

“Holding fast the Faithful Word . . .”



The *Word and Work*



“Holding forth the Word of Life.”

January - February 2008

I'm holding in my hand
the Very First W&W—

Its title: *The Christian Word and Work*,

Its date: March, 1908

Quotes this month from Some Former Editors:

“Our new enterprise has sprung from a desire to build up the Cause
of our dear Redeemer.”--D. L. Watson

* * *

“No one has really preached ‘the essentials’ until he has preached
whatever it takes to move men to take the essential steps.”--E. L.
Jorgenson

* * *

“To repent is a humiliating experience, for it is taking sides with
God against yourself. To submit to baptism is to say that the old
life is fit only to be buried out of sight and to give way to a new
life.” --J. R. Clark

* * *

“A bargain is not a gift.”--Gordon Linscott

* * *

“Many today who think themselves to be in the old paths, are only
in the current rut.”--W. Robert Heid

“Living Stone’s Contribution”

—by Paul Denny in KingsField Children’s Home bulletin

Living Stone Church recently blessed KingsField [formerly called Maple Manor] Children's Home with a large financial gift. This gift is received with mixed emotions. The Living Stone Church, which was formerly known as Southeast Church of Christ, in Jeffersontown, KY, decided to disperse after Paul Denny, their minister of nine years accepted the position of Executive Director for KingsField Children's Home. The consensus was not to seek another minister but to allow the congregation members, who typically drove in from surrounding areas distances of 15 to 30 miles, to join in with churches local to their neighborhoods. The property was sold to Portland School at a discounted price [*1/3 or even 1/6 of its commercial value, according to differing estimates--avw*], and the proceeds were shared with many good ministries including \$250,000 each to Maple Manor Adult Home and to KingsField Children's Home. The money is to be used for capital improvement, providing benefit to children for many years to come. The staff and board of KingsField extend our thanks for the ministry shared with all the Living Stone Church and pray for their continued blessing as they minister in other congregations. God bless you!

avw's reflections on the above: If I were to give a title to that announcement, it would be **“Dying with Dignity; Buried to Live On!”** Sometimes a congregation realizes it seems to be on its deathbed for various reasons. In some cases it is possible to turn the situation around and reverse the downward slide, for our God of miracles is still alive. But other times that can't be done, the church can't carry on due to irreversible circumstances. (For instance, none of the churches to whom the N.T. epistles were written now exist—even the strongest ones.)

When a congregation realizes it may be approaching the brink of dying, sometimes folks panic. Some give vent to their anger, look for scapegoats to blame, or revive old arguments and grudges. Others in despair leave the church immediately, “not waiting around for its funeral!”

Living Stone’s leaders and members took the opposite attitude. After prayerful consideration of various alternatives, they grievously concluded that disbanding the congregation seemed inescapable. Yet they sought and found ways to “die” with dignity. Notice three points: By selling it

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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In the BEGINNING . . .

Part One

Alex V. Wilson

I'm holding in my hand a faded and very frail-looking magazine. It requires delicate handling, and the front cover has become disconnected. But the contents are still legible. May I share with you some information about it?

The front cover says:

Vol. 1, No. 1

March, 1908

The Christian Word and Work

Motto: Work and Worship

Table of Contents

734 Canal Street, New Orleans, La.

The table of contents is divided into seven main sections: Bible Study Department, Contributed Articles (5), Editorial, Louisiana Department, Personal Letter [from the founder, D. L. Watson], Things Current, and Miscellany.

Inside, we learn more information on page 1. Under the name of the magazine we find its purpose: "Published Monthly in the Interest of Primitive Christianity." Primitive in the sense of "ancient" or "original," of course, rather than its secondary sense of crude or uncivilized. It called on people to break free from the shackles of denominational creeds and study the Bible for themselves -- but also give that freedom to other believers. Its motto on the cover clarified its emphases: worship the Lord, and work for Him.

Started in Response to Widespread Needs

When W&W began, its special aim was to encourage individuals in the few small Churches of Christ scattered throughout Louisiana and the whole Gulf region from Texas to the Atlantic. They had little chance for fellowship or in-depth teaching. David Lipscomb Watson, a pediatrician, was the founder. That first issue lists him as the magazine's "manager," and Stanford Chambers and A. C. Harris as "editors." All three were

members of “the Church of Christ at the corner of Seventh and Camp Streets” (New Orleans) – to quote again from that issue.

Watson’s introductory articles stated,

Our new enterprise has sprung from a desire to build up the Cause of our dear Redeemer. The fact that there are so many vast territories almost destitute of Primitive Christianity, and that one of the greatest of these fields is all about us, in which practically nothing is being done, weighs heavily upon us.... We shall urge the churches to support the preaching of the Gospel in the regions around them, that the people may know the Will of the Lord, be saved, and added to the body of Christ’s workers; and thus extend the good work on and on, till every nook and corner of this land of ours [*and the whole world, as he makes clear elsewhere*] has been evangelized....

If you love Christ...you are anxious to have His Gospel preached to every creature...to do your part in whatever manner you can. We want to keep in touch with one another. We want you to start to work for Christ today in your own home, neighborhood or congregation. We want to make [this magazine] a means of inspiration for every one who reads it, to strive harder to serve God better each succeeding day.... Ask God to bless us, that we may always know the truth and have the courage to do it; that we may never shun to declare the whole counsel of God; and that we may be the means of doing much good in the Master’s vineyard.

Troubles and Changes

Several years ago I learned from my friend, church historian Hans Rollmann, some shocking facts about the next few years. Since then his article “Word and Work” in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (published by Eerdmans, 2004) spells out those surprises: In Sept. 1913 Stanford Chambers purchased W&W from Watson and became its sole editor, though afterwards the latter sought vainly to regain control of it. Since June 1912 it had carried several articles by Charles M. Neal espousing premillennial beliefs, “views opposed in the journal by Watson, a postmillennialist. Watson was eventually disfellowshipped by Seventh and Camp for various reasons, including differing views on eschatology, personal disagreements, and a dubious fund-raising scheme for the church” (end of that quote).

I (avw now writing) personally knew Stanford Chambers, and heard him preach and teach, and read many of his articles in W&W and elsewhere. Admittedly, that was forty years and more after those incidents in New Orleans. But I cannot imagine that doctrinal disagreement was the major cause of the dispute over W&W and for the later disfellowship by the church (nor did Brother Rollmann say that). That would go against the grain of major principles of Chambers' life. He had firm convictions, but also believed deeply in fellowship in Christ despite doctrinal differences. God knows the ins and outs of whatever happened in those sad incidents. Praise Him for His grace to us. And there comes to my mind the time when Paul and Peter had a shocking and unpleasant disagreement (Gal. 2:11-14).

After becoming sole editor, Chambers added several main "departments" monthly -- department of First Principles, of Work and Worship, of Soul-Winning, of Prophecy, of Bible School, etc. He was assisted by Charles Neal, E. L. Jorgenson and H. L. Olmstead. All of them emphasized the grace of God (versus legalism). All four held premill views, but also believed in "the freedom of simple Christians" (to quote the title of a pamphlet by later editor Boll). That is, the liberty to study God's Word and hold one's own convictions without having to conform to any brotherhood creed or papacy.

Editor for Four Decades—Facing Much Opposition

By Jan. 1916 Chambers felt W&W would do better if more centrally located, and if edited by R. H. Boll. So it moved to Louisville, and Boll became its editor and major writer (though Chambers and several others contributed regularly). Boll had been ousted from the Gospel Advocate staff the year before, accused of over-emphasizing premill ideas. (I have heard evidence given that personal envy of RHB probably played a major part too; God knows.) He countered that he had visited churches where longtime members told him they had never, not even one time, heard a sermon on the 2nd coming of Christ (much less anything else related to prophecy)! Back in 1910 he had written in the Gospel Advocate, "One of the marks of the apostolic churches, in every way as essential as any other characteristic of worship or doctrine, was their constant expectation of the Lord's return." To support that statement he quoted or alluded to 11 passages from various epistles. He also pointed out that Christ's return is mentioned in Scripture more often than baptism or even repentance, as essential as they are.

Boll continued as W&W editor till his death 40 years later (1956). There was one editor-preacher who was extremely popular among many Churches of Christ during the 1930s and later. He fervently crusaded against "premillennialists," portraying Boll especially as an arch-heretic. Through the years he and hundreds of other detractors often called him a "speculator," "Jehovah's Witness" and many other such terms. Boll would deny the extreme accusations, but never tried to strike back or give tit for tat.

During the decades that various Church of Christ papers waged bitter war *on each other* over several diverse issues (the 1930s-1970s especially), most of them were in harmony in opposing W&W! Boll et al usually ignored such vicious negativism and sought to be as positive as possible. A librarian at Harding College in the 1940s told students there, "If you're tired of all the feuding and fighting in the various papers, and want something constructive and wholesome, read the Word and Work."

J. N. Armstrong, then president of Harding College, kept on befriending RHB, and endured some strong criticism for it. Popular preacher G. C. Brewer refused to join in the attacks, maintaining a positive relationship. He probably endured some barbs too. A longtime teacher at a CoC college deeply appreciated RHB and Chambers, and became a W&W subscriber about 55 years ago. His subscription has never lapsed since then! Through the decades he wrote and submitted several articles to this magazine too, which were published. But for decades he used a pseudonym because of the hostility he would have faced. In these latter, better days when legalism and sectarianism have declined in numerous places, such a step is not necessary, thank God!

Boll's deep-seated desire in teaching Biblical prophecy was always to promote practical trust and obedience. He wrote, "Doing one's duty is a first necessity, to be sure; but who can work and keep on working without constant *motive and inspiration*, without assurance that it will count in God's plans, and that our labor is not in vain in the Lord?" He felt that prophecy's main role was to provide such motivation. Again he wrote, "Unless what we learn of prophecy, of the Lord's coming, of the age to come, as well as any other truth, makes us more humble, more obedient, more loving and Christlike, we have indeed learned in vain." This was always his approach, from his early years onward.

He admitted that the prophecies are at times difficult to harmonize, but we need not get uptight about the details. He wrote,

"We may not be able to combine all the statements concerning this vast matter into one harmonious, coherent, systematic arrangement -- likely not. But we are not obliged to. Two things only are absolutely needful: first, to believe just what God has told us, without twisting or quibbling; and second, to *seize upon the practical import of this teaching* and carry it out in the power of a living faith. Nothing [else] will so change our conduct and life...."

Then Boll discusses a second essential attitude toward prophecy--the *freedom to disagree agreeably*. He granted such freedom to others (in his many Bible classes, for instance) as well as desiring it for himself. Note the following: "As for a connected theory of the things pertaining to the coming, I may have one, but I place no weight on it; and I will not quarrel with my brother for having a different idea of the sequence of events." But he immediately goes on to mention one exception: He would indeed "quarrel" about *Post-millennialism* (which was -- unlike now -- a very popular view when he made this statement). Why? Because it robs the believer of the important moral challenge at the heart of the blessed hope. "Any theory which would ... frustrate the practical end God had in view, ought to be abolished. If there is one such practical aim in this doctrine (of the 2nd coming), it is to put us on guard to be constantly ready, constantly waiting, watching, since we know not the day nor the hour.... I would thank no man for putting the coming to the other side of a millennium For this takes the point out of the doctrine."

Not a One-Theme Magazine

But p-l-e-a-s-e do not get the idea that W&W was or is a one-theme journal. Hans Rollmann comments, "Boll was no single-issue writer but also a gifted author on apologetic, exegetical, and spiritual topics.... Word and Work also promoted foreign missionary work through a news department conducted by Don Carlos Janes, and [for over 50 years published] *The Lord's Day Lessons*, a serialized commentary."

Boll and the five editors who followed him probably laid as much stress on God's stunning grace as on prophecy. One of W&W's several mottoes was "declare the whole counsel of God." That meant emphasizing, as just mentioned, the grace of God, to counter the legalism and sectarianism which spread into so many churches of Christ. It also meant centering on Christ's cross (and our cross as well). And it meant giving positive, practical teaching about the Holy Spirit (not merely denouncing the errors of Pentecostals).

Later On

To briefly summarize the rest of the story (until the March/April issue): After Boll died in 1956, E. L. Jorgenson and J. R. Clark became co-editors. In 1962 Gordon Linscott followed them, then William Robert Heid from 1976-86. (Read the articles by them in following pages.) The present editor has served in that capacity since 1986. And by the grace and enabling of the Lord, this issue marks the completion of a century of publication! Thanks be to God.

[To be concluded next issue, Lord willing]

The HOLY SPIRIT of GOD

Stanford Chambers

From the beginning the Spirit of God has occupied a most important place and performed a most essential function in the divine economy. From the time the earth became waste and void, when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, on down and all the way through the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was active in services indispensable. Men were moved by the Holy Spirit, their conduct affected by Him. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

It is difficult to see how any one who reads can fail to see personality in the Holy Spirit. In Him are found the attributes of personality. "The Holy Spirit said." "The Spirit spake." "The Spirit signified." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." There are many other similar expressions. Hardly should we speak of mere power or principle being grieved. While it is true that the term spirit is often used in the sense of disposition or attitude, like the spirit of fear, the spirit of patriotism, the war spirit, and so on, hardly will the passages referred to allow that interpretation. Some make the Spirit and the Word of God identical, declaring that whatever the Spirit is said to do, the Word likewise does. A man and his word are difficult of separation, of course, and so also God and His Word. Yet a man's word is not the man, but produced by the man. So likewise God and His Word.

"But the Comforter" said the Lord Jesus, "even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." (John 14:26). "It will not be you speaking, but the Holy Spirit speaking in you."

Inspiration by which the Holy Scriptures have been given, is by the Holy Spirit. Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." "We are witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him." (Acts 5:32)

"There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." The "one Spirit" is the one promised, the Comforter, who came on the day of Pentecost. He is the one Spirit into whose name we were baptized along with Father and Son. He is the one Spirit for whom the church is the holy temple (1 Cor. 3:16), "a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). He is the one Spirit whose life unites all the parts of the body of Christ and harmonizes its activities "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body...and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor 12 :13). It is the same Spirit for whom your body is a temple if you are in Christ, who helps our infirmities and also makes intercession for us. The Christian's activities are to be prompted and energized by the Spirit of God that he may bear the fruit of the Spirit. Spirituality proceeds from the Spirit. It has no other source.

Filled With The Spirit

"Be filled with the Spirit." This is the Christian's privilege and responsibility and plain duty. It is the Spirit's own command, through the apostle whom He inspired (Eph. 5 :16). He is to walk by the Spirit (Rom. 8:4), pray in the Spirit (6:18) and live by the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). None can do these things unless the Spirit is in him! These things must proceed from within. The outflow will be in proportion with the filling. Paul's inspired prayer (Eph. 3:14-21) is "that ye may be strengthened through his Spirit in the inward man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." The Spirit indwells the inward man of the Spirit-regenerated. "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba. Father" (Gal. 4:6). Would you be stronger for the fight? Be filled with the Spirit. Would you be more effectual in your praying? Be filled with the Spirit. Would you be more joyful in the Lord? Be filled with the Spirit. Are you concerned about bearing more and better fruit? Be filled with the Spirit. We should settle this in our minds.

How Be Filled With The Spirit?

It should be noted that we are passive at this point We are not enjoined to fill ourselves, but to be filled. God does the filling, the Christian is at the receiving end. And the Holy Spirit is given "to them

that obey him.” (Acts 5 :32). That involves surrender. It involves a knowledge of His will.

“Be not unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” I turn the faucet and the water flows. I let the water flow. The hindrance is removed. I press the button and let the current flow and have light. It is in the nature of the current to flow; it is in the nature of water to flow; it is in the nature of Spirit to flow. Sin hinders that flow; selfishness hinders; pride hinders; the love of money hinders; lust hinders; disobedience in any form hinders. The Holy Spirit is “given to them that obey Him.” Are you knowingly disobedient at any point? Are you harboring any sin ? Are you resisting the Spirit? Quenching the Spirit? Grieving the Spirit?

The HOLY SPIRIT of GOD

Finally, are you sometimes in doubt as to whether you have the Spirit? Do you give Him the right of way in your life? Do you love the brethren? If so, it is because “the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 5:5) Do you love the Word of God and the house of God? Do you find joy in rendering service in His name? These are fruits of the Spirit, and evidences of His indwelling. It is ours to practice the presence of the Holy Spirit within us, and enjoy His communion.

UNFULFILLED PROPHECY

E. L. Jorgenson (condensed)

Whether or not we shall preach the unfulfilled prophecies is not a matter for us to decide. God Himself decided that long ago. It is not even left for us to decide whether we *may* do so or not, for we *must* do so or disobey God. To every preacher, Paul in the Scriptures by the Spirit has said, “Preach the Word”; and he has himself set us the example of declaring “the *whole* counsel of God.” Jesus also has said that “Man shall not live by bread alone but by *every* word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” So then the preaching of unfulfilled prophecy comes under the general direction, “Preach the Word.” Of course, we have no authority to speculate in this realm any more than in any other department of the Word; but we do have the right to elucidate, illustrate, and enforce in our own language (that is to “preach,” not merely to quote) the sense of the written Word in this department precisely as we do in other fields of scripture.

Not only does the preaching of prophecy come under the general direction to preach the Word, but it comes under *specific* instructions also—as if God had foreseen the need of calling particular attention to this duty. Thus we read, “We have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a lamp shining in a dark place” (2 Pet. 1:19). And again, “Ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets”— we should not only know them but we should *remember them* (2 Pet. 3:2). Other scriptures on this line would be those for instance, in which the book of Revelation is urged upon our attention (1:3; 22:16). It is a motto among some people that we should do whatever God commands if for no other reason than *because* He commands it. If then we could see no underlying reason or purpose in teaching this part of the Word, no good result to be obtained by so doing it would behoove us to do it faithfully. But the case is not so. There *are* reasons, *revealed* reasons; there *are* purposes and uses good and sufficient:

1. One purpose of unfulfilled prophecy is to establish, strengthen and confirm faith, whenever the thing predicted comes to pass. “I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe.” John 14:29 (cp. John 2:19-22; 13:19; 16:4). The only requirements here are that we must know the prophecy was uttered *before* the event is predicted (that is, that it is truly prophecy and not history), and that it shall be fulfilled in our lifetime. On the same principle these predictions which were both *uttered and fulfilled before our time*, such as the destruction of Babylon, and the dispersion of the Jews, form a mighty argument for the inspiration of the scriptures and go a long way toward establishing faith. Those *uttered before*, but *fulfilled in our time*, however, are the most potent of all in this class; for of them we are *sure* that they are not history but truly prophecy. And they impress us the most powerfully because they come to pass under our own observation. But such predictions must be known and grasped beforehand in order to have their full effect.

2. Another use and purpose of unfulfilled prophecy is that by it we may warn and stir and move men to godly living on the strength of what it predicts. The third chapter of second Peter illustrates this fully. That chapter might well be called, “The appeal to a godly life on the ground of unfulfilled prophecy.”

Peter’s purpose is to remind believers, particularly of the promise of the Lord’s coming with its related events. He stops to meet the skeptic’s sneer.... Then he takes up the believers’ difficulty—“Why is the Lord so

long in coming?".... Then mark the appeal of verses 11, 14 and 17: "Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved;" "Wherefore seeing that ye look for these things;" "Therefore, knowing these things *beforehand*," "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living."

Every *modern* appeal must likewise be based on some form of unfulfilled prophecy. Everybody preaches it. Whenever we appeal to heaven, to glory and reward; whenever we threaten with hell and the wrath to come; whenever we say that Jesus is coming, we make use of unfulfilled prophecy. *Everybody* preaches it, even those who preach against preaching it. Who then can consistently oppose using unfulfilled prophecy? No one can move anyone to do anything without motive. Such predictions are scattered throughout the entire Bible; whether they be promises of reward for well-doing or threats of punishment for evil-doing.

We hear much talk nowadays about preaching the essentials and leaving others things alone—at least if they cause disturbance. But have the brethren overlooked the fact that whatever motive is required to lead a man to take the necessary steps is also essential to his salvation? Whatever hope, warning or threat is necessary to make a man take those steps is also necessary to his salvation. *No one has really preached "the essentials" until he has preached whatever it takes to move men (those who can be moved) to take the essential steps.* This point is of great importance and is being generally overlooked. Whenever our brethren begin really to ponder it, all talk about preaching the essentials and leaving unfulfilled prophecy alone will cease. Then we will be down to rock bottom in all our discussions. Then, instead of a mere charge that Brother So-and-So is preaching things in the realm of unfulfilled prophecy which, though they may be true, are disturbing the churches, we shall have what may be really a very proper charge, namely, that So-and-So is preaching things in the realm of unfulfilled prophecy *which are not true.* And this can then be taken up for investigation in brotherly fashion.

3. A third use and purpose of unfulfilled prophecy is to put a lamp into the believer's hand so that he may not stumble. The first verse of the sixteenth chapter of John is exceedingly significant. "These things have I spoken unto you that ye should not be caused to stumble." Glance over the "these things" which the Savior had spoken unto the eleven. They are predictions for the most part— predictions of coming persecution, of the coming Comforter, of the witness the eleven were to bear. Read on into chapter sixteen; see how He speaks to them of things whose "hours" had

not yet come (1-4), unfulfilled prophecy! That is, unfulfilled at that time. And spoken for the express purpose that the disciples should not stumble. A knowledge of prophecy then keeps disciples from stumbling. That is a rather "practical" effect, is it not?

Let us connect this passage with another one: "We have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a lamp shining in a dark place" (2 Pet. 1:19). If ever a pilgrim on a strange road on a starless night needed a lantern, the Christian needs a lamp for this trip that he has never made before; a lamp *that shines ahead* too, ahead where the road lies. The "word of prophecy" is that lamp. Not a lamp like the twelfth of Romans telling him what to do; but a searchlight that shines ahead pointing out in advance such things in the future over which he would be likely to stumble without that light. Lots of people are stumbling now for the lack of this lamp.

As a case in point, read this letter which appeared in The Sunday School Times during our great world war: "I want to ask you about this war. It has completely upset my faith and confidence in God's lovingkindness and tender mercy. I have given up my Sunday school class after a thirty-five years' tenure. I felt I had no message for the men. . . . I was seventy four years old on the 19th of this month. I am not sorry that I am near the end of life. The woes of this world are too terrible to bear. I never had anything to affect me as this war has done." Here is a man who stumbled for no other reason so far as his letter reveals than that he was without the light of unfulfilled prophecy. Who shall say that if this man had known the revealed truth concerning the last days beforehand, so far from stumbling on account of the war, he would actually have waxed stronger in faith as he saw the very things coming to pass which God had centuries ago predicted. But he had evidently been fed by the "Peace, peace, where there is no peace" prophets until he believed the Gospel would gradually sweep in every man and nation before the Savior's coming, and this was God's purpose in this age, and that the church militant was about to become also the church triumphant in the earth. And now with the near collapse of civilization goes the collapse of the old man's faith. "He (the Spirit) shall declare unto you *the things that are to come.*" John 16:13

"Behold, I have told you *beforehand.*" Matthew 24:25

ASHAMED OF JESUS

J. R. Clark

A Hindu who came to the United States asked his hostess at dinner, "What do you think of Jesus?" She answered, "We do not talk of such things at the dinner table." Later he approached a business man in his office in the presence of others, and asked, "What do you think of Jesus?" The business man said in a low voice, "Come out on the balcony and we'll talk about Him." Said the Hindu, "America is the only nation that I have found in all of my travels who is ashamed of its God!" The average Christian is not ashamed to go to church, but in their day by day contacts they hesitate to line up with Jesus. A business man invited a devout Christian to a party. The Christian knew that there would be drinking and rough talk. He said simply, "Yes, I'll come if you permit me to bring a friend." "Yes, sure, bring him along. There is always room for one more—by the way, who is the friend?" Said the Christian, "The Lord Jesus Christ." The business man was taken off guard. He hesitated a moment and then ventured, "I think your Friend would not enjoy our party."

My brother, are you ashamed of Jesus? Perhaps not at church, but at school, at your office, at social gatherings, in this work-a-day world, are you ashamed of Him?

I. WHY ARE CHRISTIANS ASHAMED OF JESUS?

Brother William J. Campbell of Iowa used to say, "The reason Christians are ashamed of their religion is *because they have such a meager amount.*" One who has only a little money might be ashamed of that little. He who has a limited amount of clothing, and worn out at that, might be embarrassed. A person who gives little in the offering plate may try to hide it. A man with a limited education thrown among educated men might be ashamed. So it is with you and Christ often. If He dwells in your heart in a full, complete way, you will be glad to own Him and to speak out for Him. But if you are ashamed of Him, likely your Christian experience is meager and lacking.

Others are ashamed of Jesus *because of what people think.* We live among people whose portion is in this life. It is difficult to be other-worldly in a worldly environment. The flesh does not relish being ridiculed, laughed at, persecuted. If I am an all-out Christian my friends may call me a fanatic or poke fun at me. I want to be one of them—a

hale fellow well met. In that case I am ashamed of my Lord. A woman in a certain community became interested in tent meeting. She passed by in the evenings with her basket, going to market, and paused to listen. But she did not wish her neighbor to know that she was interested in the gospel. However, she was so fascinated that she finally sat in the back of the tent. But always she brought her basket, so her neighbors would think that she was going to market. One night the pull of the gospel was so great that she went forward to accept Christ as her savior. That night the minister whispered to her, "Tomorrow night you will not need to bring your basket."

The basic reason for men's being ashamed of Jesus is *because of the stigma connected with the gospel*. Paul says in 2 Tim. 1:8, "Be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship for the gospel according to the power of God." In verse 12 he says, "For which cause I suffer all of these things: yet I am not ashamed." And in verse 16 he adds, "Onesiphorus was not ashamed of my chain." The Lord said, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

At the heart of Christianity is a cross and the cross stands for crime and disgrace and execution! Today the cross has been glorified in some quarters: the nails pulled out and the blood washed off. We see it on church spires and as ornaments on the lapel of the coat. But the real meaning of the cross—suffering, crime, death, disgrace—cannot be hid. If your favorite preacher were hauled off to jail you might be ashamed to own him, even if he were innocent. The Apostle Paul had plenty of jail experience. That is the reason that Onesiphorus and Timothy were commended for not being ashamed of him or exhorted not so to be. The Lord was arrested, tried, and finally crucified for blasphemy of which He was not guilty, and for crime he did not commit. Two girls on a ship found a certain passenger repulsive because of ugly scars on his face and hands, until they learned he had obtained these marks while rescuing his beautiful daughter from a burning building. To her those were beautiful hands. And to us the scars of Jesus should be glory marks, tokens of the great love he has for us. Are you ashamed of His scars? Or are you ashamed of the Lord who rescued you from sin? The Stigma of the gospel means salvation.

II. WHY SHOULD WE NOT BE ASHAMED OF JESUS?

The answer to this question is, first, *because we know him* and know the provision He is making for our future. "I am not ashamed; for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he *is* able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day." We know Him experientially as our Savior and Lord. We know that He is the Son of God and that He is now glorified with the Father. Why should we be ashamed of so great a One? All else fades into insignificance as we contemplate Him!

As Paul, we are not ashamed of the gospel, *because it is the power of God unto salvation*. Men are not ashamed of power: powerful weapons, powerful cars, strong muscles. The gospel has *unique* power. The word translated power in Romans 1:16 in the Greek is "dunamis" from which comes the word dynamite. The gospel is God's dynamite, able to blast away sins, before which the Law of Moses and any effort of man were and are powerless. Why should we be ashamed of this gospel of power? And we dare not be ashamed of Him down here, *lest He be ashamed of us* up there when we go into the presence of the Father. "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." That will be a great day when the Lord Jesus takes you by the hand and leads you to the Father and says, "Father, here is a person who was not ashamed of me on earth and I wish to confess him before thee as a faithful, consecrated Christian." A famous general once declared that the happiest moment of his life was earlier when he was singled out in the presence of superiors and cited for a medal. So shall it be a happy moment with us when Jesus confesses us before the Father! To believe that Jesus died for you is to believe that your life is all wrong. To repent is a humiliating experience, for it is taking sides with God against yourself. To submit to baptism is to say that the old life is fit only to be buried out of sight and to give way to a new life. My sinner friend, are you ashamed thus to own your Savior and Lord? Will you say with the poet:

I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Nor to defend his cause;
Maintain the honors of his word,
The glory of his cross.

Do You KNOW You're SAVED?

Gordon R. Linscott, 1979

Last night I talked to Jim, across 3000 miles of America. We talked about Gladys, his wife of 43 years. She left him one day recently, and he didn't appear to be terribly upset about it; in fact, he was rather expecting it. For several weeks she had been dropping hints: "When I'm gone ..." "You know, sometimes I just don't feel at home here." "I feel in my heart that it would be far better for me to leave and be with Christ." The last time we talked with her, it was the same thing; she talked about death as casually as if she were going to the store. For six years she lived with cancer, and last year—it appeared to us who looked on—it was almost like a second honeymoon, for her and Jim.

"She wasn't afraid to die," Jim told us later. "She had been delivered from that old religion of works, where you never really know how you stand with the Lord." This turned the conversation to J.C. Bunn, a pioneer preacher in the northwestern states who had himself gone to be with the Lord a few months earlier. Illinois was his home when he began preaching about the turn of the [20th] century, but the Pacific Northwest was to become his "parish". I doubt that there is a single church of Christ in those states (Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon) where Jesse Bunn has not preached. My first experience in "protracted meetings" was under the tutelage of brother Bunn at Billings, Montana, for four weeks in the summer of 1941.

"Do you remember the meetings brother Bunn held in Lewiston in 1952?" Jim asked me. "He started off by asking, 'How many of you know that you are saved?' Not many hands went up. I don't know what else he preached about those two weeks; I just remember his asking, 'Do you know you're saved?'" I recall his pointing out that the word *know* is found some forty times in First John.

WORKS AND FEAR

Several times during our conversation on the telephone, Jim expressed gratitude that he and Gladys had been set free from fear and salvation by works. What was he talking about? Why did he link fear to works?

The principle of salvation by works is explained very briefly in Romans 10:5: "Moses. . . says that the man who perfectly obeys the law

shall find life in it" (Phillips). "Perfectly obeys" is the key thought. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in *one point*, he is become guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10). The books of Romans and Galatians expand this thought and develop the ramifications of it. Since there is not even one person (apart from our blessed Lord) who has ever been perfectly obedient to God, it follows that salvation by works is no salvation at all. The person who is earnestly trying to improve the quality of his obedience has good reason to fear; the best he can produce is "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). The obedience that saves is the obedience of Jesus: ". . . through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through one man's (Adam) disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of one (Jesus) shall the many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:18, 19). "One act of righteousness"—there's our hope!! "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. . . Dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne!"

Fear has its roots in uncertainty. That is *why* my obedience brings me under bondage to fear. There is always a question: Have I done enough? Am I really well-pleasing in the sight of God? "When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants" (Lk. 17:10). To the extent that I depend on my own obedience to make me acceptable to God, to that extent will I be unsure about my salvation—and to that extent will I be uneasy—fearful—about standing face to face before God in judgment.

GRACE AND CERTAINTY

Nowhere in the scriptures does God encourage doubt and fear. Quite to the contrary! Consider the purpose of the entire epistle of 1 John: "These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life (1 Jn. 5:13). The person who hopes to contribute something toward his salvation cannot have that certainty. Self-dependence (even in the smallest measure) does not honor God; in fact, it casts doubt on the sufficiency of His provision. Therefore, God "credits righteousness apart from works" (Rom. 4:6 NIV). Works, whether good or bad, are not entered into our account. Rom. 3:16 explains why: "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; *to the end that the promise may be sure.*"

If my salvation is to be sure, it must be a free gift. If I do more than stretch out a grateful hand to receive it, then grace is no more grace (Rom. 11:16); it may be a bargain, but it is not a gift. To those who

simply believe God (as exemplified by Abraham and David in Rom. 4), salvation is granted as a gift—no strings attached. At this point, about 79.44% of my readers hit the floor in protest: “Yes, but...” “What about...? The most natural tendency in the world is the urge to justify ourselves. My human nature is willing to concede that “Salvation belongeth to Jehovah” *provided* that I “have to do something,” however insignificant. In some fashion I must qualify to be eligible to receive the gift. God says He is not going to share His glory with another. Salvation is His work, and He is going to do it all—and receive all the credit—or not at all.

When the struggling is finally over and I am ready to leave my salvation totally in God’s hands—based on His work at Calvary—I enter into a marvelous awareness of peace with God (Rom. 5:1). “Arise, my soul, arise! Shake off thy guilty fears! The bleeding sacrifice in thy behalf appears.” In response to the truth of Charles Wesley’s hymn, I see myself standing firm and unwavering on the grace of God—fully relying on His unspeakable Gift. Where once there were fears and doubts, there is now abundance of assurance. “Much more. . . much more ... much more...!!” (Rom. 5:9, 10, 15, 17).

This is where Jim and Gladys found themselves during these past few years. This is why Jim could say that they had been delivered from fear and the bondage of trying to produce good works. This is why the reunion of the family was more celebration than lamentation. They know where she has gone, and they know the Way to go to meet her. What about you? Do you know you’re saved?

SPIRITUAL PLATEAUS

W. Robert Heid, 1982

“I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” — Phil. 3:14

The above utterance was from the apostle Paul, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and was written for our admonition as well as the Philippians. It has become a memory passage for many of us, but ought to be a pole star as we sail the trackless seas of life in Christ. May these lines renew in me a vision of that “prize,” the high calling that is ours.

And may we, together, lift up our eyes to see how high that goal looms above us.

A PLACE OF REST

When we come up out of the waters of baptism, with the glorious presence of God's Holy Spirit within, there is a peace that passes understanding, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This is "that joy I knew when first I found the Lord." We hear that precious Name, and have a song in our hearts that proceeds to tell the whole world that we have been born anew. We pray and we read in a way that is utterly new to us, and the light of God's word beams into every corner of our being. We revel in the pleasures that are ours in our Lord Jesus and in the fellowship of His saints. His Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are Sons of God. This is it!

It is because this plateau of Spiritual life is indeed such a wonderful place, and so easily identifiable, that many are content to abide here and serve and wait. They delight in the five (more or less) steps of obedience that they have taken. They love to hear them preached again and again, since this is what all of the sinners need to hear, and be repeatedly reminded that they are "Safe in the arms of Jesus."

A PILGRIM ATTITUDE

One of my fondest memories of Brother Stanford Chambers was a conversation he held with me about the time we were to print his book "Conquering and to Conquer." He told me of a new concept of the meaning of 2 Thes. 2:7, which had just recently cleared in his thinking, and which he planned to include in the forthcoming book. Briefly, he no longer understood "that which restraineth" to be the Holy Spirit and to be taken out of the way; but by close examination of the words in the Greek, concluded that "He that *held on*" (in the heavenly places) was no less than Satan himself, and when his grip in the heavenly places would be broken, then he would descend to the earth in fullness of his Satanic meanness, and then the "mystery of lawlessness would no longer be mystery, but a brutal and violent fact." I was not only thrilled and convinced by Bro. Chambers' exegesis of the verse referred to, but marveled that one of his age and depth of insight, would yet be studying the word with so open a mind as to change a position that he had long held, when he saw that new light. May his tribe increase!

THE OLD PATHS

I am aware that twice in the book of Jeremiah, God speaks of the old paths. We need to seek them out and to walk therein. But *many today who think themselves to be in the old paths, are only in the current rut.* Formality does not guarantee orthodoxy. Tradition does not prove anything of itself. If we look for some "old paths" in the Bible, we might find: Abraham's path from Ur to Canaan. Abraham's path up Mt. Moriah. Joseph forgiving his brothers. Moses' mother hiding the baby Moses. Moses abdicating the court of Egypt. These are old paths that really went places. And time would fail us if we tried to mention even a percentage of the other old paths listed in God's guide book, taken by Gideon, Samson, Jephthah, etc.

It is a sad day when Christians do not desire to press on to higher ground, yet many today can see nothing ahead to challenge them. We need not slow down and crystalize because of our years. It was Caleb, one with Joshua of the two oldest men to enter the promised land, who said "Give me this mountain" (where the giants were known to dwell). He certainly was not running down like an old clock, The joy of the Lord was his strength, and he was well able to conquer the mountain that challenged him.

There are spiritual plateaus that are higher than where we are now encamped. This I mean: There are areas of liberality in giving, that few have any desire to explore. We say that God's shovel is bigger than our shovel. Then why do we shovel so sparingly?

There are sick and invalid people (saints or sinners) who would be so happy for any act of service. We have so long turned this over to the Government and other institutions, that we rarely feel the pleasure of doing humble, menial service for Jesus.

There are arenas for prayer-warfare—where we can wield the whole power of heaven against the host of wickedness. There are fears within and foes without. Satan trembles when he sees the weakest Christian on his knees. But who likes to kneel? Prayer is a territory that few explore. Although, what we have explored has proven to be most glorious. There is a higher place, the path to which reads "Be filled with the Holy Spirit." It is a hill of glory, a veritable mount of transfiguration. Its pathway is Sanctification, a getting real close to the Lord Jesus. But do we aspire? A negative attitude concerning the Holy Spirit grieves Him and impoverishes us.

There is a high ground of brotherly love and appreciation, but the path thereto is blocked by pride or bigotry. I can never see the good things in other people as long as my eyes are turned inward, upon myself. There is so much good and pleasant fellowship upon that plateau, but many never get the faintest taste of it. How can you appreciate a brother or sister, if all you can observe is their shortcomings (as compared to your own merits)?

There is a mountain-place for communion with God Himself. He has made us that haply we might feel after him and find Him, although He is not far from any one of us. We ought to help one another to climb this mountain, also.

Come, My Christian Friends and Brethren

by Barton W. Stone & Thomas Adams; published in 1829

[Tune: "O Thou Fount of Every Blessing"]

Come, my Christian friends and brethren, Bound for Canaan's happy land,
Come, unite and walk together, Christ our leader gives command.
Lay aside your party spirit, Wound your Christian friends no more,
All the name of Christ inherit, Zion's peace again restore.

We'll not bind our brother's conscience, This to God alone is free.
Nor contend with one another, But in Christ united be:
Here's the Word, the grand criterion, This shall all our doctrine prove,
Christ the centre of our union, And the bond is Christian love.

Here's my hand, my heart, my spirit, Now in fellowship I give,
Now we'll love and peace inherit, Show the world how Christians live;
We are one in Christ our Savior, Here is neither bond nor free,
Christ is all in all for ever, In his name we all agree.

Now we'll preach and pray together, Praise, give thanks, and shout and sing;
Now we'll strengthen one another, And adore our heavenly King;
Now we'll join in sweet communion, Round the table of our Lord;
Lord, confirm our Christian union, By thy Spirit and thy word.

Now the world will be constrain-ed To believe in Christ our King;
Thousands, millions be converted, Round the earth his praises ring;
Blessed day! O joyful hour! Praise the Lord – his name we bless;
Send thy kingdom, Lord, with power, Fill the world with righteousness.

[Barton W. Stone, as many readers know, was a frontier preacher, a main instrument of God in the amazing revival at Cane Ridge, Ky. (1801 and following years), and a leader in the "Restoration Movement"—often called the Stone-Campbell movement. In a sense, W&W's roots go back to him and of course many other disciples of the Lord through the ages. I never knew of this song till a few months ago when our friend Mac Ice at the Disciples Historical Society in Nashville emailed it.]

TALKING WITH OUIDA ON THE PARK BENCH

Leroy Garrett, 11-16-07

The doctor wants Ouida [the author's wife; see Nov.-Dec. '07 W&W] to take walks, and to gradually increase the distance if possible. While some others in this facility walk their dogs, I walk Ouida! I walk on my own in early morning, and sort of step it up. Walking Ouida in the afternoon is entirely different. It is so difficult for her to do even a few yards, but we now have her doing some 300 yards, with an extended rest at the half-way point on a park bench on the grounds of this facility, usually in the sun, and gorgeous weather as of late.

She shuffles along as if each step was an ordeal. "I can't go any farther," she'll tell me along the way, and I will assure her that she can make it to the bench. Sometime we turn back, making the walk shorter; but usually she makes it to the bench. There we rest in the sun, and I talk to her, not much, but some. She hardly ever says a word in reply. She sometimes starts a sentence, but hardly ever finishes one, such as "I wonder if . . ." She has a troubled countenance when she can't say what she wants to say. I try not to notice it -- even when it breaks my heart -- and I don't try to finish her sentences.

But she sometimes shows impressive recall. When I quote one of my more familiar "purple passages," such as "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart . . ." she will complete the verse, or if I name the three things that God requires, from Micah 6:8, "To love mercy . . ." she will name the other two. It sometimes gets amusing. Once when I asked her if she remembered an old friend, calling his name, she said, "Of course, you don't think I've lost my mind, do you?!"

One day on the bench I sought to ascertain how she now feels about life, if she felt depressed, or disoriented, or discouraged, or in pain. She

had some difficulty explaining, but I understand that she has no physical pain, but is grossly depleted of energy -- too tired even to think or talk. That may explain her lack of appetite, not enough energy to be hungry or to eat. And why she sleeps so much.

I assured her that it is OK. Whatever happens it is OK, for "If God is for us . . ." -- again she finished the verse -- "who can be against us?" I pointed to the beauty of the nearby flowers, the majesty of the trees, the glory and immensity of the universe, even unseen worlds, and observed that if such a Creator -- the Ruler of the universe himself -- loves us, is for us, and is on our side, it can't matter all that much what happens to us in our short sojourn in this world. "Our light afflictions, which are but for the moment, work for us an eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians).

I thought of the passing traffic, not far behind us. I could hear some of them say to themselves, "Poor old couple sitting there in front of the Vintage, probably counting their aches and pains." They'd be surprised that we were sitting on a park bench talking about the glories of heaven!

I told Ouida that when the Lord calls her home there will be a "Welcome home" committee awaiting her, and that Eliza Davies would be in charge. That garnered a delightful chuckle. Ouida loves and admires Eliza Davies, who left planet earth in the early 1870s. I came upon her autobiography while doing research in the TCU library. When I noted a chapter on "Life at Bethany" I checked it out for further study. Ouida started reading it, and Eliza became her adopted elder sister, her mentor, and probably her most admired human being

A native Scot, Eliza was abused by both her mother and her husband, and was buffeted by poverty. She nonetheless went on to endure incredible hardship as a pioneer educator in Australia and as a promoter of the Campbell heritage. She had been "a ministering angel" -- as the Campbells put it -- in the Campbell home in Bethany for several years, nursing their sick and caring for their orphaned babies.

Ouida became such an authority on Eliza that when we were in Australia in 1994, she gave lectures about her, telling the Aussies about their own pioneer! And she's written several essays about her. While in Australia we were determined to find where Eliza's "hut" schoolhouse stood, and where she lived and taught ragamuffins under impossible conditions, including hunger. But Eliza always trusted God for her needs. Ouida would tear up when telling of Eliza's hunger, with no food in the hut, only to hear a knock on the door as evening came. "Ma'am," one of her pupils would say, "mums thought you might could use these

victuals.” A little later another knock, and another pupil with still more food.

By way of help from an old history buff that we found in the local library -- in Miami, 80 miles south of Sydney -- we found Eliza. Now a cow pasture, we stood on what Eliza called “Hurricane Hill,” overlooking the Pacific. Ouida felt as if she had communed with her dear friend, whom she loves having never seen. We’ve read her heart-rending story several times together. Even recently Ouida said to me, “Let’s read Eliza once more.”

So, on that park bench I told Ouida that ere long she would get to see Eliza Davies, that she would head the welcoming committee, along with her guardian angel. Eliza will hug your neck and say, “So you are Ouida!” And you’ll recognize your dear friend the moment you see her. No introductions necessary.

Such talk reminded me of something Campbell said about death and heaven, which I related to Ouida. Death has a certain appeal, he said, when we realize that we will not only see our loved ones who have “left us behind” -- an interesting way of putting it -- but we will also see the great saints of the ages.

In another context, which happened to be his last essay, Campbell opined that no person, however gifted, has the capacity to even imagine the blessings that awaits the believer in the glories of heaven.

The great apostle said it in a different way: “The eye has not seen, neither has the ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, the things God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Jesus – Subject of 65,571 Books (And 4 More Every Day)

Geneva (ENI)—

Four new books about Jesus Christ are published every day, and there are already more than 65,000 books world-wide with Jesus as their main subject, according to David Barrett, editor of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* and missionary researcher in Virginia Beach, in the U.S.

According to *Idea*, the information service of the German Evangelical Alliance, publication statistics show there is a “global boom” in books about Jesus. In 1996 alone, 1500 new books about Jesus appeared in print, Barrett told *Idea*.

Information from libraries around the world show that there are a total of 65,571 books with Jesus as their main subject; 53,094 have the word "Jesus" in the title. A large proportion – 25,077 – have been published since 1970.

[Note by avw:] Folks, I found the above amazing news-report in my files recently. And that information was written in 1997, so a decade more of books have been written!

All this reminds me of a famous excerpt from a sermon back in the 1920s by James Allan Francis. It bears re-reading:

"ONE SOLITARY LIFE"

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself...

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth – His coat. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is [the] centerpiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

But Some books about Jesus are Hogwash! –A.V.W.

"Oprah and Friends" teach course on New Age Christ

Adapted from the website of Warren Smith, Nov. 2007

Oprah Winfrey is letting out all the stops on her Satellite Radio program. Beginning in January "Oprah & Friends" is offering a year-long course on the New Age teachings of *A Course in Miracles*. A lesson a day throughout the year will completely cover the 365 lessons from the *Course in Miracles* "Workbook."

For example, Lesson #61 tells each person to repeat the affirmation **"I am the light of the world."** Lesson #70 teaches the student to say and believe **"My salvation comes from me."** By the end of the year, "Oprah & Friends" listeners will have completed all of the lessons laid out in the Workbook. Those who finish the Course will have a New Age worldview that includes the belief that there is no sin, no evil, no devil, and that God is "in" everyone and everything.

Teaching *A Course in Miracles* will be Oprah's longtime friend Marianne Williamson—one of today's premier New Age leaders. The Course is allegedly "new revelation" from "Jesus" to help humanity work through these troubled times. This "Jesus"—who bears no doctrinal resemblance to the Bible's Jesus Christ—began delivering his channeled teachings in 1965 to a Columbia University Professor of Medical Psychology by the name of Helen Schucman. For seven years she diligently took spiritual dictation from an inner voice that described himself as "Jesus." *A Course in Miracles* was quietly published in 1975. For many years it was an underground cult classic for New Age seekers.... As a former New Age follower and devoted student of the Course, I eventually discovered that it was in reality the truth of the Bible turned upside down. Not having a true understanding of the Bible at the time of my involvement, I was led to believe that *A Course in Miracles* was "a gift from God" to help everyone understand the "real" meaning of the Bible and to help bring peace to the world. Little did I know that those New Age teachings were everything the real Jesus Christ warned us to watch out for. In Matthew 24 He warned about false teachers and the false "Christs" who would pretend to be Him.

Here are some quotes from the “Jesus” of *A Course in Miracles*: “There is **no sin**. . . ” A “slain Christ has **no meaning**.” “Do not make the **pathetic error of ‘clinging to the old rugged cross.’**” “...Never having sinned, [**man**] has **no need of salvation**.”

Robert Schuller’s Hour of Power [tv program] helped introduce and advertise the book’s ideas to his worldwide audience. And Oprah told her t-v audience that Williamson’s book was one of her favorite books, and that she had already bought a thousand copies and would be handing them out to everyone in her studio audience. Oprah’s endorsement skyrocketed it to the top of the New York Times bestseller list.

After being introduced to the world on Oprah, Marianne Williamson has continued to grow in popularity. In 2004 she wrote: “Twenty years ago, I saw the guidance of the Course as key to changing one’s personal life; today, I see its guidance as key to changing the world.

Oprah Winfrey’s misplaced faith is a sure sign of the times. But an even surer sign of the times is that most Christians are not taking heed to what is happening in the world and in the church. We are not contending for the faith as the Bible admonishes us to do (Jude 3). **Our true Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is being reinvented, redefined, and blasphemed right in front of our eyes and hardly anyone seems to notice or care. If we want the world to know who Jesus Christ is, we need to also warn them about who He is not.**

Warren Smith has written three books: *Deceived on Purpose*; *The Light that was Dark*; and *Reinventing Jesus Christ*.

VOICES From The FIELDS

David Moldez

Manila, Philippines

Dec. 12, 2007

Recently Myrna Cuevas and her husband visited us from Canada. She graduated from Central Bible Institute decades ago, and testified that she came to know the Lord and grow in faith while studying here. She works now with Global Mission in Canada. She arranged a missionary trip for their group to come this April to minister to one of the depressed areas here in the Philippines. I am amazed how God works! After more than 30 years of not seeing each other [after she graduated from CBI], now the Lord has arranged a way for us to work together for the salvation of more families in the Philippines.

One of the problems we are now facing here is the tremendous rise in prices of all commodities and yet people's income does not increase. The purchasing power of the peso is really stretched beyond limit. Praise God that we have a heavenly Father. In the end we could only say, we are God's servants and we only did our part. Praise God that we are *more* than servants, for He is our faithful friend and loving Heavenly Father.

Michiya Nakahara

Shizuoka City, Japan

Dec., 2007

As we reflect upon this past year, we have so many things for which to be grateful. We are so thankful for your constant support both financially and in prayer. Let me update you on what is happening here in Japan..

"Reading Club" was started two years ago. We meet once a month and have an average of fifteen children who attend. We have been reading some of Max Lucado's wonderful literature. The reading time is followed by craft projects. It is a joy to see these children step in to the church (many of them, otherwise, will never be here) and to minister to them.

The New Age Buddhist facility was completed this year. We see many young people as well as elderly folks come to this facility daily. Some are faithful and come every day after work. The people are in need of "something /someone to believe in." This compels me to pray even harder for the lost souls in our neighborhood that God will use me and our church to draw people to Christ, not to the fancy building which offers no hope.

Nakahara Family: Kazuma, a 7th grader keeps very busy with school work as well as Karate. Lyn, a 4th grader also takes Karate, and studies hard. But most of all, our sons have a heart for the Lord. Kazuma shared his desire to someday be a preacher, if the Lord directs him in that path. Please pray with us as God works in his heart.

Tomoko is a full-time kindergarten teacher. She keeps a very tight schedule. She leaves the house at 7 a.m. and doesn't return till 6 p.m. Japanese kindergartens have changed drastically during the past few years. People are looking for kindergartens with the most services, such as lunch, kindergarten bus, after school day care, Saturday day care, etc. Tomoko works at the only Christian kindergarten in the area, but they are forced to market themselves to keep students coming. Therefore, the extra load is placed upon the teachers (not to mention with no extra pay). She has to work two Saturdays a month for the daycare program in

addition to her regular teaching load. Please pray that God will sustain her health, and that He will give us wisdom. For now, she doesn't have any other employment opportunities, but we are grateful that she can work there.

For myself, my neck is feeling better. I have much less numbness and I continue to do my exercises. I will be seeing the doctors after the first of the year. Please pray with us that the result will be favorable to my coming to the U.S. this summer. I long to see many of you again as well as visit with my sisters and their families.

[The above is condensed. To receive their full letters by mail, write their treasurer: Bob M. Yarbrough, 19930 County Road 324, Terrell, TX 75160.]

Mark Garrett

Senegal, West Africa

Nov. 28, 2007

Radio Call-in Contest: Airing the Broadcast Yoonu Njub (Way of Righteousness) has been a key strategy for our team in Senegal for several years... We collaborated [with another missionary agency] to launch a pilot call-in contest. They paid for the airtime, we covered the prizes and special announcements.

The goal was to attract anonymous Yoonu Njub listeners to come, meet us, and meet a Wolof-speaking believer. This way they would know where to come locally for answers to their questions and we could identify some key inquirers for follow-up. At the same time we included in the won prizes some Scripture portions and even the Jesus film in Wolof!

How It Worked: At the end of the day's broadcast a question about that program was put to the audience. Anyone who called within 30 minutes with the right answer won some prizes. The first with the right answer won an extra prize (1/2 sack of rice). Even a wrong answer won a consolation prize because we wanted to meet as many listeners as possible. Given our Muslim context, the contest was conducted off-air to protect the identity of the contestants, and to prevent on-air gaffes since we were discussing religious topics. The listeners called our office number and we told them whether they had won and when and where to come to collect their prizes.

We analyzed all aspects of this project as we went along, learning from this first effort so that we can do even better on subsequent tries. Our pilot project spanned 24 broadcasts. During those 8 weeks more than 50 people called and 45 came to collect their prizes. The vast majority

have Muslim names and most are in their 20's. However, in this culture the older people send younger ones to phone on their behalf, so perhaps some winners were actually older. Six took home Bible correspondence courses and one teenage boy has already finished the first booklet and is working on the second.

Please pray that we will be wise and effective in drawing people in and getting God's Word into their hearts through their mother tongue.

4 Baptisms! In the Kaffrine area the children of the believers have been learning the truths of the Gospel for a few years. Now the fruit of all those lessons is ripening! Three teenagers who have believing parents chose to be baptized. The persecution started up with renewed vigor on them but they are standing firm.

We heard from missionary friends that our longtime Wolof tutor was baptized recently. We rejoice in hearing of this step. He has taught a long line of missionaries and so we all have been praying for him for the last 15-20 years!

[The above is condensed. To receive full reports, write Garrett Grapevine, 4733 Old Boonesboro Rd, Winchester, KY 40391.]

Rich in spirit, poor in funds for retirement—

A sociologist's study cites low pay, little savings and church-owned homes as factors contributing to ministers' bleak financial outlooks.

By Bobby Ross Jr.
The Christian Chronicle

If he ever retires from preaching, Park Linscomb figures his daily routine will include bagging fries at McDonald's or greeting customers at Wal-Mart.

Like the Manchester, N.H., minister, many Church of Christ preachers across the nation envision anything but comfortable, carefree lives after the pulpit — at least this side of heaven.

"If I may be blunt, ministers in our fellowship have been so poorly compensated that the prospect of retirement will be challenging for most of them," said James Knapp, a church member, sociologist and author of a new research study on ministers and retirement. Only one out of four

Church of Christ ministers surveyed by Knapp — 25 percent — plan to fully retire.

Twenty-nine percent said they do not intend to retire, while 46 percent plan to partially retire. The study involved 214 ministers at Texas congregations with Sunday attendance of at least 100. “While a range of explanations was provided, a common theme was an inadequate financial base for retirement years,” reported Knapp, a sociology professor at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Many ministers have been unable to save for retirement, “so there is an extraordinarily heavy dependence on Social Security,” Knapp said. Eight out of 10 ministers will rely on Social Security for retirement income, while some won’t even have that, according to the study. Many of those who do not plan to retire work with smaller churches and live in church-owned houses, meaning the minister has no place to live or equity to take with him if he retires, Knapp said. “Though most individuals do not enter the ministry for money, one must wonder if the economic realities might turn some young people away from full-time ministry or force some experienced ministers into other professions,” said Knapp, a member of the Western Heights church in Sherman, Texas.

TO RETIRE OR NOT?

When Linscomb and his wife, Linda, moved to the New England mission field in 1974, they scraped by on \$600 a month and lived in a church parsonage. Paying 15 percent of their limited income to Social Security became next-to-impossible, so they chose opting out over leaving New Hampshire, he said.

“At this point, we do live in our own home and have managed to put away a little money over the years,” said Linscomb, 55, whose congregation contributes to his Primerica retirement fund. “Even so, I have no plans to retire until I absolutely have to because of health or lack of a ‘market’ for an aging minister.

“I’m not complaining,” he added, “because the Lord has always provided for us. It is just to say that retirement from the field of ministry will not likely be in the same class — in this world — as others with comparable education and skills.”

A year and a half ago, Russ Lawson left full-time ministry after 35 years with congregations in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and the East African nation of Kenya.

“Even though my heart is in ministry and I would love to be doing it full time ... I am trying to work in the secular area to build a little retirement,” said Lawson, 59, a member of the Mid-County church in Troy, Ohio. Still, he devotes much of his free time to World Christian Literature Outreach.

In west Texas, Greg Fleming served 12 years with a 90-member church. He loved the congregation and the nice parsonage where his family of five lived. But at age 40, he found himself with no retirement savings and no equity from owning a home.

“It was a great place for our kids to grow up,” Fleming said of the quaint town of 1,000 souls. “We would have stayed there if we could have. But financially, we were just at a point where we couldn’t.” Fleming decided he had no choice but to move to a larger congregation. He has preached for 12 years at the 200-member North A church in Midland, Texas, which puts an amount equal to 5 percent of his gross salary into a retirement account. Plus, he owns his own home. “I still think I may be a bit behind many non-ministers who are 50-plus years in age,” Fleming said, “but I also know that many ministers tell me that they do not have anything like the ... benefits that I enjoy.” Fleming’s wife, Cindy, works for the state and has her own retirement plan. Like 44 percent of ministers in Knapp’s study, Fleming counts on his wife’s job to help build a financial package for retirement. Demands on a minister’s wife — at church and in the workplace — can be excessive as she works to balance her job, children, financial trouble and any number of shut-ins, new converts, showers and weddings, said Becky Wooley, whose husband, Bruce, preaches at the Brainerd church in Chattanooga, Tenn.

“Her entire life is under scrutiny and can seem to be hanging on the slender goodwill of an unpredictable congregation and a gathering of elderly men,” said Wooley, who stressed that she was speaking in general terms and loves her own congregation.

RAYS OF HOPE

Given the autonomous nature of the nation’s 13,000 a cappella Churches of Christ, fellowship-wide pension plans or investment vehicles do not exist, Knapp noted. But at least two major efforts may offer rays of hope to ministers and congregations struggling with retirement issues.

The Institute for Church and Family at Harding University in Searcy, Ark., launched a ministers' retirement program in 2005. It lets ministers or churches invest funds in TIAA-CREF retirement accounts through Harding.

So far, more than 125 ministers and staff members at 75 congregations have signed up. The plan is open to any congregation. Andrew Baker, executive director of the Harding institute, grew up as a preacher's kid. His parents, Benny and Donna Baker, had no retirement savings after 35 years of full-time ministry.

Their experience motivated the development of the Harding program, as did an 80-year-old minister who told Baker, with tears in his eyes, "I'll never be able to retire and enjoy my grandchildren like my friends."

Another group, the Christian Leaders Benefits Alliance, hopes to provide health insurance, retirement benefits and electricity savings to churches and nonprofits. The alliance detailed its efforts at the recent Abilene Christian University Lectureship, said Ron Holifield, a member of the Southlake Boulevard church in Texas.

"It would just absolutely rip your heart out the number of e-mails that I have gotten from ... ministers who ought to be retired who simply could not afford to retire," said Holifield, an alliance leader, along with Jon Mullican, executive minister at the Highland Oaks church in Dallas, and Charles Siburt, an ACU vice president.

But Roger Pritchett, missions minister at the Pleasant Valley church in Little Rock, Ark., cautioned against ministers worrying too much about money.

"There are thousands of evangelists outside of North America for whom the subject of retirement is a dream," said Pritchett, a former missionary to Kenya. "They receive low or no pay ... and have not had any help in housing, either. ... I wonder if we really believe that God will take care of us if we do his work."

Still, he said God expects prudence and good stewardship from his followers: "If we can make some simple changes, like selling the parsonage and increasing the minister's salary so he can afford to buy a house and build equity, we probably ought to do it."

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NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill, Bhill40482@aol.com

GOOD News from Borden, IN Church Three elders were appointed there in January: Jim McKinley, Ray Weatherford and Les Wright. Scott Reeder is the preacher at the congregation, following Mike Abbott who now ministers at Denham Springs, LA.

GOOD News from Sellersburg, IN Church, too Four new elders were recently appointed: Bob Campbell, Perry Couch, Kenneth Pettit and Charles Weber. They join elders Bill Couch, George Haas, Frank Hutchinson, and Lawrence Montgomery.

Correction: We are sorry that in our preceding issue we misspelled the name of Dwight Mellon, an elder at Cherry St. Church in New Albany, IN. ("For once it was my mistake, not my good friend Bennie's," says avw, blushing.)

16th Annual Christian Crusade for Christ (2008) is being sponsored by the Ponchatoula Church of Christ (LA) March 24-27 but will be held at Oak Grove Church of Christ. Theme: "The Real War" and speakers include: Sonny Childs, Robert Gill, Harry Coultas, Joe Stone, Robert Johnson, Danny Broussard, Bennie Hill, Kenneth Istre, Mike Abbott, and Frank Preston. Each day begins with lunch at noon followed by two afternoon sessions beginning at 1:00 p.m. The evening service begins with singing at 7:00 p.m. For information

contact: Cleo Russell at 225) 294-7814.

Struggles and Needs in the Philippines "One of the problems we are now facing in the Philippines is the tremendous rise of all commodities and yet our income does not increase. The purchasing power of the peso is really stretched beyond limit. Praise God that we have a heavenly Father. In the end we could only say, we are God's servants and we only did our part. Praise God that we are more than servants, for He is our faithful friend and loving Heavenly Father." --David Moldez, Manila

Brother Moldez is president of Central Bible Seminary in Manila. CBS, formerly CBI, was founded by Victor Broaddus and Dennis Allen over 50 years ago. Alex Wilson, Billy Lewter and others of our missionaries formerly taught there. For over 25 years it has been under the leadership of Filipinos (Brother Moldez and his predecessors) who were trained by us missionaries back then. It has around 100 students, but also many financial needs due to the terrible economic conditions there. Please pray regularly for it, and give as the Lord leads. Sometimes we forget to pray for churches and leaders on "foreign fields" after missionaries are no longer there. --avw

Locust St Church of Christ (Johnson City, TN) is enjoying Hall

C. Crowder teaching the adult SS class. Since moving to Johnson City with his children Cindy & Ken Brady, his presence has been a joy for the congregation. He is teaching the class this quarter. He provokes thought and brings interesting information to the texts for the class. His wife, Alice, is unable to attend due to her health. (Richard Lewis)

Sis. Joyce Schuler, wife of Bro. Louis Schuler, was called home to be with the Lord January 7, 2008 from the Baptist Hospital. Bro. Dale Offutt officiated at her memorial service on Friday of same week. She was remembered as a "woman of faith" and a "woman who loved God's word." She loved dearly her family including her grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great grandchild. She will be greatly missed at home and at church where she faithfully stood by the side of Bro. Louis and ministered with him.

Paul Kitzmiller is now the preaching minister at Ralph Ave. Church of Christ in Louisville, while continuing to direct Goin' Fishing ministries founded by the late Earl Mullins Sr. He hopes to make a 2nd visit to Ukraine soon, accompanied by J. R. Satterfield. Pray for the Lord to open doors and provide workers there, as opportunities in Russia are more restricted now.

News & Notes Editor (Bennie Hill) continues rehab twice a week following hip surgery the week after Thanksgiving (2007). It's now been about 7 weeks and God has been gracious in providing a "speedy"

recovery as my surgeon prayed the day before. I have been pain free (Praise the Lord!) and able to resume "normal" activities. Thanks to so many of you for the e-mails and prayers on my behalf.

Next Month, Lord willing We hope to run the final article in the series on the Sermon on the Mount.

A Helpful Bible-study Tool For Christmas the W&W editor gave his wife a copy of a special study-Bible published by Harvest House. (Did he think she didn't learn enough about Scripture from his sermons? –smile) It is a Bible with its books arranged in chronological order, plus enlightening explanations of backgrounds, etc.

Recently in *Gospel Tidings* magazine, editor Bill Adcox also recommended that very same item: "2008 is seeing a new venture around my home congregation; we're tackling the Bible with a new tool for us, *The Daily Bible*. This unique book, like other chronological Bibles, lets you easily follow biblical history and truth from the creation to Revelation in the order of its occurrence. With 365 daily reading portions, the reader can systematically progress through the entire Bible in a single year. The Psalms are grouped by themes, with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes topically arranged. The laws of Moses are easier to comprehend and the major and minor prophets don't leave you confused wondering where their inspired teachings ought to fit into the major scheme of the whole story. The life of Christ is not merely another parallel of the gospels, but an

integrated, easy to follow, account of Jesus' life. Throw into the mix a down to earth commentary by Church of Christ author, F. Lagard Smith, and we are looking at this being a winning combination for our congregation. The truth is that whether folks use a special study Bible or their traditional Bible, growing in our relationship and knowledge of Jesus is the focus."

The United 5th-Sunday Song Rally
Dec. 30, for Churches of Christ and Christian Churches in the Louisville area, was a time of joyful worship and fellowship. It was co-sponsored by South Louisville Christian Church and Portland Church of Christ. An estimated 350 people attended--despite the fact it was New Year's weekend with lots of folks out of town. In addition to singing and prayer, our Savior's death was remembered as we partook of the Lord's Supper together. An offering of \$780 was given for Portland Christian School, which was greatly appreciated. (It had been proposed that the offering be divided between PCS and a Christian Church ministry that plants new congregations, but the latter waived the offer in favor of its going entirely to the school.)

Ladies Inspiration Day This important meeting will be held on April 12 from 9:30-2:00. Registration

begins at 9:00. This year's location is the Waterford Church of Christ, 5706 Mt. Washington Rd (Hwy 44), Taylorsville KY. Speakers are Shirley Smith, Harriett Pippin, Sue McPherson, Barbara Hockenbury, and Joyce Zimpelmann. Theme: "The Good, the Bad, the Ugly: Which Do You Reflect?" For more info, call Joann Burks, 502: 491-09375, or Mattie Knapp, 244-6192.

BEWARE of Seemingly Fraudulent Fund-Raising among Christians: *World* magazine (Jan.'08) says that Christian Children's Fund, founded in 1938, is "one of the nation's largest relief organizations, with a 2006 income exceeding \$206 million." It does feed children, but the 1st word of its name is misleading. "A spokesperson for CCF [said], 'We do not call ourselves a ministry. We are not Bible-based. We are not a Christian organization except in the sense that we do good work.'" It "has no doctrinal statement... and does not require any statement of faith for any staff or board members." *World* says CCF even "'partners' with 'traditional healers' in Africa and Asia." If you know anyone who donates to CCF you might refer them to *World* Magazine, Jan. 12/19, 2008; *World's* phone is (800) 951-6397 within the U.S.

The following items are from christianet@worldconvention.org:

In Japan A part of the Metropolitan Tokyo Government, has celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the **McCaleb House**, the home built in 1907 by American Missionary of the Stone-Campbell Movement J.M McCaleb. Amazingly, the house survived repeated air raids during World War 2 in which Tokyo was literally destroyed by fire. Thanks to the efforts of Brother **Motoyuki Nomura** the home contains an iron bed used by the McCalebs and a small organ owned by Alice Miller, another pioneer missionary to Japan. For more information & photos contact motofish@eps4.comlink.ne.jp

Group Health Insurance -- Employees (including missionaries and certain other sponsored individuals) in Churches of Christ, Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) and other churches of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement may be eligible for lower-cost health insurance coverage through a group plan administered by Christian Leaders Benefits Alliance. For details, see website (www.clbabenefits.org) or write to Ron Holifield at Ron@GovernmentResource.com .

World Convention (held every 3 years but in different locations around the globe) seeks to build up fellowship, understanding and common purpose within the various groups descended from the Stone-Campbell movement: Churches of Christ, Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ. This family of churches now serves and witnesses as part of Christ's church in no less than 178 countries. The 17th World Convention, with the theme "Together in Christ," will be held from July 30-Aug. 3, in Nashville, TN this year. A wonderful opportunity for those who can attend—next year it may be ½ a world away!

(Continued from IFC)

“Living Stone’s Contribution”

in the manner they did to Portland Christian School they saved it lots of money (it was already considering obtaining an additional campus). They also guaranteed that the teaching of God’s Word, the sharing of the gospel, and a blessing to many families could continue in that very community where their church had existed for decades! And by their generous donations from the sale they strengthened the Lord’s work in several other places. That is how a local congregation died with dignity, and was buried to live on. It lives on at the original site, and at the churches in which members are now scattered, and in the ministries to which it gave large donations.

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