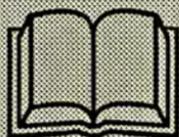


Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The *Word and Work*



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

JUNE, 1994

**If the light
of Christ's Presence
has brightened your way,
O Will You Not
TELL IT TODAY !**

- Build bridges of love in life's everydayness
- Don't leave it to the experts
- Even children can tell good news
- The Personal touch, in contact & content
- Asking questions -- a vital method

**47th LOUISVILLE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
WEEK**

August 1-4, 1994

"CONQUERING STRONGHOLDS"

MONDAY NIGHT AUG. 1

7:30 Singing (nightly)
8:00 Strongholds to be Conquered --Don McGee

EVERY MORNING, Tuesday through Thursday

9:00 Exposition of Daniel --David Tapp
10:00 Prayer Time

TUESDAY, AUGUST 2 War of the Worlds

10:45 Conflict: Is God Sovereign? --Jerry Carmichael
1:00 Conflicting Conditions --Dale Offutt
1:50 Conflicting Doctrines --Buford Smith
5:30 School of Biblical Studies Booster Supper,
Hamburg Church of Christ
7:30 Conflicting Values --David Johnson

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3 Ways Of The Overcomer

10:45 Relating to God --Jerry Samples
1:00 Characteristics of Overcomers --Orell Overman
1:50 Conflicts -- but Victory! --Ray Naugle
7:30 Committed and Trained to Go --Richard Ramsey

THURSDAY, AUGUST 4 Preparing For Battle

10:45 Praying, Fasting and Using God's Word --Alex Wilson
1:00 Knowing Your Enemy --Earl Mullins, Sr.
1:50 Quenching the Fiery Darts --Bennie Hill
7:30 "Go as Directed" --Julius Hovan

**DAY SESSIONS: Portland Church of Christ,
2500 Portland Ave., Louisville, KY 40212**

**NIGHT SESSIONS: Sellersburg Church of Christ
211 South New Albany St., Sellersburg IN 47172**

FOR HOUSING: Paul Heid, (502) 239-2886

ALSO--the Next Day!:

GOIN' FISHING MISSION SEMINAR (#2)

Friday, Aug. 5, 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Sellersburg Church of Christ Christian Center

**8:30 - 12:00, Update on opportunities/Needs in Africa, Asia,
the Americas, Russia and CIS**

12:00 - 1:00, Working Lunch: "Where To from 1994 - 2000?"

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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THEME:

TELL IT TODAY

Alex V. Wilson

It's sad that many of us disciples of the Lord are not deeply burdened about the unsaved folks around us. We believe, based on God's word, that unless people receive Christ as Lord and Savior they are lost now and doomed forever. Yet those solemn truths don't grip us as they should. We (myself included) lack the consuming urgency the church had in earliest times and in periods of revival since then.

WHY? What accounts for our sluggishness? There are various reasons, of course. One unknown writer made these pointed observations:

We are now seeking to comfort the saved rather than to save the lost. Preaching deals with "felt needs" rather than salvation from sin. Budgets are spent more for creature comforts and the "right image" than for spiritual needs. There is a greater concern for *this* world than the *world to come*. Not so much is said any more about heaven, hell, and life after death. Young people, even on Christian campuses, do not seem motivated to go to the mission field. Preaching the gospel to every creature seems to have become a low priority.

Of course saints do need comforting, and felt needs like peace of mind and loving personal relationships *are* important. Also, it is ridiculous to keep preaching gospel sermons when no unsaved persons are in the audience. But the above quote is on target in many ways. We need a rebirth of fervor to make Jesus known as the only Savior and Hope of the world.

Gathering Scalps or Sharing Love?

Some Christians shy away from personal evangelism because they've seen others engage in *impersonal* evangelism. You know, the grab-'em-by-the-throat-and-say-"Are you saved?"-approach. The kind that seems more interested in collecting scalps to hang on your belt than in showing Jesus' love to the lost. For this reason several of this month's articles stress the *personal* touch, both in our *approach* to people and in the *message* we tell them (see "Person to Person").

Some striking examples of what I mean by the caring approach are told by Keith Miller in his book *A Second Touch*. Some time after his conversion, he developed a burning desire to live for Christ in

his every-day life, in a natural way, as he put it. "I decided to go through a whole day trying consciously to see what I was actually doing to love the people with whom God had put me. It was quite a day."

"Do You Have a Family"

On the way to work I stopped for gas at the station I had been patronizing for several years. The attendant smiled and said, "Good morning, Mr. Miller." I was sort of shocked as I realized that I had seen this man dozens of times and yet had never really noticed him as a person. He knew my name, and I didn't have the vaguest idea what his was. And I was the Christian witness. I saw that this man was a person to whom God had introduced me to love for Him. Glancing quickly at his name tag, I said, "Good morning, Charlie." After he had serviced the car and I was signing the credit card receipt, I tried to think of some natural thing to say to a man whom I had ignored for three years to let him know I was interested in him as a person. Because suddenly I was. I finally came out with, "I say, Charlie, do you have a family?"

He stopped and looked at me a second. When he saw that I really seemed to want to know, his smile spread clear across his face. "Do I have a family?" And he pulled out his wallet with pictures of about nine children. This was the beginning of a new relationship with Charlie. One of his children later got seriously injured in an accident. When I read about it in the paper, I knew who it was and could go and find out what might be done . . . as a friend.

When Keith Miller drove on to his office, a similar thing happened with the parking lot attendant. "Al had a family too . . . I was discovering that if one is really interested, he can soon find out a great deal about people—in a few minutes a day. Men and women seemed to come out of the woodwork that day in the First National Building where my office was, people I had never really seen as *persons*." There was the elevator operator, the bank teller, secretaries, the waiter. "Although I could not speak to them all that day, I found that just a question, an interested ear, and one might create a 'thirty-second island' of caring in a person's otherwise impersonal day. In the months to come I saw these sketchy outlines develop into the foundations of some real relationships for Christ and for me."

Miller discovered that his simple day by day contacts "now had significance for God." [From *A Second Touch*; this book may be hard to find now. But his first and perhaps best book is still in print: *The Taste of New Wine*. I recommend it highly.]

May the Lord open *our* hearts too. And our eyes and mouths.

HOW TO BE A WITNESS

Leslie B. Flynn

A women's evangelistic luncheon was about to begin in our church fellowship hall when I spotted a visitor lighting a cigarette. My first impulse was to inform her that smoking was not permitted on our church property. But the guest speaker, a godly man of wiser instinct, quietly suggested we not interfere. A few months later I baptized her and her husband. For years they have followed Christ. I have often wondered--had I stopped her that day, might I have driven her away from the Gospel?

Jesus said we should be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." How can we be effective witnesses?

Feel Concern: We need to realize the lostness of those outside Christ. A teen-aged girl mentioned to a visiting preacher that none of her professing Christian family had ever witnessed to her, adding, "Don't they really think I'm lost?" Too easily we forget that, despite fashionable clothes, healthy body, thick wallet or elegant mansion, every unbeliever is headed for a tragic eternity. We need to be bathed in the love of Christ which weeps over the doomed.

Have Contacts: When a pastor urged his congregation to invite their non-Christian friends to an evangelistic crusade, several couples were shocked to discover they had no non-Christian acquaintances to invite. If we fail to cultivate genuine friendships with unbelievers, how will we ever win anyone to Christ?

Jesus, though separate from the practices of sinners, befriended evildoers. We are to be separated but not isolated. Setting up non-scriptural barriers between the world and ourselves may keep people from heaven. Without adopting non-Christian practices, we should involve ourselves wholesomely in others' lives, because we truly have their best interest at heart.

Though our witness often is exercised through structured ministries like Sunday School, coffeehouses or nursing home visitation, equal priority should be given to making friendships on an informal basis. We all have contacts at school, at work or in the neighborhood. Why not get involved on school committees or in civic clubs? Perhaps we are the only link between some person and the Lord. When sickness or tragedy strikes neighbors, we could take food to them. Apart from crisis times, we could help with a chore, like baby sitting, cutting the lawn for a vacationer or offering to keep our eyes

on their house. Or we could invite a friend to our home for a barbecue or dessert. Someone has said, "It's hard to convince a person you want him with you in heaven if you don't want him in your living room now."

One Christian I know makes it a personal goal to play golf mainly with non-Christian friends. When a woman saw her absent neighbor's wash on the line as it began to rain, she not only took the wash in, but ironed it! Couples have been known to move into an apartment building in order to start Bible studies. Friendship requires energy, time, acceptance and self denial. It also means not dropping people when they say "no" to the Gospel.

Use Tact: A witless witness not only fails to impress, he offends. One man let his dog run loose in the neighborhood so that when people called to complain, he could give them the plan of salvation. Another borrowed his neighbor's power mower and kept it until his neighbor came asking for it. Then he gave a "Gospel spiel," emphasizing some point like the "power" of God or the frailty of "grass." Some Christians in restaurants alienate staff by leaving tracts instead of tips.

Jesus did not buttonhole everybody. Though he took the initiative on occasion, more often people sought him out. How valuable is that sensitivity that makes us ready to speak when he leads or be content to keep quiet when he wants us to wait or listen.

However, we must not become so fearful of offending that we never speak. How easy to talk about weather, sports or politics but then have tongues that are tied when they should witness to Jesus. A happy medium lies somewhere between a hit-and-run approach and paralyzed timidity. When a nearly blind woman was seen witnessing to a store dummy, bystanders laughed at her mistake. She replied, "I like the way I do it better than the way you don't."

Know What to Say: In some circles witness is limited to a silent "Christian presence." Total emphasis is placed on a godly walk without talk. Though a godly nonverbal presence is necessary, witness requires words as well as works. Proclamation--giving a clear statement of the Gospel--is indispensable.

We should learn the general steps in leading a person to Christ whether or not we follow set formulas. An outline need not be recited with mechanical preciseness, but used with flexibility to adapt to varying situations. After explanation, a simple way to help someone make a decision is to ask, "Now that you have heard the way, would

you be willing to receive Christ?" If the answer is affirmative, suggest he bow his head and offer aloud a short prayer in which he invites Christ into his heart to forgive his sin and to be Lord of his life.

It is helpful to memorize verses which support the explanation of the Gospel. It is also wise to memorize verses that answer the leading excuses people give for not becoming Christians, such as, "I live a moral life," or, "There are too many hypocrites in the Church." The Bible says, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." [See next article.]

Live Consistently and Lovingly: One morning a young lay preacher employed by a publishing house boarded a bus for work. Having received change from the bus driver, the young man counted the money and found a quarter too much. At first he thought, "The bus is too crowded to get back to the driver, and the company will never miss it anyway." But he made his way to the front and told the driver, "You gave me too much change." The driver replied, "Yes, I gave it to you on purpose. Last night I heard you preach."

To fail to practice what we preach will destroy the credibility of our witness. The student who tries to win her classmate to Christ, then cheats on an exam, will be unconvincing. The employee who loafs on the job, then tries to testify to his non-Christian boss, will find a deaf ear. The driver whose car bears a "Praise the Lord" sticker, but whose driving is discourteous, will turn people away from the Lord. How sad for a father, after laboriously explaining to his little girl what a Christian is, to hear her say, "Daddy, have I ever seen one?"

Exercise Patience: We should not be discouraged if a person does not respond to the Gospel immediately. Paul advised Timothy, "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance."

Since people often watch our lives over a period of time, perhaps unknown to us, it may take a while before they respond to our witness. A new church member testified in prayer meeting, "A year ago I chose one of the members here and observed him closely in his business and family life. After 12 months of watching I became convinced of the genuineness of his faith, and I received Christ too."

Even when our effort seems rejected or unproductive, we should remember that our consistent testimony may be just one link in a long chain of witnesses that God is using to help a person to faith. One

sows, another waters. Still another cultivates; and yet another reaps. But it is God who gives the increase. And all will share in the reward.

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TEACH CHILDREN TO WITNESS TOO

Joyce Broyles

For over thirty years now, I have been sharing the gospel with children, encouraging them to hide God's Word in their hearts. As soon as I returned from Southeastern Christian College, a mere eighteen years old, I was saddled with a Bible Class of eighth grade boys. Remarkably, thirty-four years later, I am still teaching eighth grade boys. However, in the interim, I taught classes from babies through high school, the Girls' Club, Child Evangelism clubs, and even a few ladies' Bible classes.

Sometimes the classes have been difficult, but I keep volunteering. I need the challenge to keep studying. I have found that I learn so much more than I can ever teach. Some classes, though, have been harder to manage than others. Several times my children have asked, "Why do you keep doing it? You don't even get paid for it!" At those times, I have thought to myself that I have "bread to eat that you know not of."

There were some expenses for consumable items, supplies, special projects and refreshments; however, the cost of my time was the most valuable. Yet through the years I have been privileged to witness some of these students give their lives to Jesus. At those times, any little sacrifice that I might have made was nothing compared to the joy I experienced at their baptisms. I am not an evangelistic minister, so I have not led hundreds to Jesus, but I can vividly recall the first one, David, and then John, the King family, Jeff, Melissa, Lisa, Laura, and Kelly, as well as our own children.

Basically, I am a shy person, especially in a crowd or when I feel intimidated by others. In a classroom, however, when I am well-prepared and sitting beside my students, I feel wonderful about telling them about Jesus.

Adapting the teaching to the ages of the students, naturally, I try to tell each class how to come to Christ. Fourth graders are my fa-

vorite age group, and it is with this group that I especially stress commitment to the Lord for salvation.

Often we ROLE-PLAY, having one student ask another about Jesus. I have a small script that I have them adapt and use. We practice it regularly:

Saved person to Unsaved friend: I had a good time last Sunday in Bible class. Do you go to Bible class anywhere?

Unsaved person: No. What do you do at Bible class?

Saved: We learn about trusting Jesus so we can go to heaven some day.

Unsaved: Who's Jesus? Why do you trust Him?

Saved: Well, first of all, everyone has been bad or done bad things. The Bible says everyone has sinned.

Unsaved: So what does that mean?

Saved: Everyone was sinning or doing bad things. God is in heaven, and when He saw how everyone was acting, He sent His son Jesus to pay the price for our sins. Jesus came down from heaven and died for us, taking the punishment our sins deserved.

Unsaved: Then what happened?

Saved: God made Him alive again. Jesus went back to heaven and He's waiting for us, getting our mansions ready. There won't be any pain there.

Unsaved: Sounds like a good place. How can I get there?

Saved: You have to trust Jesus to forgive and change you. If you really trust Him you will confess, obey and follow Him.

Unsaved: Confess what?

Saved: The six most important words you will ever say: "Jesus is the Son of God." You must confess this in front of other people to show that you believe Him and are not ashamed of Him.

Unsaved: Then what?

Saved: After you confess, then you must obey. The Bible says you should repent or turn from doing wrong, and be baptized.

Unsaved: Okay, then what?

Saved: After you have trusted and obeyed Jesus, then you must follow. When you follow someone, you don't just take one step. You must follow them each day. That's what you do with Jesus. Each day, you ask Him to show you which way to go.

Unsaved: So the good news is that I can go to heaven too?

Saved: Yes, if you trust and follow Jesus. He died for us so we can be forgiven and go to heaven.

Usually, the students enjoy role-playing, and after each student has been paired off and gone through the script, the students almost know it from memory. At that point, I explain that in order to do this properly, they should know those verses that they referred to. And thus, the MEMORY WORK begins.

Each week that we meet, a new verse is added to the ones they have learned. All of the ones learned are reviewed first, each student having a chance to recite each in turn. Gradually, other facts are added to the scripture list, and the students learn things about the Bible as well as the scriptures themselves.

Of course, there are many books offering helps to parents and teachers and even students, too, about which verses to memorize and how to memorize them. I have made my own list and the rationale for them has just been explained above. The age level of the child has to be considered, but children learn a lot at a young age. They can recite TV commercials and silly songs, so I know that they can also put good things in their minds as well. These are just the things I try to teach them during the first thirteen-week period or quarter that I would have them as students.

1. Romans 3:23 All have sinned...
(After we role-play)
2. John 3:16 For God so loved the world ...
(Review role-play also)
3. Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized ...
(Review role-play also)
4. Acts 2:38 Repent and be baptized ...
(Review role-play also)
5. 1 John 2:6 Whoever claims to live in Him ...
(Review role-play also)
6. Facts: *Bible* means "book".

2 divisions: Old and New Testaments. *Testament* means promise. 66 books in all; 39 in OT, 27 in NT; 40 authors. First 4 in New Testament are gospels, biographies of Jesus. Acts was written by Luke, a doctor, who also wrote Gospel of Luke. Paul wrote the next 12-13 *epistles* or letters to churches and friends. James, Peter and Jude wrote others. John wrote the gospel of John, 3 letters and the Revelation.

7. Moses wrote the first 5 books in the Old Testament. God always has been here and He started everything in the beginning.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God .

8. During the 7 days of creation, God created these things:
(learn Poem)

Day one:*Night and day*

Day two:And *sky*,

Day three:*Land and sea*, oh my!

Day four:*Sun, moon and stars*, like a fan,
look down on

Day five:*Fish and birds*,

Day six:*Animals and man*.

Day seven:God rested.

9. Genesis 9:13 I set my bow in the clouds ...(Tell about flood, etc.)

10. Joshua 24:15 But as for me ... (God wants us to serve Him.)

11. 1 Samuel 15:22 To obey is better ... (God wants us to obey always.)

12. The Gospel, or good news, in a word is LOVE. The love book is Ruth (she promised to go with her loved one and worship God together). The love chapter is 1 Corinthians 13 (tells what love is and does and does not do). The love verse is 1 Cor 13:13. And now there is faith, hope and love ...

13. Jesus only had three years to teach, so he did not get sidetracked. He told many things that were important. He made 7 claims about himself that John recorded in his biography about Jesus. Jesus said:

I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am the door. I am the good shepherd. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the way, the truth and the life. I am the vine.

Bible verses are for *keeping* in our memories and our actions. But they are also for *giving away* to other people.

PERSON TO PERSON

Harold N. Englund

What are we really trying to do when we witness for Christ?

Are we trying to fight the Lord's battles, smiting unbelievers hip and thigh? Are we trying to defend the Faith against its outspoken enemies?

As a rule neither. In fact if we approach the ordinary person with any sort of menacing air, we're likely to fail. At worst, we'll get into a heated argument, with its residue of personal resentment. At best, we'll merely leave our "adversary" perplexed. (He probably doesn't care enough about religion to argue about it anyway.)

If our aim isn't to defend the Almighty, and if it isn't to win arguments, what is it? The Gospel of John gives us a clue. "These things are written in order that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

"That you might believe": this is an aim of witnessing, but it is only an immediate aim. "That you might have life": this is the ultimate aim.

The kind of life to which John refers is life in relationship with God through Christ, or life "in Christ," as Paul put it. The Bible also describes it as fellowship with God, Christ and the Church (1 John 1:1-3).

To apply this to witnessing, I would like to develop two contrasting definitions for the key ideas of the Gospel: sin, repentance, forgiveness, faith and Christian life. I will define each, first in impersonal, then in "life-in-relationship" terms.

Life's Purpose

Let's introduce this project with the question, "Why am I here?" The prayer of Augustine, found near the beginning of his *Confessions*, gives the answer: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee."

"Made for Thyself," said Augustine. That is, we are made for fellowship with God. Do you remember how the Ten Commandments given to Israel at Mount Sinai begin? Not with a command,

but with a declaration of relationship. "I am Jehovah, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." And then on the basis of this relationship comes the command, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

Remove the Person-to person context, and what do you have? A code of conduct. But at the heart of the Ten Commandments is the personal relationship between the Lord God and His people. Try reading the Third Command both ways, impersonally and personally. "Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain." There, a flat prohibition. But now look at what the Lord, the Covenant God and Gracious Deliverer, actually said: "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah, thy God, in vain." What a difference. The pronoun points to the context of personal relationship.

Sin

Depersonalized, sin is breaking a rule. And for many people, sin is only that. Yet the difference between God's moral law on the one hand and the natural law on the other is in this matter of personal relationship. If a person "breaks" the law of gravity by falling off a wall onto the sidewalk, he has no need to apologize; he has no feeling of guilt. But breaking the moral law brings guilt, shame, the downcast eye.

In life-in-relationship terms, sin is the betrayal of a personal relationship. Originally, it was the repudiation of the relationship between man and his Creator. Sin takes the form of breaking the obligations which flow out of this relationship. John calls sin "the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). By this he means the law of God, the will of a Person.

Any notion of sin which omits this personal reference (e.g., missing a target, a broken link in a chain, fifteen ounces in the pound) is inadequate if taken alone. The story of the prodigal son puts it better. The boy walked out on his father and broke his father's heart. His repudiation of the father-son relationship was the core of his sin. Sin is betrayal of a relationship.

Repentance

People commonly think of repentance as admitting that one has done wrong, but that is too easy, too shallow.

The word repentance literally means a change of mind. But set in a context of personal relationship, repentance involves sorrow over one's betrayal of a valued relationship and a desire for its reestablishment.

What did the prodigal son say when he repented? "I will arise and go to my father." And in reasserting this father-son relationship we know that "he came to himself," his true self.

Or listen to David mourning over his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of her husband. In Psalm 51 does he pray: "Against the Sixth and Seventh Commandments have I sinned"? No. "Against Thee, and Thee only, have I sinned."

Repentance, then, is sorrow over personal betrayal.

Forgiveness

What happens when God forgives? If we abstract this wonderful act of God from its personal context, forgiveness becomes a legal transaction--the cancellation of a penalty, or the remission of a debt.

The forgiveness of sin includes this idea, of course, but it is much deeper. A little boy knows this instinctively. What does he really want when he comes with choked voice and tear-filled eyes to his father for forgiveness? Does he want the cancellation of a penalty? No, he might even feel better if he were punished. He wants his father to know about his misconduct and his sorrow for it. He wants his father to absorb the inter-personal strain and let the love of their father-son relationship win out. All this is included in the father's embrace and loving word.

Now the atonement certainly involves substitutionary sacrifice, the cancellation of penalty. But its goal is reestablishment of fellowship between the believer in Christ and the Holy God. Forgiveness brings acceptance, removal of the strain, the experience of being "home" again with God. In forgiveness, God gives us not just His benefits, but Himself. Forgiveness is renewal of fellowship.

Saving Faith

All this has prepared us to understand saving faith. Can faith, too, lose its heart by being treated impersonally?

Faith begins with knowledge about the person and work of Christ. Knowledge is followed by a form of belief, acceptance of the great facts about Christ as true. (I'm now using the word belief in a restricted, impersonal sense. The Bible uses it this way when it says, "Even the demons believe--and shudder.")

A step beyond knowledge and "belief" is saving faith. Saving faith adds a new element, since belief can be detached, impersonal.

uncommitted. Saving faith includes personal trust, commitment, the giving away of oneself to a person.

I am here contrasting depersonalized faith (belief in a set of truths) with saving, life-in-relationship faith (commitment of life to a person). On the one hand is the statement, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate . . ." and on the other is the glad confession of Thomas, made directly to Jesus, "My Lord! and my God!" Here again, the personal relationship is revealed by the pronouns.

Let me use the illustration of marriage, since the New Testament refers to the Church as the bride of Christ. At a wedding service the climax is reached when the bride and groom face each other and commit their total selves to one another. In this mutual giving away of self comes the commitment, the trust, the relationship. They came there as man and woman; they go away as husband and wife. Each of these terms of relationship has two people in it.

So I say to Christ, "I take Thee, Jesus, as my Savior and my Lord . . . from this day forward." This act of commitment is the heart of saving faith. Let all witnessing make this clear.

Yes, your aim is that your friend may believe. But why? In order that he may have life. This life is in Christ. It is the new relationship with the Father that comes by commitment to the Son.

Christian Life

Finally, what is the Christian life? Shall we allow new life with God in Christ to be depersonalized? This would contradict the heart of Gospel. Yet it is common to hear the Christian life set forth as a series of impersonal rules: "You must do this; you must not do that."

The Bible gives the Christian a lot of commands, but they are all set within the context of his relationship to God. The Christian obeys as a son. He obeys out of love (and "love is the fulfilling of the law," Romans 13:8,10). The Christian's aim is to please his Beloved, who is the Lord, Jesus Christ. Anything less reduces the abundant life, the joyful life in Christ, to dreary legalism.

So we see two set of definitions for the key ideas of the Gospel. The personal set arises from the conviction that we were made for fellowship with God. The impersonal set falls short of this.

Sin depersonalized is breaking a rule. Sin in terms of life-in-relationship is betrayal of a relationship

Repentance depersonalized is admitting guilt. Repentance in terms of life-in-relationship is sorrow over personal betrayal.

Forgiveness depersonalized is cancellation of a penalty. Forgiveness in terms of life-in-relationship is renewal of fellowship.

Faith depersonalized is belief in a certain set of truths. Faith in terms of life-in-relationship is commitment of life to the Person to whom the truths apply.

The Christian Life depersonalized is obeying rules. The Christian life in terms of life-in-relationship is pleasing the Lord who loves us.

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YOU HAVE A TESTIMONY (HAVEN'T YOU?)

Gordon R. Linscott

Some years ago I canvassed approximately 100 church members in good standing with a Church of Christ, asking them two questions. My first question was, "Do you have hope of eternal life?" Except for one, all answered in the affirmative--although some seemed a little uncertain. The one who said, "No," also added, "I don't *hope* for eternal life, because I *have* eternal life right now." And he was able to cite the appropriate scriptures.

The second question was, "Upon what do you base your hope?" Less than ten people related their "hope" to "Jesus Christ our hope" (1 Tim. 1:1). Even of those who reported that they were trusting in the Lord Jesus, there were some who weren't too sure that they had the right answer. Very few knew the Way and *knew* that they knew Him. Most were hoping ("Wishing" would be more accurate) on the basis of church membership, good works, "doing the best they could," etc. And yet that congregation had not lacked in good sound Bible teaching. How could there be such abysmal ignorance of the most fundamental fact of the gospel?

"BE READY ALWAYS"

The command of the Lord, through Peter, is "Be ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). Why are we so unready? This is a question that has deeply disturbed me. Inquiring of brethren in various congregations around, I find the condition to be general. When, in a Sunday school class or other small informal meeting there is call for Christians to give a testimony for the Lord, the response is almost nil. When Christians will not speak of their faith to each other, certainly they are not likely "to give answer to every man that asketh" in the course of their daily lives.

THE MISSING KEY

In the book of Acts (8:4) we read that "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." We know the results. And we know that these "preachers" were not specially trained nor professionally schooled. They were ordinary people who were willing to tell what Jesus Christ meant to them. *Personal witness* was the key to the spread of the gospel in the first century. Even the apostles were primarily witnesses—not preachers or teachers or theologians (Acts 1:8). More than once we have record of Paul's giving testimony to his own experience of conversion.

There can be no doubt about the effectiveness of the personal testimonial. Thousands of dollars are paid to put on your television screen a picture of some unidentified housewife—an expert in nothing—who says, "Fab really did give me a whiter wash!" Result? The cost is soon repaid by housewives who rush out to try it for themselves. The personal testimonial cannot be refuted. When you argue about doctrine with a person, even if you win the argument, you lose the man. When you say, "Jesus Christ changed my life," he has no answer.

Today there are in use a multitude of schemes for reaching the community with the gospel. They are effective to a small degree, but usually it is a tiny fraction of any congregation that gets involved. I believe that the key to community outreach is the personal witness of every believer, in his usual, every-day situation. This key is missing. Christians are not ready to speak for their Lord when the opportunity presents itself.

HOW TO GET READY

In less than two minutes, you can read aloud Paul's personal testimony before Agrippa (Acts 26). With just a little effort, you can compose your own testimony following Paul's pattern. The essentials may be summed up in three words: Before, During and After. What

were you before you met the Lord? This is the starting point. Whether you were pious or a profligate, you were lost, dead in trespasses and sins. "For there is no difference, for all have sinned . . ." It is not necessary to relate the gory details of your behavior, but you certainly should be clear on the hopelessness of your condition without Christ.

Secondly, answer the question, "What happened to you?" We have all been saved by the same wonderful Savior, but He didn't deal with any two of us in exactly the same way. What circumstances did He use to bring you to Himself? This in itself is thrilling—how He knew to apply just the right kind of pressure at the right time. A word of caution here: Be on your guard against taking part of the credit for yourself. "Salvation belongeth to Jehovah." "Let Him that glorieth glory in the Lord."

Now to the "after" part. What difference is there between what you are now and what you were? Do you see tangible evidence of being a new creature? Have the old things really passed away from your life and all things become new? Then tell it! (If your life hasn't changed, then you haven't really met the Lord. When He takes over, He changes you.)

If you are to go all the way with Paul, one thing more should be added: The offer. Ask the Lord for boldness to add, "I wish you could experience for yourself the wonderful things that the Lord Jesus has done for me. And He will, if you just ask Him to." Of course, you don't need to use these words—Paul didn't (Acts 26:29).

It might be helpful to you to write out your testimony so you can go over it and make it more presentable to your friends. In any case, *do* take time to think it through in your own mind. Pretend that you are telling it to a friend, and consider what should be left out or included. Try to think of appropriate verses of Scripture that you might use to "back up" your own experience. Be careful that what you say *does* conform to the truth of God's word. A good way to begin is to practice on a Christian friend. You'll be surprised what a blessing it will be to him (or her) to hear of the Lord's dealings with you—even though you may feel that it was poorly told. And you'll be even more surprised at what a blessing it is to *you* when you struggle through the first few attempts to tell it to an unbeliever.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive," said the Lord Jesus. If you receive a blessing in receiving the word from the pulpit, you'll be blessed a thousand times more by sharing it with someone else. Try it and see.

WITNESS WITH QUESTIONS

Waldron Scott

Do you instinctively reject the grab-'em-by-the-necktie approach to personal evangelism for a "more natural" technique?

If so, you may find yourself desperately wanting to witness to a friend, but uncertain how to introduce the claims of Christ into the conversation. Or having managed that, perhaps you have found yourself struggling mentally to control the conversation long enough to present the gospel adequately.

No doubt about it, our first awkward efforts at friendship evangelism can be frustrating experiences. Some of us have even reluctantly decided that starting evangelistic conversations is the prerogative of gifted conversationalists--or insensitive zealots.

To solve this problem, many effective personal evangelists rely on certain habitual patterns to initiate and guide conversations along fruitful lines. Properly employed, such patterns are immensely valuable. They avoid the offensiveness of high pressure salesmanship, yet they overcome the hesitancy which too often neutralizes our sincere efforts to witness to others.

A number of such patterned sequences are in use today. A sequence that I regularly utilize consists of a short series of questions and statements that are easy to memorize and employ. Let me illustrate it by two examples. I have changed names but the incidents themselves are authentic. (The key questions of the sequence are italicized.) In this first sketch Jan and Fred are leaving the university chapel together, although about the same dialogue would occur if any religious person were asked Fred's questions.

Fred: That was a stimulating sermon wasn't it? *Are you interested in spiritual things, Jan?*

Jan (soberly): Yes, I am. Actually, I think about God a lot.

Fred (with a slight inflection emphasizing the word "real"): *Have you ever thought about becoming a real Christian?*

Jan (laughing): Why, do I look like a heathen? Seriously though, I'm not sure I could live up to being a real Christian. There are so many things in the Bible I don't understand. Do you believe everything in the Bible?

Fred (not answering her query directly): *Jan, if someone were to ask you, "What is a real Christian?" how would you answer?*

So far, so good. The conversation goes on from there. But Jan, it must be admitted, is very responsive. What about students who are indifferent or even antagonistic to religion? Let's see how Fred would handle such a situation.

In this instance he and Don are lounging in the student union. For some time their conversation ranges animatedly over a variety of topics. Then there is a lull.

Fred: *Don, are you interested in spiritual things?*

Don (surprised): Huh? Oh, I don't know. No, I'm afraid not.

Fred (with slight inflection emphasizing the word "thought"): *Well, have you ever thought about becoming a real Christian?*

Don: No, not really. It's been years since I darkened a church door. My folks forced me to go to Sunday school when I was a kid, and I got so I hated it. I just don't have time for that stuff any more.

Fred: *Don, if someone were to ask you, "What is a real Christian?" what would you say?*

You noticed, of course, that Fred's approach to Jan and Don was identical. Does this surprise you? Yet this is the whole point of a patterned sequence. If well thought out, it can be used almost anywhere with anyone.

"Are you interested . . .?" The question is personal, as it should be, but it is not an invasion of privacy. ". . . in spiritual things?" You could say "in religion" or "in Christianity" just as easily if you feel more comfortable with either of those phrases. In any event the question in its entirety is broad enough and vague enough to be perfectly innocuous, while still getting the dialogue under way.

But having begun you may be plagued by the prospect of a negative response from your listener. Your mind is likely to be a turmoil of "What will I say if . . .?" "But what if she says . . .?" or "How can I continue if . . .?" The potential embarrassment of such an impasse is enough to keep most of us from launching out.

Two observations should be made here. First, the negative response we fear is practically non-existent. Perhaps it's the age we

live in. Perhaps it's just human nature. But the fact remains that most people today are interested, even eager, to discuss spiritual matters. Second, with respect to those few who may respond negatively or (more likely) indifferently, why not relax and be ready with a question that is appropriate regardless of response.

"Have you ever thought about becoming a real Christian?" is designed for this purpose. Like the opening question, this one is direct, personal but non-offensive. Of course, whether it is unoffensive depends a great deal on the manner in which we ask it. Philip's query to the Ethiopian, "Do you understand what you are reading?" is conceivably insulting, but not necessarily so. Doubtless Philip's sincere interest and friendly manner made the difference.

Further, ever-so-slight inflections of the voice are sufficient to adjust to the various possible responses. In Jan's case, Fred wanted to arouse her curiosity by implying that there was more to being a Christian than she had thus far experienced. In the second illustration Don's less-than-enthusiastic response led Fred to present him with a friendly, implied challenge.

Observe that up to this point Fred has been questioning, not preaching. Jan and Don had every opportunity to express themselves. But in so doing they were altogether likely to get off on some tangent irrelevant to Fred's objective (e.g., Jan's question about the Bible, Don's diatribe against Sunday school). So Fred is faced with the challenge of unobtrusively controlling the conversation long enough to present the gospel adequately. This is critical, and it is important that he does not flounder.

Fred meets this challenge with his third question, "What is a real Christian?" But since this question is not in direct reply to what either Jan or Don just said, you may ask why Fred ignores their particular responses. He does this because he knows that it is imperative for him to lead the conversation directly toward the gospel. He is able to do it because experience shows that the new question is so inherently interesting that students are quick to respond to it.

Moreover, by framing his question with "If someone were to ask you . . . how would you answer?" Fred introduces an imaginary third party. This keeps the pressure off Jan and Don, who continue to express themselves freely.

However, this third question is not a gimmick to keep the conversation moving. Far from it. In answering Fred, both Jan and Don will reveal their understanding--or lack of understanding--of the gos-

pel. For the fact is this: Jan's and Don's answers to this question are quite predictable. The replies of the majority of students will center on the principle of good works. They will define or describe a Christian in terms of what he *does* rather than what he *is* (a new creation in Christ).

To illustrate this, let's continue to follow Fred's talks with Jan and Don. Since Fred's approach to both is essentially the same, for the sake of brevity we will arbitrarily concentrate on Don.

Fred: If someone were to ask you, "What is a real Christian?" what would you say?

Don: Well, I'm not sure. I guess a real Christian is someone who goes to church regularly and follows the Golden Rule and turns the other cheek and all that sort of thing.

Fred: You know, that's what most people think. *I used to think that myself.*

Don (after a short pause): Do you mean you've changed your ideas? What do you think a real Christian is now?

Fred: *Can you spare ten minutes, Don? If you have time I'd like to show you what the Bible says a Christian is and how to become one.*

The first three times Fred spoke, it was to ask questions. The fourth time, however, he makes a statement. What is the significance of this? Well, Fred's objective is to present the gospel. If possible he would like to be invited to do so. By saying "I used to think that myself," but offering no explanation, he takes advantage of human curiosity. It is almost certain that Don, who up until now has been answering questions, will reverse the order and begin to question Fred.

However, now that Fred has his opportunity to witness he refrains from plunging immediately into a lengthy discourse. He proposes a time limit and indicates that the Scriptures will be the basis of his presentation. Finally, he asks permission to proceed. In doing this Fred maintains the spirit of courtesy that has characterized him throughout. And he assures himself of Don's uncoerced attention. Moreover, if Don should indicate that he doesn't have ten minutes to spare right then, Fred is still free to suggest another time and place.

It is essential to note that Fred's conversations with Jan and Don are not extraordinary examples of good luck. Rather they demon-

strate an effective patterned sequence that can be used repeatedly. The cardinal feature is a series of questions and statements to which responses are predictable and which inevitably lead to a presentation of the gospel.

This technique has been likened to freeway traffic. The entrance may be crowded, but once you squeeze into the freeway (i.e., once you ask the initial question) you move quickly and directly to your destination. If for some reason you are interrupted or get off on a tangent, it is relatively easy to get back on the freeway, since you know what the next question logically should be. Under some circumstances you may even want to initiate the conversation with the second or third question.

Some people may object that reliance upon a technique limits the Holy Spirit. It may. Mechanicalness is a constant danger to the Christian, not only in witnessing but in every area of life. On the other hand, such a technique may enhance the liberty of the Spirit. It enables you to concentrate prayerfully on the person you're with, rather than agonize over what to say next.

But is it really possible to treat everyone the same? Is witnessing a routine, like grinding out sausages? Of course not. The thing to remember is that this pattern is a method for opening conversations and presenting an initial witness. More often than not, at the end of the ten-minute presentation your companion will want to continue. Then you will have ample opportunity to tailor your witness to his particular needs.

Will this approach guarantee results? No, not in itself. If you are shy you will still have to trust God for courage. Skill in handling the Scriptures, prayer to the Lord of the harvest, perseverance and practice: no substitutes exist for these.

Finally, let me point out that by analyzing the principle of this sequence you may be able to develop a pattern of your own. Because it is your own it may prove even more effective for you in introducing the claims of Jesus Christ. But until you have done so, why not use the three questions in this article?

- (1) Are you interested in spiritual things?
- (2) Have you ever thought about becoming a real Christian?
- (3) If someone were to ask you "What is a real Christian?" how would you answer?

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For Women (and Non-Women)

FROZEN AT THE MOUTH

The evening service was over and everyone was making their way out of church, or standing around in the porch talking--about this and that. One young couple were talking about something rather special that had happened. The week before the girl had become a Christian. "When I went to work on Monday, everyone wanted to know why I was so happy," she said. "And I told them I had just become a Christian." How lovely to tell others so naturally about an event like that in her life.

And why not tell folk--we tell them about other things--yet talking about a spiritual experience seems different, so personal. Many find it hard and remain like Arctic rivers, frozen at the mouth.

How does a woman witness to her friends and neighbors? Chiefly by her life. It should be different and attractive to the outsider. Then, as opportunity occurs, she will be able to say what Jesus Christ means to her.

NEIGHBOR

For instance a woman singing to herself, as she hung out the family washing, was asked over the fence, "How do you manage to keep so cheerful with all your brood?" Very wisely she did not give her testimony there and then--it wasn't a very good moment. For one thing she did not want her neighbor to catch pneumonia, and anyway the neighbor probably had many things cluttering her mind--the lunch in the oven, the shopping to be done, the children to collect from the playground. What she did say, quite casually, was, "If you really want to know, I'll tell you one afternoon over a cuppa. Something happened to me a couple of years ago--life hasn't been the same since." I can imagine that neighbor going indoors interested; she had been given a tid bit which as she chewed over would make her want more.

CHATTING

Another woman just chats about her Christian experience as the chance is given her. On a bus one day she got talking to the woman in the next seat, who admired her jumper. "Oh, someone at the church made it for me," she replied. "Do you go to church? It's made such a difference to my life. I didn't always go, but one day I asked Jesus Christ to come into my life, and do you know, I haven't been the same person since. I've been a new woman." Her fellow traveller was interested.

If we allow Jesus Christ to come into our everyday lives and affect the ordinary things we find ourselves doing, then as we chat about them, we shall find that along with them goes Jesus. Telling others about what he means to us and seeing others putting their trust in him is one of life's most thrilling experiences. Pray and God will give you the opportunities and the words to speak.

VOICES from the FIELDS

[Even these letters fit in with our theme]

David Moldez

Manila, Philippines

April 3, 1994

[Bro. Moldez was one of our co-workers, -AVW]

I praise God for the privilege and joy of serving Him. Here are some recent highlights here.

Commencement Exercises at *Central Bible College* (formerly Bible Institute): 15 students graduated from the three different programs. One of them is now pastoring the newly planted church at Novaliches [which David helped to plant--AVW].

March 31-April 1, the church held a Holy Week Retreat at Novaliches. Praise God for 13 who were baptized that day. April 27-30 there was a joint Evangelistic Camp in Laguna province. Young people from the Frisco and Novaliches churches plus the outreach in Nagcarlan attended. Praise God 28 young people were baptized afterwards. From May 2-8 a joint VBS was held by the two local churches at Novaliches, and 120 students came. From May 9-13 a church workers seminar was held. Thirty-six workers from five churches came for training.

Pray that God will give me wisdom as I oversee three local churches (Frisco and 2 in Novaliches), and as we work for the growth of the outreaches in San Miquel and Nagcarlan. Truly the Lord opens doors for His work. The outreaches in Bulacan started as one member at Frisco followed up his relatives there. Now around 30 believers gather for worship under the mango tree every Sunday afternoon. The outreach in Nagcarlan started after one of the young people died. Since the funeral, around 25 gather for worship every Sunday afternoon. I visit them from time to time.

Thank you so much for your prayers for us. In Christian education it seems you seldom see fruit from your labors right away, but the Lord has let us see a little in recent weeks that encourages us to go on. Our prayer is that the fruit will abide.

During the first six months of school several students received Christ as their savior, and teachers have been trying to meet with them for discipling. Several began praying for unsaved family members, and it seemed they were growing in the Lord

Then about a month ago a high school retreat was held at a nearby camp. The attendance was good. On Saturday night an opportunity was made for the students to speak to the group. For quite a while one after another stood to share his faith or to accept Christ as his savior. One of the boys was baptized at the camp.

Since that weekend a good number of the students have been meeting on Friday nights for prayer and sharing, and quite a few more have come to the teachers saying they want to be saved. Last Monday at the end of the 7-9th grade chapel, students were once again given opportunity to speak, and for over an hour the front of the room was full of students waiting for an opportunity to confess Christ before their peers. Many of the students said that they had accepted Christ at some time in the lower grades, but they never really meant it until now. Some shared that they had recently begun having quiet times with the Lord and that was blessing their lives. One girl shared her burden for the millions that have never heard.

Around 80% of our students are from Catholic and unbelieving homes. Most in elementary accept Christ at some time as a result of the teaching or a chapel service, but when they get to jr. high and adolescence, many are pulled away or lulled to sleep. Some from Catholic families think they they are betraying their parents and they can't be Christian and Catholic, too. We try to stress that the important thing for Catholic or Protestant is a personal relationship with the Lord that includes study of the Bible and following what it says. We try not to attack the Catholic church, but show that many of its doctrines come from tradition and not the Bible, and we explain that for us the Bible is the only source of truth. We pray that the Holy Spirit will ultimately lead them to the same position. Some devout Catholic families do not allow their children to participate in our spiritual life activities, and occasionally a child is removed from the school because of differences in religious teaching, but we try to avoid con-

frontation. We want to be perceived as drawing kids to Christ—not away from their parents.

There has been some protest from parents that their children should not have made this commitment without consulting them, and in one of the families, which is Buddhist, the student has been ridiculed and not allowed to attend church, but several families have seemed supportive. Most of the response at this time has been from the jr. high group, although many of the others have made individual commitments at some time in the past, and one senior in particular has made a first-time commitment and has stood unashamed before some in his class who are openly hostile to what is taught here. We are concerned that this moving of the Spirit not just become a fad, but that the students can be disciplined and become involved in an evangelical church. We are praying that as students ask questions in the home, parents will also begin to study and to long for a relationship with Christ. Please pray with us that the fruit will abide.

Crystal has been teaching the 7-12 graders in Sunday School since January. We have been talking about sharing our faith, and being willing to give testimony before others. Last week our class went to Central Park in town and had a street meeting. One or two were afraid to go, but most went along. At first the kids hung back, but later they warmed up and began singing and passing out tracts. After the meeting several engaged others in conversation. The most enthusiastic was Sebastian, a boy from our neighborhood who played basketball with John and Ted, came when he was invited to church, and accepted the Lord the morning of the street meeting! Afterward the kids shared how they felt, and all of them were glad they had gone. Some wanted to go again. Praise God!

UNWANTED BROTHERS

Alex. V. Wilson

Have you ever felt like this: "I wish God had saved me by myself and then left me alone, instead of putting me into a spiritual family, the church. If only He dealt with me as an isolated individual, without all those troublesome fellow-believers! Or why doesn't He at least let me choose my own brothers and sisters, so I could weed out some of the weirdos" (or fuddy-duddies, or radicals—or all of the preceding!) "Will He mind very much if my friends and I form our own holy huddle of think-alikes/act-alikes, and let our fellow-saints go their own sweet way?"

Yes, He will mind terribly much if we adopt such attitudes. His Word makes that clear. "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no

need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable" (1 Cor. 12:21,22).

We do need each other. Some of our brothers and sisters strengthen us by their inspiring lives and fervent service. Others strengthen us by providing us opportunities to exercise patience and forgiveness toward them. Whichever way, we find opportunities to grow.

Sticky Questions

Who is my brother in Christ? And how should I treat him? What if he differs from me? Can I have fellowship with him if he is amillennial? Charismatic? believes "once saved, always saved"? uses a piano in his worship-meetings? has a different sign-board from ours on his church house? What if he voted for Clinton? has long hair? used to be on drugs? has been divorced? What if he thinks the world of Benny Hinn, Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and the Pope? What if he has or believes all of the above? Can a person like that be our brother in Christ? And if he is, do we have to admit it, and treat him like one?

Yes, God's grace is great enough that He can save, keep, and use a person like that. If not, how do I know His grace can save, keep, and use me? If this man has received Christ as Lord and Savior, then God has received him as a son (John 1:12), and that makes him my brother. "Receive one another, as Christ has received you" (Romans 15:7). Christ received me with all my faults, failings, sins and errors. So I should receive other people with all their sins and errors too. That doesn't mean I have to be happy about their shortcomings: Christ isn't happy about mine. But He receives me, and then starts using His chisel and sandpaper to make me what I ought to be. He'll do the same for His other followers.

Some Basic Scriptures

Passage after passage in Scripture (besides ones we've already mentioned) show the importance of Christian unity and fellowship. Romans 14 shows that differing beliefs had arisen among the saints in Rome, related to matters of diet and of observing holy days. Thus there were potentially four denominations there: the pro-meat pro-holydays church; the pro-meat anti-holydays church; the anti-meat pro-holydays church; and the anti-meat anti-holydays church. How did Paul deal with this touchy situation? Study the passage for yourself; it's an important one. Just summarizing, we observe that he says, don't look down on or condemn those who disagree with you. (After all, they may be right. And even if not, perhaps they are better Christians than you in spite of being mistaken on this opinion. And

even if that is not so, they need your help rather than your condemnation.) Second, he urges them to have their own beliefs based on what they think the Lord teaches and desires. (Obviously then it must be possible to respect those you disagree with and yet not be a wishy-washy Charlie Brown type.) Third and most important of all, he exhorts that they act with brotherly love. Remember that Christ died for that brother you disagree with; that makes a difference, doesn't it?

The passage says more, but those three main points serve as guidelines that can help us relate Biblically to brethren with whom we differ. Another basic passage is Ephesians four. It calls on us to be lowly, meek, patient and forbearing in love. It tells us that all real disciples of King Jesus already possess the unity of the *Spirit*, but ought to seek for the unity of the *faith* (3,13). That means we already are one in the Spirit, for the same Holy Spirit indwells every saint. But we must "maintain" that unity. Such maintenance work means we must remind ourselves of the unity which exists. Remember that you and I and all real believers have the same Father-God, the same saving-Lord, the same Comforter-Counselor. We share in the same body, and hope, and faith, and baptism (4-6). So let's act on this sevenfold unity, and demonstrate it visibly and practically! As we do so, we can make progress toward attaining unity of the *faith*. That is, we will grow in knowledge and understanding of "the faith," the truths God has revealed for us to believe. *Doctrinal agreement is thus portrayed not as something we must begin with, but as a goal to attain.* We shall never reach 100% doctrinal agreement in this life, for "God washes all our hearts on earth, and in heaven He will also wash our brains," as an old preacher said. But we can make significant progress toward the goal, especially if we seek to do so in the unity of the Spirit.

Other Passages

A number of other passages also stress the importance of loving unity and fellowship among all God's people: Christ's prayer for oneness, John 17; Paul's horrified rebuke of sectarianism or denominationalism, 1 Cor. 1; his plea for humble harmony, Phil. 2:1-11. He lists dissension and factions among the poisonous "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:20). Then John, in 3 John 10, condemns arrogant Diotrophes, who "refuses to welcome the brethren, and also stops those who want to welcome them and puts them out of the church." Factionalism or sectarianism was obviously a problem even in the days of the apostles.

It's true there are times when professing Christians should be disfellowshipped. But the New Testament seems to give only three grounds for such drastic action: (1) living in moral evil, 1 Cor. 5;

(2) denying the saving truths of the Gospel; that is, denying basic facts about who Christ is and what He did for our salvation, Gal 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 15:1-5; 1 Jn. 2:18-23; 2 Jn 7; (3) factionalism, or splitting up God's people, Rom. 16:17; Tit. 3:10. Unless a Christian is guilty of any of those evils, he should be welcomed into our fellowship, for Christ has already welcomed him into His (1 Jn. 1:3).

Let us carefully, constantly teach sound doctrine based on God's Word. Let us have our convictions about His Word and stick to them until someone shows us from Scripture that we are in error. But at the same time, let us remember that one teaching often repeated in Scripture is the need for God's people to offer loving fellowship to all who are in Christ, even if they disagree with us on many points. (*Questions for thought*: does the mythical person described in this article's fourth paragraph qualify Biblically for fellowship in my church? Would my church receive him?)

[To be Continued]

NEWS and NOTES

Edited By Jack Blaes

Honor To Whom Honor is Due

Sunday, July 31 has been designated ORELL & FRANCES OVERMAN DAY by the Pleasant Grove Church of Christ. All their friends are invited to help the church honor them and celebrate their long, fruitful ministry there—and in other churches before going there.

The day's festivities will be held at WOODLAND BIBLE CAMP. Worship will be held at 10 A.M. At 12:30 there'll be eating & fellowship. At 4:00 "roast of faithfulness," and at 6:00 leftovers & goodbyes. If you come for the meal, please bring a salad, vegetables or dessert. If possible bring special pictures of the Overman family or ministries, or other memorabilia.

"Share with us something unique & special about what Orell and/or Frances have meant to you.

Either write it for one of us to read that day, or better, plan to be here in person. Help us give them flowers now as together we celebrate the goodness of our Lord and Saviour."
--Tooger Smith, Rt. 1, Box 272, Lyons, IN 47443; (812) 659-2616

Texas Church Needs Minister

The Prairie Creek Church of Christ is looking for a preacher. It is located in the Dallas area. Anyone interested or wanting more information may contact John Martin, 8620 Fireside Drive, Dallas Tx. 75217. Or phone (214) 398-4601.

Pray for Donald Harris, who just resigned as minister there. He has both Alzheimer's Disease and Parkinson's Disease!

Brother Boll's Book Now in Spanish

"Greetings from Bogota, Colombia. Thank you for helping

make possible the translation of R. H. Boll's book, *Christ's Teaching on Prayer*. It is now completed and being distributed to 2000 pastors & layleaders in Columbia." —Ernie Whiteside

40 copies were sent here (U.S.), most of them to Jennings Church of Christ for the mission work they help sponsor in Mexico. They donated for the cost of translating/printing. The book is 119 pages long, with a full-color cover. May the Lord continue to bless it. The English edition is available from the W&W office, of course, @ \$1.40 plus postage (& tax in Ky.). —AVW

Southeast Church of Christ, Louisville

The members studied spiritual gifts & took a Spiritual Gifts Inventory. Based on the results, various Ministry Teams have been formed, led by the elders & deacons.

A Luau was held for the 8 graduating seniors.

Baby Recognition / Parental Commitment certificates & photos were handed out, encouraging parents to bring their children up in Christ-centered ways.

5 members or close friends plan to take part in mission trips this summer, either to Russia or Honduras, Central America.

More About Video Games

I knew there were lots of junky video games, but this is ridiculous! Just today I saw a catalog. Here's the first "game" advertised:

"DOOM: KNEE DEEP IN THE DEAD. Journey to the edge of sanity, to a world where mercy and goodness have no meaning, a world where only one word is spo-

ken—and that word is DOOM! On the Martian moon Phobos, a secret experiment has gone terribly wrong and unspeakable beasts flood through a portal from another dimension. Base personnel are driven insane and now arm themselves against you. The bloodied bodies of your own troops lie everywhere. And on this side of hell, there is only YOU to deal with the horror! Approaching the entrance to the base, you hear inhuman growls in distant corridors Creatures come at you through the darkness from every direction." You are trapped "in a never-ending nightmare with MORE graphic violence than you've ever experienced in any video game Reality becomes a nightmare and the nightmare becomes a reality!"

Can you imagine any young person spending hours engrossed in such a "game" and then coming out a stable, wholesome being? Warn your youth against such defilement. —Alex V. Wilson [See last month for more.]

Turkey Creek, La.

Did you see the newspaper article about Melissa Roberts? A great honor and we applaud.

"She was chosen as Salutatorian of her graduating class. She is a member of the Senior Beta club, Yearbook Staff, Future Business Leaders of America and the track and basketball teams. She was recently chosen as the only female athlete in Evangeline Parish on the Academic All-State Composite team (all classes). Also chosen as Co-Female Athlete of the Year at Bayou Chicot."

A number of other awards were also listed in the newspaper article. Melissa plans to continue her educa-

tion on the college level and will major in Education.

Rotating S.S. Teachers

Five classes are still waiting for a teacher for next quarter. Don't let them down. If you came to Sunday School and had a good teacher in the past, remember that it is your turn now to teach this generation. The 2-3 year-olds, 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade, and 7-8th grades. If you want a class and haven't told Bro. Doug, please let him know today! . . . Thank you to the fourteen teachers who have given of their time this spring quarter. Rest well over the summer . . . We'll be counting on you come September! -- Jennings, La. bulletin

Locust St. Church, Johnson City, Tenn.

The morning message deals with another of the beatitudes as found in Matt. 5. The evening message is the final one in a series on the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian.

Did you notice that while we fell short of the desired 50 for the morning service, all of the services were above the average for last year? Let's keep moving in the right direction!

Ralph Ave. Church of Christ, Ky.

Please come back tonight and enjoy the fellowship dinner after services. There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board if you want to see what others are bringing. I believe the early church had a social life. They needed that time to show love to each other and to learn about each other. Each of us need to share not only real food but spiritual food. There never seems to be

enough time. Buy the time now; before we know it that person(s) will be gone and you will be saying I sure wish I had gotten to know him/her!

Cramer & Hanover Church, Lexington, Ky.

Central Ky. Singspiration--the 22 who represented Cramer had a great day of Fellowship. Following our pot-luck dinner 19 boarded the bus and headed to Salem. The service was uplifting as much of our time was spent singing songs of praise to the Lord. Then, the time of fellowship with friends and acquaintances in the Lord. What better way to spend a Sunday afternoon! The next 5th Sunday will be July 31st and will be hosted by Cramer! Start making plans now to be with us.

Gallatin Tenn. Church of Christ

Last week I attended a conference held in a Nashville Church of Christ building. The building was old, in need of paint and repair, located in a business section of town and had very inadequate parking space. I understand, from talking to some of their members, that there are differences of opinion about how their worship is conducted and which songs they should sing. Their worship and Bible study room is also unable to accommodate the people.

In spite of all these "problem situations" this church has a membership of 1700, is growing steadily and has to have more than one morning service. (By the way, they successfully have their Sunday School at night.) They are making a significant impact on the city of Nashville.

What does this say to us? First, that others have some of the same problems and disagreements we do. Progress and growth always have such. People can "agree to disagree" and for the sake of the body be willing to say "I don't always have to have it my way." We conclude that there must be something other than externals (building, parking, etc) that are the main producers of success. Might those things be: 1) leadership, 2) meeting spiritual needs, 3) members with a humble, servant spirit, and 4) a prominence of love as seen in Gal. 5:6, 13-15, Eph. 4:2, 15-16.

May the Lord make us to increase and abound in love one toward another and toward all men. (1 Ths. 3:12) —Julius Hovan, Minister

Maple Manor Christian Children's Home

Since it has been a while since I have explained the Sponsorship Program in our newsletter, I thought I would review it with you:

The Sponsorship program was set up to help meet some of the emotional and financial needs of our children. A sponsor becomes a special friend to the child assigned to them. A card or gift on their birth-

day, Christmas and other special holidays or occasions helps the child feel that there is someone out there who cares. If the sponsor lives close by, occasional visits or a dinner out are a special treat for the child. Usually, a sponsor supports a child financially by sending \$10.00 per month to help meet any extra needs for a child, plus \$50.00 at the beginning of the school year to help with school clothing and supplies. A sponsor can be an individual or church group. We have had several faithful sponsors who have been part of this program for several years. They have had the privilege of touching several children's lives over the years. If you or your church group would be interested in sponsorship, please feel free to contact me at (812) 246-2769 or write me at 635 West Utica St., Sellersburg, IN 47172. —Cindy Mattingly, Caseworker

Goin' Fishing Mission Seminar

Be sure to notice that our inside front cover has the schedule not only for the Fellowship Week but also the 2nd world-missions seminar to be held at Sellersburg. For further information call Dale Offutt at the church, (812) 246-2524.

At the Place of the Sea

By the greatness of thine arm they shall be still . . . till thy people pass over, O Lord – Exodus 15:16.

Have you come to the Red Sea place in your life,
Where, in spite of all you can do,
There is no way out, there is no way back
There is no other way but – through?
Then wait on the Lord with a trust serene
Till the night of your fear is gone;
He will send the wind, He will heap the floods,
When He says to your soul, "Go on."

And His hand will lead you through – clear through—
Ere the watery walls roll down,
No foe can reach you, no wave can touch,
No mightiest sea can drown;
The tossing billows may rear their crests,
Their foam at your feet may break,
But over their bed you shall walk dry shod
In the path that your Lord will make.

In the morning watch, 'neath the lifted cloud,
You shall see but the Lord alone,
When He leads you on from the place of the sea
To land that you have not known;
And your fears shall pass as your foes have passed,
You shall be no more afraid;
You shall sing His praise in a better place,
A place that His hand has made.

— Annie Johnson Flint

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