

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



# The *Word and Work*



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

August, 2005

## *Soldier On!*

with Leroy Garrett

Insights from a Veteran

\* \* \*

"The world is a better place because Irene Allen  
*expressed Christ and impressed us.*"

\* \* \*

"The most revealing times in a person's life  
come during their times of greatest trial."

# NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill, BHill40482@aol.com

**Ky./Ind. Fellowship Week-2005** was a great blessing. Attendance was good except for the first morning/afternoon. The Woodland Music Camp singers sang with talent and heart. Mark Yarbrough's expositions of Jonah were very insightful and spiritual. Rubel Shelly's 3 messages were deeply thought-provoking. Other messages also were encouraging and practical. And the teens showed great interest in Sonny Child's 3 night sessions for them. *Many thanks to all the committee members, and the helpers (in the cafeteria, for instance, plus Clinton Dorman who types the address-list each year), as well as the speakers, song-leaders and all who prayed.*

**Belmont Church, Winchester, KY** has called **Sam Marsh** to minister with them. Sam has formerly ministered in Indiana and Louisiana. And **Summerville, IN Church** has called **Alan Borders** as full-time minister.

**Rex Prather** writes, "Since October 2004 I had been filling the pulpit once a month at Summerville Church of Christ. They have just hired Alan Borders as their fulltime minister so now I am free to take more speaking engagements. In the future if your church is in need of a speaker or if you know of another congregation that needs a speaker please feel free to give them my name and number: 502-458-8199. Also if any one desires information about Woodland

Bible Camp, please call me at that number.

*Gospel Tidings* (which we mistakenly called Good Tidings in our July issue) is the magazine from which Grady Bryan's article on being a missionary in the Ukraine was taken. Grady formerly served as youth minister at Quaker Avenue Church of Christ in Lubbock, TX, where our good friend **Tom Langford** is an elder. Tom is one of the longtime leaders who has helped make many Churches of Christ more Christ-centered, grace-based and unity-oriented.

Speaking of which, the next **Restoration Forum (the 23<sup>rd</sup>)** is scheduled to be held **Oct. 16-18, in Lexington, KY!** We hope many of our folks will take advantage of this opportunity for fellowship, Bible study, and prayer with others from the Stone/Campbell movement. The keynote speaker (Sun. night) will be **Leroy Garrett**, our major writer in this W&W! Other good teachers also will speak. The Sun. night meeting will be at Broadway Christian Church, the Mon.-Tues. meetings will be at Southern Acres Christian Church. For more information go to website [www.poeministries.org](http://www.poeministries.org).

The next **Louisiana Fellowship Week** is scheduled for **Nov. 14-17 at Glenmora**. We are waiting for the complete schedule. Keep praying for improved health and strength for **Dennis LeDoux**, minister of the host church.

[Continued on page 256]

# 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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*Insights from a Veteran—*

## “Soldier On” with Leroy Garrett

Alex V. Wilson

Once more we are using the writings of one person as the main (though not the only) ingredient for an issue of W&W. We have done this before with writings by R. H. Boll, Carl Ketcherside, Edward Fudge, myself, and to some extent Stanford Chambers and John Stott. It's past time to do this with Leroy Garrett. (By the way, “Soldier on” is an expression he often uses to sign off his letters or editorials.)

Through the years we have included numerous articles by Brother Garrett, sometimes two in the same month. (He has granted us -- and anyone else -- blanket permission to do so.) Most came from his former magazine *Restoration Review*. But in this issue we will use 7 of his essays from recent years -- sent out by email, similar to (but longer than) Edward Fudge's gracEmails. If you wish to start receiving Brother Leroy's free “occasional essays” you may email him at [leroy.ouida@worldnet.att.net](mailto:leroy.ouida@worldnet.att.net). As we wrote before about someone else, “Most of the time we agree with him. But even when we don't, he stimulates us to reflect, study and sometimes change our mind.” He is loving and gracious but also a provocative prober. Another writer has put it this way: “He disturbs our superficialities.”

Brother Leroy (as he prefers to be called) is now 87 years old. The Lord has led him on a journey that began among some very legalistic and belligerent Churches of Christ. Gradually he realized that God's grace is greater not only than all our sins but also all our non-biblical, petty prejudices. Many Churches of Christ have been influenced by him to reach that same realization. But lest you suspect him of “easy-believism,” the opposite extreme from legalism, read this month's articles “Obedience of Faith,” and the two regarding God's law.

We heartily recommend his autobiography, *A Lover's Quarrel (My Pilgrimage of Freedom in Churches of Christ)*. Also his history book, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, which both teacher and students have enjoyed in my class on that subject at the School of Biblical Studies. And also a book, if you can find it, entitled *Our Heritage of Unity and Fellowship*. That is a collection of articles, some by Brother Leroy and others by Carl Ketcherside. God used the two of them to bring many folks from captivity to freedom in Christ. You may order the books from Brother Leroy at 1300 Woodlake, Denton, TX 76205.

Enjoy this month's menu—with discernment, of course.

# Jesus Touched Lepers

Leroy Garrett

To be a leper in the ancient world was abysmal terror. His disease was seen as not only intractable and incurable, but contagious. The virulent skin formed scabs and peeled away, leaving unsightly and painful open sores. The affliction was often consummate, covering the victim's body from head to foot. He was banished from society. Despised and rejected, he often lived in colonies with others similarly afflicted. He was untouchable. Even relatives kept their distance. When they brought food or clothing, they would leave it at a distance.

The disease was so dreaded among the ancient Hebrews that they legislated meticulous regulations to control it, as Leviticus 13-14 indicates. If one showed the slightest sign of the disease he was isolated for a week for observation, and then another week if there was still doubt. Once the priest, who served as diagnostician, determined he was leprous, he became a marked man -- for life! -- unless there was clear evidence of a cure. He was to wear torn clothing and disheveled hair to mark him as "unclean," and he was to cover his upper lip. If anyone inadvertently came near him, he was to shout, "Unclean, unclean!" The Leviticus law ruled that "being unclean, he would live alone and live outside the camp." He was the ultimate reject of society.

It is not surprising that we find lepers throughout the Bible, including instances of their being healed by God's power. And since they brought to Jesus "all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils," it is not surprising that he would encounter those afflicted with society's most dreaded disease. But the leper had a problem approaching a noted healer. If he dared to draw near where others were he might be stoned. Only Luke (17:11-19) tells the story of a colony of lepers, ten in number, that approached Jesus, but they stayed at a comfortable distance from him and shouted, "Jesus! Master! Take pity on us." Jesus called back to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." This he said because only the priest could officially pronounce them clean and restore them to their families and society.

On the way to the priests they were healed, all ten of them. One of them -- a Samaritan -- came back to thank Jesus. Luke tells us that "he praised God to the top of his voice and threw himself prostrate at the feet of Jesus and thanked him." This is where Jesus said, "Were not all ten made clean? The other nine, where are they?" Jesus was

impressed that it was a lowly Samaritan -- a foreigner -- who had returned to praise God and offer thanks.

While this is an impressive case of Jesus healing lepers, it was from a distance. Would Jesus actually render himself ritually unclean by *touching* a leper? All three of the synoptic gospels tell the story of this actually happening. R. H. Lightfoot, the noted New Testament scholar of generations back, esteemed this story as the most impressive of all the New Testament. It has all the marks of profound drama.

As Mark relates the story in 2:40-45, a leper came to Jesus and pleaded on his knees, "If you are willing, you can cleanse me." *If you are willing* is a cry of desperation. He knew that Jesus had healed others, but would he bother with a despised leper? While his faith was strong -- Jesus only had to be willing -- he saw it as understandable if Jesus excluded such rejects as lepers.

Jesus felt compassion for him, and he responded in kind, "I am willing. Be cleansed." In relating this, Mark says that Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him. What drama! A rabbi -- a teacher of Israel -- touching a leper! It was not only a no-no in the society in which he lived, but a breach of the law. He rendered himself unclean. As he had done before in healing lepers, he could have done it without defiling himself. Jesus -- who came to show us what the kingdom of heaven is about -- touched a despised leper.

It is one more instance of the radical character of the kingdom of God and the cost of discipleship. We claim as Christians to be *followers* of Jesus -- that is what discipleship means -- but do we touch lepers?

I'm not sure who the lepers of our society would be. The homeless who sleep in doorways or under bridges? Prostitutes? Drug addicts who poke themselves with needles? Or maybe the drug pusher? The chap in school who has poor eyesight and wears thick glasses and who is harassed and bullied to the degree that he commits suicide? The black man in the nursing home that diabetes has rendered both legless and sightless who asks you to pray that he might die? Those wadded up in wheelchairs waiting to die, and who have an offending odor? The Muslim or Hindu neighbor? Those with AIDS? Those who sin differently from us?

Let's face it. We claim to be followers of one who touched lepers. Jesus was a radical in his society. He would likely be more comfortable sitting with those just referred to than with us in our

cushioned pews on Sunday morning. We don't do things like touch lepers!

I think one of my Harvard professors understood this. When I asked Henry Cadbury, noted New Testament scholar, what would happen to Jesus should he return to our society today, he said he would be killed just as he was before. When I asked him who would do it, he said it would be the church, just as before. After all, Jesus did things like touch lepers.

The prophet Amos understood this when he heard God say, "Take away from Me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream" (Amos 5:23-24). Justice before ritual! Righteousness before "religion"!

An aged woman, longtime resident of a nursing home, taught me something about touching those who are hurting. One day when I was calling on her, I noticed a woman sitting in the foyer sobbing. Her daughter was at the desk signing her in to the nursing home. "I don't want to be here; I want to go home," she moaned. Her daughter sought to comfort her, "Mother, you are not able to care for yourself any longer. We will be coming to see you." The mother kept sobbing. I paused to watch all this, and had the urge to offer comfort, but I felt helpless, not knowing what to say.

Once in the room of my friend, I told her what I had just seen. I asked her, "Mabel, you've been here all these years, and you know what it's like. What would you say to the poor soul out there that doesn't want to be here?" She looked at me as if I didn't understand. "Leroy, there's nothing to say to her," she said.

She added, "I would cry with her."

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## Learning From Suffering

Leroy Garrett

Ouida and I have a longstanding ritual of reading to each other at breakfast, except these days, due to my vision problem, she does most of the reading. The other morning we read something about suffering, and the point was made that suffering is often a good teacher. Ouida recalled a poem, and she came up with enough of it that I could find it in Bartlett. We share it with you.

*I walked a mile with Pleasure,*

*She chattered all the way,  
But left me none the wiser  
For all she had to say.  
I walked a mile with Sorrow,  
And ne're a word said she;  
But, oh, the things I learned from her,  
When sorrow walked with me.*

Ouida and I seldom recall our own sorrows, especially the more devastating ones. They are still too painful. Perhaps we learned from them, but if so it is ambiguous just how. I am not sure we always learn from sorrow and suffering, but I accept by faith that God is with us and that he works for good amidst adversity. God can be working for our good even when it is not clear to us that he is doing so..

My ambivalence on this subject is challenged by a testimonial by the late Malcolm Muggeridge, the British cynic who came to Christian faith from skepticism. He became something of an apologist (defender) for Christianity. His statement about learning from suffering is one of the most amazing things I've ever read. I share it with you.

Contrary to what might be expected, I look back on experiences that at the time seemed especially devastating and painful with particular satisfaction. Indeed, I can say with complete truthfulness that everything I have learned in my seventy-five years in this world, everything that has truly enhanced and enlightened my existence, has come through affliction and not through happiness.

In other words, if it ever were possible to eliminate affliction from our earthly existence by means of some drug or other medical mumbo jumbo the result would not be to make life delectable, but to make it too banal and trivial to be endurable. This, of course, is what the Cross signifies. And it is the Cross, more than anything else, that has called me inexorably to Christ.

I am impressed that one of Muggeridge's stature would trace the important lessons he had learned in life to things he had suffered. If he is right that suffering leads to life-enriching insights, then we have something of an answer to both a philosophical and biblical problem. Why is there so much suffering in a world over which an omnipotent God rules, especially the suffering of the innocent and righteous? It is the question the book of Job raises but does not answer. If Job could have seen his tragic situation as a unique kind of education – important things about life that can be learned no other way – he would at least have had an answer. Not that he would necessarily



have accepted it, for he might still have asked why those things could not be learned some other way!

But Job's comforters suggested no such answer. Nor did God when he at last spoke. His comforters had but one answer – men suffer because they have sinned – just as men prosper when they are righteous -- an answer the book rejects. God himself gives no answer – only that Job should not question the ways of God. Ironically, Job did learn something significant from his ordeal, and that was that he was not to question the ways of God.

Nonetheless, Muggeridge – and Ouida's poem – do postulate a significant truth about life. Tragedy and suffering often lead to victory, depending on our response to the suffering. And, yes, we may well learn great lessons through difficulties and hardships. "No pain, no gain" is an arguably valid rule of life. I've had colleagues on campus through the years who liked to talk about the ordeal of their graduate work. They have doctoral degrees, and they want you to know that they came through suffering. We describe life in different ways. A Harvard professor talked of "living precipitously," while others in more down-home language speak of "being willing to get your nose blooded" and "If you are run over by a Mack truck, get up and keep going." Or you'll hear "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." They are talking about life, and they are saying there is something to be learned and gained by taking chances and roughing it.

The problem is that the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. As hard as some people try, they never make it. Even when they make great sacrifice and do all the right things. We all know people who deserve wealth, health, and success who have known nothing but disease, hardship and defeat. It is sometimes the case that suffering leads only to ruin and despair,

Years ago I was back at Princeton to take a short course on the problem of suffering from the renowned British scholar John Hicks. We surveyed all the "answers" from Augustine to Tillich. The professor found none satisfactory. He spent some time – with some emotion – detailing the suffering in the world, along with inexplicable tragedies. Though a Britisher, he was smitten by the Kennedy assassination, and mentioned that, along with world hunger, children dying of starvation, endless wars and bloodshed.

He referenced Dostoevski, the Russian writer who graphically described the horrors of injustice and suffering in Russian history in his novels – such as soldiers snatching babies from their mothers'

arms, tossing them into the air, and catching them on their bayonets, all for sport.

The professor's impassioned recitation of man's inhumanity to man got our attention. Then he told us that he had no answer, *except in view of eternity*. If there is another world, he reasoned, where it is all made right, then I have an answer. Injustices have to be accounted for. The wicked soldiers must give account for their treatment of those mothers and babies. Those who have suffered cruel injustices for righteousness' sake will be rewarded. In God's tomorrow of reckoning everything will be made right.

From the biblical perspective we may conclude that suffering is a necessary part of God's eternal plan. The prophets spoke of a suffering servant who was to come (Isa. 53:10-12) The Messiah's mission is described in such terms as "it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day" (Lk. 24:46). His followers were also called upon to suffer (Lk. 9:23). Paul rejoiced in his sufferings, for in some way they "filled up" what was lacking in the afflictions of Christ (Col. 1:24). Suffering is related to entering into the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). Nature itself -- "the whole creation" -- "labors and groans with birth pangs" as it awaits its redemption (Rom. 8:29). The apostle couples suffering and glory as if they go together: "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18).

The thesis with which we began -- that we learn through suffering -- is indeed biblical. Jesus is said to have "learned obedience through the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8), and he was made perfect through suffering (Heb. 2:10). And Paul states it as a general truth that "tribulation produces perseverance" (Rom. 5:3). We are even told that "we are not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philip. 1:29).

It is a puzzling truth. None of us goes out looking for suffering. We in fact find it our mission to alleviate human and animal suffering as much as possible. Suffering is an evil to be dealt with. We praise anesthetics as a monumental medical discovery because it makes possible surgery that would otherwise be intolerable. We go through life "popping pills" in pursuit of painless existence. We even have constitutional guarantees against "cruel and unusual punishment." Even executions are to be painless!

And yet we see that suffering is part and parcel of life. Mugeridge claimed that life would be boring and intolerable without it! Except for pain, injustices, diseases, problems, etc. there would be

no challenges. And suffering seems to be endemic to our faith. When the Lord called Saul of Tarsus to be an apostle, he said, "I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:16). He didn't call Paul to abundant joy but to grievous suffering. And yet the suffering led to joy! That is why he could say, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

It is one of those glorious paradoxes of Scripture. We become first by being last. We win by losing. We become strong by being weak. We become mature by being childlike. We become master by being servant. We affirm ourselves by denying ourselves. We find joy through suffering.

Even though our Lord spoke of suffering as inevitable (Jn. 16:33), it is not something we pursue. We rather accept God's call, and we go where he leads us. When suffering comes, we accept it as concomitant to the call. And we don't question it or try to explain it. We accept the mystery, and we rejoice - because of the joy set before us.

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## Can We Be Taught To Pray?

Leroy Garrett

*Lord, teach us to pray - Luke 11:1*

The answer to this may be both yes and no. Yes, there are principles of prayer that can and should be taught, such as we find in what we call "the Lord's Prayer." The one thing that Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them was how to pray. That suggests that at least to some degree prayer can be taught. And we can learn from the prayers of others - especially from the great saints of the church, both past and present. Those who grow up in a praying home learn something about prayer. A study of spirituality might well enhance our prayers. And we learn about prayer by studying the Bible. Yes, prayer can be taught - at least the *structure* of prayer.

On the other hand, if the essence of prayer is personal communion with God - a matter of heart and mind -- it is an experience that can hardly be "taught" in the usual sense of that pedagogical term. There may be within all of us an innate hunger for communion with our Creator -- an instinct that expresses itself especially in times of crisis. If there are no atheists in foxholes, it may also be true that many prayers have emanated from such fearful places. Only God

knows how many prayers there were -- desperate, agonizing cries for help and mercy -- in the Twin Towers catastrophe on that fateful day in September, 2001. Was this learned behavior?

People who may never have done so before sometimes pray, and pray passionately -- however irreligious they have been -- when their situation becomes fearfully hopeless. They do what they were never taught to do, *pray*. It appears to be natural -- part of who we are down deep inside. When all else fails, we can't help but pray. We know how, having never been taught!

Prayer does not have to be well-crafted and elegant. You may have heard of the news report of a visiting clergyman's prayer in a Boston church: "It was one of the most elegant prayers ever delivered to a Boston audience." A prayer that impressed our Lord was quite different from the Boston prayer. It was but a few words and very down to earth: -- "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (Luke 18:13) The despised tax collector who prayed that prayer probably had never been taught anything at all about how to pray. But he knew how to pray! He simply prayed his heart's desire. And that is the premier truth about prayer -- it must come from the deep recesses of a sincere heart. If this is "taught," the teacher must be the "anointing of the Holy One" (1 John 2:20).

If you were to ask me how to pray, that would be my answer: *pray your heart's desire*. I would also tell you that it is OK if you feel like you don't know how to pray. Neither do I. Even the great saints -- those gifted in spirituality -- have admitted as much. The apostle Paul put it bluntly: "We do not know how to pray as we ought" (Romans 8:26). He says we need help, and it is the Holy Spirit who helps us in our weaknesses, "making intercession for us according to the will of God" (verse 28).

This does not mean there are not principles of prayer that will make our prayers more biblical, more appropriate, and more pleasing to God. We find them in the Lord's Prayer. Prayer is to be largely a matter of praising and honoring God -- "Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." And it is about praying for our necessities, not our wants -- "Give us this day our daily bread." God promises us only our needs, not abundance. We are spoiled by abundance, and this may hinder our prayers.

And prayer is about forgiveness -- "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us." That adverbial phrase -- *Forgive us, AS we forgive others* -- is a risky thing to ask. We'd better think

about what we're saying. That line may have inspired Shakespeare's, "Words without thoughts never to heaven go."

Along the way I picked up an acronym – ACTS – that helps me to remember what to include in prayer.

- A = adoration of God
- C = confession of sin
- T = thanksgiving
- S = supplication for others

There is little place here for asking God for things for ourselves. We are to praise God and lay bare our sins before him. We are to pour out our gratitude for our abundant blessings. We are to pray for others, for mercy upon our sinful world, for world peace. We would do well to forget about things for ourselves – except for our daily bread, the necessities of life.

All this may be saying no more than we don't know much about how to pray, and that we need all the help we can get.

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## Obedience of Faith

Leroy Garrett

*Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for the obedience of the faith among all the nations for His name. – Romans 1:5*

While the term is rarely used in Scripture, it goes far in defining the nature of faith. It infers that obedience is inherent in faith – that faith and obedience are necessarily related. It says that the faith that pleases God – the faith that saves or justifies – is the faith that obeys. Does it not also say that faith that does not obey is not faith at all?

This is not only the obedience that is expected of one who is a Christian, but obedience in reference to *becoming* a Christian. That is in fact how Paul uses the term, not once but twice in Romans. The passage above indicates that Paul had been made an apostle to the nations "for the obedience of the faith" – that is in evangelizing the nations. They became Christians by obeying or responding to the gospel (faith) that Paul preached as an apostle. In Romans 16:26 he relates "obedience of the faith" to the preaching of the gospel (v. 25).

This is contrary to much Protestant preaching today, which doesn't have obedience on the table at all when it comes to becoming

a Christian. Preachers talk about "saved by faith only," by which they mean there is nothing that one is to do to be saved beyond "accepting Christ as your Savior." Obedience is completely left out – as if it were some work, and we know we are saved by grace and not by works.

True, we are not saved by works. Works and grace are incompatible, but obedience and grace aren't incompatible. Paul is our witness. He told the Romans twice that faith by its very nature produces obedience. To become a Christian one is to believe, and then obey what that faith commands – which is not works but an obedient response to the gospel. The faith that saves is the faith that obeys!

An informative example of this is in Acts 6:7: "Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith." Notice the contrast in John 12:42: "Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue."

This is a good example of the Bible interpreting itself. We see in this contrast the meaning of "obedient to the faith." The first passage shows us that many of the priests believed in Christ and obediently responded to that faith, which must mean they repented and were baptized – the pattern we see all through Acts. The other passage reveals that many Jewish leaders believed, but refused to act upon their faith. Would that be "faith only"? One group believed and obeyed; the other group believed but did not obey.

This was demonstrated on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, the birthday of the church. The apostle Peter preached the gospel. When those who had murdered Christ heard the gospel, they were "cut to their hearts." The gospel elicited faith. They asked what they were to do (v. 37). They were now believers. Peter did not tell them there was nothing for them to do, but charged them to, "Repent and be baptized" – that is to obey the faith. Verse 41 says that those who "gladly received his word" were baptized. They were obedient to the faith.

This might shed light on the presumed conflict between Paul's "saved by faith" and James' "saved by works." When James says, "A man is justified by works, and not by faith only," could he not have been referring to obedience – "the obedience of faith"? The reason I say this is because of the argument James makes about Abraham. He says the patriarch was "justified by works" when he offered Isaac on the altar ((v. 21), but the Bible otherwise described what Abraham did as obedience, not works. Hebrews 11:8 says that Abra-

ham "obeyed" as well as believed, and Genesis 12, where Abraham's story is first told, makes it clear that the patriarch not only believed, but he obediently did "as the Lord had spoken to him" (v. 4).

We might say with Paul that Abraham was justified by faith (only), and not by works, if we mean that his faith was obedient – the obedience of faith. And we might say with James that Abraham was justified by works and not by faith only if we mean that his "works" was an obedient response to his faith – the obedience of faith.

But perhaps Paul himself harmonizes it even better in Gal. 5:6 when he refers to "faith working through love." There you have it – Paul and James together – faith works! That means that biblical faith obeys – "the obedience of faith." It is the way our Lord put it in the Sermon on the Mount, "He that hears these words of mine and does them . . ." (Matt. 7:24).

The pioneers of our Stone-Campbell heritage had a simple way of summarizing the gospel: there are three facts to be believed (the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ), three commands to be obeyed (believe, repent, and be baptized), and three promises to be enjoyed (remission of sins, gift of the Holy Spirit, and everlasting life). Is this not consistent with Paul's "obedience of the faith"?

It would be a blessing if preachers today would quit telling sinners that there is nothing for them to *do* to be saved. There is something for them to do -- believe and obey the gospel.

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### ***R. H. Boll on Differing Beliefs and Practices:***

"That differences of views and doctrines should exist in the church of the Lord is not strange. Nor is it in itself bad. When free brethren study God's word independently it is to be expected that on one point and another they will arrive at different conclusions. Where brotherly love rules, these different views and the discussions that follow are mutually helpful. Where motives other than love control, differences result in dissension, strife, bitterness, sectarian parties and partisan hate. The blame in such a case, however, does not rest on the differences themselves, but on the spirit and attitude of those who differ. The wrong comes in when lines are drawn, when brethren are branded, ostracized, disfellowshipped.

# Did Jesus Claim to be DIVINE?

Leroy Garrett

It has long been the claim of "liberal" biblical scholars that Jesus himself never claimed to be divine. It was a claim made by his followers -- such as in the gospel of John, which these scholars see as a later theological interpretation. I propose in this essay to show evidence that Jesus *did* claim to be divine. And I believe this evidence will encourage the reader to have a renewed appreciation for the nature of Christ, especially in reference to his relationship to God.

I propose to present this evidence from the synoptic gospels -- Matthew, Mark, and Luke -- for these scholars consider these documents earlier and more reliable than John. While I do not agree with them in dismissing John as a reliable source of what Jesus actually said about himself, I will confine myself to the synoptics -- which they claim do not support the thesis that Jesus viewed himself as divine.

But first I want to look at the evidence in John, so as to compare it with the synoptics. There are two particular sections in John -- one in chapter 5 and another in chapter 14 -- where Jesus speaks in detail about his relationship to God, and about his divinity.

Notice some of the claims Jesus makes in John 5:

1. Whatever the Father does the Son does (verse 19).
2. As the Father raises the dead, the Son gives life to whom he will (verse 21).
3. The Father does not judge; all judgment is given to the Son (verse. 22).
4. The Son gives eternal life (verse 24).
5. The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God (verse 25-28).
6. The Father sent the Son and bears witness to him (verse 37).
7. The Scriptures speak of "me" as the one God sent (verse 39).
8. "I have come in the name of the Father" (verse 43).
9. "If you believed Moses, you would believe in me" (verse 46).



The claims Jesus makes in John 14 are even more assertive of his divinity:

1. "No one can come to the Father except through me (verse 6).
2. "If you know me, you will know the Father also" (verse 7).
3. "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (verse 9).
4. "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (verse 10-11).
5. "I am going to the Father" (verse 12).
6. "Whoever loves me will be loved by the Father (verse 21).
7. "The Father will send the Holy Spirit in my name" (verse 26).
8. "The prince of this world has no power over me" (verse 30).

In John our Lord not only declares his divinity but his preexistence as well: "In all truth I tell you, before Abraham was, I am (8:58). And he repeatedly declares himself to be the Son of God, as in 10:36 and in 11:4.

These critics say that if Jesus had really made such extravagant claims, they would be recorded in the synoptic gospels. But in the synoptics Jesus calls himself "the Son of man" -- not "the Son of God" -- and makes no clear-cut claim to divinity. John, written somewhat later, reflects what his disciples eventually believed about Jesus, not what he really believed about himself, the critics claim.

It is true that in the synoptic gospels Jesus is more indirect and subtle in his claims to divinity, but this may actually make the evidence more impressive. I find one instance -- the judgment scene in Mt. 25 -- mind-boggling in its implications. Here Jesus speaks of himself in such terms as, "When the Son of man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he shall take his seat on his throne of glory" (verse 31). He goes on to refer to himself as the King: "Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take as your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world'" (verse 33).

Here is a bold assertion of divinity, even if indirect. He not only makes Son of man a supernatural figure who is to sit on a glorious throne, but gives himself the role of both judge and king. Matthew's Jewish readers would identify the judge and ruler (king) of the universe as the God of Israel.

Even if in the synoptics our Lord identifies himself as the Son of man rather than as the Son of God, he frequently gives this term divine character. When Jesus asked his disciples to identify him, the Son of man, Peter confessed, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:16). Jesus blessed him and told him that what he had confessed was a revelation from heaven.

Again, it is indirect, but nonetheless a bold assertion of divinity.

When the high priest asked Jesus in Mt. 26:63 if he were the Christ, the Son of God, he would only say, "It is you who say it." But when Jesus went on to say to the high priest that he would see the Son of man seated at the right hand of God and coming in glory, the high priest accused him of blasphemy. This means he saw Jesus as claiming to be divine.

Another remarkable passage lending evidence that Jesus claimed to be divine is Lk. 10:23: "Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." This indicates such an intimate relationship between Father and Son -- and such a shared knowledge between them -- that it is akin to some of the things said in the fourth gospel, such as John 5:18: "He spoke of God as his own Father and so made himself God's equal." So this claim is made in the synoptics as well as in John.

While still subtle and indirect, our Lord's claim to forgive sins was a claim to be divine. The scribes (scholars of the law) understood this, for when Jesus said to a paralytic in Mk. 2:5 "Your sins are forgiven," they complained, "How can this man talk like that? He is being blasphemous. Who but God can forgive sins?" The scribes had it right: Jesus was claiming to be God -- or God's Son -- when he forgave sins. Or as Jesus said in Mt. 9:6: "the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins."

Equally impressive is Lk. 12:8-9: "I tell you, if anyone openly declares himself for me in the presence of human beings, the son of man will declare himself for him in the presence of God's angels. But anyone who disowns me in the presence of human beings will be disowned in the presence of God's angels."

Here Jesus speaks of how people respond to him in terms of their eternal destiny. If they accept him, God's angels will hear about it; if they reject him, they will be disowned in eternity. Jesus not only forgives sins, he is judge over human destiny.

We can see the claim for divinity in his claim for heavenly authority, and this is as clear in the synoptics as in John. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me," Jesus says in Mt. 28:18. This was evident in his teaching: "His teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority" (Mk. 1:22). The Jewish leaders, troubled by Jesus' bold actions, asked him, "What authority have you for acting like this? And who gave you this authority" (Mt. 21:23). It was an admission that Jesus' teaching and wondrous deeds implied an authority beyond any human court. Perhaps they wanted him to commit himself -- that his authority was from God -- and thus be subject to the charge of blasphemy. Jesus, aware of their duplicity, avoided a direct answer, but the context makes it clear that he assumed *heavenly* authority.

The way Jesus used "Verily I say to you" in his teaching appears to be a deliberate substitution for the prophetic "Thus saith the Lord," as if to put his authority on the same level with the God of the Old Testament. And he boldly placed his own authority above that of the Mosaic law -- "You have heard that it was said . . . but I say unto you" -- over and over again. He did not hesitate to say, "He who hears these words of mine and does them . . ."

Even so, our Lord's divinity was such that he didn't have to lay claim to it. It was evident by who he was, what he did, and what he taught. It was apparent that he was like no other person. No one spoke like he did. Mark tells us that he "astonished" people. He reports them as saying, "He gives orders even to unclean spirits and they obey him" (Mk. 1:27).

This is a vital truth for those of us who live in a world where the "sovereignty of autonomous self" is the rule. We want to chart our own course; we do not want to be told what to do. Our own reason -- our own resources -- is all we need. We don't want to *submit* to anything -- not even to divinity itself. But such a world is hollow at the core. The so-called "liberated self" that needs neither God nor angels in the end faces a tormenting question mark about the nature of life -- a crisis of self-identity.

There is one who authentically claims to be "the way, the truth, and the light," and he has declared, "Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on a rock." It is not a coercive authority, but the gift of God's grace.

It is the grace that assures us, "Anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt. 10:39). Even the "for my sake" speaks of divinity.

# Are We Under LAW?

Leroy Garrett

This question has to be answered Yes and No. Yes, we are under law, and it is a blessing that we are, for law reveals to us what God expects of us. It disciplines us, informs us, and makes civil society possible. It exposes wrongdoing for what it is, and it reminds us -- even painfully -- of the dimension of our own sin and of our dependence upon God's grace. There were several reasons why Paul could say, "We know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully" (1 Tim. 1:8). He must mean by that we are to use law for what it is, *law* -- and not attempt to make it do what law cannot do.

The answer is also No. We are not under law for justification. Law itself cannot make us right with God. Law does not save. Paul makes this clear in Rom. 10:4: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes." Christ is not the end of the law (period), but the end of the law *for righteousness*. The law of God is eternal. Jesus was emphatic about his mission in reference to the law: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Mt. 5:17). He went on to say that not one jot or tittle will pass from the law until all is fulfilled -- which allows for no time limit. He was equally emphatic in saying that those who keep "the least of these commandments" (law) shall be called great in the kingdom of God.

Our Lord was always responsive to the law, and he never in the least denigrated it -- though he did disapprove of some Pharisaic treatment of it. His submission to baptism even when he did not need to be baptized -- so as to "fulfill all righteousness" -- appears to be because of the law. He paid the temple tax; he sent those he healed to the priests; he honored the Sabbath; he attended synagogues -- and there read from the law. When he was asked to name the greatest commandment, he quoted from the law (Mk. 12:29). He in fact named the two greatest commandments -- both drawn from the law. He was conscious of the law to the very end. When on the cross he said, "It is finished," he appears to refer to his accomplished mission of fulfilling all the things the law had said the Son of Man should do.

It may appear that he was pointing to the end of the law when he said, "The Law and the Prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it (Lk. 16:16). But this cannot be, for he goes on to say in the next verse, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail." He was rather saying that the law and the

prophets informed concerning the kingdom of God, and led God's people to it, which they violently entered. But the law and the prophets go on and on, never failing -- not saving God's people -- but informing and disciplining them, and bringing them to the One who does save.

It is the same in Paul's teaching. He insisted that the law was "holy, just, and good" (Rom. 7:12), and that his faith did not make the law void -- on the contrary, he said, his faith upheld the law (Rom. 3:31). And yet he stressed that righteousness does *not* come through the law -- if so, then Christ died in vain (Gal. 2:21). He could not have made it plainer than in Rom. 3:28: "Therefore we conclude that man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law."

What then is the purpose of the law? It was "added because of transgression" (Gal. 3:19), which means the law was given so as to control sin in the world, or to put a damper on it. The "strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. 15:56), which means that the law exposes sin and reveals its deadly power. "I would not have known sin," Paul says in Rom. 7:7, "except through the law." Covetousness proved to be his besetting sin, "but I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said 'You shall not covet.'" Deep in his heart Paul knew of course that he was covetous, but when the law zapped him with the fact, his response was, "When the commandment came -- not to covet -- sin revived and I died." He even says that the law "killed" him (Rom. 7:11).

This led him to say a remarkable thing about the law: "We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14). There is no problem in the law -- except that no one can keep it perfectly. It is spiritual, perhaps too good in fact. The problem is with us -- our weak flesh has the propensity to sin. The law reveals and condemns the sin. But it also brings us to Christ and to grace. Paul could at last say, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God -- through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:24-25). But he would never have come to grace except for the role of the law.

He said it beautifully -- if a bit cryptically -- in Gal. 2:19: "I through the law died to the law that I might live unto God." He is saying that it was the law that got him there -- to grace! That is, it was by the law itself that he died to the power of the law, and thereby found life in God -- in grace, in Christ. That is a Wow!

But it is the same apostle Paul who assures us that the battle is ongoing -- between the flesh and the spirit -- and so the law is still

around as part of the crucible. Even after his cry of victory in Christ he says in Rom. 7:25: "So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." He had a heart for God, a desire to be spiritual, and to conform his life to the demands of the law. But there is the flesh -- his carnal nature -- that also calls for his service. The war goes on inside of us all. But "now that (justification by) faith has come" -- as Paul puts it in Gal. 3:25 -- we have the help we need in the struggle.

"What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3-4).

What the law could not do, God did! By sending His own Son! -- that what the law requires might be fulfilled in us!

That is what is good about the good news!

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## The Nature of Law, Or What Is Law?

Leroy Garrett

The 119th Psalm has some unique features. With its 176 verses it is the longest chapter in the Bible. It is at the middle of the Bible. It is divided into twenty-two sections of eight verses each, with each section captioned by one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Moreover, the law of God is referred to in each of the 176 verses, albeit in at least nine synonyms -- law, word, commandments, statutes, ordinances, precepts, the way, testimonies, judgments. Law appears repeatedly -- with the synonyms interspersed -- allowing for almost no repetition from one verse to the next.

Herein we have the Bible's definition of law -- definition by synonym. Law is God's word, his commandments, his ordinances, his precepts, his testimonies, etc. So, when the psalmist says, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against you (119:11)," he is talking about the same thing when he says, "Oh, how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (119:97). God's word is God's law, and his law is his word. So it is with 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of Your word, For all Your commandments are righteousness." God's law is his commandments, and his commandments are his law.

There is an interesting omission in the synonyms -- teaching -- which is probably the best definition of the Hebrew word for law, *torah*. When the Septuagint translators -- those who translated the Old Testament into Greek -- rendered *torah* as *nomos* (the Greek word for law) they may have erred. The Greeks thought of *nomos* as a legalistic code or a legal corpus -- "the gift of the gods for the correction of transgressions" for a given community. The idea of *nomos* (law) -- a legalistic code -- passed into New Testament thought, and it has marred our view of the nature of *torah* in the Old Testament.

While *torah* includes code law, its meaning is much broader, as is suggested in the word *teaching*, which implies personal, endearing communication. It embraces the whole of life -- directives bathed in love and grace. It is *torah* that Ps. 119:97 refers to: "Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day," and again in 119:174: "Your law is my delight." The law is a heart thing -- joyous and gracious. The writer is not talking about code law on animal sacrifices. Nor is the writer necessarily referring to written law only, but to the continual communication and fellowship of God's revelation "at various times and in various ways" through the prophets and other means (Heb. 1:1). We are not to suppose that when the psalmist said, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" that he was talking about the Bible, including that very verse!

The Old Testament writers gave both head and heart to *torah*. In Ps. 19:7-11 the law is esteemed in like terms to the gospel in the New Testament. It is perfect, converting the soul. It is sure, giving wisdom to the simple. It is right, rejoicing the heart. It is pure, enlightening the eyes. It endures forever. It is true and righteous. It warns. In keeping it there is great reward. The writer even exults: "More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." He obviously isn't talking about regulations about clean and unclean animals. Ceremonial and ritual rules were but marginal in comparison to the broader view of *torah*. It is teaching -- the way to walk in the light of the Lord -- that he exults in.

In Isaiah 66:2 we see the same idea. There God names the person he will "look on" or approve -- "the one with a humble and contrite heart, and who reverences My word." Here we have the taproot and basis of all law -- a penitent heart, compassion for others, reverence for God. This is the way Jesus summed it up. The whole law hangs on -- or is based on -- two great commandments (both of which are drawn from the Old Testament!), reverence toward God and respect for humankind (Mt. 22:37-40).

I submit that this is the basis of all law -- common law or common sense, moral law, law of the conscience (including the wisdom of the ages), statutory and social law -- and yes, even ritual and ceremonial law -- such as in Leviticus. It is all based on two laws that are universal in scope, unconditional, and everlasting -- love and reverence for God, love and compassion for others. The Levitical laws were for a particular, covenant people, and designed to make them holy before God and generous toward each other.

Observe the high ethics of Leviticus 19:34: "The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God." Note the basis of the ethics: *I am the Lord your God*. In reverencing God they were to show mercy even to a foreigner. They were strangers themselves at one time -- in Egypt -- and God showed pity on them -- so they are to show pity toward strangers -- even account them as members of the family!

This is a good place to ask if we are under that law -- there in Leviticus? And this is a good place for me to state a thesis that I believe defines the scope of law -- *Wherever God reveals light by which I am to walk that is law to me*. That includes what "the law within" -- my conscience and consciousness -- tells me. It includes Scripture, all of the Bible. It includes all civil and statutory law. It includes the wisdom of the sages and of the ages, such as the wisdom of Socrates. It includes all truth in whatever form it reaches me. Light! Wherever I find light I find law. Law means I am obligated to respond in good faith and obedience.

So, yes, of course, when I read such an exalted morality as given in Leviticus 19:34 I am to accept it in reverence and humility. I wasn't with the Hebrews in Egypt, but I have the "Egypt" of my own bondage from which God by his mercy delivered me. He showed mercy to me, so I am to show mercy to others. Because he is Yahweh God! To honor God and to show generosity toward others -- even my enemies -- that is the point of all light, all law, irrespective of its source.

Socrates was an unexpected source of light for me, a pagan in the ancient world he might be called. He taught me that I am an ignorant man, however much I might learn. In view of what is to be known, I know nothing. That light has helped to humble me and to unhorse my pride -- and to better position me to love God with all my heart and to love others as myself.

Such light comes through the arts, literature, science, nature, and all the works of God. Wherever there is light there is God's directive



(law) for the living of these days. I marvel at Shakespeare's insight into human nature, and his call for duty in an evil world, such as: "There is some soul of goodness in things evil / Would that men observingly distill it out." What insight! Ours is not a world of black and white. There is evil in men, in institutions, in politics, in churches, but there is also some good. Let's be busy -- not in cursing the evil -- but distilling out the good. Light! Again, for God and for others. We are "under law" wherever we find light, for all light comes from God.

The problem with law is that however noble and enlightening it may be it is not and cannot be redemptive. Shakespeare's insights and Socrates' philosophy may quicken our thinking and expose our arrogance, but they cannot save. Law may cause us to see that we need grace, but it cannot provide the grace. Law in fact condemns us, for it sets standards that we cannot live up to. Our conscience often condemns us, reminding us that we have done wrong. But we cannot save ourselves, in spite of the lofty claims of humanism. Law -- the whole perspective of law -- reveals that the human race is in deep trouble, for we are lawless -- rebelling against the two great commandments that make possible a decent and peaceful society -- reverence for God, generosity toward others.

Christ makes the difference, not because he gave us a higher law -- which, I suppose, we can say he did, if we consider such teaching as the Sermon on the Mount as at least a new interpretation of the law. Paul speaks of "being under law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21) and of fulfilling the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). But even a law given by Christ could not save, for it cannot be lived up to perfectly. Paul would include even law given by Christ in saying, "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain" (Gal. 3:21). If a better law would do it, Christ need not have died.

The apostle named it in saying, "I do not set aside the grace of God." "By grace are you saved through faith," he insisted in Eph. 2:8-9, "and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." It is only by "grace through faith" that anyone has ever been redeemed -- whether in Old or New Testament times. But in any age when that "faith" is evident -- such as faithfully responding to such light as one has (keeping such law as one has, even if imperfectly) -- God might well bestow the gift of grace. Christ indicates this in Mt. 25:40: "Inasmuch as you did it to one of these the least of my brethren you did it unto me" -- and to these he said, "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Jesus isn't saying that they gained heaven by "Inasmuch as you did it . . ." They were not saved by their works. But their response to the second greatest commandment, which they knew from some source, perhaps their conscience -- love and compassion for others -- led the God of heaven to bestow grace.

This identifies a relationship between law (light) and grace. Grace by nature and by its presence is unconditional and free for all, but its enjoyment is conditional. Like the rain and sunshine, they are there unconditionally for everyone, a free gift. But to benefit from them, one must make a faithful response with the means provided -- such as digging a well and sowing seed. The fall harvest is God's gift, but the farmer has to plow. But even the plowing is by grace. It is all by grace -- but it is grace *through* faith.

This is what Peter said once he saw God's grace given to the Gentiles. It was a conversion for him: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (Acts 10:34). What a liberating truth! Who is it that is "accepted" by God -- that is, who receives grace? Those who fear God (first great commandment) and work righteousness or do good deeds (second great commandment). It wasn't keeping the commandments -- however falteringly -- that saved them.

It was because of their faithful response to such light as they had that God extended grace, and it was the grace that saved them -- but again, grace *through* faith. Or as Paul put it in Gal. 5:6 -- it was "faith working through love."

[All these essays--and many more--are available at  
[www.leroygarrett.org](http://www.leroygarrett.org)]

# IRENE SPAULDING ALLEN

1921-2005

About 9 yrs ago someone wrote, "He was a clear teacher of the Bible. His teaching helped many. And he backed up his beliefs by his example and character. *He had the mind of a teacher and the heart of a servant.*" That was said about Winston Allen. But those identical words perfectly describe his wife Irene too. They both were outstanding-but-humble disciples of Jesus and teachers of God's holy Word. And as iron sharpens iron, Irene and Winston each helped the other in serving the Lord.

In 1921, out in Nebraska, Irene was born to two very godly parents, Frank and Alice Spaulding. And she profited from that privilege, taking full advantage of her opportunities to know and grow in the Lord. Later, in 1949, she married Winston Allen. As time passed they had two sons, Norman and David, and by the end of her life she had eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

In 1948 Winston had become the science teacher and first president of Kentucky Bible College in Louisville. So when Irene married him she became its First Lady. Later the school moved to Winchester, Kentucky, and was named Southeastern Christian College. They continued in that ministry till 1960. But since his youth Winston had felt the Lord's call to be a missionary in Alaska. He was attracted by its stunning beauty but also by its stunning spiritual needs – the highest rate of crime and lowest rate of church-attendance in the U.S. So to prepare for missionary work they studied at Columbia Bible College (now Columbia International University) in South Carolina from 1960-63.

They arrived in Alaska in 1964, settling in Eagle River near Anchorage. Gradually a church was established. Norris Carraway, who later became an elder in that congregation, wrote this memorial after Irene's death:

"In 1948 my wife Eunice (Phillips) sat in Irene Allen's Bible Class in Louisville. Nineteen years later in Anchorage, Alaska our 4 children also sat in her class. She has also taught most of our 14 grandchildren. She was a powerful influence on all our lives. She was a godly woman, who stood by her husband in the many years that they ministered and built a congregation in Eagle River. She sacrificed a lot in doing so. She was separated from her own grandchildren in the lower 48, but in doing so she became mother and

grandmother to many others here. Many went to her for counseling and appreciated her vast knowledge of the Scriptures.

“The work they started here is continuing with a small group that is close to God because of her and Winston. She encouraged and blessed me also. I am looking forward to seeing her again. Thank God for such a faithful woman. I miss her. The world is a better place because she was here.”

In March 1996 Irene was widowed. Seven months later she wrote, “Adjustment to being without Winston remains difficult, but God is good and His grace is sufficient.... Happiness is a choice, and I do rejoice in the Lord, even though sometimes through my tears. There is an underlying peace in my heart that can only come from above. Many ask me what my future plans are. I have earnestly sought God’s guidance and see no indication that I should make a move at present. My heart is still here with the work Winston and I labored in together since 1964, and opportunities to be a servant of the work continue. Living alone through the approaching winter will be a challenge, but I know God will enable me to meet each demand. The church is already making some plans for my safety and comfort.”

She continued living and serving there until 1999. But failing health and much pain made it necessary to return to the U.S., where she lived with Norman and his wife Arlene in Iowa. Norman recently wrote about her, “A passage that describes Mom to me is Phil. 2:3-11. Always thinking of others and the Lord. Even today as the nurses were getting her settled back in her bed she mentioned how difficult it had been for them to work with her this morning [she was very sick at the time].

“Through the years she has given much of income that would come her way back into various ministries of the Lord’s work. She has demonstrated the mind of Christ--thinking of others over herself...even in leaving friends and family and many possessions behind when she and Dad went to Alaska to fulfill His call on their lives.” [Also see the tribute by Chad Woolf, below.]

Knowing her time was short, she gave much thought to her funeral. Norman said she wanted “a clear and strong presentation of the Gospel. She wants people at her service to know that they too need the loving, seeking Savior if they have never given their lives to Him. She also wants a clear call to world missionary work—the Great Commission.” She had her priorities right, didn’t she?

Irene fell asleep in Christ on July 23, 2005, and her wishes were fulfilled at the funeral. Her body was then laid to rest beside Winston's, in the cemetery next to the Sellersburg, Indiana Church of Christ, awaiting the last trumpet.

While studying at Southeastern Christian College, Joyce Smith (now Broyles) knew both Winston and Irene very well. We conclude with words that Joyce originally wrote about Winston when he went home to be with the Lord, because they perfectly describe Irene too: "The world is a better place because *Irene Allen expressed Christ and impressed us.*"

## A Tribute to Irene Allen

By Chad Woolf

[The author is a young man who often visited Sister Allen during her last two years. At Norman's request, Chad wrote this for her funeral.]

I met Irene Allen for the first time in May 2002, about a week after arriving at Hillside Bible Church from Emmaus Bible College [Dubuque, Iowa]. I received a phone call that a widow from our church had suffered a stroke, and was in the emergency room. [So] I met her in a hospital, and it would be only the first of many visits between us in that same place. Irene and I began to visit twice a week for the next two years. We would simply talk about current events, read some scripture, and pray together. But in those brief meetings we had, I believe I learned more about submission and longsuffering than I could have ever imagined.

The encouragement that Irene clung to most, and quoted most, is found in Hosea 14:9, "The ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them." Many times I would ask Irene how she was feeling, and she would simply say, "I just don't know what the Lord is doing right now, but I know it's right." Her simple obedience was very powerful, she trusted the Lord through losing her husband, and then being mostly confined to a small room there-after. Through strokes, falls, eye and ear troubles, and cancer, Irene clung to the promise that God's plan is good, and she fought every day to simply trust that He was leading her.

I think the most revealing times in a person's life come during their times of greatest trial. I met Irene in the midst of a great trial in her life, and I don't think we ever met when she wasn't in some great pain, or on the way to another doctor's appointment or operation. I think that for believers, death is not feared, but the process of

dying is. Irene traveled to the doorstep of death more times than anyone I've every met. And with each trip she longed for heaven more than ever. But without fail she would recover, and simply respond by saying, "I guess the Lord has more for me to do." Irene will be greatly missed, because she was not only a wonderful servant of the Lord in her long ministry with her husband, but she was also a servant of the Lord while quietly sitting in her small bedroom. Through prayer, writing, and simply encouraging me, Irene continued her ministry while in her toughest years.

I often used to leave my visits with Irene thinking how much I take little things for granted. She taught me what Job meant when he said to God, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You..." Irene knew God in a way that many will never experience, and now she is with Him today, without any pain, without any doctor's appointments to go to. I know that if you asked Irene today for advice, she would say without hesitation, "The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them." Irene will be greatly missed, but if she taught us anything else, she taught us that this is not the end, we will see her again when we are gathered together with our Savior, Jesus Christ, and we look forward to that day. Good bye, Irene, I love you, and look forward to meeting with you again.

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## VOICES from the FIELDS

Goin' Fishing's Annual Missionary Conference and Meal was both encouraging and challenging. It was held at Sellersburg on August 4, the last night of the Ky.-Ind. Fellowship. Along with a number of other reports from around the world, we were informed of Dennis and Betty Allen's upcoming return to China for six more months of teaching "English as a 2nd language." Also, Earl Mullins Sr. and Eddie Olberding will escort Cecil and Betsy Garrett to St. Petersburg, Russia. The Garretts hope to stay there for at least nine months, working in a Christian home for teenage orphan boys. Such young people, especially when they become 16 years or older, often face desolate circumstances. Pray for the Garretts and also Marina, the fine Christian woman who heads this ministry to orphans. Also PtL for deeper interest in God's Word seen recently in Kenishma, Russia, where brothers Mullins and Olberding will visit. Reports were also made about Japan, Guatemala, the Philippines, and Zimbabwe. The latter is devastated by famine, AIDS, and over 750,000 poor people who've recently lost their homes and jobs! Also pray for Dan Wilson's health problems; he's now stationed at ACSI's headquarters in Colorado Springs.

It is good to be back "home" in Tema after 16 days in the North. What a trip! We are exhausted, and I have not been able to stop and write about the many adventures. We traveled 1500 kilometers on some very rough roads, visited 9 locations, and talked to about 25 churches. We held 4 open air crusades with blaring speakers and a lot of feedback. I'm guessing 200-500 people attended each of the various crusades. We did a lot of house-to-house evangelism, which proved to be very successful. We saw 71 decisions for Christ, 5 of whom were Muslims, and had 19 baptisms in various lakes around Ghana. In one small fishing village, 5 idol worshippers came to Christ and agreed to allow their home to be used to worship the one true God. So thanks for your prayers. We had no major car troubles or sicknesses. The mosquitoes were not bad except in the outhouses after the rains. The last 3 days we were able to stay in a hotel with running water, flush toilets, and no bad bugs. It was a great way to round out the trip.

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## *The PERIL of the RIGHT WAY*

R. H. Boll

If it is a great privilege to be simply New Testament Christians, it is also a responsibility and carries its particular peril. The peril of the possession of truth lies in the temptation to spiritual pride and pretense. But pride is always fatal. God resisteth the proud and if there is any form of pride uglier than another it is spiritual pride. It seems that the more of truth a man has, and the further he advances in spiritual knowledge, the more he needs the grace of God to keep him. If we claim to be simple New Testament Christians, we *must* hold such high position very humbly. "Be not high minded, but fear." For haply we will be caught saying, "I thank thee Lord that I am not as other men-or as this poor sectarian." Or perhaps we shall be exalted overmuch, over our knowledge ("for knowledge puffeth up"), and look with contempt upon the ignorant; and who knows but we may even with unconcealed joy point out the blunders of the erring. Yea, we may become censorious judges of others, and in blinding pride forget our own estate and fancy ourselves "rich and increased in riches," the while, if we but knew it, we are "miserable and poor and blind and naked." Like the Pharisees in their pride of legality, so may some today in their pride of doctrine "trust to themselves that they are righteous, and set all others at naught." Nothing so dries up the spirit, nothing so quickly sours the milk of human kindness; nothing so hardens the heart and destroys love and mercy

as just this spiritual pride and pretense of knowledge and correctness. God forsakes people like that. Like He passed by the Pharisees and took up the publican and the harlot; like He set the Samaritan in better light than the Jew; like He rejected Israel and took up the Gentiles--the proud religionist today will open his eyes in amazement when he beholds the true election of God, and what strangers He chose to number among His own. Be assured there will not be a boaster in all that flock!

### **PRETENSE**

God hates pretense. If a man would find favor with Him, let him come down off his high perch, and deal truthfully with himself and his God. Let him realize his lowly condition, and instead of trying to commend himself to the Lord by any goodness or merit of his own, let him come empty-handed, broken-hearted, in conscious need, and simply confessing his lowly estate. The Lord never turns down such hearts. But the proud He knoweth from afar. They come in for scant attention on the part of God. The hungry He satisfies with good things, but the rich He sends empty away. "Are we also blind?" said the Pharisees to Jesus. "If ye were blind," He answered, "ye would have no sin." If you had been honestly blind and had acknowledged it, I would hold nothing against you: there would be only compassion and mercy and help for you. "But now ye say, 'We see'--your sin remaineth." You claim to be able to see--well then, I hold you to the claim you make for yourself, and I will require of you all that your assumed position involves. I expect of you fruit equal to your profession, and hold you guilty for the lack (John 9:40-41).

### **WHAT SHALL THE HARVEST BE?**

Alas if it is thus God judges where shall they appear who openly boast their righteousness in doctrine, who while assuming to themselves the high name of Christ speak with contempt and scathing judgment of those who have not seen the way so clearly. It would be just like God to make of such a people a laughing-stock in the eyes of the world--to let all men see the hollowness of their religious pretense, and to bring to light all the lovelessness of their carnal hearts, so that their boasted unity-plea will turn to their reproach!

What say I then? That it is immaterial whether a man is a simple Christian or not? Or that it were perhaps even better if he did not try to take such a position? That a sectarian is as well off as one who is a Christian only, after the New Testament pattern? Far from it! That would be to discount the word of the Lord. For though all are not Israel who are of Israel, it is not as though the word of God had become of none effect. We must seek and hold and prize the truth without compromise or carelessness, if we would please God. But if



with the truth there does not also come a deeper humility in thankful recognition of the grace of God; if with it there is not also the love that weeps and prays and suffers for the help of the weak--our better light means only greater condemnation. If we can find it in our hearts to glory over the failures of others, if we can set ourselves up as standards and patterns of orthodoxy; if we have no tears nor earnest prayers for those who have not found the way, but biting criticism and loveless judgment, had we not better never have seen the Light? Lord, make us to see Thy ways, and grant us a humility as of little children, without which no one shall enter into the Kingdom of God!

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The FAX of Life--

## So That's How It's Done

Rubel Shelly

You've seen the TV clips of interviews with neighbors after somebody in their community was arrested for selling drugs or killing his wife. "He was always such a friendly person," some sweet older lady says. "He always waved and smiled as he left for work in the morning." Another says, "We used to share yard tools, and I just can't believe the person I knew could do such a thing."

You've probably said the same thing yourself about someone with whom you worked or went to Sunday School. You thought she was a trustworthy, honest person. You really believed he cared about his family. Conversations the two of you had over time gave you the impression his faith was the real thing. Then came the theft or the affair or the arrest for child pornography. What's going on?

Singer Beyoncé Knowles gave an interview recently that may explain how people you think you know wind up in situations you'd never have dreamed about them. She was commenting on all the dirty dancing her fans have come to expect from her when she performs her hit music onstage.

"That's not me," she says. "That's my best friend, Sasha." She explains that Sasha is an alternate personality who takes over her body when she gets before an audience. "There's no way I'd wear a short little dress and dance like that in front of all those people." *So that's how it's done!*

That's how a person who is pious on Sunday can curse like a sailor at work on Tuesday or take advantage of a customer Friday afternoon. And it must be the explanation for the devoted father who

goes to his little girl's recital one evening and hopes nobody asks about the bruise he put on her face when he was raging at home the night before.

Sometimes we really don't know our neighbors or work partners. We see the external image they choose to project and don't really know the drives that are deep inside. Worse still, we are sometimes dishonest with our own hearts!

Before you laugh at Beyoncé's explanation of her lewd behavior, think about your own experience. Before making fun of a woman who has worked out an explanation for what she admits is obscene, look deeply into your own heart.

Jesus shocked and offended some people by teaching that right answers and right ritual are not enough. The heart must be pure. The public and private persons must be the same. God will not tolerate the hypocrisy of play-acting.

A shiny apple with a rotten center is eventually known for its core values.

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## NEWS and NOTES

[Continued from Inside Front Cover]

*Beyond the Gates of Splendor* is a feature length documentary film experience about the Waodani Indians (formerly called the Auca Indians) and the missionary men and women who have given their lives to reach them. (Many of us remember the martyrdom of 5 missionaries in Ecuador 50 years ago this coming January. Probably Jim Elliot is the best-known of them. His widow Betty, and Nate Saint's sister Rachel later shared the Gospel among the very group who killed their loved ones.)

This powerful film, which won a Dove Foundation Seal for approved family entertainment, begins with the Waodani describing their way of life before the missionaries visited them in 1956. It is narrated by the son of Nate

Saint, and each of the martyred men's widows. It then depicts events, struggles, joys and developments in the church which was born in that village and later spread to other villages of the formerly murderous tribe. This is an incredible and inspiring story of forgiveness and love, as the crucified/risen Christ transformed (and transforms) lives. A condensed version will soon be available for use in churches (along with materials for classes to accompany it, if desired). It will be free for any church which guarantees to show it to at least 50 people. The full-length film is scheduled to be shown in commercial theaters by next January. For more information you may call 800-695-9847.

**Bouquets and a Prayer Request**  
"Once again, W & W hit the jackpot, and we both found ourselves unable to put [the June issue] down until we had read it from cover to cover. We of course appreciated the missionary articles by Dennis and Betty Allen, but thought the touch at the end where you got down and real with problems women face in parking lots was a touch of Christian practicality which is surely needed. It must be acknowledged, however, 'This is not your father's *Word and Work!*' ... We should like to order copies for the young women in our family—6 or 7 if available.

"I (Dale) am scheduled to go to the Mayo Clinic the third week of August for back surgery, hopefully to relieve the spinal stenosis and the resulting sciatica." —**Dale and Marilee Jorgenson**

**New Address: David & Karen Johnson**, 1037 Magnolia Street, Ville Platte, LA 70586. Phone: 337) 461 2769

#### **Coming Soon:**

1) Woodland Annual Meeting - Sat., Sept. 10

2) Woodland: Fall Marriage Retreat, Sept. 30-Oct. 1;

Bennie Hill - Directing; for Married Couples Only!

3) Woodland: Senior Citizen's Week, Sept. 11-15

**Revival:** Tell City Church of Christ, 1206 Tenth Street, Tell City, Indiana. Call (812) 547-6778 for dates and times. Don McGee is the prophecy evangelist.

**Breaking News, Aug. 13: Bill Smallwood** went to be with his Savior and his loved ones who are already in the Glory. Details next month about our dear brother in Christ.

**More Breaking News, Aug. 14: Kenneth Preston's** health has repeatedly been down-and-up-and-very-down in recent months. Today the elders of the Bohon Church had special prayer with him and anointed him (James 5). Kenneth and Sarah's 50th anniversary will be in September.

**More disturbing news from Zimbabwe** The Churches of Bulawayo on July 26th released a statement in regard to the treatment of displaced people in their city. They state that despite previous agreement by the Police, Social Welfare and Provincial Governors office that displaced people would be treated humanely, the riot police forced their way into a number of churches where people had been sheltering. The churches had made plans to move the people to the rural areas. They had prepared food packs, blankets and seed packs to be distributed. In spite of all these arrangements and agreements the riot police commanded them into open trucks and moved them. This was undertaken under the cover of night, between the hours of 9 pm and 5 am. Four people died, many are traumatized. We are asked to voice our protest to the highest authorities and to pray for the safety of Church Leaders and the poor of Zimbabwe. —ChristiaNet, Aug. 2005

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09/2006

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**Ministry in India** Anyone interested in missionary work in India (and the condition of many so-called Churches of Christ there) will learn much from **Kenneth Grimm's** "India Mission Report 2004-2005," especially section 13, entitled "Pastors Seminar, Vijayawada, South India." Brother Grimm is from the Westminster (Maryland) Church of Christ, where Gary Pearson ministers. Kenneth is also a highly gifted Bible teacher, especially cross-culturally. His email address is kag@kag.to He also was asked to spearhead a tsunami - relief program. Now he has gone to Sudan to help refugees and perhaps teach in a Bible college nearby. -AVW

**Lexington, KY.** New Church for Gay Believers disturbing! Jubilee Fellowship describes itself as Christ-centered, spirit-filled, Bible-based and open and affirming. Like many pro-gay theologians, Cori Wood (Lesbian minister) says "the verses in the Bible against homosexuality have been misinterpreted or written by people who didn't fully understand sexual orientation." Whatever happened to passages like 2 Timothy 3:16 "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." Did the Holy Spirit fail us in His ministry of the Word? For one, I think not!