

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

MARCH, 2001

Vision, Valleys, Victories

Insights into Pioneer Missionary Life

WORSHIP:

**"I see the throne of God, surrounded by angels
singing 'Holy, Holy, Holy.'"**

**Various current ideas about worship to arouse
our minds and stir our hearts.**

God Most high, Most Nigh

Are "Weaknesses" sins?

Who is this "Everybody" who "is doing it"?

Our Favorite Subscriber?...

It just might be Gary Pearson, evangelist of the Westminster Church of Christ in Maryland. Do you ask, "How come this favoritism?" Well, it's just that he keeps giving *W&W* subscriptions to more and more people! In a recent letter he says,

"I'm expanding my subscription list from present and former members of our Tuesday evening Mens' Ministry Team [*a keen idea --avw*] to include some additional members here [*yes! --avw*] who I think would enjoy Word and Work. Also included is the renewal for Magnolia Bible College's library. [*Wow, another really sharp idea! --avw*] Your low subscription price makes it possible to do this. With the good content and the low price, Word and Work is the best bargain I know of among religious periodicals. Keep up the good work!"

Gary's statement above takes on more significance when you realize that he subscribes to literally dozens of Christian magazines! I won't tell how many subs Gary pays for, except to say it's over twelve. A Bible verse says, "Go thou and do likewise." (*Excuse my taking that out of context.*)

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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By What Route is God Taking You?

Alex V. Wilson

For this month's editorial I'd like to share a condensed version of a message I presented to the students and staff at Central Bible College in Manila, during our visit in January.

It is important to grasp the 3 V's -- God's usual ways of working in and through His servants. (Notice the word "usual"; we can't put God in a box and say He *must* work this way or *always* works in the same pattern. But Scripture shows many instances of the 3 V's. And in this connection read James Ashley's report that follows.)

1st the Lord imparts Vision -- a burden or call to be and do something for His glory. 3rd He gives us Victory -- the fulfillment of that vision, the completion of His will, the glorifying of His name. But in between, He leads us through the Valleys -- the times when He molds, prepares and uses us. It is only as we are faithful in the valleys that we gain the victories.

Here are some of the many examples of this: 1st, the Vision: At the age of 12, Jesus knew He was the unique Son of God and that His Father had special work for Him to do. Also Moses while still young realized his strategic position as both a believer in the one true God and a prince at Egypt's court. David was only a teenager when he was anointed as king of Israel. And Paul at his conversion was told that he would be a special witness for Christ to the Gentiles and even kings. How exciting God's vision for us can be. But He doesn't stop there....

2nd, the Valleys. There are valleys of *the routine*, the ordinary, the unexciting daily duties. Jesus worked in the carpenter shop for 18 more years before His public ministry began. Both Moses and David herded sheep after their call-- Moses for 40 years! After Paul was converted he spent 3 years in Arabia and Damascus. There may also be deep valleys of *suffering*. Consider David's years as an outlaw running from Saul's army, and Paul's numerous persecutions, and our Lord's intense sufferings both before and at Calvary.

There may also be valleys of *waiting for fruit*, as church history shows. In India, pioneer missionary William Carey labored and suffered for six "barren" years without winning anyone to Christ. Only in his seventh year did he baptize his first convert. And Adoniram Judson also waited seven years for his first convert in Burma. What if either missionary had gone home after six years?

May all of us in our time receive from the Lord His call, His vision. Then may we be obedient to that heavenly vision (Acts 26:19), no matter what valleys He leads us through. If we are faithful, He shall impart to us Victories which shall give pleasure to His heart and also ours, plus glory to His Name.

Insights into pioneer missionary life

Ashley Family Nov. 2000 Newsletter -

Sorry to be s-o-o-o-o late!

James Ashley, Jan.19, 2001

[Explanatory note by Alex Wilson: *James Ashley, Wycliffe Bible Translator in the Solomon Islands, had hoped to send this newsletter back in November. He finally got it off on Jan. 19. What explains such a long delay? Well, read and see for yourself.*

This news, or rather olds, gives many insights into contemporary pioneer missions. Of course work among semi-literate people is not the only one kind of missionary work that needs to be done today. (Swarming cities and highly-educated professionals are major mission fields too.) But there remain many such primitive peoples and places needing to hear the Good News. Thank the Lord for those who answer that call.

Many mission fields, whether primitive or highly sophisticated, experience coups and counter-coups and chaos of other kinds. Our prayers for missionaries were never more needed. Now to James' letter.]

Dear Friends,

Our family is enjoying being here in Ukarumpa.

What, you may be asking, are we doing in Ukarumpa, and where is that anyway?! You probably thought we were in Sa'a village, steadily working away on the Sa'a translation.

Well, we were, and then on June 5 Actually, let me back up just a little bit more. After three years in the States, Karen and I were really glad to get back to the Solomons. In December '99 we zoomed through the Solomons' capital, Honiara, on our way to the village, staying there only long enough to buy supplies for a 5 month village stay. We got to Sa'a village just before Christmas last year, and we immediately put down roots again.

In addition to diving back into the Sa'a translation, we also completed a few other related projects. I'll name just a few – we cleaned out and spruced up our village home, kicked the kids' home school program into high gear, built a translation office, resumed publication of our weekly vernacular newspaper, and helped in the massive preparations for the wedding of our co-translator's son. I caught up on how far our co-translators had gotten in their work, assigned them more, checked the book of Acts for accuracy, and tried to teach two other lo-

cal men how to translate our Sa'a translation back into English so that a consultant could check the quality of our work.

At the end of May we were running very low on supplies and were figuring out how to make do without certain basics until we could get to the capital in mid June for our Wycliffe conference. Then on the morning of June 5, the Solomon's ethnic conflict which had been slowly escalating over the past two years made world headlines.

The Malaita Eagle Force seized control of all the weapons in the main police armory, placed the prime minister under house arrest, and demanded his resignation. The result was political confusion, pitched battles on the outskirts of the capital, and a growing lawlessness in Honiara itself as criminal elements took advantage of the possibilities opened to them when the police were disarmed.

As the situation rapidly deteriorated in that first week, it was decided that all our personnel in the capital would be evacuated. The Australian navy was supplying a ship and several aircraft for the evacuation of all expatriates, and by June 16 there were only four translation teams left in the country. Those four teams, including us, were all out in the villages where the situation was still stable and calm. We had hopes that Parliament would quickly elect a new Prime Minister, the guns would be turned back over to the police, and that the situation would be brought back under control. We all initially decided to stay in our villages and see if we couldn't last until law and order was restored.

Each team was able to get supplies to last them until Christmas, and we tried to go about our business as best we could while keeping an eye on developments in the capital. With our families safe away from the trouble in Honiara, we men of the remaining families took turns looking after the head office in two week shifts. As the weeks stretched out, however, it became increasingly clear that things were still in a downward spiral. We all realized that the situation was likely to get much worse before it got better and that, despite the difficulties of leaving our homes, we should probably all get out while we could. We feared that the transportation, communication, and banking services could break down completely, leaving us totally isolated and unproductive.

Some of the families returned to the U.S.A., but we felt that staying in this region of the Pacific would allow us more contact with our Solomons co-workers. We decided to wait out the conflict at the translation center our colleagues have established at Ukarumpa in nearby Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Its advantages include an excellent school for Philip and Susan, as well as a good translation library, many experienced Scripture consultants, and numerous other support services. We closed up our village house and with great regret said goodbye again to all our friends in Sa'a village. We left the Solomon Islands on the only remaining regular flight out of the country -- to Brisbane, Australia.

After [a short time] we came on to PNG and started putting our lives back together. Though we have had some moments of panic in applying for our PNG work permits and residence visas, these have all now been sorted out. Philip and Susan have adjusted well to the school here, and Karen is pitching in by teaching math and Jr. High Choir. I am continuing in the translation work, currently preparing I Corinthians to be checked by a consultant.

What does the future look like for us? It is still uncertain and very dependent on what happens in the Solomons. One very positive development is the signing on October 15 of a peace agreement between the two major rival militias, the Malaita Eagle Force and the Isatabu Freedom Movement. On the other hand, there is still one renegade group that was not party to the agreement, and it has openly declared its opposition to the peace.

News from some sources is optimistic, but others have serious doubts about militias actually turning in all their arms by November 14 as stipulated by the peace agreement. Also in doubt is the ability of the bankrupt Solomon Islands government to fund all the promises it made in the peace agreement. The economy is very close to total collapse with the closure of all major industries as well as many small businesses due to looting and "rascal" activity. It will take at least six months and half a million dollars just to restore water to the capital, as militants blew up the main reservoir and pumping station.

With the family now safely settled in Papua New Guinea, I am planning a three week trip back to Sa'a this month. I will make a first hand check on the general situation, and take care of numerous group related tasks at the office in the capital. I will also try to encourage our co-translators in the village, correlate the work we have each accomplished while separated, and plan work assignments for the coming months, as we expect to remain in PNG at least until the end of the school year in June.

Such a long separation from our Solomons co-workers will necessitate more trips back to the village next year -- or else bringing David and Jonathan here to work with us in PNG. Thank you very much for your faithful prayers and support that have kept us safe through these months of trouble.

Thank you, too, for praying for Kent. He is a Sophomore at Bryan College where he is majoring in music. We are generally pleased with how he is coping, though like any college student, he has his share of financial struggles and occasional difficulty in keeping his priorities in order. Please pray for him that he will continue to seek God's will and timing for the future.

Here at Ukarumpa we have been blessed with (nearly) full time e-mail and telephone service right in our own (rented) home. There is a market which, amazingly, has such unfamiliar things as strawberries, broccoli, potatoes, and cauliflower in addition to the more normal yams, taro, and bananas. The weather here at 5,200 feet above sea level is usually pleasantly cool (and sometimes as cold as 38°F!), and the local store even has delicacies like Dr. Pepper, Ranch Dressing and Kool-aid! God has surprised us again by using the bad to bless us in unexpected ways, and we trust that He will continue enabling us to translate His Word for the Sa'a people. In His joy,

--James Ashley (for Karen, Kent, Philip, and Susan)

[*avw*: On Feb. 2 came an email update, with depressing news of continuing fighting and chaos. Seemingly there were no prospects for peace any time soon. But then, only 5 days later, came this good news from James:

I just received this email and wanted to share the good news with you:

Solomons Peace Deal Signed

The long-delayed Marau peace agreement in the Solomon Islands has finally been signed. The Solomons Government has brought together the two warring factions, the Marau Eagle Force and Isatabu Freedom Movement, aboard the Australian naval ship, HMAS Tobruk....A considerable number of weapons held by various militia groups will now be surrendered.

I can't believe that the Marau peace negotiations have turned so quickly from deadlock to an agreement – but it has! Thank you for praying!!

And this seems to be a day for good news, for this afternoon I received word that Jonathan [one of their co-translators] did arrive safely in Port Moresby and that he was met by our colleagues down there. This is Jonathan's first time out of the Solomons, and I really rather wish I could be there in Moresby to see his reactions and hear his impressions! On Friday morning he will catch a flight to come up here to the Highlands, and both Karen and I very much look forward to being able to work with him here.

The Ashleys' snailmail address: SIL Box 496, Ukarumpa E.H.P. 444, Papua New Guinea. email:j-k.ashley@sil.org.pg

Our W-O-R-S-H-I-P Means Much to the LORD!!

David Grothe

In my first year as a minister...I began searching for something more than ritual in worship -- something that would mean the difference between people just attending church on one hand and really having an experience with God on the other. I began to see that when people opened up their heart to God they would experience His life. James 4:8 says, "Come near to God and he will come near to you." When we as a congregation draw close to God, then we can expect Him to draw close to us and we'll sense His presence.

A congregation can develop an awareness of the presence of God. I've been in services where nothing really seemed to be happening. I believe we need to train our congregations to become aware of the presence of the Lord. I really believe that when a congregation is in the presence of God, there is a fullness of the Spirit of God and the joy of the Lord is present. When we begin to praise Him, we begin to look for God to show up. He shows up in a service when people's hearts are toward Him and they're expecting Him to show up. If we'll move toward God we can count on Him moving toward us. Then something's going to change in the atmosphere of the service--there will be a new expectancy.

This article plus the letters following it are reprinted from *Christian Chronicle*, Oct. 2000.

Our Search for Wonder in a Broken World

[This was Part 3 of a 3-part Series on Worship.]

By Prentice Meador

"I saw the Lord...high and lifted up" (Isaiah 6:1-8).

In 1968, Robert Day perfectly described the problem in one of his cartoons. Two tired tourists—husband and wife—have finally arrived at those mysterious and mammoth stones at Stonehenge, England. Weary and worn out, the wife drops to the only bench in sight anywhere close to the stones and sighs to her husband, "I am bushed. You go and wander among them in awe." So the harried, hurried pace that most of us travel is simply not conducive to awe.

A typical Sunday morning in an average Christian home thrives on an over-stimulated pace. A quick breakfast. Hurrying to dress. A

fast drive. Arriving a minute before worship begins. Almost exhausted and without any real mental preparation we wander into a worship service without any real sense of "awe."

But there is another problem. It is tough to describe it! I'm talking about our culture or rather what it seems to be doing to us. More brutality. More violence. More obscenities. More pornography. It leaves us jaded, bored, insensitive.

We tend to shudder more than wonder. Indeed, the weird is all turned up side down. The monstrous is the mysterious turned inside out. But wondering is more than shuddering: awe includes more than the weird, and mystery encompasses the marvelous as well as the monstrous. In the words of Shakespeare, "The world is too much with us."

But God will not leave us alone. For two reasons: He is "The Hound of Heaven" and "He is not far from each one of us." He arouses our sense of awe and wonder by the mysteries of the familiar which is the beginning of worship. I don't fully grasp it, but I have observed it many times. Unable to account for and fully understand the deep dimensions of life, a worshipper finds himself slowly but surely moving in the direction of a conviction that there is Something or Someone who can account for these deeper dimensions of meaning. So Moses looks down on a common shrub which burns and ends up with his sandals off on Holy Ground. Isaiah enters the temple to see a throne left empty by the death of a king only to leave the temple with the view of a King who never dies. Paul travels down a Damascus road to persecute Christians only to have the blinding experience that opens his eyes.

So Batsell Barrett Baxter, in a January 28, 1962, sermon, says, "Worship is the most important and at the same time the most difficult thing that we can do."

It may be difficult, but everybody does it! Everybody! Everywhere! Worship is the fundamental instinct of life. Atheists worship. Infidels worship. Skeptics worship. Democrats and Republicans worship. Even Internal Revenue Service agents worship! Worship is the fundamental difference between humans and animals. They have no sense of "wonder and awe."

But God has "set eternity in the hearts of men" (Eccl. 3:11). "God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him" (Acts 17:27). This urge causes men everywhere to worship.

But what we worship depends on how we have organized our lives. William Blake, the famous English poet, stood on the seashore with a wealthy London merchant watching the sun set. Blake asked, "What do you see?" He said, "A large gold coin, the sun looks just like a gold piece."

Then the merchant turned to Blake, "What do you see?" Blake said, "I see the throne of God, surrounded by flames and the angels singing, Holy, Holy, Holy." So true worship is to ascribe worth to God, to reflect upon the value, beauty and character of God. False worship, on the other hand, is to attribute worth to an illusion which is not really there, or which is not worthy.

Many congregations currently face serious questions about worship: Should we make major changes in how we worship? Should we leave things just as they are? Should we begin a "seeker service" to relate to people in our community? Should we worship in order to have some special experience where both the heart and mind are touched?

From the point of view of the Bible, we should be concerned that every person in worship is encouraged, built up, loved, and touched in heart and soul. The Corinthian letters would have us be sensitive to outsiders in language, style, and presentation. Christian worship is not simply doing rituals out of a sense of duty with no thought of the worshiper.

But Biblical worship is not primarily focused on the worshiper. God is the audience in Christian worship, so Donald Miller in *The Nature and Mission of the Church* writes, "To evaluate worship by what happens in the experience of the worshiper is to make men, not God the center of worship."

True worship in both the Old and New Testaments is grounded in the character and nature of God. God is Holy, Love, Just, Forgiving, Righteous, and Pure. "He is the Holy One of Israel" (1 Sam. 2:2; Psalm 89:18).

The great story is the story of God who creates, delivers, becomes a man, brings hope and forgiveness to man, and rules for all eternity. In worship, we encounter God because He is the audience. We seek Him because He has sought us. We love Him because He has loved us.

So the Lord's Supper, singing, praying, fellowshiping, giving, teaching and preaching, serving, and ministering, are not ends in themselves. Rather they are means to an end. And what is the end of worship? That is a fair question.

WHY worship?

My answer begins this way. For a number of years, I taught antiquities at UCLA and at the University of Washington. I have listened to scholars express their amazement that the enlightened Greeks and Romans would lead such degenerate lives, but it really is not amazing. Look at the behavior of the Greek and Roman gods. They pillaged, raped and plundered. So did the Greeks and Romans. Here is the principle: We become like the objects of our worship.

So our many acts of worship will become rituals if they become the ends unto themselves. But God designed them not as ends, but as means. Through all of the experiences of worship, we are to become like God. So while worship focuses on the presence of God, it powerfully impacts my heart so that I begin to look beyond myself and become preoccupied with God. God is not looking for something brilliant, but something broken.

With a broken and contrite heart, we can begin to be shaped by God to be like Him. Our life begins to be filled with meaning -- that is, God.

So by the time Moses put his sandals back on, he had considerably more respect for the purpose of his own life and what he could become. By the time Isaiah felt the heat of the coals from off the altar on his lips, he discovered that he had something worthwhile to say with those lips. By the time Paul opened his eyes, he had discovered that he could begin to see the needs of mankind in a unique way.

So worship really connects my life to others. "Our fellowship is vertical," writes Bill Humble in *We Know the Joys of Fellowship*, "it reaches up to God. Our fellowship is horizontal because it reaches out to one another. We share with God and we share with Jesus and that is what supports our horizontal relationship with one another! Fellowship is what we share because we are in God's family."

A congregation could do worse than to spend the next year opening up itself to a study of worship and all that that means. Once William Temple suggested that the one and only thing that could save us is worship. He gave the most comprehensive definition that I have ever read: "To worship is to feed the mind by the truth of God, to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to purge the imagination with the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God."

[end of article]

[Prentice Meador is in his 13th year as pulpit minister of the Prestoncrest Church of Christ, Dallas.]

Enlarging the Dialogue: Some Reader Responses to the *Chronicle*

The *Christian Chronicle* began its journey to examine worship by requesting three essays by ministers Jack Reese, Dan Dozier and Prentice Meador. We planned to run the three in one issue. Soon it became obvious that the weight of what was said, the intensity with which the issue is regarded and the scope of what binds, as well as divides us, was immense. For those reasons we have extended our coverage to a three-part series and expanded our dialogue. From the beginning of the series we have asked for responses from our readers. We have been gratified by the scope and number we have received — from hand-written missives to e-mail messages. We have excerpted a few responses below....Happy reading!

The notion, so prevalent in our churches, that "every act of worship must be authorized to be acceptable" and that Christian worship must be performed according to "ordinances of divine service" is an import from the Old Testament temple service (See Heb. 9:1). ... But all that was done away at the cross. *Kurt Simmons, Lyons, Kan.*

When people use the words, "style," "personal preference," "tastes," "feelings," "excitement," "relevant," and "cutting-edge" the church is simply borrowing the . . . vocabulary of a consumer, therapeutic, entertainment culture. In other words, the terms of the discussion have already been framed and stacked against a thoroughly Christian reflection and resolution to this debate.

It is my prayer that any discussion or debate about worship be borrowed from scripture, the household of faith, and the consensus of the faithful through the ages as opposed to the passing winds of the moment.

Let us pray for wisdom, patience, humility and a spirit of love as we worship God in a worthy manner. *Robert M. Woods, Montgomery, Ala.*

The "worship wars" waged in the Church today seem clearly to be the result of members not "setting their minds on things above" (Col. 3:2) and refusing to allow their spirits to "be still and know that [He] is God" (Ps. 46:10). Sadly, far too many church members are far too busy setting their minds on their own desires and believing that they, rather than God and His purposes, should be satisfied by their worship. *K. David Kenser, Antioch, Calif.*

"Is not this the type of fast I have chosen: . . . Is it not to share your food with the hungry." ... (Isa. 58:6-7). Could it be that the Lord

would prefer that we bake cookies for persons with AIDS instead of squabbling over the selection of songs for our assemblies?

At a time when more and more people are searching for spiritual meaning in their lives, churches of Christ are declining in membership. I wonder why ... *Paul Ammons, Athens, Ga.*

Ours is not a war of "petty disagreements" with those who advocate departures from biblical teachings and examples, neither is the issue one of "worship styles" or "preferences." We are instead engaged in a battle for the very survival of non-denominational Christianity according to the pattern handed down by Jesus Christ through his apostles. "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13, NIV). *Hans Wasner, North Richland Hills, Texas*

As many of our congregations move away from our suburban "roots," and become more urban, diversified congregations, we sometimes find ourselves "killing the spirit" of our brothers and sisters of different cultural backgrounds, who express their joy at finding the freedom that Jesus Christ gives to us all.

Unfortunately we who are "established" members take away the very freedom that is the basis for their joy! We place restrictions on clapping; on standing up to express joy and enthusiasm for a worship team, or visiting group. Lord forgive us!

On the other hand, those of us who claim to be "progressive" (whatever that means) fall into a similar trap. At the same time that we lament the strident "traditionalists," we, too, create "laws where Christ has set not laws." We, too, want everyone to "follow our progressive way." Again, in our arrogance we fail to see that we miss the mark no less than the very ones we condemn. *Arthur and Carlotta Wint, Fresno, Calif.*

Jack Reese would agree with Bruce Leafblad in "Worship Leader," April-May 1992: "The crisis in worship today is not a crisis of form but of spirituality. ... It is possible to totally redo a congregation's worship service, replacing its basic format, forms and style with a totally new set and yet be entirely outside the renewing work of the Spirit. ... The great need of the church today is neither to cling to the old nor to create new formats and forms. Our greatest need today is to recover the priority of God in our worship and in the whole of life." *Ann Sewell, Searcy, Ark.*

If we are going to offer the worship in spirit and in truth which God desires, this will require us to have first surrendered our will to

His will. What God has prescribed will gladly be offered up. The fundamental war over worship is the battle which rages over who will be the love of our hearts.

We do not need a new message. Perhaps the old message with new metaphors can be helpful in reaching out to our society and even to the church, but we do not need a new message. *Lynn Newton, San Jose, Calif.*

If people attend services to have themselves fulfilled and entertained; if they go because they want to fulfill their sense of need for worship they go for the wrong reason.

We should be there for others and to fulfill their need to be built up, we should be there to see Jesus and Him crucified and to remember his love for us, and however that is accomplished, well let it be. *Dick James, Jr., South Williamsport, Penn.*

Clapping, choruses, praise teams etc. is adding to God's word. If the worship services are dull and embarrassing to some, may I suggest that this is a heart problem and in these cases there is a surrendering that does need to take place and a realization as to whom we belong (Rom.14:8). *Jodie Boren, Abilene, Texas*

I'm afraid if we don't make some changes in our worship, we will lose many of our younger generation. I think we've already lost the first round with the 20 to 30 year olds. They have a sincere desire to worship, but they are from a media world. They have a great desire to serve. If they can't find it in our traditional services, I'm afraid they'll form their own churches as some have been doing, or not go anywhere. *Girree Notter via e-mail*

I have read, with interest, the *Chronicle's* series "Worthy is our Worship?" It is a subject that, I believe, deserves the space and effort that the *Chronicle* has dedicated to the subject. ... It seems to me that worship in the New Testament is not confined to a building or temple edifice. Worship, praise and glorifying God seem to take place twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week in the "temple" of the disciples' life. I hope that our fellowship will continue to "search the Scriptures" and not lose the spirit of Restoration and kindness. *Randy Foshee, Canon City, Colo.*

A New Column in W&W

A.V.W.

We are glad to say that starting with this issue we hope to run another column, in addition to the ones by Joyce Broyles and Dennis Kaufman. Like theirs, the new one will run frequently, but not always. The author is Edward Fudge, a longtime Church of Christ teacher, magazine writer and author of several books. He was a preaching minister for many years, and now is an elder in Houston, Texas. He is also a lawyer (but not a legalist).

Several years ago he began writing a short "column" on email each Monday through Friday, though recently he reduced the number to three times a week. At present over 3,400 people across Christendom and around the world subscribe to this GracEmail, as he calls it.

Many of his GracEmails deal with Bible doctrines. Others address practical matters or current moral issues. Often he answers questions sent him by his "readers." You might not agree with *all* his opinions--I don't--so read with open Bible and active mind. Even when you disagree, you will find he is a conscientious follower of Christ who loves His word and seeks to apply and obey it.

Usually we will run one GracEmail per issue, but sometimes more. To introduce our brother and his column, this time we include two doctrinal-and-devotional samples, and two practical ones.

GOD MOST HIGH

Edward Fudge

In Isaiah 66:1-2, the prophet reveals two realities about God. Theologians speak of these truths as the divine "transcendence" and "imminence." God is so far away, in one sense, yet he is also so very near. He is simultaneously "God most high" and "God most nigh."

"Heaven is My throne, and the earth is my footstool," God says through the prophet. "My hand made all these things," the creator of the universe continues, almost matter-of-factly. How can our finite imagination grasp the notion of such an One -- who has no beginning or end, who neither sleeps nor tires, who called into being everything that exists anywhere? (A lively awareness of this vision ought to be the starting place for any worship "renewal.")

Surely we can only kneel or bow before this God, not daring to open our mouths. Perhaps we belong -- like reverent Muslims -- flat on our faces on the ground. Sometimes, in private, I pray that way,

spending time in silence, visualizing myself on the outside edge of multiplied millions who fill the Throne room of heaven praising God. Sometimes just "being there" is worship enough.

GOD MOST HIGH

Edward Fudge

"To this one I will look," God says through Isaiah, "to the one who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word" (Isa. 66:2). God most high is also God most high! In the flesh of Jesus of Nazareth he has joined our humanity. By the Spirit of the Risen Jesus Christ he has come to us again. God calls us to celebrate, to rejoice in his presence, to shout with thanksgiving and with delight!

Christian worship reflects the full spectrum of reverent reaction to the reality of God. Sometimes we bow or kneel in total silence, properly awed by God most high. At other times we make a loud noise to the Lord, celebrating and rejoicing in the mercies of God most high. Both expressions are appropriate at times but neither is exclusively so. People may "go through the motions" with either, copying others, conforming to what is expected, repeating rote words or actions. There is no inherent virtue in either set of externals.

Genuine worship always flows sincerely, from a humble and contrite heart -- no matter what the details in the program. Particular style and forms vary from culture and place and generation. But the acceptable heart everywhere remains the same. The God who is so far above us also resides deep within us. The God most high is also the God most high. The transcendent God is also imminent. In every place and in every way, let all that breathes praise his holy name!

NATURAL EVANGELISM

Edward Fudge

A sister in Houston expresses concern for the spiritual well-being of her friend. "I pray for her and her family," she writes, "but beyond taking the opportunity to share whenever she gives me an opening, I don't know what else to do. Any serious attempt to evangelize would be met with alarm and distaste. I am thinking this is a 'wait on God' situation. Or is that an avoidance of Christian responsibility?"

* * *

The fact that you ask these question tells me you are not trying to avoid responsibility. And my reading of Colossians 4:2-6 suggests that you could not be more serious in your attempt to evangelize. Unfortunately, the "E-word" has fallen into disrepute among many Christians. This demise of evangelism has resulted partly from fear and

cowardice, partly because of the church's infection by a popular culture which abhors religious conviction, and partly in reaction to the distasteful antics of some whose zeal exceeds their knowledge and good manners. In this text from Colossians, Paul offers a practical bouquet of factors which provide a natural context for evangelism and a becoming method for carrying it out.

"Devote yourselves to prayer," he says first, "keeping alert," always "praying that God will open a door for the word." God himself prepares lives to receive the gospel, opens hearts to hear it, and gives faith to receive it. We ask him to do all that, then we watch to see where he is working so we can join in what he is doing.

"Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders," the apostle continues. Our own daily lives usually provide the connection with others whom God will touch through our efforts. Our consistent, observable conduct also lends credibility to our conversation when the time comes to speak a gospel word about Jesus and God's love revealed in him.

"Making the most of the opportunity," Paul concludes. "Let your speech always be with grace." When God provides an open door and an open heart, we need to speak clearly and courageously, but also graciously and with sincere respect for each individual we address.

As you continue doing these things, dear sister, God will use you in his great saving purpose. Perhaps that will include your friend, but it will certainly be according to God's own divine sovereignty, with whomever that might involve. As one whom God has effectively called, your life is now part of his eternal plan, and Christ is being glorified through you.

WORKING FOR THE LORD

Edward Fudge

I pull into the urban strip center and enter the storefront with the sign "Anchor Box Co." I have run out of mailing bags and have come to buy a quantity supply at wholesale. This is a warehouse operation, not an air-conditioned store. Yet the young man who greets me seems genuinely happy. He even responds to grumblers with a smile. He never appears frustrated or angry, even when the line is long and patience is short. I have observed him now for more than a year.

"You have really made an impression on me," I say. "Yours is not a particularly pleasant job, yet you always seem polite. Your customers are sometimes rude to you, yet you remain calm and controlled." He seems genuinely taken aback. With a slight tinge of embarrassment

and a smile he says quietly, "Thank you. And all the glory goes to God." "I am not surprised to hear you say that," I tell him. "The Lord is truly good to us, isn't he?" "Yes," he says humbly. "I do not know how I could make it without the Lord."

My mind goes to Colossians 3:22-24. Work "with sincerity of heart," Paul admonishes, "fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for people, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance." What determines how you do your work? Job demands? Daily circumstances? Other people? My new friend at Anchor Box Company shows me a better, more consistent frame of reference. He works "as for the Lord." In doing so, he blesses everyone he encounters. And he brings honor to the Savior in an unlikely place and manner. May his uncommon attitude become common to us all.

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Sins, and INFIRMITIES

Alex V. Wilson

Some time ago in our congregation we studied three aspects of sin as brought out by O.T. passages like Exodus 34:6-7, and Psalms 32:1-5 and 51:1-6. Three terms keep recurring: "Sin" means failure, *not doing what you should do*. "Transgression" or "rebellion" mean *doing what you should not do*. "Iniquity" or "wickedness" mean *being what you should not be*.

Then we went on to see that the Christian can overcome all three varieties, "through Christ who strengthens me." That doesn't mean that iniquity (the moral twistedness of our heart) dies, nor quits fighting, nor goes away. Our "flesh" or "sinful nature" (another term for iniquity) keeps on warring against the Spirit. Gal. 5:17 makes that clear: "The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other...." But "by the Spirit" we can "put to death" the evils of our "earthly nature" (Col.3:5; Rom.8:13).

We need to be honest about this inner foe who attacks us in these three disguises. It's easy to just brush off our problems with excuses like "Oh, everybody does it" or "Lots of people are worse than I am." An unknown satirist wrote,

Take the term "sin." There's a word we could all live without. I mean, who wants to be told they're guilty of--sin? No one I know. Yet that kind of thing goes on in churches regularly.

So I think we should follow the lead of noted...personalities who, after having been involved in various questionable activities, replaced any references to sin with terms like "moral failure" and "momentary lapse."

Wouldn't our churches be more cheery places if we all did the same? Many already are...like the SMNAV (Shirley MacLaine New Age Version) of Rom.3:23 illustrates: "For all have experienced momentary lapses and have come up a tad shy of the Divine Entity's absolute ideal, but hey, nobody's perfect. So don't worry. Be happy!"

That was cleverly expressed, whoever said it. Someone else wrote, "God Calls Sin by its Right Name":

Man calls sin an ACCIDENT;
God calls it an ABOMINATION.
Man calls sin an ERROR;
God calls it ENMITY.
Man calls sin FASCINATION;
God calls it FATALITY.
Man calls sin INFIRMITY;
God calls it INIQUITY.
Man calls sin a LIBERTY;
God calls it LAWLESSNESS.
Man calls sin a TRIFLE;
God calls it a TRAGEDY.
Man calls sin a WEAKNESS;
God calls it WILLFULNESS.

Two Opposite Errors

We must not dilute what sin means, nor downplay how serious it is, nor how harmful is the devastation it causes.

Yet, at the same time we must not go overboard in the opposite direction. We ought not uphold higher standards than God does. You ask, Is that possible? Well, what I'm thinking of is the fact that some folks' consciences are too strict. They are hyper-moral. They consider things to be sins which are not. (See below for some Bible references.) The opposite error is just as dangerous, or more so, than this one; but both should be avoided.

So, let's return to the saying quoted just above. "Man calls sin an infirmity; God calls it an iniquity....Man calls sin a weakness; God calls it willfulness." Those statements are only partly true. Note some scriptures:

“I put this in human terms because you are *weak* in your natural selves” [or, “because of the *infirmities* of your flesh,” kjv; “because of your *natural limitations*,” rsv]. (Rom.8:26; 6:19a.) This is about our mental weakness, the limitations of our understanding.

Again: “Accept him *whose faith is weak*, without passing judgment on disputable matters” [such as dietary prohibitions] (Rom.14:1). This verse speaks of having under-developed knowledge, & therefore an overstrict conscience, due to scruples from their former religious ideas. See 1 Cor. 8 for even clearer teaching on this.

Again: “The Lord said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in *weakness*.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my *weaknesses*, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in *weaknesses*, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am *weak*, then I am strong” (2 Cor.12:9-10). This speaks of Paul’s toils, difficult situations, & persecutions—the pressures of circumstances too hard to bear by our own strength.

Once more: Heb.4:15-5:3 paraphrased: “We have a high priest who is able to *sympathize with our weaknesses*, since he has been *tempted* in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in *our time of need*. Every high priest... is able to deal gently with those who are *ignorant and are going astray*, since he himself is *subject to weakness*.”

Sicknesses, Infirmities, and Sins

David Seamonds is a Bible-believing pastor, counselor and author. His book, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, has many valuable insights. “Somewhere between our sins, on the one hand, and our sicknesses, on the other, lies an area the Scripture calls ‘*infirmities*.’” His point is, We are **not** responsible for our sicknesses, usually at least. We are responsible for our sins. For our infirmities and weaknesses, **sometimes** we are not and **sometimes** we are. It depends both on their causes and on how we react to them. Think about it as we continue.

The Greek word used in the N.T. is *a-sthenos*, meaning *without strength, a weakness, infirmity, crippling*. Sometimes it is used in a physical sense: an infirmity of the body when it is sick, feeble or worn out. But it is also used of the natural weakness and frailty of the body even when it is healthy. Other times it means infirmity of the soul: lack of strength required to understand a matter (because we are slow-minded), or lacking strength to restrain corrupt desires or inclinations to sin.

Thus, writes Seamonds, it often “refers to mental, moral and emotional weaknesses. Infirmities in themselves are not sins, but they do undermine our resistance to temptation. In the New Testament, infirmities are qualities in human nature which may predispose or incline us to sin, sometimes without any conscious choice on our part.”

They include the emotional wounds some people have experienced during childhood and adolescence. Perhaps the scars of long-ago painful hurts: brutal treatment by parents; violence between parents; rejection by family members or classmates; sordid, ugly sexual experiences; frequent teasing, humiliating nicknames and put-downs; a home where criticism is constant and praise is rare, if ever; etc. Such traumatic experiences scar us deeply.

The memories are recorded, and they directly affect our concepts, feelings and relationships. They affect the way we look at life and God, at others and ourselves.

We preachers often give people the mistaken idea that the new birth and being filled with the Holy Spirit are going to *automatically* take care of these emotional hang-ups. But this just isn't true. A great crisis experience of Jesus Christ, as important and eternally valuable as it is, is not a shortcut to emotional health. It is not a quickie cure for personality problems.

It is necessary that we understand this, first of all, so that we can compassionately live with ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit to work with special healing in our own hurts and confusions.

We also need to understand this in order to not judge other people too harshly but to have patience with their confusing and contradictory behavior. In so doing, we will be kept from unfairly criticizing and judging fellow Christians. They are people, like you and me, with hurts and scars and wrong programming that interfere with their behavior.

Jesus said in Matt.7:16 that by their fruits you shall know them. That is true, of course. If someone who calls himself a Christian displays constant hate or continual dishonesty, or gives way to furious outbursts of anger without repenting of them and seeking to make amends, or repeatedly commits sexual immorality, obviously he or she is a fake believer--not a real one. Paul, after listing such “works of the sinful nature” as impurity, debauchery, hatred, fits of rage, selfish ambition, envy and drunkenness, says, “I warn you, as I did before, that *those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God*” (Gal. 5:19-21). Yes, comments Seamonds,

“By their **FRUITS** you shall know them.” But it is also true that by their **ROOTS** you shall understand them and not judge them. Over here is John who may appear to be more spiritual and responsible as a Christian than Bill. But actually, considering John's

roots and the good kind of soil he had to grow in, Bill may be a saint by comparison. He may have made much more progress than John in really being conformed to the image of Christ.

Some may object: "What are you doing--lowering standards? Are you denying the power of the Holy Spirit to heal our hangups? Are you trying to give us a copout for responsibility so we can blame life, heredity, parents, teachers, and mates for our defeats and failures?"

I answer, God forbid! What I am saying is that certain areas of our lives **need special healing** by the Holy Spirit. Because they are not subject to ordinary prayer, discipline and willpower, **they need a special kind of understanding, an unlearning of past wrong programming, and a relearning and reprogramming transformation by the renewal of our minds. And this is not done overnight by a crisis experience"** (end of quotes).

Here is a specific example. Derek Prince was a quite well-known Bible teacher. He said, "For several years after I entered fulltime ministry, I was tormented by terrible bouts of depression. My main difficulties were in my thought life. I was habitually prone to negative, pessimistic thoughts. God showed me that this was really a denial of my faith in Christ (Rom.8:28).

"I deliberately set out to re-educate my mind, 'bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ' (2 Cor.10:5). I cultivated positive, optimistic reactions and thought-patterns, based directly on the promises of God's Word. This initiated a process of strict mental discipline which lasted several years. At the end, however, I was not just temporarily delivered, I was 'free indeed' (John 8:36)."

To conclude: We are dealing with the tricky boundary line between sin and mental/emotional sickness. Some people have *very deep inner wounds*--usually problems resulting from emotional trauma. These may cause ongoing major difficulties.

The CURE for such deepseated crises *begins, first of all and most of all*, in receiving Christ as lord and savior, thus finding peace with God and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit who comes to indwell and empower. Christ imparts new birth, new life, wonderful change. (In case you are wondering, David Seamands definitely agrees with that statement--so long as we don't stop there.)

B-U-T, we must not expect all problems to disappear and all hangups -- especially those resulting from *years* of sin and sadness, evil and error -- to evaporate overnight. (Did all *your* spiritual problems vanish when you were converted?) Our new birth introduces us to wonderful transformation of life, but it is just the beginning. Physical birth is followed by learning to walk, and talk, and be potty-trained,

and develop social skills, and developing mentally in school, and getting a job, etc. Spiritual birth is similar: there is still much growing to do. And in both cases, sometimes special doctoring or counseling is needed.

Some people, due to deep wounds, need extra care and healing. But all of us need to keep growing into greater maturity. We all need increasing strength from above to overcome our weaknesses. To do so, scripture gives the following prescriptions which we neglect to our detriment: 1) We need to soak our hearts in God's Word, getting to know Him better. 2) Worship Him, delight in Him, magnify and praise Him. 3) Meet in fellowship (classes and other small groups) with other believers who can love and advise you, and also comfort you with patience (but not too much; we need to be held accountable). 4) Pray--privately, and in small groups, and with the whole congregation. 5) If needed, seek counsel one-to-one with some mature Christian, perhaps a trained counselor. 6) Keep focused on Christ Himself, moment by moment.

"Finally, brethren"-- 1) Don't excuse sins: repent of them! 2) Realize weaknesses are not sins--yet they too need working on. 3) Trust our loving Lord: growth through grace is possible, through Christ who strengthens us.

Bring Christ your Broken Life

Bring Christ your broken life, so marred by sin,
He will create anew, make whole again;
Your empty, wasted years He will restore,
And your iniquities remember no more.

Bring Him your every care, if great or small--
Whatever troubles you--O bring it all!
Bring Him your haunting fears, the nameless dread,
Thy heart He will relieve, and lift up thy head.

Bring Him your weariness, receive His rest;
Weep out your blinding tears upon His breast;
His love is wonderful, His pow'r is great,
"And none that trust in Him shall be desolate."

Blest Savior of us all! Almighty Friend!
His presence shall be ours unto the end.
Without Him life would be how dark, how drear!
But with Him morning breaks and heaven is near!

--T. O. Chisholm

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Dennis Kaufman

Question: I have a friend (I really do, It's not just me trying to disguise myself) who is like a Jekyll and Hyde. She is fun to be around most of the time, but several times I have observed this change, and it is not a pretty sight. My friend becomes rageful for no apparent reason, and then the next day downplays the whole deal like nothing ever happened. Any ideas about what may be going on here?

Answer: I can sure understand your concern about this friendship. Most of us like some degree of predictability in the people we hang out with, and it's frightening when someone appears to be two different people in one body. There is always the possibility in situations like this that there are some chemical influences. Things like drug use, medication reactions, or hormonal shifts can certainly impact our moods in drastic ways. But, more often what I see behind behavior like this is an unintegrated person. Let me see if I can explain this concept.

There are often parts of our personality or past experience that we do not feel good about. Rather than exposing these shameful aspects of ourselves to the grace of God and allowing them to heal from the inside out, we are tempted to hide our ugly side from ourselves and others. We want to deny or pretend that this shadowy side does not exist. Things such as hatred, jealousy, resentment, or lust may be too painful to face.

So, like the Pharisees in the Bible, we work harder to spruce up our exterior, while the corruption within infects our soul. Anytime we are hiding from the truth, and denying the existence of a part of ourselves, it is bound to manifest itself in some indirect way. Since the predominant emotion you are seeing in your friend is rage, it is likely that she is carrying around inside her a reservoir of anger. When this is the case, certain behaviors or feelings have the ability to "hook" that storehouse of bitterness and pull it to the surface.

These "hooks" can be something as obvious as someone criticizing her in a way that reminds her of a domineering parent. But, it could be as subtle as seeing in someone else a behavior that she herself is working so hard to keep suppressed. If I am diligently laboring to keep my arrogance under control and I see someone acting arrogantly, my anger at that person can be much more explosive because that behavior is so offensive to me. This is why Jesus warned us in our critical moments to "examine the log in our own eye" (Matt. 7:5).

The choice to try to hide our sin rather than striving to continually expose it to the grace of God (prayer, accountability, etc.) puts us in the place of continually using our internal energies to suppress the truth. A colleague recently mentioned to me that this is like trying to keep an inflated beach ball under water. You can do it, but sooner or later it will launch to the surface and be visible. I suspect this is what may be happening with your friend.

The goal for each of us is to learn to trust God and trustworthy people. This helps us become the same person through and through.

Don't Judge Without Facts

Joyce Broyles

Many years ago, I watched a television show called "Hee-Haw." Each week, Archie Campbell would tell his friend about something that happened, and his friend would say, "That's good!"

Archie would answer, "No, that's bad, because. ..." and then tell why. The friend would agree, "That's bad!" and Archie would say, "No, that's good, because. ..." and on and on it would go.

Last week, I read a story from one of my favorite authors that reminded me of those jokes. In his book, *In the Eye of the Storm*, Max Lucado tells the story of a poor old man who had a beautiful white horse. Though offered much for the horse, the old man would not sell.

One day, the horse was missing. The villagers told the old man he had been a fool for not selling it before it was stolen. He told them they had made a decision before knowing all the facts. All they knew was that the horse was missing, not that it had been stolen. After two weeks, the horse came back, followed by twelve wild horses. The people said it was a blessing, for now the old man had many horses. He said all he knew was that now he had a dozen horses.

The old man's son tried to break the wild horses. One day, he fell from one and broke both his legs. Now the people said the horses were a curse rather than a blessing. Poorer than ever, the old man told them they were obsessed with judging. Who knew how this would work out?

A few weeks later, the country engaged in war. All the young men were required to join the army. The old man's son was excluded, due

to his injury. People wept and now said the son's accident was a blessing. He could stay, while their sons were gone, probably forever.

The old man finally told the people, "You are impossible. You always draw conclusions. All you can see is a fragment. Unless you know the whole story, how can you judge? You don't know what will come next. No one is wise enough to know. Only God knows."

Like the villagers, too often in our everyday lives, we jump to conclusions when we do not know the whole story. We read a page of a book and decide whether we will like the book or not. We overhear a few words someone says and think we know what they are talking about. Someone does not come to a meeting and we conclude she is angry about something. Life is so vast, yet we judge all of it with just bits and pieces. Each day is only a segment, so we cannot know what else is coming or how it will work out. No one knows. Like the poor old man, we should be content with what we know and not perturbed by what we do not know.

When we suffer, we do not know why it came or how it will end. Like Job's, our friends may try to make conclusions. Although we cannot claim complete understanding of God's ways, whatever happens, we can know that God is always good. If we can remember the story of the "white horse" as we counter problems, we can keep from making unnecessary judgments. That should help us be more contented in our personal expressions.

"Generic Religionists"

"Americans...are really generic religionists at heart. Two of three U.S. adults say they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today, but only 41% of the same people say that they are absolutely committed. Only 1/3 of the adult public identify themselves as born-again Christian, and 2/3 of all Americans have no idea what the term *evangelical* means. [It means "gospel-believer," just as *evangelist* means "gospel-teller."--avw]

"80% of Americans believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, but 59% said they don't have the time to read it. 82% of Americans believe in the power of prayer, but 53% agree that all people pray to the same God or Spirit no matter what name they use for that spiritual being. Regarding the Great Commission, 84% could not even hazard a guess as to what that term means, and 63% had no clue what 'John 3:16' refers to."

--From *Christianity Today*, Feb. 5, 2001

VOICES from the FIELDS

Ruth Wilson: Excerpts from a letter reporting on her and Alex' trip to the Philippines:

It had been 15 years since we had been back to see our dear friends among whom we lived and worked from 1963-83. The Lord led us to take this recent trip, leaving Jan. 10 and returning Feb. 1. That proved to be awfully short, considering all the people and places we wanted to see. We met with some discouraging situations, but the overwhelming impression on us was of great encouragement, seeing spiritual growth in many people and getting to visit a number of churches that have sprouted since we were last there. Seeing the 4-story Central Bible College-& Central Gospel Chapel building in downtown Manila nearing completion was also a great joy. At present the college and church plus a thriving pre-school and primary-school meet in the section which used to be dormitory apartments behind the main building. That area has been creatively renovated to meet all those needs at present. When the church and college move into the almost-finished front part, the rear section will be renovated also -- Lord willing.

In our 19 days there, Alex spoke 16 times. I gave four lessons plus many greetings / updates to various assemblies of people. [And Ruth's knowledge of Tagalog came back to her wonderfully. --avw] We had many meals or meetings with various groups of people, enjoying fellowship and sharing. We flew to San Jose, Mindoro, one Fri.-through-Mon., where we held a training conference. We visited a church out in the country from San Jose, at a place called Central. The building was filled and overflowing though it was the middle of a weekday. They are putting up a much larger building for their services. In town (S.J.) the church is doing well; it also runs a fine elementary school, which will need a much larger building before long. Growing pains are the best kind!

David Moldez, president of C.B.C., and Oscar Abella, an elder in the Manila church, went with us on that trip. After we returned to Luzon, they also drove us through the province just south of Manila. We visited 2 churches and 3 other Christian ministries on the way. In one place, Virgilio Torrefiel has a growing congregation where we enjoyed worshipping with some of the members. They also are building but have just a shell until they can afford a roof. It is a densely populated area, and the new building will surely draw in many more people. At Nemesio and Myrna Auxtero's place near beautiful Taal, a volcano in a lake, still another Christian school has begun. The students put on a nice welcome program for us. (All the folks named above were our former students and also co-workers.)

We spent that night at the lovely vacation home of Frank and Polly Kwong in a refreshingly cool climate. They blessed us in many other ways too, especially as their daughter Melisa drove us all around Manila in its incredibly dense and scary traffic.

San Francisco del Monte is the suburb of greater Manila where a church meets in the house the Broadduses built and lived in. We too later lived there

for eight years. Our reunion with the Frisco folks was very joyous. A number of my former high school Bible-club students worship there, and also some dear older ladies who were charter members some 35 years ago. It is growing and active and also runs a preschool. They dream of building a bigger and better building in place of the old house. One day we visited one of the two public high schools in "Frisco" where I used to hold Bible-club. We were accompanied by a young lady who was converted there during that time, and now for years has been doing the same type of work.

Alex spoke several times at Central Bible College, which was begun by Victor Broadus and Dennis Allen in 1955 and where Alex taught for 17 years. What joy to see its alumni serving Christ in so many ways. Besides church planters and pastors, teachers and professors, one is national director of the Bible League, another is head of New Tribes Mission of the Phil., still another is national director of Child Evangelism Fellowship, and a fourth has for years led the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of the Phil. Several people reminded us of the verse, "Our labor is not in vain in the Lord." True!

And it was thrilling to see the Lord's present work at CBC too. We praise Him for continuing to provide it with faculty, staff and students. We were encouraged by their fervent worship, eagerness to learn and serve, and willingness to come long distances through creeping traffic to attend classes.

In our travels we several times encountered relationships between Christians which are not what they should be, and this is a cause for concerned prayer. But we can rejoice that God is active and working powerfully in the Philippines. Also that while we were there He overruled in the peaceful "people-power" protest against the exceedingly corrupt president -who stepped down! That paved the way for the V-P, Mrs. Gloria Arroyo, to become president. Pray for her and for righteousness to prevail. Pray also about the vast poverty that continues to plague many people

Tom & Sharon Schreiner, preparing to go to Kenya, Africa. March 2001

Since our last newsletter in December, we have been able to visit six additional churches. Currently we are at 39% of our needed monthly support of \$5480 and have about \$21,000 of the needed \$60,000 for outgoing expenses. We are expecting to hear back soon from several of the churches with which we met.

Support Questions

We have often been questioned about our level of support and how it is broken down, so in this newsletter an attempt will be made to answer many of those questions.

Is your support level higher because you are a doctor and not used to living on lower amounts?

No, Africa Inland Mission sets the support level based on the cost of living and the number and ages of the children (remember, we have five). Doc-

tors have the same support level as church planters who have the same level as Team Leaders etc. I happened to speak a few weeks ago with a former missionary to Kenya with another mission agency whose support level for a family of four in 1997 was \$5550. It was reassuring to know that AIM's support levels are modest.

Is the money received by AIM pooled together with that for other missionaries?

Africa Inland Mission, unlike some other organizations, does not pool the support of missionaries into a general fund. Money designated for us will go into our account. If supporters fail to send in their pledges, then we will have that much less to live on and if the shortfall becomes too large it may force us to return to raise additional support. On the other hand if greater amounts than our support level are received, it will be kept in a work fund that can be used as needed for special projects, unforeseen needs or if there is a shortfall in our monthly support.

Items for Praise

Kenya has received rain (in what is usually the dry season).
Many opportunities to share in churches.
Increased support.

Items for Prayer

Continue to pray that the rains would come in proper season.
That our support would be fully raised in God's timing.
For a doctor to replace Tom in the medical practice here.
The sale of our house as God directs.
For Tom to be used of God as he speaks at various churches.

Proposed Itinerary

Late August, 2001 - leave for England
Sept.- Dec.: Tropical Medicine School
Late December: Zimbabwe to visit Sharon's parents
January: Begin 3 months orientation in Nairobi.
April 2002: Arrive Kapsowar

Our email address: tSchreiner@bigfoot.com

Our Phone: (502) 933-4674

[Since writing the above, the Schreiners' support has increased to about 50%. But let's keep praying that 100% will be met soon. If you wish to get their complete newsletter, contact them at the address or phone number above. -avw]

The Adolescent Language

Cliff Schimmels

“But, Mom, Everybody will be there. Just Everybody!”

Isn't that sad? When they mix a few tears and sobs, they can break your heart with this kind of talk, and you go to bed and have nightmares of all those innocent adolescents having fun at this party and your child is the only one in school not there. How can you be so cruel?

But don't despair. Everybody is a proper noun here. In other words, Everybody is only one person. Listen for a moment because this may be the best news you have heard for a while. Ever since it first dawned on you that this child was going to be leaving the neighborhood climate of elementary school and moving to that fearful place called middle school, you have been worried sick that that nebulous monster called “Peer Pressure” was lurking in the halls ready to gobble up your innocent offspring.

You have every right to worry, but let me offer a bit of counsel. Peer pressure is not an amorphous horde of teenagers plotting against mankind. Peer pressure is one person--the person your child looks up to. And that person's name is Everybody.

Isn't this good news? You don't have to worry about something you can't identify or even influence. Sure, peer pressure exists; and, of course, it has power and influence over your child--what he does, what he thinks, and even what he feels. But peer pressure is within your realm of understanding, if not controlling.

Of course, there may be and probably is a group to which your child belongs so you get the idea that it is bigger than one individual; but if you study the situation closely, you will probably find one person who is the central leader and the spokesman for the whole group. So it isn't the group that's peer pressure, but it's that one person--that one person we call Everybody.

My advice is obvious. Find out who Everybody is. Get acquainted with Everybody. Invite him over to the house. Take him on family outings. Make sure Everybody knows your family values and your expectations. If at all possible, get Everybody on your side. As I said before, Everybody has a great deal of influence on your child just now. Take this person seriously, but make the effort to get to know him.

Now let's go further. Make the effort to get to know Everybody's parents. Call them on the phone and ask them if it is true that Everybody is going to the party. It could well be that Everybody is at home even now pleading with his parents by telling them that your child is going and all the while referring to your child as Everybody. Invite Everybody's parents over and cultivate a close friendship with them. This in itself may well be the best time you can spend during this stage of your child's development. Your children will probably accuse you of forming a conspiracy, but a conspiracy is not all bad for parents of middle school children.

A few years ago, a group of parents of seventh grade girls took this suggestion even one step further and started meeting informally about once a month on Sunday evenings. At first they didn't know each other but came together with one common interest. They had daughters in the same class. Not only did they all grow into good friends, but these meetings went a long way to ease the anxiety of being the parent of an adolescent girl. In other words, they took an active instead of a reactive role to the threat of peer pressure.

Excerpt from The Middle School Maze, by Cliff Schimmels, Cook Communications Ministries. A prolific author and speaker, Cliff Schimmels also teaches in the education department at Lee University in Tennessee. For over thirty-five years he has either taught adolescents or taught those who will teach them. He and his wife Mary survived the middle school years with their own three children and now sit back and grin as their grandchildren reenact many scenes from those years. Used by permission. This article provided for use in magazines by David C. Cook Publishers.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

Men's Leadership Training classes are tentatively being planned for the Lilly Dale/Tell City area beginning the first of April. Men interested in taking this "Adventure in Christian Living" series can contact David Tapp at 912 Pounds Lane, Simpsonville, Ky. 40067 or Elmer Pacheco at Rt. 1 Box 452, Tell

City, IN 47586. There needs to be a minimum of 25 men before the classes can be offered. Contact these men today.

LaGrange Revival...is being planned for the week of April 2-6 with different speakers nightly at 7:30 p.m. **Elijah is coming SOON! Sing about it: Dale**

Jorgenson sent information about an event that has become memorable to many folks during the past 7 years:

The 8th annual (and final) oratorio weekend will be held on Palm Sun., **April 8** at the Perry Christian Church in Perry, Missouri. Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah* will be presented by singers and chamber orchestra that evening.

There will be participants from 10 states and all 3 branches of the Stone-Campbell movement.

In the morning service Leroy Garrett will preach; others from Churches of Christ, Independent Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ will read Scripture & lead in prayer.

Dale Jorgenson, minister of the Perry Christian Church, will conduct the oratorio. For more information, you may call him at 660-665-8575 from Tues. evenings thru Friday.

The Ladies Inspiration Day will be held on Sat., **April 28** from 8:30-2:00 p.m. at the Cherry St. Church, 302 Cherry St., New Albany, Ind. Its theme will be "**One Anothering.**" It will include a special workshop for teens, 6th grade & up. More information will be given later.

Sellersburg: Jesus loves the little children and so does the church family at Sellersburg. Wednesday nights in the Chris-

tian Center they provide Bible teaching, Prayer, & Fellowship. We have been blessed to have dedicated teachers, helpers, bus & van transportation, and facilities that make this effort possible. If you need information or transportation, call the church at (812) 246-2524. **Reminder:** Adult Bible Study meets in the church building auditorium every Wednesday night at 7:30 p.m. (Libbie McMahan)

A Bit of HISTORY: "The formal opening of the new Kentucky Bible College was held in the Portland church auditorium on Monday, September 26, 1949. The principal speakers were R. H. Boll, J. L. Addams, and Tona Covey. H. L. Olmstead gave a short message. Winston Allen was in charge of the opening exercise. 10 students enrolled: Eugene Mullins, Robert & Frank Gill, Esther Corbridge, Jimmy Cook, Leonora Howard, Betty Knecht, Stanford Broussard, Eugene McGhee, and Harold Preston. The persevering prayers of Christians are of vital importance for the success of this work." (Submitted by Rita Smallwood.)

In 1954 KBC moved to Winchester, Ky. & changed its name to Southeastern Christian College. It had a valuable ministry for 25 years, closing in 1979.

Reunion Planned: Some Southeastern Christian College alumni have engaged the old Library Building on the old campus of SCC, which is now

Winchester's "College Park" and also the Picnic Pavilion which is nearby, for **May 28, 2001** for a reunion party for **Ky Bible College, SCC, Bible Institute alumni and former teachers.** SCEC will provide meat and drink for those who tell us they are coming, and participants are expected to bring potluck dishes of potato salad, vegetables and/or dessert. Contact Cecil Garret at 399 College St., Winchester, KY 40391 or e-mail at rgarrett@mis.net

Cramer & Hanover...in Lexington, Ky celebrated her 86th birthday on Sunday, March 4th. A crowd of about 135 came together to "Praise the Lord" for His goodness and grace. The service was marked with special recognition of former bus riders and their families. Several former song leaders were present and participated in the service. A fellowship dinner was enjoyed by all and several of our bus boys & girls (now married with families) were looking forward to coming back and getting involved in the Lord's work here. The prayer of "seed sown would some day bear fruit" has become a living reality. **Praise the Lord!**

Cane Ridge Revival: The 200th anniversary of this mighty work of God will be celebrated the week of **August 6 - 12, 2001.** Everyone is invited to be among people of prayer, intercessors, and prayer warriors for this great celebration. The week will feature worship & praise, testimo-

nies, times of confession & repentance, ministry, fellowship, communion festival, and an all-night prayer meeting. For additional information and registration form contact Jim Bevis at (256) 381-9034.

Lilly Dale, Ind. Elmer Pacheco, minister at Lilly Dale Church in Gatchel, Ind., has started holding worship services there in Spanish. They are held every Sunday at 4:00 pm. Bro. Elmer, who came from Mexico, writes, "Today we were 6 (total). We had a good time in a fully Spanish speaking service. It felt kind of weird to sing and preach in Spanish after not doing it for almost 3 years."

Also, prophecy classes were conducted there the end of February by Bob Morrow.

Kentucky Avenue, Louisville: Earl C. Mullins Jr. left for the Philippines March 8th. He will be traveling to Mindanao to be with the church leaders there and then back to the Manila area where he will be visiting with the brethren and participating in an international meeting of the Tent-makers on behalf of Christian Businessmen International. He plans to return by March 23rd.

Philippine Mission Update (T.Y. Clark): A new congregation was to be established in Cebu City in February with bro. Bavien Sausa preaching. He is a

seminary & college graduate & has helped start around 10 churches in the Plaridel area.

On Jan. 29 bro. Cyrus Gesulga of Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao, was to go to Manila to help begin a new congregation. He wrote, "Several of our preachers' sons are there, some with families, who will make up the new congregation."

Letters to the Editor: A dear friend and godly church leader says, "I especially enjoyed the article on depression. I agree with all you said, having suffered a year or so of the malady. It was awful, mostly because of the blacking out of all spiritual comfort and the ability to pray in any genuine sense.

"You didn't mention what doctors are attributing much depression to these days--chemical imbalance. I have concluded that they are right. I have been able to assure a number of folks that there is hope and a possibility of medication to remedy the situation. At least that was the answer for me."

avw: Yes, that is one common cause, though of course there are a number of others as well. In the WW in which we originally ran that article, 2 other articles mentioned & amplified that point.

Changing the subject: We were also glad to get other letters too, notably those sent by Lona &

Bill Spurlock, and John Oehlschlaeger. These included interesting enclosures. Many thanks. --avw

From Africa to Heaven We learned from Titus Awokuse, a Nigerian friend who lived and studied for several years in Ky, that his father passed away early this year. We don't know any other details. His father was a veteran preacher in Lagos. Pray for the family and the church.

Richard Wurmbbrand--Spokesman for the Persecuted-- is Now with Christ. He was 91 at his death. He was a Jew in Romania who was converted to Christ while young. He became a Lutheran minister and missionary to other Romanian Jews. When Communists seized power there after World War II, he continued his activities underground, but was arrested. They kept him in prison for 14 years, 3 of them in solitary confinement. In 1964 he was freed & with his family, allowed to come to the U.S. -- after Norwegian Christians paid a \$10,000 ransom!

"In 1966 he appeared before a Senate panel, where he stripped to the waist...and displayed 18 torture wounds suffered at the hands of Communists. The event marked the beginning of a long...career of publicizing religious persecution in communist lands and supporting victims of it" (*World magazine*). He wrote several stirring books; I especially recommend **Tortured for Christ**. He also established the

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organization & magazine called **Voice of the Martyrs**. Ask for a sample copy @ P.O. Box 443, Bartlesville, OK 74005, or 800: 747-0085. --avw

"I have Learned to be Content..." Here's a wonderful example of practicing Christian contentment: Matthew Henry was a renowned Bible commentator and a very Godly man. One day he was robbed, and that evening he made the following entry in his diary:

Let me be thankful----

first, because I was never robbed before;

second, because although they took my wallet they did not take my life;

third, because although they took my all, it was not much;

and, **fourth**, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.
--from *Portland Ave. Disciples' Bulletin*