

ERN
"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The *Word and Work*



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

November–December 2007

**He had always been here,
but He Came from Afar**

* * * * *

Jesus' Closing Warnings in the Sermon on the Mount

Are we building the 'house' of our life
on the Sand or on the Rock?

A song which a friend of mine and his friends
sang in a praise meeting said it just right:

*"I'll take a shack on a rock
over a castle on the sand."*

Makes us think, doesn't it?

A Moses Day or a Joshua Day?

Alex V. Wilson

What's going on in your life these days? Highs or lows or both or in between? Elsewhere in this issue you'll find a short but provocative quote about a cloud-nine adventure Moses had, contrasted with Joshua's mundane, probably boring experiences at the same period.

Of course Joshua's life also had lots of drama and victories, and Moses earlier spent some dull decades herding sheep in a wasteland. But the quotation is true anyway. (I'll let you find it for yourself, but here's a hint: it's between Leroy Garrett and Robert Garrett.)

This issue of W&W deals with quite a few highs and lows. A new campus with new opportunities. More qualified men stepping up to the plate (to bat, not eat) -- to serve as deacons or elders in a congregation that already had several. Cooperation among churches.

But life has many downsides too: Alzheimer's. Chemotherapy. An elderly woman sobbing, "I don't wanna stay here!" Beggars—in the U.S. A Christmas trip fouled up due to no reservations. Drought, famine and corrupt government. A heaven-sent warning: "*Many* shall perish!"

May we keep close to our Lord in both the dreary and delightful times. (Sometimes we are more prone to wander in the latter.) He is good, all the times. Brothers and sisters, let us also help one another, by prayer. (Speaking of which, the editor can use some. If anyone has seen where he left his short-term memory, please let him know.)

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Bennie Hill, News & Notes

The Word and Work (691-460) is published bi-monthly by Portland Ave. Church of Christ, Inc., 2500 Portland Ave. Louisville, Ky. 40212. Subscription: \$14.00 per year; bundles of 10 or more to one address = \$13.00 per subscription. Address correspondence to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Avenue, Louisville, KY 40212.

Periodicals Postage Paid at Louisville, Ky. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Word and Work, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, KY 40212.

Vol. CI

November-December, 2007

No. 10

In This Issue

The Arrival – Max Lucado	294
“Just A Moment...” Max Lucado	296
I would CRY With Her – Leroy Garrett	298
A Wonderful Response to an Urgent Need	302
Voices From The Fields	303
Daddy’s Girl – Janis Preston Spicer	305
Can This Truly Be Worship? – Joyce Broyles	306
Happy Memories of a Vibrant Man – Alex Wilson	308
Mack LeDoux and His Impact – Richard Lewis	309
Portland Christian School Consolidates and Expands	310
Beware! Take Care! – A. V. W.	312
Consumer Christianity – Edward Fudge	319
To My Fellow-Perfectionists – Rubel Shelly	321
Surprise Attacks – Chuck Swindoll	322
What is a Protestant? – Edward Fudge	324
News and Notes – Bennie Hill	325

THE ARRIVAL

Max Lucado

The noise and the bustle began earlier than usual in the village. As night gave way to dawn, people were already on the streets. Vendors were positioning themselves on the corners of the most heavily traveled avenues. Store owners were unlocking the doors to their shops. Children were awakened by the excited barking of the street dogs and the complaints of donkeys pulling carts.

The owner of the inn had awakened earlier than most in the town. After all, the inn was full, all the beds taken. Every available mat or blanket had been put to use. Soon all the customers would be stirring and there would be a lot of work to do.

One's imagination is kindled thinking about the conversation of the innkeeper and his family at the breakfast table. Did anyone mention the arrival of the young couple the night before? Did anyone ask about their welfare? Did anyone comment on the pregnancy of the girl on the donkey? Perhaps. Perhaps someone raised the subject. But, at best, it was raised, not discussed. There was nothing that novel about them. They were, possibly, one of several families turned away that night.

Besides, who had time to talk about them when there was so much excitement in the air? Augustus did the economy of Bethlehem a favor when he decreed that a census should be taken. Who could remember when such commerce had hit the village?

No, it is doubtful that anyone mentioned the couple's arrival or wondered about the condition of the girl. They were too busy. The day was upon them. The day's bread had to be made. The morning's chores had to be done. There was too much to do to imagine that the impossible had occurred.

God had entered the world as a baby.

Yet, were someone to chance upon the sheep stable on the outskirts of Bethlehem that morning, what a peculiar scene they would behold. The stable stinks like all stables do. The stench of urine, dung and sheep reeks pungently in the air. The ground is hard, the hay scarce. Cobwebs cling to the ceiling and a mouse scurries across the dirt floor.

A more lowly place of birth could not exist.

Off to one side sit a group of shepherds. They sit silently on the floor, perhaps perplexed, perhaps in awe, no doubt in amazement. Their night watch had been interrupted by an explosion of light from heaven and a symphony of angels. God goes to those who have time to hear him--so on this cloudless night he went to simple shepherds.

Near the young mother sits the weary father. If anyone is dozing, he is. He can't remember the last time he sat down. And now that the excitement has subsided a bit, now that Mary and the baby are comfortable, he leans against the wall of the stable and feels his eyes grow heavy. He still hasn't figured it all out. The mystery of the event puzzles him. But he hasn't the energy to wrestle with the questions. What's important is that the baby is fine and that Mary is safe. As sleep comes he remembers the name the angel told him to use . . . Jesus. "We will call him Jesus."

Wide awake is Mary. My, how young she looks! Her head rests on the soft leather of Joseph's saddle. The pain had been eclipsed by wonder. She looks into the face of the baby. Her son. Her Lord. His Majesty. At this point in history, the human being who best understands who God is and what he is doing is a teenage girl in a smelly stable. She can't take her eyes off him. Somehow Mary knows she is holding God. So this is he. She remembers the words of the angel. "His kingdom will never end."

He looks like anything but a king. His face is prunish and red. His cry, though strong and healthy, is still the helpless and piercing cry of a baby. And he is absolutely dependent upon Mary for his well being.

Majesty in the midst of the mundane. Holiness in the filth of sheep manure and sweat. Divinity entering the world on the floor of a stable, through the womb of a teenager and in the presence of a carpenter.

She touches the face of the infant-God. *How long was your journey?*

This baby had overlooked the universe. These rags keeping him warm were the robes of eternity. His golden throne room had been abandoned in favor of a dirty sheep pen. And worshiping angels had been replaced with kind but bewildered shepherds.

Meanwhile, the city hums. The merchants are unaware that God has visited their planet. The innkeeper would never believe that he had

just sent God into the cold. And the people would scoff at anyone who told them the Messiah lay in the arms of a teenager on the outskirts of their village. They were all too busy to consider the possibility.

Those who missed His Majesty's arrival that night missed it not because of evil acts or malice; no, they missed it because they simply weren't looking.

Little has changed in the last two thousand years, has it?

* * *

"JUST A MOMENT..."

Max Lucado

It all happened in a moment, a most remarkable moment.

As moments go, that one appeared no different than any other. If you could somehow pick it up off the timeline and examine it, it would look exactly like the ones that have passed while you have read these words. It came and it went. It was preceded and succeeded by others just like it. It was one of the countless moments that have marked time since eternity became measurable.

But in reality, that particular moment was like none other. For through that segment of time a spectacular thing occurred. God became a man. While the creatures of earth walked unaware, Divinity arrived. Heaven opened herself and placed her most precious one in a human womb.

The omnipotent, in one instant, makes himself breakable. He who had been spirit became pierceable. He who was larger than the universe became an embryo. And he who sustains the world with a word chose to be dependent upon the nourishment of a young girl.

God as a fetus. Holiness sleeping in a womb. The creator of life being created.

God was given eyebrows, elbows, two kidneys and a spleen. He stretched against the walls and floated in the amniotic fluids of his mother.

God had come near.

He came, not as a flash of light or as an unapproachable conqueror, but as one whose first cries were heard by a peasant girl and a sleepy carpenter. The hands that first held him were unmanicured, calloused and dirty.

No silk. No ivory. No hype. No party. No hoopla.

Were it not for the shepherds, there would have been no reception. And were it not for a group of stargazers, there would have been no gifts.

Angels watched as Mary changed God's diaper. The universe watched with wonder as The Almighty learned to walk. Children played in the street with Him. And had the synagogue leader in Nazareth known who was listening to his sermons. . .

For thirty-three years he would feel everything you and I have ever felt. He felt weak. He grew weary. He was afraid of failure. He was susceptible to wooing women. He got colds, burped and had body odor. His feelings got hurt. His feet got tired. And his head ached.

To think of Jesus in such a light is -- well, it seems almost irreverent, doesn't it? It's not something we like to do; it's uncomfortable. It is much easier to keep the humanity out of the incarnation. Clean the manure from around the manger. Wipe the sweat out of his eyes. Pretend he never snored or blew his nose or hit his thumb with a hammer.

He's easier to stomach that way. There is something about keeping him divine that keeps him distant, packaged, predictable.

But don't do it. For heaven's sake, don't. Let him be as human as he intended to be. Let him into the mire and muck of our world. For only if we let him in can he pull us out.

Listen to him.

"Love your neighbor" was spoken by a man whose neighbors tried to kill him. The challenge to leave family for the gospel was issued by one who kissed his mother goodbye in the doorway.

"Pray for those who persecute you" came from the lips that would soon be begging God to forgive his murderers.

"I am with you always" are the words of a God who in one instant did the impossible to make it all possible for you and me.

It all happened in a moment. In one moment . . . a most remarkable moment. The Word became flesh.

There will be another. The world will see another instantaneous transformation. You see, in becoming man, God made it possible for man to see God. When Jesus went home he left the back door open. As a result, "we will all be changed--in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. "

The first moment of transformation went unnoticed by the world. But you can bet your sweet September that the second one won't. The next time you use the phrase "just a moment..." remember that's all the time it will take to change this world.

[The two preceding articles are chapters from *God Came Near*, copyright 1987 by Max Lucado. Published by Multnomah Press; reprinted by permission.]

I Would CRY With Her

Leroy Garrett, 9-29-07

It was a poignant scene, one that touches the heart. An elderly lady was sitting in the lobby near the registration desk at the nursing home I often visit. She was sobbing, with the intermittent cry, "I don't want to be here. I want to go home." Her daughter was at the desk signing her in. She went over to her mother and said once more, "Mother, we've gone over this again and again. You can no longer take care of yourself. You will be all right here. They can take care of you. We will come to see you."

The mother continued to cry and to plead, "Please take me home. I don't want to be here."

There I was only a few feet away, frozen in my tracks, watching this drama unfold. And of course I always have the right thing to say! I wanted to quietly intervene and say a word of comfort to the one about

to be incarcerated, as she saw it. But I didn't know what to say. I passed on, thinking I might visit her later.

When I was visiting with Marie, one of those I had come to see, I told her about what I had seen in the lobby. I told her how I pitied the poor soul, but didn't know what to say to her. "Now, Marie, you've been in this place for nine years, and you know your way around, and you're in a position to say the right word. What would you say to her." That is when Marie taught me an important lesson.

"Leroy, come on, there's nothing to say to her. I'd sit down beside her and cry with her."

There is a similar story about Ouida's mother, whom I always called Mother Pitts. Back in 1944, the year Ouida and I married, Mr. Pitts suddenly died of a heart attack, after the trauma of helping a man who had accidentally shot himself while the two of them were out hunting. It was a tragedy that substantially affected Ouida's and my life, for we always felt a certain responsibility for her, and at last, in her advanced years and failing health -- either Alzheimer's or senile dementia -- we took her into our home for the last decade of her life. Those years proved to be very difficult for Ouida -- and sometimes for me. Her mother had a way of falling in the most inauspicious places!

At the time she was widowed, she had two children still in school. She had always been a stay-at-home Mom and had no marketable skills. What would she do? How would she make it? It was a shocking, wrenching time for her. Friends called and offered condolences. Church folk were there for her. But of all those that called, Mother Pitts often told the story of one Hamby Kelpen who called on her during her time of grief. Hamby was one of those sweet, gentle souls that everyone liked. He started an ice cream business, making his own. One could see signs across several small East Texas towns -- "Kelpen's Ice Cream." He was a successful businessman. In my mind's eye I can see his smiling face to this day, and it has been 64 years. Hamby too died young.

Mother Pitts told how Hamby called at her front door, quietly entered and sat down near her, all without a word. She said he just sat there in silence, but his anguished face spoke volumes. He at last stood, held her hand for a moment, and was gone. He never said one word! For the rest of her life she recalled that visit as especially comforting.

I am not telling these stories to suggest that we should not sometimes speak words of comfort. The Scriptures urge us to "Comfort one another with these words" (1 Thes. 4:18). Words fitly spoken can be powerful, touching the heart as well as the mind.

But I am saying that the message is to be the same, whether in silence or in words, and that message is I feel your pain. If we feel the person's pain, he or she will sense it, words or no words.

That is what Marie taught me in the nursing home. In crying with the dear, frightened soul she was saying, "I've been in this stinking place for nine years, and I know what its like, so I cry with you." They call that empathy. I watched the sad scene with sympathy, still a virtue, but not on the gut level as is empathy.

As for Hamby's silent presence before Mother Pitts in her time of grief, he didn't have to say anything. Words might have even detracted. He at least teaches us that we might sometimes say too much. Remember it's the message that is to be conveyed -- I feel your pain. If you have to use words, well and good.

An interesting instance of this is the story that Charles Allen, then pastor of a large Methodist church in Houston, told at a North American Christian Convention. One of his parishioners, a prominent businessman, had suddenly lost a young son, run down by a truck. Charles told that when he called at the man's home he did not try to say any of the usual platitudes, such as "He's now in the hands of a loving God."

He just sat with him for a time, then at last said, "Jim, I don't see how you stand it!" The man then opened up and began to talk, for he now saw that his pastor felt his pain.

Back to that nursing home. Perhaps I could have found helpful words after all. I could have sat beside her, taken her hand and said, "My name is Leroy and I can see that you're hurting. I've got good news for you! I have a Friend in this nursing home, a very special Friend -- so special that he died for me, and he died for you. And yet he lives, and he's right here in this God-forsaken place. I'm asking my Friend to watch out for you. He never sleeps. Even when you're in bed at night crying, he will be there to wipe away your tears. He's your Friend too. You can talk to him and tell him how you feel, however bad it is, and it can't be so bad but what he listens"

Perhaps I have her attention. I go on: "I want to be your friend too. Would you let me visit with you? What is your name?"

[Notes added by Leroy Garrett:] Now that the staff here at The Vintage knows that Ouida [his wife] has been diagnosed as having Alzheimer's Disease (AD), they are supplying me with data on how to care for an AD patient, including do's and don't's. Don't reason. Don't argue. Don't confront. Don't remind them they forget. Don't take it personally. Do accept the blame when someone is wrong, even if its fantasy. Do respond to their feelings more than to their words. Do be patient, cheerful, and reassuring. Do remember that an AD patient is scared all the time. Do elevate your level of generosity and graciousness.

Beside this wisdom, I take what may well be our Lord's most significant advice for living in a troubled world: "Be not anxious about tomorrow; tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." These days I live in day-tight compartments, taking the days one at a time. I pray with Ouida every morning, "strength for today, hope for tomorrow." I somehow find strength for each day. I don't let myself worry about next month or next year or where all this might lead.

Though I still keep her somewhat active -- walking, church, our home study group, eating out, she is now almost totally non-responsive. But when I tell her I love her, which I do several times a day, she always responds, "I love you too." And sometimes she says when I am doing something for her, "You are so good to me." But her words are few.

[Those interested in reading previous essays will find all of them at www.leroygarrett.org Click on Soldier On. Names will be added to our mailing upon request.]

A Point to Ponder: A Moses Day or a Joshua Day?

"On the mountaintop, Moses was having the time of his life talking directly to God. But what did Joshua do for those 40 days while waiting alone on the side of the mountain? He didn't see God and had

no computer games to play to pass the time—yet he was there to greet Moses, without any complaint against God or Moses for taking so long!

Wow!!

May next year be memorable, each day—whether it is a Moses day or a Joshua day.” -- Dottie St. Clair, longtime missionary in the Philippines.

A Wonderful Response to an Urgent Need

Several months ago Douglas Broyles of Louisiana sent out an open letter to many churches and individuals regarding agonizing needs in Zimbabwe. Famine, due to widespread drought and corruption, has swept the land. Many of us have not only read about this in the mass media, but have heard and seen from Robert and Joy Garrett vivid details. (Actually Brother Broyles kindly sent out the letter in order to save me time. The Portland Ave. Church, where I am privileged to minister, has sponsored the Garretts through the decades. I am deeply grateful to Douglas.)

And we are *mega-grateful* to all of you who responded so very generously and sacrificially. Brother Garrett reports with thankfulness that ample funds have come in, and says no more is needed at this time. Now pray for wisdom in distributing the food. As you can imagine, problems and difficult decisions might easily develop in such circumstances. But the major need is to find any sources of food within Zimbabwe, or the best way to get it into the country from outside. Pray very much about this. Of course Robert at present is deeply affected by the ongoing chemo-therapy treatments Joy is taking. (See his letter which follows.) We know that our readers are interceding for them at God's throne of grace. --avw

VOICES from the FIELDS

Robert Garrett Missionary to Zimbabwe, now in Louisville 11/13

Update on Joy's Health: Many of you have already heard of Joy's problem and have been praying for her. She was diagnosed with colon cancer on October 31. She was successfully operated on November 5.

The CT scan also revealed some large gall stones so the surgeon removed her gall bladder at the same time. She came home from the hospital Friday November 9 and she is feeling well and able to care for herself and do light house work.

Chemotherapy: Unfortunately, one of the 13 lymph glands that had been removed showed evidence that the cancer had spread from the colon. She must undergo chemotherapy once she has fully healed from the surgery.

Expenses: We have yet to receive the bill for her surgery and her 10 days in the hospital. The Lord has always taken care of our needs and we know He will do so now. We had never enrolled in Medicare as it makes no payments for any expenses outside the USA. Nor do we have any kind of health or medical insurance, nor do we have Social Security.

We were deeply touched today when the mailman delivered the mail to find a note from a dear brother whom we know is undergoing cancer treatment himself--enclosed was a check for \$500 to help with expenses!

The Silver Lining in the Cloud: The joy of family is one of the delightful pleasures God the Father has blessed us with. The moment they heard of their mother's problem her four daughters swung into action. Brenda and JoAnn live here in Louisville. Shirley lives way out in Washington State and Sharon lives in Montana. Shirley, with her two youngest children, made the long day's drive to Montana. Then the next day they all piled into Sharon's van -Shirley and her two children and Sharon and her three youngest, that is seven in all. It was then another two days' drive to Louisville.

The children stayed at Brenda's house and Shirley oversaw them with their home-schooling and cooking and spent some time with her mom in the day. Sharon spent each night with Joy in the hospital.

Brenda teaches at Portland Christian School but found time to visit mom and cook for the crowd in her house and JoAnn helped out at the hospital in the day time. There were fun times at the hospital when over 17 family members visited at one time--eleven of them being grandchildren!

We thank the Lord for the loving concern and the prayers so many are expressing and continue to express.

Return To Zimbabwe: Lord willing, Joy's Chemo treatments will be finished in time for us to return to Zimbabwe in April 2008. Although things are exceeding difficult in Zimbabwe with the horrendous runaway inflation and shortages of many basic commodities, the brethren there have written to me that the churches are continuing with their evangelistic efforts and that the churches are growing.

Famine Relief: I thank all who have contributed to the Famine Relief and give thanks to our Lord for the generous amount that has been raised. PRAY for its wise use. May the Lord give wisdom and direction to those who will administer these funds to His glory.

Mark and Candy Garrett Senegal, West Africa Oct. 25, '07

Dear Knee-benders at home, My short three weeks in the U.S. were a whirlwind. After numerous tests, doctors concurred that our son Ethan's system was "overrun" by multiple viruses. It appears that the last round of antibiotics finally knocked out the tick-born parasite that caused his monthly fevers. Ethan has been fever-free since early August.

Since Candy's condition appeared to be under control, we decided to all return to Senegal together on October 3. Candy still tires very easily and needs to pace herself as she home-schools Anne and manages our home, but it's good to be together again after nearly 4 months apart.

In the next couple of weeks Candy will have to sort through all of the bills, in some cases trying to appeal or negotiate with the health care providers and insurance company. This is all very daunting to her. Pray that we'll be able to get everything resolved quickly so that we can get on with life and ministry here.

Daddy's Girl

Janis Preston Spicer

Ah, if I had a nickel for every time I've heard someone say, "You look just like your daddy!" I've had total strangers walk up to me and say, "I don't know which one you are, but you've got to be one of Kenneth Preston's daughters." My mama says that when I was born, the doctor told her, "Well, Kenneth has a daughter. When are you going to have one?" I could not hide my parentage any more than an elephant could hide his.

But that's okay with me. I have never minded being labeled as "Daddy's girl" because that's exactly what I have always been. And apparently, Daddy didn't mind it either. When I was little, he took me with him to his brother's garage in Mercer County and let me get right up under the hood with him while he patiently explained exactly what he was doing. As a consequence, I can now change my own oil, fill the radiator, check the brake fluid, and make some pretty educated guesses as to what that racket under the hood actually is. He taught me how to shoot a basketball, throw a bowling ball, hit a baseball, and hike a football. So my son had the singular distinction of being the only kid in the neighborhood whose mama coached him through every sport he ever played. Dad was a pretty fair handyman and enjoyed woodworking, so I learned to swing a hammer, turn a screwdriver, and saw a board with the best of them.

Whatever my daddy was doing, I wanted to be right there doing it with him. I carefully watched everything he did and I tried my level best to do everything exactly the same way. As a result of being such a Daddy's girl, I can do an amazing number of things without any worry at all. I do not panic when the hot water heater blows up or the car gets a flat or the kitchen pipes spring a leak. I just do whatever I've seen my Dad do in the same situation.

That's exactly what Paul was talking about, you know, in Ephesians 5:1. "Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children." I grew up watching my Dad and imitating him the best I could. In the same way, I should be watching my heavenly Father and imitating Him just as earnestly. Imitating my Daddy will stand me in good stead for a

lifetime. Imitating my Father will stand me in good stead for an eternity.

And how much better could it get than to hear people say, "I don't know who you are, but you've got to be one of God's children."

Can This Truly Be Worship?

Joyce Broyles

"Oh no, here comes another one," I thought, as I shoved myself lower into my recliner. Through the front window I could see the young woman making her way toward our front door, cell phone to her ear. Ponytail swinging, she pushed the doorbell and ended her call.

Douglas went to answer the door. He stepped outside and bent toward her, listening to her story. This was the second person to come begging.

Last week, a young woman came to our door and asked Douglas if he could help her. Someone down the street had told her he was a minister. She needed ten dollars, she said, to pay for her motel room. Alone in a strange town, she had left home because of a bad situation. She had a job at the local Burger King and had to be at work at 4:00 the next morning. Douglas handed her the bill and she left.

The next afternoon, she was back. This time she needed twenty dollars for the motel room. She promised she would not come back as she took the bill Douglas handed her.

Only, she did come back.

After she had left the second time, I had suggested to Douglas that maybe God would see this as an opportunity to share the gospel with the young woman. The next time she comes, I suggested, invite her to the patio and ask her if she is a Christian, then invite her to worship. The church family might want to help her also.

Laughingly, I ended my contribution with a note that let him know I was not supportive of giving her money. I told him that our house would be marked like the hobos of old did, with a big X that meant "gives money here!"

When she arrived on the third afternoon, Douglas went outside to speak with her. This time she apologized for returning, but said she needed forty dollars for the room. Douglas asked her if she had tried to get help from other agencies for battered and abused women. She said she had not been abused. He suggested the Sheriff's Indigent Fund, to which the churches donate. She said they would not help her because she had no local address. He told her sorrowfully that we could not help her anymore, but to try another agency.

On the fourth visit, she needed forty dollars again for her motel room. When Douglas said no, she said she would have to find a bridge to sleep under. My heart squeezed.

On the fifth visit, she asked for fifty dollars to pay rent on a small house she had found. When I asked what kind of house could be rented for that amount, she said it had been pro-rated to the end of the month, which was only six days. Again, Douglas explained that he had given her the money a friend had given him, and he had no more. As retirees, he explained, we live on a tight budget now.

So today, when another woman headed our way, I just knew she needed money also. However, when Douglas came inside, he said that this one just wanted to borrow the gasoline can. Her car was empty and she would walk the few blocks to get the gasoline and then would return the can.

"Whew!" I thought. "Maybe we're clear."

Then another thought came to my mind. Isaiah 58:6-7, "Is not this the fast [worship] that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out to your house? When you see the naked, cover him; and hide not yourself from your own flesh?"

Then I remembered Jesus telling in Matthew 25:34 about feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, taking in the stranger, giving clothing to the poor, caring for the sick, and visiting prisoners. He said the righteous would not remember doing such things, but when they did it, they were actually doing it for Him.

In effect, Jesus was validating what Isaiah had said years before. If we do these things with the right attitude, it can be worship to God. If we take care of small things, like starting where we are, being

sympathetic, and caring like Jesus, we can take care of material needs and then take care of spiritual needs also.

This is what the church needs to remember. We are not evil, but do we love people and do good? This is the responsibility of the church today.

But hey. I'm a member of the church. If I understand that correctly, then this is my responsibility. Start where I am. Be sympathetic. Be caring. Meet material needs and then give spiritual help. Learn to love people and do good.

The next person to ring my door bell will have my attention. With God's help, I'll try to be sympathetic and caring. I'll give what I am able to, and tell the Good News also. I'll show love and take responsibility to do good. It may mean taking them to buy groceries, or taking them to the motel to pay for the room, or buying the gasoline for them rather than giving them cash, but it will be a start. And, if I do it in the right attitude, it will be my worship to God.

Happy Memories of a Vibrant Man

Alex Wilson

John McNerney was enthusiasm personified. In the preceding W&W, Julius Hovan wrote about John. Here we'll add some more memories.

As a teacher at the School of Biblical Studies, I was always glad when John enrolled in one of my subjects. His presence in class brightened up the atmosphere. He was not only interested but exuberant, and eager to learn and share with others the glories of the Bible and its Christ. The Lord Jesus was real to him, and no wonder—He had dramatically changed John's life!

John was naturally vivacious by temperament--humorous, outgoing and excited. For instance, he was a rabid fan of the Washington Redskins long before he received Jesus as his Lord--and afterward too. Someone at his funeral recalled how John had tried to convert his nephew from being a Dallas Cowboys fan to being for the Redskins. He failed in that goal, but later, after performing the nephew's wedding

John told him he'd worn his Redskins boxer shorts during the ceremony! (Maybe he thought that would somehow 'convert' him.)

When John became a disciple of the Lord Jesus, he found something **really** worth-while to be excited about! Christ forgave him and gave him new power and goals. Julius Hovan carefully mentored John in his first year as a disciple—a vital influence. Later, after John began preaching at the Parksville, KY church, he commuted to Louisville to study at S.B.S. He had a good ministry at Parksville for 15 years, through thick and thin.

The second-smartest thing John ever did (you know the first) was to marry Sheila. She supported him in good times and bad, and set a heroic example of gracious care-giving through his drawn-out battle with liver-disease and death.

Though Christ freed John at his conversion from the grip of alcohol, He did not choose to spare him from its effects on his body. In his long final sickness, John told folks not to blame God for it, but him—because it was his heavy drinking in younger decades that ruined his liver. Of course John and all of us prayed for healing, but when our Father chose not to do so, he accepted that. In the hospital he prayed, "Lord, whatever You want to do with me is all right with me."

At the age of 58, John went Home to be with the Lord. He is sorely missed, but at his funeral there were many laughs and thanksgivings as well as tears. May the Lord uphold Sheila and all the family and congregation.

Mack recently went Home--

Mack LeDoux and His Impact

Richard Lewis

Mack Ledoux's fervor for the Lord had a lasting impact on my life. I never had the privilege to be with him as much as I wanted. Even though the opportunities to be with him were so few, I still feel a great personal loss at his passing.

Being in junior-high school when Mack came to Johnson City to East Tennessee State College, I developed a great admiration for him

that never ended. He directed a choral group at the Locust Street Church of Christ that contributed to my love for gospel music to this day. He had a wonderful voice.

There were various brief times to be in his presence through the years and I enjoyed each one immensely. Seeing his excitement for the Lord--whether teaching school, directing choral groups, singing and traveling with the Good Tidings Quartet, instructing the Vietnamese to fly helicopters, winning them to the Lord, being a missionary in South Vietnam, etc.--was an inspiration.

His visit and brief stay in our home in Linton, IN was a wonderful time. I was so happy our children could meet and be with Mack. It was soon after he had returned from South Vietnam, and camp was in session at Woodland. Of course he had an impact at Woodland like anywhere he went. While there he taught us songs. Two stand out in my memory: "The Longer I Serve Him the Sweeter He Grows" and "The Joy of the Lord Is My Strength."

After we moved back to Johnson City, he would occasionally surprise us at church when the company he worked for would send him to nearby Edwards Helicopter to teach their staff to fly a particular helicopter. The visits were all too brief to be with him. One of those visits was the last time I saw him and I believe it was the only time Peggy came with him.

Eternity alone will reveal the magnitude of his influence for Christ. To me the two songs mentioned above characterize his life... "The Joy of the Lord Is My Strength" and "The Longer I Serve Him the Sweeter He Grows."

Portland Christian School Consolidates and Expands

(Reprinted from The Portland Anchor newspaper)

Portland Christian School has undertaken the largest, most complex and expensive upgrade to its physical facilities in its history. This [past] summer the Portland Avenue campus is undergoing a major renovation to replace all the existing heating systems with a new state- of-the-art

heating and air conditioning system. Not only is the new system highly efficient, but it is also computer controlled. This allows each area of the school to be heated or cooled, based upon the activities taking place. "It enables us to make better use of the dollars of our donors," according to Director of Operations Houston Cockrell. "We are absolutely dependent upon our faithful donors to open our doors each fall, so operating costs are of paramount concern to us. This new system in addition to adding air conditioning campus-wide, should result in savings on our utility bills going forward," he added.

Portland Christian School began providing Christian education in 1924 when it first opened its doors at 2500 Portland Avenue. It recently held its 80th Graduation. Over those eight decades it has grown to serve over 300 students each year on four campuses. The elementary operation was moved to the former Emma Dolfinger School when Portland Christian acquired the Montgomery Street campus in 1977. Since then, two additional elementary campuses were added -- the North Bullitt Campus in Brooks, Kentucky and the Oldham Campus at LaGrange, Kentucky. It is the oldest non-residential Christian school in Kentucky and the only one whose tuition is based upon need.

In June, Portland Christian School acquired the Living Stone Church of Christ property on Taylorsville Road near the Gene Snyder Expressway. At over six acres it is the largest expansion in the school's history. "We were literally bursting at the seams on the Bullitt and Oldham campuses," stated Mr. Cockrell. "This new building is an answer to our prayers. It not only is large enough for us to consolidate those two campuses this fall, it also will allow us to move our administrative offices from the Portland Avenue campus to the Living Stone property."

Once those offices have moved, there will be enough room on the Portland campus to include grades K through 6. At that time the classes will move from the Montgomery Street campus back to the Portland Avenue campus where they were housed until 1978. The historic Montgomery property will then be sold. According to Mr. Cockrell this will be a major savings in operating costs, since the school will only have to operate one cafeteria and not try to heat and maintain a 150-year-old building. "The Montgomery property has so much history, but we would never have the funds to restore it and as a not-for-profit organization any tax incentives are irrelevant," he said. "Our hopes are

that someone with experience in restoration and re-use will acquire the building."

Mr. Cockrell concluded by saying, "God has greatly blessed Portland Christian School. We began in the Portland community and we strongly believe God intends for us to continue to minister here. It is very exciting to see that He seems to want us to serve other communities as well. We give thanks and praise to our Lord Jesus."

* * *

[P.C.S. is still carrying on a great ministry. It has been closely related to W&W through the decades. Several of its editors were directly related to it. R. H. Boll and other leaders of Portland Church of Christ began the school. Stanford Chambers was longtime principal and teacher. W. Robert Heid was a graduate and treasurer. Gordon Linscott taught there. The present editor is a graduate and former teacher. We encourage our readers to support this important Christ-honoring work with your prayers and finances, especially in light of the new property which was offered to PCS at 1/6 of its commercial value. Join in support of the building expansion program there. But don't believe false reports which circulated in the Portland community that P.C.S. plans to close its Portland campus. --avw]

Closing Warnings in the S-O-M

◊ **BEWARE! Take CARE!** ◊

A. V. W.

Do you remember how Jesus **began** His sermon on the mount? He started out with tender gentleness. We could paraphrase it like this:

>How blest are those who know and admit their **need** for God – those who know they are spiritually **poor** (not those who feel morally rich and spiritually strong). The kingdom of heaven belongs to such losers, such beggars!

>How blest are the **sorrowful**: (not those who have it all together). Those who mourn over their sins and failures, and also the needs of others shall find consolation.

>How blest are those **hungry and thirsty** for righteousness, for they will be filled. (Why do they hunger and thirst for it? Because they know they lack it, and they know they need it and they yearn for more of it.)

Our Lord thus **began** this sermon reaching out in His beatitudes to embrace those who felt un-embraceable – those who felt, “God could never welcome me, I’m a failure, a reject. I’m too weak, I’m sunk!

To such have-nots, Jesus stretches out His hands. As a hymn-writer put it:

Come, you sinners, poor and needy,

Weak and wounded, sick and sore.

Jesus ready stands to save you,

Full of pity, love and power.

Let no sense of sin prevent you,

Nor of fitness fondly dream;

All the fitness He requires

Is to feel your need of Him.

He is Able, He is Able;

He is Willing – Doubt No More.

(--Joseph Hart. #28 in Great Songs of the Church)

But as He progressed through this sermon, Jesus went beyond emphasizing God’s incredible grace and mercy. He went on to show the Father’s blazing holiness, His high demands for those who are citizens in His Kingdom, His loving refusal to set easy standards for His children. Yes, He is a loving Father who cares for us and delights to give us good gifts. But He is also the righteous King, and He loves us too much to pamper, coddle and spoil us.

So now in Jesus’ conclusion, He confronts us with great toughness, warning us over and over: These matters are serious and urgent. They are matters of life or death! He is telling us, My teachings are not just a

set of suggestions for you to pick and choose among. Rather, they are the only way to live because I, Jesus, am the only way to Life!

Let's listen to Him again, starting with Matt. 7:13-14, NIV:

13 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.

Grim Diagnoses, Clear Warnings

Why do "only a few" find eternal life? In this sermon Jesus tells at least four reasons: 1. Because of not seeking. 2. Because of false prophets. 3. Because of false profession -- just pretending. 4. Because of not practicing Jesus' words -- not persevering as disciples.

1. Because Not Many Seek: Remember His earlier words in this sermon? "**Seek** and you will find." "**Seek first God's Kingdom and righteousness!**" The Lord had said the same through Jeremiah long before: "You will seek me and find me **when you seek me with all your heart**" (29:13). And through Moses, earlier still: "If... you seek the Lord your God, you will find him **if you look for him with all your heart**" (Deut. 4:29). Yet such seekers and lookers are few.

2. Because of False Prophets/ Preachers/ Teachers (15-16): "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. Do people pick grapes from thorn-bushes, or figs from thistles?"

I doubt He was thinking of other religions here (though such warnings also are needed), but mainly of fake "believers in God" like the Sadducees who denied a lot of God's Word and Pharisees who added their traditions to it. There are cults who deny that Jesus is the eternal Son of God, or deny that He is the only Savior. There are skeptics (even within "churches") who deny that Jesus arose from the dead, or that He will come again, or that the Bible is God's inspired Word. There are people who believe you can be a good Christian without being involved in a church, while others believe they are saved because they belong to "the one true church." There are those who believe it doesn't matter what you believe! And on and on it goes.

And the “false prophets” who teach such things may be bishops, TV evangelists, professors, best-selling authors, healers, gurus, editors, college or seminary presidents, movie-stars, mega-church leaders, seers, etc. They infiltrate everywhere.

Such teachers may seem like harmless sheep, Jesus said. They may be winsome, personable, pleasant, insightful, hard-working, caring--but under their sheepskin they are devouring wolves, and maybe some of them don't even realize it! So He cautions us, “Watch out for false prophets.”

But there are still two other reasons why only a few people find Eternal Life.

3. Because of False Profession (21-23): To “profess” is to claim or declare some-thing. 21, “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. 22 Many will say to me on that day [of Judgment], ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ 23 Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”

Jesus clearly is saying that there are “many” pretenders and hypocrites in the world--some who even have superhuman powers. And such counterfeits cause great harm to His cause!

I read about a minister who visited a farmer to talk about Christ.

“Naw, I'd never come to that church,” the farmer said. “You see, I know some members there--old man Smith and Larry Jones--and they don't live any different from me. I'm as good as they are.”

And everywhere the farmer went, he told about the hypocrites in that church.

Months later the minister went to see the farmer again, and said, “I want to buy a hog.” The farmer showed all his best hogs to him. Then they came to the runt. “That's the one I want to buy,” the preacher said. “Oh no, you don't want that runt, do you?” asked the farmer. “I sure do,” replied the minister.

They loaded the runt on the truck and as the preacher left he said, “Now I'm going to ride all over this area and tell folks that this is the kind of hogs you raise.”

"That's not fair!" the farmer protested. "I have some nice hogs and you're only gonna show people that runt."

The minister replied, "If that's unfair, then you've been unfair to the church all these months. We've got some fine Christians--really good people--in our church, but all you've done is tell folks about two people who go there who aren't living right. So if it's fair for you to do that to the church, why ain't it fair for the hogs?"

Here's a tragic recent example of a counterfeit. In February 2005, Dennis Rader of Wichita, Kansas, was arrested. Everyone who knew him was amazed. He had been an active church member for 30 years: an usher; a Cub Scout leader; president of the church council; a kind friend to other members. **But**—to the utter shock of the church, he turned out to be the "Bind and Torture Killer" of ten people over a period of years! He was only a pretender.

4. The final explanation Jesus gave to explain why few folks find eternal life was, because **many Neglect to Practice His words and to Persevere as His disciples:**

"... Everyone who hears these words of mine and **does not put them into practice** is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash" (6:26-27).

Notice the difference between the pretenders and hypocrites, on the one hand, and neglectful non-practicing folks, on the other. Some who hear of Jesus are rebels against His will: **They Choose Not to Obey Him**. Other hearers are careless, casual and indifferent: **They do Not Choose to obey**. They don't get around to it. They are fence-sitters who refuse to break from the world and take sides with the Lord.

At first sight the fence-sitters seem much better than the defiant rebels or the sneaky hypocrites. The difference is huge between those who deliberately choose not to obey, and those who carelessly do not choose to obey. And yet, in the end it amounts to the same thing, doesn't it? The saying is true: **"Not to decide is to decide."** Or as James wrote nearly 2000 years ago, "Whoever knows what is right to do and **fails to do it**, for him it is sin" (4:17).

We call such failures sins of omission. Voltaire, the leading atheist in France during the 1700s, said regarding an archbishop, "That man is **guilty of all the good he did not do.**" Or in some cases we might truly

say, That person is guilty of all the good he **began** to do but then **quit** doing.”

Some people admit, “I know I need Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I ought to learn what the Bible says I should do to be saved, and then become a real Christian and go on following the Lord....”

But then they get distracted, interested in other things, and neglect to seek any more. They grow careless--and finally they become totally uninterested. Listen to what Heb 2:1-3 says about neglect: “... We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we **do not drift away** from it. For... **how will we escape if we neglect – ignore – such a great salvation?**” You don’t have to throw it away, or angrily trample on it; merely ignoring it has the same disastrous results.

No More, No Fewer

Let’s look once more at our opening verses above, Matt. 7:13-14.

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

Notice there are **two Gates**—a wide one and a small one. And **two Roads** – a broad expressway and a narrow, one-lane street. And **two Destinies**—destruction or life. And **two Groups of Travelers** – the many and the few.

Many people don’t agree with Jesus on this point: “There’s just **One** road and destiny: We’re all going to the same place, Heaven; there’s no Hell at all.” But Jesus warns us, “No—that’s false!” There are two destinies, and you must choose.

Others disagree from the other side: “There are not just **two destinies, but Three.** Maybe I’m not good enough to go to Heaven, but I’m not bad enough for Hell; so there’s a third alternative.” No, the Son of God mentions only two. In fact, to emphasize this point He goes on to mention 2 kinds of trees, 2 kinds of fruit, 2 builders, 2 foundations, 2 houses, 2 results of the storm. It seems He wanted us to get His point! (Matt. 7:15-27.)

Think of the Gates and the Roads:

Each road has a Toll-gate leading to it. You must “enter” the Gate to get on the Road to which it leads. The verb “enter” through the gate is in the once-for-all verb-tense. Our Lord is trying to tell us, “Decide once for all to turn to me and entrust yourself to Me.”

So to enter the gate stands for conversion—when we declare, **I have decided to follow Jesus – No turning back.** “Only a few find it,” said Jesus. And yet, in the words of that same song, **“Though none go with me, still I will follow – No turning back.”**

The Road leads to Life, but you can’t get on the Road without going through the Toll-gate. In other words, Be Converted—turn to Jesus in repentance. Believe in Him—have faith in His words and His grace, and most of all in His death and resurrection. Be buried with Him in the watery grave of baptism, and rise to live a new life.

And then, don’t just Stand at the Gate -- Keep Walking!

You can’t get on the Road unless you go through the Gate -- turning to Jesus. But, going through the Gate is not the end, it’s **the Start** – the start of **Walking down the narrow Road with Jesus, day by day and forever!**

It’s not easy, as Jesus warns. But it’s the only road to real Life, eternal Life. Don’t let anything stop you. Neither false prophets, nor preachers teaching error. Nor false profession—just pretending to be Christians. Nor neglecting to put into practice Christ’s words. Nor failing to persevere as His follower as He shows the way and walks with you.

Walk on with Him. Don’t miss out. **Think of the wonder of it all!** “I walk with the King—Hallelujah! I walk with the King—Praise His Name! No longer I roam; my soul faces Home: I walk and I talk with the King!” [James Rowe; #108 in Great Songs]

Next Month: Concluding Article(s) in this series—

“Who on Earth is This TEACHER—the Preacher of this sermon?”

A Common Approach Jesus Took in His Teaching

"It seems characteristic of Jesus' thought in this Gospel that he **begins messages with mercy and ends them with warnings.** The Sermon on the Mount itself commences with a ninefold benediction [the beatitudes] and concludes with a ruined house [built on the sand]. The Sermon of Parables (Matt. 13) begins with a liberally sown field and ends with the separation of bad fish from the good. And the Lord's Prayer begins with the intimacy of a God who is Father and concludes with the urgency of an Evil One who threatens our lives." –F. Dale Bruner

CONSUMER CHRISTIANITY

GracEmail – by Edward Fudge

The modern generation, we are told, looks at church through consumer eyes. They are spiritual shoppers, going from one congregation to another, inspecting the "merchandise" for quality, comparing elements of convenience, service and cost. Churches that wish to grow (or even to survive) are expected to be customer-oriented, ever-happy providers dispensing whatever satisfies the public and makes the shoppers content.

It is certainly biblical and desirable to care about people and to serve others joyfully in the name of Christ. It is also wise to try to learn the language of those with whom we wish to speak. But the whole concept described above, I suggest, tragically bypasses the gospel and distorts the New Testament picture of church as God intends it. Consumer Christianity caters to selfishness and, by rewarding it, fosters more of the same. It ignores Jesus' call to repentance, dispenses with commitment and thwarts discipleship. It forgets the primary agenda of the church, which is announcing the gospel and making imitators of Christ. Jesus does not invite us to buy a ticket and demand good service. He calls us to deny self, to put others ahead of self, to serve rather than to be served.

The church is not benefited, long-term, by dumbing-down its teaching, trashing its heritage of hymns and freewheeling its prayers -- all in hopes of attracting someone who might otherwise encounter something he or she does not understand. Growth that counts, and endures, comes when hearts are convicted of sin, turn to Christ for forgiveness, and answer God's call to serious discipleship within the loving faith-family of mutual responsibility, mutual service and mutual support.

So long as we imagine that the church's job is making people happy, that its mission is accomplished primarily on the premises, or that its work can be carried out by paid ministry and staff, we are doomed to unending frustration, worn-out workers and complaining customers. The solution is ancient and costly: "Repent and believe the gospel." "Take up your cross and follow Me." "Each one should use whatever spiritual gift he has received to serve others . . . with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ." As we do that, God in his sovereignty will see to needed growth.

[Brother Fudge later sent out this clarification re: the above GracEmail:]

"Consumer Christianity" refers to an attitude, not to a style of worship. It is found among people who dress formally and who dress informally, in churches that feature praise bands and in those that sing without instruments. This attitude appears in worship assemblies that follow a liturgical form and in those that are conducted entirely spontaneously, in those that use traditional hymns and in those that sing only "contemporary" songs. People representing all of these styles sometimes have a "consumer" mentality but no style necessarily goes with that attitude

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To My Fellow-Perfectionists

by Rubel Shelly

I confess. The story caught my eye because it indicts me. So this piece is as much for me as anybody else who might read it. As with some of my alcoholic friends, I'm in recovery now. But I'll always battle the problem of perfectionism.

Nobody can be perfect, and perfectionists know that. So the quest to meet high standards, function to the max, and produce is always frustrating. The stress and anxiety it generates spills over to others as well, making them miserable too.

BBC News Online published the following piece that might help you spot your own tendency toward this particular form of dysfunction:

Top Ten Signs You're a Perfectionist

1. You can't stop thinking about a mistake you made.
2. You are intensely competitive and can't stand doing worse than others.
3. You either want to do something "just right" or not at all.
4. You demand perfection from other people.
5. You won't ask for help if asking can be perceived as a flaw or weakness.
6. You will persist at a task long after other people have quit.
7. You are a fault-finder who must correct other people when they are wrong.
8. You are highly aware of other people's demands and expectations.
9. You are very self-conscious about making mistakes in front of other people.
10. You noticed the error in the title of this list.

Contrary to what appears to be the accepted wisdom about perfectionist tendencies, it arises not from self-hatred or a poor self-image but the opposite. Perfectionism is rooted in pride. Not self-hatred but self-love. Not a poor self-image but an inflated self-image. That fact probably lies behind Paul - who seems to exhibit traits of a

perfectionist -- counseling a Christian "not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment." Certain rational steps can help deal with this irrational problem. Teach yourself to set reasonable goals. Point out to yourself that the world doesn't end when you get a less-than-perfect outcome. Remind yourself that some processes are as worthwhile as the goal being pursued. Learn something from setbacks.

God gave you your worth when he created you in His image. So don't get fooled into tying worth to achievement, value to accomplishment. In our human condition, we all need grace, forgiveness, and acceptance - even from ourselves.

--Used by permission

***SURPRISE* Attacks**

By Chuck Swindoll

As an ex-Marine I am often the brunt of jokes told by ex-dog faces and ex-swabbies. Since my outfit is viewed as the guys with more muscles than brains, the jokes usually portray leathernecks as disciplined yet dull, brawny oxen with IQs about six points above a plant. I heard another hilarious one last weekend at a men's conference I attended.

In America they say, "It's 10:00. Do you know where your children are?" In France they say, "It's 10:00. Do you know where your wife is?" In Italy they say, "It's 10:00. Do you know where your car is?" In the Marines they say, "It's 10:00. Do you know what time it is?"

Marines aren't the only ones notorious for being thick and tired of life. Evangelical Christians run a close second!

We get out theological ducks in a row, we make sure our eternal destination is sealed in a fireproof safe, we surround ourselves with a predictable schedule that protects us from contamination with the lost world, and then, like a 600-pound grizzly, we settle down for a long winter's snooze.

Our hope? Do not disturb 'til the Rapture. And we're content to spend the balance of our lives as unconcerned and uninvolved in our world as a silverfish crawling over a pile of discarded Time magazines.

Only one problem. The battle continues to rage, no matter what the season. From spring to summer. In relaxed autumn and icy winter. Whether we choose to believe it or not.

It is so easy to forget that our adversary, like our Advocate, neither slumbers nor sleeps. With relentless, unslacking energy...as sure as this morning's dawn, he's on the prowl, "seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8)

He's been at it for centuries. By means of a brilliant strategy, an insidious scheme, he takes advantage of our mental dullness. Surprise attacks are his specialty.

Small wonder Jesus kept urging His followers to "be on the alert", to "watch", to "resist", to keep a clean crop, free of stuff that "chokes the word, making it unfruitful."

Why? Because you never know when you are in the cross-hairs of the scope of the enemy's high-powered rifle. It could be today that you will be the target. When you least expect it...in the lazy days of summer, in the cool days of autumn, in the fog of false security, under the frost of a laid-back lifestyle.

He's looking for you. He's primed and ready to fire. And he doesn't wait for hunting season. In fact, as far as Satan is concerned, it is always open season on Christians.

Are you alert to the danger?

From **The Finishing Touch**, p. 580, 581
Via Kentucky Avenue Bulletin, Louisville

WHAT IS A PROTESTANT?

GracEmail – by Edward Fudge

A gracEmail subscriber asks, "What exactly does 'Protestant' mean? I've always been taught that I am neither Protestant nor Catholic but only a 'Christian.' Can you help clear this up?"

* * *

Originally the word "Protestant" referred to followers of the 16th century reformers Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, whose work many celebrate the last Sunday each October. The noun is formed from the Latin verb protestari meaning "to make a declaration." The Reformers "declared" that God justifies sinners by grace through faith, that all believers are God's holy priesthood and that Scripture takes precedence over all other religious authorities.

At that time, those declarations distinguished Protestants from Roman Catholics (also from Eastern Orthodox), who taught that God's grace is mediated only through sacraments validly administered only by their own priests, and who regarded the Church's oral tradition as equal in authority with the written Scriptures. Most people today use "Protestant" to refer to any Christian who is not Roman Catholic or (Eastern) Orthodox. Anglicanism straddles two of these categories since it combines Protestant content and Catholic forms.

However, we might also define a Protestant church as one which descended from the original Protestant Reformers. Strictly speaking, many non-Catholic churches today are not "Protestant" in this sense. Those include numerous Bible churches, independent churches, charismatic churches, "restoration" churches (Churches of Christ, Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ), "adventual" churches (Advent Christian and Seventh-day Adventist), and a variety of independent, nondenominational congregations.

Unfortunately, many Christians through the years have imagined that their churches have no historical roots in earlier Christian history, but they have fooled no one but themselves. We cannot skip over the past 2,000 years as if they had not transpired. Far wiser to study our roots, acknowledge those earlier streams which flowed into our own religious movements, and humbly accept our identity as part (but not all) of God's "true church" on the earth.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill, Bhil40482@aol.com

United Song Rally at South Louisville, Dec. 30 p.m. A number of Louisville-area Churches of Christ hold an area-wide song rally every time a month has 5 Sundays. A number of Louisville-area Christian Churches do the same. Bob Kastens, who ministers at South Louisville Christian Church, has invited all those congregations—COC and CC—to meet there – at 3845 Southern Parkway, very near to where 3rd St. becomes So. Parkway. It's a stone's throw from Churchill Downs. The day: Dec. 30. The time: 6:00. Why: To sing praise to God, and meet brothers and sisters from both sides of the keyboard! All singing that evening will be a cappella, so no one need stay away due to any qualms. Song-leaders from each group will help us worship the Lord and exhort each other. There may be some special numbers also. Portland Christian School is offered a table to present promotional materials; and there will be light refreshments afterwards. We urge all who love the Lord, and is people, and good singing – come join this joyful time.

A few years ago, at the urging of Nathan Burks, Brother Bob Kastens began attending our monthly Louisville-area church-leaders lunch and meeting. And earlier this year Bob asked Julius Hovan and Alex Wilson to take part in the “School of Christian Living” week at South Louisville. We thank God for his efforts to build bridges of fellowship.

2nd-hand Great Songs of the Church

This wonderful songbook is now out of print, with no plans to reprint it. But when the Rowan St. Church in Louisville disbanded, they gave our office a number of them—of which approximately 100 are still on hand. Many of them are in fine condition and appearance; others look more used but are still usable. To any congregation which will come pick them up from our office, we will sell up to 50 copies at \$4 apiece. We set the limit at 50 since it seems preferable to sell them to two or more churches rather than all to one. You may write W&W, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville KY 40212, or call Alex Wilson at 502: 897-2831, or leave a message on our website: www.wordandwork.org

Looking Back to Woodland's Sr.-Citizens' Camp The 20th annual Sr.-Citizens camp at Woodland (near Linton, IN) was a real blessing. Campers came from 8 states plus Zimbabwe. About 125 registered--not counting the cooks and meal-servers--and other folks from nearby swelled the crowd for evening services. Six RV campers enjoyed the added hook-ups, 20 individuals lodged at a nearby motel, several stayed in church folks' homes in the surrounding area, and newly remodeled cabins were comfortable for many campers who took advantage of them. If you're 50 or over, PLAN NOW to Attend the Next one, Sept. 8-12, '08!

There were stirring 'power hours' of testimonies and prayers ... studies by various speakers from the Major Prophets ... reports from 2 mission fields ... 2 periods daily of rousing singing, plus a special time led by Dale Jorgenson ... messages by Sonny Childs (who was too young to be a camper that week but greatly encouraged us all!) ... rich fellowship ... enjoyable recreation ... wonderful food. Interestingly, 50 of the campers had attended KBC/ SCC, and enjoyed remembering its blessings. Co-directors Richard/

Janell Lewis and J.R./ Pie Satterfield did a splendid job.

For more information about the past camp or next year's, visit cherrystreetchurchofchrist.com, and click "senior citizens week."

Literature Ministry Bob Morrow continues his ministry of sending written materials to Christian workers in the Philippines and elsewhere. Mostly these are tracts (plus some books) by R. H. Boll and Robert Boyd, plus some c-ds of messages from Words of Life radio programs. Anyone wishing to get reports on this ministry may contact Joyce Broyles at broylesjoyce@yahoo.com or Bob at 508 E. 10th Ave., Oakdale LA 71463. Bob's wife Jo Anna's blindness and dementia continue to worsen, and he himself has health problems too. Pray for them.

David Reagan had successful hip-replacement surgery. He is doing fine. He is up and walking with some pain, but the medication is taking care of most of that. If he continues to improve at this rate he will not have to go through re-hab before going home early next week. They say thanks" for the prayers. --Don McGee

Praise God for some GOOD News from the Middle East! "Leaders of 'Open Doors' and other ministries promoting Christian witness in Muslim-dominated countries have reported 'remarkable' growth among house-based churches in Iran. The growth, they say, coincides with the increasing popularity of SAT-7 PAR, a satellite Christian television channel serving Farsi-speaking Iranian viewers. The channel is a semi-autonomous affiliate of Cyprus-based SAT-7, which has been beaming Christian programming in Arabic by satellite across North Africa and the Middle East since 1996 and now estimates a viewership in the millions." --WORLD magazine, Oct. 13

Worldview Conference – We learn that the West Houston (Texas) Church of Christ hosted a Worldview Conference on October 19-20, 2007. Featured speakers included Dr. Francis Beckwith (Baylor University), Dr. Louis Markos (Houston Baptist University) and Mr. John Stonestreet (Bryan College). It's good to see more Churches of Christ are reaching beyond their boundaries to Bible-believing speakers from other segments of the Lord's body. In the past our Ky./Ind. Fellowship Weeks have

been blessed by several messages from Dr. Bill Brown, then president of Bryan College, as well as by other Evangelicals.

KY/IN Christian Fellowship Week, July 28 -31, 2008.
Theme: "Every Member a Minister" Mark Your Calendar Now!

5 Congregations Seeking Leaders/workers:

>Community Church of Christ (near Louisville): Contact Ron Flora, 502-543-6348; yosemite@alltel.net

>Cypress Creek Church, LA: Contact Charles Seal, 318-748-8572; LSeal50868@aol.com

>Mackville Church of Christ in central Kentucky: contact Norman Darland, 859-262-5530.

>Pleasant Grove Church of Christ, located between the towns of Lyons and Linton, IN: Contact Wally Swaby at 812: 890-8428; wswaby@minerbroadband.com

>Tell City, IN Church of Christ: Contact Michael Elaman, 812-547-7096.

Parkville Church of Christ (KY) Frank Preston has taken the position as full-time minister of the Parkville congregation as of October 28, 2007. Continue to pray for that work and for Frank and his wife Connie as they have

opportunity to serve the wonderful folks there.

Prayer/Praise Booklets will be available at the Thanksgiving Service at Atherton High School for the Louisville/Sou. Indiana area. We want to encourage

church leaders to pick up several copies for those unable to be in attendance. These booklets provide valuable information with regard to Foreign & Home Missions. They are provided **FREE OF CHARGE** by the Church of Christ Worldwide (Lexington, KY) with the prayer that they'll be used to keep our churches updated on the various works. For additional copies, please write and ask. Church of Christ Worldwide, P.O. Box 54842, Lexington, KY 40555.

School of Biblical Studies... is planning to host a camp in the summer of 2008. It will be the second week of June and is for young men from 10-18. It will be called a "**Christian Leadership Training Camp for Young Men.**" The cost will be approximately \$25.00. The young men will be taught all aspects of worship, prayer, reading scriptures, preparing a talk, and much more. Ministers and all church leaders are encouraged to encourage their young men to participate. They welcome older men to help and

sit-in on classes as well. Keep watching for more information but start praying now for this worthy endeavor to reach and teach our young men to become faithful servants of the Lord.

Amite (LA) John Fulda requests locating hymns on CD by the Melody Four group. He would like to have the SATB Hymn arrangements. Titles include: In Tenderness He Sought Me; Look and Live; Brethren We have Met to Worship! Contact John Fulda at 702 South Laurel, Amite, LA 70422. Office phone: (985) 748-8891 or thegreatjf@bellsouth.net

Very GOOD News from New Albany, Indiana! We learned the Cherry Street Church had a wonderful day on Dec. 9. The congregation, which already had several elders and deacons, appointed several additional leaders. Nick Marsh (the preaching minister) and Stan Means were installed as elders, joining Bruce Chowning, David Longest, Dwight Mellow and J. R. Satterfield. Bill Weber and Kevin Parr are the new deacons, joining Edward Merten. Let's rejoice with our sisters and brothers at Cherry Street, and pray for leaders in all the churches – and especially for the Lord to raise up many more.

Glenmora, Louisiana The 33rd Central Louisiana Christian Fellowship is now history. It has been held in Glenmora at the Glenmora Church of Christ where Dennis LeDoux ministers. This year's themes were "Unity in Christ as seen in Ephesians," and "Joy in Christ," and "Signs of Christ's Coming." Among the speakers were Dr. David Wead, Bruce Runner, Don McGee, Robby Bacon, and Bennie Hill. Each year support comes from the surrounding churches in planning the fellowship as well as providing food and lodging for those who come. Not only are they blessed but the real blessing comes to those who attend. The teaching is always inspiring and the fellowship is heart warming. However, it was announced that this year's fellowship would be the final one. We are grateful for friendships, teaching, and memories that those times together have given us.

Prayer-Books re: Missionaries YOU Know! Bennie Hill still has copies available of the very

important Missionary Prayer Guides -- Fall 2007. Bennie, plus David Harding and his helpers at the Church of Christ Worldwide office, perform a valuable service for all of us. Each year they gather information and prayer requests from various missionaries supported by our congregations, and make it available in booklet form - free! We thank the Cramer and Hanover Church for supporting this vital ministry. Financial support for missionaries is crucial, but prayer backing is even more essential!

So spread the call: Copies of the newest prayer guides are still available for any individuals or churches who desire them. All one needs to do is ask: Bennie Hill, Church of Christ Worldwide, P.O. Box 54842, Lexington, KY 40555 or bhill40482@aol.com

P.S. re: Bennie: His hip surgery and therapy went well and he hoped to resume preaching Sunday Dec. 16. Robert and Joy Garrett were there Dec. 9.

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