

*"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."*



# The *Word and Work*



*"Holding forth the Word of Life."*

AUGUST, 1993

## SING AND WORSHIP-- CELEBRATE GOD'S GREATNESS

"If we fail at leading our people in worship, we have failed at everything. If we can uplift the cross and magnify Jesus so that people fall down and, in deep repentance, worship, we have succeeded at everything."  
-- J. David Newman

"What matters is not whether worship makes us feel good or happy; what matters is whether it makes us Christlike, whether men take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus."  
-- A. Harrison

## O Worship the King

"We come to God because God, in Jesus Christ, has come to us, we love Him because He first loved us, we ascribe to Him supreme worth because He has showed Himself to be worthy of our complete homage, gratitude, and trust. Worship is essentially a response, man's response to God's Word of grace, to what He has done for us "

--Raymond Abba

\* \* \*

"In Christian worship the approach to God involves both mystery and meaning. Transcendence and immanence invite us to wonder at the profound and to experience the known. True worship is an acceptance of God not as some impersonal force but as my Lord, 'my strength and my song' even as He remains the Sovereign of the universe, 'glorious in power' and 'majestic in holiness,' to 'reign for ever and ever' (see Ex. 15:1-18, the oldest hymn of praise and worship) "

-- John Fowler

\* \* \*

## Come before His Presense with Singing

The Christian hymn-book, next to the Bible, wields the largest and mightiest formative influence upon young and old, upon saint and sinner, of any other book in the world. Poetry, and especially good religious and moral poetry, emanates full as much from the heart as from the head, and partakes so much of the spirit of its author, that it insinuates itself into the soul with more subtlety and power than any other language of mortals, either pictured to the eye or presented to the ear. "Allow me," said someone, "to write the ballads for a nation, and I care not who furnishes it with its books." Permit me, I also say, to dispense the psalmody of a community, and I care not who dictates its creeds or writes out its catechisms "

-- Alexander Campbell

\* \* \*

"Each week as I plan the music for our worship services, I have three goals. They are to select music 1 which gives praise and honor to God and Christ, 2 which supports the sermon or worship theme, and 3 with sufficient diversity to meet the needs of our whole congregation "

-- Lowell Burkum

# THE WORD AND WORK

*"Declare the whole counsel of God"*

**Alex V. Wilson, Editor**

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## **THEME:**

# **SING AND WORSHIP-- CELEBRATE GOD'S GREATNESS**

Alex V. Wilson

Many of us have felt a need to emphasize worshipping the Lord. The recent Louisville Christian Fellowship Week had for its theme, "Worship--Man's Relationship to God." Also the sooncoming Kentuckiana Ladies Retreat (Sept. 24-25) will concentrate on praise and worship. And late in 1992 I planned this month's double-focus on worship and singing. It seems the Lord has been inclining our hearts to give greater attention to this important aspect of Christian living.

Attendance was up at the Fellowship Week this year. We had warm fellowship, helpful topics and some good messages. But I kept wishing we would not only talk about worship, but do it more. Harry Coultas led us in a good time of reflection on the many names and titles of Jesus used throughout Scripture. And Victor Broaddus tried to enrich our repertory of devotional songs by teaching us one from the hymnal which hardly anyone knew. But aside from those instances, there was not much creativity shown. Yes, our message topics this time related to worship. But did we actually spend more time in active adoration than in other years when the theme was entirely unrelated to this? I fear not, and thus we missed a wonderful opportunity.

We might have done some of the following: 1. Used responsive readings from great worship chapters of God's Word, like Psalms 95 or 103, Isaiah 40 or Jeremiah 10. Scriptures which proclaim God's grandeur arouse us to acclaim how great He is: proclamation produces acclamation. 2. A speaker might have closed his message about worship by having a prayers-of-praise time for five, ten or fifteen minutes. "During this period, let's not ask God for anything at all: *no requests*, please! Instead, let's extol Him for His grace and glory and other attributes and achievements. We'll have time for maybe twenty short prayers; you may pray more than once if you wish, but not longer than a sentence or two each time. Please begin each prayer with, 'I worship You because....'" [for example, ...because You have placed so much beauty in the universe You made; or, because You have restored my soul so often when I have grown cold spiritually; or, because You stooped so low when You became a man, and experienced life as we experience it day by day; or, because You are so vast in Your knowledge--You understand every fact and process recorded in every science book in all the libraries of the world. Etc., etc.] Teaching should lead to doing; we learn to worship *better* by worshipping *more*, not just by listening to sermons.

3. We might have taken more time to **learn new praise-songs**, perhaps one a day if they were short. There are many splendid praise choruses which too few churches know. If we had taken 2-3 newly-learned songs back to our congregations to teach them, what enrichment would result. Jerry Carmichael has a set of short praise-choruses printed on colored slides to be used in a projector. Some of them could have been used, providing us an easy way to learn. 4. It is sometimes very profitable to have a **period of silent meditation** after a message, during which each listener can privately wait upon the Lord with awe, thanksgiving or penitence. Surely this is a more fitting way to end a sermon on worship than merely saying "Thank you for listening."

### Principles of Worship

(1) For our worship to please God, it must be **BIBLICAL**, following the teachings of His Word. We stress this fact, and rightly so, for it is basic. Yet too often we equate "Biblical" with "the way we do it, and always have." My point is, there are different ways of carrying out worship that is scriptural. We are not restricted to just one valid way. There are not just "five acts of worship"--teaching, praying, the Lord's Supper, congregational singing and the offering. There is also Scripture reading ("Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture," 1 Tim. 4:13, NIV). The "Biblical pattern" also allows for solos and other special singing; and "mutual edification" in teaching (see 1 Cor. 14:26; Rom. 15:14). And encouraging one another (Heb. 10:25) might certainly include sharing of personal testimonies. Under certain circumstances, public confessing of sins is appropriate (James 5:16).

Are we saying that these additional "five acts" must be practiced everywhere, all the time? No, not at all. In fact my point is the opposite. There is no rigid pattern for church meetings. They may vary from church to church, also from time to time in the same church, and still be Biblical. Last month's *W&W* gave many examples of this.

(2) True worship is **GOD-CENTERED**. It acknowledges and acclaims His worthiness. It contemplates His glory, and is "lost in wonder, love and praise."

Worship views God, not the worshiper, as its center. To say of worship, "It doesn't meet my needs!" or "I don't get anything out of it!" suggests that the worshiper is at the center. Worship is not just another entree in a smorgasbord of activities planned to meet every possible human need .... Certainly God desires that human needs be met, but the deepest human need is to be in God's presence in faith and submission. "The main gift we receive is God..." (Raymond Holmes)

How can we make our meetings more God-centered? By using some of the methods enumerated in the preceding part of this article: worshipful responsive readings, prayers-of-praise times, more praise songs, etc. Focus on the Lord's attributes and actions. Occasionally at Portland Avenue we take a few minutes before we pray for folks to mention any Biblical names or symbols of our God: "the High and Lofty One; Lamb of God; Wonder; Counselor; Heavenly Father; Paraclete-Counselor-Comforter; He who sits upon the throne; King of kings and Lord of lords; Immanuel; Spirit of the living God; the Good Shepherd." Thus our hearts are stirred to adore the Majesty on high.

### **Imagination, a Great Gift**

(3) Use your **IMAGINATION** in worship. "Where does the Bible say *that*?" Well, it presents scenes for us to picture, to "image" in our minds. We sing, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face"; that's simply another way of stating what I'm saying here. Put yourself into the scenes of scripture, such as the storm striking while Jesus slept. Then sing "Master, the Tempest is Raging," and adore His power. Slip inside John's skin as he stands shattered and crying in heaven because no one could be found eligible to take the scroll from the hand of God. Then exult in triumph because suddenly the Lamb appears, and He *is* worthy! (Rev. 5)

Look backward to the Cross. Look forward to the Crown. Look upward to the Throne. Then you can't help but worship our Majestic and Merciful Lord.

(4) Vibrant praise requires **TIME**. If we are to improve the level of worship in our meetings we must take time to focus our hearts on the Eternal One, glory in His character and dwell on His good gifts to us. Hurrying through the meeting won't get it done. Doing everything in a cut'n'dried manner won't get it done either. Let's make time to magnify the Lord.

### **Some Other Helpful Practices**

It is good to balance **Order and Spontaneity**. Planning is important, but so is flexibility. Bob Moorehead, minister of a large Christian Church near Seattle, writes:

Leave room for "planned spontaneity." Those two words may sound self-contradictory, but in reality it means that you plan for a "flow" [i.e. a connecting theme for the meeting] but always leave room for another song, or a different song, or maybe no song at all in that particular place. There is something about the freshness of God's presence that calls for being quite open to improvisation at the last minute. There are some weeks when the Lord seems to be leading us

in the meeting to a time of contrition, or a time of extreme joy, or a time of extended praise. There must be room to accommodate whatever God is doing at the moment, rather than just running roughshod through a printed order just because we don't want to adapt or improvise, or because it's easier. (*The Growth Factor*)

**Posture** can be important too, as Alexander Campbell believed (Remember last month's editorial?) At Portland Avenue we find that our special period of praise is enhanced if we stand rather than sit. It seems more respectful. Kneeling is fine too, if space allows it, sadly, too often it doesn't. There's nothing superstitious about concern for posture. Some folks cannot comfortably stand, we realize. But when you enter a Throne-room, you show respect.

When praising the Lord, as a general rule **singing TO Him** is better than singing **ABOUT Him**. It makes it more real and personal. In the magnificent hymn, "Crown Him with Many Crowns," it is splendid to sing, "Awake, my soul, and sing of *Him* who died for thee." But the climax comes in verse four "All hail, Redeemer, hail! for *Thou* hast died for me..." We prefer to reword the chorus, "We have come into this place and gathered in His name To worship Him." Instead we sing, "...gathered in Your name, to worship You." Tell the Lord directly that you love, honor, reverence, thank and adore Him. There's something thrilling about that, when it's true (and searching, when it's not).

Using an **overhead projector** to flash words of songs on a wall or screen has been helpful to many worshipers. Is it essential? Of course not, just as hymnals are nonessential. But there are some advantages. Bailey McBride explains, "It lets the church sing two or three additional songs in the time that would have been spent in looking up numbers in the hymnal. Furthermore, not having the book in front of them encourages most people to sing enthusiastically." It helps you learn new songs too, but don't violate copyright laws related to them. (The Christian Copyright Licensing Co. can take care of that for you: 6130 NE 78th Ct., Suite C11, Portland OR 97218-9972. And in passing, A Cappella Junction, PO Box 48464, Ft Worth, TX 76148, can provide contemporary a cappella songs, books, tapes, overheads, etc.)

### **Progress in Worship**

One of my goals when beginning to minister at Portland Avenue was to emphasize and enhance our worship. There were a number of enthusiastic worshipers there already, but no time set aside specifically for praise. We began to devote at least ten minutes entirely to worship-songs, leading up to the Lord's Supper. We also preached about adoration, and how songs of praise differ from gospel songs, invitation

songs, testimony songs and teaching songs, etc. All of them are valuable in their place, of course. But sometimes praise songs were minimized, and we sought to change that.

Later we began adding some other songs, not found in our excellent hymnal. Some were golden oldies; "Great is Thy Faithfulness"; "Hallelujah! What a Savior!"; "Lest I Forget Gethsemane." Others were new: "Because He Lives, I Can Face Tomorrow"; "For Thou, O Lord, Art High Above All the Earth." Jim Broaddus has been teaching us more recent ones, like "I Stand in Awe of You," and "Shine, Jesus, Shine." The overhead projector helps us learn these, though we don't use it every week, and of course we sing old hymns as well. (Jim has put many hymns from **Great Songs** on overheads too, which is helpful.)

None of these steps will make worshipers out of non-worshippers, obviously. It all must begin with a heart that is on fire for the Lord. But teaching about worship, plus time set aside specifically for praise, plus adding good new songs to the good old ones, plus using the overhead, has helped us grow in expressing our adoration to the Worthy One. Outsiders have noticed this when visiting. The Lord's greatness moves us, and hearts are often stirred. We still need to make progress, of course, but we thank our Father for all He has taught us thus far.

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## THOUGHT-PROVOKERS

From Here And There

### ABOUT WORSHIP

"Worship of a heart occupied not with its Needs or even its Blessings, but with GOD HIMSELF."

\* \* \* \*

Mine Eyes have Seen the Glory

"Christianity is essentially a religion of worship. Before anything else is asked of a Christian, a glory is revealed. It all begins, not in what man is or does, but in the astonishment and wonder and awe that comes from the unveiling of what *God* is and what *God* is willing to do."--John Claypool

\* \* \* \*

The First Christians at Worship: Acts 2

"Early Christian worship was both joyful and reverent. There can be no doubt of their *joy*. Luke writes of their 'gladness' or 'exultation'

in verse 46. They were overwhelmed with gratitude at what God had done and given them through Christ. So every worship service was a joyful celebration. For the 'fruit of the Spirit is joy.' It is right to be dignified in worship; it is unforgivable to be dull!

"But if joy is an authentic evidence of the work of the Spirit, so is 'fear' or *reverence*: 'Fear came upon every person' (verse 43). that is, 'Everyone was filled with awe' (GNB). God was in their midst, and they knew it. So their joy, though great, was never irreverent. They bowed down before the living God in deep humility and wonder."--John Stott

\* \* \* \*

"If worship is boring to you, you are not ready for heaven."--A. W. Tozer

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### **Worship Impacts the Worshipper**

"To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open up the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God."--William Temple

\* \* \* \*

### **Expect Little, Offer Little--Receive Little!**

"There is awesome power for living found in proper worship, and yet so many people somewhere along the line have been conditioned to offer little in worship and expect little from worship. Consistently negative sermons, draggy singing and petty church quarrels will prepare no one for the week ahead. However, even if the service is upbeat, worship will be of little or no value to the one who has been conditioned to be nothing but a spectator.

"Sunday is the first day of the week and it should be a rejuvenation of our souls that we might better cope with life in the week ahead. but it seems that psychologically Sunday has become the last day of the week and we come tired and worn, with perhaps little to offer God, and expecting little from Him. How sad"--C. Dennis Kaufman

\* \* \* \*

### **Hushed Before the Almighty One**

"We leave our places of worship, and no deep inexpressible wonder sits upon our faces...When we get out into the streets, our faces are one with the faces of those who have left the theaters and music

halls. There is nothing about us to suggest that we have been looking at anything stupendous and overwhelming.

"Far back in my boyhood I remember an old saint telling me that after some services he liked to make his way home alone, by quiet by-paths, so that the hush of the Almighty might remain on his awed and prostrate soul. That is the element we are losing."--J. H. Jowett

\* \* \* \*

### Active Adoration, Not Passive Spectating

"Some time ago I discovered that I needed to *take the initiative* in church. For me, as with most Americans, I'm afraid, church had become merely a 'spectator sport.' I came, I watched, I listened, I critique.

"But I began to question my own attitude. Could it be, I asked myself, that my problem with worship is not what *they're* doing [the song leader, the prayers, the Lord's Supper leader, the preacher], but what *I'm* doing? So I made an important decision. I decided to take the initiative myself to assure that, whatever happened up front, or around me, *I would meet God*. And He and I together would see to it that the experience was an enriching one."--Chuck Kraft

\* \* \* \*

### Worship--the 3rd Kind of Praise

"There are three kinds of praise representing really three stages in the praise life. First, there is praise for Blessings Received. This is *thanksgiving*. Only one leper out of ten who were healed returned to give thanks. And do we return to give thanks for one blessing in ten?

"The second kind of praise is Praise for Blessings Expected. This is *faith*. Often the blessings never come until we believe God sufficiently to praise Him in advance. We never praise in vain, for our praises soon become objectified in real, tangible blessings

A third kind of praise is Praise to God Himself. This is *worship*. It has no reference to blessings, either received or expected. It rises above our needs and our experiences and is taken up entirely with the character of the glorious Lord. There are many who know Thanksgiving who do not know the praise of Faith. And of all those who know the praise of Faith there are but few who know extended moments of true Worship." (source unknown)

# HE'S WONDERFUL, ISN'T HE?

J.B. Phillips

Everybody, unless he happens to be very self-centered, worships something or somebody--it's part of human nature. For some poor lonely old soul it may be only the cat or the canary, for a great many people it is a film star, a singer, an expert at some sport or other, or to a small minority some difficult but exquisite music on the program of a great pianist, which calls forth admiration, enthusiasm and love.

It is very much this sort of thing that Christians mean when they talk about "worshiping" God. They mean that they have found Someone who is so lovable and wonderful and magnificent that He has touched the springs of worship in them far more powerfully and deeply than any human being ever could and they simply want to worship him.

Naturally this seems nonsense to people who have little or no idea of what God is really like. If at the back of your mind you are thinking of God as a Spoil-sport or a Super Detective, the last thing in the world you'll want to do is to worship him. And if you have no more idea of God in your mind than you had when you were a small child, you haven't got anyone *big* enough to call forth your admiration, respect and enthusiasm. You will no more want to worship the old childhood's idea of God than you nowadays want to play with the toys that were such a thrill to you when you were a child. You can't possibly want to worship in the Christian sense until you've seen how vast and wise, and yet how unbelievably generous and lovable, God really is.

But when you've got a grown-up idea of God, when you've seen that all the mystery and beauty in the world, all the "niceness" and kindness and humor that you love and admire in people, really come from God, you may quite possibly see what a wonderful Person He is. If you do, you'll want to worship.

And you'll want to worship more still if you accept this basic truth of Christianity--that God actually "focused himself" in a human being, whom we know by the name of Jesus Christ. If you really see that God is not only vast and immensely complex wisdom; not only the blazing Source of all truth and beauty; but is also very fond of us, so fond that He was willing to accept the limitations of being a human being, you can't help worshiping. Quietly and simply and without any fuss he came down to where we are so that he might help us rise to where he is. It meant for him a good deal of trouble and opposition, and in the end he (who was God, remember) accepted execution as a criminal--to show how far his love for us would go, and to bridge the gulf between himself and us. Once it dawns upon you what sort of God that means we have to deal with, you can hardly avoid saying, "Well, if he's *like that* . . . , I'd like to tell him, I'd like to *worship* him."

--From *Is God at Home?*

# WORSHIPFUL CHURCH HELPS HURTING COUPLE

Philip Yancey's excellent book, *After the Wedding*, gives a clear example of the importance of worship. The inter-relatedness of worship, fellowship and service are shown in the experience of John and Claudia Claxton. This Christian couple had been happily married for exactly one-and-one-half years when disaster struck. Claudia was found to have Hodgkin's disease--cancer of the lymph glands. For the next two years fears, grief, "doubts and uncertainty traveled with us like a thundercloud." But Christ upheld them through His Body. John tells about it:

"Psychologically, we received the biggest boost when we found a supportive church. The church was unlike any other we'd been to. The service is not spectacular; it contains the usual prayers and sermon and Scripture readings. But the focus of the service is on WORSHIPPING God. So often churches work at entertaining or capturing interest or using congregational-oriented gimmicks. *This church is constructed to turn attention to God. Through the worship service we began to get our eyes off ourselves and our problems and learned to meet with God.*

"And the people were fantastic. When we joined, the elders lovingly asked us about all we'd been through and explored with us ways in which they could help us. All of us were crying. We were swept up in their Christian LOVE AND SUPPORT. A weight was lifted from us when we realized other Christians were willing to share our hurts, that our well-being was important to them. They prayed for us regularly and encouraged us to share our trials with them.

"As we became involved in the church, we found ourselves putting more of our energies into SERVING. We moved to a rundown area of Philadelphia, and began working with tutoring programs. I accepted a group within the congregation as mine to minister to."

## REVIVE US IN OUR WORSHIP TOGETHER

B. Shelburne

"What is wrong with me?" she asked. "I grew up in a family that went to church all our lives. I was taught what was right. But honestly, worship services bore me. I want to be somewhere else. I know I should enjoy worshiping God, but why can't I?"

How many of us are like her, dutifully assembling to pay our weekly fire insurance, criticizing the service on the way home instead of being lifted up by a time with God? Certainly, outsiders will not become excited about God and salvation if we are not.

### Focusing on God

Why are our worship services sometimes tired and dead? How can they become alive with God's presence? In a word, *by focusing on God rather than on ourselves and what pleases us*. When one encounters God and his work, real humility and worship are automatic. It happens.

Years ago my family and I traveled through the western states. After driving for hours one morning through bald Wyoming prairies, we topped a rise and suddenly saw the whole snow-clad Teton mountain range surrounded by evergreen forests. Without even thinking, we exclaimed to each other about the beauty before us. We have all done this about a sunset, a spring morning, a spider web jeweled with dew. Grandeur and beauty call forth adoration, and God has more splendor than any breathtaking scene in his creation.

A woman had struggled with long illness. Christian friends who loved her gathered in her hospital room, gave her flowers and gifts, and prayed with her. With tears of gratitude he said to them, "You have done so much for me." Seeing their kindness, her thanksgiving was spontaneous. God has been kinder to us than any person on earth has.

It is all right to look for ways to improve our worship experience. But if we look for God, worship will take care of itself. The more we see him in his word, in his creation and in his children, the more we will feel reverent fear, penitence, delight, adoration, trust, thanksgiving and love.

It happened that way in the Bible Stunned by the miracle of the fish, Peter fell down before Jesus and cried, "Go away from me, Lord, I am a sinful man!" When Isaiah saw the vision of God enthroned, high and exalted, he cried, "Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." When the Jerusalem crowd saw the goodness of God in sending their Savior to them, they waved palm branches and shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" Thomas, on seeing the nail-wounded hands of the risen Christ, exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!"

### Procedure or Worship?

Have we mistaken correct procedure for true worship? God's directions about worship are important But you can go through correct procedure without ever worshiping. When our minds are focused just on procedure, they are not on God. In fact they are on ourselves and our correctness. *God* is the object of worship.

**It is all right to look for ways to improve our worship experience. But if we look for God, worship will take care of itself. The more we see Him in His word, the more we'll feel reverent fear and delight.**

Acceptable worship must be in *spirit* as well as in truth (John 4:24). We have emphasized *truth and* made that apply to procedure. How often have we emphasized the spirit of worship? Jesus warns that we can go through life calling on his name and being religiously active without ever knowing him or being known by him (Matt. 7:21-23). "He who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17).

Maybe our worship services are dead because we are afraid to express the worship we feel. Afraid of becoming like the Pentecostals. Afraid of what people will think. Afraid to open up and show our feelings (men don't do that; dignified people don't do that). Afraid we will leave the way of the scriptures (though we often confuse traditional and cultural ideas with scripture)

We have traditionally been "head people" rather than "heart people" Head people want everything predictable and safely under control We feel insecure about free expression All my life I have heard preachers say that we are short on emotion and could use some measure of what the Pentecostals have Yet it scares us to death when someone becomes a little expressive

I am not arguing that we should go to Pentecostal extremes. Nor do I believe in laying on excitement just to attract people. I do not think that just because one is less expressive by personality, he feels less honor for God. God made both head people and heart people. But I wonder if, when Jesus the King rode into Jerusalem on the donkey, we would not have been among those insisting that he silence the praise of the crowd.

I wonder if our interpretation of "decently and in order" does not come more from medieval Catholic liturgy and Western rationalism than from scripture. The same unchanging God once commanded, "Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy" (Psalm 47:1). God was the God of order then, and those things were not disorderly to him.

A worship practice is not wrong just because someone else does it, or just because we have never done it. It is only wrong if it violates the mind and will of God. Reaction is a poor way to decide doctrine and practice. How many Biblical blessings have we lost by overreacting?

### **Learning to Worship Individually**

"Revive" means to bring life back. Our congregational worship would be alive if we all had learned to worship individually, if we practiced the disciplines of private study and prayer as Jesus did. Especially do our worship leaders need to know how awesome it is to come into God's presence and to lead God's people in worship.

The more time we spend with the Lord in real worship, the more we will look forward to the next time, for "times of refreshing to come from the Lord." As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Psalm 42:1,2). "Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere" (Psalm 84:10).

When Mary anointed Jesus' feet with expensive ointment, everyone there knew how she valued Jesus. When we adore and honor God in heartfelt worship, people will want to worship with us. They will know we have a God worth getting excited about.

*[B. Shelburne, an elder and preacher in the Main Street congregation, South Houston, Texas, and former missionary in Malawi, Africa, is president of South Houston Bible Institute.]*

**--Gospel Tidings**

# Various Views On CHRISTIAN SONGS AND SINGING

Humbly (as sinners), yet boldly (as forgiven sinners), we press into God's presence articulating our joy in songs of praise. W. M. Clow was right to draw our attention to singing as a unique feature of Christian worship, and to the reason for it:

There is no forgiveness except through the cross of Christ. The religions of paganism scarcely knew the word. The great faiths of the Buddhist and the [Muslim] give no place to reconciliation. The clearest proof of this is the simplest. It lies in the hymns of Christian worship. A Buddhist temple never resounds with a cry of praise. [Muslim] worshippers never sing. Their prayers are, at the highest, prayers of submission and of request. They seldom reach the gladder note of thanksgiving. They are never jubilant with the songs of the forgiven.

By contrast, whenever Christian people come together it is impossible to stop them singing. The Christian community is a community of celebration " --John Stott in *The Cross of Christ*

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## Do we get More from Songs we Don't Know so Well?

"Why must a hymn be 'sung well'? Is it possible that a congregation will pay more attention to a hymn's words when it is struggling to learn them, than they do after having new hymns and praise songs can help to keep our faith and experience in Christ fresh and alive."

--Donald Hustad

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## "Why do they keep Changing Things?"

"Of innovations in congregational music a prominent churchman wrote: 'It's too new, worldly and even blasphemous. The new Christian music is not as pleasant as the more established style. Because there are so many songs, you can't learn them all. This new music creates disturbances, making people act indecently and disorderly. The preceding generation got along without it some of these new music upstarts are lewd and loose'

"The clergyman, Thomas Symmes, was a New England Puritan pastor anxious to promote musical literacy in his congregation through the new practice of singing from [hymnals that included musical notes as well as the words]. He wrote this parody of the objections he encountered in 1723! Some, if not all, of these objections can be heard even today." --Lyell Heise

## Celebration Worship

So-called "celebration worship differs from more traditional church services in that it includes more congregational praise and participation. The elements of worship vary from church to church. Some are very expressive and contemporary. Others lean to responsive readings and prayers. When we recognize that celebration has more to do with remembering, praising, and extolling than with frivolity or confusion, we place it in its correct perspective." --Eoin Giller

"In the past some pastors used 'celebration' in reference to worship, but now, unfortunately, the expression is rapidly becoming a loaded term--so loaded that some people are alarmed by its very use and conjure up all kinds of bogeymen when they hear it. But the concept of joyful celebration is found throughout the Bible (Ex. 10:9; Matt. 26:18; Luke 15:24; Rev. 4:5, 11:10). Fairness and objectivity demand that we avoid uninformed accusations about the term and about those who use it." --C. Raymond Holmes

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### Caution: Don't Overdo *Praise-choruses*

"The body of Christ has inherited hymns from many different nationalities, stretching back through many centuries. . . . As we sing hymns, we express the same praise of God as those gone before us ('How Great Thou Art'); we see God's comforting presence in the trials and sufferings they experienced ('It is Well with My Soul'); . . . and we continue to admonish each other with hymns like 'Stand Up for Jesus.'

"But not all hymns are old! Hymns continue to be written, and some will pass the test of time and become part of our body of hymnody." [see May '91 W&W, "Psalms and Hymns"]

"Choruses are a newer development, and originally were geared for children, young people, or used in evangelistic meetings. They fill the need for something short, easily understood, and quickly learned. They tend to make the service informal, lighter, along with a greater appeal to the emotions.

"Choruses are limited in how much they can say on a subject, and repeating them doesn't add any new meaning. I.e., singing one hymn gets you into much more depth of teaching, feeling, or expression on one subject than repeating a chorus several times.

"Limiting singing to choruses greatly diminishes the subject matter of our singing . . . There are hymns or worship, doctrine, personal testimony, prayer, seasonal songs, and hymns in which we encourage each other. There are hymns to fit most every occasion or mood, or to reinforce the teaching of a message." --Lillian Leyenaar

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### Caution: Don't Overdo *Hymns*

"The Psalmist tells us to praise the Lord with all our being (Psa 103:1), but for generations, almost everything done in church has been a "mind trip" . . . The sermons feed our minds. The hymns feed our minds. The Bible studies feed our minds--and that's all right--except it's out of balance. There's more to human beings than just minds . . . We need to catch up in the emotional area. To be balanced in worship, we need to exercise both mind and heart. Hymns feed our minds--praise songs feed our hearts. To worship with only one or the other is to be out of balance.

"I love praise music because it helps me worship with that other part of me. It helps me feel and express my love to my Lover. The overload on content with too little repetition that characterized many hymns hinders that." --Chuck Kraft

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## OLD VERSUS NEW: THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Mary Badami

Controversy is growing in some churches stemming from the addition of new material to our repertoire of congregational songs. The most attention is being directed at "old" versus "new" songs. While this is certainly an issue to contemplate, the amount of energy being directed toward that discussion is sadly distracting us from some greater issues.

On the surface, "old" versus "new" seems to be the only issue. However, by examining it a little closer, I think we can see there is more involved than just "songs."

Those in favor of the "new" contend that our worship in the past has been stale, meaningless, and many times scripturally inaccurate. We had song services instead of worship services. Some go so far as to say that the "old" way wasn't *real* worship. Besides, most of the

"new" songs are actually Scriptures set to music. Who can argue with singing the Scriptures?

Those in favor of the "old" contend that the new songs are unfamiliar, somewhat flippant in attitude if not theology, and very close to being irreverent at times. The "old" songs have special meaning attached to them because they mark spiritual milestones in the lives of those who cherish the old hymns. Who wouldn't hold in high regard the song that was sung while one's child walked the aisle to accept Christ? Or the song Mother used to sing to us when we were sick or hurting?

These are all viable issues, but the result of pursuing the controversy is disunity. "Old" and "new" come to be synonymous with "we" and "they." Brothers and sisters, let us *all* heed Paul's words in Ephesians 4:2,3--"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in *love*. Make every effort to keep the *unity* of the Spirit through the bond of *peace*" (*New International Version*).

How can we accomplish this? By taking our eyes off of "we" and "they" and fixing them on the Lord. The Lord gave us a rich heritage of hymnody which He inspired just as surely as He is inspiring song writers today. We cannot ignore what the Lord is up to today. He is raising up a praise revival akin to the praise revivals of the Old Testament which cuts across all denominations, cultures and geographical lines.

The heart of the worship issue is the heart of the worshiper. Worship is for God, not my personal satisfaction. God is seeking true worshipers (John 4:23). God inhabits the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3). God is worthy of our praise (Revelation 5:12).

The Word gives an abundance of Scriptures that address why and how to praise God. Not one of them tells me that my own personal interests are to be advanced in that area. Worship is for *God*. Worship honors *God*. Worship pleases *God*.

So, what am I trying to say? Let us focus on the Lord in worship above all else. Let us treat each other with respect and celebrate our differences in the Lord. Let us have a heart that is prepared to worship the Lord with whatever is available at the time, be it rich heritage of inspired hymns or the Spirit filled Scripture songs of today.

I love you and you love me. Though we are different (as God intended), yet we are one in His Spirit (as God intended).

--Reprinted by author's permission from **Christian Standard**

# Sing With Heart and Mind

Alex V Wilson

In the 1950's some Communist young people in England publicly confronted a pastor. He vigorously debated with them for a while, but then had to leave. "Let's meet again and continue this discussion," he suggested. "In fact, why don't you attend the meeting of our church's college age youth group tomorrow night?"

The next night he was pleased to see that the Marxists showed up. But he was disturbed when his young people began the meeting by singing "If you're a Christian and you know it clap your hands" (clap, clap, clap). The second verse was, "If you're a Christian and you know it, snap your hands" (snap, snap, snap; clap, clap, clap). As the group kept singing similar songs the Communists left, never to return.

The pastor's heart sank. Here were young people totally dedicated to a cause. They were out to change the world, at great cost to themselves. They had come to this meeting to interact seriously with Christians, to compare goals and messages, problems and solutions. But they must have decided that they would only be wasting their time discussing with this bunch of students singing silly childish songs: stamp, stamp, stamp, snap, snap, snap, clap, clap, clap.

What impression does *your* singing make on visitors to your church services or youth meetings? If outsiders unexpectedly drop in, does your singing have a helpful or harmful effect on them? More than that, how does your church's singing impress the Lord?

## Basic Principles

Let's think about some basic Biblical principles about worship in general, and singing in particular. Then we'll look at some examples of songs, and see how the principles apply to them.

1. God is great; He is the holy Judge; His Name is terror-inspiring; His worship should be awe-full.

Are those statements too shocking, too extreme? Of course God is also loving, tender, patient, and forgiving. Not for a moment should we forget that. But not for a moment should we forget those earlier statements either, for they are scriptural: The Lord's name is "great and terrible." He looks with favor on the man who "trembles" at His word. We are advised. "Let us offer to God *acceptable worship, with reverence and awe*; for our God is a consuming fire" (Psa. 99:3. Isa. 66:2; Heb. 12:28-29)

2. Singing is a valuable means of worship and of spiritual growth. "Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise." "Make melody to the Lord with all your heart." "Let Christ's words enrich your lives and make you wise; teach them to each other and sing them out in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." "I will sing with both spirit and mind." "Let all things be done for edification--for the strengthening of the church." (James 5:13; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:15,26).

It is clear from these Scriptures that if we sing thoughtlessly we neglect a precious means of grace. Shallow, frivolous music stunts our spiritual growth, and robs our Lord of worship He richly deserves.

### **Good Trends and Bad Examples**

Some encouraging trends have developed in Christian music in recent years. A great burst of creativity among both musicians and lyricists has produced a flood of new songs of various types. Many Bible passages have been set to music, which is a wonderful aid to memorizing and reflecting upon God's Word.

But there is still much need to improve our use of music in Christian circles. Notice the following examples.

1. For decades a widely-used song with children has been "Deep and wide, Deep and wide. There's a fountain flowing deep and wide." Probably you have heard that chorus dozens, if not hundreds, of times. But have you ever heard anyone explain to the children its meaning?

What is the fountain? Is it God's deep love? Or His overflowing gifts to us? Or the "fountain" of Christ's blood shed for us? Or something else?

Nobody really knows because the song never tells us. So how are we strengthened by singing about something which we can't even identify? Especially if we go on to sing the second verse the way it is sometimes done: "Hmm and wide, Hmm and wide. There's a fountain . . ." And then the third verse is even "cuter": "Hmm and hmm, Hmm and hmm, there's a fountain," etc.

**This is entertaining, but hardly edifying.**

2. Years ago in Manila, I knew a Chinese young man who was searching desperately for meaning in life. I took him to a Christian drama that dealt with divine judgment and eternal destiny, with people poised on the brink of glory or damnation.

But before the play began, someone led the audience in some choruses. I'll never forget one of them: "Oh you can't get to heaven on

roller skates, 'Cause you'll slide right past those pearly gates." After that my friend would never discuss spiritual matters with me again

3. Recently some newly converted young people were heard singing these words, which older Christians had taught them: "I wish I had a little red box, To put my Jesus in. And take Him out and *smak-smak-smak* (kissing noises) and put Him back again." The next verse was equally horrible. "I wish I had a little black box, To put the Devil in, And take him out and *pok-pok-pok* (accompanied by karate gestures), And put him back again "

### Common Faults

The preceding examples show several weaknesses

(1) Some songs treat serious topics--such as heaven and hell--in a light, joking manner, or even treat the holy God Himself with IRREVERENCE. Singing about going to heaven on roller skates is disrespectful--for heaven is the royal residence of the Lord Most High. Singing about taking Jesus out of your box and kiss-kiss-kiss Him borders on blasphemy, if you stop to think about it! (But too many folks do not think about the words they sing.) God's Word teaches us to have reverence for God, for He is the *real* "Reverend."

And it tells us to show respect for Satan too! "Even the chief angel Michael, in his quarrel with the Devil, did not dare condemn the Devil with insulting words, but said 'The Lord rebuke you!'" (Jude 9). Satan is not a proper subject for joking. If we sing or talk in a silly way about God, hell or Satan it gives people the impression we don't really believe in them very strongly

(2) If the first fault is irreverence, a second one is IRRELEVANCE. That is, some songs are not disrespectful but simply are not appropriate for the occasion. We don't sing wedding songs at a funeral--and we shouldn't sing nonsense songs when introducing a Bible class. At a party funny songs may be fine, but we ought to remember "for everything there is a season a time to weep, and a time to laugh" (Eccles 3)

So please don't misunderstand the point of this article. We are not against fun songs during fun occasions. There are times to sing "There was an old woman who swallowed a fly," or "I'm my own grandpaw" But there are also times to be serious. Maturity is to know the difference, and act appropriately

(3) A third fault is WASTING TIME WITH MEANINGLESS SONGS THAT DON'T EDIFY. Why fool around singing, "Deep and wide Hmm and wide Hmm and hmm." when there are a number

of songs for children which have a solid message to impart? For example, note these song-words by Mary LeBar: "What can I give Jesus? I want to do my part. What can I give Jesus: The love of all my heart. My hands and feet and money too; My praises and my songs; I give them all to Jesus, For all to Him belongs."

### Some Clarifications

In appealing for meaningful songs that build up faith and love, we want to make two clarifications. First, we are not saying that spiritual songs should all be slow and solemn. Not at all. For example, consider the song, "Get all excited and tell everybody that Jesus Christ is King." This has challenging lyrics, and demands rousing singing. To drag it along or sing it listlessly contradicts all that it means. Other examples could also be given.

The other clarification is this: We are not saying that all our songs should be profound in their content. No, the depth of the singing may vary according to the type of meeting being held, the theme being stressed, and other factors. And in the same meeting variety is helpful, so deeper songs can be interspersed with lighter ones. Simple songs like "O How He Loves You and Me," or "Sing Hallelujah to the Lord" combine beautiful music with meaningful words, and can be moving and heart-warming.

But let's not sing *only* the simple ones! We cheat ourselves of many spiritual vitamins if we neglect the great hymnwriters and profound messages of past and present. Here are some examples:

O how I fear Thee, living God,  
With deepest, tenderest fears,  
And worship Thee with contrite hopes  
And penitential tears

Yet I may love Thee too, O God,  
Almighty as Thou art,  
For Thou hast stooped to ask from me  
The love of my poor heart

--Frederick Faber

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew  
He moved my heart to seek Him, seeking me.  
It was not I that found, O Savior true.  
No, I was found by Thee

--Anonymous

Let nothing now my heart divide,  
Since with Thee I am crucified,  
And live to God in Thee.  
Dead to the world and all its toys,  
Its idle pomp and fading joys;  
Jesus, my glory be.

Now with a quenchless thirst inspire  
A longing, infinite desire,  
And fill my craving heart.  
Less than Thyself, oh, do not give;  
In might Thyself within me live;  
Come, all Thou hast and art.

--Charles Wesley

Dear Name! The Rock on which I build,  
My Shield and Hiding-place,  
My never failing Treasury, filled  
With boundless stores of grace.

Jesus! My Shepherd, Husband, Friend,  
My Prophet, Priest and King;  
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,  
Accept the praise I bring.

--John Newton

O Savior Christ, our woes dispel;  
for some are sick, and some are sad,  
And some have never loved Thee well,  
And some have lost the love they had.

And none, O Lord, have perfect rest,  
For none are wholly free from sin;  
And they who fain would serve Thee best  
Are conscious most of wrong within.

--Henry Twells

Well may the Accuser roar  
Of ills that I have done:  
I know them all, and thousands more:  
Jehovah knoweth none!

--Samuel Gandy (see Heb. 8:12)

"Tis my happiness below, Not to live without the cross;  
But the Saviour's power to know,  
Sanctifying every loss.

Trials must and will befall,  
But, with humble faith, to see  
Love inscribed upon them all-  
This is happiness to me.

Trials make the promise sweet,  
Trials give new life to prayer,  
Trials bring me to His feet,  
Lay me low, and keep me there.

--William Cowper

Hymns like these provide nourishment for spiritual growth. They stimulate our thinking, challenge us to full surrender, and encourage us to increasing faith and love. They enlarge our thoughts of God, and prompt us to true worship of Him, the Majesty on High.

Such hymns are worth not only singing but also meditating on--during daily devotions, for example, and before worship services begin. Thus you can profit from them even if you and your church don't know the music. But why not try to learn the music too, and sing these powerful songs together to honor our great God.

[--Reprinted by permission from *Evangelical Thrust* (Philippines), April 1982.]

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## GROWING FAITH

R. H. Boll

Martin Luther is credited with the paradoxical saying that "He who is a Christian is not a Christian." That is one of those "words of the wise and their dark sayings"--purposed dark, so as to arrest attention and provoke thought, and by this means fastening the lesson upon the mind. But now--just what did he mean? Well, very much the same that Paul meant when he said, "If any man thinketh he knoweth anything he knoweth not yet as he ought to know." (1 Cor. 8:2) No man is blinder or farther from the truth than he who imagines he knows about all that needs to be known.

Of course we can know, must know, some things. But the way of knowledge is, like the path of the righteous, "as the dawning of light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." So faith. It is never stationary or complete. It must continually feed on new truth,

and new aspects and applications of the old. It must go on growing in exercise, through trials and tests, in endurance and achievement (and there will be "growing pains"), and find by new and varying experience what is the length and breadth and height and depth, tasting and seeing, to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Like the manna it cannot be stored in vessels, but must be gathered fresh every day. It is utterly impossible to maintain spiritual life on cut-and-dried stuff. Truth can not be immured in creeds. Light can not be shut up in a box and preserved apart from its source. Yesterday's good can not avail for today. "The Lord filled up my cup twenty years ago, and it has been full ever since," said an enthusiastic speaker at an experience-meeting. On which a pessimistic brother remarked: "I bet it's got wobble-tails in it." Very likely.

### **Progressive Life**

So it is with all Christianity. If we seek merely to keep it, it stagnates. We have been saved, but we are being saved and are yet to be saved. We have put on Christ, but we must still put Him on. We received a righteousness from God by faith, yet we hunger and thirst after righteousness. We were sanctified once for all in Christ, but we must follow after sanctification, without which no man shall see the Lord. We have never arrived--we are in process and progress, forgetting the things that are behind and stretching forth to the things that are before.

### **The Christian's Infinite Possession**

But we are not merely seekers. In a supremely important sense we have all the truth, all light, everything. We have Christ. That settles the whole matter once for all. However much we may have to explore Him and follow on to know Him, yet having Him we have everything in possession from the first. "For in him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden." "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and in him ye are made full" (Col 2:4, 9, 10.) In Him we have every spiritual blessing (Eph 1:3.) We may go on forever appropriating them and possessing our possessions, but all is ours to begin with. He is made unto us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption---and all of these reckoned to us in perfection. There are those who go on "always learning, never able to come to a knowledge of the truth," for they have no basis. But the man in Christ is on the Rock. He has all the truth. That good confession, that Jesus is Lord and that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, sums up the whole. Who has this never needs aught else for all eternity. He that drinketh of this water shall never thirst, it becomes in him a well of water, springing up unto eternal life. Nothing can ever supersede it, nothing can add to it. The treasurehouse contains infinite wealth, beyond all we are able to ask or think, but it is all ours once for all.

# **QUESTIONS ASKED OF US**

Carl Kitzmiller

*How can I convince my loved one of the danger of being unsaved and cause him to become a Christian?*

If you are asking for a method absolutely certain of the results you seek there is none. We can inform people of the great need they have of salvation and we can be faithful in declaring God's word to them, but we cannot make their decisions for them. God has left each individual free to choose, and there is a sense in which God Himself cannot be wholly successful in reaching people. Of course we speak of a limitation He has imposed on Himself and not one which is an absolute lack of power.

There are those who are unsaved because of a lack of knowledge, and there are those who are unsaved because of a lack of willingness to accept the limitations salvation imposes. We can do what we can to overcome these conditions, but that does not guarantee the desired results. If there were a certain method, surely God would have revealed it and men would have used it. Hell would be deprived of all of its victims if there were some sure way of converting everyone. Jesus' declaration that it is the relative few who are saved (Matt. 7:14) lets us know that there is a high rate of failure from the methods He had given. Christians must be diligent in seeking to bring salvation to people, but it is necessary to our sanity that we be realistic and know that our efforts have limitations.

There are those who are unsaved because they have never heard the gospel. They may live in a land where false religions dominate and the gospel has never gone, and they simply have never heard the good news of salvation in Christ. It is not a certainty that all would embrace salvation if they did hear, but faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17) and without this there can be no turning. Of course in our land we dismiss this and say that there is no one who has not heard. We can point to all the churches, Bibles, radio broadcasts, printed matter, etc. Indeed there is a lot of religion with a Christian flavor. Even in the midst of all this it is possible for a person to be very isolated as to any effective hearing, however.

Prejudice may cause many people not to hear the gospel in any effective way. Their upbringing and education may have closed their ears to the gospel. It may be regarded as unworthy of their attention. Past injustices done in the name of Christianity may be a factor. They could hear in time that there are opportunities--likely many opportunities even--in their area, but their minds are closed. A lack of love for

the truth may lead to self-deception, and some of them may not love the truth. The closed mind may be a problem in reaching some of our loved ones. It takes a great deal of patience to reach such a person, and there is no guarantee that we will even when we have been wise, prayerful, and faithful. The word of God is powerful, but when it falls on hard hearts it finds little or no reception. These may need to see Christianity lived out in the lives of others (cf. 1 Pet. 3:1-2) before they are willing to listen to the word. Whatever creates the prejudice may make a barrier hard to break through. Sometimes, however, this barrier exists, and we have to succeed in removing it in some way before there can be much hope of conversion. This calls for faithfulness and genuineness on our part, for wisdom (Jas. 1:5), for love and patience, and a measure of intelligence in getting to the roots of the prejudice. Sometimes God brings events into such lives that cause them to reconsider.

Some do not hear the gospel because they are "too busy" to do so. This also is a form of prejudice in that other things are judged to be more important than God or salvation. These may be consumed by a zeal for things or activities otherwise good in themselves--earning a living, caring for the family, getting on with life, etc. Some are so taken up with having a good time, pursuing some earthly goal, or such like, that they are just too occupied right now to bother. It is hard to reach these with our church building oriented programs because Sunday may become one of their busiest days. They may not look on Christianity as evil or as a delusion, and they may approve of Christianity for those who have time for it, but they seldom even stop to consider how it is with them spiritually.

Some do not hear the gospel because they have heard enough to know that it requires a commitment they are unwilling to give. There may be an unwillingness to repent of certain sins, to live the crucified life, etc. These are not unbelievers in the sense of denying God's existence or even some basic truths of the Bible. But they are unbelievers in the sense that they deny the message of God in practice. Many of these hope that somehow they are going to get by--after all, "there are others who are much worse than I." They may declare belief in God too good to condemn people to hell, or they may delude themselves with other kinds of false thinking. If those we seek to reach are in this category, we must somehow impress on them the truth that Jesus is Lord, and that no man can serve two masters. We must distinguish between religion and real Christianity.

Some years ago I saw a book entitled, "Soul Winning Made Easy." That title is very misleading. Soul winning, generally speaking, is not easy. This is not to deny the value of it or the responsibility of the Christian to do it. This is not meant to discourage us but to keep us

faithful. We must ever "preach the word," whatever the response of our hearers. Without that word, in the final sense, there is no conversion to Christ. We must confront the sinner with what that word says about sin and about salvation in Christ. That word is powerful. While we must do what we can to remove the barriers which keep people from effective hearing, we cannot discount the power of God's word. We must keep at the task given us. Moreover, we need to keep in mind that conversion is God's work. This is not to deny that God uses human vessels or that we have the responsibility to seek the lost. It is just the reminder that we can "plant" and "water" but it is God who gives the increase.

We must not stoop to tricks and gimmicks to get responses from people which pass for conversion. Only God's work in the human heart can save. There is the human responsibility of living Christianity and declaring His word, but we cannot make Christians by some human wisdom apart from Him. God still allows people to choose and we cannot choose for them.

Our work is the work of persuasion (cf. 2 Cor.5:11; Acts 26:28). Beyond that we have no power to go. Misguided men have tried to convert people by armed might, by government edict, and other such like methods. We may try to get people to make a decision "for my sake," so that our persuading seeks a response from unworthy motives. Such so-called conversions are a failure because there is no conversion to Christ.

We can pray. We can walk worthily of the gospel ourselves and we can encourage others to do so. We can preach and teach the word, using all the wisdom God will give us. We can persuade. But we must look to the Holy Spirit to convict of sin and to bring about the new birth. We not only can do these things; we have an obligation to do so.

# 4 Problems Ministers Face

**1. Isolation.** The pastor's lifestyle is different. He doesn't have weekends off. He lives under high expectations. "Unless you've been a pastor, you can't understand the tension." "Many people work hard, but the pastor lives his life for other people." says H. B. London, Focus on the Family's minister to ministers.

**2. Loneliness.** A pastor seldom has anyone to talk to about the pressures of the job, the demands on the family and the sacrifices he has to make. His loneliness also comes from the fear that people would be disillusioned if they knew about his stress.

Recently, an elderly parishioner phoned, concerned that his pastor was burning out. London, remembering the group of men he met with every Tuesday morning for 20 years, told him, "Unless your pastor finds a close friend to pray with, he won't escape the cycle that results in burn-out."

**3. Feeling of Inadequacy.** Most pastors say seminary couldn't prepare them for a world that moves this quickly. Also, their wives feel the pressure to find their place. Can they be all things to all people--congregation, husband, children? Forty percent of London's mail comes from angry, frightened, hurting pastor's wives. And most of them are worried about their husbands' health and emotions.

Another concern is the expectation for the pastor's children to behave well and be involved in all the youth activities.

**4. Insecurity.** London quickly lists four insecure areas for pastors: finances, lack of medical insurance, poor retirement benefits and the fear of forced termination. This does not take into account power structures within the congregation or an attitude resistant to change from some of the church family.

Many pastors are living below the poverty level. One pastor's wife wrote him that she and her husband cried when they received an unexpected gift of \$200. They had never had \$200 discretionary income in their entire married life.

**--Focus on the Family magazine; condensed**

# **NEW CHRISTIANS OVERCOME TREMENDOUS OBSTACLES!**

In one of our cooperative ministries in the Middle East, a gospel radio broadcast receives over 400 letters every day from people requesting Scriptures. The radio pastor received one letter with an unusual request. "Please, I have read the Bible you sent and have committed my life to Christ. I'm not even allowed to visit your country. Could you please come here to baptize me?"

Because it was impossible for the radio pastor to fly to that distant country, he wrote the new convert suggesting he find another Christian near him to perform the baptism. Six months later, the pastor received the following message: "I've looked everywhere and found no Christians. But I gave the Bible to my brother and he read it and committed his life to Christ. And last Sunday we went for a drive to this little river and I baptized him and he baptized me."

That is just one more example of the power of God's Word at work in seemingly impossible situations.

--International Bible Society

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## **LURA JONES BORNWASSER 1899 - 1993**

Sister Bornwasser was born in Harlan, Kentucky to Isom and Margaret Jones, the first of their eleven children. Only two sisters and six nieces and nephews survive her. Although her earthly survivors are few, she is survived by a large family of students whose lives she influenced.

Miss Lura's teaching career began in a one-room school at a mining camp in the mountains of eastern Kentucky and, in 1924, when Portland Christian School was in the second week of its first school year, she began teaching at P. C. S. and remained there for 39 years.

In 1944 she was married to Philip Bornwasser, faithful, tried and true minister of the gospel and teacher of the word. From the time I first knew Bro. Phil he was Brother R. H. Boll's "Timothy." This marriage proved to be "made in heaven" and certainly blessed in heaven.

For a number of years, in addition to her teaching school and his preaching she and Bro. Philip maintained a dormitory for out-of-state students attending Portland Christian School and Kentucky Bible College, which was at that time on the Portland campus. Although she

never had children of her own, she housed, fed, and nurtured these "spiritual children," many of whom still speak fondly of those days.

During the summer of 1963, Bro. Philip went to be with the Lord and Miss Lura retired from P. C. S., returning to Harlan to care for her aging parents. Soon she was asked to teach a Bible class at Ross Point, Kentucky, Church of Christ. She continued to teach until she was disabled by the cancer which took her life.

I first met Miss Lura in September 1925 in the third grade. I admired her from the first day on; to me she was "queen" of P. C. S. To have her call your name made you feel good about yourself. She was not an easy teacher. She was serious about everything that went on in the classroom, and she meant for us to learn as much as we were able. She decided our several abilities, and not we ourselves! But she was very patient.

A frequent reaction to a poor grade was "I don't care." Miss Lura's response to that reaction was, "Oh, but we must care; those who don't care don't count." At first, I was sorry I *said* it; later, I was sorry that I *felt* that way; next, I determined to care for Christ's sake. But it was not just the words spoken, it was the life I saw daily demonstrating what a caring person is that wrought the change.

I hesitate to put this in print, but it shows Miss Lura's wisdom and "love and faith and purity"--her character. One day she "caught" me with a piece of home-drawn pornography. When she told me to give it to her, I WISHED for a hole to hide in. I've never felt smaller! She put it on her desk without a word. At the close of the school day, I was kept after. I had suffered through the day, and now the judgment! She spread the paper out before us both and asked, "Is this what you want your mind filled with?" Right then she challenged a little lad, through her pure life, to strive for and earnestly seek a pure life. Though it happened many years ago, I can never forget that experience.

Naturally, as a child, I didn't understand about the economic sacrifice P.C.S. teachers were making. I know that she frequently made available paper and pencils, sometimes even lunch, to pupils she had noticed were without such. (I'm talking real depression era.)

Lura Jones Bornwasser, "an example in word, manner of life, love, faith, and purity." How long did she teach? All her life. How well? Equal to the best!

June 12, 1993, the Father called His beloved (and our beloved) home.

--Jack Blaes

# NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

## A Fine Missions Seminar

Hats off to Earl Mullins Sr., Dale Offutt and the elders at Sellersburg Church, for carrying out an excellent missions seminar, Aug. 6. This was the best missions-promoting activity in these parts since Belmont Church in Winchester put on 3 missions conferences during the 1980's.

Displays, slides, a video-presentation and photo-albums enhanced the speakers' presentations. Various on-going ministries as well as open doors waiting to be entered were described by different speakers.

The most exciting part was the testimonies of 4 young people now burdened for people of other lands due to being exposed firsthand to conditions there. Alicia Hill and LeeAnn Jones were stirred by their time in Asia with Victor Broadus. Amy Lasage's time in Mexico & Kent Bowers' in Japan also influenced them greatly, & they hope to return in the future, after preparation for ministry.

Brother Mullins emphasized that obviously it was *the Lord* who made the seminar a success, for many of the preparations were made on the run, due to Earl's recent trip to Russia. About 80 people attended. The one drawback was that only a handful were under 50 years old! Perhaps next year a similar kind of missions presentation could be made specifically to teens & 20s during the Louisville Fellowship Week. --AVW

## Next Month's W&W

The Sept. W&W will be mostly stories, fables & parables. It will be different in another way, too: excellent to hand to your unsaved friends. So pray for its preparation, & that it will be a good evangelistic tool.

## Pray For These Countries

Communist CHINA'S leader for the past 14 years, Deng Xiaoping, is believed to be dying from a combination of diseases. Pray about who will succeed him, and the policies they will take re: religious freedom. China is the world's most populous nation & its fastest growing economy for the past 2 years, experts say. Though Deng gave more economic freedoms to the people, his government still bitterly persecutes most Christians.

Also keep praying for RUSSIA, and the Russian Orthodox Church's attempts to get the government to restrict or even oust all foreign missionaries for the land.

A letter from Titus Awokuse of Nigeria, now a graduate student at Murray State U in southwest Ky., asks prayer for the *desperately needy* people in NIGERIA. Politically there is chaos due to corruption; there have been riots & killings. "Economically, inflation is skyrocketing incredibly on a daily basis. Please pray that the political tension would not escalate into religious riots between the Muslim north and the 'Christian' south."

### **Bad News Dept.**

\* The church in EL PASO where Woodrow Wilson has preached for many years suffered a hard blow. On June 22nd their building burned, leaving the 2nd floor in ashes and the 1st floor badly water damaged. There was no insurance. "We are seeking God's will re: the future location, etc. Please pray for the Lord's guidance in decisions & for favor with the authorities. We meet temporarily in our homes."

\* No Baptisms. Others face that problem too "Of the 38,433 Southern Baptist Convention churches, 7,771 did not baptize anyone in 1992"--that's more than 1 in 5 churches.

### **Good News From Winchester, Ky.**

From Jan.-July '93, fourteen people have been buried with Christ in baptism at Belmont Church. A good spirit of intercession is evidenced by weekly prayer meetings for revival, held at 6 a.m. And a love for worship is shown by a twice-monthly home meeting for singing, mainly praises to the Lord.

### **Requests From Out West, #1**

Anyone who has copies of **Christian Word and Work** (as this magazine was originally called), published in New Orleans from 1908-1915, please contact Dr. Michael Casey, Communications Division, Pepperdine Univ., Malibu, CA 90263. Professor Casey is trying to get copies of the periodical microfilmed for the school's records.

### **Requests From Out West, #2**

Brother Casey is writing a book on pacifism and the Churches of Christ. His research discovered, among other things, that R. H. Boll and E. L. Jorgenson, both former

editors of W&W were under government surveillance during WW-1. Boll was still a German citizen, and both men encouraged Christians to serve in the military only as non-combatants. In those days to publicize such a view was very costly.

Professor Casey asks anyone who was a conscientious objector, no matter when, to please contact him (see his address in preceding item). Your experiences may be valuable for his research.

### **Mackville Ky. Church of Christ**

We thank God for sending Bro. Rick Murphy and Bro. David Tapp to Mackville, and for the challenging messages they brought from God's Word for our encouragement. Thanks to those who led the singing and those who brought our "special songs". We also thank God that Sis. Carol Settles came forward on Sunday night to rededicate her life to Christ. We were blessed with several visitors from Mackville and from our sister congregations in Mercer County. It was truly a great week of fellowship and growth in the Lord.

### **Portland Ave. Church of Christ**

This year's Vacation Bible School was considered a success by many of the teachers and helpers. The attendance was up compared to VBS '92 with 18 more students daily in the nine classes. We went from an average of 87 students for last year's 10-day schedule to 105 students for this year's 8-day session. For the first time we had 8, not 10, nights (Mon.-Thurs. each week).

Some teachers experienced more pleasant classroom situations, although we did have some discipline problems. Our picnic to Iroquois Park on Saturday, June 26,

proved to be a pleasant experience to many as we enjoyed beautiful, but hot, weather and excellent grilled hamburgers and hotdogs.

Ultimately we can only measure the "success" of VBS in heaven. We may never know, in this life, the impact of our efforts. Please pray as we seek to feed these students to our Wednesday Night Bible Club where they can get a weekly diet of God's Word in addition to being around adult Christians for positive role models. Nevertheless our VBS will increase our visibility and witness as a fellowship of believers in the Portland community

### **Kentuckiana Ladies Overnite Retreat**

Theme. "A Divine Romance" (praise & worship). Speakers Shirley Taylor, Sherry Marsh, Jodell Seay, Nell Bruce (former missionary now heading a prayer ministry) Panalists: Mae Broaddus, Janell Lewis, Joyce Zimpelmann, Ruth Wilson

When Friday night Sept 24 thru Sat. afternoon Sept 25 Where Camp Kavanaugh, Crestwood, Ky This is not far from Louisville. It has pleasant facilities, better than last year's Cost only \$10 Please send pre-registration to Ruth Wilson, 231 S Galt Ave, Louisville KY 40206

### **Locust St. Church of Christ, Johnson City**

*They came looking for us*  
Because the church here attempts to teach the whole counsel of God on prophecy as well as other themes, some visitors from some Churches of Christ soon discover this and do not return. We had a couple of visitors last Sunday, however, who sought us out for this very reason. In their study of the Bible they had

come to the conclusion that the pre-millennial view was the correct one, and they wished to talk to some of us, ask questions, etc. Your minister and his son stayed at the church building with them until about 11:30 P.M. discussing these issues. We found them quite intelligent Bible students. They live in California, and they inform us that they know of several others who are also thinking along these lines. Pray for these, that the Lord may use them to open the eyes of many others

### **Southeast Church of Christ**

What a blessing it is when our leaders are used to preach God's Word as needed in other congregations. Jim Rowe and Joe Blansett have been used the past two Sundays. I am so thankful that 10-15 men have been willing to speak at Maple Manor Adult Home in recent years.

I want to encourage you to contact one of the "Elders on Call" when you need help or prayer. All of our elders really want to be of service to this congregation. Pray for our elders, deacons and teachers. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

*Wednesday Evening Class Update.*— In addition to our "Prayer & Praise" and "Bible Study" class studying the book of Acts, two new classes will be offered beginning July 7. For married couples, young or old, the "Marriage Enrichment" class being taught by Bill Colwick can bring new meaning to your marriage. Feeling tired, pressured, like a candle burning at both ends? Why not try the class, "Dealing with Stress" taught by Gene Heid. Make plans now to be a part of our Wednesday Evening program here at Southeast

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## COSTLY PRAISE

"By [Christ] let us offer the SACRIFICE OF PRAISE to God CONTINUALLY, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." Hebrews 13:15

There is a distinct difference between praising God and offering the "sacrifice of praise." For a child of God, in right relationship to the father, praise is usually something which flows easily. We have so much to praise God for, that whenever we think about Him, there should be a spontaneous flow of praise from our hearts. Our praise for all the blessings and benefits He has brought into our lives.

The "sacrifice of praise" is somewhat different. It does not usually flow easily and spontaneously. It is not the praise we offer because everything is going nicely and we are happy and blessed. The sacrifice of praise is something we offer to God when we do not feel like praising Him.

Everything seems to be going wrong. Our world seems to be falling apart. In these circumstances, we are praising God, not because of our circumstances but despite them. Our praise is not ascending because we feel great and want to give expression to our good feeling. In this situation, we are praising God by faith. We are praising Him in obedience. We are praising Him for who He is and not particularly for what He has done. This kind of praise does not come easily. It is not a cheap thing. It is costly. But it brings special delight to the heart of the Father, and He loves to receive the sacrifice of praise.

--Gerald Rowlands