

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

JULY, 2000

**A RICH LEGACY --
But Not Always Lived Up To**

**FOREIGN MISSIONS:
What Would We Do Without
The Women?**

**GOD IS SOVEREIGN,
But What Does That Mean?**

**KENTUCKY / INDIANA
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP WEEK**

The 53rd Annual Fellowship

August 7-10, 2000

Theme: Standing At The Crossroads

Monday Evening, August 7

7:30 Making The Decision For Christ Paul Estes

Tuesday, August 8

9:30 Definition of Leadership Dale Offutt

10:40 Complete Joy David Tapp

11:30 Lunch

1:00 Unity of Faith Julius Hovan

2:10 Need for Church Growth Harry Coultas

7:30 Do Not Compromise Paul Estes

Wednesday, August 9

9:30 When There's No Leadership Dale Offutt

10:40 That You May Not Sin David Tapp

11:30 Lunch

1:00 Unity of Spirit Julius Hovan

2:10 Develop Church Growth Harry Coultas

7:30 Building the Faith Paul Estes

Thursday, August 10

9:30 Follow Your Leadership Dale Offutt

10:40 Know You Have Eternal Life David Tapp

11:30 Lunch

1:00 Unity of the Church Julius Hovan

2:10 Results of Church Growth Harry Coultas

7:30 Maintaining the Faith Paul Estes

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

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

Prayer Time Daily at 9:00 a.m.

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Bennie Hill, News & Notes

The Word and Work (USPS 691-460) is published monthly except December under the auspices of the Portland Ave. Church of Christ, Inc., Louisville, Ky. Subscription: \$8.00 per year; bundles of 10 or more to one address = \$7.50 per subscription. Address correspondence to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Avenue, Louisville, KY 40212. Second class postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, KY 40212.

Vol. XCIV

JULY, 2000

No. 7

In This Issue

Theme: A Rich Legacy

Our Heritage at its Best -- Leroy Garrett	194
Jesus Paid it All -- K. C. Moser	200
My Struggle with Legalism -- Ron Foster	203
What About Me? What About You? -- Rod Huron	205
A Joyful Return to the Mission Field -- Mae Broaddus	208
How to Pray for (Women) Missionaries -- Ruth Wilson	210
Joy Ridderhof -- Ian L. Downs	214
What the Bible Teaches about...God's Sovereignty, Satan's Power, and Human Freedom, Pt. 3 -- Alex V. Wilson	216
Counselor's Corner -- Dennis Kaufman	221
Seventh Year of Marriage Critical -- Joyce Broyles	223
Voices From The Fields	224
News and Notes -- Bennie Hill	IBC

OUR HERITAGE AT ITS BEST

Leroy Garrett

The Stone-Campbell Movement at its best! I am aware that there are things in our heritage that are un-exemplary, even shameful, such as our several divisions that make us a spectacle of "divided unionists," to use Alfred T. DeGroot's phrase.

It is appropriate that we be aware of the mistakes of our past in hopes that we might make some mid-course corrections. But this time around I want us to look at what is noblest in our history, what is most exemplary our heritage at its best. After all, this might be the best way to set right the things that are awry.

I want to do this in quadruples:

- four founding maxims,
- four founding documents,
- four founding events,
- four founding pioneers and their principles.

These can serve as a summary of the genius of our Movement.

Four Founding Slogans

Slogans are maxims that reflect the wisdom of a culture. Even when we can't trace their origin or identify their authors they serve to capulate great truths, often in homespun verbiage. Throughout the English-speaking world we are familiar with the likes of "Pretty is as pretty does" or "Penny wise and pound foolish" or "A bird in the hand is worth two in a bush" or "A rolling stone gathers no moss."

Such one-liners as "In God we trust" and "Give me liberty or give me death" say something about who we are as a nation. Even big business realizes the power of a slogan. Most of us can name the product when we hear "We're ready when you are" or "Finger lickin' good" or "Good to the last drop."

So it was with our pioneers. They said it in slogans. While slogans may run the risk of oversimplification, they can and often do convey great truths. They are catchy, witty, and easy to remember.

1. **"In essentials, unity;
in non-essentials, liberty;
in all things, love."**

While this slogan dates back to the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, our people popularized it and allowed it to express the essence of their plea.

It has been expressed variously: "In fundamentals, unity; in non-fundamentals, liberty; in all things, love" or "In matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; in all things, charity." For many years the *Christian Evangelist* carried it on its mast-head in still a different way: "In essentials, unity; in opinions and methods, liberty; in all things, love."

The reference to methods as well as opinions underscores the point made by Winfred E. Garrison that our people have divided over methods more than theology. But it should not have been. Had we been faithful to the principles expressed in this maxim alone it would have saved us from our divisive ways.

It is not that we do not all accept the good sense of this motto, but that we have never been able to agree on what is essential and what matter is only an opinion. Our pioneers supposed they had the answer to this by identifying as essential those things clearly and distinctly set forth in Scripture; all else is opinion.

Or, to put it another way, matters of faith are in reference to what the Bible actually says, while matters of opinion are what we think it means by what it says.

We might modernize the maxim to say: "In things that matter most, unity; in lesser matters, freedom; but always love." However we state it, it is in applying its great truth that we recover our heritage at its best.

2. "We are Christians only, but not the only Christians."

Again, this was not original to our Movement in that it goes back to John Wesley who urged his budding holiness movement to be "Christians simply" or "downright Christians." Our people came to see it as a means to unity: We will not all be Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, etc., but we can all be Christians, Christians *only*, not even hyphenated Christians.

The name also pointed to the authority of Christ rather than to any human authority. If we are Christians, Christians only, we can wear that name, yield to the rule of Christ, and be united. It was an impelling plea.

At the same time it implied an ecumenical attitude: While we choose to be Christians only, we realize we are not the only Christians. It was a matter of inviting all believers to find oneness in a God-ordained name, not some human name.

But it became a motto that now and again got turned on its head. There have always been those who concluded that the truths gleaned by the Movement, especially in reference to baptism, made them the only Christians.

Alexander Campbell in particular was adamant in pointing out that the plea of the Movement "to unite the Christians in all the sects" implied that there were other Christians. It is in being "Christians only" that Christians of whatever name can find common ground.

3. "Where the Bible speaks we speak, where the Bible is silent we are silent."

This one is original with our people. Thomas Campbell coined it as a founding concept for his Christian Association of Washington, which was an ad hoc agency for Christian unity. While he did not intend for the Association to be a church, it eventually evolved into the first church of the Campbell side of the Movement, called Brush Run, in 1811.

Campbell intended the slogan to do two things: strike a blow against human creeds and confessions of faith as terms of communion; and to point to the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice.

We do both Campbell and our heritage a disservice when we interpret the slogan legalistically. Campbell was not making the Bible a pattern for every detail in the life and work of the church. The slogan backfires when we make it mean that every progressive step the church takes, whether cooperative work or modern methods, is warranted only by being specifically referred to in the Bible.

The slogan points in a general way to the Movement's confidence in the authority and sufficiency of the holy Scriptures. It also recognizes that only the Bible, and the Person it exalts, can be the basis of union among Christians. The slogan expresses our heritage at its best when we see it saying that we as a people, like Thomas Campbell himself, are "a people of the Book."

4. "We are free to differ, but not to divide."

Ours is a heritage of freedom: free in Christ, free to think and interpret for ourselves, free to question, even free to be wrong in our search for truth. And, yes, free to differ, not only as individuals but as churches. No church has to be a carbon copy of another. The churches in the New Testament, with all their diversity, attest to this.

It is liberating to realize that we don't have to see everything alike, and yet this is what makes sectarianism so oppressive: It demands

conformity on all points of "the party line." People are loved and accepted, not on the basis of their relationship to Christ, but for their loyalty to the party.

Our forebears recognized that we do and we will differ. We can no more see everything alike than we can look alike. But that is all right. It is not differences that divide us as much as attitudes.

And that is the point of the slogan: Under Christ we are not free to divide his Body. We are rather called upon to "preserve the unity of the faith" with forbearing love.

Obviously this slogan does not suggest that there are no limits to unity and fellowship. It does not mean that the church is to tolerate anything and everything. The line must always be drawn when fundamentals of the faith are at stake. In those areas where believers justifiably see things differently, Alexander Campbell cited the rule: "So long as they hold forth the Head, who is Christ."

Our forebears rediscovered the sinfulness of division among Christians. It is "anti-Scriptural, anti-Christian, anti-natural." It is "the scandal of Christianity" that must be denounced and eradicated. Division is not an option in settling differences. Forbearance is a Christian virtue that implies that there are differences to forbear. They were "sick and tired of the janglings of sectarian strife," and theirs was a Movement to reverse the trend: differences, yes; divisions, no.

Four Founding Documents

Religious movements, like nations, have their founding documents, and for people to understand who they are, whether nationally or religiously, they need to be aware of such documents. In the Stone-Campbell tradition there are four that may be considered founding documents.

1. *Cardinal Principles of the Christian Church (1794)*

When James O'Kelly led a group of dissenters out of the Methodist Church, they first called themselves Republican Methodists. With the help of Rice Haggard, who wrote a pamphlet in 1804 urging unity on the basis of the name Christian, they soon adopted that name and called themselves the Christian Church.

In time they created a document in which they listed what they called "the cardinal principles" of their new church. It is an amazing statement in that it captures the essence of the Stone-Campbell

movement well before either Stone or Campbell came along. It listed six principles:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only head of the church.
2. The name Christian to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names.
3. The Holy Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament our only creed, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice.
4. Christian character, or vital piety, the only test of church fellowship and membership.
5. The right of private judgment, and the liberty of conscience, the privilege and duty of all.
6. The union of all Christians to the end that the world may believe.

If we sought to express our heritage at its best in but few words, this little document serves the purpose. When Alexander Campbell was but a six-year old boy back in his native Ireland, these erstwhile Methodists, now Christians only, laid out principles that became basic to Campbell's movement decades later.

It is mostly there: the centrality of Christ, the Bible only, the name Christian, opposition to party names and creeds, freedom of opinion, a plea for unity. Many of these people, who numbered in the thousands, eventually identified with Stone-Campbell. Others became a part of what is today the United Church of Christ.

2. An Address on the Sacred Import of the Christian Name (1804)

Authored by Rice Haggard, who influenced both James O'Kelly and Barton Stone to call their new churches Christian, this document was a plea for unity based upon the authority of that name. It contends that "Christian" is a catholic name that can be worn by all believers as an expression of their unity.

The *Address* urges the churches to surrender their "several distinctions," including all party names, which have "a tendency to disunite the body of Christ." In biting terms it denounces the evil of division among Christians: "If the wisdom and subtlety of all the devils in hell had been engaged in ceaseless counsels from eternity, they could not have devised a more complete plan to advance their kingdom than to divide the members of Christ's body."

Haggard not only deplored the scandal of division, but he named its cause: "One thing, I know, that whenever non-essentials are made terms of communion, it will never fail to have a tendency to disunite

and scatter the church of Christ." He here anticipates part of the slogan that we have referred to: "In non-essentials, liberty."

3. The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery (1804)

This little document, only five pages in length, grew out of the great revival at Cane Ridge in Kentucky (1801). It expressed the desire of Barton W. Stone and other reforming Presbyterian ministers to lay aside the last vestige of sectarianism, even the innocuous Springfield Presbytery that they had created when they left the Presbyterian Church.

In laying aside their presbytery they penned an impressive ecumenical principle: "We will that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large." This remains one of the most-quoted references in Stone-Campbell history, and it serves to challenge all who profess to believe in unity to lay aside any ecclesiasticism that obstructs the oneness of Christ's church.

They included this delightful line: "We will that preachers and people cultivate a spirit of mutual forbearance; pray more and dispute less."

Pray more and dispute less! That one-liner, considering its context, might well point to what is best in our heritage.

4. The Declaration and Address (1809)

Thomas Campbell came to America in 1807, and his experiences were such that by 1809 he had produced this document which has been described as "a prospectus of the reformation," referring to the movement led by the Campbells.

It called for a spirit of non-judgment: "We are persuaded that no one can be judged for his brother, so no man can judge his brother." It went on to expose division among Christians as "a horrid evil, fraught with many evils," and as "antichristian, antisciptural, and antinatural." Campbell insisted that he was "tired and sick of the bitter jarrings and janglings of a party spirit," and he stated that his aim was to restore unity, peace, and purity to the whole church of God.

The basic principle of the document recognized the catholicity of the church, which formed the basis for what his son Alexander referred to as "the catholic basis for union." Outside the Bible it has become the most-quoted and most influential statement of our heritage:

"The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one."

This is who we are as a people in reference to the unity of the church: the church by its nature is one; it cannot be other than one. Unity is God's gift to His church, to be received and preserved. It is noteworthy that Campbell penned that line before he ever had a church of his own called "Church of Christ." The church that is essentially one may have needed reform, Campbell believed, but it was nonetheless a reality upon earth.

[To Be Concluded]

[Dr. Garrett, a Stone-Campbell Movement teacher, editor and historian, currently lives in active retirement in Denton, Texas, USA. He has lectured at colleges and churches of all three traditions within our North American 'family' and is author of 'The Stone-Campbell Movement'.]

JESUS PAID IT ALL

K. C. Moser

Some years ago, the editor of a song book changed the above title of a familiar hymn to "Jesus Died for Me!" This was a popular change. In my youth I frequently heard the original title criticized because some felt that it depreciated man's role in his salvation.

To these critics the fact that Jesus died for me does not mean that Jesus paid it all. But if Jesus by his death on the cross did not pay the full debt of sin, he is not a complete Savior. If he is not a complete Savior, man must by meritorious deeds pay the balance.

One person explained his conception of salvation this way: "I buy a coat and pay five dollars down. Each month I pay five dollars until the coat is paid for." Of course, according to this illustration, Jesus paid nothing, but simply offers salvation for sale, imposing on man the obligation of paying the full price of his salvation!

Another person recently exclaimed: "I go to the church to keep from going to hell!" Others who are more sophisticated also teach doctrines that logically nullify the cross (Acts 15:1-5). Even more recently several young adults confessed that they were trying to earn salvation!

HAS "JESUS PAID IT ALL"?

Note these facts: 1) "...the Father hath sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14). 2) The Son saves by becoming "the

propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). 3) Paul and Peter teach redemption through the blood of Christ (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18, 19). 4) “Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf” (2 Cor. 5:21). 5) Jesus was “manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26). 6) “Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). 7) Peter taught that Jesus claimed that he had accomplished the work which the Father sent him to do (John 17:4). He was sent of the Father to save man by becoming his sinbearer.

Conclusive proof of the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus is found in the fact that God raised him from the dead, placed him at his right hand, and justifies the “ungodly” on the basis of the cross (Acts 2:33, 34; Romans 3:24, 25; 4:5). Furthermore, salvation, based on the sacrifice of Jesus, is offered to those who are “worthy of death” as a “free gift.”

If this “gift” was not fully paid for by the death of Jesus, it must go forever unpaid, since man receives it as a *free gift*! If man pays, or helps to pay, for his salvation, it is no longer a gift. It is no longer a matter of grace. “Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt.”

When one considers who Jesus is and what he did to save man he must conclude that “he is able to save to the uttermost (fully) them that draw near unto God through him.” Let it be remembered that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” If the combined work of the Father and the Son did not fully pay the debt of sin, salvation is an impossibility!

After Christ “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” Peter agrees: “And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.”

But why pursue this point longer? There is not the slightest reason for denying that “Jesus Paid It All.” No reason, that is but legalism! But legalism is neither scriptural nor reasonable! If Jesus by his death on man’s behalf did not “pay it all,” heaven itself is deceived. “Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people and nation . . . Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing” (Revelation 5:9, 12).

THE MEANING OF MAN’S PART IN SALVATION

Man’s part in his salvation is to receive what Jesus by his death as a “propitiation” offers as a “free gift.”

“Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood to be received by faith” (Romans 3:24, 25).

Note these facts: 1) Man has sinned. 2) Christ is his Redeemer. 3) Christ redeems by his blood. 4) Hence man receives his justification “as a gift” upon the principle of faith. What is offered “as a gift” is offered upon the principle of grace.

Any effort on man’s part to earn salvation nullifies both the principle of grace and the death of Jesus (Galatians 2:21; Romans 4:4, 11:6).

All conditions of salvation are responses of sinful man to Jesus Christ as sin offering. They must signify, therefore, trust in, reliance upon Christ as the sacrifice for sin. Partial trust, partial reliance upon Christ as Savior reflects on the wisdom of God and the mercy of Christ.

After Pentecost those 3,000 who were baptized and the others who were added to these saved were known as “believers,” that is, those who trusted in, relied on Christ as Savior (Acts 2:44, 4:32). Peter referred to what the Jews did “at the beginning” as putting their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Cf. Acts 2:38 and Acts 11:17 in the New English Bible.)

“BLESSED ASSURANCE”

“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine.” Only those who rely for salvation upon the meritorious sacrifice of Christ can possibly have any basis of assurance of salvation. Too many professed Christians live miserable lives because they think salvation has to be earned by them!

Paul wrote: “I know him whom I have believed.” Peter taught that the believer--he that trusts in Christ--has reason to “rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

Jesus is Savior, Redeemer, Advocate. Hence one’s assurance of salvation is proportionate to his reliance upon Christ as his Savior.

Yes, Jesus paid it all!

--In *20th Century Christian* [Now *21st Century Christian*]

[When Bro. Moser preached God’s grace back in the 1930’s, most Churches of Christ black-listed him. But in recent decades many have come to agree with him. --avw]

My Struggle with Legalism

Ron Foster

I owe much to my spiritual heritage in the non-instrumental Churches of Christ, especially my respect for the Bible as the Word of God. But, like most who have grown up in that background, I developed a strong vision of my relationship with God being tied to rule keeping and my ability to live a perfect life. I knew the rules well, but I sensed early on that I would not be able to lead the life of performance that I felt called to live. I thought I was to live the best life I could, then hope mightily that God might accept me, depending upon whether I had prayed last or sinned last.

The harder I tried, the more I failed. While I did not understand it at the time, I had become dependent upon legalism or "works salvation" an affliction that plagues people of all faiths. I thought "rightness" was the primary virtue, and, if I could just be "right" enough, God would have to accept me. So, I tried vainly to please Him by being in the right church with the right name and the right doctrine and the right plan of salvation.

It all seemed so "right," but I felt nothing inside except guilt and hopelessness. I could not see that I knew the Church of Christ, but I did not know the Christ of the Church.

A Godly Wife

By the time I married my wife, Pam, I had essentially dropped out of church. My faith in God was still intact, but I saw little hope in depending upon my ability to please Him. I still prayed, but doubted it had much value.

In the late 60's, in the face of my lack of spiritual leadership Pam started taking our daughters to a small Baptist church in Deer Park, Texas. I was going nowhere at the time, but I felt smug that I was, at least, not going with her to the "wrong" church. Pam volunteered in the church office and became close to the pastor. One day, he asked her why she and I did not attend church together, and she explained the situation. To his credit, he told her that we needed to be together as a family and that she should return to the Church of Christ with me, if that is what it took to bring our family together. I owe him a huge debt.

During recuperation from hernia surgery in 1969, I was visited in the hospital by two men from the Burke Road Church of Christ in Pasadena, Texas. Looking back, I can see it was a God-incident in my life, although I thought nothing of it at the time. It turned out to be im-

portant because in 1970 we decided to try attending church once again, and Burke Road seemed to be the logical place to try first.

A Message of Hope

We stayed in that church for ten years, and during that time I was exposed to the teaching of a dynamic young preacher named Wes Reagan. He was teaching the grace of God, spiritual security, and non-sectarianism, thus challenging many of the sacred cows of the traditional Churches of Christ.

For the first time in all my years of church attendance, I heard incredible "good news," but since it conflicted with everything I had ever learned, I was slow to accept it. But God began to open my heart to the message, and I began to sense an inner peace that I had never known before. For the first time, I could see in my spirit that I was totally devoid of any ability to please God by anything that I could do. Like the scripture says, "our righteousness (our very best) is as filthy rags" in the sight of God. And "there is none good, no not one." In no way could I earn, deserve, or merit his grace and forgiveness. Because I was helpless, God Himself provided a way, His way, for me to be related to Him.

A New Confidence in the Lord

I now have a new answer to that dreaded question, "If you died right now, would you go to Heaven?" I can assuredly and absolutely say "YES!" without having to fumble around with a conditional answer based upon a goodness I know I do not (and can not) have. I can now see that "obeying the gospel" means to entrust my life to Christ and His atoning blood, not to go through a checklist or formula to become right before God.

Jesus is now real in my life. I realize He loves me personally, not just a faceless body called the church. He died for me, and I can face life with a far different outlook. I can face death with no fear or doubt of my destination. I am saved by the grace of God, and I know it. At long last, I have the peace that passes all understanding.

I no longer feel the need to correct the peripheral doctrinal errors of other people. I can discuss spiritual matters with them and not feel threatened that I have to "win" to defend my credibility. Long-held viewpoints can be examined without fear that I might betray the church or the Lord.

A Transformed Perspective

Does that mean I no longer care about truth? Absolutely not! God's very essence is truth. We should be as right as we can be, within our ability to understand God's Word. But one can be 100%

right about 1001 things and still be lost if he does not know Jesus. Conversely, one can be wrong on numerous things (aren't we all?) and still be saved if his trust has been placed in Jesus.

Does re-thinking current ideas compromise truth? Not at all. If truth cannot be examined, then one must question if it is indeed truth. All truth is important; but all truth is not equally important. It is true that Methuselah lived to be 969 years old, but a far more important truth is that the Living Truth, Jesus Christ, is the Son of God and died for our sins.

The simple truth of salvation is that we have two, and only two, choices. We can stand before God on our own and plead for his forgiveness based upon what we have done. This I call "religion". Or we can choose to let Jesus stand beside us as our substitute and let God judge Jesus in our place. This I call "grace". There are no other options. Praise God for His unfathomable grace!

— From Lamb & Lion's **Lamplighter**, June 1998

WHAT ABOUT ME? WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Rod Huron

Has a superstar ever let you down? One did it to me. His name: Gordon Lightfoot.

When we lived in Toronto, Gordon's mellow ballads were everywhere: on the radio, the mall Muzak, even as theme for the Omnimax in Ontario Place. I especially like *Song for a Winter's Night* and his *Canadian Railroad Trilogy*. You might go for *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*.

After we moved back to the States, I was excited when I learned he was coming to Cleveland. Autumn and I went. Our seats were good, but I'm glad we didn't spend the extra for stage side.

Gordon was bored and boring. And possibly half drunk.

The music was there, in the old ones at least. But his new stuff was pitiful. The fire was out, suffocated by travel and booze and one-night-stands. Everybody--Gordon, too, probably--was glad when it was finally over. Gordon knew better than to offer an encore. Once off stage, he stayed off.

How did a talented youth become a weary old man?

But there's a bigger question, prompted in part by my last birthday. Lately I've been struck by the number of biblical greats whose lives turned sour when they hit my age.

Fallen Heroes

Solomon, for example. None ever started with higher principles or promise, yet toward the end he was such an embarrassment that the historian cannot bring himself to describe what his king had turned into. Compare 2 Chronicles 9:29-31 with 1 Kings 11.

Gideon, whose prayers moved Jehovah, whose three hundred routed thousands, degenerated into womanizer and idolater. Buried at a golden old age, he left behind an honored name and a golden ephod, the latter a snare to Gideon's family and Gideon's nation.

One of my heroes is Hezekiah. Faced with an impossible situation, he spread Sennacherib's letter before Jehovah.

I, too, have done that, arranging sermon notes or convention papers on the floor and asking God to see and act.

Remember Hezekiah's prayer? Terminally ill, he turned his face to the wall and begged God for his life.

This moment is the pinnacle of Hezekiah's life. Though weak and sick, never again will he rise so high. From here it's all down.

No, he does not die. He is healed. And gets the big head. And becomes a show-off. And sires a wicked son.

Better to have died an early death and righteous than become an old and evil failure.

Most tragic was Uzziah, who "did what was right" and "sought God" and "who was greatly helped until he became powerful."

But as he climbed the ladder of success, every step took Uzziah farther from God. Famous, powerful, arrogant; he decided to serve in the temple, brushing aside the objection of those qualified to be there.

God finally had enough. Before the holy altar of incense, Uzziah raged at the priests. Suddenly, leprosy broke out on his forehead. If . . . if only . . . if only . . . A lifetime of serving now fallen to this?

Personal Experiences

I know the drill. I'm not exempt. The other day I tallied some numbers, and they are considerable.

Thus far I have heard 2,290 sermons and have preached almost that many. Plus Sunday school and prayer meetings. I've played countless tapes, spent 48 weeks in church camp (add weekend retreats), written 5 Christian books, coordinated 9 conventions (I'm writing this on a plane).

I'm tired. And I'm not a newcomer to this anymore.

I know the joy of baptisms, the pageantry of weddings, the despair of illness, the tears of a funeral. Hundreds in each category.

I've prayed in shadow and sunshine, kept a daily appointment with Scripture, seen God work miracles in front of my eyes.

I used to doubt His existence, but no longer. He is closer to me now than ever.

But am I closer to Him? That's not a question I can answer easily.

Forty years serving Him and I still find it hard to pray. Fifty-one years a Christian and I am still struggling with Satan. I used to think temptation would be easier to handle as I grew older. I was wrong.

Have I become accustomed to God? For a long time I've made it my practice to read the Bible through each year. Has this Book, which used to be so holy to me, become commonplace?

Are my devotions only a habit? A good one, perhaps, but empty rote nonetheless?

Has "the deadly familiarity with the sublime" happened to me? Has it happened to you?

It could. But it doesn't have to.

--Reprinted by permission from *Christian Standard*, 5-12-96,
Copyright

A JOYFUL RETURN TO THE MISSION FIELD

Mae Broaddus

Eccl. 11:1 "Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again." We have found it *again!!* Vic and I have just returned from two weeks visiting in the Philippines and what a wonderful blessing it was.

When we first went to the Philippines in 1951 Vic told me it was his plan to convert and teach the believers to teach others so that they would not be dependent on foreign missionaries and money. When Dennis Allen arrived three years later they began to pray and plan to start a Bible College. They started with seven and it has continued to grow until there were 70-80 last semester. On Sunday we attended services at Quiricada St. where the Bible College and oldest congregation is located. Construction is in progress on the main part of the building. All classes and worship services are conducted in the part of the building that used to be five small apartments housing students and teachers. Three partitions were removed in the downstairs which is now being used as the auditorium until the front of the building is completed. Many CBC students from 30 years ago were present - the church was filled and the singing wonderful.

On Monday Dave Moldez and Oscar Abella took us to Frisco for VBS. This is the property Vic had bought with an inheritance from his grandmother. Brothers Frank Mullins and Winston Allen had visited us in the Philippines and on their return to the States they raised money for us to build a home. A large room downstairs was used for Bible classes for neighborhood young people. Ruth also taught Bible classes in the public school. I invited Arsenio Eniego to preach in our front yard for a few evenings. It was successful--the young people filled the seats placed in the yard and the adults stood in the road and the yard next door to listen. Vic deeded the property to the mission after we returned to the States. Now the whole building is used for church purposes. They have extended the downstairs of the building in the front and in the back and the church is getting so large they are dreaming of tearing the old building down and building a church that will fill the lot. Back to the VBS. Every room upstairs and downstairs was full of classes--2 or 3 in the living room and maybe 4 in the chapel. There were also 3 or 4 in the yard. Very crowded conditions but the teachers had no problem holding the children's attention.

On Tuesday we were able to witness the pouring of the last small section of cement for the foundation of the front section of the building at Quiricada St. The hole was several feet deep--a maze of steel bars which should support up to 11 stories. Land is so expensive that

up is the only way they can grow and, Praise God!, they do expect to keep growing. The floor had already been poured for the front section and the walls were up to the 2nd floor. By the time we left Manila the floors were poured on the back section and the walls going up fast. Frank and Polly Kwong are doing a wonderful job of supervising the construction.

Wednesday was a 12 hour day of go, go go. We visited 5 new churches in Cavite and Tagaytay started by students and faculty of CBC--Virgilio Torrefiel and the Auxteros. Although the members had no way of knowing when we would arrive there was a group waiting at each location. We were fed lunch at one location and lead a short service at another.

I must cut this short--a book could be written. Three days were spent on the island of Mindoro where we visited four different congregations--two have adequate buildings and two were home churches. One of our earliest students, Arnold Barrios, is Superintendent of Schools, and has a church which meets in his home. A wonderful day was spent with the Cadut family. They live on the seashore which provided a very nice breeze and beautiful view. Their back yard is filled with coconut trees. The green coconuts provided refreshing drinks. We were served a wonderful meal--3 large fish grilled over coals. fruits, vegetables and of course rice.

One day Dave Moldez took us to see mission works that he has started himself or supervised Central Bible College students in starting them. I believe we visited 5 different groups. The original congregation he started has a very nice building. Most of the others meet in homes--one in a public building and one good sized group meets in a yard where they have covered a large portion of the yard with a heavy plastic roof. It was all very encouraging.

Saturday there was a couples meeting where Vic and I were to talk to them about Christian marriage and raising children. The last Sunday there was a "Thanksgiving Night". Frank and Polly had reserved a private dining room and invited 60 guests--many were students connected with the Bible College in the early years. Three long tables were laden with food. Several former students reminisced about the "old days." Polly spoke and presented us with gold necklaces--one with a Bible pendant and the other with praying hands. It was beautiful--something to always remember. How thankful we are to God for this experience.

I started with a "casting" verse and will end with another. Psalm 55:22: "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall." Now that we are facing old age and sickness, how thankful we are that we have a God who cares and will always be there for us. We can only look toward the future with joy and expectation.

How to Pray for (*Women*) Missionaries

Ruth Wilson

"Alex, there are WEEVILS in this flour! Yuck!!" I suppose I must have yelled that the first time I found myself staring down into an "occupied" bag of flour. But, after so many times, I *did* get used to it and learned to expect to pick out what I could and cook the rest for "extra protein". And there was the missionary in a remote area who found her last box of powdered sugar so full of moving black specks that she had to make *chocolate* icing for her son's birthday cake to cover up the evidence!

Yes, being a missionary in less developed countries of the world does have its special problems. And, having been there I can say that prayers of God's people surely helped me through *some* of the rough spots. But perhaps I should share with you who are intercessors for missionaries some of the difficulties that face workers on foreign fields -- some that you may not have even thought of. Some pertain especially to women, but many are common problems of both male and female missionaries. My perspective, of course, is from the view point of a missionary wife.

Usually, the first hurdle for the new worker in a foreign land is "culture shock". This is defined as "a state of bewilderment in an individual suddenly exposed to a cultural environment radically different from his or her own" (**The Random House Dictionary**). Culture shock hits after the first few weeks, when the newness has worn off and you suddenly realize you're here to stay and can't run home to the conveniences you left behind. The telephone has no dial tone about half the time; electricity goes off often and without warning (usually when you feel your life depends on the electric fan!); a meeting is set for three, but everyone except you arrives 45 minutes late without apologies; you totally miscommunicate with your helper, who puts all the onions in the stew instead of just two. And you want to scream and go home--quick! Pray extra hard for new missionaries.

If the new recruit has gone to an Asian city, one of his or her first impressions is of the vast number of people. City streets flow with throngs of humanity, and the thousands of narrow residential streets are virtually the only playgrounds for the countless children. It might sound exciting to go as a missionary into such a ripe field. But what soon happens? The new worker begins to feel simply overwhelmed--a flame so faint as to be practically useless in such darkness.

Furthermore, after a hard day of striving to accomplish something, she longs to be alone, in the privacy of her home. But there is scarcely

any real privacy in such a crowded society. Our last home in the Philippines was some 15 feet from our next-door neighbors'--and windows must be kept wide open because of the intense heat, except during the most violent squalls! Furthermore, these dear neighbors had very different tastes in music from our own--and loved to listen to their records many hours of every day, at top volume! (In fact, many Filipinos feel it is only polite to share their music with as many of their neighbors as possible!)

The newly arrived white person must also get used to being stared at--endlessly--whenever she goes out of the house. This is especially difficult for children, whose light skin is often a great temptation for the national to touch (or even pinch!). I well remember how the beautiful little blond and redheaded children of Billy Ray and Mary Lewter suffered through many a pinch.

But perhaps worst of all for the newcomer, especially if English is scarcely known in her adopted country, is the inability to make even a simple purchase because she doesn't know the right sounds to make. At first she may not know how to say "bread" or "please" or "how much?" Gradually, with long, frustrating hours of drill, she can carry on simple conversations. But does she dare try to teach a class or even share the gospel with anyone? Oh no, she knows her mind would go completely blank, and she would probably make a complete mess of it. I remember attempting to tell a class of children that they needed to receive Jesus into their hearts - but, alas, the word for "heart" in Tagalog is "puso" and the word for cat is "pusa". Guess what I said to them! (And imagine how they laughed at that what-should-have-been solemn moment.) Learning to communicate in another language than your own often causes a tremendous emotional upheaval, which gets worse the older a person is. Pray for any missionary you may know who is working on a language.

Food problems can get much worse than weevils in flour! We learned that because of our sensitivity to certain bacteria, we must never eat raw vegetables (except for a few that grow above ground and can be peeled) and even some fruits. The bacteria must first be killed by cooking. Water is an even more frustrating problem. How can you refuse a glass of apparently clean water offered to you by a kindly national in a provincial area? You know that if you drink it, you may very well come down with typhoid fever, or at least intestinal problems. And if the water is dangerous, what about the dishes washed in suspect water? Most missionaries simply must take some risks, and we must not forget to intercede for their health.

Speaking of health, our daughter Joy experienced the following illnesses during her 18 years as a "missionary kid": primary complex

(first stages of TB), mononucleoses (twice), gastroenteritis, typhoid fever, hepatitis (the latter two during the same year), and the usual childhood diseases. We took inoculations for typhoid (yearly) and cholera (twice yearly). Once when the cholera serum was unavailable, Joy had a real emotional struggle, fearing that she would surely get this disease too! (Incidentally, her typhoid would surely have been much more serious, even fatal, had she not had the shot shortly before contracting the disease.) Life in the tropics lowers resistance to disease - and life in the far north is hard on the respiratory system. Consider the location of missionaries as you pray for them.

Rearing children on the field is one of the missionaries' biggest challenges. Yet I have discovered that it had not even occurred to some intercessors to pray for the kids of the family! How much should these children be protected from exposure to the nationals? Isolating them too much could cause misunderstanding on the part of the people with whom you work. Yet overexposure could put them too much in the limelight and be harmful to their normal emotional development. How can you prepare them for American culture (or whatever the home country may be)? It would be unfair to the children to rear them as if they were foreigners to their own home culture. Missionary schools are a tremendous boon to families on the field, for they provide an atmosphere similar to schools at home. But many families must part with their children for long periods of time so the children can live in boarding homes at those schools. And many other families must "make do" with international schools or other unsatisfactory conditions, or even teach their own children (which takes much of their precious time). And that difficult day will surely come when teenagers must go thousands of miles away to take up their college studies.

But more important than these cultural and educational needs of the children are their spiritual needs. Sometimes missionaries neglect their own children, feeling that their real call is to the nationals among whom they work. Pray that all such parents will realize that their own children are also "field of service".

Joy Turner Tuggy says in her excellent book, **The Missionary Wife and Her Work** (Moody Press, 1966):

It may be stated categorically that the presence of a loving, friendly, well-behaved missionary child is one of the greatest possible blessings in missionary work. Conversely, a missionary child who is not born again, or who has not continued to grow in grace, is a veritable weapon in the hand of the Enemy for the undermining of a Christian work. Every one of the lovely babes given to missionary parents is a potential Hophni or Phinehas or a Samuel."

Pray that all MK's (missionary kids) will turn out like Samuel, not like the sons of Eli!

And what about the missionary's own spiritual life? Does going to the field make him or her a spiritual giant, invulnerable to sin? Of course not! Seeing those great masses of people mentioned earlier may drive her to work herself to emotional and spiritual exhaustion, making her fully open to Satan's attacks. She may find it even harder than the ordinary wife in the homeland to find time for daily Quiet Times with her Lord. She knows that her first human responsibility is to her husband and children (and in fact, the husband has a like responsibility to his wife and children). Yet she sees so many things needing to be done on every side, to reach the nationals for Christ and to help the needy. Yet just how much time should she give to teaching, visitation, etc.? Each individual must decide, with God's special guidance. Do you pray for this aspect of missionaries' lives? Or can you only imagine them out preaching the gospel, tending the sick, etc.? Do you begrudge them hours of recreation, or do you see them as just as human as yourself?

Joy Tuggy says of missionary couples: "The various facets of their individual responsibilities are closely interrelated. If she be a faithful woman, not given to spreading news, she will serve as a repository of problems, opinions, counsel, and help" to her husband. I have often related to Paul's last lament in his long list of difficulties he had faced as a missionary, found in 2 Cor. 11:23-28. In verse 28 he says, "Besides those things that are without, there is that which presses upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches." If the minister of a church in the home country needs his wife's encouragement and listening ear when difficulties face him, how much more the missionary husband, to whom the problems of many churches are brought? Are there tensions among the leaders in a far-off church? The missionary must be told and is expected to solve the problem! Are there financial crises? These will be brought to him too. Sad to say, some marriages can hardly bear the strain of missionary life. We have known of couples who had to give up the effort because their marriages suffered so. Do you pray for this need?

There is more: missionaries must be (almost) always available to receive visiting nationals and to council with them. Their lives are a constant example of good or bad, either upholding or downgrading the gospel they preach. They must constantly decide whether writing letters of information home to their prayer partners is more important than the work at hand in the field. So, don't fault them for infrequent writing--just pray that they will have the wisdom to make the right decisions in this as in all other matters.

Though the list could go on, I can fully agree with a paragraph in a tract called "Praying for Missionaries", published by Moody Press:

Most missionaries don't feel sorry for themselves. Not at all. Says one: "When we hear talk of our giving up so much, we think of the poor folks at home who have to stay in the homeland when we have all the privileges of bringing folks to Christ."

Sometimes I long to go back to the field because, though needs are great in this country, there are vast numbers out there who have not even had the slightest chance to hear the gospel, while Americans are surrounded with it. But I pray that many new "recruits" will go out as the Lord of the Harvest leads. Will you pray for this -- and will you pray more specifically than you ever have before for those who do go?

[Mrs. Ruth Wilson and her family were missionaries in the Philippines from 1963-83.]

Joy Ridderhof

Ian L. Downs

What could God do with a woman full of faith and love for Him? What could He do with a woman too weak in body to be a long-term field missionary? What could He do with her if her joy was unquenchable?

Joy Ridderhof, founder of Gospel Recordings, proved the answer. With a tangible impact in over 4,000 people groups and a ministry that has remained on the leading edge of mission strategy for half a century, there is no doubting that God has done a marvelous thing through His humble daughter.

Joy's journey began in earnest in her twentieth year when she joined the first class of the Columbia Bible School in 1923. Since the school had no dormitory (she was one of three students), she lived with the McQuilkin family. It was during this season that God planted the seeds of joy in abundant measure. In Robert C. McQuilkin's home, worry was sin; rejoicing was God's will in any circumstance. Throughout her life, Joy shared freely the fruits of a rejoicing spirit with all.

In 1930, Joy went with the Friends Mission Board to Honduras, her proving ground for the next six years. She based her ministry around the outlying town of Marcala and its neighboring villages. She

endured many sacrifices of material goods and physical illness. Debilitating bouts with the flu, malaria, and smallpox took their toll:

"In 1936, I returned from Honduras ill in body," recounted Joy, "disqualified for future missionary service and without financial support. It was a dark picture indeed... Then God's Word spoke to my heart, 'Rejoice, Joy, Rejoice' ...And I answered, 'Lord, I will believe.'"

The disappointment allowed God to birth a new idea in her heart. Longing to encourage her brothers and sisters in Honduras, she recorded some Gospel messages and songs to send them. That first recording was a tremendous blessing, but the American accent limited its effectiveness. She quickly realized that future recordings would have to employ native speakers. There in Los Angeles, in 1941, Gospel Recordings began telling and retelling the sweet story of salvation.

Requests from missionaries took her to the Navajo, the Eskimos of Alaska and Mazahua Indians of Mexico. Others joined her in this exciting work. Among the first were Ann Sherwood and Sanna Barlow, two women who faithfully worked alongside her throughout her ministry.

Sanna described the amazing response they evoked time after time, this one along a Congo road. "We played the messages, one after another as they shook their heads silently listening breathlessly with wonder...."

This interruption in travel had become a gift from eternity's treasure house, unforgettably significant."

Remote tribes were not, however, the sole benefactors of Joy's tenacious passion to go where the Gospel had not yet gone; mission leaders, as well, were often spurred on by her enthusiasm.

Dr. George Cowan of Wycliffe said, "It was Joy, specifically Joy who coming back from her trip to the Philippines, challenged us--the Wycliffe Bible Translators--to go to the Pacific part of the world.. ..She was a very true instrument of God to pass the vision on.

When Joy died in 1984, Gospel Recordings had already captured the Good News in over 4,000 languages. They expect to top 5,000 languages this year. And their influence is spread out well across the globe. They have been able to record some of the languages in every political country.

Particularly notable is their "Tailenders" project, named for its focus on groups of less than 10,000 which are overlooked by many lists

of unreached peoples. Since many of these smaller peoples are preliterate, recording is an appropriate strategy.

They currently have sixty recordists. Thirty distribution centers are scattered across the globe in places such as Mexico, India, and Nigeria. Finally, if you include the 20 more serving in their Los Angeles home office, you've got about 100-150 people on task. They appear to be a Gideon-sized army up against 3,000 languages they hope to record.

"The need of those lost millions breaks my heart, but we don't have to stand and weep," Joy once said, "but believe that God has put in our hand that which when blessed and used by Him can 'thresh the mountains and beat them small...' For what period of history is God referring to when he speaks of the great things He will accomplish in the earth? If it is not for now, for when is it?"

With the legacy of faith that Joy has left ever-ringing in our ears, we can taste the victory...

And we are rejoicing!

--From *Mission Frontiers*, Aug. 1998

What the Bible Teaches about...

GOD'S Sovereignty. SATAN'S Power.

and HUMAN Freedom

Part III (Conclusion)

by Alex V. Wilson

In our first study we saw Satan's immense and fearful power and influence. We also saw man's freedom. God did not make us robots but bestowed on us the awesome gift of choice. Our second installment examined over 25 O-T passages about God's sovereignty. And we could have added more, for that is one of the Bible's main themes.

Now we pursue this latter topic in the New Covenant scriptures, and then seek to make peace among these three seeming enemies!

III. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Matt. 28:18, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Acts 2:23, **[Jesus] was handed over to you by God's set purpose and fore-knowledge;** and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 4:24, 27-28, **Sovereign Lord,.... Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles & the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.**

[Both the preceding passages stress human guilt (and thus freedom), as well as God's overruling.]

Acts 17:26, **He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.**

Rom.8:28, **We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.** For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Rom.9:15-16, God says to Moses, **"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."** It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

Eph.1:9-11, **[God] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment -- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will....**

1 Tim.6:14-15, **Keep this commandment until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time--God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords."**

Rev. 1:5, **Jesus Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth.** [Note verb tense.]

Rev.3:21. **To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.**

Rev.11:15-18, The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and loud voices in heaven said: **“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.”** And the 24 elders worshiped God, saying: **“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.** The time has come for judging the dead and for rewarding your servants.”

[Earlier we listed this passage under those that show *Satan's* present power, for it refers to a time yet future! It implies that at present God has power but has not yet taken it and begun to reign. **But it also shows that He shall!**]

Rev.17:12-14 & 16-17, **Ten kings...for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings....** The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. **They will bring her to ruin.... For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled.**

[In the *New Bible Commentary*, Geo. Beasley-Murray writes thus about those verses: *“The sovereignty of God is never more apparent [to us believing readers, that is] than during the rule of Antichrist”!* Yet God obviously will give His enemies freedom to rebel and make war against the Lamb. That is part of His sovereign plan. That's not what He wills for them to do, but His will makes it possible.]

IV. Concluding Remarks:

Without doubt other passages could be included under the 3 categories, but more than enough have been given to make each point.

The fact of God's sovereignty is clearly taught. But it presents great difficulties to our minds. For instance, if God controls humans and their choices, how can they be free? And how can He hold them responsible for their evil actions? How can He judge humans for their sins?

Yet we know that we *are* free and He *does* hold us accountable and will judge all humans! Those are facts clearly taught in God's word, as we have seen.

We also know Satan at present is allowed to exercise tremendous power to oppose God and His people. Often his attacks frustrate God's

desire for all people to be saved and for all Christians to lead holy lives.

Our minds cannot now fathom all the depths of these questions. But we can at least say this: All men do God's will -- His **permissive** will, that is. But some do it in true submission, love and cooperation, obeying Him gladly. Others, however, do His will -- that is, fulfill His plans -- unwillingly or perhaps unknowingly or perhaps even while resisting God and His commands. The latter are used by Him in spite of themselves. As C. S. Lewis remarks, "The first man serves God as a son, and the second man as a tool. For you will certainly carry out God's purpose, however you act, but it makes a difference to you whether you serve like Judas or like John."

Roger Olson explains, "We classical Arminians...believe that God *could* control everything and everyone but *chooses to be in charge rather than to control everything all of the time*. Divine self-limitation does not impugn [*that is, contradict or call in question*] God's majesty and sovereignty. We also believe...that prevenient grace [*that is, God's convicting and drawing us toward Him before we ever seek Him--avw*] is the only basis for free acceptance of God's saving grace. Without prior awakening, calling, and enabling, all humans are too sinful to choose freely to accept God's offer of saving grace. That salvation is accepted freely does not in our view impugn its nature as a sheer gift....

"We understand God as 'in charge' but not 'in control' (sovereign but not all determining).... We worship God as majestic, all-powerful, and mysterious in power.... And we affirm salvation as a sheer gift of grace unearned and unmerited, even though it must be freely accepted." [*Christianity Today*, 9-6-99.]

Consider also the views of H. C. Thiessen Vernon Doerksen, in *Lectures in Systematic Theology, 2nd edition*: "God is all-powerful and able to do whatever He wills....He can do everything that is in harmony with His perfections. Some things God *cannot* do because they are contrary to His nature: He cannot look with favor on iniquity, deny himself, lie, or tempt to sin (Hab.1:13, 2 Tim. 2:13, Tit.1:2, Jam.1:13)....

"His possession of omnipotence does not demand the *exercise* of His power, certainly not the exercise of *all* His power. God can do what he wills to do, but He does not *necessarily* will to do anything. That is, **God has power over his power**; otherwise, He would act of necessity and cease to be free. Omnipotence includes the power of self-limitation. **God has limited Himself to some extent by giving free will to His rational creatures.** That is why He does not keep sin

out of the universe by a display of His power and why He does not save anyone by force” (p. 82).

“How do the sinful acts of men fit into the program of a sovereign God?... This can be answered in four ways.

“(1)Often God restrains man from the sin which man intends to do. This is called *‘preventative providence.’* God said to Abimelech, ‘I also kept you from sinning against Me....’ (Gen.20:6).” David prayed, ‘Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not rule over me’ (Psa.19:13). God has promised not to allow the believer to be tempted above what he can bear (1 Cor.10:13).

“(2)God...will sometimes permit sin to take its course. This is called *‘permissive providence.’* In Hosea 4:17 God said, ‘Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.’ God ‘permitted all the nations to go their own ways’ (Acts 14:6; cf. 2 Chr.32:31; Psa.81:12; Rom.1:24,26, 28).

“(3)Further, God allows evil, but directs the ways it goes: ‘directive providence.’ Those involved in the crucifixion of Christ did what God predestined to occur (Acts 2:23; 4:27f.). Man’s intent was evil, but God used this evil intent to accomplish his will. God uses the wrath of man to praise him (Ps.76:10; cf. Isa. 10:5-15).

“(4)Finally, God determines the limits to which evil and its effects may go: ‘restrictive providence.’ He said to Satan, ‘Behold, all [Job] has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him’ (Job 1:12; cf. 2:6; 1 Cor.10:13; 2 Thes.2:7; Rev.20:2f.).

“From these considerations it is clear that all the evil acts of the creature...can occur only by His [God’s] permission, and only insofar as He permits them. Though they are evil in themselves, He overrules them for good. Thus the wicked conduct of Joseph’s brethren, the obstinacy of Pharaoh, the lust for conquest of the heathen nations that carried Israel & Judah into captivity, the rejection & crucifixion of Christ, the persecution of the church, and wars...among the nations have all been overruled for God’s purpose and glory. The fact that God has turned evil into good [*for better: God brought good out of evil --avw*] ought to induce his children to trust Him to do the same with the evil of the present generation.” (pp. 124f.)

“The Relation of Providence to Prayer: God does some things only in answer to prayer; He does some other things without anyone’s praying; and He does some things contrary to the prayers made” (p. 129).

Let's analyze that statement. There are many actions the Lord **does perform** even if **nobody** prays about them. For example, He makes the sun rise and set daily.

There are other prayers He **does not** see fit to answer (at present, anyway) even if **everybody** prays for them: "Make all sick people well and all bad people good."

But there are many blessings He grants **only if somebody** prays for them. They are conditional. We forfeit numerous good presents He yearns to give us because we never ask -- or we ask for them with wrong motives (Jam.4:2-3).

So, we conclude. We *know* that **Satan** is extremely crafty and powerful. Therefore we need to stay on guard, and resist him. We *know* that **we humans** are free, and liable to wander into error and evil, yet responsible for such sinful choices if we make them. Therefore we need to stay on guard, and look to our divine Savior and High Priest to protect, strengthen and restore us. We *know* that **our Lord God** is the Most High, Sovereign Ruler of all, acting in love, wisdom and power, and working out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will. Therefore let us humbly extol Him, and rely on Him with all our being, being confident that He who began a good work in us will carry it on to completion. We do *not know* how these three truths can all be true, but we need not worry about that. We may leave such puzzles with the All-Knowing One.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

By Dennis Kaufman

Question: I have become aware lately that I feel more anxious than I ever have in my life. The peace that I experience because of my trust in God is still there, but worry and fear are breaking through and taking control more than they ever have. Do you have any recommendations for me?

Answer: Anxiety is one of those emotional states that seem to be on the increase for numerous people, so don't feel alone in your struggle. The fact that the Bible so often encourages us not to fear or worry is a good indication of what a common struggle it is for us.

My study of the subject of anxiety indicates that we must enter into a 3-stage approach to really manage it effectively. A more tranquil life involves changes in the areas of body, mind and spirit.

Dr. Archibald Hart, in his excellent book, The Anxiety Cure, makes a strong case for a direct link between stress and anxiety. He pleads for us to remember some of the common sense aspects of stress management such as proper diet and exercise. Honoring the Biblical concept of rest is also crucial. Chronically overtaxing our bodies changes brain chemistry and makes it all but impossible to experience the kind of tranquility and joy which reduces anxiety.

The second aspect of our battle takes place in the mind. The Bible is clear about how our Christian faith is to "renew our minds". All of us, however, carry around faulty thinking patterns, which can significantly increase anxiety. Merle Jordan, in a book entitled Taking on the gods: The Test of the Pastoral Counselor, indicates we need to examine our "self-talk" to weed out what he calls "secular scriptures". We all have ongoing conversations in our mind where we are likely to be telling ourselves authoritative things, which are untrue such as

- 1) I am a failure if I don't meet my expectations every time.
- 2) If people really knew me, everyone would reject me.
- 3) God is powerful, but when it really comes down to it I am on my own.

Anxiety is also a primary battleground in the realm of spiritual warfare. Fear is the key weapon of Satan. If he can convince us that trusting God is shaky ground, then we lose our primary resource for peace. We are encouraged to "cast our anxiety upon the Lord, because He cares for us" (Peter 5:7), and to channel our worry into prayerfulness where the peace of Christ transcends all understanding (Phil. 4:6). In Revelation 21, a picture is painted of the New Jerusalem, which literally means the "City of Peace". Our ultimate security is found in knowing that every anxiety will someday be swallowed up in perfect peace. In the meantime we serve a God who promises sufficient grace for times of trouble.

I would encourage you to make this time in your life a point of examining the balance of your body, mind and spirit. Maintaining life balance in such chaotic times is difficult, but anxiety often serves as a symptom that something in our life needs to be adjusted back into a more therapeutic realm.

SEVENTH YEAR OF MARRIAGE CRITICAL

Joyce Broyles

Professionals have said that the seventh year of marriage is the critical one. If couples survive it, chances are good that they will stay together over the long haul.

What makes the seventh year so important is hard to tell. Perhaps by that time, couples are beginning to take each other for granted and are not as kind to each other as at first.

Douglas and I were not exempt from the stress of the seventh year. For many months we strained at understanding each other and at being civil to each other. We were not happy all of the time and I worried about it. As we worked and I continued with college classes, our interests seemed to go separate ways.

Looking back on that tense year, I realize that my husband and I were caught up in our selfish concerns. Having no children, we had followed the sports or clubs of our choice, without thinking about each other. Little by little, those kind and encouraging words were spoken less and less.

Having someone express faith in our ability or power to meet a challenge fortifies us. My dad told me to "Be kind. Everyone you meet is fighting a battle." Everyone needs a good uplifting word to fire their hopes again.

Because I was so busy with my career, schooling, and chores, I thought I needed to hear compliments more than give them. Not so. Mark Twain said that he could live for two months on one good compliment. I repeated admiring words said to me because they gave me such a boost. My working husband needed to hear them as much as I did.

Solomon of old said that a word spoken in the right circumstances was like "apples of gold in settings of silver." Instead of my sermons or special advice, what I should have given were words of encouragement.

That is not to say that I had to agree with everything Douglas said or did. We are two different people, so we do not always agree. What I have learned is that *I must never level him without also trying to launch him!* A word of encouragement can do that.

My parents never fought where I could see or hear them. Douglas' mother always seemed to know what to do or say. I admired them, and thought they had never made mistakes. I had to learn that chal-

lenges and failures haunt all of us. I told them that I could never live up to what they had accomplished. After hearing stories of their early life, I realized that they were made of clay, just like the rest of us.

By the end of that seventh year, I had to learn to ask for forgiveness, look for ways to encourage, and give genuine compliments. I could not just roll them off easily. It took time to compose them. By thinking of others, I was learning to work at not being so selfish. It helped change the attitude of the one I lived with.

After thirty or more years of marriage, many couples are comfortable with each other and may forget the difficulties that got them there. I recall that seventh year occasionally so that I will not make those selfish mistakes again. I try to refresh my memory so that I can give the best I have to those I meet each day. Those memories help me to let encouragement be a part of my personal expressions.

VOICES From The FIELDS

Robert & Joy Garrett

Zimbabwe, Africa

July, 2000

We are back in Zimbabwe and extremely busy.

The Lord blessed with 150 women at the Ladies camp meeting. This despite the fact that some from outlying farms and towns did not make it. We also had a one day for ages 5-8 on June 17. It was attended by 67 very excited children. There is a shortage of diesel here, but God enabled Bro Hunda to transport the children, cooks and teachers.

When we arrived the big trucks were all broken down. Now two are back on the road. The brand new truck has been ordered and a canopy is being built to accommodate members. We are grateful to God and His servants for providing this much needed vehicle.

One Sunday we visited the newly completed Garomonzi church building. There was much rejoicing in the Lord. The local churches have raised the funds for this building.

Now the brethren have decided to begin building a church at Mhondoro. The congregation there have been meeting in the shed built by Bro Simon and Robert about 25 years ago. Harare brethren visited Mhondoro to see the site on top of the hill there and to commence the building. We do pray that after all these years we will be able to succeed.

Robert and helpers have managed to get the trusses up on the men's dormitory here at Rockwood. The perlines have been painted and are ready to put up. We hope to have finished the roof by the men's meeting August 11&12.

Paul & Virginia Kitzmiller
June 17, 2000

St. Petersburg, Russia

We have been enjoying living in our new apartment for a couple of months now. It is not without problems, but it has a number of benefits over our old place. For one thing, we have our own water heating system here. It can be tempermental at times, but those who depend on the city to supply hot water are often taking cold showers in the summer. Our new interpreter, Anya, continues to do an outstanding job. She is hardworking and dependable. Actually, she is not only an interpreter, but she also doubles as a guide, a secretary and a "gofer"--not to mention the impossible task she faces in trying to be our Russian language teacher. We're very thankful that God sent her to help us.

Lord willing, we will leave here on June 26 and return to the States for a stay of about ten weeks. While we are home we plan to make reports to churches about our work here and, of course, spend time with our family and friends. As you might expect, we are very much looking forward to being in the U.S., but, at the same time, we will miss our friends and ministry here. Please pray for us, but don't forget to pray for the work here while we are away.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

"Atheists Need Fellowship too, and get it in their own church." (article appeared in the Dallas Morning Star) It is estimated that over 200 "hits" per day have been made on their homepage. This church offers atheists, humanists and other **freethinkers** many of the same things that theistic places of worship provide, in-

cluding a disbelief in false gods. "The God Christians, Jews and Muslims worship is unreasonable." (Mike Sullivan, co-founder and executive director of North Texas Church of Freethought.)

Isn't it interesting how even the Atheists pick up on a good thing? (concept of the church).

School of Biblical Studies... Booster Supper is scheduled for Tuesday August 8th during the Ky/Ind. Fellowship. Hear an exciting update on SBS expanding to Africa, receive the fall semester schedule for classes, enjoy a delicious meal (**free to any person considering taking a class for credit for the first time**), and a great time of fellowship! If you can't wait for a schedule - please contact Portland Christian School at (502) 778-6114 and ask for your schedule NOW!

Music Camp Success...The camp was very good again this year. We had 45 singers including cabin leaders. They came from Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Kansas, and Florida. The camp is dedicated to the encouraging and developing unaccompanied singing. One highlight was an original work composed by Jonathan Garrett. A special thanks to our camp director, Debbie Gordon for coordinating the week. Also, thanks to Parkville, Ralph Ave., Antioch and Mackville for their

support. I regarded this as a pivotal year that would indicate the future of such a camp. I came away very excited about what we do there and see a great future. We are already making plans for next year. (John Fulda)

Thot: "Going to church does not make you a Christian any more than going to McDonald's makes you a hamburger." (Jennings Bulletin)

You Are Invited...to participate in a celebration of love. Glenn and Opal Baber will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary on August 6, 2000. Please join them by sending a card to:

Mr/Mrs. Glenn Baber
108 Bayne Rd.
West Monroe, LA 71291

Mackville Revival... with evangelist Orell Overman is scheduled for July 28th - July 30th Services nightly at 7:00 p.m.