

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The *Word and Work*



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

July, 2005

**Reaching folks
with Love,
Impacting them
with Truth**

The 58th Annual Kentucky / Indiana Fellowship

August 1st - 4th, 2005

Theme: **INTENTIONAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

Monday Evening, August 1

7:00 - 7:20 pm Woodland Bible Camp Singers Concert

7:30 pm Weeds Grow, Fruit Requires Cultivation Sonny Childs

Tuesday, August 2 - Personal Spiritual Growth

9:00 Prayer Time

9:20 Enemies of Personal Growth

David Tapp

10:20 Allies of Personal Growth

Jerry Carmichael

11:20 Exposition: Jonah

Mark Yarbrough

1:15 Repentant Confession: Pre-requisite of Growth Jim Girdley

7:30 Champions of Spiritual Growth Mark Yarbrough

Wednesday, August 3 - Family Spiritual Growth

9:00 Prayer Time

9:20 Enemies of Family Growth

Earl C. Mullins, Jr.

10:20 Allies of Family Growth

Tim Morrow

11:20 Exposition: Jonah

Mark Yarbrough

1:15 Strategies & Resources for Family Growth

Rubel Shelly

7:30 Intentional Growth for All God's Family Rubel Shelly

Thursday, August 4 - Congregational Spiritual Growth

9:00 Prayer Time

9:20 Enemies of Congregational Growth

Rubel Shelly

10:20 Allies of Congregational Growth

Mike Chapman

11:20 Exposition: Jonah

Mark Yarbrough

1:15 Need and Resources for Numerical Growth

Bud Ridgeway

7:30 Spiritual Growth in Today's Culture

Nick Marsh

Children's classes (grades K-2, 3-4 & 5-6) will be held Mon.-Thurs. nights, 8:00-8:45. A class for youth grades 7-12 will be held Tues.-Thurs. nights 8:00-8:45.

There will be a missions offering Wed. Night; make checks to Ky/Ind Cn. Fellowship.

Housing Committee: Bud Ridgeway (502) 477-8255; Clint Dorman (812) 246-2600

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

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

For audio cassettes of the messages, contact Don Stump (502) 477-2252

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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Our Terrible Problem, and God's Wonderful Solution

Alex V. Wilson

Personally, I am very wary of formulas or “canned” approaches in evangelism: “Knock on the door and when they open it, smile and begin with the statement....” Of course the basic Gospel message is always the same. But people and circumstances differ widely, and our interacting with them needs to be flexible and relevant. It also needs to spring from loving concern, not merely a grim sense of duty nor an attempt to earn brownie points with God.

Don't get me wrong. It's possible for neighborhood knocking-on-doors campaigns to be done lovingly. But sometimes they are not, more's the pity. Also, it's obvious that folks need to be warned about common errors to avoid in evangelism. But no cut-and-dried, one-size-fits-all procedure will be effective.

Nevertheless, all disciples definitely need to know the fundamentals of the Good News. And that is where we should urge every Christian who doesn't have a clear grasp of that news to *study and learn an outline*. Really learn it, as in “memorize and review it”! This will give them more confidence when opportunities open up to share with the unsaved. But along with such an outline, we all should learn how to adapt those truths *in various ways* to meet varying needs and problems. Also of prime importance is “evangelizing with our ears.” Ideally, before we start talking we should listen carefully. We need to pay attention to the concerns in our unsaved friends' hearts and the questions in their minds.

And we should ask the Lord to lead us by His Holy Spirit. We need to be sensitive to His nudging. Thus we can learn when to talk less and listen more. When simply to sympathize and cry, and when to say as Nathan did—“*You are that sinful man!*” When to share the Good News (which actually begins with bad news), step by step, or when to merely say, “Oh, I'm so sorry about those personal problems you're facing; how can I help?” When to apply God's convicting commands (His “law”) and when to use His comforting promises. When to try to refute our friend's objections to the Bible, miracles, or the failures of Christians; and when to probe beneath the surface: “Is that *really* your main problem, or are you only evading what you know is your deep need to surrender your will to the God who made you?”

May our Lord make us loving and wise fishers of people!

Returning to our need to grasp and explain what used to be called "the plan of salvation," here are two outlines I have sometimes found useful. The advantage of the first is it's easy-to-memorize a-b-c-d approach. The second is taken entirely from Romans, which saves skipping all around in the Bible. (The Bible publishers used to print "Romans" all by itself, as they do the gospels. But I can't find such booklets any more.) Of course both outlines are just that; skeletons which need to be fleshed out. Maybe your class or your family would find it profitable to work on this together.

Helpful Outline #1

A—There is something to **ADMIT**: "I am a sinner and need a savior." We all have broken God's commands, whether by active rebellion (knowingly doing wrong) or by passive neglect and unconcern (selfishly failing to do good things). *Scriptures*: Romans 3:23; 6:23a; James 4:17. Also Mark 12:30 is valuable for the proud and self-righteous. Use it along with this challenge: "You (and I) are guilty of the greatest sin there is! For the greatest sin is to break the greatest commandment. Do you claim to have kept *that*?"

B—There is something to **BELIEVE**: "Jesus is the Savior I need." He is God's only solution for our sin. He can save because 1) He is the Christ, the eternal Son of God; Matt. 16:16-17. 2) He died for our sins, to pay our penalty; Romans 5:8. 3) He arose from death and is alive forever—present and active in the world today; thus He can change our hearts and lives; 1 Cor. 15:3-6.

C—There is something to **CONSIDER**, a **COST** to **COUNT**: Consider that real "belief" or "faith" always includes 1) Repenting—turning from sin and self; and 2) Surrendering our life to Jesus—for He is "Lord" or Boss as well as Savior (Luke 9:23-24); and 3) Confessing or acknowledging our allegiance to Him. We do this by being baptized—a symbol of being "buried" and "raised" with Christ "to live a new life" (Romans 6:4). We also confess our faith (and nourish it so it grows stronger) by being regular and active in a local church, plus by obeying the Bible in our daily life. Acts 2:38-46 shows how the very first Christians both preached and practiced these things. Realize, however, that these actions do not *earn* forgiveness—they give *evidence* of it. Our good works are not the *cause* of salvation, but its *result*. (Eph. 2:8-10.)

A, B and C take place in our minds. We need to realize our need to Admit, Believe and Consider. But then we need to make a decision in our will:

D—There is something to **DECIDE**: We must not just know, believe and consider what the Lord wants, but **DO** them! In Revelation 3:20 Christ compares this to opening the **DOOR** of our heart to

Him as He knocks! He pictures the unsaved person's life as a house, and He is outside. But He wants to come in with forgiveness and new life, so He is knocking. He won't batter the door down; you must invite Him in (as described above) or He won't come. But if you do open the door of your heart and life, taking Him as your Savior and Lord, He won't run away! He will gladly accept your invitation.

Helpful Outline #2, "The Romans Road"

This overlaps with the first outline, of course. But as pointed out, it all comes from Romans.

1. OUR TERRIBLE PROBLEM

- Romans 3:23, All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- Rom. 6:23-a, The wages of sin is death...

2. GOD'S WONDERFUL SOLUTION

- Rom. 6:23-b, The wages of sin is death, but the *gift* of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Rom. 5:6 & 8, At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.... God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

3. HOW to RECEIVE CHRIST, GOD'S SOLUTION

- Rom. 10:9-10, If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
- Rom. 6:4, We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

4. FANTASTIC RESULTS of RECEIVING CHRIST:

- Rom. 8:1, There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- Rom. 5:1-2, Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.
- Rom. 5:5, God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

5. HOW to EXPERIENCE THOSE RESULTS, MORE and MORE:

- Rom. 12:1-2, Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

What good news! What a great God! May we learn and then share these glorious truths far and wide.

“Having NO HOPE and WITHOUT GOD in the World”

Frank M. Mullins, Sr.

The above quoted words from Ephesians 2:12 describe the condition of a vast host. They have no hope for eternity and no access to God in the present time. This vast host of people is made up of your neighbors, your closest friends, your nearest relatives...those closest to your heart and life. They possess many admirable qualities. They enjoy much of prosperity... they live comfortably in these days of plenty. They hold responsible positions. They have the esteem of their fellow men. But They Have No Hope! They are not prepared for eternity. They do not know what it means to look to God in the every day affairs of life, and when the time of troubles and sorrow comes they must bear their burden alone without God. How tragic is their going out into eternity with no hope and without God!

You may well ask: “But how can you know this is their state?” Very simply: The Lord said, “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.” (I John 2:23 NAS) Again Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.” (John 14:6 NAS) In the first verse of I Timothy the Holy Spirit led Paul to write these words: “Christ Jesus our hope.” There is no such things as hope and access to God apart from God's Son and His blood atonement on the cross. “God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:17-18 NAS) Why do they have no hope and are without God? Because They Have Not Accepted Christ.

A Dramatic Example of God's Life-Changing Power

Colombia, South America: Violent bombings and shoot-outs between leftist guerrillas, right-wing para-militaries, drug-dealers, Colombian army forces and even satanic cults has pushed Colombia to the brink of anarchy. No group recognizes neutrality as an option in this 35-year-old war that demands every person to take sides. There's no hiding place within Colombia's borders. [Therefore many pastors, evangelists and elders as well as regular believers have been shot just for "not being on our side."]

In South America's most violent country, Colombia's Bellavista National Jail was its most violent prison until two Christian believers brought the gospel to the prison in 1990 and stopped a riot. Hundreds of inmates -- among them the nation's most notorious killers -- accepted Christ, and the murder rate within the prison plummeted from sometimes 60 in a month to less than one a year.

Now a Bellavista Bible Institute thrives in the prison. Some graduates who completed their prison sentences have become full-time Christian workers in ministries such as halfway houses that enable other released Christian prisoners to transition to life outside Bellavista. Informal Bible studies abound in cellblocks once stained in graffiti written in victims' blood. Even as Colombia continues its downward spiral into violence and anarchy, Bellavista's revival serves as a laboratory case-in-point that **the gospel [and only the gospel] can rescue this seemingly hopeless nation.**

SATAN'S SUCCESS

Edward Fudge

Somewhere around 300 A.D., the story goes, the demon hordes gathered in emergency meeting to discuss how to hinder the gospel's spread and to impede Christ's kingdom. Satan presided and received proposals. "Let's persecute these Christians," one demon suggested. "It won't help," another replied. "The more we persecute them, the more they increase." Other suggestions followed -- discouragement, false doctrine, internal strife. Each suggestion was discarded as being ineffective. Finally an enterprising devil spoke. "Let's make the church of Jesus Christ popular and wealthy," he said. "Entice these Christians to abandon the catacombs, houses and marketplaces. En-

courage them to build fine church buildings. When they have all gone inside, lock the doors and their progress will fade into oblivion."

Jesus charged his followers to "go make disciples," adding the promise, "I am with you always." But somewhere along the line we seem to have forgotten his words, or to have become confused. "Come to us," we now say, from the safe security of our church building. What has happened to turn things backwards? Has the institutional church obscured the spiritual kingdom? Has maintenance replaced mission? Has head knowledge become disconnected from heart passion? Has Christ's commission given way to church culture and comfort? Do our congregational budgets and church calendars provide any clues? Why is most of our money and time as church now spent in seeking and serving . . . the saved?

Most of us are like people who signed on to operate the spiritual lighthouse, but who then decided to decorate and enjoy the lighthouse instead (see <http://regions.ivcf.org/evangelism/252>). We resemble workers sent to harvest the orange groves, who instead formed societies to study and admire the orange-harvesters manual (see <http://psalms150-6.com/stories/orangegrove.html>). [See below.] The early church began when God energized a group of scared and demoralized disciples with wind and fire from heaven. The church's stagnation began when a later generation of disciples began erecting fine church buildings to protect them from unpredictable wind and fire. The apostolic church, which operated on divine power, had much prayer and few plans. Too often today's church, dependent on human power, has little prayer and many plans. When that happens, church busyness crowds out God's business. Instead of seeing the "great commission," we see only a great commotion.

Is anything happening in your church that could not happen without supernatural power? As congregations and as leaders, why do we even exist? What is our ultimate purpose? What are our goals? What is the essence of our mission? What is our passion? Can we hear across the centuries the commission of our Lord? Or has the crafty devil enticed us into that church building and locked the doors?

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The Life Saving Station

On a dangerous sea coast where shipwrecks often occur there was once a crude little life-saving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea, and with no thought for themselves went out day and night tirelessly searching for the lost. Some of those who were saved and various others in the surrounding area wanted to become associated with the station and give of their time and money and effort for the support of its work. New boats were bought and new crews trained. The little life saving station grew.

Some of the members of the life-saving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and poorly equipped. They felt that a more comfortable place should be provided as the first refuge of those saved from the sea. They replaced the emergency cots with beds and put better furniture in the enlarged building.

Now the life-saving station became a popular gathering place for its members, and they decorated it beautifully and furnished it exquisitely, because they used it as a sort of club. Fewer members were now interested in going to sea on life-saving missions, so they hired life-boat crews to do this work. The life-saving motif still prevailed in this club's decoration, and there was a liturgical life-boat in the room where the club initiations were held.

About this time a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in boat loads of cold, wet and half-drowned people. They were dirty and sick and they messed up the beautiful new clubhouse. The property committee soon met and had a shower house built outside the club where victims of shipwreck could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting, there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's life-saving activities as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal social life of the club. Some members insisted upon life-saving as their primary purpose and pointed out that they were still called a life-saving station. But they were finally voted down and told that if they wanted to save the lives of all the various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own life saving station down the coast. They did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old. It evolved into a club, and yet another life-saving station was founded. History continued to repeat

itself, and if you visit that sea coast today, you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore. Shipwrecks are frequent in those waters, but most of the people drown!

FRIENDSHIP Evangelism

[We don't know who wrote the following challenge, except that he was a member of the Christian Businessmen's Committee.]

Mealtime outreach events continue to be the most effective means of engaging the uncommitted in the evangelism process. It never ceases to amaze me, however, how difficult it is for many of our CBMC-ers to get non-Christian guests to attend an outreach luncheon. Many years ago I observed that the men who were most effective in getting uncommitted men to attend an outreach meeting were usually the brand new Christians. The norm was that the longer a man walked with Christ, the more difficult it was for him to get men to an outreach meeting.

I had difficulty understanding this until it occurred to me that it was the new Christian that had the most non-Christian friends. The longer a man is a Christian the fewer the number of his non-Christian friends.

Is that the way it should be? Is it wrong to believe that the longer a man walks with Christ, the more Christ-like he should be, and the more Christ-like he becomes, the more loving and accepting he should be of the unregenerate? "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'" Luke 7:34

Is it possible that many prospective guests see themselves merely as a project, rather than as a friend? Or could it possibly be that non-Christians see Christians as condemning and self-righteous?

"A man who hath friends must show himself friendly; and there is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother." Proverbs 18:24 We have already established that the cultivation phase of the evangelism process engages the heart of the uncommitted through a relationship. If 80% of those that come to Christ do so through a relationship, why are Christians so hesitant to develop meaningful relationships with non-Christians? Is it because of a fear of contamination or rejection? Or is it possibly because of misplaced priorities and a lack of time?

"Don't be afraid to take a big step when one is indicated. You can't jump across a chasm in two small jumps." David Lloyd George

YOU NEVER TOLD ME?

It was crushing, but eye-opening, experience to Pat, a Christian homemaker, when she realized how she had failed her neighbor. Beth had just returned from vacation and could hardly wait to rush over and tell Pat the good news. Someone had told her of Jesus Christ – she had received Him as Lord and Savior – and now she was the excited possessor of life eternal!

Imagine Pat's chagrin when she had to admit to Beth that although she had never told Beth, she herself, had been a Christian for years. In fact, she had attended a Christian college.

"Pat, you don't mean that you have known this all the time and never told me!" The look of hurt dismay on Beth's face struck a note of horror to Pat's heart. To think that she had failed so completely to present Jesus Christ to someone so close. Beth could have gone to a Christless eternity. All Pat could say was, "I didn't think you would be interested."

And so it goes if we are not conscientious and concerned about the salvation of others. And many of them are interested! And interested or not, we should be interested in them. Christ is!

Let's lay a plan of action, okay? Think right now of some of those in whom you have an interest:

1. A family with a new baby _____
2. A newcomer to the community _____
3. One of your relatives _____
4. A long time school friend _____
5. A close personal friend _____
6. A contact in clubs/organizations _____
7. An associate at work _____
8. A "hobby" friend (music, sewing, traveling, golfing, etc.)

9. My neighbors _____

Place here _____ the name of the one with whom you will begin in sharing Christ with others. They are interested.

Cameron's Ordeal

Dr. Rubel Shelly

I have no idea of his last name, but his first name is Cameron. His mother shrieked it dozens of times between Portland and Atlanta. At first, it was simply an annoying nuisance. But it eventually became something of a parable to me.

Cameron is about three. His mother and seven- and ten-year-old brothers (estimates again!) were traveling together in a fuselage that was 40% filled with passengers. And Cameron was restless. He soon got tired, felt cramped, and began to whine. That's when his mom moved from calling his name and telling him what to do ("Cameron, get in your chair," "Cameron, you'd better fasten that seat belt," "Cameron, you just stop that right now!") to screeching at him. The screech was usually just this: *Cameron!*

As if on signal, his older brothers alternately tried to intervene ("Cameron, want to sit over here by me?") or yelled at him too ("Cameron, you're going to get in trouble!"). Cameron's ordeal pretty soon became the ordeal of everybody within earshot.

Poor Cameron was just doing what three-year-old boys do. The pity was that he didn't have family who knew that and could react accordingly. It was somewhere around that point that I recognized Cameron. He is countless spiritual infants I know and to whom I've not reacted well. She is somebody who no longer travels with the family of God because all she got as "help" was reprimand.

I think Cameron needed his mother to hold him, not threaten him. Not once did she put him in her lap or say anything positive to him. She just made threats and tried to bully him into being good on the trip. The other two children took their cues from her.

When teachers or elders function from an authoritarian posture, their "help" to others is principally in the form of threats. So the preacher talks loudest at one of two points in his sermon – when weakest on biblical information or when closest to his own personal vulnerability.

There will be a need for faithful teaching of the Scriptures until Christ returns. Sometimes the instruction will give new direction, demand repentance, or otherwise make demands. More often than not, however, someone traveling with God's family needs acknowledgment and reassurance more than information. Loving acceptance

above strident censure. The equivalent of being held tightly in his mother's arms when he is restless, rebellious, or rowdy.

What somebody is thinking now is correct, of course. Gentle support from caring people won't always work. Some people will exploit compassion. They will still fall into habits and traps from which they will not escape. That's true.

I just know that harshness generates rebellion. A strident, angry approach makes people defensive. Screeching doesn't resemble the manner of Christ with tax collectors, prostitutes, and other sinners he called to himself.

I felt sorry for Cameron. And I prayed to be able to remember him the next time I was tempted to think the best way to help a bewildered sinner or blundering saint would be to give him a gospel mugging.

[This copyrighted article was originally published in *Grace Centered Magazine* (www.gcmagazine.net), a daily, online publication, dedicated to stimulating personal and public thought, prayer, and discussion about living the Christian life.]

“Are they FEW who are SAVED?” Jesus gives 2 Different Answers

Alex V. Wilson

This is an urgent question, for it has many implications and is widely misunderstood. We might go so far as to say that how a person answers this question reveals his relation to the Lord! Jesus dealt it in Luke 13:18-30. He began by asking, *“What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It's like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches.”*

Merrill Tenney clarifies Christ's statement: *“The mustard plant was the largest that grew in Palestine. Its tremendous growth in one season from the smallest of the seeds to a shrub the size of a small tree illustrated prophetically the growth of the kingdom from the insignificant beginnings of Jesus' company of disciples”* (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*). For example, on the church's birthday it suddenly boomed from only 120 to over 3000. Its size multiplied 25-fold in just one day! And since then Christianity has grown to become *the*

world's largest religion. It now embraces one-third of the human race. There are vast multitudes who at least *claim* to be in God's Kingdom.

[I can hear a bunch of readers exclaiming, "Whoa, brother—slow down! By your comments you've just implied that the kingdom of God is the *church*, and also is *Christianity*. But that's not right. I mean, there are many differences between it and...!" Yes, it's very true that "the kingdom of God" has several meanings—or better, several aspects or phases. But Col. 1:13 makes it clear that at least one of its present aspects is the church, the body of Christ. And Jesus' parables in Matt. 13 show that what we now call Christianity or Christendom are also aspects of God's kingdom. So, let's return to Jesus' words in Luke 13:20 and following.]

Again Jesus asked, "What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough."

This is another striking illustration of quiet-but-dramatic growth. And once more Professor Tenney has a discerning clarification. He comments that by His statement, Jesus "did not assert that the world would be *converted*; he did imply that it would be *affected* by the kingdom." That also has come to pass. Many many people--85% of the people in the U.S.A., for example--at least claim to be Christians! We'll return to that point later.

An Unknown Questioner's Unknown Motive

We continue at Luke 13:22. Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" (We added the emphasis.)

Many Jews believed that only a few people would be saved by God from their sins and enjoy His blessings for eternity. After all, of the many thousands of Israelites who came out of Egypt during the Exodus, only two—Caleb and Joshua—entered into the land of Canaan. So some Jews in Jesus' day maintained that a proportionally small number would enjoy God's eternal blessings. But others disagreed. The man who asked this question wanted to know Jesus' opinion in this debate. Apparently he asked merely from idle curiosity.

Our Lord had no desire to get involved in a theological debate-for-debate's sake. He knew that doctrinal arguments accomplish little good and sometimes much harm if the debaters are merely speculating, or wanting to show off. Listen to His answer (v. 24): He said

to them, **“Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.”**

“Make every effort.” That sounds urgent. The NASB and some other translations say, **“Strive to enter through the narrow door....”** This Greek word (*agonizomai*) literally means **“agonize.”** It was taken from the Olympic Games that began in ancient Greece. In their races, wrestling-matches, and other competitions, the contestants **“strove or agonized”** as they exerted all their strength to win the victory. They trained for many months or even years for these competitions and conflicts, and to win victory in **“the games”** was one of the highest honors possible.

So, as Albert Barnes wrote, **“Jesus says that we should strive--agonize--to enter in. He means that *we should be diligent, be active, be earnest; that we should make it our chief aim*” in life to be right with God.** We should follow Him with all our hearts. We must guard ourselves against all evils, errors, sins and even innocent distractions. Such distractions may be harmless or even good *in themselves*, but for that very reason they might sneakily divert us from the main purpose in life. That purpose is to trust and obey our creator--the Son of God who died to be our savior, leader, friend, helper and strengthener.

Being saved from evil, error and eternal doom--how highly do we value it? Do we prize and esteem it? Where does it fit in our list of priorities? Can we say *we* are striving, agonizing, making every effort to walk with God, to believe and trust and please the Lord? Christ made it clear that **“the door”** to salvation is narrow, and many will not enter into its benefits.

Not only Narrow, but Closed!

Listen to Him again: **“Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Sir, open the door for us.’ But he will answer, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’”** In the Near East the door of the house was locked at night to keep out thieves and bandits, and was not opened again until morning. If anyone knocked late at night, he was regarded with suspicion, and was usually turned away. Jesus continued, **“Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’ But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’”**

How sad. It seems few will go through the narrow door. Many will turn out to be counterfeits, or undetermined and half-hearted, and thus be rejected. **“There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out.”**

There will be surprises! Jesus was urging them, Don't take salvation for granted just because you are a Jew. And his warning is still valid: We must not take salvation for granted just because we are church members or even church workers or leaders.

Yet, Many will Throng into the Kingdom

Jesus then seemed to do an abrupt about-face. Listen to his following sentence: "People will come from East and West and North and South, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God." In that verse the Savior tells us, as it were: "Do *not* conclude from what I've said that hardly anyone will get into God's Kingdom. Not at all--its citizens will come from all directions, all areas, all lands! God's Kingdom is worldwide and universal." In fact, in a parallel statement on another occasion Jesus said that not just "people" but "*many*" will come from east and west and enjoy the "feast...in the kingdom of heaven," etc. (Matt. 8:11.)

This reminds us of a repeated refrain in the book of Revelation. There we are told that Christ's sacrificial blood "purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation." And though the Beastly world-ruler will be "given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation," yet John saw "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb." He was told, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 5:9; 13:8; Rev 7:9-10; 14-15.) Yes, though Jesus at one point called his followers a "little flock," and warned that "small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Luke 12:32; Matt. 7:14), yet the people of God will come from all races and regions, classes and backgrounds! Thank God for that.

But Again Note Jesus' Emphasis

Looking back to the earlier verses we examined, it's obvious that Jesus is emphasizing our need for urgency. In effect He states, At the last day there will be shocking surprises--amazing absences! So, *make sure* of your relationship with Me. Don't take it for granted that you are Mine. Many people fool themselves, so make every effort to enter my kingdom!

What about US-- Here and Now?

Not long ago George Barna, a reputable statistician of religion in our land, published some astonishing statistics about Churchianity here. In the U.S. today, only about 15% of the population do *not* call themselves Christians of any kind! That's incredible. All the atheists,

Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and adherents of other religions, together, add up to only 15% of the inhabitants of our land. That leaves 85% who consider themselves Christians. 35% of the latter call themselves "born again" and 6% claim to be "evangelicals" (by definition, people who believe that Jesus is divine, the Bible is God's Word, and who trust in the Gospel of God's grace and Christ's redemption). Yet, according to the polls, most of such so-called born-again folks and a sizeable chunk of such evangelicals do not follow a lifestyle clearly distinct from other people in morals and beliefs.

Let's try to make this *practical*, not just *statistics*. Dennis Royse has been youth minister for several years at the Sellersburg, Indiana Church of Christ. Some time ago he asked a number of young people in that youth group (many of them still unconverted) and also at Woodland Bible Camp, "What percent of all the people in the world (not the U.S. but *the world*) do you think are going to heaven?" Most of the young folks answered above 50%. Some said as high as 80-90%. Very many said 60-75%. A few said as low as 25%, but they were well outnumbered.

Dennis wrote about this in *Word and Work*: "It would be hard for these young people--or anyone who believed that 60-90% of earth's people are saved--to see themselves as one of the minority group headed for hell."

So, a very common idea is: If that many people are going to heaven, then surely only The Very Worst People (Not ME, obviously) need to fear being lost and ending up in hell. This belief, concluded Dennis, was the root from which springs the widespread laxness, unconcern, disrespect, lack of reverence for God, etc. among so many youth (and adults) today.

Once More, Listen to Jesus

This time let's hear the conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." (Matt. 7:13-14.)

Is that so? Why? What explains it? Jesus goes on to give 2 reasons. #1. "Watch out for *False Prophets*. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them." (verses 15-16.)

False teachers or preachers, cultists, philosophers, educators, the mass media: Many of these, whether knowingly or sincerely, spread errors that deceive people or spread evils that tempt and mislead them.

Reason #2 is *False Profession*: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who *does* the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evil-doers!'" (21-23.)

There are *self-deluded* "make-believers," those who claim to trust Christ--but their claims are not real but counterfeit. They may *not* be misled by other religions, or false cults within the umbrella of "Christianity," or false teachers on radio/ t-v. Rather, their problem may be merely not realizing their own lack of a true commitment to Jesus as Boss. They might sincerely call Jesus "Lord, Lord" but not recognize their failure to really believe in Him - i.e., trust Him enough to obey Him.

Here's another example: A research center at Princeton has measured the impact of religion on day-to-day work. Comparing the "churched" with the "unchurched" on a wide range of behaviors like pilfering supplies (i.e., stealing), overstating qualifications on resumes (i.e., lying), calling in sick when not sick (lying and stealing), and overstating tax deductions (lying, stealing and cheating), the center finds "little difference in the ethical views and behavior of the churched and unchurched."

All that is simply more proof that church-attendance and church-membership *in themselves* mean nothing. What counts is definite, practical, every-day surrender and commitment to Jesus Christ. We must keep on seeking forgiveness from Him and offering obedience to Him--which of course includes faithful church attendance and participation too.

Back in 2002 a Louisville neighborhood newspaper, *The Portland Anchor*, had an autobiographical story with these comments: Growing up in Portland in the 1960's, "we were a group of young men and women whose ancestors were Irish, French, German and English. But our national and religious differences didn't divide us. Most of my friends were Catholics and Lutherans, though I was (and am) a member of Portland Christian Church of Christ...."

Sigh! I've been ministering at this church--"*his church*"--since 1984, but to my knowledge that writer has never once set foot here nor communicated with the congregation during that time. He didn't even get the church name right, not that it matters. Yet he believes he's a member here! What does being a member--or a Christian--mean to him and millions like him? That he got dunked here 40 years ago, period?

Are there few or many who are saved? Let's urge folks to consider that question, and Jesus' answer.

“I.Q. TEST”

The following is a test found in a popular book on church growth regarding your **“invitation quotient.”** Take it and see how you rate.

- YES NO 1. Have you spoken to anyone in the last month to share with them what Jesus Christ means to you?
- YES NO 2. Did you speak to someone in the last month who has been absent from the services to express your concern for them?
- YES NO 3. Have you invited a newcomer in the community to come with you to church anytime in the past four months?
- YES NO 4. Have you encouraged or invited anyone who does not attend Sunday School or church to visit yours with you in the last month?
- YES NO 5. Did you speak to someone last Sunday you did not know personally who was in the church services--to extend your personal word of greeting and welcome?
- YES NO 6. Have you taken time to greet the people who sit next to you in the pew before or after the church services?
- YES NO 7. Do you pray for opportunities to be able to speak about Christ or your church to others?
- YES NO 8. Do you pray that the Holy Spirit will burden you with the souls of the lost people around you?
- YES NO 9. Did you pray for your minister this week as he prepared to preach his sermons today?
- YES NO 10. Have you prayed for the elders and deacons in their positions as leaders of this congregation?

Not so hard, was it? Let's check your score – Ten “yes” answers is terrific, five “yes” answers make you a cold fish, and two “yes” answers or less ... stop and take your pulse!

Adapted [Copied from the Linton, Ind. bulletin]

VOICES from the FIELDS

Undercover Agents for the Lord
Various Recent Dates

Undesignated Address

[For some time the editor has been thrilled by an exciting but dangerous missionary project. The missionaries must remain anonymous, and their address untold. We'll refer to one as H, the other as W, and keep details of their ministry vague—lest we endanger them. Everything here is true; no exaggeration. The events recorded in various paragraphs below may actually have occurred weeks or months apart. The editor reported about H and W at Woodland camp last year; those who were there will know who these secret agents are. Anyone wanting more information may contact us at W&W. We'll give you info so you can get some exciting mail. Please pray for H and W; the Lord will know whom you mean!]

K is eager to be baptized. She was reading the Bible daily but came to us for advice. She was distressed because as a result of studying for very important tests at school she had not read the Bible for 4 days! [How many folks in the U.S. get distressed over that?] She was frustrated, feeling guilty and not knowing what to do. We told her that Jesus was waiting for fellowship with her but was not going to scold or blame her if she came to Him in repentance. Later she told us she spent all that day reading the Bible and praying. Pray that we can find a local pastor to baptize her. [Such a thing must be arranged carefully, for it can be very dangerous for those involved.] H recently explained to E, another friend, that baptism is a dying to the old life and being raised again to new life....

One day we went to a wedding party. Through a series of strange events we arrived about 2 hours early, so were seated at a table with only a young boy sitting there. I (W) began talking with him about school, college plans and the usual small talk. He said he wanted to major in piano, but his mother insisted he major in English translation because he could make a good living of it. After a quick, silent prayer I suggested that he major in translation and study music on the side whenever he could. Then after college he could get jobs that would pay so well that he would only have to work about 1/3 of the time so he could do music the rest of the time. He was amazed and said no one had ever taken him seriously before. I told him that as he talked with me I had asked God for wisdom, and that the answer was from Him. I then was able to tell him the Good News of Jesus coming to earth, living as a man, and dying for us. I said God gives wisdom to all who believe in Him through Christ. He said that before that day he had never heard about Jesus so he had

never considered believing in God. But now he did, and would believe for the rest of his life and pray every day. Shortly afterward he had to leave. Pray that this birth does not get aborted....

A friend of ours in another country knows a lady who came to visit our city. We took her and some of our friends to a restaurant, and as soon as we sat down she began to criticize Christian beliefs. She raised the usual questions about other religions, "good people," and the problem of suffering. We learned she had been raised in church and her uncle is a pastor, but she had always rejected the message. We had a great discussion, explaining the difference between religion and being a Christian. She was quite interested, and friends of ours here got to hear a fresh telling of the Good News. In the end our local friend E (a very new Christian) asked if she could tell why God allows suffering. She said it was suffering that produces character. Clearly E's own recent sufferings (betrayal by her boyfriend of 8 years, her mother's death, difficulties at work, and financial problems) have been working an eternal weight of glory in her.

One time a friend was really moved when she heard some Christians conversing. I (W) was able to share the Gospel with her as we walked home. She said it was the opposite of everything she had ever been taught, so wondered how she could ever believe. Could there really be a God? I challenged her to ask Him to reveal Himself to her, if He is real. About a week later she told us she had decided to pray as a test. She did not expect anything to happen, but something did: She and one of her roommates went to get a bath at the university bathhouse (there are no bathing facilities in dorms) and locked their keys in their room. When they realized this, they were very upset because their other two roommates never come back to the room until very late at night. All their books were in their room, so they could not study. Also, they were wet and it was cold outside. So she prayed as they walked out of the bathhouse. Immediately, they heard one of their roommates call out to them! She had discovered that she needed a book and was headed back to their room. Since then C has had many questions, and we believe she is very close to becoming a Christian.

David Moldez

Manila, Philippines

June 2005

Brother David Moldez, President of Central Bible College, reports that at least 100 students received training and teaching from God's word there during the 2004-5 school year. Despite that good number, there were fewer than usual students actually finishing up any of the 3 courses. One received the Bachelor in Theology, 3 more the Associate in Theology, and 8 the Basic Bible Course. The theme

at the 42nd Commencement Exercises was, "Enlightened by God to Enlighten Others."

CBC faculty, students and grads minister in various ways and places. For example, six local churches served by them baptized a total of 57 people during the first four months of 2005. In May the local church at Maligaya began holding 2 Sunday worship meetings because the attendance outgrew their building—which has a capacity of 130 people. Three of the other churches have grown too, so that their chapels (capacity from 30-50) also are crowded now. Average attendance at the other two is around 15-20 every Sunday, due to members who moved away. Also other folks there who are attending Bible studies held in homes have not yet begun attending the meetings of the whole church.

Brother Moldez writes, "We have also started another mission outreach at Talanay, Quezon City. A couple has opened their garment factory for Bible study. We hope to start another local church in this place. Truly the work is growing and we are praying for more workers and senders in the mission field. Several CBC students are going there to share the word of God. I also join them from time to time.

"We are in much prayer now for the renovation of some of those chapels in different areas." One of them needs to be extended at the front to have sufficient space. Another needs to have a room constructed on the second floor to have enough space for children on Sunday. A third chapel is "our immediate concern, as termites have eaten the post and beams, and the carpenter said that it will collapse soon. We have begun some construction in these buildings but more needs to be done. Our assurance is that they are God's houses of prayer and worship. He can supply their needs in His own way."

Of course there are other churches too, besides those mentioned above. The downtown Manila church suffered a blow when one of their faithful workers, still young, suddenly died. Ask the Lord to bless their attempts to reach the surrounding area, and for Polding Jabian as he helps lead them. And pray for other churches on the island of Luzon, plus several on Mindoro, and elsewhere. The harvest is white.

Dan Wilson

Student Exchange Trip in Vladimir, Russia

John Maclean, the Peoria Christian School male chaperone, and I stayed with a Russian couple for two nights. The second night Sergei, our host, asked John and me about our zodiac signs. When we replied that we didn't even know what our signs were, he responded

with surprise. How can you not know something so important?! Your sign determines your health, wealth, friendships and general success in life. This is a very common belief in Russia, even among many who are practicing Orthodox. John responded, "Sergei, because you are my friend I will tell you what I believe." He then proceeded to gently and thoughtfully share the Gospel with Sergei. For over an hour I sat in awe because I have never before seen a Russian man so riveted by the Gospel. At the end Sergei said, "It is no accident that you are here. God knew I have many problems in my life right now and needed to hear what you had to say." Later we learned that both his marriage and his business are in serious trouble. Please pray that Sergei will indeed read the Scriptures that we gave to him and that God will lead a mature Christian man to him who will continue to draw him to the Lord.

Several members of our team also had chances to share their faith. 22 Russian students whom we had befriended joined us at our weekend retreat. We played games, had small group discussions and briefly studied the book of Ecclesiastes. At the end of the 2nd day we invited them to join our team the next night as we visited the youth group at Calvary Chapel in Vladimir. I wasn't sure if any of them would show up, and so was pleasantly surprised when 9 of them did. The evening included praise and worship, testimonies, fellowship with tea and cookies and a mini-concert. Several of our Russian student friends expressed to us how much they enjoyed their time there and said that they would like to go back. Over the years several of the Russian students have given their lives to Christ at this and other churches in Vladimir after we left, having gone to church because we befriended them and took them the first time. Please pray for these 9 students, that God would keep Satan and the cares of this world from preventing them from returning to Calvary Chapel.

**Robert & Joy Garret
July, 2005**

PO Box 30, Ruwa, Zimbabwe

We have been slow in getting out another newsletter since our last in April. Work and events have really crowded the days but we praise our Lord for good that has been accomplished.

Senior Camp, April 10–16; ages 13–17: There were 116 campers of whom *16 came forward to accept Jesus as Lord and Christ and were baptized into Him.*

Women's Camp, April 29–May 1: 350 women came together for a three-day retreat. Thirteen came all the way from Malawi to join with us. Some of the women must bring their small children

with them. These, plus the men who did the cooking, swelled the number of people to be accommodated at the camp to 400. All told, at least 30 congregations were represented. Of course the vast majority were Christians but there were *five who came to the Lord and were baptized.*

Drew Schreiner is a young college student, eldest son of Jim and Brad Schreiner of Gallatin, Tenn., and grandson of the late Edward Schreiner (a well known preacher of Louisville, Ky). Drew came to visit us for 2 weeks in May. He fitted in very well and lent a willing hand to whatever job we threw at him. The biggest part was the mixing and pouring of the concrete floor slab for the church in Bulawayo. He seemed to enjoy his stay. We enjoyed having him and he was well liked by everyone.

Erecting Roof Trusses: Last week we erected the roof trusses for the church in Pumula South, Bulawayo. This is of all steel construction which we fabricated ourselves. The roof will be covered with corrugated asbestos/cement sheets which are 3 feet wide by 10 ft. 10 in. long. These are manufactured locally. We needed 116 sheets plus the ridges at a cost of Thirty Million Zimbabwe Dollars which at Z\$9,000 to one U.S.\$ comes to U.S.\$3,333.33. Perhaps next month we can organize the laying of this roofing.

Our fuel has just been raised to approx. \$4 (U.S.) per gallon and is difficult to obtain. Police have removed unroadworthy and unlicensed commuter vehicles from the roads. That plus a shortage of fuel has caused transport problems for thousands. I had to cancel the nightly Bible studies at the Glen Norah church because many who would attend could not get home from work in time to come to the class. Pray for this.

Fortune-Telling

Edward Fudge

Fortune tellers have existed in most cultures throughout recorded history. Their presence evidences the universal human desire for supernatural knowledge of the future, in the hope that such foreknowledge will also bring the ability to control what lies ahead. Depending on their particular methods and means used to discern the future, these individuals have been known as diviners, necromancers, wizards, augurers, sorcerers, mediums, spiritualists, soothsayers, psychics, fortune-tellers and other terms. The Bible always views such practices as antagonistic to God -- worthless at best and demonic at worst.

When God brought the descendants of Jacob out of Egypt, he instructed them to have nothing to do with such pagan practices, but to depend on God to reveal whatever he might wish through his own chosen prophets (Deut. 18:9-23). Centuries later, one of those prophets chastened his contemporaries for consulting mediums and wizards instead of hearing God's word in the recorded Scriptures (Isa. 8:19-20). In the New Testament, the gospel is both opposed by and triumphs over sorcerers, as has been the case also through the centuries since (Acts 8:9ff; 13:6ff; 16:16ff; 19:19). Sorcery is listed as a work of the sinful nature forbidden for Christians (Gal. 5:20).

We who serve Jesus Christ are in the hands of a personal and faithful God who knows us intimately and who loves us beyond measure. He guides Christian believers through the Scriptures, Jesus Christ his incarnate Word, the Holy Spirit and, as it pleases him, through angels, dreams, providential encounters and circumstances as well as the properly-exercised gift of ordinary Christian prophecy. (For more, see <http://edwardfudge.com/written/beyond.html> .) We are therefore liberated from dependence on horoscopes, tarot cards, ouija boards and fortune-tellers of all kinds. Because they are unnecessary and undermine our trust in God, they have no proper place in our lives.

Another Suffering Singer

(Back in May our theme was *Women, Woes and Writings*. There was not enough space to include all we had planned, so we add them this month.)

“Frances Ridley Havergal was to Great Britain what Fanny Crosby [her contemporary] was to the United States,” wrote Warren Wiersbe. She lived from 1836-1879. In the hymnal *Great Songs of the Church* we find 8 of her wonderful hymns. They include “Take My Life and Let It Be”; “Lord, Speak to Me that I May Speak”; “I Gave My Life for Thee”; “Is It for Me, Dear Savior”; and “The Half has Never Yet Been Told.”

Frances was brilliant. She learned to read when she was three. At four she was reading the Bible, and at seven she began writing verses. A remarkable linguist, she learned Greek, Hebrew, Latin, German, French and Italian. And “she memorized all of the Gospels and Epistles, as well as Isaiah (her favorite book), the Psalms, the Minor Prophets, and Revelation!” (Wiersbe.)

Yet she also knew great sorrows—“recurring illnesses and almost constant weaknesses,” a biographer puts it. When she was only eleven, her mother died. When she was twenty-three her doctor told her she must choose between writing and living because her health would not permit her to do both. He was wrong. At twenty-nine, when many opportunities lay before her, she became extremely ill. She wrote, “I am held back from much I wanted to do in every way, and have had to lay poetizing aside. And yet such open doors seemed set before me....I suppose that God’s crosses are often made of most unexpected and strange material.”

Frances wrote some hymn tunes as well as words; also several good devotional books. But when she was thirty-eight the man who published all her works in America went bankrupt in an economic depression. He had an exclusive contract with her, so all her writings and compositions here were wiped out till he could get on his feet again. This set her back financially, of course. Only two years later the offices of her publisher in Britain burned down! She had recently completed a book of her hymns, *Songs of Grace and Glory*. The entire manuscript and all the plates for printing it went up in smoke. And since she did not have a copy of much of that material, she had to begin all over again—both music and words! The Lord gave her the courage, patience and strength to do so.

Many people wrote to her. In one six-month period she received over 600 letters. Her prayerfulness, knowledge of Scripture, and devotion to Christ enabled her to minister to many in this way. But her struggles with sickness and weakness continued. In 1874 she was ill for eight months with typhoid fever. We close, as we began, by quoting Warren Wiersbe: She had "a penetrating ministry that was fashioned in the furnace of suffering." Three of her hymns follow.

Like a River Glorious

Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace,
Over all victorious in its bright increase;
Perfect, yet it floweth fuller every day,
Perfect, yet it groweth deeper all the way.

Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand,
Never foe can follow, never traitor stand;
Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care,
Not a blast of hurry touch the Spirit there.

Every joy or trial falleth from above,
Traced upon our dial by the Sun of Love.
We may trust Him fully, all for us to do;
They who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true.

Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest;
Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.

Perfect Peace

I LOOK NOT BACK—God knows the fruitless efforts,
The wasted hours, the sinning and regrets;
I leave them all with Him who blots the record,
And graciously forgives, and then forgets.

I LOOK NOT FORWARD—God sees all the future,
The road that short or long, will lead me home;
And He will face with me its every trial,
And bear for me the burden that may come.

I LOOK NOT 'ROUND ME—then would fears assail me,
So wild the tumult of life's restless seas;

So dark the world, so filled with war and evil,
So vain the hope of comfort and of ease.

I LOOK NOT INWARD—that would make me wretched,
For I have naught on which to place my trust;
Nothing I see but failures and shortcomings,
And weak endeavors crumbling into dust.

BUT I LOOK UP—into the face of JESUS!
For there my heart can rest, my fears are stilled;
And there is joy, and love, and light for darkness,
And perfect peace, and every hope fulfilled.

The Unfailing One

He who hath led will lead
All through the wilderness.
He who hath fed will feed;
He who hath blessed will bless.
He who hath heard thy cry
Will never close His ear.
He who marked thy faintest sigh
Will not forget thy tear.
He loveth always, faileth never.
So rest on Him, today, forever!

Then trust Him today
As thine unfailing friend,
And let Him lead thee all the way,
Who loveth to the end.
And let the morrow rest
In His beloved hand.
His good is better than our best,
As we shall understand—
If, trusting Him who faileth never,
We rest on Him, today, forever!

Tensions, Spasms, and Hymns

Margaret Clarkson, a Canadian born in 1915, wrote at least 111 hymns. Some teachers of church music, who distinguish between informal "gospel songs" and more stately and doctrine-based "hymns," have called her the most outstanding North American hymn-writer during the 20th century. Perhaps her best known piece was "So Send I You."

Her hymns become even more meaningful when we realize that she often wrote while experiencing intense pain. Her entire life was marked by periods—sometimes lasting for days—of excruciating headaches coupled with convulsive vomiting.

When she was three, she was bedfast for almost a year with juvenile arthritis. It subsided during adolescence, so for some time she suffered "only" from the headaches and a congenital back problem. The latter produced increasing pain and spasm coupled with difficulty in walking, till surgery during her 50's brought some relief. Then, 3 years later, arthritis struck again and forced her into early retirement from school-teaching.

As if physical pain were not enough, terrific emotional blows were dealt her also. She was born into an unloving, unhappy home which finally broke up when she was 12. Her most vivid memories of childhood were of "tension, fear, insecurity, and isolation, along with the inevitable guilt feelings which sensitive children assume when caught up in undercurrents beyond their understanding."

Her hymns of faith and praise to God were written amid such circumstances! In addition to her school-teaching and hymn-writing, she authored at least 17 books. Only in the 14th, *Destined for Glory*, did she reluctantly reveal in print the pains and agonies mentioned above. Till then, even some close friends of hers knew little if anything about them. But her Heavenly Father knew, and gave her songs in the night. In *Word and Work* (5/'91) we shared 4 of her hymns, 3 of which we repeat here.

O Father, You Are Sovereign

They lifted their voices together to God, and said, "Sovereign Lord!"
(Acts 4:24, RSV.)

O Father, you are sovereign in all the worlds you made;
Your mighty Word was spoken and light and life obeyed.

Your voice commands the seasons and bounds the ocean
shore,
Sets stars within their courses and stills the tempest's roar.

O Father, you are sovereign in all affairs of man;
No powers of death or darkness can thwart your perfect plan.
All chance and change transcending, supreme in time and
space,
You hold your trusting children secure in your embrace.

O Father, you are sovereign, the Lord of human pain,
Transmuting earthly sorrows to gold of heavenly gain.
All evil overruling, as none but Conqueror could,
Your love pursues its purpose—our souls' eternal good.

O Father, you are sovereign! We see you dimly now,
But soon before your triumph earth's every knee shall bow.
With this glad hope before us our faith springs up anew;
Our Sovereign Lord and Savior, we trust and worship you!

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Now Know We Not the Meaning of Life's Sorrow

Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; *Now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as I am fully known.* (1 Cor. 13:12.)

Now know we not the meaning of life's sorrow,
Now know we not the pattern God has planned;
But comes the dawn of his all glorious morrow—
Then shall we know; then shall we understand.

Now know we but in part our life's long story,
Now see we through a darkened glass and dim:
Then shall we see our God in all his glory,
Then shall we know as we are known of him.

Now know we but the sorrow and the sadness,
Now know we but the loneliness and loss:
Then shall we know the glory and the gladness—

The crown shall rise in triumph o'er the cross.

Then shall we know the love that passes measure,
Then shall we read the mysteries of grace;
Then shall we know eternal truth and treasure;
Then shall we see our Savior, face to face!

[Copyright 1967 by Margaret Clarkson. Assigned 1987 to Hope Publishing Co. International copyright secured. All rights reserved. Used by permission.] **Tune:** Finlandia ("Be Still, My Soul"); repeat the 3rd and 4th lines.

Let Not Your Hearts Be Troubled

[Matt. 24:6 KJV; John 14:1]

Let not your hearts be troubled, you who believe in Him;
Let not your faith be shaken, nor your hope burn dim.
Look to your risen Savior, God's ever-living Word!
Soon from the throne of Heaven comes our conquering Lord!

Man cannot thwart his purpose, war cannot change his will;
Far through the clouds of conflict shines God's rainbow still.
Faithful is He who promised earth shall not always groan:
After the dark of midnight dawn shall claim his own.

Sin shall not always triumph, right shall at length prevail:
God holds the reins of empire—his truth cannot fail.
Nation at war with nation strives to subdue in vain:
Jesus alone is Victor—He alone shall reign.

Daily his hour is nearing, hour of redemption's morn;
Ours is the holy promise God himself has sworn.
Christ in his advent glory waits on horizon's rim:
Let not your hearts be troubled—you believe in him!

[Copyright 1987 by Margaret Clarkson. Assigned 1987 to Hope Publishing Co. International copyright secured. All rights reserved. Used by permission.] **Tune:** "Work, for the Night is Coming."

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill, BHill40482@aol.com

Tell City Church of Christ (Ind)

Allen Goffinet writes: After nine years of faithful service, on Aug. 1, 2005, Bro. David Johnson & family will be leaving the Tell City Church of Christ and heading for Turkey Creek, LA where they will become part of the Lord's service there. The Tell City Church is in search for a full time pulpit minister. Anyone interested may send their resume to: Tell City Church of Christ, Attn: Elders, 1206 10th St., Tell City, IN 47586.

Celebration of 20 years of the Bryantsville Hunger Relief Project: When: Sunday, July 31, 2005. Place: Bryantsville

Church of Christ and new shipping area. (4.5 miles SW of the jct of US 50 & 37 at corner of Bryantsville Rd. and US 50. Time: 4 p.m. Dedication of New Building and Celebration of 20 years feeding children. Bring: Pictures, stories, memories to share. Let Susan (Sherwood) Crawford know if you can attend: 18 Spice Valley Ct., Mitchell, IN 47446. (812) 849-0494. sherwood@kiva.net

Woodland Junior Week Report

(Jerry Carmichael) "What a week we had at Woodland, although the first two days were pretty rainy! The weather turned to the better and allowed us a great time. The week was the largest week we have had for the Juniors in a long time. There was a total of 85 for the week.

The Annual Restoration Forum will be held at Lexington, Ky on Oct. 16-18, Lord willing. The Forum will start on Sunday night at the Broadway Christian Church (this was J. W. McGarvey's church) where there will be a communion service and an opening address by Leroy Garrett. On Monday and Tuesday, the sessions will be held at the Southern Acres Christian Church where David Faust and Doug Foster will be featured speakers with other speakers still pending. There will also be preaching, singing, classes and small group discussions. On Tuesday afternoon a visit to Cane Ridge is planned.

Be Salt in Your Community

Karen Leach Berggren recommends a ministry that their church began this past school year. It is a way to get involved in the community, specifically in the public elementary school, and even more specifically in individual children's lives.

The program is called Kids Hope USA, and it is a mentoring program. We are affiliated with a national office with ten years of experience doing this. Our church matched ten members with ten different children at our local elementary school. Each adult met for one hour once a week with one child during the school year. It is a wonderful program and if you would like to learn more the website is www.kidshopeusa.org. I am the director of the program at our church and would love to answer any questions too. It has been awesome to

be a part of something that you know God made happen...for God to actually give our church a presence in the public elementary school. The principal, the teachers, and the students and parents want us to be back next year. God is good!

It's a great way to meet the needs of at-risk children. One of our Kids Hope USA children became involved every week in our Sunday night program at church and her mother wants her to be mentored again next year. There are lots of stories to tell. I'd love to hear from anyone interested in knowing more: kberggren@netzero.com

Never give up: "When Joseph was dropped into a pit by his own brothers, God didn't give up. When Moses said, 'Here I am, send Aaron,' God didn't give up. When Peter worshiped Him at the supper and cursed Him at the fire, God didn't give up.... God never gives up." -- Max Lucado, quoted in Welsh, LA Church of Christ bulletin

Keep Praying for Zimbabwe's People The drought is still severe, thus lack of food gets worse. Unemployment is still widespread, resulting in much robbery—though we have not heard that our missionaries have been affected in recent months. AIDS continues to bring down the life expectancy of the population. Many homeless people are suffering, especially since it is mid-winter! (July there is the equivalent of our January, since they are in the southern hemisphere.) PRAY for Zimbabwe! And consider sending FUNDS for those faced with starvation. Any churches or individuals wishing to help may send

funds to Brother Robert Garrett in the following way - c/o Mrs. Joann Wiese, 3556 Stone Creek Circle, Jeffersonville, IN 47130. Make the check out to Portland Church of Christ, and note that it is for "relief."

Reaching Muslims An evangelical satellite network is making a big impact in the Muslim world. Back in 1996, SAT-7 began broadcasting Christian programming two hours a week to the Middle East and North Africa. Today the network broadcasts 24 hours a day. Recently, surveys conducted by audience research firm InterMedia found SAT-7 has six million occasional viewers and 2 to 3 million people watching either daily or at least once a week. The station continues to appeal to Muslims viewers and others whose hearts may be ready to respond to the gospel's saving message. SAT-7 recently began broadcasting to parts of Australia and continues to expand its ministry in other areas of the world, particularly in places that are officially hostile to the gospel, but where Muslims and other non-Christians are hungry for the truth of God's Word. --*Allie Martin, Agape Press*

Amite La (John Fulda) Plans are to open a day-care center around August 1st with prayers that attention be drawn to efforts by the Amite Church. We are targeting young couples with children with hopes of growing into a school. Pray for these efforts.

Japan (Moto Nomura) Recently in the month of June, the Nobel Peace Prize for Women in Oslo announced a thousand women who had contributed to peace

throughout the world. Among those was Moto Nomura's mother!

Crete, Greece (Nick Tsagaragis) I thank each of you for your daily prayers in the Lord's work and for continued financial support. I continue to travel and visit businesses and people all over Crete. The main reason is so people will be informed about the Lord's love and the good news of the Gospel. I believe that all the signs are pointing to His soon return. Amen, come Lord Jesus.

Throughout the World: United Church of Christ celebrates gay rights policy. Testimony from a member: "I had practically given up on going to church because

what you hear in the news is very conservative and judgmental. Here, (Eden United Church of Christ celebrating 10th anniversary of it's open and affirming policy) it's open and affirming -- you're welcome from the day you get here. You don't have to believe anything --I don't know if I believe in God or Jesus, but I believe in these people, and that is enough for me."

Ladies Retreat 2005 -- "Bridging the Gap with Prayer." Sept. 23-24, Camp Kavanaugh, Crestwood, Ky. \$25/person if paid by Sept. 10; after that, \$30/person. Teens: \$15 by the 10th, \$20 after that.

SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

S.B.S. announces its fall schedule beginning August, 2005

Life & Work of the Preacher	Mon. 9:00 am-12:00	Mike Abbott
Christian Doctrines	Mon. 1:00-4:00 pm	Jerry Carmichael
Intro. to Greek	Mon. 6:30-8:30 pm	Jim Girdley
Principles of Christian Ed	Tues. 10:00 am-12:00	Ervin Denkins
Homiletics	Tues. 1:00-3:00 pm	Bennie Hill
Prison Epistles	Tues. 6:30-9:30 pm.	Julius Hovan

If you live in the Louisville-Southern Indiana area or near the Buechel Church of Christ and want to enhance your service to the Lord, why not consider attending SBS this fall? Now is the time to sign up and start making plans. For availability of classes contact: Jerry Carmichael, 390 C St. NW, Linton, IN 47441 (812) 847-4571; or Bud Ridgeway, 121 Arbor Place, Fisherville, KY 40023 (502) 477-8255.

Sunday School Quarterlies to Consider

The September-November *Word and Work Quarterly* will be our last (though this monthly magazine will continue, Lord willing). Here is information about several other quarterlies which are recommended by various folks.

Standard Publishing in Cincinnati is a longtime, widely-used publisher with roots in the Christian Churches. (It also publishes the weekly *Christian Standard*.) For information phone 1-800-543-1353 (Customer Service). Or send mail to Standard Publishing, 8121 Hamilton Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45231. Or email churchsales@standardpub.com Their website has a helpful FAQ feature, with answers to 18 frequently asked questions.

21st Century Christian is a Church of Christ publisher of various materials for all ages. Its latest advertisement says, "After 20 successful years with the *Adult Bible Quarterly*, 21st Century Christian introduces its successor, *Power Points for New Life*. This is a 5-year chronological study of the New Testament featuring *Application-based Bible lessons *New perspectives, same solid doctrine *Thoughtful questions for further discussion *Lessons will have Old Testament connections that add balance to the study...." PO Box 40526, Nashville TN 37204. 800-251-2477. www.21stcc.com

Scripture Press: Bob Yarbrough, who has been writing good lessons in our quarterly, says, "I heartily recommend the Scripture Press material. I used it for over 20 years and it is very good." Go to www.scripturepress.com to find information about their many materials for all ages. (They are a part of Cook Communications, so don't get confused by the appearance of that name too in the website.) Scripture Press is a trans-denominational publisher that produces high-quality teaching materials. You may phone 800-708-5550. Or write Scripture Press, 4050 Lee Vance View, Colorado Springs, CO 80918.

If any of our readers have other suggestions to make, feel free to let us know ASAP—with information such as that given above.