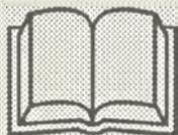


"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The *Word and Work*



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER, 1993

**THE WORD BECAME FLESH
AND DWELT AMONG US.
AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY**

- The Highest became very low. Max Lucado tells about it
- Walking to Egypt in the Philippines
- Jesus' 20th-century banquet for have-nots
- Do you see what I see?
- Heard any good songs about Caesar lately?

VOICES from the FIELDS

Robert Garrett

Ruwa, Zimbabwe

Reviewing This Year's Camp Weeks: A record-breaking 81 *young people*--those 18 years and over--gathered for their Easter camp: 44 boys, 37 girls. We had 4 days of rather intensive Bible study with some time off in the afternoon for some sports activities and games. This is the largest camp so far. Many of these campers had been coming regularly since 1985, so this was their 9th camp! It has been thrilling to watch them grow up in the Lord. They came from 15 congregations.

Senior Camp: included 5 full days of camp for the high school age group. We had 46 campers - 21 boys and 26 girls. They were well behaved and enthusiastic youngsters. Bible subject studied this year at both camps were: Christian Living, Creation, Prophetic Doctrine, How to Prepare and Teach/Preach Bible Lessons/Sermons. In the assembly each evening the boys were given opportunity to lead singing, lead in prayer and present short sermons. At the closing program Friday evening the campers presented four short dramatizations of Bible themes, followed by more than a hour of singing - congregational, groups, quartets, trios, duets, and solos. These children represented 14 congregations.

Rain: We had a week's rest between those two camps. The Lord timed the rain perfectly. We enjoyed beautiful weather during the camps and had 2 inches of rain the week between!

Junior Week: (ages 9-12) was held in May. 69 campers came for a full week -- 33 boys, 36 girls. We concluded with a **Beginners** one-day camp for grades 1 - 3. 82 little ones had a grand time.

Women's Camp, (August 11, 12) was attended by 140 women. All lessons were given by women. Joy said that most of the speakers did an excellent job giving good spiritual messages.

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THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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THEME:

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

Thoughts from a Visited Planet

Alex V. Wilson

As the year nears its end and we remember God's great Invasion of human history and human hearts, we extol again His breathtaking grace. Then may we enter 1994 faithfully carrying out our own part in that vast Divine Plan which the Most High conceived before creation, and forwarded so stunningly in Bethlehem one mystic night long ago.

"Ponder anew what the Almighty can do," wrote a hymnwriter. To help us do that, here are three brief but pregnant meditations. The first was written by former editor of W&W Gordon Linscott in 1971; but it is as true now as then, so we've updated the title.

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1993

How about a hymn to Caesar, or a song about Sophocles? They don't play many of them on the radio any more. I really can't remember when I've heard someone sing the praises of Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, or even Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Then how is it that today, for hours on end, all I hear is songs celebrating the coming of Jesus into the world? Why is no other man so honored? Why is His birth so acclaimed here at a distance of 2000 years? Incredible! Looking for natural explanations, I find none. Surely this Man was more than man, that He should be exalted as no man has been. During His earth-stay, the police sent to arrest Him returned empty-handed, exclaiming "Never man so spake!" His bitterest enemies could find no fault in Him, and the officer in charge of His crucifixion cried out, "Surely this was the Son God!"

Even though He was accorded such recognition from unbelievers of that time, it is still amazing that 20 centuries later, in this "post-Christian era," pagan America should still acknowledge His influence. Yes, surely He is the Son of God!

INCARNATION'S AWFUL PRICE

John Sartelle

I would not choose the slums of Calcutta, India, for my vacation.

There were extraordinary people who worked among the deformity and decay of leper colonies 150 yrs ago--that is not where most of us would want to live out our lives.

Multiply the distance between where we are now and those places by 1,000 and we still don't come near the awful distance traveled by the Son of God in the Incarnation

JESUS WAS NO BORE

Dorothy L. Sayers

The dogma we find so dull--this terrifying drama of which God is the victim and hero--if this is dull, then what, in Heaven's name, is worthy to be called exciting? The people who hanged Christ never, to do them justice, accused him of being a bore--on the contrary, they thought him too dynamic to be safe. It has been left for later generations to muffle up that shattering personality and surround him with a atmosphere of tedium. We have very efficiently pared the claws of the Lion of Judah, certified him "meek and mild," and recommended him as a fitting household pet for pale curates and pious old ladies. Those who knew him, however . . . objected to him as a dangerous firebrand.

THE ARRIVAL

Max Lucado

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

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

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

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

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

God had entered the world as a baby.

Yet, were someone to chance upon the sheep stable on the outskirts of Bethlehem that morning, what a peculiar scene they would behold.

The stable stinks like all stables do. The stench of urine, dung and sheep reeks pungently in the air. The ground is hard, the hay scarce. Cobwebs cling to the ceiling and a mouse scurries across the dirt floor.

A more lowly place of birth could not exist.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* * *

"JUST A MOMENT . . ."

Max Lucado

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

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

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

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

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

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

God had come near.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Listen to him.

"Love your neighbor" was spoken by a man whose neighbors tried to kill him.

The challenge to leave family for the gospel was issued by one who kissed his mother goodbye in the doorway.

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

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

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

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

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

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

BAH, HUMBUG! . . . *MERRY CHRISTMAS!*

Thomas G. Bradshaw

It was a starry, starry night. He could see them all--the Big Dipper, the Little Dipper, Orion, Caseopia, Pleaides He had never seen anything quite like it. It was beautiful! The more he looked, the more he saw. How endless is the sky!

He had plenty of time for stargazing. The sheep were all gathered around, sleeping peacefully. So were his two buddies, Jacob and Ebenezer. But it was Simon's turn to keep watch, so there he sat in the wee hours of the morning on a hill outside of Bethlehem, watching and watching--the stars more than the sheep.

Some nights he had a hard time staying awake through his watch, but not tonight. He was wound up. There seemed to be something magic in the air--a mysterious excitement. He couldn't put his finger on it, but something was happening.

And then he saw it, over in the eastern sky, a star that he hadn't noticed before, but how could he have missed it? It was so incredibly brilliant! And as he watched it, it seemed to grow brighter and brighter. It was amazing!

"Jacob! Ebenezer! Wake up! You've got to see this! Wake up! Wake up!"

"What's going on?" Jacob said.

"Look at that star! Or whatever it is! That incredible light!"

"I don't know what that is, but it's fascinating! It's huge! And so brilliant!"

"Ebenezer! Ebenezer! Wake up! Look at this thing! You won't believe your eyes!"

"Ah, shut up! Leave me alone! Can't you see I'm trying to sleep! It's not my turn to watch yet!"

"But look at this thing. It's an amazing star! An incredible light! I've never seen anything like it before!"

"That's because you're dreaming! Go back to bed! Stars, stars! I've seen stars! Bah! Humbug! Just shut up and leave me alone. I've got to get some sleep. Wake me up when it's my turn to watch, would you?"

"OK! But you're missing quite a show!"

"Yeah, sure!" Ebenezer grumbled.

Ebenezer pulled the cover over his head and went back to sleep. But not Simon and Jacob. They were too excited. That star! It was dazzling! It was so radiant! And its light seemed to reach down and embrace that little town of Bethlehem. They were awe-struck!

Then suddenly, they themselves were enveloped in glorious light, and as they looked up, they saw a man, who looked like a powerful warrior, but he was all aglow. His white garments just beamed! He must have been an angel. They were terrified!

And the angel said,

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

And then, just as suddenly as the first angel had appeared, the skies were filled with a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God and singing with such beautiful voices, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

And just as quickly as they had appeared, they disappeared. The shepherds were overwhelmed with wonder!

"Ebenezer! Ebenezer! Did you see that?!"

"What?!"

"The Angels! Did you see those angels?! Thousands of them!"

"Angels! First you wake me up hollering about some stupid star, and now you think you're seeing angels! Bah! Humbug! Simon, get real! I'm trying to get some sleep! Now leave me alone!"

"You mean you slept through all of that?!"

"All of what?"

"The light! The angels! The things they said! Their singing!"

"Singing! What an imagination! You two are crazy! Let me get some sleep. Wake me up when it's my turn to watch, and not before then, *please*. And no more nonsense about stars and angels and songs--Bah, humbug!"

Ebenezer went back to bed, but there was no way Simon and Jacob were about to sleep. They knew that what they saw was real. They weren't just seeing and hearing things. And that star, that brilliant star was still there.

Jacob asked Simon, "Did that angel say what I think he said? That our deliverer, our Savior has been born? that the Messiah had come! The Lord!"

"He did! I can't believe it! But it must be true--signs in the heavens, angels singing! Oh, if this is the coming of the Messiah, it will be glorious!"

"Let's go into town and see if we can find the baby he was talking about!"

"Ebenezer! Ebenezer! Wake up! It's time for you to watch the sheep!"

"What?! Already?! It seems like I just got back to sleep!"

"Get up, Ebenezer, you're on your own. We're going into town."

"What?! Going into town! In the middle of the night?! What time is it anyway?"

"Time for you to take over! See you later!"

"Bah, humbug!" said Ebenezer, as he climbed out from under his blankets.

Simon and Jacob went running down the hill toward town. They were so excited, they could have run all the way to Jerusalem! And it seemed that, as they went, the light of that magical star grew brighter and brighter.

They finally made it to town, and everything was dark--except for the star. They looked up, and that wondrous light seemed to be pointing to a little inn straight ahead of them. They knocked on the door and, after a while, a very sleepy looking innkeeper came and said, "Sorry, no room."

"Oh, that's OK. We just want to know if there was a baby born here tonight."

"Well, I don't know. But I do know that there was a young lady and her husband who came in late in the day, and she was about as pregnant as a woman can get. We didn't have any rooms, but I fixed them up a spot in the stable. She could have had her baby, I guess. Go take a look. They're out back."

They took off running. "You're welcome!" he called, but they didn't hear him.

"Jacob, look! Over there!"

They hurried over to the stable. First they saw Mom. She was just a kid! She wasn't about to take her eyes off that baby. Dad was there, too. For a while he'd look at the baby, then he'd look at his wife. And then back at the baby, and then at his wife again. He looked excited, but bewildered.

And the baby--he was there just like the angel said, all bundled up, lying in a manger.

"Excuse me," Simon said, "May we take a look?"

"Sure," the father answered, "Isn't that the best looking baby boy you've ever seen?!"

"Oh, you bet! This is wonderful! I've got to tell you what happened to us . . . We're shepherds, and we were up in the hills watching our sheep, and all of a sudden an angel appeared to us! Do you believe in angels?"

"Oh, yes!" the father said.

"Well this one had some great news to tell us! He said that a baby had been born today here in Bethlehem, and that that baby is the Messiah, or Savior, the Lord! He said we would find the baby all bundled up lying in a manger--just like this! . . . Your baby is the Messiah!"

"After he told us this, we saw thousands of angels! They filled the sky! and they sang, 'Glory to God in the highest!' It was incredible!"

The young couple was amazed at what they heard. But they believed it. They had seen and heard angels themselves. They knew this was a special child.

Simon and Jacob were thrilled! They headed back to the hills, praising God as they went. They were full of rejoicing!

When they got back to the sheep, there sat Ebenezer, all wrapped in blankets, but awake, barely.

"Ebenezer! Ebenezer! It's true! Just like the angels said! There's a baby, down in Bethlehem, lying in a manger! He's the Messiah! Our Savior! The Lord! We saw him . . .!"

"Bah, humbug! What a bunch of nonsense! A baby in a barn? The Messiah? Give me a break! . . . Jacob, isn't it about your turn to watch the sheep now? I'm going back to bed--that is, if I can sleep with that bright light up in the sky! Bah, Humbug!"

Simon and Jacob just shook their heads and laughed. How could anyone be so blind?

The two shepherds sat together and watched over their sheep. Their hearts were full of joy. They would never be the same. And as they watched, they listened, and they could still hear the angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest . . .!"

A long hike on a warm day brings a reminder of another difficult trip many years before . . .

A WALK FROM BETHLEHEM TO EGYPT

Tom Nickell, Wycliffe Bible Translators

I was on a four-day hike with some Agtas, the people for whom my wife and I are translating the New Testament, and we had not found water for several hours. We were constantly on the lookout for water and jungle fruits along miles of sand and pebble beaches, interrupted by sharp coral reefs which at times lifted high to form dangerous cliffs too difficult to scale.

Around midday, a depression on the rocks revealed a little spring of water, cool and drinkable.

We all took turns to kneel and drink, taking care not to disturb the silt at the bottom. One of the group caught my eye. I looked over to see a young Agta mother as she knelt beside the spring, holding her year-old son tightly to her.

Filling her mouth with long draughts of water, she was kissing her child full on the mouth. His eyes bulged as he tried to keep them focused on hers. Water dribbled down his chin.

Then I realized she wasn't kissing him, but was feeding him, transferring the clear, welcome water from her mouth to his! And he was receiving all she had to give, his eyes large with love. Such was his confidence in his mother. A picture of total trust. Just like it probably was for another Child.

Long distances. Day after day repetition. Deprivation. Sand, sun and uncertainty. No food for tomorrow; just what they found today. No sure lodging. No certain welcome or friendship at the end of the journey. A long walk from Bethlehem to Egypt.

But this Child travels easily, slung onto his mother's back, moving as she moves, rolling with the roll of her gait, head swaying, sound asleep.

She stumbles. He falls with her, momentarily startled, but quickly quieted by her love and his unshakable confidence in her.

She sweats, he gets wet. He urinates, she gets wet. The heat and discomfort of one is absorbed by the other, in love.

They stop to rest and cool themselves. She feeds him water, perhaps just like the Agta mother, careful that none is wasted by playing Baby hands. She peels some fruit for him: a little bruised, a little sandy and smelling a little like donkey. But he doesn't object. He takes it gladly. His mother is humanity, and he receives all that she will give of love, of simplicity, of sickness. His life is open to absorb and to bear all that she will give.

Such a Child! . . . who, though in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be held onto, but emptied himself . . . born in the likeness of men . . . humbled, obedient unto death . . . Therefore, God has exalted him.

There is a difference, I know, between the young mother, Sekka, and the virgin, Mary. There is a difference between Kalletong and Jesus Christ. But for those few days I saw such endurance, such an uncomplaining nature, such quickness to love and to bring delight to another, that at times I felt as though I were walking from Bethlehem to Egypt with a holy family.

And at times I felt the bittersweet realities of this child's life and of this Child's life. They are enough to drive me to my knees.

[Tom Nickell and his wife, Kristy, translated the New Testament for the Agta people of the Philippines. They now live in Winchester, KY. This article is reprinted, by permission, from **In Other Words**, the magazine of Wycliffe Bible Translators.]

BY INVITATION OF JESUS . . .

Peter Marshall

One bitterly cold December night, when Washington was covered with a blanket of snow and ice, a man sat in his comfortable home on Massachusetts Avenue. A crackling log fire threw dancing shadows on the paneled walls.

The wind outside was moaning softly like someone in pain, and the reading lamp cast a soft, warm glow on the book this man was reading.

He was alone, for the children had gone out for the evening, and his wife had retired early.

He read the following passage from Luke: . . . *When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors. . . . But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.*

Somehow he could not get away from those simple words. He closed the Bible, and sat musing, conscious for the first time in his life of the challenge of Christ, whose birthday was so near.

What strange fancy was this? Why was it that he kept hearing in a whisper the words he had just read?

He could not shake it off. Never before had he been so challenged. "I must be sleepy," he thought to himself. "It is time I went to bed."

But as he lay in bed, he thought of the dinners and parties that they had given in this beautiful home. Most of those whom he usually invited were listed in "Who's Who in Washington."

He tried to sleep, but somehow he could not close the door of his mind to the procession of the poor that shuffled and tapped its way down the corridors of his soul.

As he watched them pass, he felt his own heart touched. He whispered a prayer that if the Lord would give him courage, he would take Him at His word, and do what He wanted him to do. Only then did he find peace and fall asleep.

When the morning came, his determination gave him new strength and zest for the day.

His first call was on the engraver who knew him well. At the counter he drafted the card, chuckling now and then as he wrote, his eyes shining. It read:

Jesus of Nazareth
Requests the honor of your presence
at a banquet honoring
The Sons of Want
on Friday evening, in a home on
Massachusetts Avenue
Cars will await you at the
Central Union Mission
at six o'clock

At the bottom of the card was the quotation: *Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

A few days later, with the cards of invitation in his hand, he walked downtown. Within an hour, there were several people wondering what could be the meaning of the card that a kindly, happy, well-dressed man had placed in their hands.

One was an old man seated on a box trying to sell pencils; and another stood on the corner with a racking cough and a bundle of papers under his arms. There was a blind man saying over and over to himself, "Jesus of Nazareth requests the honor of your presence . . ."

At six o'clock, a strange group of men stood waiting in the vestibule of the Central Union Mission.

"What is the catch in this, anyhow?" asked the cynic. "What's the game?" The blind man ventured to remark: "Maybe it's part of the government relief program."

Just then someone came over and announced that the cars were at the door. Without a word, they went outside.

There was something incongruous about it all, these men, clutching their thin coats, huddling together, their faces pinched and wan, climbing into two shiny limousines. At last they were all inside, and the cars glided off with the strangest and most puzzled load of passengers ever carried.

When they dismounted, on Massachusetts Avenue, they stood gazing at the house. Up the broad steps and over thick-piled carpets, they entered slowly.

Their host was a quiet man, and they liked him--these guests of his, whose names he did not know.

He did not say much, only, "I am so glad you came."

By and by, they were seated at the table, with its spotless linen and gleaming silver. They were silent now; even the cynic had nothing to say. It seemed as if the banquet would be held in frozen silence.

The host rose in his place. "My friends, let us ask the blessing.

"If this is pleasing to Thee, O Lord, bless us as we sit around this table, and bless the food that we are about to receive. Bless these men. You know who they are, and what they need. And help us to do what You want us to do. Amen."

The blind man was smiling now. He turned to the man seated next to him and asked him about the host. "What does he look like?"

And so the ice was broken. Conversation began around the table, and soon the first course was laid.

It was a strange party, rather fantastic in a way, thought the host. His guests had no credentials, no social recommendations, no particular graces--so far as he could see. But, my, they were hungry!

Yet there was not a trace of condescension in his attitude. He was treating them as brothers.

It was a grand feeling--a great adventure.

He watched each plate, and directed the servants with a nod or a glance. He encouraged them to eat. He laughed at their thinly disguised reluctance, until they laughed too.

As he sat there, it suddenly occurred to him how different was the conversation! There were no off-color stories, no whisperings of scandal, no one saying, "Well, I have it on good authority "

They were talking about their friends in misfortune, wishing they were here too . . . wondering whether Charlie had managed to get a bed in the charity ward, whether Dick had stuck it out when he wanted to end it all, whether the little woman with the baby had found a job.

Wasn't the steak delicious!

When the meal was over, someone came in and sat down at the piano. Familiar melodies, old songs, filled the room; and then in a soft voice the pianist began to sing "Love's Old Sweet Song," "Silver Threads Among the Gold," "The Sidewalks of New York."

Someone else joined in, a cracked wheezing voice, but it started the others. Men who had not sung for months, men who had no reason to sing, joined in.

Before they knew it, they were singing hymns: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," "The Church in the Wildwood," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross."

Then the pianist stopped, and the guests grouped themselves in soft, comfortable chairs around the log fire.

The host, moving among them with a smile, said: "I know you men are wondering what all this means. I can tell you very simply but, first, let me read you something."

He read from the Gospels, stories of One who moved among the sick, the outcasts, the despised and the friendless: How Jesus healed this one, cured that one, spoke kindly words of infinite meaning to another, and what He promised to all who believed in Him.

"Now I haven't done much tonight for you, but it has made me very happy to have you here in my home. I hope you have enjoyed it half as much as I have, and if I have given you one evening of happiness, I shall be forever glad to remember it. But this is not my party. It is His! I have merely lent Him this house. He was your *Host*. He is your *Friend*. And He has given me the honor of speaking for Him.

"He is sad when you are. He hurts when you do. He weeps when you weep. He wants to help you--if you will let Him.

"I'm going to give each of you His Book of Instructions. Certain passages in it are marked, which I hope you will find helpful when you are sick and in pain, when you are lonely and discouraged. Then, I shall see each one of you tomorrow, where I saw you today, and we'll have a talk together to see just how I can help you most."

They shuffled out into the night with a new light in their eyes, a smile where there had not been even interest before. The blind man was smiling still, and as he stood on the doorstep, waiting, he turned to where his host stood.

"God bless you, my friend, whoever you are."

A little wizened fellow who had not spoken all night paused to say, "I'm going to try again, mister; there's something worth living for."

The cynic turned back, "Mister, you're the first man who ever gave me anything. And you've given me hope."

"That is because I was doing it for Him," said the host, and he stood and waved good night as the cars purred off into the darkness.

When they had gone, he sat again by the fire and looked at the dying embers, until the feeling became overwhelming, again, that there was Someone in the room. Someone who stood in the shadows and smiled too, because some of the least of these had been treated like brothers for His sake.

*Peter Marshall, prior to his death in 1949, was Chaplain to the United States Senate. This story is condensed from his book **Mr. Jones, Meet the Master**, published by Fleming H. Revell Co.*

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Its Essentiality to the Faith

David R. Reagan

There is probably no aspect of the Christian faith that has been subjected to more abuse than the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus.

The world, of course, laughs at the concept. But, tragically, so do many professing Christians. I think it would be safe to say that most liberal Christian spokesmen, representing the mainline denominations, would reject the idea of the virgin birth as nothing more than a crude attempt by ignorant First Century disciples to attribute deity to Jesus.

Central or Peripheral?

Is the virgin birth central to the Christian faith, or is it only a peripheral issue that should be relegated to the realm of opinion?

I believe it is absolutely essential to the faith, for it attests to the identity of Jesus--namely, that He was God in the flesh.

Make no mistake about it--if Jesus was not God, then His sacrifice for our sins was meaningless. No imperfect man could have died for our sins, because his death would not have appeased our Creator's demand for justice. Our sin bearer had to be a perfect man, and thus he had to be divine.

The Hebrew prophets pointed to the divinity of the Messiah. Isaiah said He would be "Immanuel," meaning "God with us" (Isa. 7:14). Isaiah also said the Messiah would be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). Micah stated that the Messiah would be one who had existed "from the days of eternity" (Micah 5:2).

If Jesus was the Messiah, as He claimed to be (Mark 14:61-64 and John 4:25-26), then He had to be God in the flesh. That requires a miraculous conception, because all people born of human parents are born with a fallen sin nature (Psa. 51:5 and Eph 2:3). To deny the virgin birth is to deny the deity of Jesus.

Satan's Attack

Satan hates the doctrine of the virgin birth because it clearly points to the divinity of Jesus. Satan has thus done everything he can to undermine the doctrine's validity.

Satan's most effective attack has been to raise up scoffers and mockers at the very center of Christianity--in the pulpit. The usual approach is to ridicule the nativity story as the product of the overactive imaginations of ignorant disciples.

The Lord obviously anticipated this attack on His Word, for the Holy Spirit motivated a very special man to give us most of the details regarding the virgin birth. That man was Luke, who just "happened" to be a medical doctor! (See Col. 4:14). Isn't that neat?

Think of it, the Bible's leading advocate of the virgin birth was a highly educated man who fully understood the biological aspects of conception and birth. He was the person who would have been the most skeptical regarding any "legend" of a virgin birth.

Important too is the fact that the virgin birth of the Messiah was prophesied by the Hebrew prophets. This fact discounts the idea that the virgin birth was a johnny-come-lately idea conjured up by a bunch of illiterate and superstitious shepherds.

The Concept in Prophecy

The first mention of the concept in prophecy is found in Genesis 3:15. In this verse, God tells Satan that the redemption of Mankind will come through one who will be born of "the seed of woman."

Isaiah makes the same point in Isaiah 7:14 where he states the Messiah will be born of a "virgin." It is true that the Hebrew word used by Isaiah can also be translated "maiden." But when a group of rabbis translated this verse into Greek in what is known as the Septuagint Version of the Hebrew Scriptures (about 285 BC), they used a Greek word that can only mean "virgin." Likewise, when Matthew quoted this verse in his Gospel (Matt. 1:23) and applied it to Jesus he used the same Greek word that can only be translated "virgin."

A third prophecy is found in Jeremiah 31:22: "The Lord has created a new thing in the earth--a woman will encompass a man." This is a rather enigmatic prophecy, but the important thing about it is that Jewish rabbis over the centuries have interpreted it to mean that the Messiah will have a miraculous origin. As one rabbi put it, the conception of the Messiah will be "like the dew of the Lord upon a woman."

The Biblical Evidence

The best evidence of the virgin birth is to be found in the Scripture record.

Consider first of all the immediate reaction of Mary to Gabriel's announcement that she would conceive a son whose name would be Jesus (Luke 1:31). Mary responded: "How can this be since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34). Mary may have been a very young woman (probably about 13 years old), but she knew how a baby was conceived, and she therefore knew it was not possible for her to have a child. That's why Gabriel responded by declaring, "Nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

Further evidence of Mary's innocence is to be found in the first action she took after she became pregnant (Luke 1:39-40).

She "went with haste" to share the news with some relatives! Now, how many unwed pregnant girls have you ever seen behave in that manner? They are usually so overcome with guilt and shame that they want to hide. They certainly don't want to share the news with relatives!

Even more significant is the kind of relatives Mary selected. The head of the household was a priest by the name of Zacharias (Luke 1:5). Keep in mind that although Mary was only betrothed to Joseph and had not yet consummated the marriage, she was considered married to him. If she became pregnant during the betrothal period, she was considered an adulteress and was thus subject to stoning or divorce. In other words, she faced death or humiliation. Yet, she ran to a priestly family to share the news of her pregnancy. If she had been guilty of adultery, it would have been the responsibility of Zacharias as a priest to report her. This evidently did not concern Mary because she went in innocence.

Further evidence of Mary's innocence is found in the description of her arrival at the house of Zacharias. His wife, Elizabeth, who was six months pregnant with John the Baptist, felt the baby leap in her womb with joy when Mary entered the house! (See Luke 1:41 and 44.) Also, Elizabeth was "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:41) and immediately spoke a supernatural word of knowledge. She cried out: "Blessed among women are you, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" (Luke 1:42). She then declared Mary to be "the mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:43).

The final bit of evidence of Mary's innocence is presented by Luke in verses 45 through 55. He records a glorious song which Mary sang to the Lord in the presence of Elizabeth. It begins with the words, "My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my savior." How many unwed pregnant girls have you ever heard singing a song like that?

A Call to Faith

The evidence of the virgin birth which Dr. Luke presents is overwhelming. Yet, it does not *prove* the virgin birth. The virgin birth, like the resurrection of Jesus, must be accepted ulti-

mately by faith--but not by blind faith. It is faith based upon factual evidence and the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

The world sneers and screams, "It is impossible!" The Angel Gabriel said to Mary, "With God nothing is impossible!"

What the world so desperately needs today is the simple childlike faith of Mary.

Another thing all of us so desperately need is the willingness of Mary to yield her life to the Lord's will, regardless of the circumstances. Remember Mary's brave words: "Behold, I am the bonds slave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word"(Luke 1:37). Mary spoke those words knowing that she could likely suffer execution or public humiliation.

It is no wonder that the Word says Mary will be called "blessed" by all generations (Luke 1:48).

The Significance

One thing is certain. The virgin birth is not irrelevant. It is essential to the deity of Jesus. And the deity of Jesus is essential, in turn, if His death had any meaning at all. Paul ties it all together in Galatians 4:4-5: "God sent forth His Son, *born of a woman*, born under the Law in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

To deny the virgin birth is to deny the deity of Jesus, for without the virgin birth Jesus is just another man born with the flawed sin nature inherited by all of us from Adam. And if Jesus is just a man, then we have no hope whatsoever.

"And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus." Luke 1:31

[From "**Bible Prophecy Insights**," published by Lamb and Lion Ministries, P.O.Box 919 McKinney, TX 75069.]

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

Part 2

Alex Wilson

Oh how I fear Thee, living God!
With deepest, tenderest fears,
And worship Thee with trembling hope,
And penitential tears.

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

--Frederick Faber

Throughout the whole Bible God's holiness is shown to be terrible and unapproachable. Offerings were necessary when an Israelite sought to approach God. A mediatorial priesthood was required. In the tabernacle, God's presence in the holy of holies could be entered by only one man, and he only one day each year. Thus God manifested His hatred of sin. The scripture-writers emphasized this truth repeatedly: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on perverseness" (Hab. 1:13). "Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: evil shall not sojourn with thee. The arrogant shall not stand in thy sight: Thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou wilt destroy them that speak lies: the Lord abhorreth the bloodthirsty and deceitful man" (Psalm 5:4-6). God's holiness is the reason for His jealousy; He will be a devouring fire to those who oppose His holiness: "Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins" (Josh. 24:19). "The Lord thy God is a devouring fire, a jealous God" (Deut. 4:24). "The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling hath seized the godless ones: Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly" (Isa. 33:14-15). "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

Because of these facts, we should "offer service well-pleasing to God with *reverence and awe*: for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28-29). When men get a glimpse of God's holiness they do not remain frivolous and profane. The apostle Paul speaks of "perfecting

holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1), and also includes the fear of God along with love as the great motives which drove him on: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11; also v. 14). And even the song sung in heaven mentions fearing God: "Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest" (Rev. 15:4).

Holiness underlies all of God's dealings with His creatures. He is steadfastly and completely opposed to evil; He will not trifle with it. He requires holiness from His creatures; He rightly demands that men be entirely devoted to His worship and service and that they be clean, separated from sin, and perfect. ("Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," Matt. 5:48.) God's requirements are set forth clearly: "Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood, and hath not sworn deceitfully" (Psalm 24:3-4). "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit" (Isa. 57:15). "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity, or what communion hath light with darkness? . . . Wherefore, come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty . . . Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of body and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1).

The sincere man, when confronted by God's holiness and His righteous demands upon His creatures, immediately sees the immense gulf between himself as a sinner and God. Man being sinful, God must by His nature be separate from him; there can be no communion or fellowship. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2). Man stands condemned, separated from God because of his wickedness, and utterly hopeless and helpless.

Therefore, if God's purpose--which is to have fellowship with man--is to be fulfilled, God Himself will have to provide the way. Man's attempts to earn acceptance with God are futile; his works are woefully inadequate to meet God's requirement of a holy heart. Only God can provide the needed reconciliation and only God can make man holy in heart, and He is under no obligation to do it, for man merits only condemnation. Therefore salvation must be entirely a provision of God's grace.

God grace has not been mentioned before in these articles on His holiness. Perhaps our study thus far has made Him seem very harsh and unlovable--almost like a vengeful bully. Perish the thought! God's word declares, "Jehovah is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." "The earth is full of the loving kindness of Jehovah." "Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive and abundant in lovingkindness unto all them that call upon thee." The apostle John, who wrote, "God is light," also wrote "God is love." Calvary shows that both of John's statements are true: it displays the greatest holiness ever known, but also the greatest love. Why, then, is God's holiness so severe? Why is He "a God that hath indignation every day"? (Psalm 7:11). A.W. Tozer gives the answer: "Since God's first concern for His universe is its moral health--that is, its holiness--whatever is contrary to this is necessarily under His eternal displeasure. To preserve His creation God must destroy whatever would destroy it. Every wrathful judgment in the history of the world has been a holy act of preservation. The holiness of God, the wrath of God, and health of the creation are inseparably united."

To think rightly about God we must never forget nor minimize either His holiness or His love. (Study the poems beginning and ending this article.) Actually, *we appreciate God's grace only to the extent that we realize His holiness.* As John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ, so the knowledge of God's holiness prepares our hearts for receiving His grace. In these days when sentimental "soft soap" about God's love is common, let us make sure that *our* message is not an amputated one.

God's holiness produces not only healthful fear but also deep comfort in the man who is rightly related to Him. The presence of evil in the universe disturbs all men and often causes doubts to rise, but the man who truly knows that God is holy and perfectly free from all evil knows that this problem is only a temporary one. And the holy majesty, glory, and greatness of the Lord should make His servants ashamed of their worries and frettings. He who knows God agrees with the prophet's exclamation, "Ah, Lord Jehovah . . . there is nothing too hard for thee" (Jer. 32:17).

To conclude, then: God's holiness is involved in nearly all our knowledge of Him. It includes His exaltedness and power as the source of all things, the omnipotent Creator and Sustainer, the great self-existent One. It includes His moral perfections--righteousness, justice, goodness, loving grace (for love is the heart of moral perfection: there is no conflict between holiness and love). And God's holiness is involved in His eternal purposes for you and me. Having in the past foreordained us to be conformed to His own holiness, He commands us now to be holy as He is holy; and He Himself will soon

bring that condition *fully* to pass--"We shall be like Him"! Such is the majesty and splendor and grace of our God. Worship Him

Eternal Light! Eternal Light!
How pure the soul must be
When, placed within Thy searching sight,
It shrinks not, but with calm delight
Can live, and look on Thee!

The spirits that surround Thy Throne
May bear the burning bliss;
But that is surely theirs alone,
Since they have never, never known
A fallen world like this.

Oh, how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before the Ineffable appear
And on my naked spirit bear
The uncreated beam?

There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode;
An Offering and a Sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God:

These, these prepare us for the sight
Of Holiness above;
The sons of ignorance and night
May dwell in the Eternal Light,
Through the Eternal Love.

--T. Binney ; this may be sung
to "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind "

[Continued from inside front cover]

Bulawayo is Zimbabwe's second largest city after Harare. It is about 275 miles from Harare. There are three congregations there that have come into our fellowship and are seeking deeper instructions in the Word. In July we were invited to hold a meeting there to give instruction especially in the prophetic word. On Saturday afternoon the 17th Joy taught a women's class of 35 women. Then Sunday through Wednesday I gave some prophetic lessons at the Paddonhurst Church of Christ. Attendance and interest were very good with many showing a thirst for the truth. Surely there has never been a time in which it has been more important that our knowledge of the prophetic word be such that it can be said of us, *'But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief'* (1 Thess. 5:4).

Karen Ashley

Solomon Islands

Oct. 1993

James is planning a tour of Small Malaita island to get a feel for wider opinions regarding different ideas about spelling and dialect to use in the Scripture translation. This tour is really crucial. We have four NT books plus a hymnbook ready to print except for spelling checks, but we'd just as soon not waste our money printing them if people are going to complain about these two issues. We think the complaints are coming from just a few people, but we need to be sure. Pray for these matters to be settled soon, so we can get the Scripture portions that are finished into circulation. Pray also for calm seas as James travels by canoe and for strength to do the necessary hiking.

Keep praying for our co-workers David and Timo as they work on the translation into Sa'a. Timo is translating Hebrews and David is working on Colossians. Also continue to pray that the Sa'a people will learn to discern which of the old customs are related to spirit worship and that they would then be willing to forsake them. Pray for James' opportunities to preach and for me when I speak at the women's Bible study.

Other prayer requests: for our transportation situation. In August the village tractor was broken, the axle of our pushcart rusted through, the gears of James' bicycle got messed up, and one of two village canoes developed a major leak. Pray for spare parts to be found, and for fewer future (simultaneous) breakdowns.

Kent, Philip and Susan are beginning grades 7, 4, and kindergarten this year. Three students means my time is stretched pretty thin. Pray for us all to have good attitudes.

Ragena Mullins
November, 1993

P.O.Box 1509 New Albany, IN 47151

Last week Earl faxed a letter from Russia where he's been since October 11. I'd like to share some of what he wrote. His days are filled from morning until midnight. For two and a half weeks after he arrived, he was involved in helping with American Christian school students visiting in a city called Novgorod. Their purpose was to share their faith.

".....at the farewell dinner, I sat at a table with Sergei, who is in charge of youth activities for the whole region of Novgorod. We talked of many things, but from my vantage point the most significant was his references to the team. He deals with many groups visiting Novgorod, and stated this team was very unusual in that they first of all did not look down upon the Russians, they did not make fun of them and even when they laughed, it was not offensive. He spoke of their staying in the Russian homes, being so open, getting along with one another, as well as with the Russians. From every indication it appeared he was most impressed with the group. I was reminded of the Lord's statement, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you love one another.'"

(FYI: Three Portland Christian School students will make this same kind of trip to a different Russian city in January.)

After the team left, Earl remained in Moscow to teach Bible classes. His first Sunday back in Moscow he attended a congregation with Maxim, his interpreter, who is also the leader of this group.

".....We waited two hours for children who never did show up. About noon four adults showed up. We had a good study together. ... He (Maxim) is an example of one of the needs for help over here. He was asked to take charge of a congregation after having been in a training class for only one week. Strange as it may seem, there have been three young men in the last week who have been negative as to the way very young Christian men are being asked to take charge of congregations with little or no training, and having been Christians for a very short period of time."

Missionaries all over Russia and the former U.S.S.R. countries are feeling resistance to the simple message of Jesus. Russians are being encouraged to return to their traditional religious faith, and not to believe what the westerners are telling them.

Earl is scheduled to return home December 10th and hopes to make a trip visiting churches early next year, Lord willing. In January he will be taking the Portland Christian School team mentioned earlier into Russia.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

Oooooops!! Sorry About That

We really goofed in the Oct. issue. Somehow the credit line that should have appeared at the end of two articles was left out; also the fact of their copyright.

A.W. Tozer's article "The Terror and the Glory," and John White's article "Embarrassing Doctrine?" were both reprinted from HIS magazine, by permission of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. IVCF graciously allows us to use articles from HIS, with the usual condition that we acknowledge where the articles came from, and give notice that IVCF is the owner of the copyright (thus no one else may reprint without their permission). We apologize to Inter-Varsity for our glaring oversight.

Prayer-supporter Ministries

Mike Abbott reports that at Borden, Ind. Church a successful prayer ministry has been launched. At least 17 members have agreed to give extra time for intercession for special needs. Each does this on 2 days assigned to him/her each month, which means that on every day of the year there are at least 2 people praying specifically for major needs in the church, community and nation. Mike supplies all of them with updated lists of requests. Continuing, specific intercession is so important.

At Portland Ave. Church a number of our ladies formed a prayer-chain a year or two ago. When special crises arise, one of them is alerted. She phones the next person on the chain and explains the

emergency; then the 2nd calls the 3rd, etc. on down the line. The Lord has heard their cries for help in time of need. At Portland the monthly prayer-meeting for spiritual awakening continues too, as well as the pre-Sun. school meeting time to pray for God's Word to go forth in the full power of His Spirit.

Greater Louisville Prayer Mtg.

I have been asked by the Freedom's Heritage Forum of Louisville to promote a Greater Louisville Prayer Meeting. Non-denominational and non-racial to seek God's protection on our families, youth and an awakening of the churches - that the Church will be the Church and for the civil leaders and a righteous approach to the making of laws. A goodly number has responded. Meetings are in various church buildings every Saturday 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. If your doors are open, let me know. -- Jack Blaes

W&W Appreciated in Africa

"We have such an appalling lack of good Bible study materials to give to our people here in Zimbabwe. I give out more than 40 copies of W&W each month. Occasionally there are articles I would like to be able to give to several hundred people." -- Robert Garrett, who is starting a printing program of his own there.

Book by Shelly recommended

I am reading a book, IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT, by Rubel Shelly. Dr. Forcade highly recommended it. Chapter 1 is "Moved by

a New Spirit"; chapter 2 is "Christians are 'Under the Influence.'" Then chapters 3 - 11 are one each on the fruits of the Spirit. Then last chapter is "Be Filled with the Spirit." --Lois McReynolds

News from 18th Street Church

We had one lady to confess the Lord and be baptized. We have a good Bible study on Wed. nights. We still have our fellowship dinners every month on Sunday after the worship service. --Hazel Vibbert

You'll Wanna Save This Date!!

It sounds a l-o-n-g way off, but you will want to mark it down now: April 19, 1994. Why? Because that is when Leroy Garrett will speak for us at the Restoration Lectureship.

Dr. Garrett, now retired after teaching philosophy in college for many years, is better known as an author and longtime editor of *Restoration Review*. He wrote the monumental history book, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*

He will speak 3 times on the theme, "Moving Toward Restoration." The 3 topics will be Lessons from the Past, Conditions of the Present, and Perspectives for the Future. The lectureship will be held at Louisville Bible College, 1-265 at Beulah Church Road (exit 15), Louisville.

Southeast Church of Christ

We have just finished an exciting weekend at our Leader's Retreat. Much prayer was made for the leading of the Lord. Stay tuned for 1994 plans!

We are also excited to hear about the possible expansion of Maple Manor Adult Home and property expansion at Portland Christian School. Interviews are being held for additional houseparents at Maple

Manor Children's Home. God is so Good! -- Nathan Burks, Minister

A Challenge At Buechel

Are you satisfied with the Buechel Church of Christ the size it is today? If you are, your're in big trouble. If you are completely content, it means you have no unfulfilled dreams. And when you stop dreaming, you start dying. "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion."

It Takes Gut To Leave The Ruts

I am preparing to lead this congregation on an adventure. An adventure of growth--and you're invited to come along. But first, you have to be honest and make a decision. The way I see it, you have four choices:

- (1) Quit. Throw in the towel. Give up. Wait to die.
- (2) Retreat. Back off. Step down. Cut back. Take it easy.
- (3) Shift into neutral. Take a reflective break. Review the whole situation. Seek solitude and review your whole spiritual life.
- (4) Move ahead deliberately, carefully, but boldly. Look up. Seek out directions that promise new levels of achievement.

Now, you have a decision to make. Remember, even no decision is a decision --Rick Handy, Minister

Sunday Evenings

Recently we have had what we might call "special subjects." Some have asked for studies on various subjects. (Tongues speaking was one example) Others that will be coming up are studies about abortion. Also homosexuality. Yes, these are Bible subjects, even though we have long overlooked them. -- Glenn Baber, Turkey Creek, La.

New Prayer Service

Those who can may wish to take advantage of a time of prayer each Sunday evening at 6:30 P.M. Some have expressed an interest in this activity, and we think it is one to be encouraged. There will be separate groups for men and women. We would encourage those who can to participate. Fer-vent prayer can avail much. -- Carl Kitzmiller, Johnson City, Tenn.

Gallatin Church of Christ

Christian Towers Awarded 2.688 Million Dollar Grant!!

Christian Towers of Gallatin, Inc. has received a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to construct a 54-unit apartment complex for our senior citizens here in Gallatin. The new facility will be a five-story building located on property adjacent to Christian Towers.

We praise God that this congregation took the initiative 20 years ago to sponsor the efforts of several of our members to construct a facility for our senior citizens with low or moderate income. Christian Towers, a 100 unit apartment complex which opened in September 1979, is a result of that effort and has been a blessing to many of our older citizens through the years

We again praise God for this most recent development. With a

long waiting list at Christian Towers, the need is certainly evident.

Tell City / Lilly Dale Conference

On Feb. 25 - 27 at 7:00 E.S.T. nightly, the annual meetings will this year have as their theme "Our Godly Heritage." Fri. nite: Where We Came From. Sat. nite: Where We Are. Sun. nite: Where Are We Going? Notice there are no day sessions. For more information contact the Tell City Church of Christ, (812) 547-6778. Tim Hill now ministers there.

Themes of This Year's Issues: (1993)

- Jan.** Improving Our Families
- Feb.** We Need to be Forgiven, and Forgiving
- Mar.** God can do More with Sin than Forgive It
- Apr.** He Rules the Winds & Waves
- May** Preach to all Nations
- June** The Good News about the Good News
- July** Doing Things Differently
- Aug.** Sing & Worship
- Sept.** Tell Me a Story
- Oct.** Our Father in Heaven
- Nov.-Dec.** The Word became Flesh