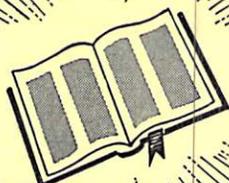
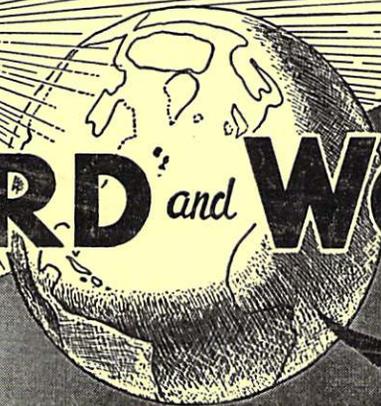


"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."



The **WORD** and **WORK**



"Holding forth the Word of life."

OCTOBER, 1990

Liberty and Unity

"Because we may not in everything see eye to eye, can we not in anything work shoulder to shoulder?"

—Robert O. Fife

Coming in January:

- * The man of faith who founded Word and Work.
- * 84 years ago, 75 years ago . . .

NEWS AND NOTES

Mullinses to the Philippines: Tentative plans are for Earl & Ragena Mullins to leave Louisville on Nov. 19 (if visas come through on time), heading for the southern Philippines. They hope, if possible, to stop in Japan on their way, visiting mission work there.

Central Louisiana Christian Fellowship, Nov. 12-15 at Glenmore. Speakers are Glenn Baber, David Johnson, Paul Kitzmiller, Mike Abbott, Danny Broussard, Tim Morrow, Nick Marsh, Earl Mullins Jr. Workshop leaders will be Joe Blansett & Emory Grimes re: elders/deacons, and Martha Blansett & Faith Grimes re: wives of church leaders. See last month's W & W for the complete schedule. For more information call Dennis LeDoux, 318-748-4243.

Highland Church of Christ, Louisville:

J. Dwight Thomas became the minister of the Highland Church of Christ on January 1 of this year. He was living in Elizabethtown at that time but has now moved to the house next door to our church building. Anyone wishing to contact the Highland Church may do so by sending your notice to:

Highland Church of Christ
c/o J. Dwight Thomas
1267 Bardstown Road
Louisville, KY 40204

Dwight's phone number is 454-6752, but his office is the church building with the phone number 458-9655.

Honduras:

Ted Hardin called from his school, desperately seeking a 1st-grade teacher. See June & Aug. W&Ws for information re: this Christian school. Any prospects should phone this number in Honduras & leave your name and telephone no. for them to relay to Ted, so he can call you back: 1-504-326-447.

Locust Street Church of Christ, Johnson City, Tennessee

Kevin Keene, a junior at Milligan, began work with the church in Sept. as youth minister. He will be teaching a class on Sunday morning and hopes to get some classes and activities started with our young people on Sunday evening and through the week. We encourage our young people to begin at once, get behind Kevin as he provides leadership in this part of the work, and lend your full support for a strong program.

We will be having our 56th Homecoming Day on Sunday, Nov. 4. It has been a custom for some years to have a meeting at this time. The meeting will be Nov. 4-7. Evangelist for this year's meeting is Doug Broyles, of Jennings, La. As most of you know, Doug is a "hometown" boy, the son of Bernice Broyles. He is currently an elder and a minister at the Church of Christ in Jennings.

OUR SYMPATHY IS EXTENDED TO:

—Bro. Kenneth Istre and the family in the sudden death of his wife, Betty, on Sept. 25th. Betty was in good spirits and seemed to be doing well and she and Kenneth were driving to Houston for her medical checkup when she was struck with cardiac arrest. Kenneth and Betty were with the Church here in the early fifties and Kenneth was minister of the church while taking work at E.T.S.U. They had lived in Jennings, La. for a number of years. Betty was a fine Christian lady and she will be greatly missed by the churches as well as by her family.

Kenneth's address is: 727 E. 3rd, Jennings, LA 70546.

—Donald and Delores Harris, of Quinlan, TX, whose son, Dale, died this past week. Donald and Delores spent some time in Africa with the Children's Home at Salisbury a few years ago. They visited among the churches and were widely known. Their address is Route 3, Box 491-1, Quinlan, TX 75474.

Church of Christ, Henryville, Indiana:

A small number met this past Tuesday night at the Baptist Church for a community prayer service for the situation in the Middle East and for the American Military Personnel over there. Be in prayer for them! We do not know what God has in store at the present time, but many of the prophecies of the Old Testament speak of events that are to take place in the Middle East. Luke 21:36 is even more important for us as we face this very uncertain situation.

There will be more Community Prayer Services in the future as our military stays over in that area.

This situation shows just how fragile the "peace" of the world is. We were rejoicing over the events of Europe, and then this situation arose.

Continued inside back cover

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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THEME:

LIBERTY and UNITY

Alex V. Wilson

As happens from time to time, tensions have arisen *within* some churches and also *between* some churches over various disagreements. Some of our "mainline Church of Christ" brethren are agitated over whether it's all right to have special numbers by quartets, trios, etc. or whether all songs should be sung by the whole assembly! Some among them are contending over HERMENEUTICS, or *methods of interpreting Scripture*. (This is really the root of the dispute just mentioned.) Is their traditional approach of determining our duties by looking for New Testament "direct commands, approved examples, and necessary inferences" valid or not? If so, how do we know which of these are still binding and which are not?

In other places, including a few churches close to home, tensions sometimes arise over singing stately hymns versus livelier gospel songs versus contemporary heart-songs (maybe by showing the words on a wall via overhead projector). Some members find their worship becomes more meaningful when they express themselves during song or prayer with uplifted hands; others find this unhelpful or even distracting. Then there is the matter of cooperation with other churches. Some folks are happy over the possibility of our School of Biblical Studies working more closely with Louisville Bible College, a school of the conservative Christian Churches; other folks feel dismay at the prospect. (Merger is not really being considered, but sharing a common campus and some faculty is.)

Underlying many of these disagreements is a larger, more basic question: Is the New Testament entirely *descriptive*, entirely *prescriptive*, or somewhere *in between*? That is, does it say to us, "This is what Christians did in the first century: have the same faith, love and enthusiasm as you serve the same Lord in very different ways today." Or does it say, "This is what they did, and Christians in every century should do the same things the same way." Or is there a middle ground? Leroy Garrett's article following this one wrestles with these matters. See what you think.

But don't misunderstand what he is saying. I saw an article in a church magazine obviously written to refute brother Garrett. It was entitled "Who Says There is No Pattern to Hold?" and said, among other things: "There are those who are telling us not to take the word of God seriously. According to them, we cannot know the truth anyway and there must be no relevancy in doctrine. . . . Is the Bible applicable to all of life's struggles, even in its doctrinal approaches, or is it a book containing fiction, fables, myths, and such like?" Obviously this critic is setting up a straw man to shoot down, for he distorts Garrett's teaching beyond all recognition—a totally unfair tactic.

HOW WILL YOU TRAVEL?

Let's think about an analogy. Suppose you want to travel quickly from Louisville to San Diego. You might go by plane. If so, during

the flight the pilot might veer 25-50 miles away from a direct course—due to a storm, a navigational error, or because he wanted to see the Grand Canyon! The pilot has great freedom. You might travel by train instead (at least in former times you could, before so many routes closed down). By train there is hardly any freedom to maneuver. After all, it's supposed to stay on the tracks. Or maybe you choose to go by car. Then you'll have more freedom than the train has but less than the plane. You'll have freedom, but within limits. You'll want to stay on the road, and stay within the speed limit; yet you may drive faster or slower, take a scenic route or the most direct, etc.

Now compare those options to the New Testament's teaching about church practices and meetings. It's not like the plane flight: "It doesn't matter what the Bible says; anything goes." But it's not like a trip by train either: "All churches should be exactly alike; all should imitate every New Testament practice—nothing more, nothing less." No, it's like traveling by car: *freedom, but within limits*.

In other words, Bible teaching about church activities is not laid down in rigid laws but in *flexible principles*. It tells us to baptize, but gives no rules about whether to do so in streams and rivers or in pools inside buildings. Christ told us to remember His death by means of the Lord's Supper, but He didn't say Sunday was the only day it should ever be held (after all, He initiated it on Thursday night). The Corinthian disciples had fellowship meals, but it seems Paul abolished them due to their abuses; so should we have such meals today, or not? (1 Cor. 11:17-34)

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE COVENANTS

One difference between the Old Covenant and the New is that the former contains *many specific details* while the latter contains *general principles*. If Christ's New Covenant with the church were as detailed as the Old Covenant with Israel, it would spell out for us exactly what the pastor-teachers should wear (the color and type material of their suits; whether to wear a necktie or not) . . . and a precise code governing church meetings (how many per week, what days and times, the order of each service) . . . and rigid regulations regarding the architecture, dimensions, and floor-plan of church-buildings (if it told us to build such edifices at all)! The former Covenant was suited to one people living in one small land, and during their spiritual childhood when they needed to be regimented. But the New Covenant is suited to many people scattered around the world in many lands with differing customs; living at different times; and being spiritually more mature and thus able to be trusted with more freedom.

We repeat, our Rabbi has not given His church rigid rules but spiritual principles to serve as guidelines. What principles am I referring to? These, among others: "Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." "I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved." "Let all things be done for edifying—for the strengthening of the church." "Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." "Make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification." "Don't pass judgment on one another; instead make up your mind not to put any stumbling block in your brother's way."

Within these and other similar guidelines found in Scripture there is much leeway, room for variety. We have great freedom, within the limits of Biblical principles and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Thus churches need not all be alike; there is no one detailed blueprint for us all. Thus differences within God's guidelines should be no grounds for bitterness or lack of fellowship.

HISTORY'S EVIDENCE

When we examine the history of the *many* movements that sought to "Restore the church to its N.T. pattern," a remarkable fact stands out. There has been much variety among them. No two of them have agreed on all the details. "It became clear that other Christian movements had also pursued the restoration vision, but pursued it in vastly different ways. How could we account for these differences among those who claimed to uphold the apostolic faith?" That is quoted from a very important book by two professors at a Church of Christ university, Leonard Allen and Richard Hughes. I strongly recommend their book, *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of Churches of Christ* (ACU Press; 160 pages; you may order it from us @ \$12.25 postpaid).

Here are a few examples. John Cotten was a leader among New England Puritans, who endeavored "to have all Christ's own institutions, and no more than His own, having a liberty to enjoy all that God commands, and yet urged to nothing more than He commands." With this desire, he believed that we should keep Sunday as the "Christian sabbath," and observe it from Saturday evening to Sunday evening—not Sunday morning to Monday morning, as was common in England. He also believed, along with many others, that we should sing only Psalms or other Scriptures put to music. How dare any uninspired writer expect his words to be sung in church meetings, as though on a level with inspired verses!

Again, most Separate Baptist churches in the 1700's believed in "the *nine* Christian rites": baptism, the Lord's Supper, the love feast, footwashing, the kiss of charity, anointing the sick, laying on of hands, dedication of children, and the right hand of fellowship. But a leader of the Particular Baptists during the same era found *thirteen* rites that Christians should practice: all the "nine rites" except dedication of children, plus collecting money for the saints, feasts, fasting, funerals, and marriage. He also believed that the Lord's Supper should be observed every Lord's day *evening* only, for not only did the earliest Christians observe it at that time, but the very term "supper" required it—since any other time would make it the Lord's breakfast or the Lord's dinner! Would you care to debate that man?

Refreshingly, the Separate Baptists, unlike many other groups, "left room for disagreements about the precise details of the biblical pattern, for they did not want to revert to the strict conformity they had fought so hard to escape." Hooray for them.

The point is clear: If we are to enjoy the unity which Christ desires His people to have, we must also grant each other liberty in beliefs and practices. As this issue of *W & W* develops these themes, we recommend you read the articles in the order presented; there is continuity from one to another.

DOES THE CHURCH HAVE A PATTERN?

Leroy Garrett

See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you in the mountain.—Heb. 8:5

This passage has long been a proof-text for the doctrine that the church of the New Testament, like the tabernacle of the Old Testament (which is what the above verse refers to) is to be built according to a detailed pattern or blueprint. And that pattern or blueprint is the New Testament. This view has been set forth in many Church of Christ sermons with some such title as "Building According to the Pattern." The Christian Churches have also been given to this kind of thinking, with no less a luminary than P. H. Welshimer choosing to preach on "A Twentieth-Century Church on a First-Century Pattern," as he did as early as the 1928 North American Christian Convention.

I believe that this interpretation is untenable and indefensible, and one that has worked havoc among us in that it has contributed to division after division. Our umpteen parties within the Movement are due in part to what might be called "patternistic theology." Once we assume that the New Testament is a prescribed pattern, with all the details of name, organization, work, and worship of the church spelled out, then it follows that all congregations must be alike, believing alike and conforming to the same prescription. Add to this the fact that each "wing commander" among us has his own idea of what the right pattern is and you have the making for more debates and more divisions.

The logic is flawless as it is severe. If the New Testament is the blueprint of the church and I read the blueprint aright, then my view of the church is the right one and all others must line up with the way I see it. This leads to the "only true church" mentality, and again the logic is unerring, for if I correctly read the pattern my church is right and yours is wrong. No diversity allowed! This is why we have divided over such matters as Sunday schools, choirs, instrumental music, societies, sponsoring churches, and even whether we can eat in the church building or have a Christmas tree. It is assumed that the New Testament, as the church's pattern, legislates in all such matters in one way or another.

This patternism has given rise to the so-called "law of silence," which means that if the New Testament is silent regarding the thing in question it is disallowed. If there is such a "law" it is one that has to be obeyed with much selectivity, for there is no way that we can reject everything about which the New Testament is silent. The list of things concerning which the Bible is silent is virtually endless, but no party among us selects more than a few of them to be tests of fellowship. A case in point is a recent exchange in the *Christian Chronicle*, a Church of Christ news journal. The editor suggested that our congregations might do well to have an occasional choral presentation along with congregational singing. In response to this the editor

of another journal wrote and asked for book, chapter, and verse for a choir. It so happens that said editor is high on lectureships, for his name is usually among the featured speakers. And where does the Bible talk about lectureships?

We can resolve this hermeneutical problem only by some hard, honest thinking. Is the New Testament really the kind of book that we are making it? If it is a detailed pattern, like unto the instructions God gave Moses for the building of the tabernacle, why are there such differences in interpretation? If it is as "clear" and "easy" as we make it out to be, why do we stand alone in many of our conclusions? There are not differences like that over the recipe for a chocolate cake. The fact is that the New Testament bears no resemblance to a recipe, pattern, or blueprint—because their prescriptive nature allows no differences of opinion.

And where does the New Testament make any such claim for itself? The proof-text cited above is referring to the tabernacle in the wilderness, regarding which Moses was given precise detail, including the exact measurements for the curtains and the design of the priest's garments. Where is there anything in the New Testament that even remotely suggests that it is to be such a pattern as that for the church through all the centuries?

Too, Moses was given the pattern for the tabernacle prior to the building of it, and with such instructions in hand he proceeded to build it. Is that the way the early churches were set up? There is not a congregation mentioned in the New Testament that had the New Testament for its pattern, for the New Testament was not written, canonized, and circulated until hundreds of years later. How could the New Testament have been the pattern for the first Churches of Christ when they had no such book?

Hard, honest thinking will convince us that "going by the New Testament" is not as simple as we have made it. We would have no problem if the New Testament were indeed a pattern like the one given to Moses, just as it was no problem to Moses. He knew exactly down to the last detail what God wanted, and so he responded to the warning and "built all things according to the pattern." It is not that way with us and the New Testament. Even with the New Testament in hand we cannot always be sure exactly what we should do—and so the New Testament lends itself to varying interpretations. Do we have "pattern theology" on such issues as military service, euthanasia, genetic engineering, birth control, the death penalty?

And if it is setting up a church how about having trustees, owning property, erecting edifices, building baptistries, setting up a corporation—and precisely how is a congregation to be organized? On all these matters the New Testament may lay down principles, and there is some information, but there is obviously nothing even resembling a spelled-out agenda. The New Testament is far more *descriptive* (of the life and faith of the early believers) than it is *prescriptive*.

Bold thinking forces us to ask how ancient documents, however inspired they may be, composed under such volatile and varying circumstances, are to be interpreted and applied to the ongoing life of

the church, century after century. Is there any evidence in those documents that we call the New Testament that the church in all succeeding generations is to do precisely as the first century church did, if indeed this can be correctly ascertained? Or is it that in the experience of the early believers, as revealed in the New Testament we are motivated to do for our generation what they did for theirs—but not necessarily in exactly the same way? If they washed each other's feet, for example, which was appropos to that generation but not to ours, I might do my neighbor's yard for him.

To assume that the New Testament is a detailed pattern for the church for all ages is to be confronted with insurmountable difficulties. According to Acts 4 the church at Jerusalem practiced a kind of communism in that each one sold his possessions and placed the proceeds in care of the apostles, "and they distributed to each as anyone had need" (verse 35). This is what the first-century church did. Would brother Welshimer, who wanted the twentieth-century church to be built upon the first-century pattern, want his Christian Church in Ohio to do as the first Christian Church in Jerusalem did?

That same Jerusalem church, with the apostles and elders in charge, issued a letter to the Gentile churches in which they set forth a list of four "necessary things" that they were to do or not do. One of the essentials was that they were to abstain from things strangled, that is non-kosher food (Acts 15:20). Why does that letter not apply to the Gentile churches today if Biblical patternism is the correct hermeneutics? Could Moses pick and choose when he was warned to build the tabernacle according to the pattern?

Numerous things in the New Testament may be accounted for on the basis of cultural influence, whether it be foot washing, the holy kiss, the wearing of a veil, hair styles, or the role of women, and so we should feel free to make changes according to our own culture, *while preserving the spirit of these instructions*. But if the New Testament is a pattern to be followed precisely, we are stuck with all these ancient customs, such as the fact that some five times the New Testament says, "Salute one another with a holy kiss."

Paul's instructions to Timothy about widows points this up. According to 1 Tim. 5:9 Paul did not want a woman "enrolled as a widow," which means to be supported by the church, if she were younger than 60. He goes on to speak of the younger widows, and these he wanted married, barefooted, and pregnant, or words to that effect. While such notions may have fit those times, it would be foolish to make such instructions a pattern for all ages and cultures. In our culture widows do not have to be maintained by the church. They can go to work, which they could not do in Paul's day, and they probably have insurance and Social Security.

But when a church today does find it necessary to help widows financially, perhaps by giving them a church job (which is close to what Paul was talking about), do we have to turn down a widow who is only 58 or 59? We even feel free to employ a 35-year old widow and think nothing of it. Wherever Paul came up with his "threescore years," we seem to have no problem ignoring it. But if that is part of a divine and detailed pattern that we are warned to heed to the letter,

then what? Paul also says that such widows are to have washed the saints' feet. That one really does thin out the ranks! This points well to the vast cultural differences between their culture and our own, and it underscores the impossibility of pattern hermeneutics.

What then is our pattern? It is the same pattern that Peter, James, and John had and all the churches of the Bible—Jesus Christ himself! The invitation that Jesus issued to his disciples is ours also: "Come, follow me." This is the pattern that is often referred to in the New Testament, such as Phil. 2:5, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," and 1 Pet. 2:21, "To this were you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps." The God of heaven did indeed give a pattern to his people, but it was a Person and not a book or an array of documents, and that Person is after his own likeness. This means that ultimately God is our pattern, as Paul recognizes in Eph. 5:1, "Be followers of God as dear children." Jesus shows us the way to God. He is God's interpreter (Jn. 1:18).

This means that the New Testament, indeed all of Scripture, may be viewed as our pattern to the degree that it reveals Christ to us. Our interpretation of Scripture should always be in reference to Christ. Jesus Christ is the law and the prophets, the essence of all that they mean. That is how Jesus himself saw the Old Covenant Scripture—"They testify of Me," he said in Jn. 5:39.

What then is the New Testament if not a pattern of the sort given to Moses for the tabernacle? It is part of Holy Scripture and is to be esteemed as such, and like all Scripture "It is profitable" (2 Tim. 3:16). But it must be interpreted responsibly, and patternistic hermeneutics is not responsible, to which our dozens of parties bear witness. We are to read the New Testament so as to be brought closer to God by being brought nearer to Christ, and this should be our rule. Nothing else really matters.

One line from the New Testament illustrates my point: "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three, and the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13). Whatever the question may be in our study of the New Testament, if our interpretation has no relevance to faith, hope, or love, which is the essence of the Spirit of Christ, we can forget it, for it does not abide. That says it all. The "abiding interpretation" is that which points to the Spirit of Christ in terms of faith, hope, and love. All else is useless opinion.—from *Restoration Review*

* * * * *

Freedom through Jesus

James G. Van Buren

The idea of freedom for Christians and churches in areas where definitive revelation is not found has been a means of procuring unity in diversity. Paul urged the Galatians, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then" (Galatians 5:1, *New International Version*).

We have believed this freedom involves Christian *thinking*. We may not all have the same opinions on the origin of evil, the rela-

tionships involved in the nature of God, the schedule of events in the "end time," the meaning of various symbols in the book of Revelation, etc., but can still stand together firmly on central realities about Jesus, our Lord.

We may have divergencies about *worship* concerning the hymns we should use, the extent of bodily movement we should make, the degree of decorum to be exhibited, the way or time in the service when the Lord's Supper should be observed, and many other matters. Here we are allowed wide liberty and we certainly use it!

Likewise, we encourage our fellow Christians to be aware of liberty in our *Christian living*. Of course, we seek to be Christlike and to give evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in our conduct. But, should Christian women wear earrings, or high heeled shoes, or use cosmetics? Should men wear neckties, or comb their hair in certain ways, or grow beards or mustaches? What should Christians do about playing cards, or having picnics on Sunday, or wearing jewelry? Many churches lay down careful and rigid codes of conduct in some of these areas. We feel liberty under the general constraint of Christian commitment is the right "way to go."

* * * * *

No Condemnation, No Intimidation

Ben Rake, Jr., in his church bulletin

Dear Ones, there has been some concern about some minor visible changes taking place in our worship times recently, and I would just like to share an observation that might help to put our minds at ease. Certainly we would not want to do anything that makes a worshipper uneasy to the point of detracting from his or her heart-felt adoration of the Lord as we worship.

There are numerous passages in the New Testament which record the Lord's encouragement of the fact that there is freedom. "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." Jesus said, "... and the truth shall make you free, and you shall be free indeed." A quick check of our concordances will lead us to many other such references.

Only a few years ago, a dear brother was shocked when a new-made friend in a large assembly (several thousand, as I recall) lifted his hands in praise at the singing of a hymn of worship. This brother was humiliated, red-faced, a little upset, and not a little unhappy at this expression of love and surrender by his new friend in Christ. But since then, my dear brother himself has been prompted by our heavenly Father to lift hands many times, and he has gladly done so.

May I, beloved, reach up to the Savior I love? Does it matter to you what position my arms and hands are in as I worship? Blessed is the human father whose little one excitedly extends his hands for a hug! My Heavenly Father loves to be loved, too!

I will likely never forget a young conscientious objector who visited our worship services at Shawnee Church during the Vietnam war. He had promised to attend even though to do so meant a

difficult trip in from Ft. Knox that Sunday morning. He arrived a little late for Sunday School, and entered very quietly and reverently. Only the teacher noticed him come in, and as he entered, he stepped into a pew at the rear and knelt in prayer for some fifteen minutes, praying silently. No one else noticed his love and adoration for the Lord, but it was an inspiration for yours truly, the teacher.

In acts of worship the main question is always, What is my attitude in doing so? Only the Lord and I know, and He knows better than I. I am no better than you if I lift hands, or kneel in prayer, or sing with my eyes closed, or hug a brother who is hurting because of Satan's attacks this past week. There is no condemnation for those who do worship more demonstratively. My Lord says so. There should be no intimidation for anyone who does (Worship is between the Lord and me!), nor should there be intimidation for him who is not led to. Praise the Lord for the freedom that is found in Him!

—Reprinted by permission

* * * * *

Brotherly Unity Amid Diversity: Instrumental Music

by Carl Ketcherside

If a congregation of disciples chooses to use the instrument as an aid to worship I must respect their right to make a choice based upon their study, although I may not personally endorse the choice they make. But they are not answerable to me nor the congregation with which I am affiliated and they enjoy the same autonomy as we do.

No congregation of saints which opposes instrumental music is ever obligated to adopt it; no congregation which desires to use it can ever be forced by another to relinquish it. Each congregation must be self governing and self determining under God. Our task is not to get brethren to unite in their opinion about the instrument, but to be united in Christ Jesus. Such unity is not produced by fondness for things but by affection for the brethren.

Question: "How can unity come about while some use the instrument and others cannot?" The answer is simple. It involves two things. First we must cease making the use of the instrument a test of fellowship, and secondly, we must start practicing the local autonomy which we have always proclaimed. We have no right to make anything a condition of fellowship which God has not made a condition of salvation. If brethren are good enough to be accepted by God they are good enough for me to receive. No one is saved because he has the proper understanding of instrumental music at the time he is immersed, and no one will be lost because he is mistaken about it.

Some of God's children think they can please our Father by employing instrumental music in his public praise. I think they are mistaken. I think they presume too much. But that mistake does not cancel the relationship which was established by being born into the family. They would not become my brethren by ceasing to use the instrument, they did not cease to become my brethren by beginning

to use it. They are my brethren because we have the same spiritual father. This is the basis of brotherhood!

The point at issue with me is not so much whether instrumental music in worship is of God or the devil. I have some brethren who affirm it is of God, others who do not know, and still others who do not care. Those who are interested on both sides quote scriptural passages to sustain their views. Frequently they use the same passages—one to prove it is of God, the other to show it is of the devil. What concerns me primarily as of the present is whether those who use it are brethren. If they are and I refuse to regard them as brethren, or if I do not love them as such, then I am of the devil regardless of where instrumental music originated. "By this it may be seen who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not do right is not of God, *nor he who does not love his brother*" (1 John 3:10).

If we demand that those who use the instrument, which *they* regard as a matter of opinion, give it up in behalf of unity, are we not by the same reasoning obligated to give up Sunday school classes and individual communion cups, which *we* regard as matters of opinion, in order to have unity?

I doubt that we will ever settle the problem by one side giving up the instrument, or the other side adopting it. Perhaps such a course would not settle our difficulty anyway. It might actually intensify our trouble for a long time. But we can overcome the sin of schism right now.

The truth of it is that, instead of the new covenant scriptures teaching that it (instrumental music) is a sin, they say nothing about it. Those brethren who oppose it do so upon the basis of their deduction. From scriptures in various settings and places they formulate a basis of interpretation and using this as a working postulate they conclude that the introduction or injection of instrumental music would violate the intent of God. Since they believe that their postulate is valid and their construction derived therefrom is correct they cannot condone the use of the instrument. I share their view and, therefore, it would be a sin *for me* to introduce instrumental music into the praise service of the saints in violation of my conscience.

However, other brethren read the same scriptures and draw from them a divergent conclusion. They are as honest and sincere as I am. They love Jesus as much as I do. How shall I act toward them? I cannot demand that they violate their conscience and confess something to be a sin when they do not believe that it is. But brotherhood and fellowship are not conditioned upon their seeing it like I do. We were not begotten by "my postulate" but by "our Father." I am not told that I must love instrumental music, but I am obligated to love my brethren—all of them—and this I do.

Now if I think more of my reasoning and deduction than I do of my brethren, I'll sacrifice brotherhood to my deduction. The reverse is not true. Through brotherly love I can retain both my brethren and my personal conviction. This I am resolved to do. It is merely a matter of priorities.

[The preceding article was made up of quotations from the writings of

Carl Ketcherside over a period of years. They were compiled by Lloyd Boyll, along with fifteen other similar chapters on topics like fellowship, creeds, conformity, differences, interpretation, unity, etc.—all by brother Ketcherside. The resulting 41-page book, *A New Spirit*, is available from our office for \$3.50 including postage and handling. The above excerpt was reprinted by permission of College Press Publishing Co.]

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RESTORATION LEADERS:

T. B. LARIMORE—

Teacher, Preacher, Man of Unity

By the Editor

What Carl Ketcherside emphasized and lived in the 1960's-80's, T. B. Larimore practiced at the turn of the century. He lived from 1843-1929, and has been called the "most popular preacher" among the Churches of Christ, and their most significant leader in the late 1800's next to David Lipscomb. It is claimed that he began more churches in the South than any other man, and he preached not only throughout the whole U.S. but also in Canada, Mexico and Cuba. Leroy Garrett writes that Larimore refused to take sides in the rising tide of controversy, and instead insisted that "No man has a right to make a test of fellowship of anything which God has not made a condition of salvation."

He demonstrated that one can be true to the faith and a very acceptable leader without being an exclusivist, and so he was the precursor of a long line of Church of Christ leaders who were able to avoid a narrow view of fellowship. Some of these of the generation following Larimore were George Klingman, R. H. Boll, H. L. Olmstead, Hall Calhoun, and, in his later years, R. C. Bell. (*The Stone-Campbell Movement*, p. 684)

Teacher of Preachers

Larimore became a Christian on his twenty-first birthday, and soon afterwards attended Franklin College near Nashville. After finishing there, and being deeply influenced by its Christian atmosphere, he engaged in itinerant evangelism along with a more experienced preacher. He also taught school, and took a devoted Christian, Esther Gresham, as his wife.

About three years later the Lord led him to establish a Christian school called Mars Hill College, near Florence, Alabama. "The school was a monument to Larimore's faith and hard work. He and his wife worked with pick, hammer, saw and shovel to erect a three-story house with twelve rooms and three halls," according to historian Earl West. From 1871 to 1887 this school trained many men who became preachers and leaders in the Churches of Christ and the conservative Christian Churches. One of his students later wrote,

His influence was magnetic; his success, wonderful. His pupils loved him. We dreaded, not his anger, but his disapprobation. His power to restrain, and at the same time impel, was remarkable. His look could quell a meeting; his approving smile, incite to highest aim.

But despite his gifts as a teacher, and the fruitfulness of his school, the call to evangelize burned in his heart. Since he could

no longer bear to reject the many appeals to hold gospel meetings, and since he could not fulfill both ministries—as a teacher and an evangelist—he closed down Mars Hill College after sixteen years. From that time on, he preached the gospel of Christ to many thousands.

Proclaiming the Good News

To read of Larimore's evangelistic campaigns boggles our minds today. "Wherever he went, his meetings were scarcely less than sensational," says West, who then gives some examples. In 1894 he preached in the Sherman, Texas church from January 3 through June 7, more than five months! During those 154 days he delivered 333 sermons and baptized 254 people. Or consider his meetings in a Nashville congregation in 1900. Beginning on New Year's Day, "the meeting continued through seven Sundays with two services a day and three on Sunday and the building was often full with some being turned away." Ironically his meetings in Sherman, Texas in 1917 were almost identical to his campaign there in 1894: he labored twenty-two weeks, giving a total of 333 sermons again as he followed his common practice of preaching twice daily and three times on Sundays.

His hearers felt that the quality of his messages matched their quantity. One of them said, "His sermons to me have appeared Samsonian in strength, Pauline in wisdom and Christ-like in meekness." David Lipscomb commented,

Everyone hears and understands all he says. He seems to know the New Testament by heart, and quotes freely and exactly much Scripture. . . . He looks at it from all sides and in all of its connections. . . . He has dealt especially upon the necessity of walking by faith—to take God at His word, do just what He says do, adding nothing thereto and taking nothing therefrom, then trusting His promise for the blessing. . . . No one ever made less effort to move by exciting the emotions than Brother Larimore.

Words Matched by Deeds

Someone else described his ministry as fearless and forceful, yet also courteous, kind and humble. Which leads us to his character. His dedication and Christlikeness were impressive. Someone wrote to the Gospel Advocate, "It is hardly possible to associate with Brother Larimore and not be made better. He is very greatly loved by all who know him." West observes that the evangelist's power "lay more in the man than in his pulpit supremacy. He was loved because he was good, pure and God-like. 'Each day with me is a day of firm resolve to have a pure heart, to have a clear conscience, to be good and do good,' he often said." The Lord produced in him a humble, meek and lovable character that reminded men of the Savior he proclaimed, and brought glory to Him.

He persevered in his ministry despite a number of calamities—the death of his son, various illnesses, the death of his first wife, a train wreck caused by a collapsing bridge. Along with those griefs, he was deeply pained by the hostility and divisions that occurred during his lifetime. The so-called Restoration Movement began splitting and splintering in spite of the efforts of Larimore and likeminded believers. To learn of his response to such situations, we turn to the following article, which was part of a message originally delivered to the Akron, Ohio, Unity Forum in 1988, by a history teacher at David Lipscomb University.

LARIMORE, A PEACEMAKER

Douglas A. Foster

Larimore was averse to any situation that involved discord and strife. He had become a part of a religious movement, however, that was becoming more and more characterized by internal dissension. *His desire was to promote Christian unity, yet now he was being urged to take sides in the controversies. Larimore was convinced that his only course of action was to "simply try to 'preach the word,'"* a phrase he used repeatedly to mean teaching things which were unmistakably taught in scripture. He meticulously avoided being drawn into the heated discussions over the divisive issue, explaining that he would leave those things for "wiser and better men" than him to settle. He was personally convinced that the matters of instrumental music in worship and the missionary societies fit into the category of "foolish and untaught questions" mentioned in 2 Timothy 2:23. The Lord through Paul had positively ordered Christians to avoid such matters because they "gender strifes."

As the controversies became increasingly heated, Larimore was constantly asked with which part of the movement he identified or to which side he felt closest. He always responded that as far as he knew, he belonged to nothing except that to which every Christian belonged—the church. *"I have never belonged to a 'wing' of the church or anything else. I belong to Christ, hence to the church of Christ—not to a 'wing' of the church."* The factions in the movement were identified by their stands on the various questions. Tongue in cheek, Larimore suggested that the questions were not good things to stand on. If Christians thought they had to do something with the questions, it would be better to sit on them and to stand on Christ and him crucified.

In the summer of 1897 an incident took place which severely tested Larimore's non-committal stance on the divisive issues. In July of that year there appeared in the *Christian Standard* and *The Christian-Evangelist* an "Open Letter to T. B. Larimore" written by a former student, Oscar Pendleton Spiegel. He urged Larimore not to be silent while those of his own religious family were drifting apart. Larimore owed it, Spiegel insisted, to himself, his family, his friends, and to God to "speak out on some matters now retarding the progress of the cause of Christ." After a paragraph extolling Larimore's work and influence, Spiegel pressed him for his stance on whether a musical instrument was permissible in worship, if it were justifiable to organize groups other than local churches to promote mission work, whether or not cooperative meetings were antagonistic to the scriptures, and whether a regular, paid ministry was in harmony with the scriptures and conducive to the best interests of the cause of Christ.

Larimore saw the letter first in the *Christian Standard*, and penned a lengthy reply evidently that very day. He began with an explanation of his non-sectarian stance.

Now, my dear brother, if you deem it possible to believe it possible for a man to be in no sense a partisan, but just simply and solely a Christian, in

this intensely partisan age, please try to believe that I am not a partisan, and that what I write—ALL I write—is written from no partisan point of view; but that I write simply and solely as a CHRISTIAN, with no selfish, partisan or personal purpose to subserve.

He then indulged in several paragraphs of reminiscences of the harmonious Mars Hill days. During the seventeen years he presided over the school, he wrote, not seventeen seconds were wasted on questions that "do gender strifes." The Bible was taught rather than "useless, blinding, bewildering theological theories." During the operation of the school the divisive issues were practically never heard, thought or dreamed of, and Disciples churches in the area increased ten fold. Further, he pointed out, wherever he and his students went, strife and discord were unknown or disappeared, due to the unity that existed among them and the plea they presented. He seems to imply that if the procedure worked then, it could work now.

As to the matter of fellowship, Larimore expressed his views in this way:

When Bro. Campbell took my confession, on my twenty-first birthday, he questioned me relative to none of these "matters now retarding the progress of the cause of Christ." While thousands have stood before me, hand in mine, and made "the good confession," I have never questioned one of them about these "matters." Shall I now renounce and disfellowship all of these who do not understand these things exactly as I understand them? They may refuse to recognize or fellowship or affiliate with ME; but I will NEVER refuse to recognize or fellowship or affiliate with them—NEVER.

Although alienated from many progressives by his refusal to endorse instrumental music and missionary societies, and alienated from many conservatives by his refusal to denounce the innovations, Larimore continued to try to avoid the divisive issues. He was convinced it was his duty.

Larimore continued to do what he said he would in his open letter reply: *he never refused to recognize, fellowship or affiliate with any of his fellow Christians. Any barriers that were erected were erected by others, not by Larimore.* He kept up contacts with the "other" segments of the Disciples as best he could. His relationship with the *Christian Standard* remained excellent, and he contributed articles to that paper as late as 1916. When David Lipscomb died, the *Standard* asked Larimore to write the obituary for its readers. When it was announced that Larimore was being officially added to the editorial staff of the *Gospel Advocate* in 1916, the *Standard* printed an editorial which praised Larimore as a Christian, preacher and writer. Larimore continued to be included in the "List of Preachers" published each year in the Disciples Year Book, later the Yearbook of the United Christian Missionary Society, until 1925.

Larimore maintained all the contacts he could with various segments of the movement in the midst of the sometimes explosively divisive situation. His approach to unity was that which Barton W. Stone expressed so effectively at the 1832 union meeting in Lexington, Kentucky. While he realized, Stone said, that there might be differences in belief among followers of Christ concerning many things, as long as all would agree to use only the words of scripture, those differences could not separate them.

Cooperating With Other Brands of Christians

Can two or more groups of Christ-centered, Bible-believing churches (who agree on the fundamentals of the Christian faith but disagree on some secondary matters) work together? If not, why not? If so, to what extent? Can it be done without trampling on anyone's conscience?

Preceding articles have shown how disagreements led to divisions in the Restoration Movement in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Spiritual-minded brethren on both sides of the organ were troubled by such separation. Our Savior's prayer for unity and Paul's emphasis on it showed how Heaven feels about its importance! And historically the Restoration Movement's plea had been for Biblical oneness among believers—unity with liberty, unity amid diversity of beliefs and practices of secondary nature, unity in Christ our common Savior and Lord.

In the 1930's a unity movement was spearheaded by Jame DeForest Murch of the independent Christian Churches and Claude Witty of the Churches of Christ. Regional and/or national meetings were held from 1937 through 1941, having adopted a splendid policy called "Approach to Unity," as follows:

1. **Prayer.** Definite private and congregational prayer for unity, seeking the leadership of Christ.
2. **Survey.** Seeking to determine how much we have in common in faith and practice.
3. **Friendliness.** Establishing individual friendly relations by exchange of fraternal courtesies and through fellowship meetings.
4. **Co-operation.** Joint activity in enterprises which will not do violence to personal or group convictions.
5. **Study and Discussion.** Open-minded study and humble discussion of the things which at present divide us, in order to discover the way to complete and permanent unity.

In the end those meetings seemed to accomplish very little, mainly because the "mainline" Churches of Christ (as they are now called) took the position, No cooperation without uniformity. One leader wrote, for instance, "We cannot unite by agreeing to forget our differences. These issues touch our practices, and one side or the other will of necessity have to undergo a complete change of front before we can be together." It seems to me he fumbled the ball, for he confused unity with union. There can be loving *unity* of heart and action between believers and even between congregations (i.e. cooperative activities of various kinds) without organizational *union* (i.e. full merger).

From the premillennial Churches of Christ, various leaders participated in the Murch-Witty unity meetings with interest and sympathy. E. L. Jorgenson, Don Carlos Janes and J. R. Clark all attended. Brother Jorgenson participated as a songleader and also directed a chorus. Brother Clark wrote an insightful article which was published in *Word and Work* in 1940. Because of some parallels between the situation then and now, we may profit from reading it.

Observations on the Unity Movement

by J. R. Clark, 1940

I enjoyed the Lexington Unity Meeting and want to attend next year if it is not far away. I could draw a picture of this whole movement, as I see it. I would draw two camps over against one another. In the Church of Christ camp I see a tendency to be in bondage to unwritten creeds; emphasis on secondary things which should be included but not made to stand out above the big things of our faith; an attempt to live the gospel on a fleshly plane. As a factor in Christian living the Spirit has almost no place. It is not the fruit of the Spirit, but the works of the flesh. This accounts for lack of unity among us, for "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," etc. While insisting that we stand for the whole truth we virtually dare one another to investigate and walk out on the deeper spiritual things of God's word. Thus those who contend the loudest for non-sectarianism have contracted that very plea into the worst kind of sectarianism.

On the other hand, there is the Christian Church camp with their garments blowing in the breezes of liberty until it would seem they might lose their skirts. There is open-membership, modernism, innovations (including the organ, orchestra, and various organizations), and it would seem, in striking hands with denominations, that they hold themselves on a par with such. This spirit of liberty makes for indifference and worldliness. We, contending for simplicity of worship, have enough worldliness without further opening the gate. It is true we should not have a "holier than thou" attitude, but we should not let the fear of being so accused keep us from having convictions and denouncing sin in every form.

These two camps are the extreme pictures of the two wings, and due to these things we are suspicious of one another, and fail to trust one another, and to make any final effort toward unity. Why would the "Christian Church" wish to line up with Pharisaism, bondage to human creeds, fleshly religion? To surrender their organ and organizations and do so would to them mean that very thing. Then for the "Church of Christ" to swallow the "Christian Church" "as is" would seem to be taking up with Modernism, and surrendering the simplicity we have in Christ. Thus we don't bury the hatchet.

But out from the camp of the "Church of Christ" I see a line projecting of those who see the folly of our mistakes in putting the emphasis in the wrong place, quenching the Spirit, sealing certain portions of the scriptures, Pharisaism, and bondage to creeds. These approach a center border line between the two camps. Also, projecting from the "Christian Church" camp, there is another line of individuals who are dissatisfied with the extremes of the "Christian Church" and long for simplicity. They draw near to that border line and face the finer element of the "Church of Christ" group. They all say, "Let's get together and talk things over in a good spirit and see

if we can learn to love one another more and find a ground for unity." But the "Christian Church" is all the time looking over our shoulders at our camp of radicals, and some things they would otherwise give up they hold; and we look to their extreme camp and decide we had about as well let well enough alone. I fear we can't drag both camps together. It would be such unity as tying two cats together and hanging them over a clothesline. But possibly the better spirited on both sides could quit representing their respective *extreme* camps and get together as independent, New Testament Christians—by not stopping at Campbell, but going on back to Christ. I see no point in our ever surrendering the simple, free-from-innovations, New Testament ground, regardless of how legalistic some of our brethren may grow to be.

* * * * *

Cooperation Without Compromise CAN Be Done—It IS Being Done

Alex V. Wilson

"Possibly the better spirited on both sides could . . . get together as independent, New Testament Christians"—not focusing on other churches' extremists but rather on "our Lord Jesus Christ—THEIR LORD AND OURS" (as Paul put it in 1 Cor. 1:2). This was J. R. Clark's conclusion (see preceding article), and through the years it has been possible sometimes not only to *get* together in meetings but also *work* together in service. It *has* been done and it *is* being done, with God's blessing. Don't you think He wants us to do it more, where practical?

What sorts of cooperative service are we talking about? Well, let's look at some examples, past and present, where working together worked well.

In June 1961 E. L. Jorgenson wrote thus in *Word and Work*:

Some may have wondered, "What is the editorial position of this journal regarding fellowship?" This journal has no fixed "positions." Our writers are all free men, under God, to write what they believe is right. It may be remarked, however, that none of us have advocated anything on this line more than Brother Boll himself had long practiced. We think his course at Cedar Lake was scriptural and model. Year after year he went there to address the conservative Christian [Church] ministers of Chicagoland. By the courtesy of those good brethren, and on their initiative (not by any demand from him), no instrumental music was used when RHB spoke. But when it came his turn to sit, while others who used it were speaking, he listened with interest and raised no fuss or protest. After all, it was their meeting, and Brother Boll was not like some who might have flung bombastic challenges at them. Here was the spirit of Romans 14 and of fellowship at its best—fellowship in spite of an unresolved difference. Those men loved our brother for himself, and for his humble attitude, and he loved them dearly in return. They all, both he and they, were benefited, and the bonds of Christian love were strengthened.

Brother Boll also spoke on at least one occasion at the North

American Christian Convention, the annual Bible conference and fellowship week of the Christian Churches.

Current Examples

Every two years the Christian Churches around Portland, Oregon, sponsor a church-growth clinic, and they regularly feature a speaker from the non-instrumental churches. Again, in a famishing world, a number of Churches of Christ have sent food supplies to Poland, India, Central America and Ethiopia. But out of \$7,000,000 worth of food sent to Ethiopia, over one million was donated by instrumental congregations, for the non-instrumental churches to distribute. When people are starving, whether for meat and potatoes or for the Bread of Life, differences of worship practices need not hinder working together to overcome the emergency. As one brother put it, "BECAUSE WE MAY NOT IN EVERYTHING SEE EYE TO EYE, CAN WE NOT IN ANYTHING WORK SHOULDER TO SHOULDER?"

Again, several years ago the Christian Churches set a goal of doubling their number of congregations by the year 2000. But in setting forth their goal they said, "We do not wish to plant churches where they will duplicate the efforts of our non-instrumental brethren." Now I know, and you may also, of cases where that principle has been violated, which is sad. But, like us, they have no denominational headquarters to enforce laws, so neither they nor we can guarantee how various individuals or congregations will behave.

In Louisiana, at least two of "our" preachers plus 1-2 Christian Church preachers work together regularly in conducting a short-term Bible institute in their area. And in Kentucky some preachers from each group have been active in the other group's camps or at retreats. In by far the majority of such cases the results have been beneficial, not harmful.

Overseas Cases

For the 1988 Restoration Forum at Akron, Ohio, Kay Watts gathered the following examples from around the world of Churches of Christ and Christian Churches helping each other. She found many sad examples too, of non-cooperation, duplication of efforts, a spirit of rivalry, and sometimes even bitterness and strong opposition. But thank God for all of the good and profitable relationships that have been established.

Note the following reports from various mission fields: "We have a general agreement that neither mission will establish congregations within two miles of the other in rural areas. We also encourage fellowship among our churches." (Malawi) "In the past, a non-instrumental missionary worked together with our Bible Institute. He was a wholly Christlike person." (Italy)

"The non-instrumentals own campgrounds and we've been active in helping get facilities there prepared each year. It is also free to be used by our congregation for special outings if we desire. Our children attend the camp (usually led by their folks) and we are involved in other activities throughout the year." (Belgium)

"A *cappella* missionaries were asked to speak at the 1985 Pan Africa meeting." (Kenya) "We use one of their men on a regular basis at our seminary." (Canada) "When we started services in the mountains I would often go to the city to bring up an elder from the non-instrumental Church of Christ to preach for us." (Honduras) "There have been some joint men's meetings." (Kenya) "Periodically we exchange hosting at what we call 'Great Family Gatherings' (a sort of area-wide fellowship)." (Belgium) "I conduct each summer a small unity effort Bible study for the young men of our two segments. The more they come to know each other, I feel the wall is getting melted down rapidly." (Japan)

"There have been shared evangelistic meetings. Also their group has a large food relief program here right now. At their invitation we cooperated with them in distributing food to areas where we have churches without any mention that there are 'two groups.'" (Zambia) "Two non-instrumental men have been asked to serve on the board of Pioneer Bible Translators." (Papua New Guinea) "One of their missionaries writes Sunday school lessons which we publish and distribute. Many of them helped finance this." (Brazil) "We invited a non-instrumental missionary to have a book stall at our All-India Convention. We will not have instrumental music when an *a cappella* missionary speaks." (India) "We have immersed folks in areas where there are non-instrumental churches and left these converts in their care." (Belgium)

"Currently three Pioneer Bible Translator members are non-instrumental. They are opening a new work. They will be supported almost totally by non-instrumental churches." (Papua New Guinea)

Perhaps the most thrilling statement—because of the Jesus-like spirit it portrayed—was by an instrumental missionary in Italy named Harold Fowler. He wrote of his experiences there: "Everywhere I have gone among non-instrumental Christians, I have been treated with a brotherly spirit and found a warm welcome. I have preached in non-instrumental churches and presided at the Lord's table. Bible study materials I have written and printed found a usefulness and welcome among many of their churches here. A bit of homespun but definitely Christian philosophy has been my guideline; 'It is pretty hard to keep kicking a dog that keeps licking your hand.' And by the grace of God, I for one am determined to be that dog. I have already experienced the joy of the Spirit alive in my brethren on both sides of the keyboard, and rejoice in the truth and righteousness, the growth and power that is evident in each precious brother or sister. Every effort that has been made to encourage unity has been richly rewarded, even if initially it was difficult to break the ice. So often, I have found beneath the seemingly forbidding exterior, a Christian to love, and in loving him, found a brother."

May God give us grace and boldness to follow His Word as we understand it, to both grant and exercise freedom in the body of Christ, and to spread abroad the good news of Jesus our wonderful Savior.

Hosea, The Heart and Holiness of God:

"GOD'S COMPASSION AROUSED"

(Hosea 11:1 - 12:1; read this passage first)

Ernest E. Lyon

The emphasis in Hosea changes with the opening of chapter 11. From here to the end of the book the emphasis is on God's love. Four times in these four chapters God speaks; each time He is interrupted by Hosea detailing Israel's sin. It may look like Hosea could not understand why God is speaking as He is; but I doubt that, for God had prepared Hosea to understand this from the first of the book. I personally feel that Hosea is inspired to show Israel's sin while God speaks of His love in spite of that sin. What do you think?

What would you take to be the key verse of the chapter? The chances are that at first reading you would say verse one, especially if you remember Matthew 2:13-15, where we are told of God sending Joseph with Mary and Jesus to Egypt until Herod died. He then sent them back to the land of Israel and this verse is quoted as being fulfilled in that. However, let us not forget that God there was not calling Jesus back to safety but away from the safety of Egypt to the land where He was to serve God and finally to be crucified after much ill treatment. Israel, however, was called out of Egypt, where they were in slavery, to be a nation and to be free. Verses three and four then show how much God acted as Father and Mother to Israel.

Now let us notice verses 2, 5-7. God does not ignore Israel's sin in spite of His love and His loving ways to them. He recognized their sin at all times, for He cannot ignore sin. He must judge it. How that statement should be a great concern to citizens of the U.S.A. will be obvious if you will take a good look at our country. God has blessed this country in many ways. Can you tell how we have shown our appreciation of this? We have protected the Jews—but Anti-Jewish feelings are on the increase. Almost every home has a Bible—but so many of them just gather dust. Our church membership is phenomenal—but think how few attend regularly and many fewer really take part in the work of the Lord. We send missionaries everywhere—but now some of those countries are seeing the need of sending missionaries to us. And then think of the killing of unborn children by the millions, and remember from God's word that one unsolved murder casts a shadow on the place where it happens. Think also of the gambling, murders, rapes, adultery and fornication, thefts, etc. *ad infinitum*. Our country is in bad shape, and how many Christians are praying for it? I hope all of you are, and that you are praying earnestly for revival to start in your own heart and then spread to others and then to the whole country.

Did you notice that because of their refusal to repent Israel would try going to Egypt, and Assyria—a much worse nation—would rule over them. That happened in a few years.

Verse eight is, to me, the real key verse of the chapter. Let us read it two different ways. First read, "How can I give you up?" And then turn the emphasis and read, "How *can* I give you up?" The second way is the way God was saying this, as the context clearly shows. Because He is God and is love, He could not treat them like He did Admah and Zeboiim, towns that were destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah. The end of the verse shows the heart of the situation—"My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused." This reminds me of that pair of verses from Lamentations 3:22, 23 that are used in the popular hymn, "Great is Thy Faithfulness." "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail." He had just shown that He would not and could not ignore Israel's sin, yet God's love must come to the front. We should pray for repentance in this country so He can bless us.

I love His explanation in verse nine. First He points out that He will not carry out His fierce anger, something that would call for the devastation of Ephraim, and then notice the reason—"For I am God, and not man." Here lies the trouble when men try to decide why God allows certain things to happen that they say would not be allowed if they were God. They are judging by man's standards and God is acting by His own nature. How many times have you looked at some great disaster to one person or a number of persons, even a whole nation, and wondered why a just God would allow such things? God does not feel called on to explain these things to His creatures. They need to love and trust Him and to know that He is love and that He is good. By our standards we can say that He could not allow certain things to happen, but He does allow them and does not feel called on to explain His actions to us. How many times have you heard people say (or said yourself), "Why, Lord?" or "Why me, Lord?" or some such things? Don't do it any more. What God does is right, and all we need to know to understand this is that He is holy, He is righteous, He is love, He is good. If you don't believe that then much in the world is unexplainable, and even if you do believe it, it may be that His actions are unexplainable in our terms. For He is God, and not man, "the Holy One among you." We ought to be thankful that He will not come in wrath. And we should have a much clearer view than Hosea did of why God can do as He does. We know He loved us so much that He gave His only begotten Son to become man and to die for us. When we repent and turn to Him in faith He can wipe away our sins and bless us even though by our standards we should be cast off. A realization of that is a blessing as we consider how much God loved and loves us and how much He did for us to be able to give us eternal life in Christ.

After saying he would not come in wrath, God then goes on to say that He will call Israel and they will come to Him. At the end of verse ten He says something that interests me—"his children will come trembling from the west." That is interesting to me because the U.S.A. is west of Israel. I am not saying that He is telling in advance of calling Jews out of the U.S., but I am saying that this is one of the places He could be speaking of. He also lists Egypt

and Assyria as places from which He will call them. And why is He calling them?—to settle them in their homes, in the land of Israel.

God finishes this first speech in the last verse of chapter 11 and the first verse of chapter 12. Here He anticipates somewhat the things Hosea will say in 12:2-6. He reminds us that He is not treating Israel so nicely because of their faithfulness to Him. No, indeed, for note His accusations concerning their unfaithfulness.

Do I need to remind you that all this fits in exactly with how God starts out this wonderful little book of prophecy, for which I gave it the label, "The Heart and Holiness of God?" He shows great love to Israel, not because of Israel's good points but because He is God.

Aren't you glad that God shows us how He treats us today in all this? What if God would treat us exactly according to what we deserve? Remember His Law that expresses His abhorrence of sin and then honestly answer that question for yourself. Each of us should admit that if we had what we deserve we would be thrown into the lake of fire without any delay. We are not His children because we deserve to be but because He is what He is. He is not a god like the gods that men create in their own minds, gods that are very human in the way they react to everything.

You see, God was getting ready to cast Israel out of their land, using the Assyrians as His weapon, but, unlike the way He would deal with Assyria later, He would not be acting in His anger but in His love, trying to call them back to Himself. I am thankful that He chastises me, because that shows His love. Aren't we all glad of that?

VOICES from the FIELDS

Moto Nomura

Bethany Home, Japan

Sept. 15, 1990

The lectureship at Abilene Christian University, where I have been invited to speak, is approaching. It will be in February. I feel and know that somehow the Lord will raise the needed transportation funds to attend the lectureship. I hope on the way to or from Abilene I can visit Louisville.

It has been 5 years and 5 months now since we moved to the mountains from Tokyo. The Lord sent us various kinds of people to our Bethany Home with various kinds of blessings and problems. Last week we hosted our 1,021st over-nite guest. One-day visitors' number triples that of over-nite guests. We did our best to serve each visitor with prayer and love that we find in Jesus Christ. Not all have been restored to faith or regained the sense of purpose of life in visiting us, but most of them went down the hills to cities with joy and confidence they found in the love of Jesus Christ, and we are grateful. In some cases we could not serve them well, however. But we are happy that God sent us to the mountains for a new kind of ministry no one had ever done before in Japan among the Stone-Campbell Movement Churches.

I don't know just how long we can continue to do this both financially and particularly physically, but we are happy to do till He says Okay, stop. Special prayer is requested for the sake of Yoriko as she serves many visitors with smile. Physically it has been a bit of a burden upon her as we get older.

We do need missionaries. I think we have established a good beach-head for any missionary to come in and work. It is God's grace that we city people have made successful and fast contacts with so many people in the mountains. We need missionaries very badly.

THE ALASKA JOURNEY

Kenneth G. Stockdell, Sr.

[Ken Stockdell is an elder in the Gallatin, Tenn. Church of Christ, which sponsors the Allens.]

The Alaska work was begun in the early 60's when Winston and Irene Allen answered the Lord's call for them to go to Alaska. Throughout the years the work has been effective in reaching persons for the Lord. The numbers that have gone through this small group are approximately 450 different persons who have come and gone and have worshipped, participated, and referred others to the work. Along with this, there have been 50-60 baptisms plus others who have transferred their membership or have asked for help from the group.

In 1979 when we first visited Eagle River, we met in the basement building that had been built a few years before. There were approximately 25 people in attendance for the worship and meeting times, but a Bible school that Julius and Claudia Hovan participated in was attended by approximately 40 young people. We raised the question at the time of putting an upper structure on the building even though the money had not been raised for this work. In 1985 the Gallatin church sent me to Eagle River in order to try and initiate a building program. . . .

From 1985 to 1989 many obstacles arose but each time the Lord made the obstacles disappear. Many of the people in the church assisted in various tasks that had to be done and worked closely with the contractor. In early July of 1989, the construction was begun and the top was completed so meetings could be held in the auditorium in late December 1989. In January 1990 the first baptism in the completed building was performed.

The work has now reached a level of 40 people from a regular 25 one year before. There are persons from the neighborhood who now come frequently where before they failed to attend. The man who made the baptistry unit is now attending. The contractor and his family have also been attending and have a very wonderful testimony for the people at the church.

The Allens have labored long and now would like to transfer the oversight of the work to a new family. The work is in such a situation that new workers could move in and continue the work and

branch out as much as possible. The opportunities are great in the area.

The church has an extremely nice facility. The basement area that was built in the mid seventies has been maintained well by Brother Winston and Sister Irene along with the others there. It is hard to see that it was built fifteen years ago. The new auditorium allows for at least 80 to 100 people but probably could be increased slightly if needed. The work that needs to be completed is the landscaping and parking area. When this part is done, which should be by September or early October, the construction will be completed and the church will be debt free.

With the facility debt free, many may ask what is the need in the future. There are three major areas. The first is to pray for the work and the many souls in the area that need to be won to the Lord. Secondly, there is a need to have a person or preferably a man and his wife to go to the work and get settled with the aid of Brother and Sister Allen. Thirdly, financial support is still needed and especially when new persons move there to take over the work because the cost of living is very high.

Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

Why do Christians have to suffer?

This is one of the most frequently asked questions, it seems.

There are a number of reasons why Christians suffer. Any one of the following reasons or a combination of some of them might be applicable to individual cases. There may be causes we have not listed here, but these will give us some insight.

(1) Christians live in a sin-cursed world. God has not seen fit to exempt us from many of the trials and tribulations of life. It is not difficult to see the wisdom of this. Now He overrules for good for His own (Rom. 8:28) and He may see fit to respond to prayer, righteousness, or other things, and build a hedge about His own. Even so, Christians live in a world where evil is limited but not yet removed.

(2) Christians may suffer for their own folly. Some sins have a way of finding us out in this life. There are consequences from some sins which continue even when the sin has been forgiven. Christians may be unwise in their approach to living here and now. Christians may be improvident and suffer thereby (cf. 2 Thess. 3:10-12).

(3) Christians may suffer chastisement (Heb. 12:3-13). This is the means God uses to keep us mindful of sin and looking to Him. Some learn more readily from chastening than others. Although brought by God's love, chastening can be a grievous experience for the present.

(4) Christians may suffer, sometimes even unjustly, because of the sins of others—a wife because of the sins of a husband, a child be-

cause of the sins of a parent, etc. While God will bless the faithful believer who thus suffers unjustly, all of His accounts are not settled in this life. Faith requires that we keep looking to Him even when we do not understand.

(5) Christians may suffer for righteousness' sake, i.e., for being and doing the right thing, for our identity with Christ (Matt. 5:10-12). Just as the world hated Christ and persecuted Him, so it is with the Christian who will live a godly life. As our lives run counter to the ways of the world, this sometimes brings suffering.

(6) Christians may suffer for the glory of God (e.g., John 9). God may use the suffering as an occasion for showing His power, demonstrating Christian character to the world, or in some other way, for the advancement of His work. Some suffering may make us useful vessels for sharing with, counseling, encouraging others.

(7) Christians may suffer because God thus keeps them looking to Him. Apart from continuing reminders of our fallibility and weaknesses, we might grow careless or presumptuous (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9-10). Suffering may be needed to keep us dependent on Him.

(8) Christians may suffer for the proving of faith (1 Pet. 1:6-7). This is not so God will know the quality or strength of our faith. He knows. It is in order that we may know and in order to rid our faith of the impurities that might exist. Those things that test or prove our faith are often very useful in making us get our priorities right, our values straight.

Please comment on the promise of Matthew 18:19. To whom is this given? Our experience in a certain matter seems to indicate we may have a misunderstanding of it.

In Matthew 18:19, Jesus promises: "*Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven.*"

I don't know of many promises in God's word which stand absolutely alone so that some other truth(s) does not in some way qualify them. There is a classic example of this in Jesus' temptation. Satan cited a promise of scripture to Jesus, declaring the angels would take care of Him if He jumped from the pinnacle of the temple (Matt. 4:5-7). Of course the promise was true, but Jesus declared that God had also said something else that had an important bearing on His conduct. It is a mistake to single out one promise and to expect it to be so literally fulfilled that it sets aside other equally applicable portions of God's word.

One is reminded of the child who insists on the fulfilment of a parental promise regardless of the circumstances which may develop. Kept by sudden illness or an accident from fulfilling the promise to a child of a picnic, a parent may be reminded, "But you promised . . . you promised!" One expects the child to understand that the weightier matter takes precedence and that in making a promise one cannot always list all the "unlesses" and "ifs". It is not a case of dishonorable conduct; it is a case of the greater taking precedence over the lesser.

Now God is not limited as man is. He can know what the future holds, etc. But many of His promises are clearly meant to be general principles, showing what is true as a rule. He does not in every instance give the "fine print," listing the exceptions or stressing complementary or supplementary matters. Do we mean that God is unreliable? Not at all. But it is possible on the human side to read more into a promise than He promised, because the part must be seen in the light of the whole.

Consider the matter before us. Two Christians agree together to ask God to let them sin without imposing any penalty. Is God bound to honor that request? If we take Matt. 18:19 by itself we might draw such a conclusion. "Well, of course," someone says, "we know we must ask in His will. We can't ask God to do wrong." That is a right answer, but it is not stated in so many words in Matt. 18:19. This verse taken by itself can be made to be a blank check for good or evil, right or wrong, anything!

"But we are asking for something which is surely in His will," it may be protested. "We are asking God to defeat people in wrongdoing and to bring them back to Himself." It is not God's will that any should perish or that any of His sheep should stray away and be lost. At the same time it is not God's will to deprive people of a privilege of choice, to keep people serving Him out of simple force. You see, God's will is not always limited to one issue. In His will He may allow the prodigal son to go into the far country and to get into desperate straits before He seems to be doing anything. Of course all along the allowing of sin to bear fruit is a part of His way of reaching that one.

Human beings have the problem of being limited as to time and knowledge. We do not always know what God is doing when He seems to be doing nothing, and we want Him to act at once—especially if we are hurting in some way—when He may see fit to act over a much longer period.

It may be that some will contend that this verse is a promise to the apostles only. There are some of Jesus' words that were for them especially. Even the apostles did not have a blank check for anything they wanted, however. Only a short time later the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, would ask for favored places in the kingdom (Matt. 20:20ff). Jesus indicated that the Father would not honor their request seeing it involved something already settled in the Father's will. Even apostles could ask selfishly, contrary to the will of the Father, and be refused.

Strictly speaking, Jesus' words in this passage are spoken to the disciples (18:1) but I do not believe they are limited to the disciples (or, apostles). The context suggests that other things here discussed are true of Christians generally and are not limited to the apostles only. I believe Jesus meant here a strong statement on the power of prayer and on the power of agreement and unity in making prayer effective. All prayer must conform to the broad principle of being in His will, however. If the promise were absolute and not subject to other limita-

tions God has imposed, then man could be more powerful than God, demanding things contrary to His principles. We could demand that God act unrighteously, selfishly, or in contradiction to His word.

Let us know that the prayers of God's people are heard, that God stands by those proper acts on the part of the Christian and insofar as He can in righteousness He validates their actions. God says, in effect, I stand behind the actions of My Servants. This does not give His servants free rein to do anything. It is understood that His servants must act in righteousness.

"Crumbling World, Sure Foundation"

A. W. Tozer

We must meet the present emergency with a spirit of optimism. This is no time for repining, no time for looking backward, no time for self-pity or defeated complaining. We are on the winning side and we cannot lose. "Lo, I am with you" makes ultimate defeat impossible.

Surely the days are evil and the times are waxing late, but the true Christian is not caught unawares. He has been forewarned of just such times as these and has been expecting them. Present events only confirm the long-range wisdom of Jesus Christ and prove the authenticity of the prophetic Word. So the believer actually turns defeat into victory and draws strength from the knowledge that the Lord in whom he trusts has foretold events and is in full command of the situation.

Let us beware allowing our spiritual comforts to rise and fall with world news or the changing political and economic situation. We who lean upon Jesus and trust in the watchful love of a heavenly Father are not dependent upon those things for our peace.

It is not a pleasant thing to see a group of Christians huddled around the T.V. listening with worried faces to the newscaster or the commentator painting lurid pictures of atomic bombs or the destruction of whole populations by bacteriological warfare. Where is our faith? Where is our confidence in the final triumph of Christ? All that these gentlemen say may be true. We have no desire to deny that the signs are ominous and the end is drawing near. But we refuse to get panicky, regardless.

It may easily be that before long one or another of our cities may go up in a puff of smoke and leave no one to tell how it happened. It may be that our land may be invaded and made to suffer along with the other nations of the earth. We have been spared hitherto, but we have no guarantee for the future. God may yet chasten us with fire and blood for our presumptuous sins and for our high-handed flouting of His holy laws. No one can say for certain, but it could be.

But suppose it should be? Does that spell the defeat of all our hopes? Is our sense of security dependent upon the turn of events in

Washington or Moscow? Is God the God of our better days and not the God of our sorrows too? Is there not a sure hope beyond the smoke and the rubble and the grave? Is there no difference between Egypt and the children of Israel? Is there not blood on a few doorposts here and there?

We must face today as children of tomorrow. We must meet the uncertainties of this world with the certainty of the world to come. To the pure in heart nothing really bad can happen. He may die, but what is death to a Christian? Not death but sin should be our great fear. Without doubt the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Sooner or later that will come. But what of it? Do not we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness?

Surely this is not the time for pale faces and trembling knees among the sons of the new creation. The darker the night the brighter faith shines and the sooner comes the morning. Look up and lift your heads; our redemption draweth near.

THE EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN TEACHER

Part 3: The Curriculum

Joyce Zimpelmann

"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6

"Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; Teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning." Proverbs 9:9

Many Christians are concerned about the demise of many New Testament churches. We look askance as congregations grow smaller and church doors close. It is beyond the realm of this article to discuss why this is happening; but answers to the following questions may have some bearing on the problem.

Prayerfully consider these questions:

1. Are the children and adults who regularly attend Sunday School and Bible classes receiving ALL the teaching they need to become mature Christians capable of affirming their faith regardless of circumstances?
2. Are the children and teens, as well as adults, able to search the scriptures for themselves to find answers to questions and problems?
3. Is the teaching program both comprehensive and in-depth so that the students are well-grounded in the faith?
4. Are the students prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks them the reason for the hope that they have? (1 Pet. 3:15)

If ye are unsure of the answers, perhaps we should take a careful look at our curriculum. We do not want to be guilty of the situation described in Hebrews 5:12-14, which states:

In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's Word, over again. Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

The problem is summed up in these questions. What should be taught? When? How? The goal of every Christian education program is to develop mature Christians ready and willing to serve in whatever capacity the Lord calls them to serve.

In considering this problem, we do not intend in any way to minimize the role of parents in teaching their children about God. The passage in Proverbs, quoted above, as well as other passages (Deut. 6:4-7; Eph. 6:4; etc.) emphasize the parents' obligation. But the church also has a teaching mission that becomes more important each year as people come into our assemblies who have had no opportunity to learn about the Lord in their homes. It is imperative, then, that the teaching program of the church be both inclusive and in-depth.

Where do we begin? Perhaps the best place to start is with the congregation. Consider questions such as the following:

1. What ages are represented in our Sunday School and Bible Study classes?
2. Are the participants predominately from "churched" families and grounded in the faith or are there newcomers?
3. Is there a nucleus of people having similar interests and needs, e.g., Children whose parents don't attend? Adults who come from other faiths? Teens and singles who have their own agenda? One-parent families? Are we providing for the needs of these groups?

After determining the make-up of the participants, consider the learning opportunities offered each group. Are there classes for all ages? Do some age groups have more learning opportunities than others? Are the class settings conducive to learning? Are the teachers willing and able to teach?

When this has been determined, we are ready to take an in-depth look at the curriculum.

Curriculum encompasses everything taught. It has both a horizontal and a vertical dimension. It includes the subject matter, materials and methods used.

The teaching curriculum of the congregation is comprehensive and includes not only Sunday School offerings but also Wednesday evening and other Bible-related classes. The curriculum begins with the nursery class and continues through the adult classes.

In order, then, to determine if our teaching program is adequate, we need to consider the following:

- expectations and goals at each level;
- topics/subject matter covered;
- materials used;
- teaching strategies used.

Specific Goals, Realistic Expectations

Determining goals and expectations may be difficult when we break them down into age groups and classes. Yet it is essential to

do this in order to insure that the students grow and develop as mature Christians. Thus, we must grapple with questions such as: What should first-graders know about the Lord and their relationship to him? What do we expect our twelve-year-olds to know? What expectations do we have for our high school seniors who may be about to leave us for college? Are we developing our young men to become deacons and elders? Are we developing our young people to become Sunday School teachers and youth leaders? etc.

In order to develop teaching goals for the participants, attention must be given to developmental expectations of individuals as related to physical, mental, emotional and spiritual growth and to those Biblical truths and beliefs that are fundamental to our faith. This is a difficult task which may be made easier by considering individual participants who are somewhat typical of their age and stage. For example:

Kelly is a gregarious five-year old who loves to sing heart songs and retell Bible stories. She is about to enter the first grade of a public school. 1. What should she know about God and her relationship to Him? 2. What Bible stories should she know? 3. What should she know about Jesus? 4. How should she be expected to demonstrate her knowledge of such concepts as love, reverence, worship, etc?

David is now a sixth grader about to enter middle school. He has attended Sunday and Wednesday classes since he was a baby. 1. What should he understand about Christ as Lord and Savior? 2. What should he be expected to know about the Bible and his use of it? 3. In what way is he expected to apply the teachings of the New Testament regarding personal conduct? etc.

When expectations have been established for all of the groups and classes, they should be compared with the actual subject matter being taught and the materials being used. Again using specific students and questions, determine how close the curriculum comes to fitting the expected outcomes. For example, can Kelly and her classmates tell about God and their relationship with him? Accurately relate certain Bible stories? Quote key Bible verses and tell what they mean? Demonstrate by their behavior that they understand what it means to be reverent and worshipful? Etc.

This is by no means a comprehensive list; but it illustrates the need for our curriculum to be compatible with our goals and expected outcomes.

Discrepancies between expectations and subject matter will be seen. The gaps should be plugged. This should lead us to consider the materials and the teaching strategies being used.

Topics Taught, Materials Used

In order to determine what has been taught, consider the subject matter taught over a three-to-five year time span. List the topics taught at each level in each class over this period of time. Then compare this list with the outcomes and expectations which have been developed for each level. For example:

1. If the expectation is for David and his fellow sixth graders to understand and accept the plan of salvation, has this been taught? Have the students responded?

2. Can David and his peers find scriptural references easily? Has this been taught? Has the material used required this?
3. What has been taught to the sixth graders regarding personal conduct? Have they had lessons from the Epistles regarding the way Christians are expected to behave? Have they studied ways to overcome peer pressures as related to drugs, immorality? etc.

As the list develops, it may become evident that certain books of the Bible or topics have been covered at almost every level while other topics or books have been neglected. At this point, depending upon the needs of the students, changes may need to be made.

Curriculum is not stagnant. It changes with the needs of the students; but it is important that those things we hold to be most sacred be taught consistently.

After the subject matter has been determined, a survey should be made of the materials being used in all facets of the educational program. Questions such as these should be studied:

1. Is the material relevant and interesting to the students?
2. Is the material Bible-centered and accurate?
3. Do the materials emphasize the fundamental beliefs we embrace?
4. Is the material arranged so the students are encouraged to study on their own? etc.

When the subject matter and materials have been reconciled to the teaching objectives and expectations at all levels, they should be shared with the entire teaching staff. The teachers should be encouraged to plan together so that the students will experience consistency and continuity in their teaching. More effective teaching and learning should occur as a result of teachers planning together. Consider these examples:

1. John teaches the Sunday morning high school class. They are currently studying Heroes of Faith taken from the book of Hebrews. Although the students seem interested in the experiences of Abraham, Sarah and the other Old Testament characters, they are having difficulty applying these lessons of faith to their own lives. John mentions this concern to Steve, the Wednesday night teacher. Steve decides to plan some relevant "contemporary" activities that will help the students make this application.

2. Harold is teaching an adult Bible class. Although most of the students have been in Sunday School most of their lives, there are several class members who are new Christians. Harold notices that they have puzzled looks on their faces when he uses terms such as justification and sanctification during his lectures. He realizes that some in the class may be leaving with unanswered questions. He meets with the teaching staff and asks for solutions to this problem.

We cannot force people to attend Bible classes; but we have an obligation to provide them with opportunities to learn those things essential to their Christian development. Effective teaching and learning doesn't just happen. It takes prayerful planning, constant evaluation and cooperation to make it work. This challenge is far too great to leave to chance.

NEWS AND NOTES, continued from inside front cover

1 Thess. 5:3 says: "While people are saying, 'Peace and safety,' destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape." Paul goes on to tell us that we are sons of light and that we should not be asleep, but alert to the situations around us. Keep looking UP! Your redemption draweth nigh!!

KBC and SCC ALUMNI REUNION plans being made:

We are looking for former classmates of KBC and SCC who would be interested in having a reunion in Jennings during the New Year holidays, complete with gumbo supper and followed by the Watch Night Service.

The Jennings church will be having their 55th annual service, beginning at 8:00 p.m. It will be a time of renewing old friendships. Former members of the Chorus will also be invited to sing.

We would like to have names and addresses of former students who live in your area so that we can get information out to them. Please send us any that you may know as soon as possible.

Activities for the weekend, day, or just the evening are being planned. Some lodging with local church members will be available for those who can stay over. Contact us by writing or calling: Douglas Broyles, Rt. 2 Box 781, Jennings, LA 70546 1-318-824-5966

Iroquois Church of Christ, Louisville:

We thank our Lord for the blessings we enjoyed last Sunday, our 35th Anniversary Day! Five were present who came on opening day: Clara Houk, Bill and Ruth Price, and Charles and Barbara Houk.

Lamb & Lion Ministries

On September 6th, David Reagan and John Jackson, our Minister of Outreach, left for a twelve day missions trip to Poland. They returned safely on September 18th. While in Poland, Dr. Reagan spoke twelve times on the

Second Coming to six different churches located in five different cities.

Jennings Church VBS Experiment a Success

We enjoyed great success this past summer as we experimented with a new VBS program. Instead of five consecutive days of lessons and crafts, we met on five scheduled days throughout the summer: two in June, two in July, and one in August, about two weeks apart. In the first hour we sang for twenty minutes, had a short devotion, and then went to class for thirty uninterrupted minutes of concentrated Bible study.

We selected as our theme, "Who is this Jesus?" and wrote our own lessons which were divided into (1) Birth, (2) Life, (3) Death, (4) Resurrection, and (5) Ascension and Second Coming. Each teacher provided visual aids for her class.

The first three sessions were in the morning, followed first by backyard olympics for an hour, then refreshments; a trip to the zoo with bag lunches was the second activity; and on the third day we took a trip to a water park and went Dutch Treat. The last two sessions were in the evening, followed first by a skating party; and finally, as the culminating activity for the summer, a hot dog cookout and oldies games.

Some advantages our teachers mentioned included having more time to prepare, carrying the theme with them all summer instead of just one week, enjoying the outings more than trivial crafts, and especially not having interruptions during class time. The only record kept was a head count, conducted by the director at closing time.

The majority of the students at the school were from our own church family, but several brought visitors. It was a summer which drew us all closer together, complete with a baptism and other visible signs.

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