

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

SEPTEMBER, 1996

THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS

"The first missionary to Korea lasted only 15 minutes before his head was cut off. Years later the Bibles he distributed in those few minutes were found to be still in circulation." -- Voice of the Martyrs

A Christian named Newman once said, "We should not be afraid that our life will come to an end. Rather, we should fear that our life will never have a beginning."

"95% of Christians in the U. S. wouldn't last a week if they lived in a Muslim country as a native citizen there." The speaker who made that statement didn't mean they'd be dead within a week (though that's a possibility), but that they would renounce Christ rather than continue suffering. May we search our hearts. How much does He mean to me?

**22ND ANNUAL
CENTRAL LOUISIANA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

November 18-21, 1996

Theme:

"AUTHOR AND PERFECTOR OF FAITH"

Evening Sessions:

CHRISTIAN FAMILIES AT RISK

MONDAY Nov. 18

7:00 p.m. Christian Families At Risk Earl C. Mullins, Jr.

TUESDAY Nov. 19

Prayer Time daily, Tuesday - Thursday: 9:30 - 9:55 A.M.

10:00-10:50 a.m. The PROPHECIES of His First Coming Nick Marsh

11:10-12:00 a.m. The PERSON of Jesus Robbie Bacon

1:15-2:05 p.m. The PURPOSE for Which He Came Bill Allen

7:00 p.m. Christian Families at Risk Earl C. Mullins, Jr.

WEDNESDAY Nov. 20

10:00 - 10:50 a.m. The PROGRAM He Established Randy Coultas

11:10 - 12:00 a.m. The POLICIES He Set Forth Buford Smith

1:15 - 2:05 p.m. The PARABLES He Shared Harry Coultas

7:00 p.m. Christian Families at Risk Earl C. Mullins, Jr.

THURSDAY Nov. 21

10:00 - 10:50 a.m. The PURPOSE of His Coming in the Air
Stan Broussard

11:10 - 12:00 a.m. The POWER He will Reveal at His Parousia
Earl Mullins, Sr.

1:15 - 2:05 p.m. The POSITION He Will Eternally Hold
David Johnson

7:00 p.m. Christian Families at Risk Earl C. Mullins, Jr.

All Sessions at Glenmora Church of Christ

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THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Jack Blaes, News

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THEME:

" THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS..."

Alex V. Wilson

This issue has taken a long time being born. Its gestation period has been years, not months.

Oh, fairly often my predecessors and I have run articles (or, more often, news items) about persecutions past and present. We felt that was important, because to most Christians in America such tribulation seems as unreal as the man in the moon. But for over a year now I've considered focusing an *entire issue* on persecution. Why? Well, here is some personal background.

Persecution: Normal and often Fruitful

As a young Christian I saw how often the Bible mentions suffering for the Lord's sake. Jesus both endured and foretold it. Acts is full of it, as are the epistles and Revelation. The Old Testament includes many examples too. And church history tells the same story, by and large. It seemed the usual experience of God's people. But in the U.S. it has been the exception, not the rule.

I also noticed that persecuted Christians usually were stronger in faith, love and hope than those who lived in easier times and places. And in general the church seemed to grow faster as well as deeper during persecution. Tertullian, an early church leader, observed this fact and wrote, "The blood of the martyrs *is the seed* [of the church]."

In Recent Decades

I remember in the early 1950s reading how the Roman Catholic Church in Spain and in Colombia, South America, dreadfully abused evangelical Christians. (That later dwindled, due to the 2nd Vatican Council.) Then we all began hearing about persecution in Communist lands--mass arrests, property confiscated, imprisonments, slave-labor camps, tortures and executions.

In 1958 in Honduras I met a Christian woman whose enraged Catholic uncle had tried to kill her. Though he failed, he did put out one of her eyes. I also met a mild-mannered Christian man who some years before had waited outside the evangelicals' small chapel, machete in hand, determined to kill every believer as they left their meeting. But God miraculously restrained him: as he heard the sermon through the open window, his body became paralyzed and his conscience convicted. Very soon he was converted.

During our years in the Philippines we met a number of believers who had been persecuted in various ways. Usually it took the form of strong family opposition. For example, when one of our Bible school students was baptized, her parents beat her and tore up her Bible. Another convert's mother wrote her from a distant province, "If you don't return to the true religion, I'll throw myself into the ocean and drown." The young woman was not certain that the threat would not be carried out! What would you have done?

Special Leaders and Ministries

Meanwhile, events occurred which put a human face on those continuing reports from Communist lands. In the mid-1960s Richard Wurmbrand, a Christian leader from Rumania, was enabled to reach the West. The Marxist government had imprisoned him for fourteen years before his escape. In May 1966 he testified in Washington before the Senate's Internal Security Subcommittee, stripping to the waist to show eighteen deep torture wounds covering his body. The press carried that story across the U.S., Europe and Asia. In 1967 his book **Tortured for Christ** appeared (it's a classic!), followed the next year by **In God's Underground** and later by other books. He established a ministry called "Voice of the Martyrs," described later in this issue.

A second significant book was published in 1967: **God's Smugler**, by "Brother Andrew"--a pseudonym for a Dutch Christian who time and again had managed to take Bibles into various Communist lands. His book is a classic too. The ministry he founded, "Open Doors," has blessed our congregation in two ways through the years. Once or twice a month in our midweek prayer meetings (and they really are times of prayer), we intercede for persecuted disciples in many lands as reported in their monthly "Newsbrief." (These are 8-page papers available free from Open Doors, P.O. Box 27001, Santa Ana, CA 92799.) Second, 3-4 times over the past dozen years we have held "Persecuted Church Sundays." Sermon, songs and prayers on those days center on our persecuted fellow-believers worldwide. Sometimes we have allowed nobody but the songleader to use a hymnal, nobody but the preacher to use a Bible--as reminders that many Christians own no Bibles and many churches have no songbooks at all.

In Manila, Ruth and I were privileged to hear Richard Wurmbrand and Brother Andrew speak a few times. They were memorable occasions. Since that time the Soviet Union has disbanded and the Berlin Wall come down. But Communism still holds sway over China (with 1/4 of earth's people), Viet-Nam, North Korea and Cuba. And Christians in ex-Marxist countries need all the encouragement and Bibles and training they can get as they face conditions different from any they've known in the past. Also, fundamentalist Muslims have gone

on the warpath in a number of lands. They are the main persecutors now (but remember: just as very few Christians are like Jimmy Swaggert and the Bakkers, so also only a minority of Muslims are terrorists). Our brothers and sisters in all such places are still standing in the need of prayer and practical help.

You Really Ought to Read this Issue!

Two other incidents persuaded us to center on this theme at this time. In a bookstore I saw and browsed a book entitled **By Their Blood: Christian Martyrs of the 20th Century**. Written by James and Marti Hefley, it contains 672 pages in 39 chapters! And it's only about *this* century!! Divided into 10 sections by geographical regions, it's the **Foxe's Book of Martyrs** of the 1900s. Many folks think persecution was mainly a thing of the past. To the contrary, more Christians have been martyred during our century than any other!

Then Robert and Jackie Gill attended the Voice of the Martyrs conference in Oklahoma. That was a lifechanging experience which Jackie shared with several ladies' groups. At my request she submitted a number of materials for this issue. Read, and weep.

As we consider the sober reports that follow, may we remember that our Lord Jesus is truly worthy of all the sufferings we or others may be called on to endure for Him. He calls us to no fiercer Cross than He has already taken.

Thus may we sing with deeper meaning,
Here all who suffered sword or flame
For truth, or Jesus' lovely name,
Shout **Victory** now, and hail the Lamb,
And bow before the great I AM!

For Your Information: 1. To hear approximately 2 minutes of news and prayer requests from the Suffering Church worldwide, 24 hours a day and updated weekly, you may call the **Open Doors Prayer Alert Line** toll-free at 1-800-426-2411.

2. To get a sample copy of the *Voice of the Martyrs* monthly magazine, write VOM, P.O. Box 443, Bartlesville, OK 74005. Tel.: (918) 337-8015.

3. For *Open Doors*' address, see the editorial.

4. My study shows that 24 or the 27 books of the New Testament refer to Christians suffering for the Lord! Check it for yourself.

THE TRIUMPH OF POLYCARP

An Early Christian Martyr

James H. Jauncey

It was early in the year 156 A.D. that the smoldering embers of persecution burst into flame. The place was Smyrna (now called Ismir, Turkey), a fabulously beautiful city on the banks of the Aegean Sea and overlooking the Dardanelles entrance to the Black Sea.

The heathen mob, goaded into murderous anger by fanatical Jews, had grabbed some unsuspecting Christians and dragged them to the arena where the games were going on.

Their trial before the Roman proconsul was over in seconds, as he said to each in turn, "Do you curse Christ? Will you sacrifice to Caesar?" "No," they answered. He waved his hand. First one and then another was hurried into the arena. Death was quick and terrible as they were ravaged by the raging lions. The crowd screamed in frenzy.

Several of the prisoners backed down and renounced Christ when they face the awful ordeal, and these were led off to make sacrifice amid the jeers of the crowd. They might as well have been dead, for they no longer belonged with the Christians, and they would be outcast among the heathen because of their cowardice.

The tension rose as Christian after Christian was sought out and brought before the proconsul. Most took their martyrdom bravely. Nothing seemed to satisfy the hate and blood-hunger of the crowd.

Finally someone yelled, "Get Polycarp. He's their leader." The cry was quickly taken up until it became a roar. Christians went quickly to Polycarp with the word that his life was in danger.

They found the old man at prayer. At least eighty-six years old, he had been pastor at Smyrna for longer than anybody could remember; and in his youth he had been a disciple of the Apostle John at Ephesus only a few miles away. He barely looked up at his friends in spite of the urgency in their voices.

"Pastor, you must flee. The soldiers will be coming." The old man snorted, as if danger were of no consequence.

"Not for yourself," they said. "For the Church. You are the shepherd. Consider the sheep." He sighed. "God's will be done," he said; and he let them lead him away. He was taken to a farmhouse not far away from the city.

Meanwhile the proconsul had closed the games, but the order for the arrest of Polycarp had gone out. Search parties were sent out under the personal direction of the chief-of-police, a man named Herod, who regarded this as the opportunity of a lifetime.

All the while Polycarp showed no signs of alarm. Most of his day was spent in praying for each church by name all around the world. That night he had a dream in which his pillow burst into flames. Telling his attendants about it, he said, "I think the Lord is trying to tell me that I must be burned alive for the faith."

The elders of the church felt that the only chance for his safety was to keep him moving, and by night they shifted him to another farm and hid him in an attic. By then Herod's men had traced him to his previous hiding place. Torturing a slave, they discovered where Polycarp was.

They waited until late at night before they swooped down on the farmhouse. Polycarp was in bed. His attendants saw the enemy coming and tried to hurry him away. But Polycarp would not go. "It's no use," he said. "God's will be done."

He was waiting in the living room when the soldiers burst in. Something about the old man stopped them dead in their tracks.

"Come in, friends," he said, gently. "I will not try to escape. Sit down and eat some food. I would ask that you allow me an hour for prayer." "Certainly, sir," the sergeant said, amazed at the calmness of the old man.

Polycarp went to a corner and began to pray. His soft tones reached the soldiers, who marveled that he never mentioned himself, pleading only for his fellow Christians.

"What's the empire coming to when we have to arrest a good old man like that?" the sergeant muttered.

Following his prayer, Polycarp was arrested and transferred to the city on a donkey. At the outskirts he was met by Herod and Herod's father, in a carriage. They courteously invited him in. The morning by now was well advanced.

"There is no need for you to die, you know," Herod said. "After all, what harm is there in saying 'Caesar is Lord,' and offering incense? Frankly, many of us don't believe it either, but it doesn't cost us anything to oblige." The old man didn't even bother to answer.

"Come, now, Polycarp," Herod pleaded, "You are too valuable a man to die."

Polycarp shook his head, "I will not do as you advise," he said flatly.

When they saw that it was useless to try to persuade him, their masks of friendship fell off. He was brutally shoved out, even before the carriage had stopped, badly bruising his shin. Limping, he was brought before the proconsul. The crowds were milling around.

"You are Polycarp?" asked the Roman.

"Yes, sir."

"You know the law on this matter?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

"Then have respect for your age and do what the law requires."

"No, sir."

"Come, change your mind. Swear by Caesar. Denounce these Christians. Say 'Away with these atheists'." [In those days the pagans accused Christians of atheism since they had no images or temples of their God, and refused to worship any other gods. Thus they seemed to believe in no deity at all. --AVW]

Polycarp looked up to the jeering crowds. He gestured towards them. "Away with the atheists," he said.

"Don't mock me, old man. Take the oath. Curse Christ."

"Curse Him?" said Polycarp. "Oh, no. Eighty-six years have I served Him, and He never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?"

"Nonsense, curse Christ."

"I am a Christian."

"Persuade them to let you go," said the proconsul derisively, pointing to the crowd.

"You are the representation of Caesar, and as such I honor you, but to them I owe nothing."

"I have wild beasts."

The old man never wavered. He looked the governor in the eye. "Call them," he said softly.

“BE FAITHFUL EVEN UNTO DEATH”

Some Snapshots from Around the World of Christians Following Christ at Great Cost

Compiled by Jackie W. Gill from “Voice of the Martyrs” Sources

BANGLADESH

Reported by Mark Ulbricht

“In Bangladesh when someone accepts Christ, they are no longer allowed to drink water from the Muslim village well or they would ‘pollute’ it. They must walk over a mile to carry water.”

“When someone becomes a Christian, no one will hire him, his children are kicked out of school. Christians are also beaten and robbed.”

“When a converted Muslim family refused to celebrate a Muslim holiday, the husband was beaten, his leg broken and their two cows stolen.”

“Another Christian who would not agree to celebrate ‘Ramadan’ was beaten and had his rickshaw taken. He was a rickshaw puller.”

“And a Christian farmer’s money and tools were stolen and his house destroyed by the Muslims.”

SOUTH SUDAN

Reported by William Ochen

“Persecution of Christians has been going on for 10 years in Sudan. The UN Commission on Human Rights reports Christians molested, sexually abused, crucified . . . women and children sold as slaves or prostitutes. Threats of starvation and death are used to force Sudanese to convert to Islam.”

Mr. Ochen was arrested in 1984. He has been stoned and beaten for refusing to accept the Muslim religion.

Mr. Ochen showed a video of young children in ankle chains being punished for refusing or being slow in memorizing the Koran, the “Bible” of Islam.

Every child is required to memorize it in the Arabic language even though they do not speak this language. It often takes 7 years during which time they are not taught anything else!

In the South of Sudan, most children and also many adults go naked. All are hungry. Because Muslims burned down their villages, many Christians have taken refuge in mountainous regions. In some places, Christian women have to walk for hours to collect water.

Would we remain faithful Christians at this price, or would we give up and become Muslims? What would be your choice?

The average *annual* income of a worker is \$420. Inflation is tremendous. The price of bread rose 500% in one year. In the South, there is one doctor for 83,000 people.

But in the South, plagued with misery and the worst persecution, a miracle is taking place. More Muslims are coming to Christ in Sudan than anywhere else in the world. Twenty years ago, Christians made up 5% of the total population. Today, they comprise 20% of Sudan (*Frontline Fellowship*).

These have knowingly chosen the way of the cross. Would we make such a costly choice?

NORTH VIETNAM

Reported by Sister "Nguyen"

In 1975 North Vietnamese churches were closed by the communist government. Many Christians denied the faith for fear.

In 1990 many "house churches" were started; especially among the tribal groups in the highlands. When caught, Christians often lose their jobs, but witness to the arresting officers.

There are heavy fines for meeting to worship or for owning a Bible. The average monthly wage in rural Vietnam is \$14. All their possessions are at risk, but they still are willing to risk everything in order to own a Bible.

Secret police infiltrate the underground church. Who is a real Christian? Who is a fake? Sometimes infiltrators become Christians!

NORTH KOREA

"Any religious activity not sponsored by the government is illegal in North Korea."

"Christians in North Korea cannot listen to the short wave radio messages from the outside. Short wave radios are forbidden. The radios sold in North Korea are built by the Communist government and are set only for North Korean frequencies. There is a 15-year prison

sentence for possession of a Bible in North Korea and a life sentence for witnessing to others about Christ.”

Fiendish Destruction of Families

“Several years ago a public school teacher told her class of 3rd graders to go home and without telling their parents, look for the “black book” and bring it to school the next day and they would receive an award.

“The young girl relating the story knew where her parents kept the Bible hidden, so she followed the teacher’s instructions and secretly took it to school the next day. Fourteen of the sixteen class members brought back Bibles. They were honored by the teacher and given red scarves. When the little girl excitedly returned home to show the “award” to her mother, she found the house was empty. Her parents were never heard of again.”

Putting Christ Above All

Twenty years ago, in a GokSan village, about 250 kilometers from Pyongyang, a group of highway workers were widening a road for Kim Il-Sung’s agricultural inspection.

At the town outskirts, the workers were demolishing an abandoned building and stumbled upon an underground room. A tiny catacomb, it served as home and meeting place for a congregation of 27 believers under the leadership of Pastor Kim Tae Yong.

Dumbfounded, the workers contacted the police. Under orders from Pyongyang, the police gathered the Christians and, in the presence of 30,000 inhabitants of GokSan, they were told: “Deny Christ, or lose your lives!”

The congregation refused. Cruelly, the officials separated four children from their parents and prepared to hang them unless the church recanted. Fondly, the parents told their children, “We will see you in Heaven in a little while.”

Afterwards, the adults were told: “Reconsider, or you will be placed under a steamroller.” The believers refused to deny Christ. As the townspeople watched the execution, they heard Pastor Kim’s flock singing: “More love to Thee, O Christ”

(Above related at 1996 VOM conference by “Thomas Kim” and published in VOM booklet *North Korea: The Battle Continues*).

CHINA

A Christian lady in Jilin, China, writes: "It isn't easy to buy a Bible from the official church. I have hand-copied several copies of a Bible study manual on Romans to give to others."

A pastor in Sichuan Province: "In most churches, an ordinary believer doesn't have a Bible. Christians listen very carefully when I read from scripture. They want to remember every word. That 'Bible' is then passed on to others."

Another Chinese believer tells: "There were two Bibles among a church of several hundred. The pages of these Bibles were removed very carefully and given out to believers. To be in the possession of such treasure was indescribable. Most had never seen a Bible before. Each one copied down what he was given, then he could pass the pages on to someone else."

"There are more people under communism in China today than ever have been in the rest of the world together. China has the largest number of Christian prisoners in the world."

"An estimated 40 million Christians now meet in homes throughout China; some having only one Bible to share among them. Many Christian leaders remain in prison, others are in hiding."

(Above quotes from Merv Knight, director of VOM in Australia. He has spent much time in China.)

The following are from *China: The Untold Story* published by VOM and revised January 1995.

"Evangelizing, preaching and distributing Christian literature outside the officially approved channels is illegal."

"Christianity is the fastest growing religion in China today, especially among young people. Their vibrant faith is captured in the words of one young female house-church leader. When asked if she was afraid of persecution, she smiled and replied, 'That would be my time of glory.'"

Protestant house churches have sprung up all over China, and are most numerous in the coastal areas and the provinces of Henan and Anhui. But their growth is far from "unimpeded". The government does everything from controlling the distribution of Bibles to rounding up and beating these "unofficial" Christians.

"China has 350 million young people, but it is illegal to preach the Gospel to young people under the age of 18."

WHY THE ENMITY OF THE WORLD?

R. H. Boll, 1948

"Marvel not if the world hateth you," wrote John the beloved disciple to the Christians (I John 3:13). They might have marvelled. Their gospel was a message of good tidings. Their attitude was one of love toward all men. Their distinctive activity was that of good works--deeds of kindness, mercy, helpfulness. Why should the world hate them? Jonathan Golorth relates an eminent Chinese scholar's account of the terrible massacre which took place in the governor's yamen at Taiyuanfu in 1900, during the Boxer Movement. He went on to say:

. . . . that just before the carnage began a golden-haired girl of about thirteen years of age went and stood before the governor. "Why are you planning to kill us?" she asked, her voice carrying to the farthest corner of the crowded courtyard. "Haven't our doctors come from far-off lands to give their lives for your people? Many with hopeless diseases have been healed; some who were blind have received their sight, and health and happiness have been brought into thousands of your homes because of what our doctors have done. Is it because of this good that has been done that you are going to kill us?" The governor's head was down. He had nothing to say. There was really nothing that he could say. She continued: "Governor, you talk a lot about filial piety. It is your claim, is it not, that among the hundred virtues filial piety takes the highest place. But you have hundreds of young men in this province who are opium sots and gamblers. Can they exercise filial piety? Can they love their parents and obey their will? Our missionaries have come from foreign lands and have preached Jesus to them, and He has saved them and he has given them power to live rightly and to love and obey their parents. It is then, perhaps, because of this good that has been done that we are to be killed?"

By this time the governor was writhing. Each word seemed to touch him to the quick. It was far more than a defense, that brave speech, it was a sentence. It was the girl who sat in judgment and the governor who stood at the bar. But the drama lasted only for one brief moment. A soldier, standing near the girl, grasped her by the hair, and with one blow of his sword severed her head from her body. That was the signal for the massacre to begin.

"I saw fifty-nine men, women and children killed that afternoon," went on the scholar. "Even in the very moment of death every face seemed to hold a smile of peace. I saw one lady speaking cheerfully to a little boy who was clinging to her hand. Then her turn came, and her body fell to the yamen floor. But the little fellow, without the sign of a whimper on his face, stood straight upright, still holding fast his mother's hand. Then Another blow and the little mangled corpse lay beside that of the mother. Is it any wonder, therefore, that such marvellous fortitude should have led me to search your Scriptures and to have compelled me to believe that the Bible is in very truth the Word of God?"

The hatred of the world does not always, or often in our day, manifest itself in such violent fashion--but such outbreaks are symptomatic of the deep inward ill-will of the world against Christ's people. That child's rebuke to the wicked governor shows up the marvel of that hate. But, after all, it is no marvel. There are reasons.

1. The world hates Christians because they are not of this world. "If ye were of the world," said the Lord Jesus, "the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). The world demands conformity, and it is not slow to discern that Christians are not of their kind. They sense the fundamental spiritual difference. They feel that somehow Christians "don't belong."

2. The Christian's thoughts and ways clash with those of the world about them. (This really belongs under the fact stated above, but merits special notice.) They "think it strange that you run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you," says Peter (1 Peter 4:4). They feel the rebuke, however meek and lowly the Christian's refusal may be to participate with them. They are quick to suspect "hypocrisy" and spiritual self-exaltation and pride, or what not.

3. "The world cannot hate you," said the Lord to His unbelieving brethren, "but me it hateth because I testify of it that its works are evil" (John 7:7). The Christian also, following in Christ's footsteps, both by his life and teaching, testifies the same; and, quite naturally, the world resents that. It was not the world's wicked works of which the Lord testified that they were evil. The world would have taken little offense if the Lord had only condemned the crimes and immoralities of men. But it was the works and enterprises and great doings of the show and glitter of which the world is proud, which He branded as evil. "For that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). And, "all that is in the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is the world" (1 John 2:15-17). This is plain truth; and the world does not love those who tell it. So--"marvel not" at the world's hate.

4. The very gospel which Christ's followers preach is based upon the fact that all men are lost and doomed to perish. The salvation they proclaim is an escape and a rescue. The fold of Christ is a haven of refuge--the only possible refuge at that. As Noah in his building of the ark "condemned the world" (Heb. 11:17) so the Christian's message of salvation in Christ condemns the great sinful, unbelieving world.

5. There is still a deeper reason. Satan is the usurper-prince of the world (John 14:30) and its god (2 Cor. 4:4). He is the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2). The Christian does not belong to Satan's kingdom, but owes allegiance to the great rival kingdom of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and, moreover, works, like a

you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed." (1 Pet. 4:12f.)

* * *

A Call to Disciples made by the Asian Theological Consultation (1976, but still timely): "We call the churches to prepare themselves in spirit through deeper fellowship with our Lord and Savior, through prayers and the study of the Word of God.

"We urge all Christians to give more attention to memorization of scripture and hymns....

"We call the theological schools to teach their students how to endure suffering...and to train them in leadership of small groups and house churches. We warn against over-dependence upon one person who may easily be removed in times of trial."

* * *

The Apostle John: "They overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death." "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus." (Rev. 12:11; 14:12)

* * *

It'll never happen here??? Richard Ramsey in *The Exhorter*: "If an anti-God government should take over our nation, older Christians would be liquidated, younger ones brainwashed, and little children raised up on anti-God propaganda. Christians would have to hide their true identity, meet secretly. A typical Christian service under such circumstances might consist of 2 or 3 Christians meeting for prayer in a barber shop while the Christian barber was cutting the hair of one of them. Evangelists might pose as traveling salesmen, businessmen, doctors, government officials, etc. Secret symbols for identifying other Christians would have to be devised.

"A Christian's hope is in the Second Coming of Christ...But if he delays his coming and evil times do descend upon us, we would do well to be prepared to them....Christian leaders might have to flee during the night to some prearranged fishing camp stocked with canned goods where they might continue to direct Christian activities in secret.

"The hardest thing for us who live in easy-going America to realize is that this is not fantastic dreaming....We cannot get it through our

head that attempts at church services in many countries today bring swift prison sentences."

* * *

It Happens Here NOW, in Subtle Ways:

Recently, syndicated columnist Cal Thomas was scheduled to do a TV interview for a *Good Morning America* segment about homosexuality in San Francisco (reported by Joe Maxwell in *World* magazine). When Thomas's conservative part of the segment was canceled, he called the producers for an explanation.

The producer explained, "My senior producer was afraid you would get on and quote some Bible verses."

Thomas protested, "You'll have every other screwball on that show. They even mention God in a blasphemous way on some of your entertainment programs. Are you saying I can't speak well of him?" But Cal Thomas was excluded. He said he's come to expect that kind of treatment.

Can It Possibly Be Harder Here? "He had just emerged from existence under a regime that took an intolerant view of Christianity. But now, viewing Christians who live not only in freedom but in relative popularity, this man was appalled. To him, these Christians seemed casual about their commitment, preoccupied with position and possessions, contaminated by the world. And he said so.

"A few months later he went back to visit the friend to whom he had spoken so bluntly when he first arrived. He asked if his friend remembered what he had said, the bitterness of his criticism. The friend remembered.

"The man stood silent for a few moments, reflecting. The friend tensed for a second attack. 'I have come to apologize both for what I said and the way in which I said it,' he said simply. 'I was merely afraid. I did not know how dangerous freedom could be. It has been a year now. And I am worse than those I criticized.'

"Then he added a significant statement: '*It is more difficult to live the Christian life under freedom than under repression.*'" (Ruth Graham in *Christianity Today*).

PREPARING FOR PERSECUTION

(Summary of a sermon preached by John R. W. Stott)

And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to Thy servants to speak Thy word with all boldness (Acts 4:29 R. S. V.)

So began the persecution of the Christian Church. Since that day it has never ceased. It continues unabated today.

Peter and John, after healing the lame man at the Beautiful Gate and preaching to the people, had been arrested, put in custody and brought to trial. The Supreme Jewish Council had forbidden them to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus, and when Peter and John quietly replied that they must obey God rather than men, the Sanhedrin further threatened them (whether with imprisonment, the dreaded scourging or death we are not told) and released them. Peter and John went straight to their Christian brethren to pray.

In many parts of the world today the persecution of Christians is open and undisguised. Violent attempts are being made to stifle the Church's witness. . . . [We omit his examples.--AVW]

It is, therefore, instructive to note how the early Christians reacted in a time of persecution and under threat to give up their testimony. In particular, let us observe their attitude to God and their persecutors.

I. They Trusted the Sovereignty of God

The opposition of the authorities did not overthrow their Christian faith. They did not begin to doubt whether God was God. They did not complain against His providence or whine over their sufferings. No. They prayed. And as "they lifted their voices together to God" (v. 24), their hearts and minds were filled with the divine sovereignty.

They called God "sovereign Lord," using the word *despotes*, which was used of the Roman Emperors and slave owners and signified a sovereign and absolute rule. They also called themselves His slaves (v. 20), and they described those who had been responsible for the death of Jesus as doing "whatever Thy hand and Thy plan had predestined to take place" (v. 28). They believed that God's "never failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and on earth" (from the Book of Common Prayer). They did not deny either human responsibility or man's freedom to choose, but they saw these things within the wider context of the over-ruling sovereignty of God. Herod and Pontius Pilate, Gentiles and Jews, rulers and people were free agents, who set themselves of their own purpose against the Lord and His anointed, and yet in so doing, they were accomplishing the very thing which God's hand and purpose had fore-ordained.

1. *First, they referred to creation.* "Sovereign Lord, who didst make the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them" (v. 24). God's sovereignty is viewed first and foremost in His creative work. The whole universe and its contents (earth, sea and space) were brought into existence by the will of God. They owe their origin and continuance to the purpose and power of God. They have no inherent self-control; they are upheld by the authority of the living God. Only God depends for His being on Himself; all other things come from Him and depend on Him.

2. *Secondly, they referred to prophecy.* In their prayers, the apostles spoke not only of what God had done (in creation), but also of what He had said (in Scripture); not only of His creative work, but of His prophetic word. "Sovereign Lord . . . who by the mouth of our father David, Thy servant, didst say by the Holy Spirit 'why did the Gentiles rage . . .'" (vv. 25, 26). This is a quotation from Psalm 2, in which God clearly foretold the raging and rebellious fury of the world against Himself. Kings, rulers and people would conspire together saying "let us burst their bonds asunder and cast their cords from us." But the God who predicted the opposition of the world predicted also its final overthrow: "He who sits in the heavens will laugh them to scorn. The Lord will have them in derision."

This prophecy of the world's opposition to God's Christ had been historically fulfilled. In that very city of Jerusalem there had been a vile conspiracy of Gentile and Jew, leaders and people, against the anointed Son of God. Yet the victory was not in the hands of God's enemies. God had not abdicated His throne. His own purpose of love will ultimately triumph.

These assurances should bring us comfort. The most frightening fulminations of men against God and Christ should not alarm us. If opposition breaks over our heads and we are threatened with extinction, let us take fresh courage from the works and words of God, from the evidence of His sovereignty to be found in what He has made in the universe and what He has said in the Scripture.

II. They Preached the Word of God

We have seen that the apostles felt no bitterness in their hearts towards *God*, and complained against neither His love nor His wisdom. But what about their *persecutors*? Did they show resentment towards them or seek to take revenge? Did they plot against their enemies as their enemies had plotted against Christ and them? Or did they run away and seek safety in the hills and caves of Judea or Galilee? No. They did none of these things. They stayed at their post, although it meant imprisonment and scourging for some, and death for others, and they prayed for boldness to preach.

How positive they were! They were not content just to grit their teeth, to stay and stick it out. They loved their enemies and desired the eternal good of their persecutors. They longed to see them won for Christ and saved by Him for ever. They thirsted not for the destruction, but for the salvation, of their foes. They wanted them to hear the gospel, to embrace it and to enjoy its innumerable benefits. So they prayed for utterance, for freedom of speech and courage to preach the word.

And God answered their prayers. The place where they were assembled was shaken. They were all filled anew with the Spirit, and in the power of the Spirit they preached the word of God with boldness.

Down the Christian ages persecution has too often caught the people of God unprepared. We need to prepare. Let me make three suggestions.

1. *We need a deeper confidence in the Sovereignty of God.* The whole world is in the grip of a vast convulsion. The old order is passing away with bewildering speed. Nothing is secure or certain in the future. Our greatest need is a quiet, serene, unshakable confidence in the sovereignty of God. So we must meditate on the revelation which God has given of Himself in His works and in His word, in nature and Scripture, until we are still and know that He is God, exalted in the earth. Then no catastrophe can shake us.

2. *We need a deeper experience of the Spirit of God.* A persecuted Church cannot stand in its own strength or survive by its own power. It would be engulfed, its life stifled and its witness smothered, apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps our desperate need in the Church today of the fullness of the Holy Spirit will only come home to us when we are driven to it by the violent opposition of the world.

3. *We need a deeper knowledge of the Word of God.* If the day comes when we are forbidden to preach or teach in the name of Christ, we cannot obey. The world can persecute the Church, but it must not be allowed to silence it. Our backs may be against the wall, but our mouths must remain open in testimony. But what would happen if they took the Scriptures from us, or if the Edict of Diocletian in A. D. 303 was re-enacted and all our Scriptures were ordered to be burned or confiscated? We must prepare soberly and sensibly for this eventuality too. We need to store God's Word in our hearts, meditating on it, memorizing it, digesting it, until it is so much part of us that it cannot be taken away from us. They may take God's Book out of our hands, but they cannot take His Word out of our hearts.

ARE DOORS OPEN OR CLOSED?

Here are a few excerpts from an interview with **Brother Andrew**. See the editorial for more about him. The full interview appeared in *Christianity Today*, Dec. 11, 1995.

You have concentrated your personal efforts recently on the Middle East. What are the challenges for the Christian church there?

We face a growing wave of Muslim fundamentalism, fed by a number of things. Until the end of the Second World War, seven-eighths of the entire Muslim world was colonized by so called Christian nations. The Muslims lived under constant humiliation. They could not solve their own problems.

Even today they are divided and disgusted with their own weakness. From this division, a radical faction has emerged that wants Muslims to go back to their roots. It's a revival movement, very much political because in Islam there is no separation between church and state. And because they are the only guys with an ideology, I think they have a future. They have a faith for which they're ready to die. In comparison, we Christians have lost that kind of faith.

Look at Lebanon. Two, three terrorist-suicide bombers chased away the strongest army of the world. We have no answer to that dedication. Let's face it: we are not willing to die. Not for Jesus and not for anything.

And this is the quality of Christianity that I seek desperately. Not the fanaticism, but a dedication that demonstrates a willingness to lay down our lives. Doesn't the Bible say a lot about that?

Why is your ministry called *Open Doors* when you concentrate on where the doors are closed?

No, the doors are not closed.

I keep telling people that there's not one door in the world closed where you want to witness for Jesus. It may be closed for an organization or for a Bible society, but that doesn't mean the Bibles can't get in. Show me a closed door and I will tell you how you can get in. I won't, however, promise you a way to get out.

We don't ever guarantee that we can get people out. We have lost a number of our people, usually national workers, who were blown up, tortured, or killed in a number of countries. It's a dangerous game, but nonetheless, the doors are not closed. Jesus said in Acts 1:8 to go. He didn't say, "Go if the doors are open," because they weren't. He

didn't say, "Go if you have an invitation or a red carpet treatment." He said, "Go," because people needed his Word. And that's how we look at the world.

In what sense are these Muslims "open"?

They are accessible. We've openly given out gospel tracts at the Islamic University of Gaza, which has never happened before. We have an open invitation to lecture in the Islamic university, which is the hotbed of *Hamas*, on what real Christianity is. We give out Bibles--I never have enough Bibles. At one meeting I called, four hundred Muslims turned up. We have never had a meeting before with four hundred Muslim fundamentalists. And I only had 40 Bibles.

LEARNING FROM MARTYRS

While imprisoned during the French Revolution, Christians Franz Ravennas and Martin Guillaibert wrote a famous document instructing the faithful how to behave under threat of death. It was written in jail, which they called "the ante-chamber to paradise." They were beheaded on June 25, 1794, but the inspiration of their message remains. Here is a short version:

"When you are before court, you should remember the behavior of the apostles before the council which judged them. On hearing the death sentence, you will receive it as the invitation of the King of glory, Who invited you to His wedding feast. You should endeavor to have the same joy that our predecessors had when they were in the same situation.

"When they have finished reading the sentence, you will say with Saint Cyprian and many other martyrs, 'Thank God!'

"Upon returning from court to jail, sing, 'I was glad when they said to me, Let us go into the house of the Lord, etc.' (Psalm 122). While awaiting execution, sing joyful songs. When they bind your hands, say the words of St. Paul: 'I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of Jesus Christ' (Acts 21:13).

"When they open the prison gate to let you out for execution, sing, 'Open to me the gates of righteousness. I will go through them, and I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter' (Psalm 118:19, 20).

"On the way to being shot, speak to the guards from Scriptures about the delight of suffering and dying for the religion of Jesus Christ. You can occupy yourself also with words like those of Paul: 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' (Romans 8:35).

“When you encounter the executioner, remember the words of the Apostle Andrew: ‘O dear cross, long since desired, receiving my last breath, as you received my first committal,’ or those of the great martyr Ignatius: ‘When will the happy moment come when I will be slaughtered for my Savior? How long must I still wait? Tyrants, henchmen, fire, cross, wild beasts, all torture, come in haste to help me to see Jesus.’ Say also a prayer for the persecutors.

“St. Polycarp, at the stake, said with eyes lifted toward heaven, ‘Lord God Almighty, I praise You that You gave me the honor to share in this hour the cup of Your Anointed for resurrection of body and soul to life everlasting and to renewal through the Holy Spirit. May I be received today with Your saints as a pleasing sacrifice. I praise You for all things, with Your beloved Son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.’”

A Martyr's Last Deed

Here also is the noble deed of a martyr:

Dirk Willems was convicted as an Anabaptist under the harsh rule of Spanish Catholics in the Netherlands in the sixteenth century. He escaped from prison by letting himself out of a window with a rope made of knotted rags, dropping onto the ice of a pond behind the jail. A guard pursued him as he fled.

Dirk crossed the thin ice of the pond safely. His own weight had been reduced by short prison rations. His heavier pursuer, who had eaten more than needed, fell through the ice.

Hearing the guard cry out for help, Dirk turned back and rescued him. The less-than-grateful guard then seized Dirk and led him back to captivity. Even after all this had happened, the prisoner was burned to death as punishment for his beliefs.

From such thoughts and examples of extreme love, even toward a deadly enemy, we can learn to choose the right way.

Western Christians met some believers who had been deported from Russia. They asked the leader, “How did you manage to survive 32 years in Russian prison camps?”

He replied, “Even a desert looks like a flower garden when you are in communion with the Lord.”

VOICES from the FIELDS

Joseph Shulam

Jerusalem, Israel

August 1996

I would like to share with you the good news of two more people who have accepted the Lord in Baptism. One is the daughter of a very faithful family who have been attending our congregation for two years, and the other is Judah, an Englishman who is living in Jerusalem. These two additions to the Body of the Messiah are now the seventh and eighth persons who have been baptized in our congregation since the beginning of the year. It has been a good year in spite of the fact that it started with a very painful split in the Jerusalem congregation. The congregation has grown in many ways, and above all it has resulted in the maturing of some of the men into leadership and position of service.

In Cyprus we have organized with Dr. Michael Wood a seminar that will collect scholars from Israel, USA, Egypt, and Palestinians who will study the theology of the Land. This is an issue that divides Arab and Jewish believers in the Messiah and we need to resolve it Biblically. The seminar will take place in the end of June in Cyprus because it is neutral territory.

I found a resolution by the Baptist church regarding the Jewish people very interesting. The partial text of the resolution passed by the Southern Baptist Convention: "Whereas, Jesus commanded that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47): and Whereas, Our evangelistic efforts have largely neglected the Jewish people, both at home and abroad: and Whereas, We are indebted to the Jewish people, through whom we have received the Scriptures and our Savior, the Messiah of Israel, and Whereas, There has been an organized effort on the part of some either to deny that Jewish people need to come to their Messiah Jesus to be saved, or to claim, for whatever reason, that Christians have neither right nor obligation to proclaim the gospel to the Jewish people, and Whereas, There is evidence of a growing responsiveness among the Jewish people in some areas of our nation and our world: now, therefore, Be it Resolved, That we . . . re-affirm that we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Romans 1:16): and Be it Further Resolved, That we recommit ourselves to prayer, especially for the salvation of the Jewish People as well as for the salvation of "every kindred and tongue and people and nation.(Revelation 5:9)" As a non-Baptist, I congratulate them for the interest and courage to pass this resolution. Of course it would have been better if this was so self understood that a resolution like this one would not be necessary. Let others learn from the Baptists about the issue of Jewish Evangelism.

[Joseph Shulam, a Jewish disciple of Jesus-Messiah, and his wife Marcia attended the Louisville Fellowship Week in August. Joseph was one of the main speakers. Their ministry in Israel is exciting and sometimes dangerous due to persecution. If you want to receive their newsletters, write their U.S. distributor: Newland St. Church of Christ, 13852 Newland St., Garden Grove CA 92644.
-AVW]

Michiya Nakahara Shizuoka City, Japan August, 1996

Here are several matters for thanksgiving and other matters for prayer:

Having the pavement completed on the church alley. It has cost us about \$2,000, but our senior Christian sisters now feel much safer walking in the alley. (The church building sits off the street a good ways since land is at a premium. The only access to it is through an alley. This alley has now been paved.)

The daughter of our oldest members has returned to church for the first time in 20 years. Pray for her.

We now have a brand new toddlers class during the church service.

A seminary student from Evangelical School of Japan in Tokyo has chosen our congregation to work with as an internship placement. We are very excited and we are expecting him to join us in August.

We are planning our annual church seminar again to be held on August 4. The theme for this year is to find the best methods of evangelism unique to our members and our church.

We are still very prayerful about purchasing a piece of property about 500 sq. ft. in size. By having this small piece of land, we will be able to make limited parking space for our members. We have none at present and this presents a real problem. However, land is very expensive. Pray with us about what to do. This land has recently become available to purchase.

We have set the second Sunday of October as "Memorial Day." We will conduct a gospel meeting each time on "Memorial Day" with strong emphasis placed on evangelism to the non-Christian family members of those of our members who have gone on to be with the Lord. Pray that we can reach these people for the Lord.

Goin' Fishing Mission Supper

Earl Mullins, Sr.

On Thursday night August 8, *Goin' Fishing* hosted a dinner. Close to a hundred from the fellowship meeting attended. After a delicious meal, Eugene Mullins reported on the opportunity Eastern Hills Church of Christ in Garland, Texas has been given to work in Monterey and Matahuala, Mexico.

This was followed by Alex Wilson giving a report on the Central Bible Institute in Manila and on the work in the northern part of the Philippines. He also updated us on the work of Martin and Susan Brooks, graduates of Portland Christian School, who left for mission work in Mozambique on August 7, and on Tim Yates, also a PCS graduate, and his wife working in Malawi, Africa.

To cap off the evening a Goin' Fishing pilot video was viewed. Updated information was given on three missions that are different in their type of cross-cultural ministry on behalf of the Gospel. This 29 minute video presents the work of Robert Garrett in Zimbabwe, Africa, the worldwide Words of Life radio ministry and the Goin' Fishing ministry. The expense of this professionally produced video was underwritten by the Sellersburg Church of Christ and a brother interested in exploring this avenue whereby mission opportunities and activities can be effectively communicated to churches and individuals. If interested in using this video in congregation, Bible classes or homes, contact Goin' Fishing.

Breakfast Meeting

The Goin' Fishing supper was great, but there was not enough time to present reports on all the missions in which our fellowship is involved. So on Friday morning we had another special meeting at Sellersburg Church. There were about 85 who were blessed by attending this meeting.

Bob Yarbrough, Jr. gave a report on the work Piedmont Church in Dallas has sponsored for many years in Japan. Michie Nakahara and his wife carry on the work began by his father and mother. Shichiro and Teruko and are doing a good job. Keep them in your prayers.

Doug Broyles gave a report on the work of the Jennings, La. church and its young people in Mexico further south than the work in the Monterey area. He reported the doors are wide open and opportunities abound. Related to still another kind of mission work, Doug asked us to pray for a Christian Brazilian girl who wants to return to this

country to study the Bible. She stayed in their home as an exchange student during the 1995-96 school year.

Dennis Allen spoke on behalf of the work in Eagle River, Alaska and developments since the homegoing of his brother Winston. Sister Irene Allen, Winston's wife, would like to stay in Alaska this winter if her health permits. He also reported on the progress of the work in Hong Kong which he and Betty, his wife, visited last year. 1997 is a critical year for the church there as Hong Kong will become politically a part of mainline China.

The work of the Iroquois Church with the brethren in Mindanao, Philippines was presented by T. Y. Clark. Various reports from the brethren there indicate a continuing expansion of the work. Also two leaders who have labored long in the work of the Lord on the island are very seriously ill, one with cancer and one having had a stroke.

Betty Ann Schreiner told about the mission trip of Portland Christian School students to Honduras this summer. They, including herself, were involved in construction and medical work. "The students and team members always come back feeling they have been more blessed than they could have ever been a blessing."

Though the Sherwood family was not able to attend the breakfast, they left literature concerning Hollace Sherwood's progress since his stroke this summer and the future of the High Lysine Corn Project. Plans are to raise another crop of corn to send out in the name of Jesus, our Lord, to those in need.

Very stirring reports were given by Pam Wilson, Jodell Seay and Phyllis Mullins on the 1996 Kineshma teacher seminar team. The Lord richly blessed their being used of Him in both Kineshma and Moscow.

Without exception each reporter gave a common plea. **PRAY!!** Pray that God will continue to use these missions and missionaries to His glory and honor -- that souls will be brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, grow up in Him, and that indigenous congregations will be established.

It was encouraging to hear all the reports and realize how God is using His people in His vineyard. May God grant us more vision and dreams related to getting the Good News to every people, tongue and tribe. He is going to do it (Matthew 24:14). If we will let Him, He will use us in this Great Work of His. To God be the glory! Amen!

Pray the Lord of the Harvest will be given the freedom in the lives of His people to strategically locate HIS laborers which are few in light of the vastness of the harvest. (Matt. 9:36 - 38)

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaas

Great Opportunities For Ky. Churches

At Rupp Arena in Lexington, on Nov. 1-3, "ENVISION" will be held. ALL Christians & especially ALL elders & preachers should be interested in it, for it is about World Missions & how we can carry out the Great Commission as soon as possible.

You may have attended ball-games there. Now attend something far more significant! The conservative Christian Churches are putting on this missions motivation-&-training conference. We can learn lots from them, for they are on the move in many places around the world. This isn't fun & games. There will be times to fast & pray. There will be numerous seminars on practical subjects like: How can we motivate our members to be involved in the Great Commission? How can we here help our missionaries overseas? etc. There will also be messages by 8 top-notch speakers.

The meetings are open to the public, free. Night sessions will start at 7:00. Day sessions on Fri. & Sat. will start at 9 or 10. For more information call toll-free 1-800-972-1137 or write Box 11, Copeland KS 67837.

Friends, churches which make no attempt to reach out for the Lord usually dwindle away &

dry up. God forbid that we lose our vision for the world. Here's an opportunity that can help us.

--AVW

Send Us News!

Many people who read this column have never, and probably will never worship inside the walls of your congregation. But many or most of them have more than a "passing interest" in what you are doing and how you do it for our Common Savior. Your reports which appear here often challenge and encourage them to put more energy, effort, and thought into doing more in their home congregation. We hope you will catch a vision of how faithfully reporting "What the Lord hath done" will bear fruit for time and eternity and in far away places. So, send in your reports, frequently and joyfully. God's blessings on you all! --J.B.

Louisville Christian Fellowship Week

The 49th Louisville Christian Fellowship (LCF) was an outstanding experience. The LCF Committee is to be commended for their looking to the Lord in providing direction and vision for this year's week and for launching out infollowing His leadership in planning the format. The theme of the week was "Making Connection With Those Outside the Church." The four speakers of the week were Julius Hovan of

Gallatin, Tennessee, Marvin Phillips of Tulsa, Oklahoma., Joseph Shulam of Jerusalem, Israel and Earl Mullins Sr.. Each had an hour session every day and each spoke one of the four nights. Attendance for the day and evening sessions was better than it has been in years and the request for tapes of the sessions has reached over a thousand. We are grateful for evidence of the Holy Spirit working mightily in the week and for His blessings.

Pray that the Lord will give wisdom in planning for LCF's jubilee year August 4 - 8, 1997. Make plans now to attend!

From Sister Irene Allen:

. . . "Adjustment to being without Winston remains difficult, but God is good and His grace is sufficient. . . Happiness is a choice, and I do rejoice in the Lord, even though sometimes through my tears. There is an underlying peace in my heart that can only come from above.

"Many ask what my future plans are. I have earnestly sought God's guidance and see no indication that I should make a move at present. My heart is still here with the work Winston and I labored in together since 1964, and opportunities to be a servant of the work continue. Living alone through the approaching winter will be a challenge, but I know God will enable me to meet each demand. The church is already making some plans for my safety and comfort."

--Sis. Irene S. Allen

12731 Spring Brook Drive
Eagle River, Alaska 99577

Winston and Irene served in Alaska faithfully for 32 years. Now that Winston is with the Lord, Irene feels that she still has a place of ministry there. We know from being there that she is held in high esteem and that many feel very close to her. It is important that the financial needs of this faithful missionary continue to be met.

This last paragraph is from Dennis Allen. I, Jack Blaes, concur. I trust that many others do also.

Gallatin Church of Christ

Ezekiel 33:1-20 records God's reminder to the prophet that as a watchman it was his duty to warn the people about immoral conditions and impending judgment. If he warned them and they ignored him they would be responsible for the results. If he failed to tell about the situation, the judgment would fall on him.

Do we not have a parallel to this today? Those called to be God's ministers, pastors or leaders have a responsibility like the watchman's. In fact all of God's people have a like responsibility to issue warnings about conditions that affect individuals, churches, cities or the nation.

Some have said information shared recently about certain political leaders and their decisions have been biased, untrue or unfair. Anytime a speaker shares what is false, it is the responsibility of any who hear it to call him to task by presenting the truth. Their failure to do so leaves judgment on them.

97-05 Z:1

James R. Satterfield
114 Brandywynne Lane

New Albany

IN 47150

Please understand he has a God-given duty to share facts, truth and scriptural principles no matter to whom it refers. The issue is not one of political parties, but Biblical principles.

Congratulations to Teresa Hollins who graduated from TSU on August 10, 1996 with a Master of Science degree in Guidance and Counseling.

Jennings La.

Congratulations . . . good job! The budget was met in June with a weekly average of \$2019 and an additional \$1748 toward the loan

payment of \$2100. God has certainly blessed us and will continue to bless our faithfulness.

Open meeting deemed useful. Some 47 adults expressed ideas, questions, and/or just listened to the discussions. Those suggestions will be addressed in future business meetings and will be shared as decisions are made. One outcome of the meeting is that plans are to have the gym open with adult supervision here on Mondays from 7 - 9 p.m., Wednesdays from 8 - 10 p.m., and Fridays from 7 - 9 p.m.