

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

MARCH, 2000

GOD'S WORD
NEEDED AS
NEVER BEFORE

Jerusalem Newsletter (excerpts)

March 8, 2000

Joseph Shulam

P.O. Box 8043, Jerusalem 91080 Israel

The Radio work is one of the major breakthroughs in all of Jewish Evangelism in Israel. We are the first to have a daily one-hour show in the Hebrew language. We have seven days each week to preach the Good News in the Hebrew language to all of Israel. Our broadcast covers all of Israel and into Southern Russia. We have received responses from the Southern Republics of Russia all the way to the south of Israel. We have regular listeners even in the Orthodox Jewish community who contact us when they can and tell us how wonderful it is that they can hear teaching about Yeshua the Messiah even when they cannot openly come to fellowship.

Our services on Saturday are full and many times in the last few months there was standing room only. Orthodox Jews who have stayed and asked questions for many hours and left our fellowship with handfuls of books about Yeshua the Messiah have visited us recently. I have spoken and answered questions of Jews who either already believe in Jesus (Yeshua in Hebrew) or are well on their way to believe and be baptized. This happens in person many times each week and through the Internet and phone from as far away as Siberia, Japan, and Australia.

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Bennie Hill, News & Notes

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**“Strength for Today and
<<BRIGHT HOPE!>>>
for Tomorrow”**

Alex V. Wilson

Twelve times it looked dismal for the ballteam at halftime. Twelve times they were getting beat and things looked like they were gonna get worse. But in ten of those games they came from behind to win!

But now it's the national tournament. They're facing the best teams in the country. What chance is there now? Sure enough, playing Duke they got behind by 17. Hopeless. Hang it up; let's leave early and get out of the parking lot before the traffic jam. But *hey--lookit that!* Then they faced Stanford, and U.K. trailed once more, this time by 10. Hopeless again; who could do it twice in a row in the NCAA tourney? *Well, whaddaya know!* Then the finals, against Utah. Again Kentucky went into a slump. Down by 12; you can't win a national championship that way. Hopeless this time! *Who could do it three games in a row?* The *Wildcats* could--and did!

Well, I'm not a rabid sports fan (though of course athletics has its place), and personally my sun doesn't rise and set depending on the fortunes of U.K.'s team. But I had to hand it to them, those 1998 players were the "Comeback Cats" indeed, winning over and over and over again when everything seemed hopeless. But they surely put their followers through an emotional meat-grinder. The fans' feelings during those games went up and down like a yo-yo, from basement-low to sky-high, from agony to ecstasy.

Say, why mention all this in *W&W*? Not just to make Bennie Hill yearn for those good old days to return, but rather to make a point. Have you ever considered how Jesus' followers felt during the dismal days between Calvary and SONrise? And have you ever pondered what an astonishing comeback Jesus made?

A Hurry-up kind of Excitement!

When Jesus died, the disciples' hopes died too. The fear that gripped them was as hard as the stone that sealed the grave. Their faith was as cold as that tomb.

But that tomb became a Womb! God said, "Let there be Life," and it was so. The Father raised His Son from death, and His followers

from total gloom and despair to ecstatic rapture! One sign of this is the word, "Run." N. T. Wright observes,

"In the Gospels, all the first witnesses of the Resurrection **run**. One-half of the references in the Gospels to people running occur in the Resurrection stories: the women **run from** the tomb, Peter and John **run to** the tomb, the disciples in Emmaus **hurry back** to Jerusalem. [There was a] God-given energy that can't wait to get the good news out...." [4-6-98 *Christianity Today*].

Yes--they were **Energized, Excited, Stirred, Moved**. Because Jesus arose, they had a new and deeper hope. Listen to Paul on trial before a provincial governor and a king: "I'm on trial today because of **my hope** in what God promised our ancestors. This is the promise our twelve tribes are **hoping** to see fulfilled. O king, it's because of **this hope** that those Jewish [leaders] are accusing me. *Why should anyone consider it incredible that God Raises The Dead?*" (Acts 26:6-8).

WHAT was that Score?

Why *should* anyone consider resurrection incredible? Because death was and still is winning! It's far, far, far ahead. It has an unbelievably long lead.

In fact, the score when Jesus was born was Millions to 2. Two men during Old Testament times never died, but millions did. Three folks during that era were raised from death--but they died later. Then Jesus came. He brought three people back to life--but they died later. (And the two men whose resurrections are recorded in Acts also died again.)

So the score when Jesus was killed was Millions dead to 2 who never died (or millions dead to 8 at best, if you add those who'd been raised for a while). It seemed Death would surely win and have the last word: "Life, you are defeated! I triumph over you so one-sidedly that it's laughable."

But Death laughed too soon. It was the tortoise and the hare all over again. For Jesus died but returned from the realm of death. "Yeah, but so what? What's the big deal about that, since the score is 'only' Millions to 9 now? Check the scoreboard. Why does one more resurrection make any difference? Why are you Christians optimistic about resurrection, and talk so joyfully about hope and eternity?" Thus the unbelievers scoff and sneer at what seems ridiculous to them.

Too Little Hope, and too Much

In the days of the apostles, most people had **no hope** in the face of death. Tombstones from that era have been found with this inscription:

I was not.

I became.

I am not.

I care not.

Obviously they believed that life was just a meaningless accident between one non-existence and another. Sad.

In our time some people put **false hopes** in the new science of cryonics. Here's how it goes: Twenty-seven people when they died were frozen in liquid nitrogen at -320 degrees F, awaiting the day when medical science finds a way to make death and aging a thing of the past.

Ten of them each paid \$120,000 to have their entire body frozen. The other seventeen each paid a mere \$50,000, for only their heads were frozen. They "hope that molecular technology will one day be able to grow a whole new body from their head or its cells."

And they say we who believe the Bible are gullible!

Speaking of gullible, would you believe me if I said a basketball team was behind by 100 points with only three minutes to go... **but** in the final three minutes the other team totally caved in. I mean, they just collapsed--too weak to walk down the court. So the losing team made a basket every five seconds (all of them 3-pointers), making 108 points in three minutes, and won!

You wouldn't believe that, and with good reason: it's preposterous. **But do believe this:** Though Death for thousands of years has been ahead Millions to only a few, L-I-F-E will be the winner when the final buzzer sounds! For Jesus is Victor--the Risen, Living One. And He will share His victory with His committed followers. At His return, those millions who have hoped in God in ages past will arise to live forevermore. For us, "death itself shall die."

Jesus' resurrection is the basis of our hope. He arose, never to die again (not like Lazarus and the rest). He arose in a new, glorious body with new powers, equipped for joys we can't even imagine now. And when He returns, we shall be like Him.

Caterpillars No More...

Years ago our family saw an unforgettable drama. Its setting was a mental hospital. It was a comedy, sort of. Sometimes it was obvious that the "sane" people outside acted crazier than the residents. Yet the patients were insane indeed. Sally was absurdly insecure, hourly asking anyone who conversed with her, "Do you think I'm nice? Do you think I'm pretty?" Life's tragedies had pushed Lois over the edge, so she constantly played with a doll thinking it was the baby she lost due to sickness, accident or crime. Jim thought he was a great violinist; but when he played, all he produced were screeches, squeaks and squawks. Bob really was a world-class piano player but since his plane was shot down in the war he never touched a key. He also didn't realize that the "nurse" who cared for him in the hospital was actually his loving wife, who faithfully served him despite his total amnesia. Then there was the elderly Mrs. Simmons, who every year tried to give up electricity for Lent. Whenever she could she would turn out the lights. Also for years she's been painting a picture of a great sailing-ship cruising over the sea. But when we finally saw her canvas it was entirely blank. They'd never allowed her to have any paint for her brush!

Finally the drama ended and the curtain fell. It had been interesting, and we waited to applaud at the curtain call. But we didn't know the climax was yet to come. When the curtain rose, W-o-w! We heard great music brilliantly performed as Jim and Bob played a duet. Bob smiled up at his wife, who had her arm around his shoulder. Sally, not thinking of herself, was passing refreshments around to everyone. Lois was holding her real live baby girl. And on Mrs. Simmons' canvas was a fully rigged schooner cutting majestically through the blue waves.

And I thought, "Y-E-S, that's *IT!* COME, LORD JESUS, and make it TRUE! Deliver this groaning creation and your groaning children from our wretched frustration and our bondage to decay. Metamorphose us caterpillars into butterflies! Come from behind and defeat death and degradation."

"The Christian is on his way, not to death but to life."

(W. Barclay)

"Let us live as those who are *prepared to die*,
and die as those who are *prepared to live*."

(James S. Stewart)

* * * *

The rest of this month's articles are related to the subject of Teaching God's Word--and why it's especially needed Now.

Three articles deal with how to instruct with skill and creativity. Such teaching is desperately lacking in many churches. The crying need for it is seen in the younger generations' abysmal ignorance of what the Bible is about (read about how a funeral demonstrated that fact). The questions which people ask counselors like Dennis Kaufman show how little they understand even the most basic moral teachings of Christianity.

But lest we get critical only of sinners outside the church, listen in to two ladies discussing sin inside our congregations. How we need to *live* God's word, not just know it. And those of us who teach it need to evaluate our own *motives* in teaching, as R. H. Boll did.

Latter-day religions like the Mormons need to be measured by God's Word. Read the surprising things their leaders say about the Bible. But what about disagreements on secondary issues among born-again believers? Reuell Lemmons has wise insights about that. And how should we respond when people level blunt criticisms at us or our teaching? Joyce Broyles helps us here. May we all profit from this month's treasures.

A Message for Teachers & Preachers

JESUS, THE MASTER TEACHER

Dr. David R. Reagan

Jesus was the greatest teacher who ever lived, for He was God in the flesh. The book of Job says:

God is exalted in his power.

Who is a teacher like Him?

Job 36:22

The answer to the question posed by this scripture is, of course, no one; and Jesus of Nazareth proved that.

In Matthew 7:28 we are told that "the crowds were astonished at the teaching of Jesus because he taught them as one who had authority--and not as their scribes." Let's consider some of the reasons the teaching of Jesus was so powerful and effective.

Grounded in the Word

To begin with, the teaching of Jesus was grounded in the Word of God. When he began His teaching with the Sermon on the Mount, he

said: Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (Matt. 5: 17 & 18).

On another occasion Jesus said "The Word of God is truth" (John 17:17). Jesus preached the Word. He taught the Word. He lived the Word.

It was, in fact, Jesus' emphasis upon the Word of God that resulted in his death. As He preached the Word, He drew people away from the traditions of men, and that infuriated the scribes and pharisees who therefore plotted against him.

Energized by the Spirit

Another reason for the effectiveness of Jesus as a teacher is that He taught in the power of the Holy Spirit and not in the power of his flesh. I don't believe Jesus ever once prepared a lesson that was based exclusively on his own experience, insight, or wisdom. He looked to God. He operated on the power of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of prophecy (Isa. 11:2).

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and indwelt by the Spirit from birth. Yet, He did not go forth to preach and teach until He had received a mighty anointing of the Spirit at His baptism. Jesus recognized the source of his teaching power and He often acknowledged it publicly, as at the synagogue in Nazareth when He applied the words of Isaiah to himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me" (Luke 4:6-9) On another occasion He said, "The Father who dwells in me is the one who does my works." (John 14:10)

Focused on Jesus

A third reason the teaching of Jesus was so powerful is because His teaching focused upon Himself:

- "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by me" (John 14:6).
- "Whatever you ask in my name I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13).
- "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another even as I loved you" (John 13: 34).
- I am the resurrection and the Life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).
- "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was--I am!" (John 8:58).
- "If you knew me, you would know the Father also" (John 8:19).

- "You search the scripture because you think that in them you have eternal life; but it is they that bear witness to me" (John 5:39).

Adapted to Needs

A fourth characteristic of the teaching of Jesus that made Him so effective was His adaptability. He adjusted to circumstances. He was willing to toss aside His lesson plan and focus on the needs of the moment.

A good example of this characteristic of His teaching can be found in Luke 12. As the chapter begins, Jesus is speaking about the evils of Pharisaism. He gradually shifts into what appears to be a major discourse on the leading of the Holy Spirit, but He hardly gets started before He is rudely interrupted by a young man who asks Him a totally irrelevant question.

But Jesus does not respond to the impertinent question as most of us would. He does not rule it out of order and then return to His learned discourse on the Holy Spirit. No, He sets His lesson plan aside and zeroes in on the covetous attitude of the young man who interrupted Him. In the process, He proceeds to present the parable of the Rich Fool, and through that parable He teaches a powerful lesson about relying on God rather than the riches of this world. Now that's what I call adaptability!

Varied in Method

Another thing which contributed to the power of Jesus' teaching is that He was very flexible and varied in His teaching methods. Note the great variety of techniques which He used:

1) Startling hyperbole--

- "Pluck out your eye.
- "Hate your own life."
- "Become like a child."

2) Vivid analogies--

- "Be born again."
- "I am the vine."
- "I am the bread of life."

3) Probing questions--

- "Who do men say that I am?"
- "Which is easier, to say 'Your sins are forgiven' or to say 'Rise up and walk?'"
- "What man of you, if he has one sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?"

4) Profound paradoxes--

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

"The first will be last and the last first."

"Whosoever would be great among you must be your servant."

5) Penetrating observations--

"Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

"Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's."

6) Fascinating parables--

"The Kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found, covered up, and went and sold all that he had so that he could buy the field."

7) Exciting action or object lessons--

When He turned the water into wine.

When He fed the 5,000.

When He called the little children to Him.

When His disciples reaped grain on the Sabbath.

The teaching of Jesus was grounded in the Word, energized by the Spirit, focused on himself-and it was adaptable and flexible.

Lived in Life

A final factor which gave power to the teaching of Jesus is that His teaching was exemplified in His life. Jesus lived what He taught. The quality of His life transformed the lives of thousands. And the quality of that life continues to this day to transform the lives of millions, for "although He was the Son of God, He learned obedience through what He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him." (Heb. 5:8 & 9)

Now, having completed this survey of the characteristics of Jesus' teaching, let me ask you a question: How does your teaching compare to that of Jesus, the Master Teacher?

Questions for Teachers

For example, is your teaching grounded in the Word of God? Or does it proceed from the wisdom of Man? Paul said: "I do not teach the gospel with eloquent wisdom lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power." (I Cor. 1:17). Paul also said: "I do not want your faith to rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (I Cor. 2:5)

Is your teaching energized by the power of the Holy Spirit? Is it bathed in prayer? Or do you rely upon your own cleverness? Paul wrote that the mysteries of God's Word must be "spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:6-16). Paul also wrote: "We have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways: we refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's Word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." (II Cor.4:2)

Is your teaching flexible and adaptable, always aimed at speaking to the needs of people? Or is it rigid, stifling, aloof, and theoretical? Do you teach with compassion and love, or do you have a dogmatic, sectarian attitude? Paul advises us that the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness." (II Tim. 2:24)

More Questions

Is your teaching Christ centered? Or is it focused upon the traditions of men? Which are you more interested in: indoctrinating people with doctrines or bringing them into a closer relationship with Jesus? Do you focus on Jesus in all your teaching? For example, when teaching the creation, do you point out that Jesus was the Word by which God spoke the creation into existence? Do you point out that the animal coverings which God supplied Adam and Eve were a sacrificial type pointing to the sacrifice of Jesus which would provide a covering for our sins? Do you show students how Jesus is portrayed in Noah's ark and the ark of the covenant? Do you show them how Jesus is reflected in the lives of Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and David?

Finally do you live what you teach? Do you present a good life style example to your students? Paul said: "Set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity." (1 Tim. 4:11)

Do you communicate by your actions that you consider your teaching responsibility to be an important one? Do you arrive at class on time? Do you take a personal interest in your students? Do you prepare your lessons? Do you really prepare them? Or do you throw them together hurriedly on Saturday night to the inspiration of Front-line or ESPN?

Apostolic Advice

The Apostle James says: "Let not many of you become teachers, for those of us who teach shall be judged with greater strictness" (James 3:11). Don't let that statement frighten you; let it sober you. Let it impress upon you what an honor and glory it is to be called of God to teach His Word.

Bullish on Sunday School

Marlene LeFever

I'm a Sunday school teacher. If you could hear me say these words, they would sound more like they were shouted from a megaphone, "I'M A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER!" I'm bullish about my church job. Let me take you into my elementary class to share some of what God is doing there.

Daddy-Ache

Reach everyone I teach! That was my teaching goal. I was really, really prepared for Sunday school. But, when only one child showed up, my first reaction was, "What a shame! I prepared such a good lesson and now it will be wasted." My second reaction was more Christ-centered. I said I wanted to reach every ONE I teach, and here she was! Obviously God wanted Melissa to be my class.

I taught the whole lesson, and we had a great time. Melissa, an auditory learner, enjoys talking, and in our one-to-one class she could talk all she wanted. Our lesson was on Jesus being with us when we hurt. After we studied the Bible story, we did the talking-moving activity in our lesson. She stretched out on a large piece of paper and I traced around her. Then we talked about the times when she had hurt and Jesus had helped her. She came up with typical eight-year-old things. "I fell and hurt my knee." We thanked God that He had been there with her, and put a Band-Aid on the knee of her life-sized paper outline. "I hurt when I didn't understand how to do my homework and I got a bad grade." A Band-Aid went on the head of her drawing. Then she said something that taught me--her teacher. "When my daddy isn't home, I have a daddy-ache."

What a beautiful idea, I thought, as she placed a Band-Aid on her drawing's heart. In a spiritual sense, I'd like to feel a Daddy-ache, so that when I neglect my friendship with God, I feel the ache in my heart. When I'm too busy to pray or study the Bible at my adult level, that Daddy-ache will remind me to spend time with Him. May I teach so each youngster in my class comes to love Jesus and to feel a Daddy-ache when he or she moves away from Him or does something to disappoint Him.

Table-Top Egypt

Our small church has a space problem so my class meets in the basement. Another Sunday our lesson was on Abram's journey from Ur, so the nine students took a basement journey. We were sitting on a wheelchair ramp, the first stop in our journey, when a visitor with a crying baby joined us. In our limited church space, it was the only

place she could go to comfort her little fellow. She listened as I told the story of Abram building an altar. The baby stopped crying, but the woman didn't leave. We journeyed to other parts of the basement as our journey continued, and she came along.

We ended our Bible study in Egypt, a table where all the children climbed up and sat listening to how Abram lied to the Pharaoh. The woman and sleeping baby were still with us (standing beside the table). Class ended and she asked me, "Was that story really in the Bible?" I assured her that it was. "Does this church tell Bible stories every Sunday?" I nodded and explained that we not only tell the stories, but we also help children and adults discover for themselves what that story has to teach them. "Well," said the woman, "do you mind if I come back again?"

That's what I want every one of my classes to be like--so exciting and involving that even a visitor with a crying baby will be captured and drawn in.

Tired Bones

Heather whispered to me, "Do you think Jesus is angry at me because I prayed that the sermon would end? My bones were tired sitting." Heather is very athletic, a beautiful youngster whose body is growing so fast that I can almost see her maturing. She's in Sunday school almost every Sunday, even though she's the only one in her family who comes. "Tell you what," I suggested. "Why not draw a picture of something in the sermon that is important to you? Drawing will take your mind off your bones! Then share what you have drawn with me. It will be our Sunday school after Sunday school." Her questions in class and after church are difficult and surprisingly insightful.

God called me to be a teacher. Twenty years from now, many of the children I now teach will be living for Jesus. I know God will honor my Sunday morning gift to Him and to them. Has God called you, too? Then come on! Shout with me! I'M A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER!

Marlene LeFever is Director of Ministry Relations for David C. Cook Church Ministries and editor of Teacher Touch a quarterly letter of affirmation for Sunday School teachers. Used by permission.

Strategies for Christian Teachers

Joyce Zimplemann

“But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear” — Matt. 13:16.

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding yourselves” — James 1:22.

The verses stated above should serve as guidelines for both Christian teachers and pupils. Not only should we want our pupils to hear—to be exposed to—God’s Word but to heed it and act upon its message.

The Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:3-9) dramatically portrays a picture of what happens to the Truth as it is presented to individuals. Germination does not depend upon the seed, for God’s Word is perfect, but upon the condition of the soil—the hearts of the hearers. Christ, the Master Teacher, was able to look into the depths of the heart and mind of those who came to Him. (See John 4:5-29.) We do not have that power but we can pray for the wisdom, perception, awareness and sensitivity that we need to present God’s Word in such a way that our pupils will attend, understand and accept the teaching.

What do we need to know about our pupils? Certainly we must know that which we teach—the Truth which we present. (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 4:16, etc.); but we must know our pupils and plan our lesson preparation according to their needs and maturity. Consider the following steps:

Learning Styles
Needs
Attitudes & Feelings
Concerns
Previous Experiences
Background Knowledge

Each of these steps needs to be considered as we plan our lessons. This means that we must actively seek to know our pupils and to stay aware of their interests, attitudes and concerns.

We often use terminology that is confusing to our pupils. Little children think in concrete terms and dwell in the “here and now.” In what concrete ways can we help them experience God’s love and grace?

Think about these situations. How would you approach them?

Just what do the terms redemption, salvation and justification mean to eight-year olds? How can we make these terms meaningful to them?

How can God's love be understood by a child who has been rejected by his parents or whose parents reject Christianity?

How can eternal life become real to someone who is physically hungry or thirsty or burdened down by today's problems?

What do middle-class American teenagers really know about sacrifice and deprivation? How do we explain peace to a generation of young people who have experienced a television diet of war, unrest, lawlessness and immorality?

What does Absolute Truth mean to those who have been taught at home and in school that right and wrong are relative and dependent upon circumstances?

We must carefully examine the terms we use and take so much for granted. We want our pupils to hear with their hearts and minds as well as their ears.

Do we know what anxieties and concerns our pupils have? A little child will often interrupt the lesson to divulge what is on his mind, but older children and teenagers have learned other behaviors and do not reveal their problems. Whether or not the lesson we present is accepted as relevant depends upon the learners' perceptions and concerns. If he is preoccupied with anxieties or problems he will not hear. The message will go unheeded.

The Prodigal Son takes on fresh relevance in these days of drop-outs and drug addicts. Can we lead our pupils to comprehend the meaningfulness of this message?

The Parable of the Good Samaritan can do much to combat the prevalent philosophy which denies our responsibility for our brother. How can this story be made real to our pupils?

A study of Biblical characters not only points up man's human frailties but demonstrates the reality of God's indwelling Spirit within man. Can we teach so that Moses, Joseph and Paul become alive to the pupils? Do we teach so that the pupils will realize that the blessings God bestowed upon Biblical men and women can also be given to them? Can we emphasize that those men and women had need and concerns just as we do today?

"Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only" (James 1:22). It has been proven that we learn best when we actively participate in the learning experience. Thus our lesson strategy should provide for active pupil participation. Little children love to sing action songs, manipulate objects and visual materials and express themselves. Do we utilize these materials and techniques?

If teenagers feel comfortable with the adult leadership, they will ask questions relevant to their interests and current concerns. Their questions are often "loaded" and complex; but they furnish us with insights into their experiences and feelings. Do we capitalize upon these questions and use them as guidelines for topical study? Or do we, in our anxiety to "cover the material" stifle any participation from our pupils?

Background knowledge and previous experiences of the pupils are equally important to consider when planning our lesson presentation. Children who have attended Bible classes from infancy are often most knowledgeable about the "basics" of Christianity by middle childhood, while teenagers and adults who have experienced worldly teaching may confuse such doctrines as Salvation through Grace. When our class is composed of both those well-versed in the Scriptures and those novices to Christianity to whom do we gear the lesson? Obviously, we cannot concentrate on the one to the exclusion of the other. Therefore, we must devise ways to meet the needs of both groups through a "buddy" system of study, through a dual-level of presentation or by the use of visual aids.

The responsibilities of a Christian teacher are awesome as James reminds us (see James 3); but the rewards of seeing the seed germinate and ripen into maturity should give all Christians the desire to ask God to give us wisdom to teach His children.

Today's Biblical Illiteracy

Gene Wilder

More often than not, I am the minister who tries to offer words of hope at a graveside funeral service, but on this particular day I was simply part of the grieving crowd. Since I had no ministerial responsibilities, I took the occasion to observe and learn. I listened carefully to the minister and watched the mourners' reaction to his well-chosen words.

The minister's words from the Scriptures had a soothing effect on those gathered around the graveside, and I could tell his short eulogy brought comfort and hope. The minister concluded his remarks by asking those gathered to recite, by memory, the familiar words of the 23rd Psalm.

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. . ."

One by one the mourners began to mouth the familiar words.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. . ."

As I looked around, I noticed some of those gathered around the graveside were silent. Their mouths did not move during the recitation of the words.

"He leadeth me beside the still waters. . ."

As I glanced across the crowd, I noticed a distinct pattern. People who were 50 years old or older were reciting the Psalm. Those who were 40 or younger were silent.

"He restoreth my soul. . ."

Then it dawned on me. The younger members of that congregation did not know the 23rd Psalm by heart. They could not recite "the familiar words" because, for them, the words were unfamiliar.

For me, this experience was but another reminder of the pervasive biblical illiteracy characterizing our nation today. An ever-increasing number of people are unfamiliar with the words contained between the leather-bound cover of their Holy Book. Seemingly, the Bible is the book everybody has, but nobody knows.

A recent survey of graduating high school seniors determined how much they knew about the Bible. In that survey, more than 50 percent of the students thought Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife.

About 66 percent did not know who preached the Sermon on the Mount, and 79 percent could not name one of the Old Testament prophets. The problem of biblical illiteracy seems as prevalent among church folks as it does the unchurched. Because the average church attender no longer knows the Bible, I am increasingly careful about the terms I use in preaching. Twenty years ago, I could have used the name of Joshua in passing, but not so today. Regrettably, many of my hearers do not know the difference between Joshua and Jezebel. What are the consequences of this biblical illiteracy? Only time will tell, but I don't like what I see.

The evolution of a society without the knowledge of "holy words" scares me. In times past, holy words provided a foundation on which society's morals were built. If the foundation crumbles, what will fall next?

Granted, you can't tell a book by its cover, but you won't know the book at all if its cover stays closed.

Counselor's Column

ENGAGED COUPLE WANTS TO KNOW WHY CHURCH WANTS THEM TO LIVE SEPARATELY

Dennis Kaufman

Question: I am a new Christian and I want to do the right thing as a believer in God but there are some things I don't understand.

My girlfriend and I had been living together and planned to be married in a few months, but the church insisted we separate until we married. We have done that, but I still am not sure I understand the reasoning since we love each other and are in a committed relationship.

Answer: I appreciate your desire to be obedient to Christ and to respect the leadership of the church. Entering the Kingdom of God involves different guidelines than the world promotes, and you have bumped a significant one in the area of sexuality.

Obedience to God is always a good thing and obedience combined with insight and understanding is a more powerful force for righteousness. So I will do my best to explain the reasoning behind the church's stance.

As a counselor, I have become convinced that sexuality is to the emotional world what nuclear power is to the physical world. It is an incredible gift and has tremendous power for good, but when improperly used the potential for destruction is massive.

I see people whose lives have been deeply impacted by sexual fallout--incest, molestation, rape, infidelity, unwanted pregnancy, homosexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, shame from past promiscuity, pornography addictions, abortion. None of these issues heals easily or quickly.

God obviously wanted to give us an indescribably good gift in the physical oneness of a husband and wife, but this gift comes with numerous cautions.

Think about the government regulation of nuclear material. We have seen the damage that can result from a Chernobyl nuclear accident. We have known the harmful effects of radiation for decades.

Yet with all the emotional destruction of unbridled sexual behavior, the world continues to promote a confusing mixed message about where sexual boundaries ought to be placed.

God is much wiser. He has built into the law, the Gospel and our consciences very powerful containment for sexual behavior. From start to finish, the Scriptures fight for powerful boundaries around sexual expression. It is only within the confines of the marriage covenant that God ordains a sexual relationship.

Jesus even tightened the boundary in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:7) when He said we need not only be sensitive to our sexual actions but also our mental attitudes. We need to discipline ourselves to avoid lusting after someone who is not our spouse (Matt. 5:28).

It is easy in our day for two mature people to rationalize that their sexual involvement before marriage is not hurting anyone, including themselves. The world is relentless in telling us that is the norm. However, to bend from God's standard is to start down a slippery slope of compromise. One only has to look around to see the destruction that is being created.

Therefore, as a church, we feel compelled to hold God's standard high and to try to protect it as true wisdom.

It is my prayer that you continue to submit to this truth, rather than fall prey to the temptation of thinking God and the church are out of step with current norms.

There is grace for those who miss God's target, but let's not think we can change the target and not suffer the consequences.

--From *Southeast Outlook*, with permission

THAT SIN

By Daniel Schantz

Betty: Hello?

Lily: Hi, Betty? This is Lily. Have you heard the latest?

Betty: Why, no, I guess not.

Lily: It's about Jim and Jennifer--they were caught in the act of sin.

Betty: What? Are you serious? Jim and Jennifer? Tell me more.

Lily: I guess it's been going on for years and no one suspected.

Betty: Well, I suspected. I'll tell you, I've never liked the way Jennifer dresses. She always looks immaculate, a one-woman fashion show. There's only one reason why a woman dresses like that.

Lily: That's what I've always said, too. And Jim is entirely too good-looking for his own good. Frankly, I don't trust any good looking men--they're all perverts. I hear he even tints his hair!

Betty: I don't doubt it. That's so insincere, so fake. He's such a hypocrite. I hope they kick them out of the church. I mean, Jim is a deacon, after all, and Jennifer teaches those impressionable third graders.

Lily: Oh, but they aren't. That's the unbelievable part. They just slapped their hands and let them go on serving in the church.

Betty: What's wrong with our leaders these days? They are so soft on sin--they've got no guts. By the way, who caught Jim and Jennifer?

Lily: The preacher! I guess they were doing it when he walked in on Jim.

Betty: That's so disgusting. How can people be so shameless? Don't they know the Bible condemns that sin throughout? The book of Proverbs is full of warnings about that. How can they justify it?

Lily: I know, I know. I don't understand it either. It's the preachers, I say. They don't preach strong enough sermons. Always talking about grace instead of judgment and Hell--that's what people really need to hear.

Betty: Well, our whole society has become so loose, it was bound to creep into the church. Oh, it just makes me sick. You can't trust

anyone, not even leaders. What I'd like to know is how Jim defends himself?

Lily: Oh, he said that he and Jennifer were "just talking."

Betty: Just talking my foot. What does he think we are, idiots? Frankly I think the two of them should be taken out and stoned to death. That's what they did in the Old Testament, and judgment is supposed to be stricter in the New Testament. Personally, I plan to do my part to see that they are punished. I'll see that everyone in town hears about this. Jim will be lucky to keep his job, and Jennifer can rot in Hell as far as I'm concerned.

Lily: That sounds a bit harsh, Betty.

Betty: Well, that's what they deserve. That sin is the worst sin in the world.

Lily: Maybe so, but stoning?

Betty: They need to be punished as an example to others. That's the only way this sin is going to stop. Men need to learn they can't just hop in bed whenever they want.

Lily: Bed?

Betty: Well, where else would they do it?

Lily: Do what?

Betty: That sin! Sex! It's a terrible, horrible sin that destroys lives.

Lily: You mean adultery? I wasn't talking about adultery. I was talking about gossip. Jim and Jennifer were caught gossiping on the phone.

Betty: That's it? That's all? You called to tell me that? Well, whatever. Hey, I have to go. I've got to tint my hair before Bob gets home.

Lily: I've got to go, too. I'm going shopping, for a whole new wardrobe. I'm gonna knock 'em dead Sunday!

Betty: Bye, and hey, could you return that latest issue of *Cosmopolitan* that I loaned you? I missed that story, "Two Women In Love."

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The Preacher Searches his Soul before his Lord

(Gleanings from R. H. Boll's Personal Notebook)

Alex V. Wilson

In our July '99 issue we concluded a series of articles about R. H. Boll as a writer, editor and Christian. He would not have wanted such attention called to himself. But there were rich lessons to be learned from his life and writings, don't you agree? Our purpose was to impart those lessons, not to exalt him. We do not plan to extend that series. But just a few months ago we found some materials we thought would be a fitting addition.

The School of Biblical Studies, located at Portland Christian School in Louisville, has a small collection of historic materials from the Stone-Campbell movement. Among other items it includes books, letters, and mementos of Brother Boll--some of his sermon outlines, personal notes, and articles he had clipped from various magazines to use as sermon illustrations. I've browsed through some, but not nearly all, of these materials. My favorite so far is a small, black, looseleaf notebook which was sort of a private journal. My friend Hans Rollmann discovered it while doing research here, and showed it to me. There are no dates in it, so we don't know the time of the entries.

Significantly, Brother Boll devoted its first four pages to matters of prayer. He listed some scripture references on that topic, then areas of prayer for himself. They are "wisdom; 'unite my heart' [see Psa.86:11, ASV]; petitions of Mt.6; temporal needs; personal matters; inner circle; special friends." Then followed some topics for general intercession -- government, members of his congregation, churches elsewhere, missionaries, that the Lord send forth laborers, and the unsaved. Then came a list entitled, "For Special Blessing." His comments there were very interesting, and again I quote him exactly: "Revival. Power in Meetings. Financial Needs of the Church. The Work." Only under that last topic did he include sub-topics: "School. W&W? Alas!?" I wonder what crisis produced that final exclamation. The "? Alas!?" seems written in different ink from the preceding words. Perhaps it was added later in some time of distress (financial? declining circulation? opposition from other papers?).

The notebook continues with about ten of R.H.B.'s **sermon outlines**. After that he jotted down a few quotations from writings by other men, followed by a list of "**Themes and Topics**" for sermons and/or articles.

Then comes the inner sanctum, the holy of holies of this small book. It is a section entitled simply, "For Myself." It contains five pages (only 3 by 5 inches in size) of meditations and admonitions which he addressed to himself. He never knew that other eyes would see them. Yet I do not feel that publishing them now violates his privacy. While there is some confession of his struggles, there is nothing truly confidential. And his soul-searching can help us, preachers most of all, to examine our own hearts. For we wrestle with these temptations too. So we turn to his meditations. The rest of this article is entirely his own composition except for two quotations and the closing illustration, which I have seen credited to Spurgeon. Brother Boll himself put a dividing line between each section; this was not an article for publication but a series of reflections for his own pondering.

* * *

Do not try to preach up to your reputation; to uphold or advance your reputation; to come up to what is expected of you; to "do yourself justice."

Make thyself of no reputation--lest you become a man-pleaser or a servant of Self. It is a weary road!

Remember that pretense shuts the door to all further progress.
Whose servant am I?

For whom, & for what am I working?

Preach the truth & let God take care of the "impression."

Be content to fill your place. Don't try to seem more than you are. Don't try to make yourself bigger, or to advance yourself. Be faithful and let God promote you as He sees good.

No more than to run after reputation should a man run on his reputation (coasting) --i.e. grow careless & indolent. Seek continually to please the Master better - "that thy progress be manifest unto all."

Do not be "trafficking in unfelt truths."

Lord help me to be in earnest! I am prone to forget what I am really after - the need and the help of souls - [while] endeavoring to put up "grand" and "wonderful" sermons, "powerful arguments" etc. - which tends more to the glory of self than the help of the people and the magnifying of God and Christ. Lord make me simple, single-minded, pure in heart and motive, sincere and earnest.

The Futile Strife for Fame

"And sometimes, too, the Reverend divine
In meditation deep of holy things
And vanities of Time, heard Fame's sweet voice
Approach his ear; and hung another flower,
Of earthly sort, about the sacred truth;
And ventured whiles to mix the bitter text
With relish suited to the sinner's taste."

--Pollok, Course of Time, Bk III

Never preach anything you would not be willing to die for.

Does God resent our addressing Him for show or formality, or in any way except sincerely, reverently, humbly, and in faith? If so, how often He has been insulted and blasphemed by the contemptuous familiarity and perfunctory prayers of His professed people! - "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain" - literally - "Thou shalt not lift up the name of Jehovah thy God for falsehood."

To pray in any unreal way - for pretense, for appearance of religiousness, for custom or form's sake, in any way except in spirit and in truth, is blasphemy and contempt. It is a worse form of profanity than that of the slums.

It is better to save your soul than your face.

Be content to appear no better nor greater than you are. Just be yourself, plain & natural.

"I left my reputation where I left my sins: at the foot of the Cross."
(Gypsy Smith)

"That was a fine sermon you preached this morning," said the deacon to the preacher. "Thank you," he replied, "the devil told me that just as I stepped down from the pulpit."

Mormonism--What Does It Really Teach?

Alex V. Wilson

We face a dilemma: On the one hand, Mormon people (or Latter Day Saints) seem so sincere and godly. Mormon families seem so wholesome and pleasant. Most of their young people are above average in studies, morals and leadership, and seem to love the Lord. Many people feel that the Mormons they know are not only Christians but *fine* Christians.

On the other hand, preachers and others have taught that Mormonism is a false cult, that Mormon doctrine is grossly unbiblical, that their 'god' is not our God of the Bible. Can that be true, or have we been fed a lot of false and derogatory accusations against the Mormons?

Here is a survey of their beliefs, to help us understand their official teachings. *The following quotes are from their own leaders' and writers' quotations. And their belief regarding their latter-day prophets means that such statements are as authoritative as the Bible itself.*

I. Their View of AUTHORITY, of WHY they Believe What they Believe

1. "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the book of Mormon to be the word of God. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great... things pertaining to the kingdom of God" --*Articles of Faith*, #8 & #9.

2. "And because my words shall hiss forth -- many...shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible and there cannot be any more Bible....Because ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written" --*Book of Mormon*: 2 Nephi 29:3,6,10.

3. "Mormons look upon Joseph Smith as a prophet of God, in the same literal sense as they look upon other prophets of the Old and New Testaments. They so accept Smith's successors, from Brigham Young to today's president of the church." --R. L. Evans in "What is a Mormon?" *Look Magazine*.

4. "We recognize the Bible's limitations as well as its value. We do not ascribe final authority to any of its statements because we believe that God has reestablished the authority to speak in His name, and has given it again to righteous men." --U.S. Senator Wallace Bennett, "Why I Am a Mormon."

5. "Add all this imperfection to the uncertainty of the translation, and who in his right mind could for one moment suppose the Bible in its present form to be a perfect guide? What knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now that it did in the original?" --Apostle Orson Pratt, *Divine Authority of the Book of Mormon*.

6. "We are all aware that there are errors in the Bible due to faulty translations and ignorance on the part of translators....Guided by the *Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants* [another of their scriptures--avw] and the Spirit of the Lord, it is not difficult for one to discern the errors in the Bible" --Former LDS President Joseph Fielding Smith.

II. The Mormon View of GOD

1. "We believe in God, the eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost" --*Articles of Faith*. [That sounds really good, but don't be fooled by their quoting *only* that statement. Read what follows below, too.]

2. "In the beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it" --Joseph Smith.

3. "In the heaven where our spirits were born, there are many Gods, each of whom has his own wife, or wives, which were given to him previous to his redemption, while yet in his mortal state"--Apostle Orson Pratt.

4. "God Himself was as we are now, and is an exalted man" --Joseph Smith.

5. "As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become" --President Lorenzo Snow.

6. "Gods exist, and we had better strive to prepare to be one with them" --Brigham Young.

7. "When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives with him. He helped to make and organize the world. He is Michael, the Archangel, the Ancient of Days, about whom holy men have written and spoken--He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do" --Brigham Young.

8. When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was not begotten by the

Holy Ghost. And who is the Father? He is the first of the human family; and when he [Christ] took a tabernacle [body], it was begotten by his Father in heaven, after the same manner as the tabernacles of Cain, Abel, and the rest of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve” --Brigham Young.

III. Mormon Teaching about SALVATION

1. “We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel” --*Articles of Faith*. [Read on!]

2. “The gospel is a code of laws and ordinances given to men to enable them to assimilate themselves to those who are in heaven” --Joseph Smith.

3. “The gospel is a system or plan of laws and ordinances by strict obedience to which people are assured they may return again into the presence of the Father” --Brigham Young.

4. “Some of our old traditions [meaning their pre-Mormon beliefs] teach us that a man guilty of atrocious and murderous acts may savingly repent on the scaffold. Upon his execution you will hear the expression, ‘Bless God, he has gone to heaven...through the all redeeming merits of Christ the Lord!’ This is all nonsense. Such a character will never see heaven” --Brigham Young.

* * *

Yes, it’s true that many Mormon people are pleasant and have high morals. We should give them credit for that. But at the same time, it is obvious from the quotations above that **the official teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints contradict the Bible in many important ways**. Their system of beliefs cannot be reconciled with the historic Christian faith as taught by Jesus Christ and His apostles.

DARE TO DISAGREE

Reuell Lemmons

When an idea comes up, don't be afraid to pursue it. If the evidence seems to uphold it, contend for it. If the evidence is not there, do not be afraid to admit that you were wrong. That's the way scientific progress is made. And that's the way progress in the church will be made.

We are afraid of any spirit that cannot endure a difference of opinions. We see a growing tendency to have peace at any price. Controversy is so unpleasant many are willing to endure almost anything rather than to be involved in it. That's the way the devil has gotten into many congregations. Elders were not commissioned to stop the mouths of gainsayers without reason. The pain of controversy is not as great as the pain of apostasy that will result if the faith is not contended for. There is nothing unscriptural in daring to disagree.

But disagreement should not be unpleasant. Sometimes it is. This is one place where heat is generated sometimes because there isn't much light. It is a fine art to disagree without being disagreeable.

The circulation of the blood; the world is round; when these ideas first came up they were rejected by the sophisticated intellectuals. Those who gave birth to the ideas were burned at the stake; their books were banned and their names expunged from the public records. Now their critics are all gone and forgotten, but their ideas determine the direction and destiny of our world.

In Europe it was decided by the scientists that all heavier-than-air machines could not fly. But the Wright brothers thought that there was at least a possibility that they might. They were right and their critics were wrong.

When someone comes up with an insight into a passage of scripture that differs from the commonly accepted view, the standard procedure is to burn him at the editorial, elders meeting or pulpit stake. It is standard procedure to summarily cut him off without a hearing. We ought not to do that, for there is the possibility that he might be right. When we have decided that we have all the knowledge there is to have, and that despite our clamor for Bible study, we have, really, already reached all the correct conclusions and there isn't any possibility of learning anything new, we have fossilized into a sect. We ought not to decide without complete examination that any idea can't fly.

The next step we usually take is to excommunicate, isolate, and otherwise limit in every way possible the influence and exposure of the person with a new idea. Are we afraid of the truth?

When the fellow with the new idea is tried without evidence and convicted without a trial by the ignorance of his jury, we are almost, if not altogether, back to witch-hunting. Any time "truth" has to be thus defended by those who choose to be ignorant, we are in trouble. There is no more certain way to demonstrate a narrow, sectarian spirit than to deny a hearing. We are not obligated to accept the conclusions; we are obligated to forego dismissing an idea until we have weighed the evidence. An intolerance toward a different view, without considering the evidence thoroughly, is "Exhibit A" of the witch-hunt mentality. It is the identifying brand of the sectarian spirit.

Hardly anything could be more dangerous, or more unchristian, than brotherhood intolerance. If the only way we know how to deal with disagreement is to ban and banish, then our future is an ever-shrinking island.

If we are ever to enjoy the unity for which Jesus prayed, we must learn to deal with disagreement in some other way than a strong-armed show of withdrawal force or a power play of authoritarian guarantees.

Until we have decided that we have all the answers to all the questions, we have little ground to stand on when we black-list someone simply because his ideas do not fit our established patterns. Many of ours haven't flown; maybe his will. The only way in the world to make progress is to probe the unknown. The church ought to encourage, rather than discourage, the spirit of exploration in the scriptures. The Restoration was conceived in that spirit.

Let no one use these words to justify wild and groundless speculation. There is no room here for any doctrine that the scriptures do not teach. There is no wisdom in running clear through Jerusalem in our flight from unscriptural teaching. What we are trying to say is that just because one has never had the idea, that is no evidence there isn't any merit in it. It might fly. We, to be honest, are obligated to not reject it without a hearing. If the idea can't stand the heat of disagreement, and cannot survive disagreement, it does not deserve to live.

--Firm Foundation, May 22, 1979.

CRITICISMS CAN MAKE A BETTER PERSON

Joyce Broyles

Twenty-five years ago, I complained to Christine, my husband's aunt. Someone had done something that I was not happy about. She told me, "Joyce, you say mean things about people sometimes. You have a wicked mouth!"

That stunned me. I never thought of myself as someone who was wicked! But Christine does not say things lightly, so I began to listen to myself when I spoke. Unfortunately, I discovered that I could be very negative and critical, especially about family members.

That was a pivotal point in my speaking habits. Daily, I began to pray for help that my speech would be "always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Col.4:6), that I would know how to talk in a helpful and encouraging way. It has not always been so, but I do try, and I have improved a little in the last 25 years.

A short time after speaking with Christine, I was telling my mother-in-law that my children did not always do what I asked. She smiled wisely at me and said, "Why should you expect them to be perfect? *You* have never been!"

That was a shocker, too! Wow! It helped me look at my children in perspective. When I was their age, I had acted like them often.

When I lamented to my husband about our daughter, he suggested that her actions which bothered me were very much like my own. I wanted to refute that, but I realized that my daughter and I both had opinions that we believed in strongly, so he was probably right.

Sometimes, people have problems getting along with others, especially between the generations. We older ones expect the younger ones to know better, to be mature, to make reasonable decisions, and to be responsible and dependable for their commitments. Too often we forget that before the years matured us, we were probably very much like them.

It helps me to remember Christine and Mrs. Broyles, in their wisdom, telling me to be careful before I speak or judge. Sometimes, I get discouraged or depressed, but I remember that although I change, God and His Word never do. Then, like a sheared sheep who has been forgiven of sin, I set my eyes again to follow the shepherd, to teach the Titus principle (Titus 2:4), and to wait patiently and quietly. I have not yet arrived, but I keep trying. It is a vestige of my personal expressions.

IN MEMORY OF TERUKO NAKAHARA

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On March 1, 2000, the Lord called a special lady into His presence. After she returned to Japan in December, 1999, Teruko was diagnosed with advanced liver cancer. She fought the good fight as long as she could, but that dreaded killer took her body some two months later. However the Lord had secured her soul years before when she gave her life to Jesus. So, as she entered His presence, it was joy for her but sorrow for all of us who loved her, for we will miss her dearly.

I knew "about" Teruko before I ever met her. Shichiro Nakahara lived in my parents home in Dallas during the summers while he was attending KBC in Louisville (later to become Southeastern Christian College in Winchester, Kentucky.) As a young teenager, I had the privilege of regarding him as my Japanese brother. He would tell me of his girlfriend back in Japan. Her name was Teruko, and he missed her dearly. My father perceptively recognized that Shichiro would be much happier in America if his "lovesickness" was cured, so he took it upon himself to sponsor Teruko in coming to America in 1954 and attend SCC. I shall never forget that August day when she arrived and came to our home for the first time. When she saw Shichiro and he saw her, it seemed obvious to us that this was the beginning of a friendship and later a marriage relationship that was to last until the Lord called them Home.

Teruko graduated from SCC and soon afterwards married Shichiro. They moved to Dallas and worked with a church in Denton, Texas while they both attended Seminary in Fort Worth and received degrees in Religious Education. Teruko helped organize the kindergarten program which later developed into East Dallas Christian School. Two children, Annette and Stephanie, came along in the process. Those were busy times in her life but she managed quite well as wife, mother, student, teacher, CYE camp counselor, and friend to all. It was in 1960, however, that she began to see how God was bringing all of these separate activities into sharp focus. It was then that Teruko and Shichiro committed their lives to the call of God for the mission

fields and decided to return to their native land to work for the cause of Christ among the Japanese people. The Piedmont church agreed to sponsor them in their work. They planted a church in Shizuoka City, Japan, which is carried on by their son, Michiya, to this day.

The wise man in Proverbs well described our sister, Teruko Nakahara, when he said that her children (and grandchildren) call her blessed, and her husband praised her. She was truly a woman who trusted and served the Lord faithfully. She, too, was an industrious and creative woman. She was talented in many areas. She supplemented her income by sewing for others and made many outfits for her grand kids. Her needlepoint projects were items of sheer beauty. Her greatest legacy, of course, was her three children and her seven grandchildren. She also had a special place in her heart for her daughter-in-law, Tomoko, and her son-in-law, John.

Teruko had made plans to donate her body for medical research at the University in Tokyo to help find a cure for her type of cancer. Shichiro had done the same thing at his passing in 1988. A memorial service is planned for her on March 20 in Shizuoka City, Japan. Michiya estimated that there will be an attendance of over 300 as both his parents were well respected by the Christian community throughout Japan. Annette, Stephanie and the five children will travel to Japan to attend this service. The funds which were received during February and designated for travel will be sufficient to cover these expenses. Your generosity has been greatly appreciated. The Lord supplied exactly enough funds for all travel, medical, and out-of-pocket expenses during this ordeal. Praise the Lord!

We extend our sincere sympathy to the Nakahara family in the loss of Teruko, but we rejoice in the blessed hope that she is now with her Lord, and further, that we shall one day be reunited with her and all of God's departed church when He comes again. Maranatha!

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

Jennings: (Paul Estes) The Portland Christian High School chorus will be on their Spring Tour the week of April 3rd and visiting other churches in Louisiana.

Westminister Witness: (Maryland; Gary Pearson, evangelist) One day a group of scientists decided that man had come a long way and no longer needed God. One was chosen to tell God. He said, "We've decided we no longer need you. We can clone people and do many miraculous things, so leave us alone." God listened patiently and kindly to the man, then said, "Very well. Let us have a man-making contest." The scientist replied, "OK. Great!" God added, "We'll do just as I did in the beginning with Adam." The scientist said, "Sure, no problem." As he bent down to grab a handful of dirt, he heard God say, "No, no, no. You go get your own dirt!"

Mozambique: The local Mozambican churches have joined together to help the 100s of 1000s of flood refugees and have also had numerous opportunities to share Christ with them. Martin Brooks asks, most of all, that people in the United States pray for those that are on the front line in Mozambique helping these storm-ridden people.

Politically Correct? Al Gore recently gave a big speech about how his faith is so important to

him. In this attempt to convince the American people that we should consider him for president, he announced that his favorite Bible verse is - John 16:3. Of course the speech writer meant John 3:16, but nobody in the Gore camp was familiar enough with scripture to catch the error. Do you know what John 16:3 says? "And they will do this because they have not known the Father or Me." The Holy Spirit works in strange ways!!!

Lexington: This past March 4th commemorated 85 years by the grace of God, for the Cramer and Hanover Church of Christ.

LaGrange Ky: Louis Schuler is "back in the saddle" and announcing their Spring Revival Meeting April 3 through 7 nightly at 7:30 p.m. Speakers include: Nick Marsh, Mike Abbott, Ron Flora, Bennie Hill, and Dale Offutt. Each speaker has been assigned a different topic that proves to be very interesting.

Macclenny Florida: The Raiford Road Church (west of Jacksonville off Interstate 10) will be celebrating their 50th Year of existence and ministry in North Florida on Sunday, June 11th. Friends and former members are encouraged to join in this day of activities with a special worship service being planned to honor and praise the Lord! Drop them a line of encouragement:

Mr. Jody Griffis, Rt. 1 Box 580,
Macclenny, Fl. 32063

Highland Community Church:

The board of Directors of Christian Academy have decided to name the high school auditorium at their new English Station Road campus Lyon Hall in honor of our pastor of 39 years, Ernest Lyon. Congratulations, Ernest.

Interested in Fill-in Preaching:

Joe Peckinpugh of the Lilly Dale, Ind. Church is interested in getting experience in preaching God's Word. He has taught a S.S. class for some time, & preached a time or two. He recently began studying at the School of Biblical Studies. You may reach him at (812) 836-4363.

The S.B.S. Annual Spring Seminar

was a blessing to those who attended. There were over 100 Fri. night--including the Portland Christian High School chorus led by Phyllis Mullins--and over 50 at Sat.'s helpful workshops. Julius Hovan, Sonny Childs & Cameron Cox brought profitable messages.

Robert Garrett has urged S.B.S. to send 2 faculty members to hold classes in Zimbabwe, later this year when the Garretts have returned there. The main emphasis would be on leadership training. Decisions are not finalized but we hope this door will be entered.

Hamburg, Ind. Church will hold special meetings April 9-12,

Sun.-Wed. Speakers will be Randy Coultas, Mike Abbott twice & Dale Offutt twice.

2 Hoosier Veterans Move Home.

Word comes that Baty Terhune, who for many years was an elder at the Dugger, Ind. Church, fell asleep in Jesus. He was 97.

Also Marion Carty, 87, passed away in February. His late wife was a niece of Stanford Chambers, early editor of WW. Bro. Carty was a longtime worker & songleader at Berea Church of Christ, which Bro. Chambers helped establish. He was an avid WW reader too.

Gallatin Church had an excellent singing meeting a few weeks ago. Graham McKay shared stories of hymn-writers or incidents related to the writing or message of various hymns. This always makes the songs even more meaningful than they already are.

Excerpts from Notes: "I look forward to each issue of Word & Work. Especially enjoyed Feb. with recent information from various missions. It helps me pray better." --Glenn Baber, West Monroe, La.

"We are back in Sa'a village, settled, and translating again, currently in Acts. Pray for Susan as she has forgotten most of her Sa'a language and has to re-learn it. Philip is in his element, playing soccer every day and going spear fishing on weekends." --Karen Ashley, Solomon Islands

Sowing God's Seed in Japan

Motoyuki Nomura, Bethany Home, 1381 Koarama, Nagasaka-Cho, Kitakoma-Gun, Yamanashi-Ken 408-0031 Japan email to: motofish@comlink.ne.jp Feb./Mar.,2000

Last Sunday we had 22 in our house-church worship/fellowship, 12 children and 12 adults who all partook the Lord's Meal in a joyful and yet with solemn heart attitude. This was one of the largest assemblies of His people in this isolated place in our full 15 years of ministry, a direct result of His grace through the prayers of the brotherhood, for which I can not find any suitable word but to say "Thank God and thank you folks for His blessings upon us even in this part of the world." Last July a 9th grader girl, Chika, was baptized into Christ. Now her younger sister, a 5th grader, Nao, is thinking about her own salvation. Please pray that Nao will join the Family of God soon. I have never pushed anyone to accept the Lord, but pray and wait for His own leading.

My wife Yoriko suffers from an extremely low blood pressure and naturally from her heart that does not pump sufficient blood into her body. She has fainted a couple times, but she is so patient and quiet that she does not tell me so. She needs your prayers....

In our small ministries in the past forty years we have sent around 150 Japanese young people to Winchester or to Louisville with our earnest prayer for each one of them. Folks in Kentucky and some in Louisiana together with Graham McKay have tried to help them find Christ as their Savior while they were there. Of about 150 or even more, some have grown in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in such a way that we find them faithfully working in His vineyard in Japan. [He mentions some of those, but says fewer than 10 seem to be in that category.] It reminds us of the parable of a sower. So we commit their souls to the Lord. We have done our best for each young Japanese soul who went to our schools in Kentucky in the past forty years.