

“Holding fast the Faithful Word . . .”



The *Word and Work*



“Holding forth the Word of Life.”

March – April, 2008

The Lord has enabled Word and Work to
Proclaim Good News, and
Teach God's Word, for

100 YEARS

--praise His Name!

100 Years--that's 1200 months,
over 5200 weeks,
over 36,500 days.

Postal CHAOS! and A Postal *Hero*

The following message from Texas is just one of *several* similar letters or emails we have received in recent months, not only re: our Jan-Feb issue but the preceding one too. A good brother in Texas wrote, "I received the W & W (Jan-Feb) on Wednesday. There was only one copy that came but the label has (Qty: 10) on it. Was I to receive a bundle of 10? [Answer: Yes, as usual.] If so, I received only one. Perhaps the bundle was not securely fastened. *Not complaining, just letting you know* what is happening."

In my reply I sent him these thoughts: Maybe sometimes it is *wrong* *Not to complain!* *Sometimes complaining is fully justified* -- to the Postal Service in this case and several cases almost identical to it! -- because they messed up more than a few copies and in more than one place in recent months.

Dozens of copies (usually the ones we mail in bundles) have been returned to our office, most often with no indication of what their destination had been. Thus we don't know who did not get them unless the subscribers call us. Louise Wells says, smiling: "If you didn't get this or the 2 preceding W&Ws, call my home, 502-775-8243, and we'll replace them." And we have, sometimes by UPS! But can the Postal Service compensate our few veteran volunteer ladies for the many extra hours and stresses involved? Will the Postal Service offer us free postage to mail the same issue to the same people for the 2nd time, due to their blunder? It's not the cost that disturbs us so much as the principle of the thing. Here's what blows my mind: *Ever since the Postal Service pushed their magazine Rates Higher, the Service has gotten markedly Lower!* What is wrong with that picture?

If you or your church have been affected by this, *please do complain -- in a friendly and Christian manner, yet firmly too!* Remember that the person you're talking to is probably not the one responsible. But show them the above facts, and explain your own instance. Squeaking wheels get the grease.

I'm pretty sure what they'll say, because we've heard it a few times. "The Postal Service itself doesn't send magazines anymore; they hire a delivery service." That simply means you and I should insist that the USPS register our complaints with *that service*—or replace that middle-

Continued on IBC

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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100 Years Old: To God be the Glory

Alex V. Wilson

Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness. --Psalm 115: 1, NIV

It was 1908. Teddy Roosevelt was president. Model T Fords began rolling off the assembly line, and Thomas Edison won a legal dispute over the rights to the moving picture projector. The Detroit Tigers won the American League pennant, sparked by a young outfielder named Ty Cobb. AND, down in New Orleans, a few disciples of the Lord Jesus began publishing a Christian magazine named *The Christian Word and Work*. [See the preceding issue.] The subscription price was \$1.00 a year, and for some months a special offer was made--3 months for only 10 cents. (By 1914 the price dropped to 5 cents per copy but only 50 cents per year!)

***"As it was in the beginning,"
(but Not "is now and ever shall be")***

Some interesting items are found in the few issues I have seen from the 1908-1915 era. There was a monthly column, "Our Boys and Girls," which was "edited by Cousin Ellen." An article from 1913 caught my attention. It is entitled, "Immorality Laid to Women's Garb." It describes how a state legislator from Cincinnati, alarmed by "a great wave of immorality now sweeping over the country," introduced a bill asking the governor to appoint a commission to "prescribe the fashions to be worn by women in the state of Ohio." One wonders what resulted.

But it is the advertisements which perhaps strike you the most. You could buy a teachers' reference Bible with concordance, Bible dictionary and other helps for \$1.75. And those early issues contained ads not only for religious supplies and books but also for a coal dealer, a pharmacy, an insurance agency, a clothing store, typewriters, and "self-sharpening secret-spring shears--always sharp." At the bottom of the table of contents page is another ad: "HOSIERY--Darn-proof, Guaranteed; 12 pairs, \$1.00. Intense Black, Tan or assorted. Gents or Ladies..." from a hosiery mill in North Carolina. An editorial says some readers dislike having ads in the magazine, to which the reply is given that they might

not be needed if readers would pay for their subscriptions on time and would help increase the journal's circulation.

Moving North

Later came 1916. President Wilson and the whole country were fearful about the war in Europe. Wilson also advocated women's suffrage, but even that year--before women got to vote--Jeanette Rankin was elected as the first woman to the U.S. Congress. That was also the year that Einstein developed the theory of relativity, Rockefeller's personal wealth passed one billion dollars, and a young painter named Norman Rockwell for the first time had a drawing appear on a magazine cover. AND, in New Orleans, editor Stanford Chambers proposed that *Word and Work* magazine be edited by R.H. Boll and published in Louisville. The offer was accepted, and a new era began.

In this issue we continue to look back to our magazine's roots and beginnings, with gratitude to our Lord. Truly, "Tis grace has brought us safe thus far, and grace will lead us home." Brother Boll used to say of *Word and Work* that it was "always dying yet behold--it lives!" (see 2 Cor. 6:9). In Jan./Feb. we told about D. L. Watson, the originator of the magazine, and about Stanford Chambers and R. H. Boll. That took us from 1908-1956.

After Boll died in 1956, **E. L. Jorgenson** and **J. R. Clark** became co-editors. Brother Jorgenson had been a frequent writer since before Boll became editor in 1916, and was his close friend and co-worker through the decades. A wonderful musician and song-leader, he compiled the outstanding hymnal *Great Songs of the Church* which for decades was used by many Churches of Christ. (For quite a few years he left his name out of the book because congregations who were opposed to what they called "the pre-millennial movement" would not buy it if his name was there!) He also finalized the vast material which Don Carlos Janes had compiled from the writings of Bible scholars and preachers through the centuries. It was published as *Faith of Our Fathers*, and presented strong evidence that the basic premillennial view had been held by a number of godly and orthodox Christians throughout church history. (Though it has taken various forms in the details.) That book has long been out of print, but is available online as a series of articles that appeared in *W&W* in the mid-1940s.

J. R. Clark wrote a number of articles on various topics, many of them studies of Scripture passages. He and ELJ both continued the desire this magazine had from the first, to build bridges and remove barriers

among the disciples of the Lord. Like all of W&W's editors (except the founder, D. L. Watson, a pediatrician), Brother Clark was a preacher. He ministered for years at Dugger, Ind. and then even longer at Ormsby Ave. Church in Louisville. He was a gracious, pleasant and humble man. Recently Dale Jorgenson (nephew of ELJ) wrote a personal letter to the editor musing on various aspects of W&W through the decades. He included these comments; note especially his statement about J.R.C.:

Thanks to the spade work of Ernie Stefanik and Hans Rollman, and with the support of Alice Mullins, there now is a complete index for fifty years [of W&W] on line. The four hundred ten names of contributors in that index read like an expanded version of Hebrews chapter 11: many Bible scholars, saints, and missionaries who have gone on to immortal life. Several names still move me just to see them in print—names such as J. R. Clark who served as publisher for the journal many years, and was patiently content to serve in a "John the Baptist" role as chief supporter of others who did most of the editorial work." [I.e., the others wrote most of the editorials, selecting of articles to include, etc. but J.R.C. did much of the work which was less seen and more tedious, but still essential. Next issue we will mention others who also did such routine tasks.]

In 1962 **Gordon Linscott** became editor, and continued as editor through 1976. He was quiet and humble, but the waters ran deep. After he fell asleep in Christ, someone commented, "Gordon influenced *many* people for the Lord, *quietly*." And though his life had its full share of trials and sorrows, a younger disciple and close friend of his recently told me, "Gordon was the most joyful man I've ever known." It stemmed from his deep passion for our Savior. He stressed that we need to know *Him personally*--not just verses, truths, service and church (as important as they are in their place).

I was privileged to know him well after he came to Louisville to become a teacher at Portland Christian High School and preach at Fisherville Church. Shortly after that He became editor as well. I remember wonderful conversations and also times of worship and prayer with him. He joined a small group of men who met to pray for a deeper walk with Christ and for revival in the churches. As editor his articles were mostly not long (like some editors who shall remain unnamed), but contained deep insights and packed a wallop spiritually. A major regret of mine when Ruth and I went overseas was that my face-to-face fellowship with Gordon was limited to furloughs every 4-5 years. Years later Parkinson's Disease ravaged his body and mind. His dear wife

ministered to him through those difficult years. His faith never wavered, but it was so sad to see the real Gordon going and gone. What happy, unimaginable reunions there will be in the coming Glory! Come, Lord Jesus.

Gordon naturally continued W&W's emphasis on grace due to his own experiences. He grew up in congregations and a college steeped in legalism. In college he reasoned with himself something like this: "If I become a preacher I'll have more chance of getting to heaven than if I don't. But if I become a foreign missionary I'll have an even better chance." So he became a missionary to Italy, and there realized he still wasn't saved—at least not from hopeless self-dependence! A Church of Christ missionary there helped him to see that, and to lead him to trust in the Savior's righteousness, not his own. He came home a changed man, who never got over his passion for Jesus.

In 1976 when Gordon became disabled, **W. Robert Heid** took over the helm, and continued till mid-1986. He too was a prince of a man. For three generations members of the Heid clan have been mainstays at the Portland Avenue Church in Louisville. Robert grew up there, and attended Portland Christian School. Later for a long time he and his dear Jane were the school's volunteer treasurers.

Robert loved the Bible, and preached its gospel over thirty years at Nelsonville Church. Then he returned to Portland for sixteen years--first as co-preacher with C. V. Wilson, and then sole preacher. All that time he also led or co-led the Heid Printing Co. (which has printed Word and Work for decades now along with all its other business). His loving nature, calm faith, and steady sacrificial service all stood out. So did his emphasis in life and writing on Christ-centered family living. He also was deeply concerned for world missions, and was a longtime editor of the *Missionary Messenger* magazine before becoming editor of W&W.

An interesting insight into Robert's nature is seen in a decision he made in later years. Though still busy running the print-shop in the Portland area, he bought and moved to a farm in Indiana. Why? One major reason was because he wanted to raise sheep. Why? Because the Bible so often portrays God as a shepherd and us as His sheep. Robert felt that if he personally experienced shepherding he would grow in understanding God's relationship toward us and vice versa. I'm sure he did.

[To be concluded next time, Lord willing]

Other W&W Writers (besides the Editors), and Various Subjects Covered

We lack space and time to mention all who have been outstanding writers in W&W through the years. But we must pay tribute to at least some of them.

Don Carlos Janes (1877-1944) wrote often in its early decades. More than any other person he promoted a burden for world-wide missionary work among the entire Church of Christ movement. He visited numerous mission fields, both "reached" and "unreached," and penned many articles and several books about them. His vision encouraged a large number of people to become missionaries. And he was an exuberant fundraiser and donor to mission works. In recent years Dennis Allen consented to be our missionary editor, gathering and also personally writing heart-stirring articles.

There have been a number of **regular columnists** through the decades, some of them for long stretches of time. J. Harding McCaleb wrote many short devotionals on living for Christ. Professors Earl C. Smith and later J. Edward Boyd often shared insights on the New Testament scriptures from the Greek language: "Word Studies in the Original Text." J.L. Addams edited the "Seed Thoughts" column with its thought-provoking quotes, poems and sermon-illustrations. For many years Carl Kitzmiller (like Stanford Chambers earlier) wrote a questions and answers column re: the Bible and Christian living. And for a long time he also wrote lessons for the Sunday School quarterly, succeeding R.H. Boll. Ernest Lyon, and later Jack Blaes, wrote monthly analyses of current religious, moral and political events and trends: "A Christian Views the News." And a number of articles by Dale Jorgenson, Billy Lewter and others helped us to Biblically evaluate various modern trends in the areas of philosophy, psychology and literature. In earlier decades H. L. Olmstead and Frank M. Mullins wrote numerous Bible studies... but so did so many other people that just to name them all might fill the rest of this page!

A valuable service is the *News and Notes* column, which keeps us informed about important events, opportunities, and other information. Keep sending your news to Bennie Hill (BHill40482@aol.com).

We surely need to pay tribute to the ladies too. That includes "Aunt Ellen" in earliest years, to Mary Knecht (wife of Paul Knecht Sr.) and her daughter Betty Allen, plus Joyce Zimpelmann, Ruth Wilson, Joyce Broyles, Janis Spicer and others in recent decades. They have provided splendid insights about family life, Sunday school teaching, women's roles and opportunities, missionary work and other important topics.

Our Version of History Molds Our Attitudes

W&W has had articles by and/or about early leaders in the "Restoration Movement" like Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, Walter Scott and Robert Richardson. And later Church of Christ leaders or writers from David Lipscomb, James Harding, and J. N. Armstrong, to Carl Ketcherside, Leroy Garrett, Rubel Shelly, Edward Fudge and Max Lucado. Also Christian Church writers such as J. D. Murch, Victor Knowles and others.

But writers from a wider spectrum have not been excluded nor neglected. A strong weapon against conceited sectarianism is a knowledge of church history. In November 1983 we began a series by various authors on "Heroes [and Heroines] of the Faith"—over 30 in all! It told about Jesus' disciples from early centuries: martyrs like Justin and Polycarp, and teachers and leaders like Augustine, Francis of Assisi, and Peter Waldo. Then medieval reformers like Luther, Calvin and Menno Simons. Great evangelists like John and Charles Wesley, and D.L. Moody. Missionary leaders Count von Zinzendorf, William Carey and Hudson Taylor. Other outstanding Christians from recent centuries like John Newton, William Wilberforce, George Muller, Charles Finney, Charles Spurgeon, Amy Carmichael and John Sung. Then from our own era we have included writings by A.W. Tozer, John Stott, James Packer, Jim and Elisabeth Elliot, James Dobson, and Philip Yancey. That doesn't mean we agree with all that those folks believe, of course—just as many readers don't always agree with the editor now, and vice versa. So, what's new?

Not Guilty!

A few folks may think the current editor introduced this "liberal" trend of including so many writings by or about people who are "not of us." But he pleads *Not guilty!* For in the first year that R.H. Boll edited W&W (1916), he included articles by D.M. Panton, G.H. Pember, Charles Trumbull, and Philip Mauro—none of them from the Stone/Campbell movement. He also ran a good article by James Stifler,

who was identified in W&W as a Baptist. And a letter about demon-possession, written by a missionary identified as a Presbyterian. And the magazine carried advertisements and recommendations of books written by such men as R.A. Torrey and James M. Gray, both of whom were presidents of trans-denominational Moody Bible Institute. Was Boll too liberal? No, he just recognized that God has lots of children in lots of places. (Of course there are also lots of folks who claim to be Christians but aren't. RHB knew that too, but also knew that such are found inside as well as outside our congregations.) He also pointed out errors when he felt that was necessary.

I heard a taped sermon of his in which he referred to incidents from the ministries of Billy Sunday, R.A. Torrey, and John Wesley—gleaning positive lessons from them. And he also said, "I got hold of a book of sermons by Billy Graham. And I wondered if among all those sermons he would say something about the coming of the Lord. I was gratified to find that he does stress that. He says a number of things about it." He then read a lengthy quote from Graham's book, ending with the evangelist's words, "I'm not looking for death, I'm looking for Him." RHB then concluded, "This shows that Billy Graham does believe this teaching and does stress it. This may account, in part at least, for the great success of his campaigns. For the doctrine of the personal return of Jesus Christ is important, exceedingly so."

By the way, the long series by various authors that we began in 1983 ended with two articles of my own. The first was a warning entitled *Faults and Failures of 'Heroes.'* And the last article was a discussion entitled *Who Are My Brothers?* It said, "We need to realize how very large and varied is God's world-wide family. The church of Christ is bigger than the Church of Christ.... This magazine never wants to promote the idea that it doesn't matter what you believe and practice, nor what church you are active in. Such things matter immensely! But so does the unity of all God's people. To feel that we are the only real Christians, or at least the only Grade-A believers, is to live in a land as unreal as Oz."

Another "by the way": Our series on "Heroes" also included articles about Stone and the Campbells. And right after that series concluded, we reprinted another one entitled "Early Restoration Leaders." It had 12 articles, all by Sylvia Root Tester. Interestingly, all of them were men (including Raccoon John Smith, Moses Lard and J.W. McGarvey). I commented that the articles could help us (1) to know our heritage

better—its strengths and weaknesses. And (2) the series could enable us to better understand and influence the present as we discover how past leaders, beliefs and trends produced our current conditions. Also we could (3) learn from our history to avoid the defeatist attitude, "Can any good thing come out of the Restoration Movement?"

May our Lord give us strong and life-changing convictions based on His word, but also help us to keep knocking down walls and building bridges.

Stanford Chambers, Triple Threat

Alex V. Wilson

Part I

In the days before football became so specialized that each player concentrated on offense alone, or defense, or kicking extra points and field goals, etc., some backfield stars were called "triple threat" players. They were good at running and passing and kicking, all three, so when they got the ball the defenders never knew what they might do because of their multiple talents.

In serving Christ, Stanford Chambers was at least a triple threat to the hosts of wickedness. He was gifted by the Lord as an evangelist and church-planter, Bible teacher, counselor, editor and writer, song-leader, school administrator, and more besides. But he was always careful to give glory for his accomplishments to the Most High, and to realize that his own labors would be fruitless apart from "power from on high." I remember one year when he gave the daily Bible expositions at the Louisville Fellowship Week. Each morning as he arose to walk to the pulpit he started leading the chorus, "I need Thee, O I need Thee, Every hour I need Thee..." He was depending on the Lord for ability to teach, not on his own wisdom or study or many years of experience.

Most of the following facts are taken from a sketchy autobiographical article he wrote in the Aug.-Sept. 1945 issue of *Truth Advance*, a magazine he edited for a long time, and from a series of articles in *The Exhorter* in 1964-65. He was born (1876) in Missouri, but was brought up in Indiana, adopted by Louisiana, and spent most of his life in

Kentucky. Both of his parents and all his grandparents were "adherents to the [Restoration Movement] plea that all Christians should be Christians only"—proponents of every believer's right to study Scripture for himself, teach it as he understood it, and practice "New Testament simplicity in public worship and in daily living, observing the Lord's Day as indeed His day."

An Unusual Call to Preach

He became a minister of the Gospel due to God's "unmistakable answer to long continued and at last desperate praying for one most dearly beloved," his father. After interceding for his father's conversion for a long time, a new thought unexpectedly came to him while at prayer one day. "Lord, if you will help me or someone else do something or say something to bring Pa to Christ, I'll preach the Gospel." The *next morning* during the meeting at "Old Shiloh" Church the prayer was answered. Only God knew of the vow or even of the prayer that had been made so fervently, but there could be no turning back after such an obvious call. Like Paul, Stanford Chambers responded, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." Like Christ, he also said, "To do so 'is both meat and drink.'" He thrived on it.

He preached his first sermon on April 16, 1898, while in State Normal School in Terre Haute, Indiana. He was twenty-two years old. His second sermon was given at his home church, later known as Berea, which then met in a schoolhouse near Sullivan, Indiana. During the fall of that year he married Tacy Jane Blakeman. For almost seventy-one years she was a devoted wife, loving mother of their six children, and dedicated follower of the Christ she and her husband loved so much.

The day after the wedding the new husband and wife went to Tennessee to attend the Nashville Bible School. It had been started seven years earlier by David Lipscomb and James A. Harding. Both of those men were outstanding Christian examples, leaders and Bible teachers. Both also combined firm convictions with large doses of freedom. For example, Brother Harding had started a weekly meeting during which any topic of interest could be discussed, and every student or teacher could present his views openly without fear. "On subjects of unusual controversy he invited speakers on different sides of the issues so that students could learn every side of a question." Thus writes L. C. Sears in his biography of Harding, *The Eyes of Jehovah*. He continues,

Perfect courtesy and high respect for the views of others was always true of the school under Harding and Lipscomb. On the "rebaptism" issue, which was threatening to divide the church, J.D. Tant was invited to give a series of lectures opposing the views of Harding and Lipscomb. [Stanford] Chambers relates that he was surprised to see Harding, after a lecture, put his arm around Tant and walk with him to Harding's home for dinner. He learned to his astonishment and his great joy that "brethren could be brethren though they differed."

Such Christian tolerance and love, and such openness of mind, left impressions on students that influenced the church for a generation or more. Dr. T.W. Brents, who differed radically from E. C. Sewell on the appointment of elders, was invited to present his views and Sewell to present his. After their discussion Lipscomb commented, "Now, young people, we have done our best to help you. You will have to study your Bibles and make up your own minds."

Teachers did not dictate to the students what they must believe or teach. They held the principle: "*I'm not right; you're not right; but the Bible is right.*" They presented from the Scriptures the truth, as they understood it, and then left students to reach their own conclusions on the basis of their own study. It was a high respect both for the authority of the Scriptures and for the intelligence and the integrity of each man's mind and conscience. (pp. 145-7)

Establishing New Churches

Due to lack of finances, the Chambers remained at the school only one year; but that experience made an indelible impression on them. He later wrote, "In the Nashville Bible College and through J. A. Harding, we began to be impelled to pray for open doors of opportunity to give out what we with unspeakable joy had received."

Soon after arriving back home near Sullivan, Indiana, he and his friend Edward Neal were invited to hold gospel meetings at the Milan schoolhouse on the banks of the Wabash River. That river served as their first baptistry, as folks came to Christ through their preaching. This was followed by other meetings during that summer of 1899, in at least nine different locations. That was a heavy preaching schedule for a young man whose only experience had been one year at Bible school plus preaching two times before enrolling! True, both Ed and Charles Neal

helped out with the preaching during some of those meetings; yet he alone held a three-weeks' series of meetings in which twenty persons were converted and some others restored to the Lord. And his service during that first year of preaching was most impressive: "115 sermons, 27 baptisms, a number of restorations, received in all \$37.92. It was a most joyful year."

According to his article in *The Exhorter*, he preached 33 times during his second year, and 48 times during his third—the only other years for which he recorded statistics for us. I don't know if the 115 sermons claimed for his first year was a typographical error or not. Whatever the case, he adds matter-of-factly, "I was preaching by night and teaching school by day." He was a fulltime public school teacher and evangelist at the same time from 1899-1907. Maybe that was due to financial needs; even back then more than \$37.92 was needed to support a family.

Many small towns sprang up in that part of the country during those years, as coal mines boomed. Brother Chambers and his co-workers planted new churches in a number of those towns—I could not discover how many. We give here only two examples of his church-planting ministry. In the summer of 1904 he held daily gospel meetings for three weeks at the Atlas schoolhouse. As a result thirty-five people were either baptized or restored to Christ. They were eager to have a church house, and within a few months had bought a lot and constructed a building. Another series of evangelistic meetings was soon held, adding twenty-two more members.

In May 1905 a tent was set up in north Linton, and gospel meetings were held for five weeks. On the opening night the members of the Atlas church came riding into town on hay wagons, carriages, and buggies, "singing the gospel all the way as they came. It 'set things on fire.' The town took notice. The tent was soon filled to overflowing. It was estimated that a few nights we preached to a thousand people." Brother Chambers and W. J. Brown did the preaching, which resulted in "75 additions." After resting a month, more meetings were held, resulting in more conversions and the establishment of a congregation that continues to this day.

Growing in Faith

But Stanford Chambers was not only preaching and teaching; he himself was learning to trust God more and more. The Bible taught him

to do that, and James A. Harding had always emphasized and exemplified it too. Brother Chambers learned very well the lesson of God's faithfulness. He wrote about the time a Christian man had endorsed him at the bank for a loan of \$100. "I was not insolvent, but my goods were not immediately convertible into cash." Just one day before the note at the bank was due, he still had no cash on hand to pay it off. Nobody but the Lord knew this fact, but that night after prayer meeting another Christian brother said, "Brother Chambers, the Lord so greatly prospered me on my last job that I want to share a little of it with you for the Lord's sake." He put a check into his hand...for exactly \$100. Having a generous God made him generous. Years later, at Portland Church in Louisville an unknown but obviously poor man came to the meeting one night. It was mid-winter and bitter cold, and he had no overcoat. He asked for help, and though we don't know what other help Brother Chambers gave him, we do know that later that night the man left with an overcoat and a certain Christian went home without his. It's easy to "trust God" for someone else's needs; he trusted Him for his own.

So far we have covered only the first thirty-two of his ninety-three years (1876-1907). During that time he was born, born again, called to preach, married a dedicated disciple, studied in Bible School, taught in public school for eleven years (three of them before going to Nashville), and preached the Gospel for eight years establishing a number of churches. Other great things lay ahead as he left Indiana to go south.

(To be concluded)

R. H. Boll – Teacher of God's Word

by E. L. Jorgenson

Robert Henry Boll was born June 7, 1875. The birth-place was Badenweiler, a small but far-famed watering place in the heart of the Black Forest, Southern Germany. His parents were ardent Catholics. In the Cathedral at Freiberg, stands the marble statue of one Bernard Boll, first Archbishop of Freiberg, an illustrious kinsman on the father's side. As for the mother, it was her wish that Robert should be a priest, a wish in which he himself shared enthusiastically. But in God's good providence he was hindered even from beginning that career.

The father seemed to have had no such influence over the son as the mother exerted; and that partly because he died before Robert was ten years old, while his mother lived and kept in touch with him in one way and another until her death when he was twenty-two. The mother (who never came to this country) was described to me by German friends who knew her as a beautiful woman of most expressive face, strong intellect, and high ideals. The son remembered her with love and longing, and spoke of her in tenderest terms. The father, say these friends, was of rather a roving disposition. He removed the family to Basel in Switzerland when Robert was three years old; and after a short residence there, to Karlsruhe in Germany. Thence, following a hard experience, the bitter memory of which lingered to the end, the father brought the family to Muhlhausen and from that place to Freiberg, a beautiful city not many miles from the River Rhine.

Here Robert went to school. Here the younger of his two sisters died, and in the same year his father also. At eleven he entered the Lyceum or Latin School. Though a lover of books and precocious also, the German school system seemed to him needlessly severe. But perhaps that hard training accounts in part for the strong student habits which characterized him to the last, and for more than the average power of concentration throughout long periods of study. But if it was good in the end, it was not pleasant; and often relief was found in communion with nature in long walks through the German woods, and in the companionship of a mother who was to the son, adorable.

When Robert was fourteen, the mother married again; and it turned out, as it so often does, that the step-father cared not for the child at all, nor the child for him. This incongeniality and the loosening of the bond between him and his mother that naturally came with it, paved the way for Robert's departure to America. With an aunt by marriage (Mrs. Ulman), and other friends who were sailing September, 1890, he came to this country and stopped for a brief period with them in Zanesville, Ohio. It may be of some interest to say that this (original) was written in Zanesville, where the writer had been at great pains to trace things accurately and gather much information, in addition to that furnished by Brother Boll himself.

In Zanesville, Robert worked for a time and found it tough enough for a school boy utterly unused to it, and of a frame somewhat slight besides. As a musician, an artist, or a story writer, had he given himself to one of these pursuits, he might have "made good" and made his head

save his heel; but at manual labor he was never a great success, having no turn for it--though not a whit worse at that or anything else than he made himself out to be. For several years after this he was a farm laborer in Tennessee, where he went after leaving Ohio. It was in that state that he obeyed the gospel. Brother Sam Harris took his public acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as Lord and it was in Columbus Brittain's pond (near Nashville) that he was baptized on Sunday, April 14, 1895. The manner of his gradual relinquishment of Romanism which led to this step, and his turning toward original Christianity is of great interest, but cannot be fully related here.

In the fall of that same year, 1895, he entered Nashville Bible School where J. A. Harding was still president. By reason of Brother Harding's mighty faith in God he was taken to "work his way"--although all such chances were in fact filled before he applied. Robert had walked twenty miles through the rain to present himself at the school; and in God's good leading it was this comparatively little thing which touched the big Harding heart, and led to his admission. Brother Boll considered himself greatly indebted to J. A. Harding and felt the greatest appreciation also of his teaching. He paid back what money was spent upon him; but the debt of love that was due could never be repaid.

His first sermon was preached in a mission meeting at the Nashville jail; and the first protracted meeting was at a schoolhouse named "Accident," not far from Nashville. The following account of that first meeting, written some time ago by Brother Boll himself will interest the reader:

"It was through the enthusiasm of my friend Bob McMahon (who in the meanwhile had also entered the Bible School), that I was inveigled into holding my first protracted meeting--which meeting well-nigh played out in the middle of it. Bob had made arrangements for the affair without having half consulted me about it. He 'just knew' I could 'hold a meeting.' It was to be at 'Accident', a little log school house that sat as if blown there by some favorable accident on the hillside by the big road, near Bob's home. And it was too small a thing in Bob's eyes to start in for a week's meeting--two weeks seemed too common even; we must arrange for a three weeks' campaign at least. So he pulled; and I, however reluctantly and diffidently, tumbled into assent with his ambitious plans. The date was June 15, 1896.

"So after [our semester at Nashville Bible School] had closed I stayed around some days. A few days before that 'appointment' was due (I shook in my shoes at the thought of that), there was a prayer meeting at the Bible School chapel; and it happened that there were present a number of notable men of God: David Lipscomb, E. G. Sewell, T. W. Brents, J. A. Harding, J. W. Grant and J. W. Shepherd. The assembly was small and I do not remember how it came about, but I made a talk in the imposing presence of those brethren. As we went out Brother Shepherd slapped me on the back and said to me, 'Go right ahead; you will come out all right'--which was but a kind word dropped by the way, but it helped me so greatly that I never forgot it.

"The big meeting started off fairly well, but after the first flush of curiosity had passed the audience dwindled to a few, and then fewer; and these looked bored; yawned, smiled, and a few young couples who were there for their sweet company's sake, did valiant courting. And my lofty looks were brought very low and my speech and my preaching became weaker and more stumbling and halting. On Wednesday night, which had been particularly dispiriting, I ventured the suggestion to Bob on the way home, that it might be well to close Sunday. Bob said he thought so too. That was a blow I had not expected, for Bob's faith and comfort had alone upheld me. The first effect was to arouse me. I could do something and I simply *would*. So Thursday I went in for a special effort. I picked out the best theme I had in reserve and felt rather confident that I could talk for an hour on it and to edification. But my big sermon failed me more miserably than any previous one. I got entirely through with it in twenty minutes and stopped with a feeling of being lost in the woods. On the way home that evening it was Bob who suggested that the meeting ought to close Sunday--if *not sooner*; and that straw broke my back.

The next morning I took my Bible and fled to the woods, where I spent the day crying, praying, studying; and on Friday night, like a poor sinner to the gallows, I went back to 'Accident' to preach. But lo--how it came no man could trace--there was a new atmosphere, a larger audience, a new interest, and to everyone's astonishment (my own especially), I preached with ease and power. And that proved the turning point. Saturday night the attendance was unusual and I preached if anything better; and Sunday night it was said that such a crowd had never been seen in the little school house. Well, the meeting ran over two weeks, and about seven were baptized in the course of it. Often since

then I have found that when I came to the end of myself God was a never-failing help, and that when I was weak I was strong."

For several years after this, Brother Boll preached wherever he could; in barns, in school-houses, in church-houses, in the open, under arbors; and his work bore good fruit. In 1900 he left the Bible School, but he did not cease to be a student, nor to go to school. His special study ever afterwards was the Bible in various languages. His knowledge of its facts was remarkable, and his grasp upon its spiritual truths, profound.

About this time also, his work as a preacher began in good earnest: in Texas, in Tennessee, in Kentucky; and in evangelistic meetings frequently in other states. In 1903 he made a first visit to the congregation at Portland Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky, where the beloved George A. Klingman had labored seven years; and in 1904 he took up the work there. From that time on until his death he remained with the Portland Avenue congregation--more than fifty-two years. In Louisville he was married to Miss Vilette Schang, and three children were born to them, of whom God took the first when she was two years old.

R. H. Boll excelled as preacher, teacher, and writer of religious truth. In which capacity of the three he was the strongest would not be easy to say. In his preaching he denounced sin terrifically, but brought hope and "strong encouragement" to all who heard. He was logical, his outlines being well arranged and easily remembered; but he was not logical in the sense of being dry or merely intellectual in appeal.

As a teacher of the Bible he was instrumental under God in raising up many gospel preachers. A number went from his home congregation to bear the message; and many from all parts of our country almost--east, west, north, south--came in for the help and blessing of the classes which he conducted every winter in Louisville; among these many, the writer of this sketch. Brother Boll helped me be "a Christian only," an independent Christian, separate from all ecclesiasticism, recognizing no authoritative teacher aside from Jesus Christ, bound by no string or human bond to any man or set of men, obliged to agree with no one but God. And so he helped scores of others also.

It is, however, as a writer for the religious press that he was most widely known. In 1901 he became one of the editors of the *Gospel Guide*. In 1909 he became first-page editor of the *Gospel Advocate*. This post he held for six years; and when in 1915 he resigned it, five other

papers offered him their columns. About this time the monthly magazine, *Word and Work*, was purchased and removed from New Orleans to Louisville. There he assumed the work of editing that paper and in this work he continued steadfastly--along with his preaching and teaching--until his final day on earth, April 3, 1956. On that last Sunday before he passed on Friday, he preached at Portland Avenue with unusual power. And thus he had his wish to be used of God until the end.

* * * *

Additional details, from an article by Larry Miles in *Word and Work*, April 1980:

Concerning his pilgrimage to the Christian faith, we give you Bro. Boll's own word in *The Church I Found and How I Found It*:

"When I became a Christian--simply a Christian--it meant to me the surrender of the faith and teaching which was instilled in me from infancy, in which I grew up, and which I still held when I turned my twentieth year. It was by God's providence that I met with certain Christians, some of whom took the time and trouble to show me some of the truth. That was another of God's mercies. I had become acquainted with the 'Church of Christ'; and the idea of being simply and only a Christian of the New Testament sort attracted me. But at that time I looked upon the Church of Christ as simply a denomination among other denominations. It seemed to me that it arrogated to itself exclusively a name to which, as I judged, all other denominations had equal right. The dogmatism and arrogance (as it appeared to me) of their attitude affected me adversely.

"For a time I felt and spoke cynically of all the religious bodies. Still I was resolving the problem in my mind; and despite my limited understanding, I saw that I had at least the same opportunity of being simply a Christian as had the people of whom I read in the New Testament, and an equal right to belong to the church of Christ in that original and universal sense in which the apostles and all the earliest Christians belonged to it. I also began to understand that such a simple Christian stood responsible to his Lord alone for all his faith and practice; and that therefore the word of God, all of it, and it only, must be his guidance--no man having the right either to limit him therein or to impose on him anything besides; that he was free from all men and from every human yoke. With that conception more or less clearly in mind,

and understanding little else, I confessed Christ as my Lord and was buried with Him in baptism."

It was on Sunday April 14, 1895 that he became a Christian. In 1895, he entered into the Nashville Bible School. Concerning how he arrived at the school, Bro. Boll wrote these words in the *Word and Work* dated June 1922:

It was a chilly, rainy day in the late fall of the year 1895 that I stood on Brother Harding's porch at the Old Nashville Bible School on Spruce Street, homeless, friendless, penniless, but not quite hopeless of an opportunity to go through school. When I presented my mission request, Brother Harding regretted very much, but there really wasn't any work to speak of by which a boy could earn his way, and such applications were many—"Perhaps next year we can find an opening for you," he said.

I turned and slowly walked away. Probably I looked crestfallen. He stood and looked after me. "You look to be wet," he said. "Yes," I answered. "How did you get wet?" "Coming in from the country in the rain." "Didn't your wagon have a top on it?" "I didn't come on a wagon," I replied, "I walked." "How far did you walk?" "About twenty-five miles." "You mean to say you walked twenty-five miles through rain to come here to school?" And he looked me over again. "I believe you want to go to school. Go to the dormitory and tell Brother Dodd to show you a room. We'll get through some way."

I am sure he did not see how "we" could get through. But he didn't want to see. His heart was bigger than his pocket-book any day, and he felt he could afford to risk a thing or two, for there was the promise of God. Such was his faith.

LIFE IS LIKE BOOT CAMP

by Leroy Garrett

[see the past 2 issues for background]

Ouida [his wife] had her monthly visit with her primary-care physician this week. Her responses to his usual questions revealed continual mental deterioration. She didn't know what year it is, and she could not name the president of the United States. But she could count to

ten, forward and backward, and she could walk on her own for several feet.

The doctor has advised that for my own well-being as well as for Ouida's that we should have home health care, which is to begin this week. I do not know yet precisely what they will do, but the doctor says their service will likely eventually lead to her moving to what they call "downstairs" here at the Vintage -- to the nursing unit.

Ouida doesn't want to go to the nursing unit, but I assure her that wherever she is that is where I will be. That is the advantage in being at this particular facility. We will be in the same building, and I can spend as much time with her as I please, back and forth.

She may not have scored high on the doctor's questions, but once back home at the dinner table she was a bit philosophical as she pondered the day's activities. *Life has its experiences!*, she opined, somewhat forlornly. I replied, "Yes, life is like boot camp." I explained that at boot camp the recruits are honed and shaped -- by way of harsh and painful discipline -- for what they are soon to face as soldiers at war. So with us. Life on planet earth is "a vale of soul-making," as a poet put it, and we are being readied for the main event in God's tomorrow. And the preparation may be arduous and painful. This is why Paul could rejoice in his sufferings, for suffering produces that hope that does not disappoint (Romans 5:3-5).

Later in the evening she referred to the difficulty of "this situation." I asked what she meant by "this situation." After a pause she at last said, *Helplessness*. I asked, "You feel helpless, always helpless?" She nodded yes. I agreed that to feel helpless is probably our most painful experience, and it can be almost unbearable. But I assured her that even in our feeling of helplessness God can and will work for our good, using it to enhance our trust and dependence on him.

I am always telling her that it is OK, whatever happens it is OK, for God is for us. She once responded, deploring her situation, "It is not OK!" I retreated, agreeing that it is not OK to hurt, but it is OK in that God is with us and he will see us through. But I admit to a certain feeling of helplessness myself in my lame efforts to comfort someone who is so terribly devastated by life.

I often think of my wise nursing home friend who taught me the inadequacy of words. "I would cry with her," she said.

But we have the assurance that in life's most cruel reverses -- anxiety, disappointments, terminal diseases, loneliness -- God works for our good, using them to shape us into what he wants us to be, and to make heaven all the more glorious.

The apostle said it better than I: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

[Later: Dec. 7, 2007] **Note:** Ouida is now being assisted by Home Health Care, and it is making a difference. It will continue for at least the next two months. Her appetite has improved and she is doing better and feeling better. *I am resolved to make this experience our very best time together of all our 64 years.* This morning, after feeding her breakfast -- two eggs scrambled with cream, sausage, a waffle, hot tea, all of which she consumed -- and then reading Scripture to her, she looked me deep into the eyes for a moment and finally said, *I adore you!* Not bad after 64 years!

A Challenge from the SCHOOL of BIBLICAL STUDIES

Are you concerned about the future of the church as it is today? I know that I am, and so are the other board members. The church is in need of young, middle-aged, and older men to fill the pulpits. These men need training in God's word, preparing lessons, speaking in public, and how to grow a church. For the churches to survive, many things need to be done.

The School of Biblical Studies (SBS) is where the help is. We have qualified men and women ready and willing to teach and help prepare for the next generations. Our board and faculty are well-educated and dedicated to the cause of Christ. The staff has the talent needed to train others. What is holding us back?

Let me ask some questions. **When was the last time you encouraged a man to preach? When was the last time you encouraged a preacher?** We could go on and on with this list of questions. The bottom line is that we have to do some things about the far reaching problems. We beg your support as many are called, but only a few answer the call financially or otherwise.

Let us begin to address the needs of the church. Let us begin to help men prepare to preach the gospel of Christ. Let us begin to help men and women teach Bible classes and evangelize. Your cooperation is needed more than ever. We are here to help. Let us help. —**Bud Ridgeway**, Board Chairman (condensed from newsletter. See website pcsbbs.org or call 502-499-2702) or write S.B.S., 2105 Buechel Bank Rd, Louisville, KY 40218.

How He Became a PREACHER

Frank Preston, 50, now preaches at Parksville Church in Mercer County, Ky. An article in the Jan. '08 *Good News Gazette* ("A publication for the Churches of Central Kentucky") tells of his background. It fits in with our preceding item by Bud Ridgeway. We must encourage young people to be all-out for the Lord whatever their career may be. But beyond that, we should urge them to seriously consider if He is calling them to become Bible teachers, (men and women, by the way), missionaries (men and women), deacons (literally, "servants"—men and women: see Rom. 16:1, RSV, NLT, NIV foot-note, also 1 Tim. 3:11 in Greek), evangelists, preachers, and/or elders.

Now back to Frank Preston and various influences on his life that nudged him toward ministry. Janis Spicer writes, "When he was 12 or 13 years old, Marvin Burton asked him to lead a song at a song service and he's been leading singing ever since. He never considered being a preacher till one Sunday morning at Bohon when Daddy [Kenneth Preston] was gone and nobody else was available to preach, so Frank volunteered to speak for a few minutes.

"He continued to fill in for Daddy from time to time and eventually took the Bohon pulpit fulltime in 1983. In 1999, he assumed the pulpit at Mackville and continued there till last year. This past October, after filling in for John McNerney during his illness, Frank began preaching fulltime at Parksville. He is very excited about the work there and is especially encouraged by the increasing attendance of young people...."

Earlier the article also mentioned that Frank "has taken classes through the School of Biblical Studies." So several factors influenced him: his Christian home (not mentioned in our condensed quote above); the church; encouragement and invitations provided by church leaders;

S.B.S.; and Frank's willingness to seize opportunities when they arose (some of them on the spur of the moment!).

Most of all, we should remember Christ's words (paraphrased): The harvest is huge, workers are scarce. So *pray* the Lord of the harvest to raise up workers for his harvest field. --avw. To receive the *Good News Gazette*, phone Janis Spicer at 606: 303-2206

NOW HEAR THIS!

Sonny Childs in his Oct.-Dec.'07 report re: his Missionaries for America ministry, writes these thought-provoking words:

Individual Christians should pursue unity around absolute imperatives. If God didn't command it or condemn it, don't divide over it. We need each other!

The collective church desperately needs to spend more time thinking outside the building. In January we established thinkoutsidethebuilding.com to promote practical Christianity. It is our goal to provide helpful suggestions on how Christians can take the Gospel back to the streets. Your suggestions through emails and letters will be essential to making this site effective. Tell us what you and other Christians are doing to re-establish the grassroots movement that once turned the world upside down. Let's make the Gospel mobile again. Let's think outside the building! (End of quote, which was greatly condensed.)

Response by avw: Well said, Sonny! Friends, let's re-read those words many times – pondering, praying, planning, and putting them into practice. "If God didn't command it or condemn it, don't divide over it. We need each other!" And, "Take the Gospel back to the streets ... make the Gospel mobile again ... think outside the building."

At Portland Church (Louisville) this is exactly what we've been trying to do, especially recently. It's not easy, but it's essential. A few weeks ago we joined another church in the community in distributing food and coffee to homeless people. This week some of us plan to visit and participate with a congregation in another part of the city which has begun holding a Sunday night "service" each month inside an ale-house. Yep, some of us plan to go in there to get to know folks, and to help the believers as they sing and talk about Jesus with customers while the latter listen and drink their beer. Jesus himself did that sort of thing, which sets

a pretty good precedent. We're seeking God to guide us in building bridges to folks in the community.

Heavenly Father, help all of Your people to think outside the box, outside the building. Not to try to be sensational, but to know and befriend folks whom You love, and who need You. Lead on, Lord! Through us, reach the lost. Through us, build Your church, extend Your Kingship over many lives.

The Sermon on the Mount teaches us about Jesus—

“Who on Earth is This *TEACHER*?”

Matt. 7:28-29, When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

The Sermon on the Mount . . . or “Theology”?

Some people say things like this: “To me, Jesus was a very good man, a wonderful example, an outstanding teacher or maybe even a prophet of some kind. But I reject all those ideas about his ‘divinity’ — that he is the ‘eternal son of God.’ Nor do I accept the stories of his miracles. Nor that he ‘made atonement for us by his death, and then rose again from the dead’—as lots of folks believe. *No way!*”

They continue, “He was a remarkable teacher of ethics, and I admire his moral teachings like the Golden Rule and ‘Judge not,’—but I can’t believe his incredible personal claims—if he really even made them. Forget the theology, just give me the Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus’ teaching of ‘the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man.’”

You might hear people—even professors in college religion courses—present those opinions (or something similar to them, though the terminology and details differ). *How will you reply?*

Some Instances

About twenty years ago a friend of mine was a student at a college in Kentucky that had begun as a Christian school. He took a class in “Introduction to New Testament Studies.” The instructor said something like this: “Maybe Jesus himself never claimed to be the Messiah. Maybe

that claim was only an interpretation made up by some of his followers later. As the church developed its theology, it ascribed to Jesus lots of beliefs and claims which he himself never made."

The instructor also said, "There's no evidence for Jesus' resurrection apart from the testimony of his apostles." The teacher thus implied that such testimony was weak because the apostles were naturally biased.

Some college classes and popular books also set forth statements like these: "We should get back to the religion *of* Jesus, not the religion *about* Jesus." Or again, "We need the *Religion of Jesus*, not the *Theology of Paul*." The point of such statements is that we should follow Jesus' example of love, forgiveness and self-giving, but not believe Paul's later teachings about Jesus' deity, atoning death, the Trinity, etc.

Here's one more example that has made the rounds. A Jewish scholar named Klausner wrote, "If ever the day should come that Jesus' ethical code would be stripped of its *miracles*" and of mystical *claims to deity*, then "the Book of the *Ethics of Jesus* will be one of the greatest treasures of the literature of Israel for all time." (Thomas Jefferson took a view almost identical to that, so it's not really new.)

The people who made those last three statements would likely all agree that the Sermon on the Mount which Jesus preached is wonderful (at least a lot of it). But they would disagree vehemently with many of the writings of Paul and John. "Forget their theology, just give me Jesus' sermon. Never mind the 'God-who-became-a-man' stuff; just give me the moral teachings."

That View is So Simplistic

To take such a view is, frankly, to overlook clear teachings Jesus made in this very passage, the Sermon on the Mount [from here on we'll call it the SOM.]

Notice in this very sermon the implications of assertions like the following:

1. Matt 5:11-12, "Blessed are you when people...persecute you because of *ME*. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." He did not say, if you are persecuted for the Lord our God, but on *my* account. No prophet ever said that!

2. 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44. Six times Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said..., but *I* tell you... but *I* tell you... but *I* tell you...!"

He spoke with majesty, with royal assurance. Not like the Scribes, who habitually quoted from this or that rabbi (whose interpretations were usually externalistic and legalistic). Not even like the O.T. Prophets, who truly declared, "Thus says *the Lord*." Instead, Jesus repeatedly said, "Truly truly *I* say to you...."

3. 7:24-27, "Therefore everyone who hears *these words of mine* and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down... and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But 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.... It [will fall] with a great crash."

We probably have heard those words since our childhood. For that very reason they usually don't strike us with their full force. Jesus was claiming that His words are the *only* sure foundation in life! What insolence to say that – unless it is true!

4. 7:21, "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."

He says, "My" Father, not "our" Father. Eleven times in the SOM when He mentions God to His disciples, He calls Him *your* Father. He also teaches *them* to pray, "*Our* Father." But He never says "Our Father" in a way that includes other men along with himself. Instead it is "My Father." While His disciples may become God's children, Jesus' relation of Sonship is unique.

5. 7:22-23, "Many will say to *Me* on That Day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then *I* will tell them plainly, '*I* never knew you. Away from *Me*, you evil-doers!'"

Thus He claims, "I will Judge All People—the whole human race! And I will judge them on the basis of their personal relationship to Me!" For anyone less than The-God-who-become-Man to make such extraordinary claims would be either total insanity or the height of arrogance.

John Stott rightly observes, Above all else the SOM "discloses the uniqueness of the Teacher. The major question the Sermon forces upon us is not even, What do you think of His *teaching*? but, Who on earth is this *Teacher*?"

The Tremendous *USEFULNESS* to Us Christians of Jesus' Mind-boggling *PERSONAL CLAIMS*

In the preceding article we quoted only from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. Now let's notice a few more of Jesus' many incredible claims, but from other passages. This will build our case even stronger. You may wonder why that is necessary, but the following section shows that **this entire subject is urgent for all disciples to master.**

We hope any of our readers who have not heard this overall approach before will memorize it! And also make copies of it to distribute to fellow-Christians--for *use*! I say that seriously, not as a joke or exaggeration. For it can strengthen our faith and help us share the Good-news with unbelievers more readily. I thank God that I learned this way of presenting Jesus from Paul Knecht at PCHS over 50 years ago, and have used it many times in witnessing (including last week)! Listen carefully to some more startling claims spoken by this itinerant preacher and ex-carpenter:

1. "I and the Father are one." John 10:30. "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." John 14:9. He claimed to be not just a great prophet -- but that He had a unique oneness with God the Father, and was a unique representation of the Father.

2. "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. If you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins." John 8:23-24. "No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6.

He claimed to be unique, distinct from all others. He said that only those people who put faith in him could be forgiven of sins -- that he was the only "bridge" by which we can reach God the Father.

3. "A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear [my] voice and come out...." John 5:28-29. "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." John 11:25-26. He claimed he would raise all the human race from death, man's universal scourge.

4. "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." Matt 10:37-38. "Anyone who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:33. He claimed to have the right to require t-o-t-a-l allegiance from all people, that he was worthy of complete dedication from everyone -- even to the point of dying for him.

What if Queen Elizabeth made even a few of those statements, about herself! Or if Billy Graham said some of those claims? Or Pope John Paul? Or Karl Marx? Or Mahatma Gandhi? Or John F. Kennedy? Elvis? Martin Luther King Jr.? Castro? I mean, just think about it! Fill in the blank with the name of any influential person that comes to your mind. None of them ever made statements of such extravagance. Sure, some folks like the late dictator Idi Amin made idiotic self-claims, but who ever took him seriously behind his back? It remains true that no person of moral influence ever claimed for themselves such an exalted and eternal identity and such an extraordinary position as Jesus of Nazareth repeatedly did.

The Significance of His Staggering Claims in Our *Witnessing*

When we consider all this, we realize that due to Jesus' self-advancing claims we face a *dilemma*. But it is one which we Christians can use to our advantage in the end! Due to those claims He must be either **much worse or much better** than any and all other religious or moral leaders, prophets, teachers, or "saviors."

He cannot be classified as just one of them. For if His claims are **false**, He was not a great man at all, but must have been **either a Liar or a Lunatic!** Yet those alternatives are absurd, considering the wisdom of His insights and also His supreme impact for good on human history. But if His claims are **true**, then He was and is **the Lord of All** -- the unique Son of God and the only Savior!

Only one other alternative is possible beside those three. That is, that Jesus' claims were merely **Legendary**. He never really made such claims; they were merely put in his mouth later by the gospel-writers. But tons of evidence refute that. For if he never made those statements (and remember how numerous they are), why would the early Christians have made them up? They knew such claims would arouse fierce opposition from the Jewish leaders and thus put the believers in danger of losing all they possessed, maybe life itself. In addition, for them to invent and put into Jesus' mouth such claims was contrary to scriptural demands for truth-telling—and they believed the Scriptures. Also, other early followers would have spread "the true, non-deity version of Jesus' life." No, Jesus himself was no legend, nor were those numerous claims fictitious. Thus his unbelievably self-forwarding statements, which set him apart from all other great teachers throughout history, leave only those three alternatives mentioned above: liar, lunatic or Lord of all.

Yet consider that if he was a Liar, an intentional deceiver, he was no mere two-bit fraud but *the biggest liar in all history*. For nobody else in their right mind ever made such far-out claims. (Review them again if you doubt that statement.) Of course a few dictators and even religious leaders through the centuries have made grossly exaggerated statements and boasts about themselves (to be a god, or infallible, etc.). But nobody ever matched those declarations Jesus made.

Yet there was nothing pompous about him. No one was a more humble servant than he: giving of himself to help and heal, and to wash his disciples' feet! What a paradox – incredible claims and lowly service.

The second possible explanation for his breath-taking assertions is that he was a Lunatic who himself believed them but was obviously self-deceived. Our mental asylums contain some people like that, with a sickness called delusions of grandeur. Yet if Jesus really was such an insane person, he was no mere two-bit idiot but a total lunatic, off the charts – for look at his crazy statements! Yet, could that be true of the man whose influence outweighs all others? (Who else split the calendar into B.C. and A.D.)?

Yes, his claims were crazy. Unless they are true. For that is the only other possible alternative. If His claims are true, he is the LORD of All, God become man, the immortal one who became mortal in order to provide salvation for his creatures. Sherlock Holmes might say, "Nothing else fits the evidence, my dear Watson." He'd be right.

Well, what *Is* that Evidence?

To us it all seems so clear! And maybe some of you are wondering, "Why bother even to discuss all this in W&W?" Why? Because other people are not convinced, and deny it with laughter and ridicule (some of them). And many folks, especially youth, are exposed to constant lies and attacks in school, the mass media, etc. Some Christians even hurt the cause: When asked, "Why believe in Jesus?" they say, "Oh just have faith and you'll know why. We shouldn't depend on human reason or wisdom." But that's a disastrous half-truth/half-lie. Luke wrote that Jesus "gave many convincing proofs" to the apostles, and mentions at least four times in Acts that Paul "reasoned" with the Jews about the Christ.

So again we ask—What is the evidence? We need to know it so we can share Him. It is mentioned above, but here it is in mini-summary form:

1. In the light of Jesus' claims plus his impact on history, other alternatives make no sense.

Could the man who has been the greatest source of love and motivation for integrity throughout all the centuries have been a big hypocrite and seemingly compulsive liar? Ridiculous! Could the most influential man in all history have been a total lunatic? Absurd!

2. The *major* evidence that backs up his claims: He arose! See what the apostles preached as recorded in Acts. Their repeated 3-point sermon was, *Jesus died, He arose, and we saw Him*. "You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this." (Acts 3:15; also 2:23-4, 32; 5:30-32; 10:39-43; 13:27-31.) Paul spells it out in full detail in 1 Corinthians 15. On their firm faith that Jesus conquered death and literally walked out of the tomb, the early Christians staked "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor" (like the signers of the U.S. Declaration of Independence). Neither persecution nor even martyrdom squelched their witness.

3. Doubtless the most important confirming evidence, so far as *we now are concerned*, is something like this: A man wrote a letter to TIME magazine after it published an article down-grading the Bible. He said, "As far as I'm concerned, the liberal theologians can keep their [so-called] historical Jesus – ['Jesus as we now know Him to be'] and their [merely human] Bible. **I'm a former alcoholic and adulterer set free by the power of the living Jesus Christ. Who cares about [the**

theories of skeptics] when the resurrected Son of God can transform you here and now?" Yes, there's a place for reasoning but also a need for testimony! As the old song says, "You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart."

Throw out Bait – Arouse Curiosity

Friends, we need to share these facts with our unbelieving, unconvinced friends. We might say, "Hey, I read a stunning statement. (It's true, for you just read it here.) It said if Jesus is not *the Lord of all*, he was either a *Lunatic*, a total nut, really psychotic--or else he was the biggest *Liar* in history! What do you think of that?"

They'll probably say, "Hunh? What do you mean?"

Then we can share 4-5 of His huge claims, and explain the only logical alternatives, and present the evidence, and tell our testimony! I trust we have a testimony, and can tell not only what He *did* but what He has done and *is doing*--for me. Of course we don't have to do all that at one sitting. Depending on circumstances, it may take weeks, months, or even years. Or we may be only one link in the chain. But we should aim to be able to summarize it all in 15-20 minutes in case we have the chance—and then be able to amplify it if possible). Review it. Study it. Write out a summary or outline to keep in your car, purse, briefcase or elsewhere. Role-play "witnessing" in your Christian fellowship-group or youth-group. Be prepared, and use it. Share Jesus and the four L's.

Think it over again – and Do it

Hmmm: *His claims. *Logical alternatives. *Historical evidence. *Personal testimony.

Hmmm: *Liar? *Lunatic? *Legend? *Or Lord?

We can share that.... We can share *Him*. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and *you will be witnesses to Me -- testify about Me -- tell people about Me*" (Acts 1:8 in various versions).

Related Materials -- Ideal to Read, Lend or Give Away

Visit or call your local Christian bookstore.

Have You Considered Him? 28-page booklet, written by Wilbur Smith in 1949, and so helpful it is still in print. \$1.50. IV-Press.

Evidence for the Resurrection, powerful 28-page booklet by Norman Anderson. \$1.50. IV-Press.

Jesus and the Intellectual, 24-page mini-magazine by Bill Bright. In color and with pictures; ideal for college students. \$1.25. CCC.

Basic Christianity, 180 page book by John Stott. A truly outstanding book for all adult Christians--and to give away to skeptics, unbelievers, and new converts. \$6.00 IV-Press.

You can't be *Him!* (But he was.)

Movie actor Cary Grant once was walking along a street when a man saw him and got very excited: "What a minute, you're...you're--I know who you are, don't tell me--uh, Rock Hudson, --no, you're..."

Grant thought he'd help him, so he said, "I'm Cary Grant."

But the guy said, "No, that's not it! You're, uh, you're... Let's see, I know who you are, but I can't put my finger on it..."

There was Cary Grant identifying himself, telling his name, but the man wouldn't accept his claim, wouldn't believe him.

Sadly, in many cases it's the same with Jesus: "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, but the world did not recognize him. He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (Jn. 1:10f.). Even when He identified himself by His claims and His miracles, they turned Him down. But not everyone.

REACTION to the Sermon on the Mount

— and the Cause of Their Reaction

Matt. 7:28-29, "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had *authority*, and not as their teachers of the law."

Jesus' authority is a theme which Matthew loves to emphasize. Jesus not only *taught* with authority (7:29), but also had authority over *sickness* (8:8-13). He had authority to *forgive sins* (9:6-8), and even authority over *unclean spirits* or demons (10:1). That latter verse shows that He also

delegated to His apostles authority to heal sicknesses and also drive out evil spirits.

Indeed, *all authority in heaven and on earth* belongs to Jesus (28:18). Hallelujah—what a Savior!

[This concludes our studies in the SOM. At least for now!]

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill, Bhill40482@aol.com

Preaching the Gospel on Radio for over half a century As of 2008 **David Tapp's** radio program *Sowing the Seed* entered its 51st year on the air! It airs on Sunday mornings in Louisville (2 stations), Lexington, and Harrodsburg. Contact Brother Tapp for full information: 502: 722-8003, or 912 Pounds Lane, Simpsonville, KY 40067. His newsletter says, "I pray that souls will be saved through Jesus' blood and Christians encouraged to live for Him through the power of His indwelling Holy Spirit."

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

5th Sunday Song Rallies, March 30
**Louisville* area: Portland Christian School-East Campus, 12610 Taylorsville Rd., Louisville; 6:00.
**Central Kentucky*: Ebenezer Church of Christ (near Harrodsburg), 6:30 p.m. **Indiana*: Shiloh Church, at 6:00 p.m.

LaGrange (KY) Church of Christ—April 7-11, 7:30 nightly. Speakers: Nick Marsh, Ray Naugle, Ron Flora, David Tapp, Dale Offutt. Theme: "I Am."

Ladies Inspiration Day (April 12) 9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. will be held at the Waterford Church of Christ (5706 Mt. Washington Rd. (Highway 44) Taylorsville, KY. Theme: "The Good, the Bad, the Ugly: which do you reflect?" For more information, contact Joann Burks at (502) 491-9375 or Mattie Knapp at (812) 244-6192 Speakers: Shirley Smith, Harriett Pippin, Sue McPherson, Barbara Hockenbury, and Joyce Zimplemann.

Parksville, KY with Don McGee preaching. **April 18-20**. Sunday morning at 10, with dinner following in the fellowship hall, but no Sun

night service. Mon. and Tues. services at 7:00 pm.

David Reagan will preach 4 times in 3 days in meetings at Highland Community Church (Louisville) from **May 18-20** (Sun.-Tues.).

50th Reunion of Class of 1958 from KBC / SE Christian College: Plan ahead for **Sept. 12-13**. It will begin 3:00 on Fri., and at 9:00 Saturday. Place: Woodland Bible Camp, Dugger/Linton Indiana. J.R. & Pie Satterfield, Dick & Janell Lewis are co-directing Senior Citizens' Week and also coordinating plans for this special 50th reunion. Put it in your datebook and stay tuned. Faculty and staff come too.

School of Biblical Studies' March Lectures, scheduled for March 7-8, had to be cancelled due to the heavy snow. Possibly it will be re-scheduled in the fall. Stay tuned.

Good Opportunities at Buechel Church, Louisville Bud Ridgeway and Erwin Denkins seek to equip the members at Buechel--and Anyone from Anywhere Else Too—to serve the Lord in various ways. For example, earlier they held a 1-or-2-day seminar on teaching Sun. school, and one on church leaders. Not many folks take advantage of these opportunities. **Now** Bud is having a Personal Workers Training Class the last Thursday night of each month (7:00-8:00) for 6 months. It is free, and uses the Ivan Steward program "Open Bible Study." If anyone wants to know more about this *or future* training classes, contact these

brothers at the church or at bbridgeway@bellsouth.net.

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.

Ken Grimm, a missionary on 6-months furlough from Africa, made himself available as temporary fill-in preacher at **Cypress Creek Church of Christ** in Louisiana. On Feb. 22 he wrote us: Gracey and I "are back in Maryland now after 7 weeks. I preached there every Sunday morning and evening, and led Bible studies most Sun. mornings and Wed. nights. Also did a presentation at **Pine Prairie** last Sun. afternoon for all the churches in the area--on Lifeline of Hope's work with orphans [in Africa

and elsewhere]. Everything was very well received. For 13 sermons I preached my way through Philippians, always going back to the theme verse 'He who began a good work in you will complete it.' My last sermon was on Jonah, showing that from beginning to end Jonah is about the undeserved mercy of God. Members in Cypress Creek expressed to me that this has been a time of great revival in the church. I think everyone there is energized to move forward in a big way. I am hoping that this will open the door for me to continue to have a fruitful ministry in this brotherhood."

Ken is a longtime member at Westminster Church of Christ in Maryland, where Gary Pearson has ministered fruitfully for years. Gary has probably given more people subscriptions to Word & Work than any other person now living! Does anyone want to try and outdo him? Back to Ken Grimm, here is a website related to his ministry. Check it out: <http://kag.to/missions/missions.html>

Tell City Church of Christ (IN) "is still looking for a minister. In the interim we have hired Brian Jones to fill in on Sundays. Brian recently moved to Owensboro, KY, where he is CEO of a hospice organization. He is a graduate of Freed-Hardeman with a B.S. in religious studies and Lubbock University with a M.S. in religious studies."

Central Ky. Song Rally "Those who were not able to attend the 5th-Sun. song service at Bohon in December truly missed something. The congregational singing was wonderful as usual and we truly

enjoyed the special singing from John and Amalie Preston. But what you missed the most was the sharing of testimonies by so many as to the blessings God bestowed last year. So many stories, from cancers miraculously cured to strokes survived to missing purses restored intact to prayers for special gifts answered ... our God is truly wondrous!" --Janis Spicer, *Good News Gazette* 1/08

Churches Working Together Provide Water in Zimbabwe In southwest Zimbabwe, the country's second-largest city, Bulawayo has been unable to provide clean, potable water to many of the 1.5 million residents because of serious water shortages. 4 of the 5 dams that supply Bulawayo, in a drought-prone area of the country, stopped functioning after the reservoirs ran dry. The city government has petitioned for more reservoirs to supply water, but the central government has denied its requests. The state government will not tackle the water crisis until the city hands over the water supply to a state-run agency. The local authority refused saying that it believes "the agency has proven it has no capacity to control the water systems." That has left Bulawayo's residents with only a few hours of water access weekly and most scavenging for water from broken pipes and hand-dug pits.

The interdenominational group 'Churches in Bulawayo' is now managing 30 water distribution tanks, each carrying 5000 liters. Tanks have been set up at churches, as well as police stations and city council

offices. The Showers of Blessing Trust which is a project of the Associated Churches of Christ and managed by World Convention incoming President B. J. Mpfu, are drilling for water and providing wells for the worst hit areas. The Trust is also providing food relief to Church members across the country as there is a shortage of grain due to the drought conditions. —*ChristiaNet*

Wanta know what's Really goin' on? AVW warmly recommends *World* magazine. Former W&Ws have had quotes from it (see last months' News/Notes for an expose of an obviously unbiblical "Christian" charity organization). *World* is a news-magazine resembling *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News*, etc. but is written from a Bible-based worldview. You find helpful info & insights there the others won't include. It now is published biweekly (26 issues/year) for \$49.95. Each issue has 84 pages, with 5-6 helpful columns by various Evangelical writers, plus departments covering

national & world news, politics, religion, lifestyle, entertainment (reviews), personal finance, sports, letters from readers, etc. Recent articles included "Violence against pro-lifers ignored by mainstream media"; "Michigan 2nd-graders exposed to world religions"; "Disney returns to its roots"; and "Iraq: Attacks on churches show vulnerability of Christians." If interested you may contact P.O. Box 20002, Asheville, NC 28802-9998 or customerservice@worldmag.com.

Interested in sermons and gospel songs? Larry Miles invites you to visit the website he set up for Cherry St. Church of Christ in New Albany, IN. It has links you may click to hear songs or sermons, or get info re: various ministries or congregations. For example, here's one of Nick Marsh's messages listed: "*The Unsinhtly Sin* (pro-life sermon)." Go to cherrystreetchurchofchrist.com. You may reach Larry himself at larrymiles@insightbb.com.

[From IFC]

man pronto, as of yesterday. The public shouldn't have to play detective and spend a bunch of time tracking down where the buck ends.

We pay taxes and postage, so please get with it, USPS.

Let me end on a positive note. In general, our postal service is good at handling an enormous task. Many of its employees are fine and helpful people. Yet that doesn't mean do not complain about this mess! But now I want to thank a postal hero, who has repeatedly gone the 2nd and 3rd mile to help us. I've never met Ron, and we don't know his last name. But he has spent much time kindly helping Louise and Jane with forms, packing, explaining the complex records that are required, etc. For the Jan./Feb. issue he even put *extra* address-forms in the bins, farther down than the usual ones, in case the top magazine – with the address on it – would get separated (as had happened) and info be lost for all the rest.

I nominate Ron for the Medal of Honor! Some other postal workers said that he is the only one there (a major p.o. in this area) who really understands and can solve problems related to last year's big changes in postal rates, weights, records, requiring magazines to use plastic bins instead of envelopes, etc. etc. It's that new system that's killing us. But thank God for the Rons (by whatever name) who cheerfully care and help.

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