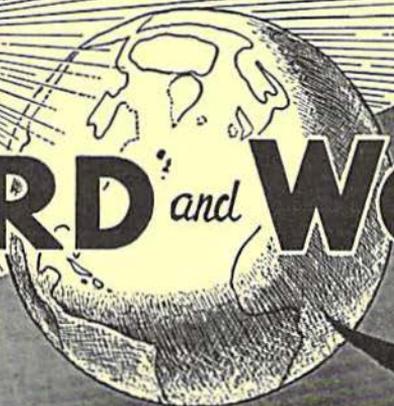


*"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."*



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



*"Holding forth the Word of life."*

MAY, 1990

## **FACING MORAL CRISES**

**Abortion . . . AIDS . . . homosexuality . . . pornography  
. . . premarital sex . . . child abuse: is there still hope  
despite these growing horrors?**

**"It may be the great irony of the modern era that four of its most life-ending and/or debilitating maladies are preventable: AIDS, alcoholism, abortion, and drug abuse. No miracle cure or wonder drug is needed, just the application of the rules of healthful, holy living."**

**— Marshall Leggett**

**"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life." Galatians 6:7-8**

**"Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral . . . nor adulterers . . . nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. BUT you were Washed, you were Sanctified, you were Justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."**

**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

# NEWS AND NOTES

## S. S. QUARTERLIES— A PRICE INCREASE

The W & W Sunday School Quarterly has not increased its price since at least 1983, while the costs of paper, printing, mailing, etc. have risen astronomically. So beginning with the Fall quarterly (Sept. - Nov.), the price will go from \$2.00/year to \$3.00/year. Even that is a modest charge compared with other publishers' prices.

**Locust St. Church, Johnson City, Tn.:** Anniversary Day at Mt. View: Our thoughts and prayers are with the brethren at Mt. View Church of Christ as they observe Anniversary Day today. The first meeting in their (then a basement) church building was on April 7, 1946. This work was started from Bible classes held in the community by Locust St. ministers and in the early days received considerable help and support from the Locust St. congregation. Paul Clark is the current minister and Chester LaHue is an Associate.

## Gallatin, Tenn.

Because we believe in the sanctity of life we support the Cumberland Crisis Pregnancy Center. Your minister and an elder, Dr. David Stewart serve on the Center Board. Several of our women are volunteers who do a great work with clients. Many of you have been generous with gifts to sustain this growing ministry.

"What a Difference a Savior Makes" is the theme for our meeting with Rubel Shelly, May 6-9.

**Meet Rubel Shelley:** He preaches for the Woodmont Hills Church of Christ in Nashville, and is Director of Publications for 20th Century Christian. He is a member of the faculty of Vanderbilt University Medical School and a clinical ethicist at the University Hospital. He is a frequent contributor to a number of publications circulated among Churches of Christ. He has written over twenty books, several of which have been translated into other languages for instructional use. He has spoken on Christian College lectureships and has given special lectures on Christian evidences on major college and university campuses in various parts of the nation.

## Tell City, Indiana:

Missionary Sunday: March 25 was our

monthly time to remember our Mission works. The joint service with Lilly Dale Church was here and our special guests were about 20 members of the Portland Christian School Chorus under the direction of Brother James Embree.

## Buechel Church of Christ, Louisville:

Don Rucker and the youth class are planning a retreat. There will be lots of fun activities: camping, hiking, cook-outs, fishing, canoeing, etc. These activities will take place at Saddle Lake in Indiana.

## Belmont Church, Winchester, Ky.:

Bro. Cecil Garrett opened the morning service with a detailed explanation concerning plans by the elders and deacons to rearrange the auditorium to a semi-circular design facing westward. This will enhance worship, as singing will be much improved and there will be a greater feeling of togetherness.

## "Words of Life":

In the Philippines Bro. Cyrus Gesulga reports many needs due to the long drought and failure of crops. Also, the continued uprisings by the communists killing people and burning homes. Great poverty abounds in all our churches even to lack of food and clothing. Bro. Clark and Bro. Cleo Russell are leaving on May 8 to visit as many congregations as possible.

## Bohol, Philippines:

A spiritist healer has been won to the Lord. Earlier, his brother and sister who are both spiritist healers and missionaries were converted as well. They all surrendered their charms, books and instruments for burning. Please pray for their protection. Pray also for us as we continue to minister to the demon-oppressed people. —Nemesio and Myrna Auxtero

## Shizuoka City, Japan:

The new building is completed, providing an enlarged area for the church meetings, and classrooms, plus living quarters for Teruko and Michiya Nakahara. A dedication service was scheduled for Monday, April 30, a holiday in Japan. Bob Yarbrough (the younger) from Dallas flew over to speak at the dedication ceremony and to encourage

Continued inside back cover

# THE WORD AND WORK

*"Declare the whole counsel of God"*

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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## THEME:

# FACING MORAL CRISES

Alex V. Wilson

I'm sorry, folks, but our theme this month is an unpleasant one—like last month's theme on false teaching. (Next month will be better, I promise.) But as we said before, we need to be warned as well as edified, and problems don't go away just because we ignore them. A good harvest requires pulling weeds as well as planting seeds.

And so you'll read about some ugly stuff in this issue. And yet amid the muck, God's grace and power shine through as well. What would we do without our Savior!

### *Moral Insanity*

"I smoke, I drink, I play cards for money, I pet. I haven't yet gone the limit, but only God knows when or whether I will. My family does not know that I am bad. Of course they don't know, or at least they don't seem to know I do these things.

"But are parents deaf and blind? I can't let myself be in church affairs any more. Maybe I am a good girl as girls go, but I feel bad. Sometimes after an exceedingly wild party I drop on my knees and say: 'Oh, God, please forgive us all' You understand I am not out with a tough crowd—just the boys and girls of the best families that I was brought up with.

"The thing that troubles me and puzzles me is the older people all having faith in us, and these preachers standing around telling us how fine and good we are. Sometimes I'm going to kidnap one of them and take him on a party. I'm sure the next time he preached it would be about sin.

"Do the preachers and teachers know that we young people do these things? Is it the way the world always will be? Please write something to quiet my mind or I shall go mad."

This was a letter—a cry of despair—which the minister of a fashionable church in Washington, D.C. received over thirty years ago. If conditions were bad then (and of course they've *always* been bad), they are much worse now.

Many schools now make the pill or condoms available to any coed who asks for them. The ignorance of Christian moral standards is seen in the following true incident. A college girl was converted to Christ through the witness of fellow-students. One of the questions she asked them about the new life she had just begun was, "Must I quit going to bed with my boyfriend now?" She was sincere in her questioning. She thought maybe she was supposed to quit, but on the other hand maybe there was nothing at all wrong with it. So she asked, to make sure.

A preacher whom I know happened to see a note from one high school girl to another. It said, "I've been to bed with ten different

boys this year." The writer of the note attended his church. Not many days later the girl's mother approached the preacher privately and said, "I've discovered something awful about my daughter. She smokes!"

I do not mean to imply by some of the statements quoted above that parents should be overly suspicious of their children and never have confidence in them. But we should be aware that young people today face unprecedented pressures and temptations. As best we can, we parents must prepare our children to face them. Prayer, example, understanding, and helpful teaching are urgently needed in these days of crisis.

### *The Biblical Perspective*

The Christian view of sex is not "NO, because it's *bad*," but rather, "WAIT, because it can be so *good*, with the person and the time of God's choosing." I heard that statement many years ago, and it struck me as eminently true and sane. It still does. In C.S. Lewis' book, *Mere Christianity*, he shares the following valuable insights. Ponder what he says.

Modern people are always saying, "Sex is nothing to be ashamed of." They may mean two things. They may mean "There is nothing to be ashamed of in the fact that the human race reproduces itself in a certain way, nor in the fact that it gives pleasure." If they mean that, they are right. Christianity says the same. It is not the thing, nor the pleasure, that is the trouble. I know some muddle-headed Christians have talked as if Christianity thought that sex, or the body, or pleasure, were bad in themselves. But they were wrong. Christianity is almost the only one of the great religions which thoroughly approves of the body—which believes that matter is good, that God Himself once took on a human body, that some kind of body is going to be given to us even in Heaven and is going to be an essential part of our happiness, our beauty and our energy. Christianity has glorified marriage more than any other religion. If anyone says that sex, in itself, is bad, Christianity contradicts him at once.

But, of course, when people say, "Sex is nothing to be ashamed of," they may mean "the state into which the sexual instinct has now got is nothing to be ashamed of." If they mean that, I think they are wrong. I think it is everything to be ashamed of. There is nothing to be ashamed of in enjoying your food; there would be everything to be ashamed of if half the world made food the main interest of their lives and spent their time looking at pictures of food and dribbling and smacking their lips. We grow up surrounded by propaganda in favor of unchastity. There are people who want to keep our sex instinct inflamed in order to make money out of us. God knows our situation; He will not judge us as if we had no difficulties to overcome. What matters is the sincerity and perseverance of our will to overcome them. Before we can be cured we must want to be cured.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **ABORTION: THE SILENT HOLOCAUST**

John Powell

It was the end of my seminary training. I had accumulated so many academic degrees I felt like "Father Fahrenheit." However, as I entered St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio, to serve as chaplain for a short time, a startling thought occurred to me. I had never

seen anyone die. I had never seen anyone born. Scenes of suffering and raw grief had all been quarantined out of my academic existence. I somehow sensed that St. Thomas Hospital would be an initiation into areas of life I had never previously entered. I would experience the loves and the hurts, the joys and the sorrows of human existence as never before.

How right I was in my anticipation. In my first week I looked on the corpse of a 19-year-old boy who died in a fiery wreckage when his car was struck by a train. I prayed over the body of a 20-year-old girl who had put a gun in her mouth and sent a bullet searing through her brain.

But the most educational of all my experiences was the birth of a baby boy. One morning I was permitted in the delivery room. The atmosphere was casual and chatty until the actual moment of delivery. Then the room became very still . . . until a baby boy came wriggling into the world. A doctor cleared the baby's breathing passages with suction tubes and briskly rubbed his chest and back. Then it happened. The baby cried.

When I heard that first wail of life, something very profound happened to me. It had never happened on any of the other momentous occasions of my life, not even on the day of my ordination. I simply turned numb. The doctor, who had been explaining the delivery procedure to me, continued his descriptions, but I didn't really hear. I was utterly overwhelmed by the beauty and sacredness of that moment and what I was seeing.

It was as if my mind were saying, "Cannot compute! Cannot compute!" What I was witnessing was too big, too beautiful, too sacred to fit easily into my mind. My mental machinery simply short-circuited. In a daze I stumbled out of the delivery room, and as I walked down the long corridor of the hospital, I began to understand the concept that God does not come to know you and me at conception or birth. God does not get such new ideas, nor does he lose old ones. He has known and loved each of us from all eternity.

Cannot compute. Cannot compute. The miracle of life. The good news of God's love for his world and for each of us. Every new child is a sign that God wants the world to go on.

The child was indeed a unique and unrepeatable image and likeness of God himself. God does not make carbon copies. In the whole history of the human race that little boy had never occurred before, and in the entire course of human history still to be, he will never occur again. No one has ever had or will ever have his fingerprints, his unique combination of gifts, his immortal soul. It is a realization that can enter the mind only gradually. It is a mystery of love that we can only dimly appreciate and never fully understand.

### *NEVER AGAIN*

Some time after the Akron experience I went to Europe for further studies. As all good scholars must, I spent some time in Germany. On one of the school tours, we took a trip to Dachau. In that small city stand the remains of one of the Nazi death camps built during Hitler's regime.

As our guide escorted us through the barracks where the huddled masses of humanity were imprisoned, I began to have an eerie feeling of unreality. Did all this really happen? Could human beings really do this to one another? The evidence was before my eyes, but my mind balked at understanding.

Finally the guide took us through an oblong extermination building. He explained the "plan" of Dachau. "In this first room, you will notice the clothes hooks. The prisoners of Dachau would be invited to come in here for a warm shower, while their lice-ridden clothes could be deloused. After stripping and hanging up their clothes here in this room, they would be invited into the next room."

Our silent group of tourists followed the guide, who continued his explanation with an objectivity which was almost unbelievable. This apparent shower room, with waterless shower heads in the ceiling and open drains in the floor, is actually a gas chamber. "This is where the prisoners were to die." I think all of us felt the shock of deceit, the lingering shadows of death. We were then ushered into the next room of the oblong extermination building. "The corpses were to be stacked here, while a guard with pliers pulled out the reusable gold and silver from the mouths of the dead."

And then into the last room, the room with the ovens where the corpses were to be cremated. The heavily rusted slides were pulled out like slabs waiting for new bodies to be dumped into the flames. The guide explained that around the death camps where these cremations took place, the odor of burned flesh could be detected for five or six miles.

For the second time in my life, I turned numb. If the birth of that baby boy in Akron had been too big, too beautiful, too sacred to fit easily and quickly into my mind, this was too violent and shattering. As the group moved on, I stood there frozen with disbelief. It was as if I were standing in the pit of a nightmare and hoping that I would wake up and find that it had all been a bad dream.

I remember my last look back at the gates of Dachau and the words written on it in so many languages: *Never Again*. I remember saying a prayer, as we left, that such a horrible human tragedy would "never again" be a part of our human history.

Yet somehow I can't help feeling that America today is buying this thinly veiled Nazi doctrine: There are lives not worth living. Only those should be allowed to live who are wanted, who are productive, who are not physically handicapped or mentally retarded. Have American medical practitioners really volunteered, as some German doctors had once done, to become the social executioners of this neat little world that has no room for defectives?

## **TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS [ \* \* READ THIS! \* \* ]**

The kind of world we live in is governed to a large extent by the consensus ethic of that world. It's something like a game: There have to be rules upon which everyone agrees. There are two ethics competing for domination in our contemporary American society. There is the traditional, humane pro-life ethic, which sees every human life as valuable in itself. It offers loving acceptance and care

to every human being, without distinction of size, shape, skin color or self-sufficiency. It assumes that every life is worth living.

Under this ethic, everyone who comes into this world comes as a part of our human family. Everyone comes to us as a unique and unrepeatable gift. There will be, in this world, people like the late Helen Keller: deaf and blind and unable to communicate until Anne Sullivan comes along. Anne Sullivan will attain the stature of a tremendous human being only because there is the challenge of a Helen Keller to call greatness out of her. There will also be in this world retarded and deformed people. There will be schools for "exceptional children" and "Special Olympics."

There will be sympathetic and compassionate treatment of the aged and the senile, who are also a part of our family and who motivate us to be human and loving. The message that the aged deliver will be a request, an invitation and a challenge to our capacity for love and endurance. When we rise to this challenge, like muscles that grow strong with exercise, our societal capacity for mutual love and concern will also grow. We will become more and more humane toward one another. The handicapped and the aged are here as much for us, perhaps, as for themselves. Like Anne Sullivan we can really become great human beings if we choose to love them, not to kill them. The world under the pro-life ethic may not be as neat and clean and pain-free as the world ruled by a quality-of-life ethic, but it is far more humane and compassionate and much more loving.

Struggling to replace this pro-life ethic is the quality-of-life ethic. This ethic is pragmatic and utilitarian. It does not attach absolute value to any human life in itself. Rather it sets "a standard of quality" which every individual life must meet; if a given life fails to meet this standard, it becomes disposable and will be rejected. Abortion, euthanasia and infanticide are natural outgrowths of this ethic.

In this world, living by the New Ethic, those in control will decide which lives are wanted because of their quality of excellence and their ability to contribute to the quality of life in general. This world shuns on principle all suffering and immediately anesthetizes all pain. By consensus agreement, it forbids anyone to be a burden, under pain of death. It puts your life in my hands, if I am in control, and my life in your hands, if you are in control.

The New Ethic would knowingly and willingly lay its human sacrifices on the altar of "quality existence" to insure the creation of a true master race, just like the one Hitler envisioned and hoped to produce in his dreams for the Third Reich. All the mountains would be leveled. All the problem persons would be removed. No calls, no challenges to human greatness or to unselfish love, just a perfect, loveless world for perfect unloving persons.

I think that we are at the "Day of Decision." I truly believe that whatever we decide on the abortion issue will by a very logical and inevitable progression become our decision between the Old Ethic of unconditional respect for life and the New Ethic which insists upon the quality of life and which respects the human right to life only after admission tests are taken and passed. Malcolm Muggeridge has called abortion "the slippery slope." His image is clear: Once we start

down that hill, it is so slippery that we will be pushed along by the logic of the first accepted premise and there will be no stopping.

Once we take it upon ourselves to end the lives of 4,000 innocent babies each day because they are not wanted, we have accepted not only abortion, but the principle that we can take an unwanted life. Of course, the New Ethic propagandists have no trouble with this. However, I am confident that in the end there will be enough of us who cannot live with this horror. We will no longer lay human sacrifices on the altars of utility and the quality of life. We will no longer weigh human lives on the pan scales over things, like money and convenience.

[From Abortion: The Silent Holocaust by John Powell, S.J. © 1981 Tabor Publishing, a division of DLM, Inc., Allen, TX 75002.]

### ON RECORD

Many might want to dismiss John Powell's warnings against the quality-of-life ethic sweeping America as being sensationalistic. But the following quotes he collected from well-known pro-abortionists stand on their own as an indictment of all who consciously or unconsciously devalue human life.

● In May, 1973, four months after the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion-on-demand, Dr. James D. Watson, a Nobel Prize Laureate, was quoted in Time magazine as saying: "If a child were not declared alive until three days after birth, then all parents could be allowed the choice that only a few are given under the present system. The doctor could allow the child to die if the parents so chose and save a lot of misery and suffering."

● In January 1980, another Nobel Laureate, Dr. Francis Crick, was quoted in the Pacific News Service as follows: "No newborn should be declared human until it has passed certain tests regarding its genetic endowment, and if it fails these tests it forfeits the right to live." (Crick has also proposed compulsory death for everyone at age 80.)

● Philip Handler, president of the prestigious U.S. National Academy of Science, has said that the time has come to exert a national policy of eliminating defective unborn babies.

● In the United States it is statistically confirmed that the most dangerous place for anyone to be, with regard to the preservation of one's life, is in the womb of one's mother.

\* \* \* \* \*

## AIDS: Church Accepts Stricken Family

Joy L. McMillon

VANCOUVER, Wa. — It was February, 1989, and everything seemed to be falling into place for Gary and Jean Smith. After completing 20 years in the military, they were thrilled to be back "home" and worshipping with the Vancouver Church of Christ.

Their three children also loved Vancouver and were happy to be back.

Jean was especially pleased to return to her prayer group. Two hours of prayer together every Monday since 1979 had made the four women very close. They had even kept her in their prayer group while she had been gone for five years.

At 43, Jean, a dedicated mother who homeschooled her children, had strong attractive features and thick, brown hair. Gary, 44, was

thinking about a new career as a chiropractor. He was taking a few pre-med classes.

But there were some annoying health problems. For more than a year now, the wound from an earlier surgery hadn't healed. One morning in March, their baffled doctor urged Gary to be tested for the HIV virus.

"I laughed at him," said Gary, "and thought it was ridiculous." Though AIDS was receiving increasing attention as it spread beyond the high-risk groups of homosexual men and drug addicts, ordinary middle-class couples, faithful Christians, hardly perceived the disease as a threat. Gary and Jean thought of AIDS, if they thought of it at all, as something that had nothing to do with them.

Still, there had been disturbing signs—the surgery that wouldn't heal, the 30-pound weight loss, and bouts of profuse perspiration.

"By the end of the week, a knot was pulling at my insides," said Jean.

Traffic seemed exasperatingly heavy the day they drove to the health clinic in downtown Portland, Ore. As usual, there was no place to park. Jean drove around the block while Gary went inside to get the test results. Rounding the corner, she saw her ashen-faced husband standing on the curb.

"I have AIDS," said Gary, his voice quivering, as he opened the door and took his seat. They fought to remain calm as they drove home. That weekend Gary and Jean were too frightened and stunned to talk about his illness. Jean would have to be tested right away. How would they tell the kids? What about their friends?

Even though Jean soon learned she didn't have AIDS, they began to realize the need for emotional support in managing the disease.

"The first place we thought of was our church family," Gary said. Still, meeting with the elders in early June was "the toughest thing I ever did in my life," he admitted. He and Jean explained they believed Gary had contracted the virus during a 1985 surgery in which he was given a blood transfusion.

"The elders were magnificent," said Gary. "The first thing they said was, 'What can we do to help?'" They decided to tell the rest of the tightly-knit 450-member congregation, thinking "that it would unite us instead of some of the people knowing and others not," said Jean.

On Sunday morning, June 17, elder Don Koontz, read the announcement of Gary's condition and the statement that "there was no sin involved" to the congregation. A hush spread across the church. Then the entire congregation surged down the aisle, surrounding the stricken couple.

"It was the most incredible thing I've ever seen—young and old, everyone was there to hug and love them" said minister David Fleeer.

In the same announcement, the elders also told the congregation they had arranged for a representative from the county health department to make a presentation that afternoon. More than 60 people listened for two hours while Tracy Reilly-Kelly helped members understand the disease.

"You could just see the worries and fears evaporate," said Fleeer,

who noted that the Smiths had been preparing communion for the church, and there were lots of questions.

Opportunities for a compassionate ministry among AIDS victims are increasingly real these days, as churches across the nation find themselves being touched personally by people like Gary and Jean (not their real names).

Some, like the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, have had an AIDS victim repent and place membership, as Don Peables did a few months before his 1988 death.

Other churches are finding their benevolent ministries approached by AIDS patients who need financial assistance. Dealing with these new, sensitive problems, leaders often feel uncomfortable disclosing the situation to the other church members.

In one instance, well-meaning Christians in a rural Tennessee church built a glass booth in the auditorium for the AIDS victim.

In some instances, afflicted children of church members are coming home to die. Tragically, when one 30-year elder was reluctant to talk publicly about his terminally ill son who had come home, members seemed to sense the guilt and shame and pulled away. Before his son died, no one came to visit the family, and no one attended the funeral, recalled the elder.

In other cases, where there is openness, there has been an outpouring of compassion, love and support.

During Gary's three hospitalizations this summer, food brigades brought home-cooked meals to their door for weeks at a time. Four women washed windows, scrubbed walls and waxed wood floors in their home. Members have given them financial assistance, cared for their children and even planted extra flowers in the front yard for Gary's homecomings.

"Just like the Scriptures speak of Jesus' having covered our sins, the family at Vancouver has covered us," said Jean, who, along with her seven-year old has taken a paper route that gets them up at 3:30 a.m. daily. "They have met needs we didn't even know we had."

For instance, every Friday evening this summer, a picnic basket filled with goodies mysteriously appeared at the Smith's door. It seems members had learned that every Friday night Gary and Jean have a "party" just for the two of them—a celebration of getting through another week.

Another member brought Gary a teddy bear to the hospital. She had taken the bear throughout the congregation asking dozens of members to hug the bear. Then she brought "Huggy Bear" to the hospital of Gary, a symbol of the congregation's love and support.

"It's a humbling experience to have people love you that much," says Gary, who has gained 40 pound since beginning use of the drug AZT and is able to attend services now.

Health educator Reilly-Kelly also has been impressed by the congregation's response. "Telling them was a very risky thing to do, but they have been a wonderful church," she said. Reilly-Kelly says she uses the groups as an example of how to respond to AIDS wherever she lectures.

Although Gary and Jean are realistic about the disease—Jean

spent this past summer reading 400 to 500 pages a day in medical journals—they try to remain positive. To help them accomplish that, they have begun to keep a “Record of Right” based on 1 Corinthians 13:5, which speaks of love keeping “no record of wrong.”

Jean said they didn’t want to remember “wrongs,” negative things or people who didn’t do this or that, so she started keeping a record of kind deeds, good news and loving words. They rehearse the list every Friday night.

Despite the financial strain and the rollercoaster nature of the illness—relapse, improvement, relapse—both Gary and Jean say they can see blessings that have come their way, including a clearer focus on life’s priorities and a closer relationship with God.

“We haven’t had very many really hard times yet. But this experience has allowed us and our children to see a loving and serving church family and to see elders who are shepherds in a very personal way,” said Jean.

Meanwhile, the family is tentatively finding their way one day at a time. The children are attending public school this fall, and Jean is enrolled in nurses’ training. She is caught between trying to spend as much time as possible with Gary and completing an education. Like their parents, the children are struggling to understand and cope with these life-changing developments.

As for the church, these experiences have meant spiritual growth as well. “You think you will never have to deal with this, but when it comes to your own church family, it challenges you and changes your attitude,” said elder’s wife Kay Koontz.

Growth, challenges. Whatever the age, whatever the problem, wherever human needs are, the church has an opportunity to be a healing presence.—From *Christian Chronicle*, September 1989

\* \* \* \* \*

## **AIDS—TESTING POSITIVE**

Robert Winter

“Have a seat, Bob,” my doctor said. He paused, looking at me soberly. “Your test result came back positive. You have been exposed to the virus that causes AIDS.”

“It’s important for you to realize what this means,” he continued. “It doesn’t mean you will necessarily get AIDS. But the HIV virus is in your blood. As a result, your immune system has created antibodies to it.”

The year was 1985. It had been two years since I decided to leave the gay lifestyle, but now my secret fear was coming true. The AIDS virus was in my blood.

### **BACKGROUND**

I was in the eighth grade when I had my first homosexual experience with one of the older guys at boarding school. My confused adolescent fantasies included sex with men and women after that. A

second homosexual encounter during my first year of Bible college seemed to confirm what I'd suspected for years.

*I must be gay, I thought.*

My friends seldom talked about sex. I felt they could never help or tolerate someone with my feelings. Homosexuality seemed too evil a subject to talk about. So I hid my problem, saying nothing to anyone.

Finally, I couldn't stand the hypocrisy I felt between my outward Christianity and my inner homosexual longings. The gay lifestyle appeared to offer love and acceptance, a place where I would finally belong. I quit college and plunged into the gay life. Over the next 12 years, I got heavily involved in drugs, alcohol and deep levels of sexual perversion in an attempt to deny the emptiness in my life.

Satan twisted my soul and personality until my behaviour disgusted and shocked even me. But instead of love, acceptance and belonging, I only developed deeper levels of insecurity and self-hatred.

By the age of 30 I had the things that should have made me happy: a good job, my own home, and a 21-year-old lover who really cared for me. Yet none of this satisfied me. I wasn't even capable of being faithful to my lover and ended the relationship. All the things society implied would make me happy had failed.

## HOPE

One day, my mother gave me a sermon tape from her church. For the first time, I heard of men and women who had come out of homosexuality. God used that tape to soften my heart, and give me hope that change was possible. I went for counseling, and experienced the power of God as He began changing and restoring my life.

For several months, my homosexual feelings vanished. *My gay struggles are over, I thought naively. I'll never be troubled by homosexuality again.*

But then all the old feelings came back. I sought counseling at church, but the counselor didn't really understand homosexuality. He felt that I shouldn't share with my friends what I was going through, and this made things worse.

## INNER CONFLICT

Soon I started going to parks and places where I could engage in anonymous sexual behavior. The conflicts inside were terrible. Even though I wanted to serve the Lord, I couldn't stop my sin. The pain I felt was like slashing myself with a knife. I knew God held me responsible for my actions, but felt powerless to break the addiction.

Because of the strain on my life and emotions, I started to seriously consider suicide. Thankfully God put people into my life to encourage me. Although they didn't know much about homosexuality, they gave me unconditional love and helped me to persevere. I cried out to God, and couldn't understand why He didn't seem to answer. Only later did I realize He was preparing help for me all along.

God brought me to a ministry for people who struggle with homosexuality. Their eighteen-week course changed my life by restoring my hope. For the first time, I met people who had successfully left

the gay lifestyle, including some who were happily married. The possibility of change and wholeness became a reality to me.

During this period of new hope, my doctor informed me I tested positive to the HIV virus. It didn't seem fair and I cried out to God. "I'm finally getting some help and now this!"

## ANGER

Initially I felt angry at God and considered going back into the lifestyle. I had tried so hard, and now I might get AIDS. In my anger I even had thoughts of just going crazy and having sex with as many people as possible, as some sort of twisted revenge on God and life. It seemed that God had deserted me.

"If God genuinely loved me, He wouldn't have let me get sick," I said to myself. I felt He was punishing me for not being good enough. As I worked through these feelings, I realized it was my choice to go into the gay lifestyle. My illness was a result of my sexual sin.

Also I realized my exposure to the virus had probably occurred before I returned to the Lord. He knew I would become ill and brought me help because He loved me. Jesus died on the cross for me and forgave my sins, but He didn't promise to take away all the physical consequences of those sins.

## PROGNOSIS

When I tested positive in 1985, I was told that only about 20% of the people who tested positive would actually get AIDS. Currently the figure quoted is around 70% and some physicians believe it will eventually be 100%. From a purely medical viewpoint the outlook is not encouraging.

Fortunately there is a great deal of work being done to find a cure. The doctors are getting better at prolonging and improving the life of AIDS patients. Even more important is the fact that God is not limited by man's knowledge.

As a Christian I know all things are possible with Christ. I believe that God does physically heal people today. I have learned to be persistent in praying for my physical healing and to believe that it is possible.

After all, if God has the power to create this entire universe and to raise people from the dead, He can certainly destroy a small virus in my body.

Yet I have also learned not to equate being healed with receiving God's love. Instead I know deep in my heart that God loves me. He will do what's best for my life.

In June of 1987, I developed PCP (Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia) which classified me as having full-blown AIDS. I don't know if God is going to heal me or take me home, but He is always there to comfort me.

## LESSONS

One of the lessons God taught me was not to suppress the emotions of fear and grief. At first I tried, but that only made things worse. Instead I try to follow the example of David in the Psalms.

He is always honest with God about where he is at. First he is honest about how he feels and then he focuses on how wonderful God is and what He has done.

It has been better for me to cry with my loved ones about how much it will hurt if God takes me home, rather than glossing over it and never discussing it. Only when I am willing to face fear and grief can Jesus come into the situation and bring me comfort. But if I refuse to talk about my feelings, communication and intimacy with my loved ones are blocked.

#### ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

My life on earth will seem like a moment when compared with eternity. Learning to deal with AIDS and to trust the Lord since my diagnosis has brought me deeper peace and joy than I thought possible.

Through facing trials, fears and pain, I have learned that God is always there to comfort me and help me through the hard times. If I let myself remain in an attitude of self-pity or anger, it blocks the peace, joy and comfort that He has for me.

Regardless of whether I am healed or taken to heaven, I know that facing AIDS has brought me closer to God than ever. The more I can develop a meaningful relationship with Him in this life, the more I will be able to serve Him during eternity.

For information concerning Christian organizations that minister to the homosexual, please contact: EXODUS INTERNATIONAL, P.O. Box 2121, San Rafael, CA 94912; (415) 454-1017

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## Former Addict says, "You Can Conquer the Porn Habit."

Dave Caton, in *A.F.A. Journal*

I was introduced to pornography at age five; I was addicted to it by age 11. My porn habit eventually led to drug abuse, and my drug abuse to drug addiction. However, my addiction to pornography was much more intense than my addiction to drugs. It was so strong that I felt I would go to my grave with a porn magazine in my hands. I always felt that I could walk away from drugs, but I looked at pornography as a way of life.

I was addicted to various drugs for approximately 11 years, and to pornography for 17 years. When I was saved in 1984, the Lord delivered me of every chemical dependency that I had. Yet, I was not immediately delivered from the bondage of pornography. With the Lord's help, I had to *overcome* the shackles of pornography and inappropriate sexual behavior.

Although I know God can immediately deliver anyone of any addiction, I feel that He wants us to *overcome* inappropriate sexual behavior. God gave us the desire for sex so that we would multiply in number to worship Him, glorify Him and provide fellowship for Him.

Therefore, it would be contradictory to His plan for God to deliver man from sexual desire. Since man takes it upon himself to indulge in inappropriate sexual behavior, then man must decide to leave that behavior and turn back to God's plan.

Addiction to pornography is unlike drug addiction. First, the porn habit is driven by the God-given sex drive. God did not give us a natural desire for drugs and alcohol. Second, pornography causes a severe modification in the user's behavior. The porn addict cannot walk away from the bondage of pornography as easily as the drug addict can walk away from chemical dependency. A drug user can generally walk away from the addiction once the chemical is completely removed from his bloodstream.

The porn addict has two physical shackles with which the drug addict does not have to cope. First, the porn addict has to contend with the hormone epinephrine. Secondly, he has to deal with the habitual conditioning of masturbation. Both are unique to the porn habit.

Epinephrine is a chemical which is secreted into the bloodstream by the adrenal gland when the porn addict indulges in his habit. Epinephrine goes to the brain and locks in the visual (or auditory, e.g. Dial-A Porn) stimulus present at the time. The addict's mind is polluted with sexually explicit images. Furthermore, he will remember these images without trying, and he will see them regardless of his desire to forget them.

These lock-in images will result in severely changed behavior. They are both vague and vivid. Their vagueness creates a need to return to pornography for reinforcement of the images; they are not explicit enough to satisfy the intensity of the stimulus the addict desires. Yet, they are vivid enough to cause him to desire inappropriate sexual behavior and to re-enact pornographic scenes on his wife, children or others.

The porn habit is also a conditioned response. The addict becomes conditioned to respond to pornography through masturbation or other inappropriate behavior. God created man to be sexually stimulated through sight. Therefore, the average male will become aroused by pornography. If one continually satisfies his arousal through masturbation, then he will become conditioned to respond to pornography inappropriately.

Pornography retards the user's emotional maturity process. The addict will likely develop many weaknesses in his ability to deal with stress. Also, he will find difficulty with failure and rejection. Therefore, his behavior is severely affected by his porn habit.

The porn addict will have to make continuous effort to change behavior which has been so drastically modified by his habit. There are seven steps he must go through *before* real change occurs.

(1) The addict must realize that pornography is a sin. He must recognize the spiritual and physical dangers associated with the porn habit. He must understand that he was deceived by pornography and pornographers. He must truly desire to overcome his addiction.

(2) The addict must repent of his sin and turn to God for salvation, strength and overcoming power. Without God and moral

conviction, he does not have a hope of beating the porn habit. (I tried for years to quit; nothing worked until I repented, turned to God, and stood on His word.)

(3) The addict must protect his eyes. He must realize that sexual stimulation starts with the eyes, and remove all sexually stimulating material from his environment.

(4) The addict must renew his mind through God's word. He must learn the pattern God has set for dealing with rejection, failure and stress. He must effectively deal with the withdrawal effects of epinephrine.

(5) The addict must discipline his diet, exercise, relaxation, sleep and many other physical activities. It is amazing how much one's diet and physical routines can enhance the addiction to pornography. Also, he must learn the pattern God has set for sexual relations within marriage.

(6) The addict must fight back. He must utilize his energy, once spent *indulging* in pornography, to *fight* pornography. Fighting back will help him develop the moral character needed for overcoming pornography.

(7) The addict must *continually* strive to achieve the first six steps. He will find it necessary to utilize these steps on a daily basis. Some of the steps must be practiced for life while others may receive less attention as he is healed from his addiction.

[David Caton is Florida State Director of American Family Association. His new book titled *Pornography: The Addiction* describes in detail his seven steps (outlined above) to overcome porn addiction. Caton is fully convinced that each step is vital to conquering the problem. Cost: \$6.45.]

\* \* \* \* \*

## If Your Daughter Gets Pregnant

Anne Elver

"Anne, this is Mrs. Lewis, Sally's mother," the nurse said.

Sally Lewis, seventeen, was a client of this social service agency's program to assist pregnant teenagers. As a volunteer I had a variety of tasks, but I most enjoyed teaching prepared childbirth classes. I often had the opportunity to coach a girl through labor and delivery, as I was about to do for Sally.

Mrs. Lewis and I got acquainted as I waited to join her daughter. We quickly discovered that we were both Christian wives and mothers. Our visit ended when the nurse called me to join Sally.

Mrs. Lewis grabbed my hand as I stood up to go. "I'll be here. Call if you need anything. I can hardly believe Sally's having an out-of-wedlock baby." I squeezed her hand.

Mrs. Lewis could be anyone. Statistics show that four out of ten girls in the United States will be pregnant in their teens. The Christian home isn't immune. A survey of one group of churchgoing teens showed no significant difference between their sexual activity and that of unchurched teens.

Why is this? Teens face tremendous peer pressure, and society's secular standards have become more permissive. Sexual innuendos

pepper the media. The media seldom show the consequences of immorality, almost giving an impression that there are none. These factors pull on all teens alike, bringing the possibility of a teenage pregnancy to the Christian family too.

Suppose *your* teenager gets pregnant? Christian parents are especially bewildered and overwhelmed when this happens, for we tend to ignore the possibility beforehand. Here are some suggestions to consider if your teenager gets pregnant:

*Use this time to increase your love for the Lord.* Your daughter's plight is demanding on everyone concerned with her. Opportunities for the Lord to show His mercy and love to you increase because of this.

You will want to keep up with your normal devotional practices, such as prayer and Bible reading, but spend some extra time with the Lord apart from your regularly scheduled devotions. If you don't have another equal block of time during the day, consider adding several shorter sessions with your Heavenly Father to your schedule.

Other Christians are a spiritual resource too. The Lord uses our fellow believers to meet needs, and many parents find that their Christian commitment grows out of gratitude for the support that others offer during a teen's pregnancy.

Be especially careful not to slack off in your regular church activities and other occasions to be with Christians. Any additional fellowship beyond what you normally get gives the Lord that many more chances to help you. You might want to consider inviting your minister and Christian friends and leaders to your home more often, or seeking out extra fellowship times at church or in other Christian organizations.

This extra effort is worthwhile both now and in the future. Parents who spend this time to draw closer to the Lord cope with the immediate problems more easily, and have a deeper love for the Lord for the rest of their lives too.

*Prompt medical help is needed.* Teenagers have a higher rate of death and complications from pregnancy and delivery than older mothers. The teenager's baby is three times as likely to die in his first year of life than other babies. The infant is more likely to be underweight or premature at birth, increasing its risk of chronic, lifelong health problems.

Early detection of any potential problems may prevent serious complications later. Early medical attention also helps impress on the teen the necessity of following the doctor's orders carefully.

*Find some emotional support for yourself.* You have special needs at this time. Few parents face this news without disappointment and perhaps outright anger. Christian parents often assume a heavier burden of self-blame and guilt than others. We feel we've done something amiss, failing the Lord somehow.

Find another believer whom you trust and share your feelings honestly. The support of a trusted confidante helps you face your feelings, enabling you to resolve them more quickly. Ask your support person to pray for you. Prayer support is vital as you and your daughter make decisions with lifelong consequences.

*Objective counseling benefits you and your daughter.* You love your daughter. Her baby is your grandchild, and you may form an emotional bond with it too. Most parents cannot be unbiased when their child makes decisions regarding two people they love deeply.

Counseling gives you and your daughter a better understanding of the short-and-long-term consequences of any decisions to be made. Your daughter is the one who will live most closely with all decisions and reap the aftermath most keenly. Parents who understand this can offer guidance best, refraining from pushing the girl into an unwise decision. The daughter is also advantaged, for she won't resent her parents or blame them in a few years as she lives with the results of a decision she regrets.

An objective counselor can point out factors you and your child overlook in the duress of her dilemma. Your minister, a church-related social service agency, or a family service agency can steer you to a counselor.

One caution: Do not even consider abortion an alternative. Well-meaning people, wanting to "put this all behind us," sometimes see abortion as the best solution. Educate yourself and your daughter to how the unborn baby is developing in her womb. An innocent human life, made in God's image, is at stake. Why add the sin of abortion to sins already committed?

*Be sure your daughter knows the risk she takes if she agrees to marry.* Marriage may seem to be the easiest solution to your daughter's problem, and you want to spare her the most pain, but the easiest solution often isn't the best.

Teen marriages are three times more likely to break up than others. The family that teens establish faces many pressures, because the partners are still maturing and often lack the ability to stand under the weight of early parenthood and marriage simultaneously.

*Your daughter should understand the demands of single parenthood if she considers this option.* Few teens realistically understand the implications of parenthood. Should a teen become a single parent, she faces heavy responsibilities at a time when she is ill-equipped to handle them. The girl ultimately regrets responsibilities she didn't anticipate. The counselor you seek out can help your daughter realize the magnitude of parenthood.

*Your daughter needs advance emotional preparation should she choose to surrender her child for adoption.* Birth does not end the girl's emotional attachment to the baby. She experiences real grief and loss when she surrenders her child. The teenager who doesn't anticipate these feelings is apt to back out of her decision at the last moment, entering parenthood to escape from troubled emotions.

Your daughter needs to know God's forgiveness firsthand. Premarital sex is a violation of God's laws, but it is like any other sin—it's not unforgiveable. Guilt can leave lifelong scars on your daughter if she doesn't admit her mistake and accept forgiveness from the Lord.

Signs of guilt commonly shown by teenage girls are usually subtle. The girl may refuse to purchase or wear maternity clothes long after she needs them. She might find excuses to avoid going out in public. Some girls buy inexpensive wedding rings to give the impression that

they are married. Others may try to shift the blame for the pregnancy to the boy.

You don't want to add to your daughter's guilt feelings, but when you see signs of regret, use them to suggest that she should confess her sin and accept God's forgiveness. If you find that she has already confessed her mistake, help her overcome the aftermath of guilt. A pregnant teenager who hears God's forgiveness spoken to her after a confession is best able to accept it.

*Assure your daughter that pregnancy is her only difference.* Her self-esteem may be wounded, and she needs assurance of her usefulness to the Lord. Assure her that she is still a useful member of society too. Express appreciation for her good qualities often; pregnancy does not change these.

You may be able to help your daughter accept her self-worth, or enlist help from your minister, a Sunday school teacher, or church leader if your daughter needs reassurance from another source.

*Your daughter should be prepared for people's reactions to her pregnancy.* The pregnant Christian girl often has a harder time than a non-Christian teen. Prepare her for any negative, judgmental reactions. These aren't her problem, but belong to whoever has them.

Tell her that people might ask probing, personal questions. Let her know she doesn't have to share information that she may not want to. "I don't want to discuss it" and changing the subject are an acceptable response.

*Encourage your daughter to keep up with normal activities as much as possible.* She needs her friends now more than ever. She also needs diversion at this trying time.

*Watch your other children for signs of stress.* Sibling problems are not uncommon at this time. Your other children may withdraw from their social activities, have difficulty sleeping, depression, appetite changes, or troubles with their studies.

Siblings need to understand what is happening. They may need help dealing with their needs just as your pregnant daughter does. A family service agency, minister, or school counselor are good places to seek help if you feel you need additional resources.

*Urge the teenage father and his parents to find help also.* The boy is frightened and upset too. He may propose marriage in an attempt to solve the problem, without adequately assessing his maturity and resources. The Christian boy may need help resolving guilt before the Lord just as the girl might.

The unborn baby is a grandchild to the boy's parents too. His parents probably had similar feelings as yours toward the news. The same sources of help for you will also provide some for this other hurting family.

Teenage pregnancies *are* a problem in America, even among Christian families. Christian parents who arm themselves with knowledge and know what to do beforehand are wise. Any of us could need this knowledge, for no one is immune to this unsettling experience.

—from *THE LOOKOUT*, July 29, 1984, by author's permission  
[P.S.: Also important are public confession to the church and then gracious acceptance by the church.—A.V.W.]

## A HEALTHY TEMPLE FOR HOLY LIVING

Joyce Broyles

A number of years ago I was able to travel throughout Europe and Asia. On one of my trips, I visited temples in Athens and Corinth built in honor of some Greek mythological gods. Later, when reading Paul's letter to the Corinthians, I realized the parallel he was making concerning our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is that part of the Godhead that lives in us. Therefore, as Christians, we need to be concerned about how we are going to care for that temple of the Holy Spirit, our bodies.

In India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, I had to take off my shoes before I could enter their temples, but those temples were filthy, filled with pigeon droppings and dirt. In Thailand, Korea, and Japan, again I had to remove my shoes, but those temples were spotless. The attitude of the people was different. So also, with us, our attitude will determine our actions.

In making a decision to keep our bodies healthy, we must decide what will go into them, Food, drink, and chemicals are available. As Christians, we must decide whether they are pleasing to God or not. We may choose to refuse them, use them appropriately, or abuse them.

The key to healthy living and being able to refrain from pressures to abuse our bodies lies in being unconsciously competent. This state comes about through normal growth and development.

As babies, we needed shoes on our feet, but we were unaware that we had feet, much less that we needed shoes. We certainly could not tie our shoes. We were at the stage *unconsciously incompetent*.

As toddlers, we learned that we could not go outside unless we had our shoes on, so we carried them to Mom and asked her to tie them for us. At that time we were *consciously incompetent*.

When we got to kindergarten, we knew how to take one string and make a loop, take the other and make a loop, loop them together and make a bow without making a knot. We could tie our shoelaces, but we had to concentrate. We had finally reached to the stage of being *consciously competent*.

Now as adults, we get our shoes tied without thinking which lace was picked up first. We do it unconsciously. We are now *unconsciously competent*.

As Christians, we want to refuse anyone or anything that can lead to an unhealthy body. We want to be able to do it without having to go through the decision-making process at the time of each crisis. We need to be unconsciously competent; and to be that, we have to make decisions to refuse before the crisis arises. This can be done by going through a process.

First, describe the situation. What is the temptation? Is it a situation that will lead to trouble?

Second, evaluate the situation. Is it illegal, immoral, or irresponsible? Will we get into trouble if we do it?

Third, what are some alternatives or other choices? What possible ways can we handle this?

Fourth, what are the consequences of each choice? What are positive and negative ones? Which ones are risky?

Fifth, make a tentative decision. Discuss it with someone we trust.

Sixth, decide on a final decision. Act on it. Try it out.

Seventh, evaluate the decision afterwards. Did it work? Is it the best solution?

Working through this process with several role-play situations with help to firm up our beliefs and decisions so that when Satan tempts, we will be able to stand.

### *Ads and their Appeals*

Another source of help in making decisions is to analyze advertisements. Checking them over with friends or peers and asking questions is a good way.

First, what is the primary purpose of the ad? Usually, to recruit new customers, increase the use of the product, or help us choose between competing brands (market share advertising).

What basic value, want, or need does the ad appeal to? Some examples are: Success, sex, money, adventure, happiness, skill, power, acceptance, love.

Is it a realistic portrayal of life? Most are not real-life situations based on life as we know it or in our own environment.

Some advertising is classed as life-style advertising. The life style is portrayed and then a product is dropped into it to suggest achievement is by using the product. Could another product, a non-chemical one, be substituted and still have the ad retain its appeal and effectiveness?

If the advice of the ad is followed, will we achieve what is suggested? Try to determine if the ad's goal will be the end result if we actually follow the promotion.

Once we decide what we are supposed to gain by following an ad, we can try to think of alternative approaches. Other courses of action perhaps could be taken to achieve the same goal.

### *Refusing to Drift with the Current*

After deciding to refuse anyone or anything unhealthy, how can we actually stand up to those who offer it to us? By following a few steps, we can do it and still keep our friends, stay out of trouble, and also have fun.

*Ask questions.* Repeat what we have been asked to do so we can tell for certain whether it will mean trouble. "You want me to . . . ?"

*Name the trouble.* Call it by its legal name if possible. "That's DWI!"

*List the consequences of the action.* Use first person pronouns: "We'll be suspended!"

*Suggest alternatives.* Propose doing something else, then get up and start moving in that direction.

*Leave, and leave the door open.* Tell them what we have decided to do, and then take off, but invite them along. If they hesitate, tell

them where we will be until a certain time and that we will be waiting for them if they change their minds.

We must work together to keep our bodies healthy and to be good examples of positive peer pressure to help our friends and family stay healthy also. Selecting someone we know and trust and talking to them about these situations is a big help. Analyzing things we see and hear helps, too.

As Christians, we have other help. We can ask God for guidance when we make our decisions, and for help in living out what we decide to do. With God's help, when the crisis situations arise, we will be able to react with unconscious competence. That competence will be victory, and our bodies will be clean temples in which the Holy Spirit can happily live.

\* \* \* \* \*

## IF YOU HAVE SINNED . . .

R. H. Boll

It is a serious thing, and not to be regarded lightly. My first word, like John's, would be, "These things I write unto you *that ye may not sin.*" But that is not the last word, thank God; for John goes on to say, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins . . ." (1 John 2:1, 2).

There is a difference in sins. The Bible speaks of *great* sins a man may commit, which implies that some other sins are of a minor character. But we are not always able to estimate the relative gravity of our offences. Some sins may seem small to us because they are common and habitual; in God's sight they are great. In any case the least sin is not small in God's sight; and if unforgiven would make salvation impossible. And there are great sins. "There is a sin unto death," John says. "All unrighteousness is sin. And there is a sin not unto death" (1 John 5:16, 17). Of this we shall have something to say further on.

Say then, that you have sinned—perhaps a great sin: what now will you do? It is a critical time. You may take a wrong step and go down into indifference and fatal, final hardening. Or you may be forgiven and humbly rejoice in His mercy and His forgiving love. It depends on the attitude you take, and what you do about it. First of all the facts must be faced. Do not minimize your guilt. Do not put yourself off with excuses. When you deal with God you must above all things be honest. You must come as you are, without pretense or any attempt at concealment. There is nothing hid from His sight, and "all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Now, "if we confess our sins," says John again, "he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Will you believe that? "I acknowledged my sin unto thee," said David, "and mine iniquity did I not hide. I said I will confess my transgressions unto Jehovah; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Ps. 32:5).

"Is it enough," you may ask, "to confess my sin unto God?" Yes, for forgiveness it is. For sin is always and primarily against God (Ps. 51:4). But if God's honor, or the demands of righteousness, calls for confession before men or to men, granting you are sincere in the matter, you will not fail to make things right in this regard. If your sin was a public one you must confess it publicly. If by your sin someone was injured and by your confession the wrong can be righted, you must confess it to the parties concerned. If it was between you and God alone, to Him alone you need confess—though even then it is good and helpful to confess to faithful brethren also (James 5:16).

### THE BASIS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

You may have noticed the recurrence of the word "righteous," in the passages above quoted. "He is faithful and *righteous* to forgive us our sins." And, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ *the righteous*." So David also: "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness O God, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of *thy righteousness*" (where we might have expected the word "mercy"). Or, again, when pleading for forgiveness, "In thy faithfulness answer me, and in *thy righteousness*" (Ps. 51:14; 143:1,2). Now righteousness means justice; and is it justice we want? God forbid. Yet God is just and cannot be otherwise. Where then does His righteousness come in, in forgiving the sinner? John tells us: "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins..." God gave His All, His Best, when He gave His Son to die for our sins. And He did it that He "might be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). Now He can forgive righteously.

### "THAT HE MIGHT BE FEARED"

"There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared," said the psalmist. The forgiveness of God fills with a holy fear. All through the Old Testament God inculcated the lesson that sin is a terrible thing, and that it calls for blood, and that only the death of the poor victim at the altar could avail to meet its guilt. But those Old Testament sacrifices did only foreshadow the real truth: "for it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." It required a truer sacrifice—the blood of One who was the dearest, the purest, the most precious and beloved, the Son of His love, and His awful death upon the cross, to lift that debt. "He is the propitiation for our sins."

"My sins, my sins, my Savior,  
Their guilt I never knew  
Till with thee in the desert  
I near thy passion drew;  
Till with thee in the garden  
I heard thy pleading pray'r,  
And saw the blood-drops falling,  
That told thy sorrow there."

Now come, my brother, and gladly receive that forgiveness which was there bought for thee—rejoice and be glad—but rejoice with trembling. It is free, no fee, to you—free yet not cheap. “There is forgiveness with thee *that thou mayest be feared*” (Ps. 130:4).

### CAST NOT AWAY YOUR BOLDNESS

But to go back to our first question—you have sinned. Now one great danger is that you may get discouraged and think there is no use of starting over. “No use” is the devil’s word. When you hear that, or it is suggested to your mind; he is behind it. God says there *is* use. “Cast not away therefore your boldness which hath great recompense of reward.” Whatever may have happened—cast not away your boldness (Heb. 3:6, 14). We are not left without hope and without help. John says, “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.”

“Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need” (Heb. 4:14-16).

### DOUBTS AND FEARS

It seems hard for us small-minded mortals to believe in the free, whole-hearted, disinterested love of God, and His full and free forgiveness. We feel there must be some sort of hitch in it—it can’t be just so good and free as that. And often after we have penitently sought the Lord’s forgiveness, we still carry the load of guilt around with us, and with a haunting fear. Perhaps we didn’t fulfill all the “conditions?” Our repentance was not perfect? Or maybe we were not sincere enough? And so on. Often the preacher adds to these doubts and fears. Anxious to uphold the high standards, he represents salvation as if it were placed on top of a greased pole, and exhorts his hearers to climb for it. That makes unhappy Christian lives. Moreover it is impossible to live right with a bad unsatisfied conscience. The forgiveness of sins is the very foundation of the Christian life. We can have it by faith, and faith takes the Lord at His word. “But I have sinned and asked for forgiveness so often I fear the Lord doesn’t think I mean it,” says one. A man once remarked that the passage that tells us to forgive seventy times seven, (Matt. 18:22) is the hardest in the Bible. “I think it is the sweetest in the Bible,” another answered. “How can you say that?” replied the first man. “Well, do you think the Lord wants us to be better than He is? If He tells me to forgive seventy times seven, will not He do so, too? I can go to Him time and time again, and He will forgive me again.” That is not the best way, but it is even so; and we sometimes need that encouragement. However He not only forgives, but is able also “to break the power of cancelled sin, and set the prisoner free.” “Unto Him that loveth us and *loosed us from our sins by his blood...*” (Rev. 1:5).

## THE SIN UNTO DEATH

But there is the sin unto death, of which John speaks—how do I know that I may not have committed that? The passage is this:

“If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death” (1 John 5:16, 17).

You will notice that John speaks *about* those who sin unto death, not *to* them. As for such they are not accessible to admonition. They are hardened, defiant, unapproachable. “It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance.” Their state is described in Heb. 6:4-8. They may end up in a paroxysm of bitter remorse like Judas, but until then they are utterly impervious to the appeal of God. What is that sin? It is the renunciation, in the face of all light and truth, of Jesus Christ, and the siding with His enemies, the sin of one who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace” (Heb. 10:29). Is that your case, my brother? The very fact that you fear and are concerned shows that it is not.

To a convicted sinner his sin is mountain-high, inexcusable, unforgivable. For such is the word, “Come now and let us reason, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. 1:18). The blood of Christ is adequate even for this. David in his plea for mercy for his frightful transgression, says, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.” Might this be? Surely—for the Spirit of God did indite those words (2 Samuel 23:2). And to all sinful souls the Lord says, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, all thy transgressions. . . return unto me for I have redeemed thee” (Isa. 44:22). “Repent ye therefore and turn again that your sins may be *blotted out*”—utterly, entirely cancelled, as though they had never been. Then with love and joy start out to live for Him who did this for you. The fact that you do so is the proof that you have not committed “the sin unto death.”

\* \* \* \* \*

**TEACH THE BIBLE BETTER:**

## CHILD ABUSE

### THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY

The teacher planned to talk about earthly fathers' love to help preschool children understand the Heavenly Father's love. “When does your daddy love you most?” she asked. A usually gregarious child immediately stopped participating and went over to the corner of the room. She squatted down and wrapped her arms around her legs. Her body heaved with sobs, but she made no sound.

The teacher drew correct and awful conclusions. The child had been molested. As a Sunday school teacher, she was required by law

to report her suspicions, and the subsequent investigation proved she was correct. The preschooler had been sexually molested. The child was removed from her home.

Upon suspicion or confirmation of any type of child abuse, a teacher must report it. The specific laws differ in each state, but every Sunday school teacher should know them. A copy can be obtained through your local department of social services, city or county attorney's office, law enforcement agencies, or the state attorney general's office.

Children's Village, U.S.A., provides a toll-free national hot-line number and will assist you in reporting child abuse: 1-800-4-A-CHILD.

If you suspect child abuse, according to Karen Mains in her book, *Abuse in the Family* (Cook), you should report the following:

1. The name of the victim
2. The current location of the victim
3. The type of abuse being reported; injuries you may have noted, signs of neglect, or things that may have led you to suspect molestation.

We can no longer hide behind the banner: "Not in my church." Be aware. Don't disregard your suspicions. God may use you to save a child's life—physically and emotionally, as well as spiritually.

—David C. Cook Publishing Co.

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## Hosea, The Heart and Holiness of God

### "GOD'S DIFFICULTY"

(Hosea 6:1-11; read the passage first)

Ernest E. Lyon

I hope you will recall that at the close of chapter five God had said that He would leave Judah and Ephraim and return to His place until they admitted their guilt. In the opening three verses of the chapter we have the cry of those who wanted Him to return. They said *they* must return first, then He would heal them, bind up their wounds, revive and restore them. So they had cried, "Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge Him." Then God would return and restore them.

In verse four God cries out, "What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah?" God was in difficulty. If you read no further you would think it was because of their terrible sins; but He could take care of those through His Lamb that He would send to take away the sins of the world. The difficulty lay in *what to do with them when they professed something that would not last*. They professed love, but it faded away soon like the morning mist or the early dew that lasts such a short time.

Let us remind ourselves that the people of Israel were very religious. But also remember that their religion consisted of man seeking to come to God in his own way. Paul began his famous address in the meeting of the Areopagus with these words: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious." But it was a religion of idolatry and they were lost. The Bible uses the word "religion" only

once in a good sense, in James 1:26, where James was speaking of good works that should follow salvation.

Feelings are involved in what Hosea is saying here, but they are not backed by right attitudes and activities. Feelings are not enough in themselves. Henry Ward Beecher well said, "Feeling is to action what wind is to the sails." And let us not forget that when the wind is controlled it helps, but uncontrolled it can wreck. Feeling is a combination of mind and emotions. The mind grasps the subject and the emotions respond. Feeling needs really to heed the facts the mind produces and then to act on them. You can superficially grasp truth about God and get feelings, admiration, aspiration, intention—but unless we face the facts and act accordingly, our goodness will be like the morning cloud or the early dew.

This love (or submission, or goodness, as other translations give it) then, is response to conviction about God. We must get our lives rooted in these facts about God. A lot of people say the Apostle's Creed every week, but the opening statement ("I believe in God") must go beyond sincerity, even telling the truth, for so long as it is just an intellectual conception, it is worthless and will quickly pass away. It will not go with us into the everyday world and sustain our witness.

The question is, have we faced seriously our statement? Have we faced seriously the thing we affirm? Have we considered the implication of this declaration? And, most importantly, are we now arranging our lives in accord with our statement? If not, it will be like the morning mist or the early dew. Have you wondered why preachers in Rescue Missions say they have advantages over the preachers in suburban churches? People in the Rescue Mission know their need and will respond fully if they *hear*. A man named Thomas Champness is given credit for this statement—"If God made the country, and man made the city, the devil made the suburbs." That is rather extreme, but it has an element of truth. God has more difficulty dealing with people who know but whose submission or love is fleeting, passing away like the morning mist. "O Ephraim, what shall I do?"

Another reason why our love, our submission, is fleeting is that we fail to concentrate and settle this *before* other things interfere. The heart with mixed motives does not take us where God wants us. Like the Psalmist we need to pray, "Give me an undivided heart." Or with Paul let us be able to say, "One thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal" (Phil. 3:10). We need to look carefully into our hearts and then not allow other motives to come in.

The last seven verses of the chapter quote God's condemnation of this kind of dealing with Him. Never forget verse 6, "For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings." But also notice the seven charges against His people that God makes in verses seven through ten. They had broken the covenant, were unfaithful to God, their city was stained with blood, they lay in ambush for men, they committed murder, committed shameful crimes, and were given to prostitution. A very large and terrible set

of accusations. Could there be any hope, any cure for their condition?

There is truly a cure, but, believe it or not, it is in ourselves, not in God. Verse six show *His* desire, but how about our desire? Will we respond? Now look back again at the first three verses of the chapter. First, note the three times "let us" is said. In verse 1, "let us return to the Lord." In verse three, "Let us acknowledge the Lord" and "let us *press on* to acknowledge Him." If we obey these exhortations we will be able to satisfy God's heart.

But now underline at least in your minds, the statements begun by "He will." In verse 1, "heal us." In verse 2, "revive and restore us," and last, in verse 3, "come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth." There you have God's desire. There you have the way of being as God would have us to be, and it starts with "Let us."

We remind ourselves again that God says, "What can I do with you?" Shall He blast them, condemn them? That is something God does not want to do. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He desires that all come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. God can take care of our sins that men recognize as sins, but what can He do about our fleeting acknowledgment of Him? That is what He is asking here.

Each one of us needs to ask himself the question—"Where are we living?" I am not asking you; you should not ask me; but each of us should ask himself that question. Are our aspirations and good intentions fleeting, like the early dew? If so, God is in difficulty with us. We need to ask God to discipline us until we truly have a living faith, but "let us" do what God has told us that He might be able to show His love through eternity.

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## THOUGHT PROVOKERS

### from Here and There

#### Is He our Master or our Servant?

"In the '90s look for increased tension between Christians who see Christ as their helper and those who see him as their Master." —John Wimber, *Equipping the Saints*

#### UNPRECEDENTED EVENTS

Six months ago, who would have predicted that the Berlin Wall would come down? But it has come down. Who would have predicted, as *U.S. News and World Report* says, "The latest fad among Russian youth is going to Sunday school"? Who would have understood that when Wil Goodheer put an ad for studying the Word of God in the Bucharest, Romania newspaper, in four days 1,300 Romanians would respond?

Who would have guessed that a general in the Russian army would fly to Israel and seek out the church of Christ where Joe Shulam preaches? Who would have thought that he would confess, "I have been a secret believer in Jesus Christ"? Who would have dreamed

that 120 believers in Jesus as the Son of God who have been baptized into His name, have been meeting for 20 years across the street from the Kremlin? Who would have dreamed that Hans Nowak would have preached to audiences of 500 in Eastern Europe?

While none of us knew that this was going on, God knew it. He was raking Eastern Europe back and forth, getting it ready to be fertile. God has been at work in the Eastern bloc. He is the Lord of the harvest.

—Prentice Meador in *Christian Chronicle*

*We received nearly three thousand letters from the USSR in the last month.*

Among the many who wrote were an artist, a journalist, an aviation student, a university student, a university professor, an engineer, an economist, a musician, a soldier, a factory worker, a former gang member, a drug addict, an Olympic athlete, a mother of five, and a mother-to-be. They included Marxists, Moslems, many atheists.

They had the following in common:

- They listened to the Gospel on FEBC broadcasts
- They desired to follow the Lord
- They desperately wanted a Bible

A 27-year-old man, who lives and listens in Leningrad, wrote this impassioned plea:

My life was empty and senseless... I indulged in drugs, women, alcohol—and each year I was sinking deeper and deeper. All that was good and acceptable was destroyed. I never knew God or had any reason to believe in Him. I ran away from people and myself to work in a lighthouse. I was in deep pain and shame. There was a radio there. It is now three months that I am listening to your broadcast. I do not know how long my life would have continued if I had not found your broadcasts. I do not have a Bible. Please do not reject me, a deep sinner. *Stretch out your hand and help me.*

Your brother, Nikolai

A few months ago while in the Soviet Union, we were told of a conversation between Kremlin officials. The question under discussion was *WHY is there so much immorality in the USSR?*

One official suggested: It is because we have no moral base. A moral base means God. We have left God in Russia and it is time we get back to Him.

—Bob Bowman of Far East Broadcasting Company

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## **VOICES from the FIELDS**

James (& Karen) Ashley

Solomon Islands

April 1990

We have just finished seven weeks attending a workshop on Matthew. Both of our co-translators David and Timotheus came to the workshop, and together we worked on polishing the first 14 chapters, which is all that we were able to cover. We are pleased to have that in good shape now, and are looking forward to tackling the last

half of the book. We've been delayed in returning to Sa'a, because the ship broke down and it has taken 10 days to get the spare parts delivered from Australia and then installed. But it is fixed now, and hopefully we'll return to Sa'a on April 9.

There are lots of English words or concepts that are unfamiliar to David. I think I spent a day describing Lake Galilee—large, deep, land-locked body of fresh water. David had trouble imagining a body of *fresh* water as big as his whole island and the necessarily huge land mass surrounding it. We searched for a suitable Sa'a word from various options meaning lagoon, swamp, stream, bay, water, or ocean. I finally realized the fresh water aspect has really very little relevance and the best word is probably "aasi," meaning "sea" like in the familiar KJV term "Sea of Galille."

As you can see, translation is often just plodding work, but it does have it's moments. For example, Mt. 3:16 was first mistranslated as, "Jesus came up out of the water and saw the dove descending from heaven and lightning struck"—from the English expression "alighting on him." And Mt. 7:15, "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing . . ." was understood to mean that the false prophets would come dressed in sharp looking woolen suits!

We started another project in November. There had been a lot of immorality coming to light in our village, and the district priest asked us to start a Bible study for the young people. We agreed to do it, and we met for several weeks right up until we went to Honiara. We've been covering what it means to be a Christian—a follower of Christ who does what He wants, and not just those who claim the name because they were baptized as infants or confirmed or anything else. Attendance wasn't great at first, but after resolving some scheduling conflicts we had 35-45 people. In January we continued the classes, and Karen helped with some of the teaching. When we go back this time we hope to start again, and would appreciate your prayers.

Karen and the kids are doing well. A lot of Karen's time each day is spent preparing school work for both boys, and then in walking them through it.

Susan has a vocabulary of 8 to 10 words now. Not surprisingly her first word was "mama," but since that means "father" in Sa'a, we don't know for sure who she is talking to.

We praise the Lord that we were able to get our truck to Honiara on a landing craft and that we were able to sell it at our asking price. (There has not been any visible progress made yet toward repairing the road on Small Malaita.)

In January I took a malaria eradication course, and we praise the Lord that I have had no re-occurrences since then.

Please pray for our co-translator Timotheus who was very sick in January. He developed an ulcer and couldn't eat for two weeks. He was unable to get treatment for it because his village is a three hour hike into the mountains from the nearest clinic. When he was finally able to make it there, they didn't have the right medicine anyway. He is on medication now and is doing much better, but we would appreciate your prayers for his complete healing.

# A Mother's Day Letter

## I'M SORRY

Name Withheld

Dear Mom,

I am in my forties now. You are bedridden and no longer able to recognize me. Only a few people on this planet have ever seen you. Your picture has never been in a paper or magazine. Now your world is limited to only Dad's constant care and a few others who help him. One day your body will also die, as your mind has already done. But Mom, you will live forever.

As I ponder what to talk about this Sunday, I felt compelled to write to you, because this is Mother's Day Sunday. I know you can't understand, and yet I sense you understood for many years what I now have the spirit to confess to you and God. I am impressed with my blindness and stupidity and your wisdom and love. Why and how you continued to love and care for me, even in my cruelty to you, can only be answered in your Christlike spirit. I did not physically hurt you, as you know, but I was still so mean. I would have kicked me had I been you, and I am a Christian.

When I was at home growing up on the sharecropper's farm, you were fat, uneducated, poor and old. You were ignorant of most of this world and its concepts. You spoke a broken English. You could read just a little and write essentially nothing. Hardly equipped to raise six children. It did not matter to me that these conditions were essentially beyond your control. You had been born into that environment, and you had risen steps above your brothers and sisters.

I grew very quickly to dislike fat, uneducated, poor and old. As a teenage student in school I did not want to be seen with you. Not only were you fat, uneducated, poor and old . . . you had all the paraphernalia that went with those characteristics. All I saw was the old car, the homemade dress, the butchered language, the table manners, the lack of money . . . the list seemed endless. I did not want you to come to my school nor to any function where some one might know you were my mother. You were an embarrassment to me. What would my friends say? (May peer pressure be eternally accursed!)

Mom, I'm so sorry. I've prayed often, since I've grown up, that God had mercifully blinded you to my stupidity and sin of those teen years. Please forgive me. I'm sorry for the times I hurt you. Thank you for doing your best for me in spite of me. I know, that's what love is, doing the best for your child in spite of your child. I could not tell you before, while you were able to communicate, because maybe God had protected you during those years I was growing up. If He had, I did not want to hurt you. I could not hurt you now, because now, Mom, I love you.

Mom, according to this world's standards, you still are fat, uneducated, poor and old. Like the world, I was also blind to real beauty,

but now I see. Once I was blind to real wisdom, but now I understand. Once I too thought gold and silver were real wealth, but now I know differently. Once I was a child and childish, but now I am a parent. Mom, I am so proud of you.

I understand now the pain that was there when you could not help with my homework. I understand now the pain you felt when you could not provide some of those material things that were so important to a teenager. I understand the pain of feeling out of place in a society that then and now bases it all on youthful appearance and social and economic standing. I understand the pain of a rebellious teenager.

During college years I grew some, and then I was able to hug you and give you a kiss and tell you that I loved you. I started getting you a watermelon for Mother's Day because you enjoyed that more than flowers. I did not get you one this year, but I suspect there will be something like watermelon in heaven for you. Even though I grew up some during college it has been only in the past few years that I have come to know how tough you really are. Now I know that Jesus was so real to you. Now I know you are a champion among mothers. You did not leave when it got tough. You hung in there when Dad was so sick for so long. You did not answer my rudeness. You were indeed a class act. It had to be God who gave you such love and such strongness. I thought I was tough because I played football, but toughness is being true to the challenge of being a Christian mother in today's world. Toughness is saying "no" when "no" needs to be said. Mom, the hours you must have spent in prayer in order to be so strong, so much like Jesus. I know you did, because I caught you praying often, especially in the evenings.

You certainly had every reason to leave, to quit, to just send us all to hell and go take care of yourself for a change. Now, Mom, I see how beautiful you really were during all those years. You really did do it all. You took care of me and five others, who, although you had given life to us, I suspect often felt the same way I felt. It was not Dad's fault that he could not read or write and that he was nearly blind, but nonetheless, you still had to care for everything, from money matters to discipline and most everything else in between.

Why did I change? And why are all your six children and twenty or so grandchildren Christians? And why do the other five children also love you today? Because of the one outstanding concept you instilled in all of us: JESUS!! You see, Mom, no matter what I said, nor how I behaved, I had to see that you were a Christian. That Jesus was real to you. You were not an occasional Sunday morning Christian, but you lived it everyday. This is how I remember you, Mom.

I remember, Mom, you never spoke profanity from your lips. You never cursed at Dad, nor me, nor any human, nor an animal nor an occurrence. You never called a person a fool. You saw people as special. And you were rather alone in caring for the black people also. You never got out of control. I know; I heard you everyday for eighteen years. Jesus said, "Out of the heart, the mouth speaks." Your

English was broken, but never profane. You could not read much, but read us the Bible. Anyone who knows the Bible and Jesus is not an uneducated person. Now I see!

I remember, Mom, you never turned your back on anyone in need, black or white. You took care of my grandparents in our home for years, though you were old and poor. For years you cared for my uncle even though he had mental problems and epilepsy. For years you fed the many relatives. You really were wealthy. What wealth you had! Now I understand the wealth to be had in sharing. What wealth you will possess in heaven!

I remember, Mom, I never had to worry about you being home when I got there from school. You were always there. You missed only one day in eighteen years! What security you were. You were old, but tough. You did not use baby sitters nor come up with monetary excuses so you could dump me on someone else and go do your thing.

I remember, Mom, there was never even a discussion about what the family was going to do on Sunday mornings and evenings and Wednesday evenings. Everyone knew that part of each week was set aside to honor and worship the God who had made us and to commune with other Christians.

I remember, Mom, never feeling you had whipped me without just cause, but I do remember having to go get the switch you used on me. I still remember the bush it came from! But you never screamed at me.

I remember, Mom, there was always food to eat.

I remember, Mom, you never verbally degraded me. You always were the essence of the example of winning by being a tough, loving, trusting Christian. And you are my Mom! How ashamed I am to confess that for years I thought of you as an embarrassment. God, forgive me.

You are to be honored, because all six of us have followed you in making Jesus the very vital part of our lives. All of us possess more material goods than you ever had, but I often wonder if any of us will ever be as wealthy as you are today.

One day, maybe soon, your body will die and Dad and the six of us will get together to bury your body. And I will cry some more. I will cry because you were so good to me and I was so stupid for so long. But I will not be crying because of where you are. I know you will be with Jesus. Why? You know why, Mom. Not because you were so good, but because of Jesus. It is by grace, isn't it? You knew you had sinned and someone told you the good news that Jesus died for your sins, and in your place. You believed that and your sins were forgiven. And you were baptized. And then all those years, through it all, you kept that faith. That is why I know I will see you in heaven, because I have accepted that same good news. And I have kept the faith.

Thank you, Mom, for everything, but especially for Jesus.  
I love you.

See ya' in heaven, Mom,  
Your Son

## NEWS AND NOTES, continued from inside front cover

the work. He is their treasurer, and a longtime friend of the Nakahara family. Pray for Michiya Nakahara as he combines preaching and seminary studies, and for Teruko to be daily sustained by the Lord physically, emotionally and spiritually. Thank God for this step forward in the church there.

### Southeast Church of Christ, Louisville:

In the past, some of you have expressed interest in attending the Bill Gothard "Basic Life Principles Seminar." I am pleased to announce that it is to be held in Louisville, July 9-14, 1990. It is for youth and adults. (For more information, call 502-935-5142. Cost is \$35 before June 5, \$45 after that.) —Nathan Burks

### Linton, Indiana:

On Monday night April 23, Bro. Bill Vickers will begin our Sunday Teacher Training Class. We will begin each Monday evening for 6 sessions. All who are presently teaching or have been a teacher as well as those who wish to learn how to be a teacher are encouraged and invited to attend.

### Ebenezer Church of Christ, Route 1, Salvisa, Kentucky 40372

We are pleased to announce a Music Camp for young people July 22-28 at the Antioch Camp in the wooded hills north of Frankfort, Ky. The camp has three purposes: (1) to praise God, (2) to edify and inspire our young people, and (3) to prepare them for greater service to the churches of Christ in the ministry of song.

The director is John Fulda, former professor of music and director of the chorus at Southeastern Christian College. John is now the minister of the Big Creek Church of Christ and a teacher of choral music in the Amite, LA, school system. Since John's gifts of musical leadership and inspiration have blessed so many of us, we are truly pleased to have him lead this camp. Joining him on the staff will be his daughter Jana, James Embree, and Bonnie Colwick.

We need to publicize and promote the camp in the churches. Please encourage your youth, grades 7 and up, to mark the dates of July 22-28 on their calendars. College students and even grads are welcome too.

Second, we need financial support for the camp. While other camps usually have only food expenses, which are

paid by a minimal camper's fee, the music camp will incur several extra expenses for sheet music, travel expenses for John and an honorarium for him.

We anticipate that these extra expenses will run something over \$1,000. We are hoping to find nine other churches willing to join hands with Ebenezer to take care of these extra costs.

—Bob Ross, (606) 734-7743

### URBANA '90 IS COMING!

Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) sponsors a missionary convention of strategic importance to world evangelism once every 3 years. Urbana 90 is scheduled December 27, 1990 - January 1, 1991, in Urbana, Illinois (on the campus of the University of Illinois).

Anyone giving serious consideration to missionary service needs to be there! Registrations postmarked by June 30, 1990, receive an early registration discount! Hundreds were turned away from Urbana '87. Call IVCF at Madison, Wisconsin, for additional information and registration forms (608-274-7995). Anyone in the Kentuckiana area interested in going may contact Victor Broaddus re: transportation: 606-253-9834 (evenings).

### Jennings, LA:

March 2 - 3: Thirty-three attended the Teachers' Workshop taught by Glen and Opal Babel, Beth and Evon Weatherford, and Kay Roberts. Very profitable.

March 9: Bowling for families in Lake Charles. Good fellowship.

March 15 & 27: Fifteen workers painted the foyer, halls, fellowship room, and upstairs. Nice work.

March 18 - 22: Buford Smith spoke at our Spring Meeting. Good, practical messages.

March 25: Five men shared short messages at the evening service. Excellent thoughts. Marlin and Brian Comeaux, Doug Barberousse, Douglas Broyles and A.J. Istre.

March 31: Several helped to clean up Jennings in the cleanest-city contest.

April 1: Douglas spoke in Alexandria Church of Christ. Gideon representative was with us and had a moving testimony.

April 7: Seven ladies attended Ladies Day in Turkey Creek. Our own Joyce Broyles was one of the 5 speakers. Wonderful, beneficial time.

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## A PRAYER FOR HOLINESS

I want a principle within of watchful, godly fear,  
A sensitivity to sin, a pain to feel it near.  
Help me the first approach to feel of pride or wrong desire;  
To catch the wandering of my will, and quench the kindling fire.  
From Thee that I no more stray, no more Thy goodness grieve,  
Grant me the filial awe, I pray, the tender conscience give.  
Quick as the apple of an eye, O God, my conscience make!  
Awake my soul when sin is nigh, and keep it still awake.  
Almighty God of truth and love, to me Thy power impart;  
The burden from my soul remove, the hardness from my heart.  
O may the least omission pain my reawakened soul,  
And drive me to that grace again, which makes the wounded  
whole.

—Charles Wesley

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### COMING NEXT MONTH:

- \* Does Proverbs 31's ideal woman threaten you?
- \* Women in the early church
  - \* Great women missionaries
  - \* Frances Havergal: songs amid sufferings