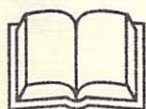


"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The **Word and Work**



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

November - December, 2002

The Most High God who Humbled Himself

"Man could never climb to God. Man in his fallen state could not know God. **The lower nature can never understand the higher nature.** The mineral kingdom cannot understand the plant kingdom. The animal kingdom cannot understand the kingdom of men. The carnal man cannot understand the kingdom of God.

"Solid geometry can include the facts of plane geometry, but plane geometry cannot include the facts of solid geometry. *A philosopher can play with at kitten, but a kitten cannot talk philosophy.* **The initiative must always come from the higher to the lower. So God must act first if man is to be lifted above his fallen condition.**" -- N. E. Rhodes, Jr.

The GOD who *STOOPS!*

*O the love that drew salvation's plan,
O the grace that brought it down to man,
O the mighty gulf that God did span
At Calvary!*

William Newell penned that song. Consider this: He could have ended the stanza with the words, "...At BETHLEHEM"! Not only the cross of Calvary, but also the barnyard birth of that Child was stunning. And his whole life was "O"-inspiring: the manger ... the carpenter shop ... the humble preacher with no place of his own to lay his head ... his rag-tag band of followers ... his washing their feet. Even apart from his arrest, trial, torture

Continued Inside Front Cover

Continued from Front Cover

and death, consider how long a journey he made to span that mighty gulf and bring far, far down to us the salvation we needed.

Ponder these wonders further by reading the six short meditations by N. E. Rhodes, Jr. From various angles He probes the mystery of God Incarnate, the Creator Embodied. Brother Rhodes, who went Home last year, was a veteran preacher, elder, and educator. He wrote many articles for *Gospel Tidings*, a fine magazine that circulates quite widely among Churches of Christ. When Gordon Linscott edited *Word and Work*, he reprinted a number of brother Rhodes' articles. The series this month is well worth joining them.

“You know the GRACE of the Lord Jesus Christ...”

“Grace” means love for the unlovable and unworthy. We often think of Saul of Tarsus as the greatest example of our Lord's grace. Christ freely forgave and accepted the man who had opposed Him as a fraud -- as a hoax whose claim to be the Jewish Messiah brought shameful disgrace to all Jews. With intense bitterness and hatred Saul had persecuted the Christian believers, traveling near and far to arrest and imprison them and even have them executed. He himself later admitted,

I was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them. (Acts 26:9-11.)

And that was the man whom Christ not only forgave, but called to be a local church leader ... and an evangelist ... and a missionary ... even an apostle and a writer of a large part of the New Covenant scriptures! Astonishing!

And yet my recent study, prompted by an article by M. W. Hines, leads me to think that another man from that era is almost as great an example of God's astounding grace. If the Lord could and would save this stubborn unbeliever, after all the privileges he had, then He can save anyone who will call on His name! Read on and see who it was.

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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The Incarnation . . .

1. THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH

By N. E. Rhodes Jr.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

The incarnation is the central fact of the gospel. It means man does not have to climb up to God for God has come down to man. Religion is man's search for God, but the gospel is God's search for man. That is why that though there are many religions, there can never be but one gospel.

Somewhere I read of the child of a foreign missionary who was separated from his parents while he attended school in this country. When someone asked him what he wanted most for Christmas, he pointed to a picture of his father and said, "I want my father to step out of that picture frame." Jesus is God stepping out of the frame of the universe and meeting us personally as God, simplified, God intimate, God tender, God redemptive.

Man could never climb to God. Man in his fallen state could not know God. The lower nature can never understand the higher nature. The mineral kingdom cannot understand the plant kingdom. The plant kingdom cannot understand the animal kingdom. The animal kingdom cannot understand the kingdom of men. The carnal man cannot understand the kingdom of God. Solid geometry can include the facts of plane geometry, but plane geometry cannot include the facts of solid geometry. A philosopher can play with a kitten, but a kitten cannot talk philosophy. The initiative must always come from the higher to the lower. So God must act first if man is to be lifted above his fallen condition.

Someone I have forgotten who) compared this to the action of a lily seed in a swamp. Consider the slime of a foul swamp as contrasted to the beauty of a lily. How can the mud be transformed into the beauty of the lily? The lily must drop a seed. The seed is tiny in comparison with the parent lily, but it is essentially lily. It is buried in the mud and takes root in it. Then the lily begins to rise up. The mud gives itself to the roots of the lily and is lifted up and transformed. So Jesus is the seed of God that enters our world. He is enmeshed and

buried in human flesh. He takes root in this world. Then he begins to lift. We give ourselves to him and are lifted up and transformed.

This is the fundamental truth of the incarnation. Modern theology does not like this truth, so it invents new theories to escape it. Modern theology is no kinder to the truth of the incarnation than history was. History had put God to one side. God walked back into the center through the incarnation. History had to embrace him. It did, with the murderous embrace of a bear at bay. The bear knows his enemy and crushes the life out of him. History knew its enemy--the enemy of the meaningless cycle of grasping and losing, conquering and succumbing, building and destroying. So what does modern theology do with the incarnation? It invents exemplarism. Jesus is the perfect man. Real Christianity should therefore forget all that foolishness about virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, and baptismal regeneration and just live like Christ did. Jesus was just a great human teacher and set us a good example.

There is an element of truth in exemplarism, of course. Every false doctrine must have its element of truth or it could deceive no one. Our Lord's earthly career is indeed an example in the sense that we have seen no better human life lived and never will. But to say that it is simply a model career by which we should model our careers is to apply a right answer to the wrong question. Jesus did not come to earth primarily to show men how to live but to reveal to them God's way with man. The law told men how to live. The right question to ask of the incarnation is not "How do men live?" but "What does God do?" The incarnation is not so much a revelation of God's nature as it is of his behavior.

The first announcement of the gospel is not a statement of God's nature or even of God's commands. The angel Gabriel appears to Mary to tell her what God is going to do. Now this does tell us one thing about God's nature. The thing it tells us is simply that he is a God who does things. It is unthinkable that God revealing himself in Christ should reveal himself out of character. Jesus is not showing us God on an off day. He is showing us God as he everlastingly behaves. He is not a God who laid aside his true nature to come to earth and save men. He is a God who expressed his true nature by coming to earth to save men. He acted in character. It is his way. He is then a God who operates among men and within men.

What proof can we offer that Jesus was indeed more than just the best of men? What evidence can we offer to prove that he was God? This question will be the subject of the second chapter in this series.

The Incarnation . . .

2. GOD IN HUMAN FORM

By N. E. Rhodes, Jr.

In the first chapter of Matthew the angel of the Lord appears unto Joseph in a dream and tells him that Mary's child must be named Jesus, for "he will save his people from their sins." This not only tells us something about what Jesus does but also who Jesus is. There are many opinions concerning this matter. Unitarians, Jews, Moslems, Hindus, and Atheists all deny that Jesus was God, yet they all agree that he was a great and good man. The Unitarian says Jesus was the greatest of all men but was divine only in the sense that all men are divine. The Jew says Jesus was a wise and good Rabbi but ran afoul of a puppet government in Jerusalem and was killed as a blasphemer. They argue that he could not have been Deity. The Moslem says Jesus was one of the six major prophets of God but was not as great as Mohammed. The Hindu says Jesus was a great mystic teacher whose teachings were misunderstood and corrupted by his followers. The Atheist says Jesus was a great humanitarian who has been misinterpreted by ignorance and superstition.

Forgives

Now all these ideas can be refuted by the one fact that Jesus claimed to forgive sins. There is no question but that Jesus came to earth as a savior. Christ forgiving sins is the central theme of the New Testament. It is what the whole book is about. If he does not forgive sins, then the whole book is false and there is no real proof that Jesus ever really lived. We might reject the doctrine of Christ forgiving sins and still quote from the book as we would from Shakespeare or Byron or an editorial, but we couldn't give it a special place in our thinking because we would consider it unreliable in its primary point. But the startling fact about this is that if Jesus could forgive sins, then he was God. The Jews were quite right when they asked the question, "Who can forgive sins but God?" Unless the forgiver is God, then a claim to be able to forgive sins is ridiculous. I can forgive you for stepping on my toes but not for stepping on everybody else's toes unless I consult them. I can forgive you for stealing my money but not for stealing everybody else's money. But Jesus acts as if in every case he was the one injured. All things are God's. Jesus' attitude here makes sense only if he is God. If he is not God, then such behavior is silly and conceited.

Teaches

Yet modern theology insists that Jesus was a great man while it stubbornly refuses to acknowledge him as God. It argues that Jesus was humble and meek. But when people want to accept Christ as a great moral teacher but not as God they are inconsistent. A man who was just a man and made the claims that Jesus did would not be a great moral teacher. He would be a lunatic or a devil. He would be either a crazy man or a blasphemer. We can laugh at him for being a fool, condemn him for a blasphemer, or worship him as God. But it is foolish to say he was merely a great human teacher. He said, "Before Abraham was, I am." He also said he would come to judge the world at the end of time.

God in Human Form

Modern theology attempts to escape this dilemma by arguing that Jesus meant he was God in the sense that all men are divine. They argue that all men created by God are indwelt by the Spirit of God and a part of God. Now this idea might be intelligently advanced if Jesus had been preaching to a bunch of pantheists when he made his startling claims. But he was not. He was talking to Jews. The Jews believed that God was apart from his creation in the sense of being above and beyond it. If this was not what Jesus meant by God, he was purposely misleading, for he knew what the term meant to them. If we accept the New Testament at all, we must accept the fact that Jesus was God revealed in human form.

Reveals

The revelation of God in human form enters history very gently by a human channel and shows us what perfect love is within the life of a man. It gives us something we can grasp and hold on to. First we see a baby and a long-hidden growth. Then we see the unmeasured outpouring and self-spending of an other-worldly love and mercy that teaches, heals, rescues, transforms, but never tries to get anything for itself. Looking deeper, we see beyond this a mysterious self-imparting and a more mysterious anguish and struggle, consummated at last in the most generous and lonely of deaths, issuing in a victory which has given life ever since to men's souls. Through this vivid life (what Christ does and how he does it) Christ's prayers, his compassion, his healing activities, his use of suffering, his communion with God and man, the light of reality floods our twilight inner lives and shows the human transfigured by the divine. God hath "in these latter times spoken unto us in his son." And how does God begin to reveal himself in his son? We will defer the answer to that question to a later chapter.

The Incarnation . . .

3. WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

By N. E. Rhodes Jr.

One of the most significant things that Jesus said was, "When you have seen me you have seen the Father." What then is God like? The heavens open and what is disclosed? At first a baby lying in a manger. Here is God manifest in the flesh, entering the world in a stable. Around him is straw, poverty, cold and darkness. These form the setting for the divine gift. Outside in the fields the shepherds look up, astonished to find the music and radiance of reality all around them.

The world is not to be saved by evolution but by incarnation. We will not naturally develop to the image of God. We do not have to. It comes down to us. The more deeply we enter into prayer, the more certain we become of this. Nothing can redeem us but the life-giving incursion from heaven. "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world." What we look for then as Christians is not Utopia but something which is given from beyond. Emmanuel means "God with us." The purpose is the whole creation won from rebellion and consecrated to the creative purposes of Christ. This means something far more drastic than the triumph of international justice and good social conditions. It means the transfiguration of the natural order by the supernatural and thereby the triumph of Eternal Love. Though we should achieve social justice, liberty, peace, racial equality, economic equality, and though we gave our bodies to be burned for these causes and yet lacked the love that can abide only in the human heart by a divine invasion, we would be nothing. The kingdom of heaven is the Holy, not just the moral. It is the Beautiful, not just the correct. It is the Perfect, not just the adequate. This, after all, is the real difference between love and law, grace and legalism.

Look now at the wise men from the East. They came to see the Christ. Here were scholars from an ancient culture, turning from their abstruse calculations and searching of the heavens because they see a new star. They feel driven to seek along fresh paths for a clue to the mystery of life. What they find does not seem at first sight to be what we should now call "intellectually satisfying." It was not a revelation of some cosmic mind but a poor little family party. It was found not in a cathedral but in a stable; not pageantry but squalor; not aesthetic satisfaction but swaddling clothes in a manger. Yet it brought them to their knees. They were truly wise men and like all the truly wise they were humble minded. And so we find them on their knees before a little, living, growing child. This is one reason why simplicity is valu-

able in worship. The utmost that man can achieve, on his own, capitulates before the unspeakable and mysterious simplicity of the method of God. The shepherds got there before the wise men did, but each worshiped and worshiped acceptably. Humble love always can and always will.

And when that Baby grew up he moved among men, declaring the kingdom of God. He set about it in the most practical way. He was not nearly so interested in great philosophies about love as he was in simple, loving, redemptive acts. "Jesus went about in all Galilee preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing all manner of diseases and all manner of sickness among the people." He was acting as a link between the love and harmony of heaven and the jangled and defective life of man. "Tell John the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed." Human life was being readjusted and made whole by the healing action of dynamic love. This love is exercised by one whose life is identical with his prayer. His instructions to his followers follow the same lines. They are to heal disharmony and misery wherever they find it. They are to meet with an eager and compassionate love the most repulsive aspects of life. They are to touch the leper, minister to the neurotic, and seek the degraded and the lost.

Christ announced the purpose of this love to be the bringing in of the kingdom of God. This would mean the giving back to our lost, tormented planet its place in the orchestra of heaven.

But how does this love act on our individual lives? It is much like the time that he walked to the disciples in the ship, "and the wind ceased and there was a calm." So Christ, when we turn to him, intervenes between us and the storm that threatens to overwhelm us. He comes to the rescue whatever the need. Sometimes it is on events that we feared might destroy us or the people and causes we love. But the presence of Christ among us today is a spiritual presence. If the incarnation is to be real to us, it must occur within us. Christ must be born in our hearts as once he was born on earth. And how is this to happen? We will discuss this in a later chapter.

The Incarnation . . .

4. GOD'S PREPARATION FOR THE BIRTH OF HIS SON

By N. E. Rhodes Jr.

We are now going to look steadily at the Christ to see how his Spirit is born in us and his life reproduced in us. What hinders the birth of the Spirit in the heart of man? The answer may be suggested by the fact that when Christ was born on earth he had to be born in a stable. There was no room in the inn. Is this why the Spirit of the Christ has not yet been born in you? There just isn't any room. Your heart is too packed with the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, resentments, greed, anxieties, and prejudices. Then what will change this situation? Evidently there must be preparation before Christ can be born. How will you make this preparation? Actually you will not make it at all. God has been working at your preparation all your life. Go back and look at the preparation God made for the birth of Christ on earth.

Listen to God's Promises

God singled out a man. His name was Abraham. He became a rich man with great flocks and herds. He was called the friend of God and the father of the faithful. Throughout the Bible he is recognized both as an historical character who actually lived and as a symbol for faith. He was the beginning of the preparation. Faith always is. Look at him striking out blindly from Ur. Look at him climbing Mount Moriah with Isaac his son to offer a terrible sacrifice. Listen as the Lord says to him, "In thy seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed." Listen as God promises him a son, against all nature and all hope. But Abraham believed the promise of God even against nature and against reasonable hope.

Leave Carnal Attitudes

God has promised your faith that his Son can be spiritually born in your life. Your carnal nature denies it. You look at your past life and it seems hopeless, and yet for years God has been preparing your faith as he prepared Abraham. He now tells you to get up and leave the familiar carnal attitudes even as he commanded Abraham to leave Haran. He orders you forth as he ordered Abraham, "not knowing whither he went." He does not say what hardships and struggles lie ahead for you. He simply speaks to your faith and commands you to get up and go forward in obedience to him. He calls for your faith to

sacrifice everything to him in complete surrender upon your own Mount Moriah. From that rich faith can come blessings for you and for all those around you.

Yield to Guidance

For centuries God made ready for the birth of his Son. For years he has been getting you ready for the spiritual birth of his Son in you. He sent Moses, who, like Abraham, was both an historical figure and a symbol. Moses is the symbol of law. He was God's agent in the delivery of Israel from Egypt, in their feeding, in their guidance. He pleaded with them, exhorted them, punished them, and at last brought them to the border of Canaan; but they could not go in.

For years God's law has been shaping you. Paul reminds us that the powers that be are ordained of God. All just law is based in God. Many types of law have shaped and directed your life. There was the law of your parents and their training and correction. There are the ethical and moral laws of decent society. There are the laws of your own conscience and even traffic laws and tax laws. All these have been shaping you, preparing you, teaching you, and convincing you that no man liveth to himself and that no man can have his own way about everything. They have taught you that there is such a thing as duty and that it is holy. The law has restricted your wild impulses, trained your energies and guided you. But when you stand at the border of Canaan, the law cannot take you in. It will take more than obedience to parents, more than your conscience, more than society, and more than government now. You must pass through the waters and inherit the kingdom God gives you.

Again God prepared a nation for the birth of his Son. He set up a temple and gave Israel a priesthood. And so God has been working on you. You have been to church many times and watched the worship. You have heard the praise of God in song and the prayers of Christians issue forth to rise like incense to the Lord.

But of all God's preparations perhaps one of the most vital was the mission of the prophets. We lack space to consider it here but we will turn our attention to it in the next chapter.

5. THE BIRTH OF THE CHRIST SPIRIT IN US

By N. E. Rhodes Jr.

God prepared his people for the birth of his Son by the mission of the prophets. They tore at Israel's conscience, pleaded for Israel's repentance, and ever talked in holy emotion of the glory of Israel's God. They spoke strange things about a coming Messiah and about how different everything would be when at last Messiah came. He would sit upon the throne of David and Israel would live in the kingdom of God.

Preparation in Your Soul

Has not God made the same preparation in your soul? Don't you remember that biting sermon that cut like a knife in the raw sores of your secret guilt? Don't you remember all those appeals you have heard pleading with you to repent and turn to God? You thought you had resisted them successfully, but each one took its toll. Those strange messages about the kingdom of heaven and how different life is there, viewed from the inside, have been molding your thought and leaving their mark. You have walked out of church and mentally shaken yourself like a terrier issuing from a swim in the creek. But the dew of grace does not shake off so easily.

Sowing in Your Soul

For many years God has been angling for your soul through strange encounters, circumstances, troubles, griefs, and pleasures. So for centuries he prepared Israel and then at last he sent his Spirit and a seed was sown. That seed grew in the womb of Mary and then the Christ was born. In the same way the Spirit of God sows the seeds of the kingdom in your soul. First you see the message, the seed the Spirit placed in the living word. At last the seed grows in your heart as it did in the womb of Mary. And when at last the Christ Spirit is born in you, the same angels who sang to the shepherds of old will open in glad hallelujahs in heaven; for "there is joy among the angels in heaven" over one sinner that cometh to repentance.

Fruition in Your Soul

Before Christ can be born in you, however, you must humble yourself and become as a little child. But do you not feel yourself at this moment hovering on the brink of such humility? This is the humility that can give up all its own vaunted knowledge and merit and cast itself humbly on the grace of God. Do you not feel the seed of the

Spirit swelling in the womb of your own spiritual life? Always before, pride, or prejudice, or fear, or hopelessness has held you back and smothered that seed crying for fruition. But surely now you see that this glorious thing can and must happen to you. God has spent too long in your preparation to let it go to waste. All your life, God has built toward this wonderful hour. All the meaning of your personality is narrowed down and gathered into this holy moment.

But once Christ is born in you, what then? Is there further wisdom in God's word for you? We have talked about how Christ is born in us and have seen that everything that was in preparation for and continuing with his birth on earth could in some way be repeated in our own experience. We were not just trying to be clever. The analogy is really there. There is no use trying to be clever about life. Only insofar as we find God in it do we find any meaning in it anyway. Without him it is a tissue of fugitive and untrustworthy pleasures, conflicts, ambitions, desires, frustrations, and intolerable pain. Cleverness doesn't help. To accept Christianity does not mean to have some elaborate philosophy of the Spirit. It means accepting the gospel story as touching our lives significantly at every point.

We have seen how the birth of Christ touches us and is repeated in our lives. This is true not only of his birth but also of the rest of his life. Nothing is written in the New Testament by accident. Everything is there because it gives us spiritual truth. It conveys to us the supernatural. It speaks to our condition. The higher critic worries about differences between John's account of the life of Christ and Luke's account. But I am interested in something else. Both accounts are charged with God. Both show me how Christ can live and grow in me. That is why meditation on the gospel is so nourishing to the soul. It gives us ever deeper light and better food as we grow in the humility and love which are the parents of true wisdom.

But what are we to say of the first thirty years? Surely there is nothing there to feed the Christian. We are told so little of that precious life while it was going through the tender freshness of childhood. But even here there is a lesson for us. It is a lesson we will consider in the next chapter.

6. THE PATIENCE OF CHRIST

by N. E. Rhodes Jr.

After the Christ is born, the new life grows in secret. For several years nothing very startling happens. He is simply a child in a carpenter's shop. After the return from Egypt there are no long pilgrimages nor seeking of new frontiers. There are no peculiar conditions attached to his life nor seemingly any need of them for some time. Such a life seems to have satisfied him and should satisfy us until our time comes. It is not heroic to try to seek something more glamorous or exciting than the environment in which God has placed us to serve. That third-rate little village of Nazareth with its limited social contacts and monotonous manual labor reproves us when we begin to complain about the paucity of our own scope and opportunities. And that simplicity, that quality of quietness and love for the ordinary, follows Christ even when the time came at last for him to leave Nazareth.

The child grew as other children grow. The lad worked as other lads of Nazareth worked. Once at twelve he went into the temple at Jerusalem and demonstrated what he really could do if given a chance. He amazed the doctors of the law with his wisdom. It seemed such a shame, such a prodigal waste, to bury a talent like this at Nazareth. Yet that is exactly what God did for eighteen more long years. Jesus goes back with his people to Nazareth and is obedient to them though he must have seen much there that chafed his soul.

This will be true in your life. When the Christ is born in you, you are eager to be up and doing. But those eighteen silent years should serve to convince you how gradual the soul's growth in the life of prayer and service must be. It is like the hidden life at Nazareth. We go on and on doing ordinary things and waiting on God. It is useless and silly to try to stretch ourselves beyond our place or outrun Christ in our foolhardy zeal: Growth in God is a far more gradual business than we realize at first. We are so raw and foolish in our notions. We think of ourselves as mature men of God when we are still just children of grace. We want to choke on meat when we can hardly digest milk. We want to run the kingdom when we can hardly run our own affairs. We want to control our brethren when we cannot yet control our own moods. All kittens like to behave like cats, but it is no good and the mouse gets away. We long to be up and doing when we are not yet done or even ripe. Spiritual impatience needs to remember that the higher a life develops, the longer its period of growth. Ephemeral insects become adult in a very short time. The new-born lamb gets up

and starts walking. But the human baby depends for months on its mother's love. Sanctity, childhood in God, is apt to be of long duration. We want to prepare ourselves and grow up in a few days or weeks for a life of highly applauded heroisms. We need to remember that Christ took thirty years to grow and only three years to act.

It will be this way as Christ grows in you. The Spirit will not suddenly stretch like a great gas balloon. It will simply fill you as you grow, develop, and make room. This is safer. Suddenly inflated balloons can burst. The healthy plant develops strong hidden roots before it tries to flower out and produce fruit. We sometimes think that we ought to shoot up quickly like the seed on the stony ground, but we should remember that such plants wither.

When you do not see startling results and amazing growth in the first few months of Christian life, don't grow discouraged. Think of the baby in the stable at Bethlehem and the little boy on the streets of Nazareth. Think of the young man in the carpenter's shop. The life was here that would change the history of the human race, but after thirty years there was not much to show for it.

And when at last the time comes and he does move, there are three basic temptations. There is the temptation to use his knowledge and power for personal profit. There is another temptation to use it sensationally for personal glory. There is yet a third temptation to sacrifice the spiritual to the material and use spiritual wisdom for material ends. We will be faced with these too. But look at Jesus as he confronts them and you will know how the Christ Spirit will meet them for you.

The whole personal ministry carries on the analogy I have suggested in these few articles on the incarnation. May I commend a study to you in which you consider again the books that tell of Jesus' life with such an analogy in mind. It will be most rewarding.

The stunning point of Christmas is that God considered my needs and the worth of my relationship to Him to be sufficient cause to go through the trauma of changing places.

-- Joseph M. Stowell

The Son of God became man to enable men to become the sons of God.

-- C. S. Lewis

THE COURAGE THAT MADE CHRISTMAS POSSIBLE

A Chinese itinerant evangelist was traveling one Christmas in the rugged province of Gansu. He trudged on foot from village to village. It was snowing and a cold wind blew, but his heart was warm.

This was his first trip as an evangelist, and he had made quite a few converts in the five villages he had just visited. But as he approached the sixth village, he was to be catapulted into a drama that, when looked back upon, seemed like a replay of Bethlehem itself.

He tells the story with great emotion:

"As I drew near the village, I sensed that something was wrong. People were huddled together, talking in low tones, glances darting accusingly at each other." I introduced myself to them. "Greetings, I am the bearer of Good News, that... "

"A small man interrupted me. "Well, we have only bad news here right now." With ill-concealed irritation, he explained, "A couple has just had their baby stolen."

In the poorer areas of China, where couples are restricted to one child, baby snatching is not uncommon. Indeed, there are even gangs that roam the countryside, stealing babies for wealthy childless couples in the cities.

I asked to see the couple, but the people just said to me, "Go away. We don't want you here. Stop pestering us and move on."

Tears sprang into my eyes. I had rarely been spoken to like that. Should I shake the dust from my sandals and move on? Or should I strive with them a while?

"Please take me to the couple," I pleaded with the villagers. "I may be able to help."

Reluctantly, maybe only because I was a stranger, they took me to the cottage of the unfortunate couple. I stepped inside the house to find both husband and wife staring quietly at me. Other villagers crowded at the doorway.

There was silence. The couple's grief hung heavily in the air. I said, "I'm so sorry to hear about your plight, but I know someone who may help...God. Let me pray to Him."

There was no reaction on the couple's faces, so I went into my prayer, feeling very uncomfortable indeed. "Dear Father, many years ago at this same time of year you sent a child into the world and rescued us all. We ask now that you will send back this child to us, and deliver this village from the sadness that grips it. Amen."

Suddenly the young husband spoke. "Shut up and go away. We have prayed to our gods and nothing has happened. Why should yours be any different?" I was grabbed from behind by the other villagers and propelled out of the village. "Don't you dare come here again!" they bawled as I retreated.

Failure and Resolve

What a failure! I wandered the hills in a daze of humiliation and tears. "Lord, have I prayed in vain?" I shouted.

Then I stopped, and began to think a little about Christmas. The Son of God had come to a world knowing He would be despised, kicked, beaten, misunderstood and finally crucified. Yet He still came.

And I thought, "I went to that village expecting a hero's welcome, or at the very least, I relied on being a curiosity, quizzed and entertained by people who live very dull and isolated lives. Instead, I had only been treated a little like Christ was treated." Kneeling there in the snow, I knew what I had to do. I had to go back to that village, knowing for sure I would be despised. This was to follow in the Master's footsteps. He had the courage. So must I. Yet I quaked with fear. Those villagers had handled me very roughly. My arms and shoulders were still sore from the bruises they had inflicted when they grabbed me. With a pounding heart, I turned and began to walk slowly back towards the village. It was going to be dangerous, and what would I say?

Welcome Sound

Suddenly, in the still afternoon air, I heard a baby's cry. I headed toward the sound. There was the cry again, coming from what appeared to be an old well shaft. I reached the shaft. Six feet down was a little baby, wrapped in a thick blanket, lying at the bottom of the dry well.

"Lord I praise you," I shouted into the well, and the booming echo frightened the child into another whimper. The baby was blue in the face, and I climbed down to hug some warmth back into it.

This must be the missing baby from the village, snatched only that morning. I unwrapped the blanket. Ah, there was the explanation, it

was a baby girl. Those who had taken it did not know it was a girl, and finding later that it was, left it in this old well to die. The city couples that finance this hideous trade invariably want only males.

I walked back to the village with the precious bundle of life clasped to my breast.

The villagers came running. They were amazed and overjoyed. Loving hands led me to the cottage of the poor couple, and the smile on the mother's face as I placed the baby into her lap was unforgettable.

"Come, warm yourself by the fire" said the husband. They drew up a chair for me, and as the other villagers crowded around, he asked, "Who was that God you prayed to?"

Honored Guest

What an invitation! Here I was, the honored guest, looking at 30 people waiting eagerly to hear the Gospel.

"Well," I began, "He came to earth in the form of a little baby, just about this time 2000 years ago "

The couple believed in Jesus that night, and I learned a great lesson. I only heard that baby's cry because I had turned to go back to the village. If I had refused, I would have walked in an entirely different direction, far out of earshot of the baby's cry.

If I had not had the courage to take the Gospel despite the consequences, I would never have found the baby, never have introduced people to the Lord. I had to first accept the price of evangelism, of taking the Good News knowing I would be despised, caring nothing for myself.

I gained a great insight that Christmas into the courage the Lord Jesus showed in coming to such an unwelcoming village as our world. I went back to that village reluctantly. He came willingly.

My prayer is, "God grant me more of that courage that made Christmas possible!"

That Bitter Brother of Jesus

Alex V. Wilson

Consider with me a member of our Lord's human family whom we rarely think about: James, the brother of Jesus. He should not be confused with James the son of Zebedee and brother of John. Those brothers were two of the three main leaders among the twelve apostles of Christ, but that James was martyred soon after the church began. Two or three other men named James also appear in the New Covenant scriptures.

The James we will study now is first mentioned as the oldest of Jesus' four brothers. Observe Mark 6:1-6, NIV.

Jesus...went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. "Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.

Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

Jesus' Siblings

Maybe you've heard that Joseph and Mary never had any children of their own -- that Jesus was Mary's only child. The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches have traditionally taught that these "brothers" and "sisters" of Jesus were merely His cousins, or else were Joseph's children by an earlier marriage (thus Jesus' half-siblings). There is no Biblical text that requires or even supports those views. And they arose only because of the idea which spread later in church history, that Mary was perpetually a virgin. But that idea is contradicted by Matt.1:25, "[Joseph] had no union with her until she gave birth to a son" (NIV). Or, he "kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son." (NAS.) Note the "until," which clearly implies that after Jesus' birth Joseph and Mary had normal sexual relations. (And if they didn't, it would violate the scriptural principle Paul set forth in 1 Cor. 7:3-5.)

Here are other verses about His brothers in addition to the one given above: John 2:12, [After His 1st miracle at the wedding feast in Cana,] Jesus went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. Matthew 12:47, Someone told Jesus, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." We'll see more as we proceed.

Thus it seems clear that after Mary had Jesus, she and Joseph had sons and also daughters. Jesus had four younger brothers, and James was the oldest of the four.

Imagine James' situation: (I admit we're speculating on *some* matters here.)

WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE...

*Growing up being the younger brother of a boy/man who to some people seemed flawless!

*Constantly being in your big brother's shadow?

*Having a brother who never goes along with your disobedience, or any bad ways?

*Having an older brother who is extremely bright and smart (like that time when he was only 12 but had that long, impressive discussion with scholars in the temple)?

BUT ALSO, WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE...

*Hearing tales from some folks in your village about your mom, dad and older brother. Snide remarks and questions like, "Didn't your parents ever tell you that your brother was born before they were married, and that Joseph admits he is not Jesus' dad?"

*When you ask your dad about that, he admits that yes -- your brother is not *his* son. But then he tells you an incredible story about angels and a supernatural birth, etc. And your dad even said that he and your mom believe that your brother actually is none other than *the Messiah!* Your brother!

*How would you feel when your brother turns 30 and leaves home. That means leaving the family carpenter shop for good, forcing you to support the family (for your father Joseph has died in the meantime)?

*How would you feel when before long your brother gets publicly endorsed by the headline-making prophet, John the Baptizer -- who happens to be a relative of your family?

*How would you feel when your brother himself becomes a *celebrity*, although a controversial one?

*How would you feel when a band of followers gather around your brother, following him around everywhere. They believe he is an outstanding teacher, maybe even the Messiah!

What would it be like? How would you feel?

So far we've done a bit of speculating. Now, let's see what we can learn about Jesus' brother James directly from the gospel accounts. They indicate that Jesus' siblings adopted a skeptical attitude toward His ministry and personal claims.

First the gospels raise *questions about James* because of what he did *not* do. Consider: Why didn't James himself become a follower of Jesus, and later even become a member of the 12 apostles? By that time it's likely that the younger brothers -- Joseph, Simon and maybe even Judas -- could run the carpenter shop and support the family financially.

If that were not possible, surely James could have joined the larger band of Jesus' disciples, and accompanied Him at least some of the time, while usually working in the shop at home. Why didn't he?

This fact by itself only *hints* at his doubts about Jesus. But here's some additional, and stronger, evidence of James' skepticism. Mark 3 says,

Jesus entered a house, and again *a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind"....*

[When] His mother and brothers arrived, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! *Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.*"

Now we know that Mary *did* believe in Jesus (Luke 1-2; John 2:1-11, etc.). Probably on this occasion she was just expressing a mother's deep concern for her son's health and welfare: "He's not taking care of himself -- all those people constantly thronging around him and not giving him even a minute's rest. And he's not even eating -- why, it's like he's out of his mind!"

But James and the other brothers seemed to be *really dubious* about Him -- truly questioning His sanity. Remember Jesus' statement after the people of Nazareth got riled up over His sermon there? 'Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor. ...And he was amazed at their lack of faith.'

James lacked faith in his brother. He was unwilling to honor Him as others were doing.

John 7:1-6 expresses these facts even stronger, and puts beyond any doubt the assumption we've been making. We read,

After this, Jesus... purposely [stayed] away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life. But when the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near, Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. No one *who wants to become a public figure [Sneer]* acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." For **even his own brothers did not believe in him**. Therefore Jesus told them, "....The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil."

Beyond the shadow of a doubt we know that at least by this time James and his younger brothers had rejected Jesus' claims to be the Messiah, or even a teacher sent from God. They did not believe Him.

In addition, James spurned his mother's testimony to Jesus. Surely, seeing James' unbelief, Mary must have given witness to Jesus' unique conception, the angelic announcements about Him, His special mission, His divine nature, His identity as the Messiah sent by the Lord.

But James refused to believe her. O how that must have grieved Mary. O how that must have hurt Jesus.

James' unbelief was so deep it led to his refusal to do his duty as a son and brother:

When Jesus was crucified, and Mary was there watching her son die, where was her next-born son? Why wasn't James there to comfort her in this her most tragic hour of shame, despair and the depths of grief? Oh yes, maybe -- just maybe -- he was back in Nazareth running the carpenter shop, and didn't know what was going on till too late. But note the following facts which seem to indicate otherwise.

While Jesus was hanging on the cross, John the apostle was there, along with Mary and her sister and some other women. Jesus said to Mary, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to John he said, "Here is your mother." Then we read, "From that time on, this disciple took her into his home." She went to live with John! Why? It would surely seem it was because James her son had forsaken her -- or at the very least had crudely snubbed her. (John 19:25 ff.)

Why didn't James take his brother's body down and help bury him? Why was it left to Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea to perform those sorrowful tasks? Because James did not believe in his brother, and apparently would have no part in seeming to back him.

O how his mother must have grieved, not only at the loss of her *first-born* but also her *second-born* -- and her other children who seem to have been influenced by him.

But That's Not the End of the Story, Praise God!

Notice God's Grace. In 1 Cor. 15:5-7 we read that Christ, after His resurrection, "appeared to Peter [who had denied Christ], and then to the Twelve [who had run away in fear]. After that, he appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living.... *Then he appeared to James....*" [who had never become His disciple at all].

What happened as a result? 1) James did become a disciple. He renounced his former unbelief and became a believer indeed. And as his younger brothers had formerly followed him in rejecting Jesus, now they followed him in their acceptance of Him. For we read in Acts 1:14 that after Christ ascended into heaven, the apostles "returned to Jerusalem [&] went upstairs to the room where they were staying.... They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with *his brothers*."

2) In the following years James and his brothers even undertook some evangelistic trips, apparently, for Paul writes in 1 Cor. 9:5, "Don't [Barnabas & I] have the right to take a believing wife along with us [on our travels], as do the other apostles and *the Lord's brothers*?"

3) Reading on in the Book of Acts, we see that as time passed James emerged as the leading elder of the church in Jerusalem. In Acts 21, Luke writes, "When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly. The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present" (17-19). He was the only elder whose name is mentioned.

Then in Gal. 2:8-10 Paul states: "God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars [leaders in Jerusalem & among all the churches], gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles [primarily], and they to the Jews" [primarily].

4) James is even called an apostle, though --like the apostle Paul-- he was not one of "the 12" original apostles of Jesus. Paul writes in Gal. 1:18-19, "Three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him 15 days. But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. (The NAS is clearer than the NIV regarding this verse.)

5) James wrote "James," one of the NT epistles. In his letter he refers to his older, once-despised brother as "our glorious Lord Jesus Christ." And he referred to himself humbly as "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (2:1; 1:1).

In several places the letter seems to reflect James' personal errors and experiences. We saw earlier that he had almost surely disbelieved his mother's story about herself and Jesus. He must have concluded that she had been nothing but an impure girl who after getting pregnant out of wedlock "trapped Joseph into marriage by silly stories of visions and dreams" (M. W. Hines). Then later, James seems to have thought, Mary conned Jesus into believing the same nonsense, leading Him to make preposterous claims about Himself and thus mislead multitudes. Due to Mary's loyalty to Jesus, James seems to have forsaken her in her widowhood -- leading Jesus to give her into the care of the apostle John. Now James, with shame seeing his errors, writes, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: *to look after ... widows in their distress*" (1:27).

James had formerly slandered his Brother as an insane fake. Now he urges the disciples of Jesus, "Brothers, do not slander one another" (4:11). He himself had wandered from truth into flagrant error, and yet God had forgiven him. So he appeals to his fellow-believers, "My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins" (5:19).

James had experienced God's gracious dealings with him. Based on his experience, he advises, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all *generously and without reproaching* -- *without finding fault* --, and it will be given to him" (1:5, RSV / NIV).

The Lord God had forgiven James, transformed his heart, and built him into an able leader and a teacher of practical righteousness. What grace! According to church history, James later demonstrated his devotion by suffering martyrdom, probably in 62 A.D. He had come a long way, and he followed his Master to the end.

Applications:

1. Familiarity breeds contempt: Don't let it happen to you, if brought up in a Christian home. Don't take such privileges for granted

2. God's astonishing grace: Forgiving a staunch, longtime, influential unbeliever and building him into a convinced, fully devoted follower of the One he used to oppose bitterly.

3. Christians, keep praying on and on for unconverted relatives and friends. Jesus, and Mary, must have prayed for *years* for James to trust and commit himself to Jesus. Finally he did!

[After this article was written and preached, an interesting discovery was made. On Oct. 21, 2002 the news media reported that a scholar has deciphered the inscription on a "burial box" (or ossuary) of bones he bought from an Arab antiquities dealer 15 years ago. The inscription says, "JAMES, SON OF JOSEPH, BROTHER OF JESUS." And experts say the box has not been tampered with, and that it dates to the mid-60's A.D. That is the time when Christ's brother James was killed for his faith, according to the historian Josephus.

If this find is genuine, it is the first *archeological* evidence of Jesus ever found. Of course there are numerous historical references to Him in *writings* by various contemporaries and near-contemporaries, both Christian and secular. But this, if actually the bones of Christ's brother, would be the earliest archeological inscription referring to the Lord. The names James, Joseph and Jesus were all common in that time. But hardly ever did such inscriptions refer to a brother. Why would it in this case, unless that Brother was more prominent than the man whose bones are there?]

[P.S.: Edward Fudge's *GracEmail* reported facts similar to the above. But one day later he published additional information he had received, as follows:

James A. Ayars, a Seventh-day Adventist scholar, writes that while the James Ossuary is a significant find, it is not the oldest archaeological reference to Jesus. "In September, 1945, an equally significant 'recovery' occurred in the back yard on the Talpiot Road, south of Jerusalem. Dr. Eleazar L. Sukenik and N. Avigad catalogued the contents of this 'catacomb,' and published the results in *The*

American Journal of Archaeology, 51: 351-365, October, 1947 under the title 'The Earliest Records of Christianity.' (see also 'A Tomb on the Road to Bethlehem,' *Look Magazine*, vol. 23, no. 25, December 22, 1947, pp. 75-79.)

"This tomb contained ossuaries holding the remains of various members of the Barsabas family (mentioned in Acts 1:23 and 15:22). What was most significant in this find were the inscriptions: 'Jesus is risen/ascended,' 'Jesus is LORD' and 'For Jesus, son of Joseph.' Another significant revelation was the use of the symbol of the cross on these ossuaries. According to coins and pottery evidence found within the ossuaries, this crypt was last closed in 42/43 A.D. These inscrip-tional evidences of Jesus predate the James Ossuary by two dec-ades."]

They all were looking for a king
To slay their foes and lift them high;
Thou cam'st, a little baby-thing
That made a woman cry.

-- George Macdonald

I would have liked to have seen the baby Jesus. But the glo-ri-fied Jesus yonder at the right hand of the Majesty on high, was the baby Jesus once cradled in the manger straw. Taking a body of humiliation, He was still the Creator who made the wood of that manger, [and] made the straw.

-- A. W. Tozer

Our trouble is we want the peace without the Prince.

- Addison Leitch

A little girl said she liked Santa Cause better than Jesus be-cause "you have to be good for Santa only at Christmas but for Jesus you have to be good all the time." Much of the Christmas observance at church is not far removed from that attitude.

-- Vance Havner

A Man of Vision and Faith: Victor N. Broaddus,

Dec. 1926 - Oct. 2002

A. V. W.

A thrilling memorial service for Victor Broaddus -- lasting over two hours -- testified to his powerful influence for the Lord, especially in missionary work. Those who spoke included two Filipinos and one Chinese who were among the fruit of his overseas ministry, and three missionaries who were mentored by him. Also a preacher who mentored him after Victor returned to the U.S. from prison camp in World War 2. Another one who prayed and worked with him a lot in recent years. And a preacher with a widespread prophecy-teaching ministry who had been introduced to that aspect of God's Word by Victor. Also his two sons, plus a fellow-elder at Cramer and Hanover Church -- from whence Victor and Mae were sent to the mission field and where they have served in the years since their return. Let's see what we can learn about, and from, this brother.

Growing Up, and Imprisonment

Victor grew up as a "missionary kid" in China. His parents decided to speak Chinese even in the privacy of the home, so that they would all master the language. The beneficial result of their decision was that when Victor grew up he spoke Cantonese better than many Chinese people did. The down side was that when the family returned for a year in the U.S., and Victor enrolled in first grade, he knew very little English!

When World War 2 broke out, Victor, his step-mother and younger brother and sisters were in Manila. His father, foreseeing the Japanese invasion of China, had moved them there for safety. He then returned to Hong Kong, believing he could minister there for a while before having to flee. He could not have known that the Japanese would invade the Philippines (and Hong Kong too, I believe) on the same day they attacked Pearl Harbor! So Victor's dad, Emmett Broaddus, became a prisoner of war. He died of heart trouble some months afterwards, but his family in Manila was not informed till a year later!

That year they had lived under house arrest, but then had no choice but to become prisoners in the campus of the University of Santo Tomas in downtown Manila. Along with thousands of other foreigners they lived in dire conditions. During the first year Victor, in his mid-teens, had only one shirt and one pair of pants to wear. By the

second year his shirt was worn out and his trousers became shorts -- for the lower part had to be cut off so the seat of his pants could be patched. Not only was there deprivation, but grim experiences of seeing severe punishments handed out by the guards from time to time. (For instance, some boys who deflated the tires of the soldiers' jeep were shot.) Yet the prisoners established a school of sorts, where Victor received a good high school education. And there were some amazing answers to prayer.

Toward war's end, the camp commandant was told to retreat to the other side of the river, where the Japanese planned to dig in. But, said the secret order, "before leaving the camp, execute all the men prisoners, 18 years old and above." Victor was eighteen. The Filipino underground learned of this plan, and informed Gen. MacArthur whose troops were heading toward Manila. He sent a special detachment ahead of his main body of men, and they freed the prisoners only hours before the deadly deadline.

Though the prisoners were thus marvelously delivered, the total impact of those years took its toll. When the family boarded ship for the U.S. some time later, Victor was dead sure of two things. 1) He never wanted to set foot in the Philippines again. 2) He never would be a missionary anywhere. Six years later he returned to Manila as a missionary!

Missionary Ministries

Those six years were important for four reasons. 1st, the Lord cleansed his heart of the bitterness that had accumulated during the war. 2nd, he studied at Harding College. 3rd, there he met and later married Mae Webb. In her he found a worthy woman. Through the decades she has been an outstandingly gracious and capable wife, mother, missionary and partner in Victor's every good work. 4th, he became experienced in church work, at Harding but also under the mentoring of Orell Overman and H. L. Rutherford.

Thus in Dec. 1951 Victor, Mae and baby Richard arrived in Manila. The young, lanky American who spoke fluent Cantonese easily got people's attention, and soon he began a Chinese church. Later an English-speaking Filipino congregation was also established.

(We will always remember joint church meetings when the same song would be sung to the same tune but in three languages simultaneously --Cantonese, Tagalog and English!) When Dennis Allen arrived a few years later (followed by Betty afterwards), Central Bible Institute was begun to train "lay-leaders" as well as preachers. Through the years many unsaved college students also enrolled, and a number were converted. Thus it served an evangelistic goal too.

As time passed, a number of churches were planted in various provinces. Victor helped start some of these, and strengthened others which were begun by others but remained very weak. There were many ups and downs in all the churches -- joys and heart-breaks, thrills and disappointments. (So, *what's new?*)

The Lord called the Allens to serve in Hong Kong, but before long Harold and Vena Preston arrived in the Philippines. Harold had been a pilot in the war, and Victor suggested buying a plane to make it easier to reach the outlying churches. Funds were raised and a Cessna 4-seater was bought and named *Wings of Life*. Victor also learned to fly, and many trips were made to proclaim the Gospel.

After Ruth and I and baby Steve arrived in 1963, I remember flying with Victor. Two trips were especially memorable. We went to Zamboanga and Agusan in the southern Philippines and tried to help folks escape the shackles of "we're the only true church." We also flew and then hiked quite a way to visit some exciting churches in isolated eastern Mindoro. No foreign missionary or Filipino preacher had established them. Rather, they had sprung up because at the end of the war a departing G.I. gave a simple farmer a New Testament. He read it, believed it, obeyed it, and convinced almost his whole village to do the same. Then they spread the Word and a few other churches sprang up as well.

Through radio Victor also preached the Gospel to Communist China. For at least ten years he recorded messages in Cantonese which were beamed to the mainland by the Far East Broadcasting Company's far-reaching transmitters. He bought and used a printing press as well. His main purpose was to edify the scattered churches by means of a monthly magazine which he published -- *Christian Platform*. Every month Mae wrote Sunday school lessons to help teachers. Various ones of us contributed articles, and the Word of the Lord spread.

Meanwhile Central Bible Institute (now College) began to dwindle in number. Victor searched and searched for property we could buy, instead of continuing to use the rented building from which we might be evicted at any time. His vision was to remain in downtown Manila, in order to stay near both the Chinese area and the "university belt" from which CBI drew many students. The Lord finally led him to a suitable place, and members in Manila plus many of you *Word and Work* readers donated generously to make its purchase possible in 1967. [*Update*: The building became terribly worn out, but during 2001 it was finally replaced by a sturdy new one.]

We were extremely grateful for the new location. It caused the student body to grow right away. I once had a class at the former building with only one student, but I taught three classes with over 50 students each at the new location during our last semester there, in 1983. The enrollment still fluctuates, of course, but has reached as high as 150. Contrasted with other Bible institutes or Christian colleges in the city outskirts, C.B.I. was very unglamorous. By and large its neighborhood is dirty, extremely noisy, and often thick with bus exhaust. The streets often flood during rainy season, and there's no grassy campus -- only buildings! But it's near the transportation lines, and multitudes of people -- especially students. From this simple, unpretentious school the Lord has raised up many workers and leaders for churches, and also for many other important Christian ministries in the Philippines! How He loves to use weak things to demonstrate His sufficiency and strength. (See 2 Corinthians 12.)

Later Life

Ruth and I were surprised and saddened when in early 1970 -- toward the end of the Broadbuses' furlough -- Victor called to say he had agreed to stay in the U.S. for another year. Southeastern Christian College in Winchester, Kentucky asked him to be interim president for a while so they could find a fulltime leader. He was the only one all sides would accept. Apparently he did a good job, for the next year they appointed him fulltime president. Though the school closed in 1979, I imagine that would have happened sooner had he not been at the helm.

Victor returned to the Philippines several times in following years. He brought teams of folks, mostly college students, on trips to survey mission work in various lands -- Japan and Hong Kong as well as the Philippines. These were profitable times, and could be humorous as well. We shall always remember the year when two fellows, Walt and Wade, carried their cameras everywhere and took pictures of almost everything. One night we suggested the group attend a concert in a cathedral. That didn't appeal to the guys, so they dragged along reluctantly as we all attended. It so happened that Imelda Marcos also attended, escorted by her bodyguard (a general)! There she was, across the aisle and just one row back from us -- one of the best-known women in the world! At concert's end she walked right in front of our row (she smiled at Victor as she passed). Guess what? To their chagrin, Walt and Wade (expecting a dull evening) had left their cameras home that night!

At SCC Victor not only served as president but also directed the choir some years. Music of all kinds, but especially singing, was always a key ingredient of his life. He also began the Timothy Club,

open to any young men interested in preaching. As I understand it, he provided practical training, and the group would share their questions, joys, sorrows and struggles.

When SCC closed, Victor gave himself to encouraging mission work. He opened the Church of Christ Worldwide office to freely forward funds to the fields. This functioned, and still functions, under the auspices of the Cramer and Hanover Church. Victor was an elder and teacher there ever since his return from Manila. He also published *Missionary Messenger*, a magazine with challenging articles and letters from missionaries. He organized missions-emphasis meetings and conferences. He compiled and distributed the yearly Missionary Prayer-Guide when C. V. Wilson could no longer do so. (It's good that Bennie Hill, assisted by others at Cramer and Hanover, has now taken up this task.)

Victor believed in prayer. Ben Rake mentioned that one year during a Bill Gothard seminar in the Lexington area, Victor served as a prayer-counselor. That meant he missed the messages in order to pray for them, and also be available for individuals who came to the prayer-room with their problems. David Reagan tells in his book *Trusting God* how he asked Victor to pray and anoint him (James 5), when a kidney-stone threatened to keep him from holding an important series of meetings. Victor prayed, God healed, David preached, and many responded!

Victor would be the first to insist he wasn't perfect. But he was a man sent from God. Another comic/tragic incident must be told, for it reveals his meekness and trust in the Lord. One time, early in his missionary career, some Christians in Hong Kong asked him to visit there and help them with some problems they faced. On Sunday before the meeting began another missionary appeared and asked (or demanded) to preach that time. He had preached for them on some former occasions, and the church gave in to his insistence. He proceeded to lambaste Victor as a false prophet, a teacher of error, a dangerous man who should not be welcomed but disfellowshipped! But that's not all. That missionary did not know Cantonese, and none of the Chinese there knew English. Victor was the only one who could interpret the message, so he did!! He translated the whole message accurately, just as the man said it. The result was that Victor's obvious integrity won the people's hearts all the more, and doomed the other fellow's efforts to destroy his testimony.

Our Lord gave Victor much wisdom and many abilities, and he used them with faith, zeal and humility. We praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit for our dear brother.

VOICES from the FIELDS

James and Karen Ashley have been involved in Bible translation in the Solomon Islands since 1986. They estimate that this next year will see the completion of their work on the Sa'a New Testament. There are many checks yet to be completed as they work towards a final draft that is error free, properly formatted, and ready to be printed.

While the Solomons used to enjoy a reputation as "The Happy Isles," a coup d'état and ethnic fighting in June 2000 has destroyed the peace and left the government and the economy struggling to survive. Law and order are no longer respected, and essential services like health care and transport are severely compromised.

The Ashleys spend most of their time living and working in the rural island village of Sa'a. The Sa'a people have a long history of "doing church" thanks to missionaries more than a century ago, but their spiritual lives are shallow due to church traditions that emphasize rituals more than understanding of the word of God.

Prayer Requests:

Pray for the Sa'a people to be hungry for God's word and to be willing to apply it to their lives.

Pray for every facet of the translation work to be under God's protection, as Satan's attacks often escalate in the final stages of a project.

Pray for national coworkers David and Jonathan, as family and community problems affect their work.

Pray for the equipment to function "glitch-free," as computer problems, solar power shortages, radio malfunctions, etc. make it difficult to meet daily translation goals.

Pray for the Ashleys to remain healthy, as treating anything beyond the most basic illness requires a trip to the capital and possibly even Australia.

Pray for their children to love and trust God as they are all away at school: Kent, a senior at Bryan College; Philip, a freshman at Harding University; Susan, in the ninth grade at a school for missionary kids in neighboring Papua New Guinea

Pray for godly leaders in the Solomon Islands society and government to implement wise solutions to a huge list of problems as they try to move the country away from civil war towards peace and stability.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

Cramer Church (Lexington, KY) Bro. Victor Broadus' Memorial Service - A heavenly celebration was experienced by over 250 who came to the homegoing of Bro. Victor on October 30th. Twelve men glorified God as they spoke of the godly influence Victor had on them. Voices were joined together in song and worship culminating with the Hallelujah Chorus! Victor's children celebrated in specials of their heritage, singing "It took a miracle." The entire service was such a testimony to Victor's life and our glorious hope! We extend God's comfort and our love and prayers to Sis. Mae and their family. She has so tirelessly and faithfully attended his bedside now for over 9 months.

Woodland Bible Camp (Dugger, Ind.) 2002 Highlights:

- *all new water lines to kitchen
- *improvements to recreational building.
- *shower in cooks' cabin renovated.
- *Jr. Wk had 56 campers - 33 staff members. 89 total.
- *Since 1964: \$721,624.07 receipts; Attendance: 19,108; Retreats: 3,363; Baptisms: 647. Woodland Bible Camp is truly a mission field.

Antioch Christian Camp (Frankfort, Ky.) Word was re-

ceived last week that the Camp has been sold to a young couple whose desire is to operate another camp.

Antioch Camp was the result of the vision of Brother Clayton & Sister Myrtle Goins who in the early 1970's donated 36 wooded acres for the development of a Bible Camp. Several men will remember camping out on the original site long before the tabernacle was built. The camp has been used over the years as a means of reaching boys & girls with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And only eternity will tell the many who were influenced there to make decisions for Christ.

Sellersburg (Ind) Dennis Royse writes: "The youth group is busy with a 'shoebox ministry.' They will fill shoeboxes with things like homemade cards, cookies, candy, small devotional books, tapes, pictures, etc. and then send them to servicemen and other family members for Christmas. A suggestion was made to send shoeboxes to missionaries who can distribute them to the children they come in contact with." What a wonderful way to get more involvement for missions.

Bethany Home (Japan) How much do you appreciate celebrating Thanksgiving? Bro. Moto writes: "Two years ago I was in need of a cooked Thanksgiving Turkey for some of my English

students. Since our oven is so small, Yoriko and I decided to shop in Tokyo and purchase a cooked turkey from one of the many hotels. We spent \$100.00 and another \$65.00 to have it sent to Bethany. Everyone seemed satisfied with this rare once-in-a-life-time gift for our kids at Bethany." As you celebrate this Thanksgiving, remember many throughout the world who are less fortunate.

Missions Around the World Prayer-Praise Booklets...were distributed at the Louisville Area Thanksgiving Service on Thanksgiving Day. If you were not able to attend and would like a copy (s) for your church please contact: Bennie Hill, P.O. Box 54842, Lexington, KY 40555. e-mail: bhill40482@aol.com

Our Lord Answers Prayer
"Today I was listening to WLW, Cincinnati. The trucker, Ron Lantz, who made the 911 call that resulted in the capture of the suspected 'sniper' killer was on the air. Lantz is a Christian man and recounted an incident of a week earlier. He was driving on I-70 in the east and talking with other truckers on his CB radio. He asked them if they believed in God and after getting many yes's asked them if they would join him in a prayer service. They chose a place to meet and 75-80 truckers stopped there. They had their prayer service for our country and a week later the shooter was caught. The place they stopped was about 30 miles from

where the suspect was apprehended. **God Is Good And In Control!!!**" --Judy Harless; passed on by Jerry Carmichael. [Additional comment by avw: This has been verified as a true story, not an "urban legend" as so many "wonderful" stories turn out to be. *World* magazine had an article with more details.]

MUSLIMS ACCEPT CHRIST

-- Ian Shelburne, gracEmail subscriber and missionary to Uganda, reports an unusual openness among Muslims to the gospel. Following a recent funeral, a Muslim businessman named Ali expressed appreciation for Ian's funeral sermon. "Thank you for telling us how beautiful Jesus is," he said, "without telling us how bad we Muslims are." About 50 Muslim villagers have believed in Jesus as Savior and have been baptized. A national Muslim leader spoke against the conversions but the villagers withstood him. You may send a word of encouragement to Ian at ishelburne@bigfoot.com.

MAJOR SHIFT -- A century ago, more than half of the world's Christians were European. Today, only about 25% reside in Europe, and that percentage will likely shrink to 20% by 2025. Africa and Latin America, by contrast, accounted for approximately 12% of world Christians a century ago. They now constitute 40%, and are expected to be home to over half of the world's two billion Christians

by 2025. (*Modern Reformation*, Nov./Dec. 2002, via GracEmail).

Idea for Preachers, & their Kids--Pastors' kids usually don't like to hear themselves used as stories in a parent's sermon. But incidents in their lives sometimes are great to illustrate a given point. So, what does a minister do? A pastor came up with a clever solution. Every time he uses a son or daughter as a sermon illustration (good or bad), that child gets \$5.00 ... if that son or daughter was listening.

Not a bad arrangement. The five bucks eases whatever embarrassment there might have been, and the system keeps family members attentive during the sermon.

So ... your kids are older and would never settle for \$5.00? Well, you should have thought of the idea earlier on your own. -- David R. Mains, "Sunday Soundbytes"

You might need to know this: Garry Moore once devised an answer to take care of crank letters. "The enclosed letter," he would write, "arrived on my desk a few days ago. I am sending it to you in the belief that as a respon-

sible citizen you should know that **some idiot is sending out letters over your signature.**" -- James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited

Portland Ave. Church, Louisville, Homecoming: On Nov. 17 the church celebrated its 125th anniversary! (Bro. Alex says, "No wonder we're tired!") It was founded in 1877 by 2 men from a downtown church as a "mission Sunday School" (or church-planting outreach, it might be called now).

The auditorium was filled (it usually is not!) for this homecoming day. The preacher told of God's numerous blessings to and through the congregation during a century and a quarter, and challenged all to press on. Sharing of food, memories and memorabilia, plus a praise-concert concluded a glorious day.

Highland Community Church, Louisville, Ordination: On Nov. 17 James Girdley was ordained as a minister of the Gospel. He has been preaching/teaching at the church already for some time, but this step publicly and officially expresses the church's acknowledgment and affirmation of his gifts and call to ministry.

Please Notice:

Effective immediately (i.e. the March-May Quarterly) the price of our Sunday School Quarterly will be raised to \$1.50.

SCHOOL of BIBLICAL STUDIES

Class Schedule for Spring Semester, 2003

Classes begin Jan. 6 - End April 29

Bible Doctrines - II	Mon. 1:00 - 4:00	Jerry Carmichael
Library Orientation	Mon. 4:00 - 5:00	Alice Mullins
Homiletics - I	<u>To be Announced</u>	Bennie Hill
New Testament Church	Tues. 6:30 - 8:30	Earl Mullins, Sr.
Church History - II	Thur. 6:30 - 9:30	Alex Wilson

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