in their tracks. And this is just one field...."

[avw now: The above facts are urgent. Because the crisis is far worse overseas than here, we need foresight. To me it seems wise if all overseas workers supported financially from the U.S. could be sent funds in Dec.'99 not merely for one month, but three! Not just for Dec., but Dec.-Feb. 2000. This will require planning, and sacrifice. Let's not fail the Lord nor the workers in His harvest fields.]

PERSONAL and FAMILY PREPARATION for Y2K Or OTHER EMERGENCIES

(as suggested by the Joseph Project: www.josephproject2000.org
Amended by avw)

We need not panic about the possible crisis that may loom ahead of us. Trust God! But we ought to Prepare Wisely, just in case. That means, Ask some practical questions and begin to formulate a plan to fit your personal situation. Ask yourself:

- How would I heat my home if there were no electricity or gas service for several days or longer?
- What would I use to provide light in the evenings?
- Do I have enough food in my home to feed my family (including pets) for several weeks if I were unable to purchase food from the local grocery stores?
- How about extra toilet paper, toothpaste, soap, feminine products, etc?
- How would I prepare meals without electric power or gas service?
- What would I do for drinking water if city/county water delivery was interrupted?
- How would we bathe, & wash dishes & laundry? What about garbage disposal?
- Where would we go to the bathroom if power outages stop running water?
- How would I communicate with family and friends, and stay abreast of news in the event of power or phone outages? (Consider no tv, radio, computers, fax, etc.)
- Do I have a supply of cash on hand in the event banks have difficulty processing financial transactions? (We do not recommend you remove all your funds from the bank; but it might be wise to have 1 month's amount on hand in case of temporary problems.)
- What would I do in a medical emergency if 911 were unavailable? Do I have a first aid kit for emergency use? Are any doctors or paramedics nearby who could help?
- What would we do for entertainment if we suddenly found ourselves at home for extended periods of time without the usual "techno toys"? Have good books, games, etc.

Such questions may overwhelm you with fear. But if we Work Together we can help each other prepare. Wise churches could hold some meetings from time to time--for encouragement, practical advice, & planning. We need to be ready, OURSELVES, but more than that, we want to be ABLE TO HELP OTHERS TOO! So, another Major Question is: How can we reach out to help others in THEIR needs...both in *practical ways* (materially & emotionally) and in *spiritual ways* (can you explain to others what a *real* Christian is, and how to become one? Can you encourage the depressed and fearful from God's Word?)

VOICES from the FIELD

Tim & Dawn Yates 5 Dudley Rd., Charlestown NSW 2290
February 1999

We're here! After months of preparation and waiting on paperwork from the Australian government, we finally received our visas and have arrived in Australia. It has taken us quite a while to get our shipment from America, buy the things we need and get settled into our new home. We are fortunate enough to live in the house right next to the church.

The Charlestown church of Christ in Newcastle has welcomed us with open arms and with great hopes for the future. This congregation of believers has not had a full-time minister for over two years. Needless to say, they are excited about the possibilities the Lord has created by bringing us together. We will need many prayers as we begin to build up this church both spiritually, and in number, and as we work in a resistant society.

It is quite different to work with one local church, rather than nearly 200 bush churches! There are challenges to each, I assure you! Preaching every Sunday morning and night has been very challenging, but I am loving every minute of it! I preached every Sunday in Malawi, but it was to a different church every time!-- Tim

Dawn writes: Meat pies, sausage rolls, lamb chops, barbecues, iced coffee, bubs, ta's, ankle biters, good tucker, beautiful views, colorful birds, friendly people, kookaburras, tea. These are some of the things that come to mind as I think of how to describe Australia after only three months of living here. Many things remind us of America, yet surprisingly, many things remind us of Africa. We are conveniently located just beside the church, a few minutes drive to several different beaches, and a short walk to the main shopping center in town. The house we are

renting was very old and worn, but we have made it into our home after many hours of cleaning and painting and repairing.

Lauren is adjusting to her mommy being her Sunday school teacher. She often mentions her old friends, home and church in Knoxville, but she is adjusting well to her new friends, home, and church here in Charlestown. She enjoys learning the Australian words for things and correcting Mommy and Daddy when we make a mistake. She can also sing plenty of songs "the Australian way", which basically means leaving out the "r"s. Leah is walking everywhere and getting into whatever she can. Having children seems to open many doors into people's lives. With so many young families around us, it is important to have a common bond with which we can open the doors of communication and friendship. Please pray for us as we make friends and try to make a difference in people's lives. E-Mail Address: Yatesfamily@ozemail.com.au

Robert & Joy Garrett

Zimbabwe

January, 1999

At Epworth the floor slab has now been poured and the roof sheeting fixed in place. The congregation there is now very happily meeting under the roof. The next step is to build up the brick walls. We did have one mishap. I had stored the asbestos/cement roof sheets (10 and 12 feet long) here at Ruwa and carried them back and forth to and from Epworth. One evening we left some on the floor at Epworth and the next morning they were gone. A gang had climbed the seven-foot fence and carried them off. When I went to buy replacements there were no 12-foot sheets in town and we had to wait two weeks before they became available again.

The walls must wait until bricks are made. There is a good termite hill on the Epworth site from which bricks can be made. The brethren there will begin making bricks about May or June once the rains are over. We can make bricks for about half to one-third the cost of commercial bricks. We praise God for what has been accomplished at Epworth and thank all who contributed to this work. At the moment we are not asking for any more funds until after the bricks are made.

Our three years are about up and, Lord willing, we will be returning to the States in May -- and then return to the field in April of the following year. The Lord has blessed and it is not necessary to ask for travel funds. We can hardly wait to be with our children and grandchildren again. We look forward to visiting among you and wish to share the Word of God with you. When Paul and Barnabas returned from their missionary journey, "they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." (Acts 14:27) Our contact address

while in the States will be: 16111 Plum Creek Trail, Louisville, KY 40299. Phone (502) 267-7759

Dennis & Betty Allen

March 9, 1999

For years we have prayed that the Lord would open an opportunity to serve...in China. He has now given us such an open door. An English Institute is being opened in a city in north China. During the day students will be taught English for tuition. At night the facilities will be used as a training center for...leaders. Due to the greater tolerance of the government and the growing desire of Chinese...for leaders for the rapidly emerging groups, it is planned that this training center will eventually teach thousands. We will be the only Americans in residence at the beginning. The 1st program is designed to make the 2nd possible, so that it will be entirely self-supporting within 2 years....As this work is just getting started we will all be learning as we go along as there are many unknowns. We'll need a lot of prayer.

We are planning to go to China in mid-April. Classes are expected to begin in May. Two-bedroom apartments can be rented for \$150 U.S. a month. We should be able to live on our present Social Security income. Our main extra expense will be travel. We've applied for 6-month visas. At present we are gathering material for our English classes, and also studying Mandarin so we can communicate on a basic level. We will also have a capable interpreter.

We covet your prayers. Freedom is still limited.... Any letters we write you must be carefully worded, and the same is true for any letters you send us. Don't say anything derogatory about the government, nor call anyone by that unwise term, 'missionaries.' It's o-k to mention your own personal experiences, even answers to prayer. If you wish to write us after April 15 please send it c/o Linda Allen, 2415 St. Xavier St., Louisville KY 40212. She can forward your letter to us.

We feel humbled to have this privilege. We have been given many rich blessings and want to share them with others there. Pray for the Lord to give us health and enable us to do this work. [This letter has been condensed & adapted. For more details, call 812:883-3994 by April 15.]

[Dennis and Betty Allen's departure for China has been delayed for an undetermined length of time (possibly one or two months), due to the sudden unavailability of the building that was to be used for their ministry. Be much in prayer for this matter.]

Paul & Virginia Kitzmiller Moscow, Russia March 1, 1999

We have just returned from Kineshma. Praise the Lord that enough of the problems have been worked out that we will be able to continue teaching in that city. We will go [from Moscow, where they now live--avw] on selected weekends and conduct classes on Sat. and Sun. At the Spiritual Center. This seems to be the best arrangement in the present political and economic situation.

We are a little disappointed that it was necessary to make this change, but it will give us some benefits that we didn't have before. We will be able to focus more on the Bible and less on English and we are hopeful that we will have a little more freedom to associate with the teachers outside the classroom. Most importantly, this will show us an opportunity to keep in touch with our truth-seeking friends there.

Because of the influence and encouragement of teachers-missionaries in Kineshma in recent years, one teacher reported to us during the past weekend that she had now read the entire New Testament. She was happy to tell that now she knew for herself what the Bible said and was not depending on what others told her it said. She was encouraging other to do the same and was also using the instruction of the Bible to teach her children. Thank you for your interest in this work. Please continue to keep us in your prayers; there are still many obstacles ahead.

SOMETHING TO LIVE BY

Recently the very first page of my Bible got torn out! It was the one before the title page, so no great loss. But on it I had copied a quotation from the great missionary to Africa, David Livingstone. He said,

"LORD, SEND ME ANYWHERE--

ONLY GO WITH ME.

LAY ANY BURDEN ON ME--

ONLY SUSTAIN ME.

SEVER ANY TIE BUT THE TIE

THAT BINDS ME TO THYSELF."

A question for each of us: Can I say that?

JESUS Had To; WE Have to

Don McGee

As we read the Bible it is easy to see that God gave us much to think about in regard to life here and eternity over there. Almost on every page we find the encouragement we need to meet the challenges of this life. Likewise, we are often told of the magnificent glories which will be ours when God changes this dispensation and we are finally with our Lord along with saved loved ones, never to be separated again. And, along with those promises we find some strong words which dictate a manner of living which "must" be characteristic of our lives as disciples of Jesus. Words such as "you must be born again", "except one repents", etc. These words leave no options.

Because this sense of injunction is so often mis-emphasized, we seldom realize that our own Lord was also under injunctions. When Jesus left His heavenly glory and voluntarily accepted the body and life of a human in order to save the race, He also accepted the mandates which dictated how this work of His was to be done. In essence He "counted the cost", and was willing to do it.

I was recently reading from John chapter 3 and reconsidered a word which appears quite prominently in the text. It is the word "dei" in the Greek, and is a strong word of command. We translate it "must". It is used in verse 7 where Jesus says to Nicodemus, "you must be born again." No options, no choices, no anything. . .if people are to be saved they must be born again; you see, "you" is plural referring to everyone, not just Nicodemus. Scan down to verse 14 and note, "...even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Here the same word refers to something Jesus must do in order to redeem lost humanity, and that something is for Him to be killed by Roman crucifixion.

So often religious liberals soften up what God has said in an attempt to make the Bible more palatable to people who want religion without conviction. Might sound good in a seminary classroom or pulpit, but it does not square with the truth. The point is that when Jesus said for us to take up our crosses and follow Him, He was not asking us to do something for which He did not set the precedent. He understood that in order for salvation to be provided, He had to die. He also understood that in order for us to avail ourselves of what He provided, we "must" be His conforming disciples. "Dei" ...a very strong word. Sorta looks like "die", which is what we must do ourselves in order to live with Him.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

Short-Term Mission Trip... is being planned to Woodland Bible Camp. We will paint the outside of the tabernacle, then stay over to worship in the woods! Fri., May 14th, - Sun., May 16th noon is the proposed date. (David Johnson, Tell City, Ind.)

Woodland Bible Camp - Summer Schedule 1999

May 1-June 12 Worker's Week

Jr.#1 June 13-19 J.Carmichael & David Johnson

Int.#1 June 20-26 Rick Tribby & Tom Rogers

Jr. #2 July 11-17 Need Director

Int.#2 July 18-24 Mike Abbott & Patrick Longest

Senior Wk. July 25-31 Alan Borders, Paul & Trey Denny

Senior Citizens Sept. 12-17
Robert Gill and staff

Friends & Family Retreat Sept. 17-19
Cameron & Sharon Cox & David Pound

Senior Retreat Sept. 24-26
Nathan Grimes & Steve Hill

New Address:

Bob & Joanna Morrow

P.O. Box 406

Glenmora, LA 71433

Gallatin Daycare Program...is expanding. The Kindergarten-Daycare committee has been given the responsibility to ex-

pand our daycare program, which currently serves 3 yr olds through 5 yr olds to include infant care. The Regions Bank building that has recently been purchased, will be used for this ministry. The committee has set September, 1999, as an opening date. What greater ministry can we have than assisting in training these children in the way that they should go?

From Cyrus O.Gesulga in Cagayan De Oro City Philippines: Our 17th Annual Lectureship is scheduled for May 19-21, 1999. Our average attendance is about 400 and folks come from the Visayas and Mindanao area.

Jennings God blesses Youth Rally! Isn't God good? The rally was a mountain top experience for all who participated. God answered prayers and blessed with wonderful lessons, moving music, and fantastic fellowship. Praise Him with us for those who helped and for those who came. Pray that many young people continue to take a stand for Him and that adults keep encouraging them. We are looking forward to having Bro. Paul Estes and his family join us in the work here in June.

Turkey Creek, La...announces their upcoming revival with Sonny Childs. A Family Values Revival with the theme: "Parent-

ing and Loving It" will begin March 13 in Turkey Creek with the Church of Christ there as host. Contact Harry Coultas if you're in the area and need more information: (318) 461-2769

Portland Christian School...is celebrating her Diamond Anniversary Year (1998-1999)

Saturday April 24 - Alumni Banquet to welcome the Class of 1999. (All-purpose building at 6:30 p.m.)

Sunday Night May 23rd -Baccalaureate at Portland Ave. Church of Christ.

Thursday, May 27th - Kindergarten Graduation (All-purpose building at 7:00 p.m.)

Friday, May 28th - High School Graduation in All-Purpose building at 8:00 p.m.

Cramer & Hanover...was delighted to host the Portland Christian High School Chorus during our worship service on March 7th. 30 young people gave an excellent concert in song and scripture as a testimony to the God they serve. Their excellent singing is also a testimony to their director Phyllis Mullins. Other adults traveling with the group were J.R.Satterfield, Jodell Seay, Steve Hill, and Ed Merten. The young people also sang that weekend at the Central Kentucky Christian School in Harrodsburg and Belmont Church of Christ in Winchester. Again we commend their testimony in song as well as conduct.

Victor & Mae Broaddus...were honored by Lina Yee and her son

and niece who were in attendance during Cramer's morning worship service. Sis. Yee presented Victor & Mae with a plaque for their role in the Philippines. Both Lina and Jimmy Yee attended Central Bible Institute. Today they pastor a large church in Manila which has started five or six other churches. Each of these ministers who signed the plaque consider Bro.Victor their father in the faith. Bro. Victor in turn gave God the glory as he read from 1 Cor. 3:6 "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." Praise God for His laborers world wide and the seed that continues to be harvested.

Congratulations...to Maple Manor Senior Division on receiving an award from the state of Indiana for their great nursing center and staff!

Good News! Bro. Bill Smallwood baptized his sister (age 70) in February. Praise the Lord for this "babe" in Christ!

Hamburg: It was encouraging to have so many stay for a recent Dinner and to have so many ideas for church growth. A list of these ideas will be provided. Keep this Church, as well as all congregations in the brotherhood in your prayers for growth in spirit & numbers. For any of the "growth ideas" to work, workers are needed. Where is the Lord leading you in His service?

From Southeast Church of Christ: A group of 6 adults and

6 students has been organized to go to Guatamala for a mission trip between April 5th and April 14th. Betty Ann Schreiner is one of the adults planning to go. All will be painting, building and making school improvements at the Velasquez Christian School in Chinaulta. School will be in session, so there will be opportunities to meet and minister to the students. Those who are going on this trip desire the prayers of the church.

Keep Sending Me "News & Notes"

Bennie Hill

P.O. Box 54842

Lexington, KY 40555

e-mail: Qtcm99a@prodigy.com

Some Updates

Nathan Burks & T. Y. Clark are up and around somewhat, but still weak after slow recovery from operations. Keep praying for them, also for Paul Clark

who is very weak. Pray for their wives too; caregiving is hard.

School of Biblical Studies, Louisville

We have been blessed recently in 2 distinct ways. The Ky. Dept. of Post-Secondary Education extended our license for 5 more years. And in recent months various churches--including Sellersburg, Tell City, Lilly Dale, Southeast, DeRidder and Linton--have begun making regular contributions to our school. This has helped our finances a lot, and we are very grateful. The Southeastern Christian Educational Corporation has assisted us for years making it possible for us to offer our classes at extremely reasonable cost.

In the near future we hope to add a class in how to use computers to assist in the work of the church. Jim Embree is our board chairman. --avw

What's our Goal?

Leroy Garrett

One of our missionary papers reports the conversion of a Church of God preacher in Ghana. The preacher in turn converted his church. They then changed the name of the church from "Church of God" to "Church of Christ." One reading the report might wonder what "conversion" means in this context--from one denomination to another? If they were already a Church of God (the most frequent designation for the church in the NT), what does it mean to become a Church of Christ?

In light of such behavior as this can we seriously claim that we are not a denomination? Besides, is this our mission in Africa, converting believers from one denomination to another? In Africa? One would suppose that the Church of God and the Church of Christ would be cooperating in the conversion of unbelievers.

--from "Once More with Love," Jan. 1999

99-05 Z:1

James R. Satterfield
114 Brandywynne Lane

New Albany

IN 47150

A Declaration of Faith For Each Morning

I BELIEVE on the Name of the Son of God.
Therefore I am IN HIM, having redemption
through His Blood and Life by
His Spirit.

And He is IN ME, and all fulness is in
Him.

To Him I belong, by purchase, conquest,
and self-surrender.

To me He belongs, for all my hourly
need.

There is no cloud between my Lord and
me.

THERE IS NO DIFFICULTY,
INWARD OR OUTWARD,
WHICH HE IS NOT READY TO
MEET IN ME TODAY.

The Lord is my Keeper. Amen.

--Handley Moule

* * * * *

* Remember the Ladies Inspiration Day *

"Excellence into the 21st Century"

April 17, 8:30 - 3:00

Cramer Church of Christ

199 North Hanover Ave., Lexington, KY

Have Questions? Call (606) 269-1312