

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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EDITORIAL:

THE GOSPEL THAT MEETS ALL NEEDS

Dennis L. Allen

One marvel of the Gospel is that it meets the needs of all mankind in every period of history, in every phase of each individual's life, in every culture, in every race. Sadly, the Gospel has not always been presented in that way. Too often, with the Gospel, we have brought along trappings of our own culture that have hindered the reception of the good news of salvation to the uttermost. People looking at the externals have said, "This is the foreigner's religion." So it is essential that we remind ourselves that we are not called to go into all the world and change the culture of the people. Rather we are called to preach the uncluttered Gospel and change their hearts. It is not necessary to become like an American to become a Christian. Often you see pictures of church structures in Africa, China and India that look like architectural copies of American churches. You can be quite sure that they were built with American church funds and that the builders followed American building plans. It is so easy to feel that if the new believers have a substantial building and all the other trappings we are used to here, that the work will be much more firmly established. We attended a government approved church in China where the choir wore robes just like one would have seen in the States forty years ago. Before the communist takeover they had been taught that was the proper way to conduct a worship service. Even the hymns were the old familiar ones the Christians in America sang.

When we go back to the New Testament we find very few trappings were required. Most of the churches were apparently started in homes with extended family groups. The beginning of the church among the Gentiles was in the house of Cornelius. At Philippi there was the church in the house of Lydia (Acts 16:15,40). In Romans 16 Paul refers to several household groups--the first of whom was Priscilla and Aquila (Rom. 16:3-5). There was a church in the house of Philemon (Phlm 2). The church at Jerusalem was large. We don't know what meeting arrangements they had. Apparently large groups did manage to come together in one place sometimes, but it would seem that spiritual fellowship and worship took place often at the level of the extended family and close neighborhood relationship. Buildings are just not mentioned in the New Testament. Through the centuries since then in most of Christendom it has been taken for granted that a church must have a building.

However, it is thought-provoking to see at the present time in many places the emergence of the house church in connection with the rapid advance of the Gospel. The outstanding example is China. The communists thought they could stamp out the church by closing the church buildings, burning Bibles and hymn books and sending the preachers to labor camps. They made warehouses out of the church structures, but they didn't destroy the church. They succeeded only in scattering the fire. Where there were less than one million evangelical Christians when the communists came into power, today there are probably 60 to 80 million. Most of the believers are in house churches, subjected some times to persecution, even torture and death, but the church continues to grow. If the church were dependent on buildings and all the other externals, it could never have survived, much less grown as it has. They meet where they can, often changing the place and the time. In some cases the Scripture for teaching is copied out a few verses on paper by several different ones and brought instead of Bibles, so that if confiscated their Bibles will be safe. Just yesterday I received a letter from a friend quoting a co-worker in China which gives an insight into the conditions some Christians there work under. One Bible School was in caves 1500 feet up in the foothills of a mountain range. It was very primitive - no electricity, no gas, no running water, and very cold and difficult at night. But the thirty young people were so hungry for God, you forgot the hardships and gave them all you could."

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. The nomads with no settled dwelling place, the pigmies of the African jungle, as well as the affluent, sophisticated people of North America all need the same Gospel. The former will probably be more at home culturally with the New Testament pattern than the latter. Every people group that hears the Gospel finds that Christ living in them means true fulfillment, true meaning and purpose in life. Christ is at home in their midst and belongs. The Jew who is converted to Christ is no less a Jew, nor the Chinese, the Japanese, the Ifugaos, or the Hottentots.

GRACE

In the movie *The Last Emperor*, the young child anointed as the last emperor of China lives a magical life of luxury with a thousand eunuch servants at his command. "What happens when you do wrong?" his brother asks. "When I do wrong, someone else is punished," the boy emperor replies. To demonstrate, he breaks a jar, and one of the servants is beaten. In Christian theology, Jesus reversed that ancient pattern. When the servants erred, the King was punished.

---Philip Yancey

CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS

David Garrison

The Ten Universal Elements

After surveying Church Planting Movements around the world, we found at least 10 elements present in every one of them. While it may be possible to have a Church Planting Movement without them, we have yet to see this occur. Any missionary intent on seeing a Church Planting Movement should consider these 10 elements.

1. Prayer

Prayer has been fundamental to every Church Planting Movement we have observed. Prayer typically provides the first pillar in a strategy coordinator's master plan for reaching his people group. However, it is the vitality of prayer in the missionary's personal life that leads to its imitation in the life of the new church and its leaders. By revealing from the beginning the source of his power in prayer, the missionary effectively gives away the greatest resource he brings to the assignment. This sharing of the power source is critical to the transfer of vision and momentum from the missionary to the new local Christian leadership.

2. Abundant Gospel Sowing

We have yet to see a Church Planting Movement emerge where evangelism is rare or absent. Every Church Planting Movement is accompanied by abundant sowing of the Gospel. The law of harvest applies well. If you sow abundantly you will also reap abundantly. In Church Planting Movements hundreds and even thousands of individuals are hearing the claims that Jesus Christ has on their lives. This sowing often relies heavily upon massmedia evangelism, but it always includes personal evangelism with vivid testimonies to the life-changing power of the Gospel.

The converse to the law of the harvest is also true. Wherever governments or societal forces have managed to intimidate and stifle Christian witness Church Planting Movements have been effectively eliminated.

3. Intentional Church Planting

In every Church Planting Movement someone implemented a strategy of deliberate church planting before the movement got under way. There are several instances in which all the contextual elements were in place, but the missionaries lacked either the skill or the vision to lead a Church Planting Movement. However, once this ingredient

was added to the mix, the results were remarkable. Churches don't just happen. There is evidence around the world of many thousands coming to Christ through a variety of means without the resulting development of multiple churches. In these situations, an intentional church-planting strategy might transform these evangelistic awakenings into full-blown Church Planting Movements.

4. Scriptural Authority

Even among nonliterate people groups, the Bible has been the guiding source for doctrines, church policy and life itself.

While Church Planting movements have occurred among peoples without the Bible translated into their own language, the majority had the Bible either orally or in written form in their heart language. In every instance, Scripture provided the rudder for the church's life, and its authority was unquestioned.

5. Local Leadership

Missionaries involved in Church Planting Movements often speak of the self-discipline required to mentor church planters rather than do the job of church planting themselves. Once a missionary has established his identity as the primary church planter or pastor, it is difficult for him ever to assume a back-seat profile again. This is not to say that missionaries have no role in church planting. On the contrary, local church planters receive their best training by watching how the missionary models participative Bible studies with non-Christian seekers. Walking alongside local church planters is the first step in cultivating and establishing local leadership.

6. Lay Leadership

Church Planting Movements are driven by lay leaders. These lay leaders are typically bivocational and come from the general profile of the people group being reached. In other words, if the people group is primarily nonliterate, then the leadership shares this characteristic. If the people are primarily fishermen, so too are their lay leaders. As the movement unfolds, paid clergy often emerge. However, the majority--and growth edge of the movement--continue to be led by lay or bivocational leaders.

This reliance upon lay leadership ensures the largest possible pool of potential church planters and cell church leaders. Dependence upon seminary-trained or in nonliterate societies, even educated pastoral leaders means that the work will always face a leadership deficit.

7. Cell or House Churches

Church buildings do appear in Church Planting Movements. However, the vast majority of the churches continue to be small, reproducible cell churches of 10-30 members meeting in homes or storefronts.

There is a distinction between cell churches and house churches. Cell churches are linked to one another in some type of structured network. Often this network is linked to a larger, single church identity. The Full Gospel Central Church in Seoul, South Korea, is perhaps the most famous example of the cell-church model with more than 50,000 individual cells.

House churches may look the same as cell churches, but they generally are not organized under a single authority or hierarchy of authorities. As autonomous units, house churches may lack the unifying structure of cell churches, but they are typically more dynamic. Cell groups are easier to shape and guide toward doctrinal conformity, while house churches are less vulnerable to suppression by a hostile government. Both types of churches are common in Church Planting Movements, often appearing in the same movement.

8. Churches Planting Churches

In most Church Planting Movements, the first churches were planted by missionaries or by missionary-trained church planters. At some point, however, as the movements entered an exponential phase of reproduction, the churches themselves began planting new churches. In order for this to occur, church members have to believe that reproduction is natural and that no externals are needed to start a new church. In Church Planting Movements, nothing deters the local believers from winning the lost and planting new cell churches themselves.

9. Rapid Reproduction

Some have challenged the necessity of rapid reproduction for the life of the Church Planting Movement, but no one has questioned its evidence in every CPM. Most church planters involved in these movements contend that rapid reproduction is vital to the movement itself. They report that when reproduction rates slow down, the Church Planting Movement falters.

Rapid reproduction communicates the urgency of coming to faith in Christ. When rapid reproduction is taking place, you can be assured that the churches are unencumbered by nonessential elements and are fully empowered to participate in this work of God.

10. Healthy Churches

Church growth experts have written extensively in recent years about the marks of a church. Most agree that healthy churches should carry out the following five purposes: 1) worship, 2) evangelistic and missionary outreach, 3) education and discipleship, 4) ministry and 5) fellowship. In each of the Church Planting Movements we studied, these five core functions were evident.

A number of church planters have pointed out that when these five health indicators are strong, the church can't help but grow. More could be said about each of these healthy church indicators, but the most significant one, from a missionary vantage point, is the church's missionary outreach. This impulse within these CPM-oriented churches is extending the Gospel into remote people groups and overcoming barriers that have long resisted Western missionary efforts.

WHY HOUSE CHURCH ISN'T THE ANSWER

Wayne Jacobsen

Jesus did not leave us with a model to build, but a guide to follow. We experience the life of the church not because we meet a certain way or in a certain place, but because we learn to listen to God together and let him teach us how to share his life. If we substitute any method or design for that process, we will end up following it instead of him and building a counterfeit instead of the real deal. Beware of any model of would-be leader who wants to tell you what to do, rather than help you hear Jesus. Are there real leaders in the body of Christ today? Of course! But they are not heading up movements or devising models, they are helping people know who Jesus really is and learn how to follow him.

It's Not the Form

I love seeing the body of Christ find ways to live out its faith and fellowship in household-sized groups where people can be active participants together in the journey of faith. The early church found the home to be the most natural environment for people to share God's life together.

It is easy to convince people that house church just might be the answer to all that they've desired in body life, that is until they get involved in one. It quickly becomes evident that meeting in a home isn't necessarily all it's cracked up to be. What do we do about the people

who only want to use the group for their own needs? Where can we find enough people willing to pay the price to share that kind of life together? What do we do when the meeting is boring and we're tired of staring at each other?

Moving out of a larger building and into a home does not of itself answer anything of substance. While it does provide the possibility of more active participation and deeper relationships, just sitting in a house together for a meeting does not guarantee that those things will happen. If people are discovering the substance of what it means to live as a church, changing the mechanics will only provide a platform for people to commandeer the group in their thirst for leadership or pull it down by trying to make their needs or passions the focus of the group.

What's wrong with the church today has far less to do with the forms we use than it does the journey we are on. If we are looking for house church to meet the needs that more institutional forms couldn't touch, we are likely to be disappointed by our experiences in house church. Any time we begin with our needs as the focus, instead of God's purpose, we will end up disappointed by the results.

Absolute Dependence

Experiencing the joy of authentic fellowship begins when we realize that all our dependence must be centered on Jesus himself. We don't share fellowship because we need to. We don't do it to get our needs met. True fellowship can only be known where our dependence upon Christ spills out in our love for others. Knowing the joy and freedom of his life, we can't help but share it with others.

Scripture is clear. True life is found only in Jesus. There is life in no other--not even a correct arrangement of Christians in houses or buildings. That's what Paul meant when he called Jesus the Head of the church, declaring that it was God's purpose for him to "have first place in everything." Our needs are not the focus of body life. His presence living among us is.

We can only fill up on God's life through a transforming relationship with the Father through his Son. We were never meant to come to fill ourselves with church, but to live full of him and then share his life together with God's people.

A Call for Tentmakers

Ruth Siemens

English teachers Bob and Betty talked discreetly about God to their students in China and invited small groups home for meals. Imagine their delight when engineer Wu said, "I want to know about God. Is there a book about Him?"

Don designed Arab-style houses and shared the Good News with colleagues and clients. He made friends playing soccer, learned a new way to fish. His landlord, a Muslim chief, introduced him to clan members as "my friend who believes in the Prophet Jesus." Naturally, people asked questions.

Helen played violin in a national symphony orchestra in a Buddhist country and started evangelistic Bible studies with the musicians. In her free time she did campus evangelism and worked in a local church.

Daniel and Esther support themselves in teaching while they translate the Bible into the language of a million Muslims.

In Muslim countries, Roy builds factories, Bill manages a supermarket, Joe does marine biology, Mary is a hospital dietitian, Mel is a company financial analyst, Jerry is a computer engineer, Julie teaches first grade. Mission-motivated Christians who make Jesus Christ known as they support themselves in salaried, secular jobs around the world are "tentmakers." They are bi-vocational witnesses--integrating daily work and spiritual ministry.

They are called "tentmakers" because they follow the model of the Apostle Paul who financed his missionary work by making animal skin tents. Tentmakers do not relegate spiritual ministry to their free time, but make Jesus Christ known on the job and elsewhere. They belong to accountability and fellowship structures like mission agencies, tentmaker fellowships or teams. But Christians who take jobs abroad are tentmakers only if their motivation is missions and they do cross-cultural evangelism.

They are different from "regular missionaries," who are wholly supported by individuals and churches from their home countries. Generally, such donor support has only been possible due to the affluent blessings of God over the last 150 years--ever since Western colonization opened doors for Christian religious workers to go to every continent.

Two Biblical Missionary Models

The New Testament presents two equally valid models of missionary work. Paul modeled self-support--tentmaking--while Peter modeled the donor or church support of regular missionaries.

Jesus called Peter and his partners to leave their fishing company forever and trust him for their financial needs. Paul wrote approvingly that Peter and his wife still received church support in their missionary travels. So did the brothers of Jesus (1 Cor. 9).

But having established this point, Paul then said three times that he had never made use of his right to refrain from earning his own living! Because he wrote near the end of his third journey, his whole ministry is meant. He and Barnabas had already supported themselves on the first journey (v. 6). Additional evidence from Paul's writings show that self-support was his carefully planned strategy and the occasional donor gifts were the exception.

Twice Paul says he earns his living in order not to put an obstacle in the way of the Gospel. Apparently, support was no problem in the Jewish communities. But this "Apostle to the Gentiles" knew his motivation and message would be suspect if he received any financial gain from his preaching.

Paul's job provided a natural context for evangelism and helped him identify with the city laborers, many of whom took the Gospel to their own villages in their own native language. They followed Paul's model of godly living in the work world, and his example of self-support instead of waiting for donor assistance (2 Thess. 3:6ff). Paul's churches became self-supporting, self-reproducing and self-governing missionary lay movements, resulting in explosive, exponential growth. Even pastors of Paul's churches supported themselves in the pioneer stage, although some received support as congregations grew and leaders proved themselves.

Historical Precedent

Paul's model of self-support became dominant in the early Church. Christian lay people in many walks of life shared the Gospel at work and in their neighborhoods. When persecution scattered them abroad, they preached everywhere they went (Acts 8:4; 11:19).

Later, monks became a significant new kind of formal missionary, often supported by wealthy landowners or rulers. As barbarians invaded the Roman Empire and formed small states, their newly converted rulers supported missionary monks, often for political reasons. Masses of people were Christianized, and some were truly converted.

But it was mainly Christian lay people who spread the Gospel as they conducted trade and settled in pagan lands or as wars, persecutions, floods, famines or earthquakes scattered them to distant locations.

Even in our modern period, most of the early missionaries were tentmakers. The Moravians in the early 1700's and the Basel Mission sent teams that set up businesses for their support. In India in the early 1800's William Carey managed an indigo factory and taught in a college. In China, Robert Morrison translated for the East India Company. In Japan, a few years later, William Clark began an agriculture college (today's Hokkaido University). Most of his students became church leaders. In Africa, David Livingstone served the British Consulate as he explored the continent and evangelized. Many lesser known tentmakers helped open the way for regular missionaries. As Western colonization opened doors on every continent, individual and church donor support became the norm for mission societies. Tentmaking was largely forgotten.

After the interruption of two world wars, we entered into the post-colonial era when more than 130 new countries gained independence. They became fiercely nationalistic and protective of their non-Christian religions. Seventy per cent of the world became off-limits to missionary work, and countless secular jobs opened. Among restricted areas were most of the Muslim world, India, China and most of Asian and European Marxist lands. Tentmakers were needed again!

The Emerging New World of the Last Decade

But history rushes on, and recent years have seen the beginning of a whole new world order. The USSR's deteriorating economy within a changing world economy (the European Community, Pacific Rim, etc.) and its ethnic unrest led to Communism's failure. The Soviet Union is really a Third World country except for its military hardware. It is the last of the colonial empires to disintegrate. Thirteen of its fifteen Soviet Republics (many of its 154 ethnic groups) have declared independence or sovereignty.

The Soviet Union's republics, its Eastern European satellites and its client states around the world have rejected Marxism and seek multi-party politics, free market economics and massive Western help. But the changes are incomplete, ethnic conflict threatens chaos, and long-repressed religions, hostile to evangelical Christianity, threaten to close recently opened windows of religious freedom. But--in nearly every case--poverty will keep secular jobs open.

The winds of change are also blowing in neutral and non-Marxist lands that realize there are no longer two super-powers to play against each other, and that desperately needed development help now de-

depends on good government and sound economics. All fear they will be left out.

Why Tentmakers?

First, tentmakers transform restricted-access countries into "creative access" countries. More than half the world is still off-limits to conventional missionary work. Some, like Cambodia, invite Christian groups for development, but not evangelism.

Secondly, tentmakers facilitate access to non-believers in open countries, since they do low-key "fishing" evangelism in the worlds of business, finance, commerce, industry, education, medicine, fine arts, agriculture, sports--circles in which they move naturally and understand the mentality and jargon. Regular missionaries are normally unable to gain entry and acceptance to these circles.

Thirdly, tentmakers alleviate the problem of personnel. Even at present accelerated rates, we will never have enough formal missionaries to evangelize this generation. We cannot staff the missionary task unless called lay people provide the large majority of cross-cultural workers with formal missionaries undergirding strategically. This is especially true in creative access situations.

Fourthly, tentmakers alleviate the financial bottleneck. Growing missionary costs make support-raising slow and not viable for most Christians. Tentmakers' jobs enable them to work year after year with little or no church funding.

Fifthly, tentmakers are the norm for new missionary-sending nations, which cannot follow our recent Western model of donor support. Their currency may have little value abroad, or is not exportable. But they can send marketable tentmakers!

A great many tentmakers and regular missionaries are needed to finish world evangelism! Each Christian must ask: "Does God want me to follow the Paul model or the Peter model?" Many Christians switch from one to another at different stages of their lives, or combine elements of both.

Tentmaker Options Around The World

The first and largest tentmaking category is salaried positions. Our research turns up several thousand jobs a month, in all career areas, all over the world. One to three-year contracts are often renewable indefinitely. Round-trip travel may be paid for the employee and his family.

Many positions in complex career areas require Ph.D.s or masters degrees because countries hire foreigners only for jobs requiring ex-

pertise they lack. But good openings appear for non-degreed applicants licensed in more practical areas such as: building trades, auto mechanics, heavy equipment operation, secretarial work, etc. Openings are available for new graduates, mid-career and retired people.

The five largest vocational areas are: agriculture (including animal science, forestry, nutrition, food technology); engineering and sciences (all kinds); business (including economics, finance, accounting, computers); health care (every kind); and the biggest-- education (all fields, all levels, especially TESL). But openings are available in the social sciences, fine arts, athletics (even scuba divers!) and in industries like communications, petroleum, aviation, tourism.

Other tentmaker categories are: (2) Christians starting businesses abroad: a small language school, TV repair shop, family farm, computer consulting, etc. (3) Fellowships, exchanges and internships provide partial or total support. Debbie financed her graduate studies in the Middle East with an English teaching fellowship; Jim did his pre-doctoral genetics research in Switzerland. (4) Voluntary service provides housing and living expenses, and may pay travel. Ben and Jan did health care in an Asian refugee camp. Ken does agroforestry in Central America. (5) Study abroad may cost no more than at home, or less. Scholarship help may be possible. (6) Retired people take full-time or part-time jobs (often no upper age limit), or none at all, in a country where retirement income goes further than it does here. All of these categories are excellent contexts for tentmakers.

Global Opportunities provides missions counseling, specialized tentmaker training for individuals, churches, and agencies, pre- and post-orientation information, Christian networking and a comprehensive computerized information service on tentmaker and donor-support jobs around the world.

Tentmaking today is a significant part in the task of world evangelization. All Christians have a part in finishing the job. If you want to be involved, why not contact us!

Ruth E. Siemens is founder of Global Opportunities, 1600 Elizabeth Street, Pasadena, CA 91104

The Laity's Vital Role

Danny Martin, International Director

There is a small phrase at the end of Ephesians 4:16 that describes what needs to happen for the Body of Christ to be healthy, mature and united. It's not a phrase I have ever listened to anyone preach about. The emphasis in the passage is on the person of Christ who is the head of this Body. He makes the Body grow and build itself up in love. But then there is this descriptive phrase that shows how this happens in the real world. The phrase is, "as each part does its work."

We know that any body is made up of many parts. We have arms and necks and toes. So too in the Body of Christ. We have apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor/ teachers. Their job is not to usurp the headship that belongs to Christ, but rather to equip or prepare God's people for works of service. The very word "laity" means the people of God. According to the phrase in Ephesians 4:16, we all have work to do.

When we look at the history of missions, we find that one part of the Body was singled out as being more valuable than all the others. The leadership gifts of Ephesians 4:11 were what we primarily sent overseas. And these people generally made excellent missionaries. We need leadership.

But then something went wrong. Converts in foreign countries who wanted to be real, first-class Christians saw that all of their mentors possessed these leadership gifts. They were all evangelists or preachers. They were all full-time Christian workers. And so these converts quit their positions as business leaders, as factory workers, as professionals or as blue-collar laborers and went to Bible school in order to become leaders in the new churches themselves. Why this sudden rush into full-time Christian service? There were many factors. But among the worst was the realization that there were two classes of believers, the clergy and the rest of the people, or the laity. The "clergy" had a special calling and a close, personal relationship with God. The "laity" or normal people learned to depend on their pastors to tell them all about God. The "priests" stood in the gap between God and man.

Western missionaries would have planted very different churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America if they themselves had been business leaders and blue-collar laborers. They would have modeled a church that gave special honor to the weaker gifts. Each part in the Body would be equal. We would model interdependence "as each part does its work."

Book Review

The Treasure Principle, Randy Alcorn, Multnomah Publishers, Inc. P.O. Box 1720, Sisters, OR 97759.

This little book is a gem. It is about the joy and blessing of giving. The author takes you on a journey with him as he experiences the reality of the truths he presents. "When you discover the secret joy of the Treasure Principle, I guarantee you'll never be content with less." This is a powerful presentation of the Bible teaching on giving. He reminds us that 15 percent of all that Christ said relates to this topic. "There's a fundamental connection between our spiritual lives and how we think about and handle money."

Christ is the greatest investment adviser the world has ever known. He's told us about a secure investment that pays dividends far greater than any in this world. "This is the ultimate inside trader tip: Earth's currency will become worthless when Christ returns - or when you die, whichever comes first. (And either event could happen at any time.) Did you know that Christ encourages us to store up treasures for ourselves? (See Matt. 6:20.) He just wants our investments to be secure. Also He wants us to have a great return. How does 10,000 percent sound? (Matt. 19:29.) "You can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead. It's a revolutionary concept. If you embrace it, I guarantee it will change your life."

The author probes into many of our culture's ingrained attitudes to money and materialism and shows Christ's better way. "Do you wish you cared more about eternal things? Reallocate some of your money from temporal things to eternal things and see what happens."

Giving is a skill--a grace which Paul encourages us to abound in. This book will motivate you to excel in giving. If the Lord returned today would you have any regrets about the money sitting in bank accounts, retirement programs, estates, etc.? The author suggests we ask ourselves, "Five minutes after I die, what will I wish I would have given away while I still had the chance?"

-- Dennis Allen

In honor of Sister Dollie Garrett, now 98 years old, written by her daughter, Carolyn Loveland.

Mother's Heart

A daughter of Kansas and Oklahome,
She thrived on learning and loved to roam;
Leashed to the clothesline, her toddler heart
Still longed to explore horizons apart.

As a young girl, on the prairie she'd run
Through blowing wind, her heart, full of fun.
Maturing in years and in spirit, too,
Her heart became focused on one God so true.

Soon love swelled her heart for a man of like mind
Who also loved God, and worked hard and was kind.
Their marriage, now blessed with one son, then another,
Her heart rose to meet her new charge as a mother.

Together in purpose and determination
They gave their lives for an African nation.
Though her heart was wrenched as they sailed away,
She looked up to God, still her guide and stay.

There were leanness of times and such meager living;
But her heart reached out through hands always giving.
What could it matter to keep up with fashion
When so many were lost and needed compassion?

Steadfast and faithful, while the family grew,
She wrote to her mother and others, too.
Disillusioned by some who they'd hoped would bring aid
Their hearts still endured, and daily they prayed.
There was joy when they saw people come to the light,
And awe at God's grace through a lightning strike.
Their children departed as they became grown,
Then she and Dewitt ran an orphan's home.

Such pain in her sorrowing heart brought the tears
When God took her mate of so many years.
But her constant soul swerved not from the task,

And she gave every moment that God would ask.
Now, content to take all He sends her way,
As her leash of this life begins to fray,
Her spirit is ready and glad to soar
Where she'll be right at home when He opens the Door.

I would like to thank everybody who has had fellowship with us in the Lord's work. How good the Lord has been.

Carolyn wrote this prayer for my birthday. When I heard it, it flashed into my mind that I would like to have it printed in the Word and Work because I would like to share it with all of the people who have had fellowship with us throughout the years. Some, I know, have sacrificed.

Seeing I can't see or write because of trembling of my hands, I have asked some of the children to see if the W&W would publish this beautiful prayer. It tells so much. It covers the years. Someway it shows forth the overruling providence of my life throughout the years. I thank Thee for my husband and my children.

The Lord works things out for you if you give Him time. His time is not our time. How good the Lord has been.

Voices From The Fields

Robert & Joy Garrett Ruwa, Zimbabwe June 2002

It has been a record-breaking time for all our camps this year. We had previously reported 158 youth (18 years and older) at the 4-day Easter Camp.

Senior Camp (High School age) had 82, and the Junior Camp had 88 Bible campers

New Births : From these three camps there was a total of 39 who accepted Christ and were baptized.

The Women's Camp (May 23-26) had a record-breaking 365 women. They had also asked two of our men to give special lessons, one on the role of women, and the other concerning idols. Both were excellent. There were 29 who came forward for rededication after the lesson on idols.

The Lord Provides: Although this country is experiencing shortages of some food items, the Lord enabled us to find all that was nec-

essary. Some was purchased here, some in South Africa and some was donated.

Lupani is another two hours northwest of Bulawayo. Brother Khumalo had started a congregation there a few years ago while teaching at a secondary school there. We have been granted a church site in the nearby township. Because it is a rural area the building codes and restrictions are minimal so the local people should be able to put up a building without my having to be heavily involved.

Mhondoro. For many years the church there has met under a "temporary" shelter. Lord willing, they will have a proper building before this year is out. The Mbare church is helping much with making of bricks and other things. They also, using our 4-ton truck, hauled several loads of river sand from a nearby river and some pit sand dug out of an area some distance away where the soil is very poor - being mostly white sand under the thin topsoil. The river sand will be used for making concrete and the pit sand will be mixed with cement to make mortar for the brick walls.

The building will be on top of a rocky knoll. We have marked out and pegged the foundation lines. Soon, as the Lord enables, we hope to prepare the foundations.

Tshekedi. Just a few miles away in another part of Mhondoro another congregation has recently been started by the working of Bros. Sunny Nyahora and William Kalela. It is quite a densely populated area and shows great potential. They will also need a building!

Binga Bible Seminar. The last week of this month, Lord willing, will see myself and three of our ministers in Binga. After men from Binga had attended our local Bible Seminar in January they requested that we come and hold the same kind of lessons in Binga. They expect from 40 or more people to attend this three-day session. Because of the shortage of corn meal I will be taking 200kg (over 400 lbs) to help them out. We were able to get this our last shopping trip down south.

Tom & Sharon Schreiner Kapsowar, Kenya June 4, 2002

It's hard to believe that nine weeks have passed since we first drove into Kapsowar. The hospital along with the housing is located on top of a plateau which drops steeply into the surrounding valleys in all directions giving lovely views of surrounding hilltops. On clear days we can see all the way to Mount Kenya. The area is much more populated and less "rural feeling" than we had anticipated

There are always a lot of people walking to and from various places. Center, as the main street of Kapsowar is called, reminds one of an American town in the old west, with wooden storefronts and a dirt street which turns to thick mud when it rains. Shops vary from small butcheries to groceries to the ever presents hotelis (small cafe type shops) and bars. We are able to get some staples at Center, but most of our shopping requires a 2 hour drive into Eldoret. Recently that trip stretched into more than 3 hours as the roads had been turned into slick mud several feet deep in some places. On our return trip we had to maneuver around hopelessly mired matatus and trucks. We were thankful for our four wheel drive Land Cruiser Prado which conquered the muddy hills and delivered us safely home. It is an experience we will not soon forget as the roads are narrow and often drop off rather steeply on the sides. Only God enabled us to make it home without being hit by another vehicle or getting stuck.

The local Africa Inland Church has two services, the early service being an English service for the local boarding schools. We have been very impressed by the quality of preaching we have experienced thus far. Each service averages around 300 plus people. There are many other churches in the vicinity which would be considered close in a society with cars, but here people must walk. We are looking forward to visiting some of these churches in the future. Sharon asked a local school girl how many schools were located in Kapsowar and the answer was 23 if you included both government and private. We hope this gives you a feel for the community of Kapsowar.

Ups and Downs: Practicing medicine in a rural mission hospital has definitely been a stretching experience. It is difficult to have to reveal to someone that they are infected with the virus that causes AIDS, especially since there is no treatment to prolong life available here as there is in the West. But recently as Tom was counseling a woman named Salina, he was also able to share the Gospel and see her receive Christ as Lord and Savior.

With a pediatrician's knowledge, he has also been able to make a difference with some of the premature babies here. One such, Lonah, weighed only 1 pound when she was born a month before our arrival here and had not gained any weight while Ruth, her twin sister, had long since passed her up. In fact, Lonah had been losing weight in the week prior to our arrival, and was so thin she had developed some pressure sores. She turned out to have a Patent Ductis Arteriosus and after Tom restricted the amount of fluid she received for a time while boosting the calories she was fed, she began to gain weight. She recently passed the 4 1/2 pound mark and along with her twin is home and growing well.

AIDS is a heart break that shows up all too often here. One ten month old boy who was brought to the hospital weighed only 10 pounds and had not gained any weight in the last 4 months. As suspected he had AIDS and his mother also tested positive for HIV. She professes to be a Christian, but faces a difficult and uncertain future with 3 other children that will need to be cared for. Please be in prayer for these and others that come for care.

Fellow Missionaries: We would like to introduce you to our fellow missionaries with whom we are privileged to serve. Jane Brown is a midwife from Scotland and is responsible for the maternity services. Arlene Cummins is a pediatric nurse from Canada and has helped raise the nursing standard on the pediatric ward. Ann, who left for a short furlough in England 2 weeks after our arrival, is a general practitioner who has been here for 15 years and is fluent in both the local dialect and Swahili. She has been serving as the Hospital's Medical Director. Bill Rhodes, our surgeon, is from California. He and his wife, Laura, have four children (one is in college), and their youngest two kids have quickly become friends with our older children. When you are remembering us in prayer, please ask God to bless and keep these missionaries also.

Misc: Our addition has moved forward, but we are still waiting for the ceiling to be installed along with the glass for the windows and the door. According to our most recent statement from AIM we have raised 80% of the amount needed to cover the cost of the new room, with around \$1000 left to raise. We are grateful to those of you who have given. Anyone else wishing to give should send their donations to AIM designated for the Schreiner House Addition. As it will still be some time before the room is completed it is probably just as well that our container is still somewhere between New Orleans and Kapsowar. We are managing with furniture left behind by previous missionaries, but are looking forward to our own things.

Our committed pledges are \$350 per month short of our support goal set by AIM, but God continues to meet our monthly needs through many of you. Again we thank you. Your love and support have meant so much to us, and we are also grateful for the letters many have sent. TomSharonSchreiner@aimint.net

James Ashley

Email Received May 5, 2002

We spent most of the month of April in Sa'a village, and I was able to finish the exegetical check of the book of John. This is a task that is short to report, but long to actually do. The entire book has been left with the review committee for checking while we are gone for the next three months. The review committee worked through I and II Pe-

ter, and I made adjustments to those books in response to the reviewer comments. The two books are now in the process of first draft back translation by a national.

I also spent 3 days in the next dialect area at the Evangelical Church Easter convention, and was able to give a report to them about the progress on the NT and our hopes for publication next year. I passed out 19 copies of 1 and 2 Timothy and had two meetings to solicit comments. The first was with the pastors present at the convention, along with others who stayed out of interest, about 60 people. I read through the entire book of 2 Timothy paragraph by paragraph, asking for questions and giving comments to help them think and to give them time to formulate questions about the text. Their comments were very encouraging in regards to ease of understanding and confirmation that they are willing to use Scriptures in the Sa'a dialect. They only questioned four individual words, two that they felt were not widely used in their dialect and two loan words they would like to see exchanged for Sa'a expressions. This was especially encouraging because I have never seen any of this denomination use or refer to the old translation, and I have long been concerned that the same might happen to our work.

The second meeting was with the women at 7 AM before the Sunday morning service. Due to time constraints we only read through two chapters of 1 Timothy. I told them that much of my motivation in translating the NT was to benefit those who don't know English very well, which is probably more true of the women as a whole than the men. I have also noticed how so often it is the women who have a stronger interest in spiritual things, and I wanted to make a special attempt to let them know that we are trying to produce a book that they will be able to understand without an educated pastor to explain it all first. They got the message with such enthusiasm that I went home and printed another 19 copies just for the women.

Tim & Dawn Yates Charlestown, Australia May 2002

Three months and over 18,000 miles later (including flights), our furlough has come to an end! Whew!

Someone once said that furlough was a time for rest and relaxation from the everyday stress of the ministry. We're not sure that's the way to put it, but it was wonderful to spend time with family and friends that we haven't seen in years.

We arrived back in America in early December. Most of that month was spent with our family and friends in both Pennsylvania and Indiana. It was so nice to spend Christmas and the New Year with

family once again. Our holidays in Australia are fairly private, since most of our friends have their families to think about.

In early January we made our way back to Knoxville, TN, the "home base" for the Mission. Of course, we have family in the Lord there, too, and enjoyed spending time with all of our church, college and mission friends. One of the biggest surprises of our trip back was the difference in the campus of Johnson Bible College. They have really expanded and it was a joy to stay on campus while we were there.

There wasn't a lot of time to waste, though, and it was off to Atlanta within a couple of weeks. This was the start of our biggest trip on the road. We went south through Georgia to Florida, back north through to South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, all the way to Cleveland, Ohio. Then it was back south again through Louisville, KY and on to Knoxville again toward the end of February. On March 3rd, we flew out of Knoxville to return to Australia.

We managed to hold it together pretty well, thanks to the Lord. The girls traveled really well and we were proud of them. Nevertheless, by the end of February they were asking if we could go back home! What a wonderful feeling that by returning to Australia we were returning home.

During our stay at Johnson Bible College, we were able to meet with several college students about the work in Australia. We were really hoping and praying that the Lord would plant seeds in their hearts and we would eventually get some workers in Australia. One of those with whom we spoke was Shawn Buis.

Shawn is a Senior at JBC on the Youth Ministry and Preaching program. He and his fiancé, Sarah McLaughlin, who is a teacher Education major, came to talk with us for quite a while about the possibility of their working in Australia in the future.

Since then, Shawn has applied to ACM for a summer internship. This will be a college credit program and is necessary for Shawn to graduate. His application to ACM has been approved, and his proposal to the Youth Ministry program with JBC has been approved. This means that all Shawn has to do is come up with the funds necessary to visit us for three months this summer (winter in Australia).

Letter from Betty & Dennis Allen

Greetings! I dislike writing form letters, but with only a few days and about 150 things to do, this is the only way I can be in touch with you:

Back in the summer, Dennis and I learned of a mission agency (that does not discriminate against age!), and we applied to them to direct us to a needy place among the unreached peoples of the world. We attended their orientation in Seattle and were "accepted." They are in process of setting up a situation for us - probably in Thailand or maybe China or ? - and will probably be calling us in the Fall.

When our friends in Manila heard that we were open to another tour overseas, they said, "Why don't you come here?! We need you."

Now the church in Manila has been on its own for a number of years, and we have no thought of changing that. There are some tensions in the church there, though, and we hope to get into the scriptures with them as to how to resolve those tensions. The early church had some tensions, too, as I recall, but they are capable of resolution.

We feel the Lord is opening the door for us to go to Manila for the summer, leaving June 18th and returning here August 29th. Mission to Unreached Peoples has no objection to our going. They would hope we can attend a further orientation in Seattle in the Fall, and then go directly to the appropriate field of work. The congregation we attend here in Salem has encouraged us in this purpose and offered to do whatever they can to be a part of our effort. The Lord has given us long life and good health--for which we are duly grateful, and we want to be good stewards of these gifts.

After all these things were set in motion, we received a request from a dear friend in Hong Kong to sponsor her young son to come here for high school. For a number of years now we have desired this, and it seems a problem to me that the request came just now when we have committed to be away. But if it is of the Lord, His timing is right, and we are moving ahead with that request as long as He opens doors. The boy's grandfather has come forward to take financial responsibility, PTL!The hope is that he can enter school this Fall; his mother (who is a young widow) will likely accompany him to the U. S. and stay a month. We are trusting the Lord to time her arrival to coincide with our return from Manila.

We covet your prayers. Sorry this letter is so impersonal, but it seems to be form letter or none!

Love, Betty (and Dennis)

Ordering Our Cause in Prayer

Billy Ray Lewter

“Oh that I knew where I might find him! That I might come even to his seat! I would set my cause in order before him, and fill my mouth with arguments” (Job 23:3,4).

Job longed to state his case directly before the High Court of Heaven. He seemed to understand there was more than majesty, glory, and judgment at the throne of God, that there was a mercy-seat (Hebrews 9:5), a throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16). He wanted a hearing where he could pour out his heart to God Himself.

God later gave such a glorious invitation, “Put me in remembrance...let us plead and argue together. Set forth your case that you may be justified” (Isaiah 43:26, Amplified Bible). One truth here is that we have no case, nor did Job. We can't present a single shred of evidence to show our innocence. Yet, throughout the Bible, we see that to a humble, penitent sinner, who asks for God's mercy, God says, “tell me your needs, remind me, set forth your cause.” This is an invitation not to be refused.

But how? Knowing our guilt, how do we order our cause, what “arguments” can we set forth? Before we go there we have to ask what prayer is.

I'm standing on holy ground here, I need reverence. Who am I to define prayer? Like Job (42:3), I am uttering things that I understand not, things too wonderful for me.

Maybe Psalm 42:1 reveals the essence of prayer, “As a deer longs for the water-courses, so my whole being longs for thee, O God.” This is also the way Jesus prayed. “While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings with a loud cry and tears, to the one who could deliver him” (Hebrews 5:7, New Living Translation). Prayer is passionately longing, searching, striving everywhere and all the time for God's ultimate victory. David calls it “deep calling unto deep” in verse seven. Prayer is seeking God's mind, God's truth, God's peace. Prayer puts our mind, physical body, and material possessions into a spiritual context. It helps us see things from an eternal perspective.

Jesus said we “ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). I have fainted mentally and spiritually. Life is a fierce, stressful battle at all levels. I come near fainting often. But Jesus said that I ought not to faint, I ought to pray. I pray that I learn something of David's passion for prayer, a passion that doesn't quit until the prayer turns to praise. I pray that I grasp the truth of what I am writing, then I won't faint.

Again, how? How do we order our case in prayer? What "arguments" did godly persons in the Bible use when they prayed?

Humility

Abraham said, "Please forgive me boldness in continuing to speak to you Lord. I am only a man and have no right to say anything" (Genesis 18:27, Good News Bible). Humility is the first order of prayer. Before God's Shechinah glory, Job would not have tried to tell God how good he was, of his achievements, or demand an explanation. When God responded to Job, he cried out, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (42:6).

We have no right to whatever we are seeking, "Our hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus blood and righteousness."

Joyful Anticipation

However, if we found ourselves favored to stand among those who frequent a king's court, wouldn't we have great expectations? When we pray we are kneeling before that great and terrible throne where angels bow and Cherubim praise God constantly. Yet this is a throne where grace is dispensed.

To pray is to enter the treasure-house of God, and be blessed from His inexhaustible storehouse. To pray is to cast off our burdens, to be forgiven of our sins and healed of our diseases, to be filled with the power of God's Holy Spirit, to reach the highest point of Christian life, intimacy with God.

We belittle God when we beg for crumbs, when we kneel in the presence of Jesus, the Bread of Life. Far from expecting too much, we expect too little. If our desires are great let our asking be great.

Promises

Jacob stood fearfully on one side of the brook Jabbok, his brother Esau, whom he had deceived many years before, stood on the other side with his armed men. Jacob prayed, "Remember that you promised to make everything go well with me" (Genesis 32:12, GNB). Thou saidst! Jacob was holding God to His promise.

God can do as He wills, yet He binds Himself by what He says. He will not break His covenants. Hosea understood this in portraying one of the major concepts of the Old Testament, God's covenant love rooted in the very essence of His Being. "Hesed" (or "chesed", silent "c") is a Hebrew word that denotes intimate relationship. It is translated as loving kindness, steadfast love, everlasting love, unfailing love, or, most of the time, mercy. All of God's blessings to us come from this covenant love, from which nothing can separate us.

“Hesed” is the key to understanding the book of Hosea, one of the most beautiful books in the Bible. Hosea is a poignant example of God’s extraordinary covenant love to wayward Israel. The sentences of the book of Hosea fall with the throbs of the broken heart of God. Hosea had a deep, emotional understanding of the love of God that I lack, that I want. Oh God, teach me!

The promises of God have been sealed with the blood of Jesus and God won’t put to scorn that blood. He is waiting for us to respond, to believe Him. Our future is as bright as the promises of God. Claim them.

Boldness

Paul says, “We have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him” (Ephesians 3:12). Hebrews 4:16 tells us to “Come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Also, we have “boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus” (10:19).

We have what Job longed for, access to God’s throne, liberty to open our hearts freely to God. We can order our causes without doubt, because we have an advocate, a mediator, Jesus the Messiah.

The Past

An “argument” used by David and Moses was to plead the past. David prayed, “Oh, do not hide yourself when I am trying to find you...you have been my help in all my trials before; don’t leave me now” (Psalm 27:9, Living Bible). When God threatened to destroy the thankless Israelites, Moses reminded Him, “Lord, why should you be so angry with your people, whom you rescued from Egypt with great might and power” (Exodus 32:11, GNB). This was your idea, God! Throughout the books of Moses we read, “God said to Moses...” then, “Moses said to God....” You would think the two knew each other.

God is unchanging. He can do in the present what He did in the past, because His purpose is the same. He can do for us what He did for Moses, for David, for Job. Therefore, we can plead the past, God’s Biblical record, and our own past, in order to prevail upon God’s very present help in time of trouble.

God’s Name

Another “argument” employed by Moses was the name of God. Moses reminded God of the oath He swore with His own name. He told God that now the Egyptians can say, “The Lord was not able to bring this nation to the land which he promised them, so he destroyed them in the wilderness” (Exodus 32:12, 13; Numbers 14:13, 16).

When Sennacherib, King of Assyria invaded Judah, Rabshakeh, his representative, delivered an eloquent speech in Hebrew telling the Jews that Jehovah couldn't help them anymore than the gods of all the other nations they had conquered. He asked for surrender without a fight.

King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah prayed, and an angel of the Lord slew 185,000 Assyrian warriors while they slept. It's a good thing for Israel Rabshakeh made that speech. It was not the poor, insignificant Hezekiah with his little band of soldiers, it was Jehovah who came to fight.

Over and over the Bible states "for thy great namesake." God will honor, defend, and respond to His name. Recently in a difficult situation I prayed silently, dozens of times, one of the names of God, "Jehovah-jirch, Jehovah-jireh" (the Lord will provide). He did. Even His name is a covenant of love.

Our Faults

I am unfit to come before the throne of God, and a holy God could not be consistent with His nature to even listen to me. But He has provided a way by which my prayers do come before His mercy-seat. "His oath, his covenant, his blood, support me in the whelming flood. When all around my soul gives way, he then, is all my hope and stay."

God knows our faults, how weak our faith is, how poor our claim is, but He invites us to come in, to be restored and refreshed by His presence. That ought to ignite our hope, to encourage us to pray, to shoot adrenaline into our souls.

Conclusion

God said, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Psalm 81:10). Maybe Asaph shows here the culmination of Job's request. Instead of opening the mouth to set forth our arguments, sometimes we just need to open the mouth, for God to fill.

A few nights ago, I had a little taste of such an experience. I couldn't sleep, and I had been studying Hosea, so I started praying for a deeper understanding of God's love, something Hosea had. As Asaph said to do, I literally opened my mouth wide as I lay on my bed praying silently. In joyful anticipation I held on for a blessing. For the next three or four hours snatches of verses or thoughts came to me and I tried to write them down on a note pad in the dark, while I continued to pray. I don't think I ever felt closer to God, or came closer to David's passion in prayer. That was the most refreshing night of my life.

Now, as I try to flesh out those thoughts, I realize how inadequate words are. There are deeper depths and higher heights in prayer than

mere words can ever reach, certainly mine. I am uttering things too wonderful for me. To a soul passionately thirsting for God, He fills it with great and mighty things we know not, even if we struggle in communicating it.

Thank God for Good Hymnals

A.V.W.

Brother Graham McKay of Nashville has for years been a diligent student of hymnbooks as well as hymn stories and hymn-writers' biographies. He loves and praises *Great Songs of the Church* as a hymnal that for decades excelled the others and indeed set the standard for new ones to aim at.

But he also rightly points out that it's not the only good hymnal that is available today. Copies of *Great Songs* are still available from Word & Work office, and probably from Frank Preston too -- at preston@seamet.com. But almost certainly it will never be reprinted, and it is dwindling in number.

So in the future, you may want to consider other hymnals for your congregation (or for yourself individually, for *along with your Bible a hymnal is a great aid in personal devotions*). If so, here are two outstanding ones: *Praise for the Lord* (published by Mark McInteer, Praise Press: (800) 331-5991), and *Songs of Faith and Praise* (published by Howard Publishing Co.: (800) 858-4109). In these books you'll find most of the songs from *Great Songs* which you love, but since the former (we'll call it PFTL) has 990 songs, and the latter (SFP) has 1030, obviously they each have many other treasures too. Yes, wonderful older songs like Great is Thy Faithfulness; Wonderful Grace of Jesus; Man of Sorrows, What a Name; King of my Life I Crown Thee Now; Thine is the Glory, Risen Conquering Son; and The Ninety and Nine.

But then they also have numerous recent songs, many of which also excel in adoration: Majesty; Because He Lives; Great is the Lord; You are Beautiful beyond Description; Awesome Power, Boundless Grace; Shine, Jesus, Shine.

Comparing the two more recent hymnals, we find that both of them have indices of authors and composers, which *Great Songs* lacks. But having so many songs means each of them weighs much more and requires a larger rack to hold them. Looking for some of my own well-loved songs, I find that only *PFTL* has Meekness and Maj-

esty; also, Spirit of God, Descend upon my Heart. But only *SFP* has The King is Coming (the chorus only); also; *Jésus! What a Friend for Sinners.*

Tim Yates praises *SFP* highly. Graham McKay loves both books, but leans toward *PFTL*. While I'm at it, thanks to others who shared their insights too. Back in 2000 when W&W first asked for opinions on this matter, John and Barbara Sheffler wrote a lengthy evaluation which we greatly appreciated. Thank God there are many wonderful spiritual songs available to us. And many good hymnals. Of the newer ones it seems to me these two excel.

John Wesley's Rules for Singing

[Excerpts only]

1. Sing lustily [heartily] and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan.

2. Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above the rest of the congregation, so that you may not destroy the harmony. Strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.

3. Sing in time. Whatever time is sung be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend close to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can; and take care not to sing too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.

4. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing.

5. Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense [meaning] of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually. So shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when He cometh in the clouds of heaven.

CHILDREN ARE GOD'S BLESSING

Edward Fudge; GracEmail

"God calls children blessings, in Psalm 127 and in many other texts," writes a Christian sister. "Why, then, don't we want to have them? Or why only one or two? Are modern-day babies not also a part of God's plan?"

* * *

Indeed, children are entrusted to us as gifts from God. However, we need not forget that the Old Testament people of God lived in extended families in agrarian and semi-agrarian societies.

Childlessness was socially undesirable, for children (especially males) not only constituted needed workers but also the "social security" for aged parents. I know no reason why we should think those people were unaware of family planning by "natural" means or that God frowned on such foresight.

Jesus suggested that one should not go to war or plan a construction project without counting the cost -- although winning a war or building a house both depended on God's favor and blessing.

Should we think it less prudent to combine fiscal stewardship with planning a family? Of course, the conclusions a couple reaches are their business and God's alone, and ought not be second-guessed or judged by others who have no responsibility in the matter.

If we entrust our families to God -- in planning, rearing, and teaching -- he will certainly guide and provide in that area of life as well as in any other. We parents learn much about God's love as we deal with our children, and children learn much about God's fatherhood through the example of godly parents. May your house be filled with his Presence and his abiding peace.

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A Divorced Parent's Dilemma

Dennis Kaufman

Question: What should I tell my child when asked if I still love and miss my ex-husband? I want to be honest, yet my child is upset if I say I don't.

Response: This is a situation where the primary goal is to avoid two unhealthy extremes. The first danger would be telling your child only what he/she wants to hear. Children have an uncanny ability to perceive the truth. If you begin misleading your child about your true feelings, he/she will likely perceive, at some level, that you are not being honest. This also creates a dilemma as the youngster gets older and is able to see more clearly the real dynamics that are present in the parents' relationship.

The other extreme would involve telling your child all your feelings on the back side of a divorce. Young children struggle to handle negatives about their parents because they need to be able to trust and idealize them. In some ways explaining divorce is like educating them about sex. It is important to give them little pieces of truth as they are able to understand. Learning to teach children at the age appropriate time is one of the greatest challenges we face as parents.

Some sample responses that avoid extremes would be:

Age 5: Sweetie, I'm happy that you love daddy so much, and I know it hurts you that mommy and daddy aren't together. When you feel sad about that, you come sit on my lap and I will hold you. Age 9: I'm glad you have such a strong love for your daddy. When your dad and I tried to love each other, there were so many hurts, our marriage wasn't strong enough to take it. If there's more you need to ask me, I will do my best to help you understand.

A part of the maturing process for any child is learning how to tolerate frustration. All of us must develop this skill or we end up being very self-centered. But the frustration tolerance must be built in small doses. Otherwise a child can be overwhelmed and become broken-spirited. Divorce takes its toll on youngsters, but the trauma can be lessened by creating as much trust and security as the parents can provide.

I would also encourage you, in this situation, to make sure you personally work through your own grief process toward forgiveness. This will provide more of a sense of objectivity toward your ex-hus-

band, so your anger doesn't spillover and contaminate your child's view of his/her father.

If an ex-spouse is abusive or highly manipulative, of course, it will be essential to provide as much protection as is possible for your child. When it comes to your ex-spouse's negative relational patterns that you will be tempted to tell your child all about, be assured he/she will figure it out soon enough.

Profitable Meetings in Louisville

Alex V. Wilson

The "Stone-Campbell Dialogue" group met in June, as previously announced (see April W&W). They had met 4 times previously, seeking to destroy walls and build bridges. **Their dream is not merger, but cooperation without compromise of convictions. Not unanimity of views, but fellowship in Christ in order to make Him known worldwide as Savior and Lord.**

As an editor I was privileged to be an observer at their discussions. I found them interesting, though to my regret on this occasion much more time than usual was spent on planning other meetings than on sharing doctrinal and practical insights. That was necessary this time, because attempts were begun to promote cooperation without compromise on the *grassroots* level -- among individuals and congregations from the three streams of the "Stone-Campbell movement."

A joyful-but-challenging gathering was held for the general public, where friendships were begun or renewed. And there was another meeting of the Dialogue members with local church elders, preachers and other leaders. We had hoped for more, but were nonetheless glad that about 67 folks showed up (including Dialogue members). At this meeting Church of Christ members were most numerous, followed by those from independent Christian Churches and then Disciples of Christ. Maybe that's because the first group is more interested in unity, or maybe because we've experienced more disunity than the others! Or maybe both reasons are true. In the breakout groups some sad experiences were shared, but also touching testimonies and reports of joyful progress here and there. Some congregations made plans that night to work together with others in practical ways.

We must remember that our divine Lord prayed fervently for His followers to be united, so the world may hear the Gospel. (John 17.) Such unity must never budge on the truth of that Gospel of **who Jesus is and what He has done to provide salvation for believers**

(Matt.16:15-17, 1 Cor.15:1-8). No compromise can ever be made on that core of the Christian faith.

But we must not wait around for other disciples of the Lord to agree with us on everything before working together with them to make Christ known to the world. The first Christians did not agree on everything (Rom. 14 gives examples), and believers today will never agree on everything either. Nonetheless we should seek to cooperate with those who trust in the Good News of the grace of God, both in practical ways of being salt and light and loving our neighbors as ourselves (for example, building Habitat homes, and opposing the plague of abortion), and especially in the task of obeying the Great Commission by preaching the Gospel and making disciples worldwide.

So, let's share the dream of unity. Not merger, but cooperation without compromise of core convictions. Not unanimity of views, but fellowship in Christ in order to make Him known in all nations as Savior and Lord.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

Central Bible College expands outside Manila: "This coming school year, the Board of Central Bible College has agreed to open another extension class at Cavite [some miles away] under Brother Torrefiel. We will also continue the extension class at Novaliches where Brother Herman Moldez teaches one subject too. Though this means additional expenses, yet it is worth it to train more workers especially from our local churches in distant places.

"A few months ago I met an elderly lady [now a Christian]. She had not seen nor heard about the Bible till a CBC student shared with her about God's word and salvation. Truly our labor is not in vain (1 Cor.15:58)." —David Moldez, CBC president

Sharing Helpful Insights in Japan: The Lord helped Bro. Moto Nomura at a gathering of about 25 Japanese preachers (plus a few missionaries too, I believe). For the 1st time in their regular gatherings, they studied various views of Biblical prophecy. Moto shared some of the history of 20th-century conflicts and splits (often ugly) that occurred because of such differences. To be more accurate, the bitterness resulted because some preachers denied others the freedom to teach their views. We rejoice that in many places (but not all), attitudes are now much improved. But we must never forget the tragedies that result among Christians when dogmatism reigns and freedom is denied.

TRUTHS to LIVE by--

“We are more wicked than we ever realized, but more loved than we ever dreamed.”

--Rico Tice in *Christianity Explored*

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“Your **worst** days are never so bad that you are beyond the *reach* of God’s grace. And your **best** days are never so good that you are beyond the *need* of God’s grace.”

--Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace*

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“The greatest missions movement in history is taking place **right now**. You’d have to be dumb to think this stuff isn’t **exciting**.”

--George Verwer, missions leader

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“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.” --C.S. Lewis