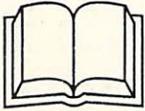


"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The *Word and Work*



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

January 2006

Theme #1:

The SERMON on the MOUNT:

The Poor in Spirit, and
God's Good Welfare Program

Theme #2:

SHARING WONDERFUL NEWS

Use Questions, and
Lift up Jesus --
Even if you're Not an Evangelist

For YOUTH and All Who Love Them—

Richard "Hoss" Ridgeway, a young man of wide experience and fruitfulness in ministry to youth, will speak for the **SBS LECTURESHIP**. This will be **March 3 and 4** (Friday night from **7:00-9:00** and Saturday morning from **9:00 to 12:00**), at the **Buechel Church of Christ**, 2105 Buechel Bank Road, Louisville. 502-499-0724.

"Hoss" has preached for eight years. The first five years were in Front Royal, VA, the last three years in Ocala, Florida. During his eight years of ministry he has conducted six Future Preacher Training Camps in Virginia and Florida. He regularly speaks at 10 different youth rallies each year. Young people will receive a blessing from Hoss' love for the Lord.

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Saturday morning's messages:

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Maintaining the Soil.

This young man will share with us insights into the youth of today. It will be of great benefit to all church leaders and their wives to attend these sessions. They are sponsored by the **School of Biblical Studies**, also located at the Buechel Church of Christ.

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Bennie Hill, News & Notes

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We begin an important series--

Introducing The Sermon on the Mount

A. V. W.

One time in Manila I was scheduled to preach on Sunday morning, but a torrential rainfall flooded the streets and we couldn't get there. Rudy Mapile, another member of our preaching team, had to fill in at the last moment, unprepared. He walked to the pulpit and announced, "*Today you will hear the greatest sermon ever preached to this church!*" And he was right, for he proceeded to read chapters 5-7 of the Gospel of Matthew – the Sermon on the Mount.

Yes, Christ's sermon was probably the greatest discourse ever preached anywhere, anytime. "Blessed are the pure in heart.... You are the salt, the light.... Let your light so shine before men Love your enemies.... Our Father in heaven.... Consider the lilies of the field.... No man can serve two masters.... Do not worry about tomorrow....

Seek first the kingdom of God.... Judge not.... Ask and it shall be given to you.... Do unto others.... The wise man built his house on the rock...." All those sayings and more, contained in one sermon.

The message is so pregnant with insights that Martyn Lloyd-Jones of Westminster Chapel in London preached a series of 60 meaty sermons on it. Published in two volumes.

The Key Verse

It seems to me that the key verse is Matt. 5:20. "I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law [the scribes], you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Hey, wait!—is Jesus teaching salvation by works, by our righteousness and obedience? Of course not, for at other times and also in the first sentence of this sermon He shows we cannot earn salvation. No way can we work our way into God's kingdom. But He makes it clear that being His disciple will make--*must* make--a deep difference in our heart and life.

Christ is mainly dealing with the question, What kind of character and conduct does God desire and require from His people? This is not an evangelistic sermon, though it contains "gospel" (good news for sinners) as well as duty (commands for His creatures). Primarily He is addressing us, His people, calling us to be different

from unbelievers. He challenges us, "What are you doing more than others?" (5:47), and bluntly commands, "Do not be like them," the unconverted (6:8a).

Key Expressions

The main terms are *righteousness* (used 4 times), *kingdom of heaven* (8 times), *reward* (9), *Father* (17), and *heaven/ heavenly* (21, including those times He mentioned the kingdom of heaven).

Consider the implications of these expressions. He is saying, Do not live only for visible things or for the present. Instead, consider and remember **heaven** -- the realm of invisible realities, the place of our future glory. Heaven is the place of God's throne (5:34), His dwelling-place where His will is perfectly done (6:9-10). We may store up treasures there (6:20) and thus have a great reward waiting for us there (5:12). Remember to evaluate everything from the viewpoint of heaven—that is, of God Himself. (The Jews in their reverence for God's name often substituted "heaven" for the word "God." Thus Matthew, writing to Jews, almost always uses the term "the kingdom of heaven" while Mark and Luke, writing primarily to Gentiles, say "the kingdom of God.")

The **kingdom of heaven** (or of God) is already present in the sense that we can now enjoy membership or citizenship in it, if we surrender to the rule of God's Christ, the King (see Col. 1:12-13). The present aspect of the kingdom is seen in Matt. 5:3, 5:10 and 6:33. But the kingdom is still future in the sense that it will not be established with full power and glory on this rebellious planet until the King will return. See 6:10 and 7:21; also Gary Pearson's article that follows.

Although God's kingdom is often mentioned, God Himself is called **Father**. He lovingly provides for His children's needs (6:31-33), gives us good gifts (7:11), and delights to bestow generous blessings or "rewards" for our faithfulness (6:1,4,6,18).

Both Christ and His apostles often mention **rewards**. We should not develop a legalistic, commercial, bargaining attitude as a result of this recurring theme (see Matt. 20:1-16). But the point is this: Discipleship is costly. Jesus knew His followers would experience many sufferings. So He constantly reminds us, "Though it costs to follow me, it also *pays!* I demand sacrifices but I also offer rewards beyond comparison." God appeals to our self-interest, but never to our selfishness. (Did you get that?) It pays to serve God: see Rom. 8:18; Heb. 11:6, 26; 12:2; etc.

So we can summarize the message of the sermon by saying that genuine disciples of Messiah Jesus have God as their King: we loyally obey Him. And genuine disciples also have God as their Father: He lovingly cares for us. The sermon thus teaches **our duties as subjects of God our King, and our privileges as children of God our Father.** [See article, "Various Interpretations of the Sermon."]

A Life of Blessing

Gary Pearson

The Gospel of Matthew was not divided into chapters until around the 13th century, and I tend to agree with commentator Jack Lewis that the chapter division we have between chapters 4 and 5 of Matthew is misleading. The theme of the Sermon on the Mount really begins back up in 4:23 where what Jesus preached is summed up by Matthew as the "**gospel (or good news) of the kingdom.**" We see in Matthew 3:2 that John the Baptist preached about the kingdom of God, and we find in 4:17 and 23 that Jesus also began his public ministry preaching about "the kingdom."

When we talk about the kingdom of God we are talking about **the reign of God.** "Kingdom" equals "reign." God's kingdom does not equal the church. I know that's a bitter pill for some folks to swallow because that view was strongly taught in many Churches of Christ when we were growing up. The bottom line, however, is that it just is not true. If you're not convinced, get a concordance and look up the passages that mention the *kingdom of God* and try substituting the word *church*. It won't fit. God is indeed reigning in his church--so there is a close relationship between the Kingdom and the church--but they are not the same thing.

One other reminder about the kingdom: Remember this phrase--"**already but not yet.**" We need that phrase in our mental toolbox that we use in interpreting the New Testament. It is like a hammer or a screwdriver in that it is one of the most common interpretive tools we need to properly understand the Bible. It definitely applies to the kingdom.

Has the kingdom of God come? By all means, yes! The kingdom or reign of God invaded our world when God the Son came to this earth in flesh and blood. [Matt. 12:28; 21:31-32.] The kingdom of God also came with great power on Pentecost as we read about in Acts 2.

Is the Kingdom of God still to come? Again, by all means, yes! We will not see the kingdom of God come in its fullness until Jesus comes again in his glory to sit on his glorious throne--as He most definitely assures us He will do. (Matthew 25:31.)

This is why some Bible passages speak of the kingdom as a present reality as in Luke 17:21 when Jesus told the Pharisees, "For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you [or within you]." This is also why other Bible passages speak of God's kingdom as something that we are still awaiting as in 2 Peter 1:11 where Peter writes, "For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you." Peter was writing to Christians; yet he speaks of their entry into the kingdom as being in the future.

So keep these three basic tools about the kingdom in mind:

1st, the kingdom of God is the reign or the kingly rule of God.

2nd, the kingdom of God is not the church, although the church is certainly to be within or under the reign of God.

3rd, until Jesus returns, the kingdom of God is "already but not yet." The kingdom has come and the kingdom is coming.

What in the world does all of that have to do with the Sermon on the Mount? The Sermon on the Mount is where the rubber meets the road for each one of us when it comes to the kingdom of God and our daily lives. Talking about the kingdom of God can become theoretical and obscure--up there in the clouds somewhere. The Sermon on the Mount brings the kingdom of God down to earth.

What does it really mean for God to reign in my life and in your life today and tomorrow and the next day? The best and the most comprehensive description of kingdom living that we will ever find is in the Sermon on the Mount. As Oswald Chambers put it, "The Sermon on the Mount is not a set of rules and regulations; it is a statement of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is getting His way with us."

[Gary Pearson preaches at the Westminster, MD Church of Christ. He makes sure that many members there receive the *Word and Work*. Why not go thou and do likewise?]

The Sermon on the Mount--

Background, and the Opening Sentence: God's Blessings for the Undeserving

A.V.W.

Background to His Sermon:

Matthew 4:23-25, the paragraph preceding the sermon, sets the stage for us: "23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people."

Notice our Lord's multi-faceted ministry. By *teaching* He instructed the minds—the understanding and attitudes of the hearers. By *preaching* He again proclaimed truth, but perhaps with more appeal to the emotions -- seeking to stir the feelings, convict the conscience and confront the will. (Teaching and preaching overlap, of course—sometimes more, sometimes less. Yet each has a distinct emphasis.)

By *healing* sick bodies He met physical needs, and demonstrated His divine credentials. He also aroused great interest in His message, as the next verses indicate.

"24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. 25 Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis ['ten towns'], Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him."

Wow—what an opportunity! Yet notice His strange reaction. He seemed to deliberately leave them behind. In 5:1-2 we read, "Now when he saw the crowds, *he went up on a mountainside* and sat down. His *disciples* came to him, and he began to teach *them...*" [Italics added.]

QUESTIONS, Then and Now

Why climb up a mountain? How could the sick, weak and crippled follow Him there? Why leave the large crowds behind? Why thin out His audience?

Why waste time "just teaching" when He could be using this time healing them? "Why interrupt *action* with *talk*?" asks one

writer. The probable answer is, Because there's a time for each of them. But let's pursue this question a little more.

Some Possible Answers

Some, or all, of the following might have played a part. Maybe He went up the Mountain---

To weed out at least some of those people not deeply committed to his Kingship: those interested only in seeing sensational sights and miracles, or in filling their bellies -- but not about to obey God!

Maybe to *multiply* his ministry – so that his closest followers might do later what He was doing now. That is, possibly to *train his followers* in important principles of discipleship and leadership, in order that later they might teach, preach and heal with the attitudes He sets forth here. In the long run, in-depth training of a few can reach the multitudes more effectively than one man trying to do it all.

Maybe to practice *preventative* medicine – to prevent ills, not just cure them. In other words, to practice healing of minds and hearts -- not just bodies – since so much sickness is at least partly psychosomatic.

Maybe to emphasize the lesson that being right with God is more important than physical health, if you must choose between the two.

Now He Begins:

Matt 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This of course was the first of eight "Blesseds" or Beatitudes.

What did He mean by *blessed*? "Happy"? No, though that's a definition we often use for it. But *happiness* is a subjective feeling, that depends on what *happens*, on pleasant circumstances. Jesus here is describing *God's View of Blessedness* – what real blessedness is in His sight--regardless of feelings or emotions, and regardless of circumstances, of what happens.

We tend to believe "Blessed are the rich, the mighty, the glamorous, the celebrities, the winners, those at the top of the social ladder." Jesus soon sets us straight.

Here are some other translations:

"GOD BLESSES the poor in spirit, the sorrowing," etc.--A Declaration.

“GOD BLESS the poor in spirit...” --A Prayer, a Benediction.

“GOOD NEWS to the poor in spirit...” --A Proclamation.

In these eight Beatitudes Jesus lists the *Ideal Qualifications of citizens* in God's Kingdom—that is, *our Goals*. He here describes what all true Christians should be—for real Christians are citizens of God's Kingdom even now. (Col. 1:12-13.) Also in these statements He is revealing the *Privileges* that result from being such people: that is, our *Blessings*.

Look again at the first—and most important--blessing, in verse 3: Blessed are *the poor in spirit*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Note other translations:

NEB, How blest are those *who know their need of God*; the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

TEV, Happy are those *who know they are spiritually poor*; the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

NLT, God blesses those *who realize their need for him*, for the Kingdom of Heaven is given to them.

Some Bible teachers have said that the Sermon on the Mount teaches salvation by our righteousness, by our good works. *No*--the very first sentence contradicts that theory! Jesus does not say, Blessed are the spiritually rich – those who have good character, those rich in obedience, good works, religious zeal. Rather, God blesses those who are spiritually poor--who realize and admit they lack any goodness that can earn His favor.

Elsewhere too Jesus taught that the religious, self-satisfied Pharisees (“God, I thank You I'm better than others: I pray, fast, study the Bible, give tithes,” etc.)—such self-righteous people are not in God's kingdom. But the traitorous, hated tax-collector who prayed, “God, have mercy on sinful me!” – that wretch was saved! Forgiven, not because of his goodness, but in spite of his badness.

Someone said, “*Christ's Church is the only society in the world in which membership is based on the qualification that the candidate is UN-worthy!*” We should run that thought through our mind often. It means that the meanest, most rotten, ornery, low-down human skunk on earth can be forgiven and received by Jesus right now! The most addicted, helpless, hopeless failure can enter God's Kingdom today!

They don't have to climb out of the pit of sin first. Don't have to clean themselves up first. Don't have to pull themselves up, little by little, step by step, month by month. NO! Just cry out to Jesus *now*, saying, "O God, I'm poor: I lack virtue, goodness, chastity, self-control, kindness. I'm sunk! Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner with no good qualifications, no accumulated goodness which makes me eligible. No merit in which I can trust or of which I can boast. I'm **no-good but plenty-bad! God, have mercy on me.**" The person who comes to the Lord with that attitude will not be rejected.

The wonderful old gospel song says it so well. Some daring soul had the audacity to update it thus, for the unchurched:

Just as I am, without one plea
Except Your blood was shed for me,
And that You tell us, "Come to Me"-
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot, --
To You, whose blood can cleanse each spot:
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt;
With fears within and foes without:
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am -- poor, wretched, blind!
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yes, all I need in You to find-
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am! You will receive,
Will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Your promise I believe.
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Just as I am! Your love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be Yours, yes Yours alone:
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Conclusion: In his commentary *The Christbook*, Dale Bruner writes these notable words: "I believe it is the purpose of every command in the Sermon on the Mount to drive us back to the first Beatitude.... When we read 'whoever is angry with his brother is going to

hell,' or 'whoever looks on a woman in order to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart,' we will feel very poor in spirit indeed. [But] the moment we begin to look down on those who have not come as far or as high as we, in that moment we have become rich in spirit and so fall out of the blessing of the first Beatitude.

"The Sermon on the Mount is, spiritually speaking, actually the sermon from the valley. It starts low. It starts with those who feel very unlike mountains! Every command in [this] sermon, [if] taken seriously, drives believers back into the valley of the first Beatitude and its wonderful promise of kingdom belonging and kingdom resources. The first Beatitude is both the goal of every subsequent sentence in the sermon and the source of the ability to live it."

Yes! For once we enter God's kingdom, He promises to meet our inner needs, from the riches of his grace and power. Only in His kingdom is there a really good and wise welfare program for the poor! He not only accepts us as his citizens, but also adopts us as his Children, and loves, keeps and strengthens us.

INTERPRETING the Sermon on the Mount—

Various Views

A. V. W.

There are various vexing questions and problems regarding this sermon. First, *how should we Interpret and Apply this message?* Jesus said if our eye causes us to sin, pluck it out. Did He mean that literally? He said not to resist an evil person, and if someone slaps one cheek we should turn our other cheek to him too. Did He mean not to resist an attacker or kidnapper, and not defend even a helpless person from violence? And not to oppose dictatorship, Communism, or Muslim terrorists? Jesus said to give to the person who begs from us. So should we give to every beggar we see, every time we see him?

Second, *For Whom was and is this sermon intended?* Jesus said He didn't come to abolish the law and prophets, and that whoever keeps the commands found in them shall be great in God's kingdom. Does that mean we should keep the Sabbath, and the Day of Atonement, etc.? And offer animal sacrifices? Not eat pork? He talked about offering a gift at the altar in the temple. Does that apply to us; if so, how? Could it be that this sermon was only for Jewish believers under the Old Covenant, but not for us—God's New Covenant people?

He said if you don't forgive others, God won't forgive you. Does our forgiving merit God's forgiveness? He said that he who does God's will shall enter His kingdom. Does our obedience earn salvation?

Various Answers Given to those Questions

I. The Liberals' View: Jesus' Program for All People

Most theological liberals think of this sermon as Jesus' "gospel," his "way of salvation" (however they interpret salvation). This is the crux of his message, showing how society can be reconstructed and the kingdom of God ushered in. This is his program for mankind.

No! This sermon is addressed not to people in general – as though Jesus is preaching, "Follow these instructions and you'll be right with God and His kingdom will come," etc. Instead He is teaching those who are already His disciples (5:1-2), though He was overheard by listening "multitudes" too, who seem to be distinguished from His followers (7:28-29).

Liberals usually teach that Jesus was a great teacher of ethics who taught that *all* people are children of God. This is the "universal fatherhood of God and universal brotherhood of men" doctrine that once was very popular—and in many places still is. They therefore play down the amazing personal claims of Jesus that set Him apart from—and above—all other teachers. They like this sermon's moral teachings, but dislike the Gospel of John with its many "I am" statements by Jesus. Yet notice in *this* sermon the implications of assertions like the following:

5:11, If you are persecuted on MY account, blessed are you.

5:17, I have come to FULFILL the law and the prophets.

5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44 You have heard . . . but **I** say to you . . . !

7:24, MY words are the only sure foundation in life!

7:21-23, **I** will judge all men--the human race!--and judge them on the basis of their personal relationship to **ME!**

For anyone less than deity-become-man to make such extraordinary claims would be either insane or the height of arrogance. In light of those claims just mentioned, if Jesus is not the Lord of All, then he must have been either totally insane (with "delusions of grandeur") or else the biggest liar in history!

II. The Common Early-Dispensationalists' View: The Sermon is Literal but Not for Now

Dispensationalism is a school of thought held by a number of conservative Bible teachers, especially those of the premillennial persuasion (though not all "premls" are dispensationalists). Among them have been and are some outstanding men of God and preachers of the gospel. J. N. Darby fashioned and spread the dispensational viewpoint in the 1800s. It was popularized even more in the first half of the 1900s by the *Scotfield Reference Bible* (1909) and by L. S. Chafer at Dallas Seminary, among many others. But by the late 1950s a number of dispensationalists had come to believe that a few doctrinal views commonly held by earlier teachers needed some amending. A revision of the *Scotfield Bible* was completed in 1967 which toned down some previous teachings. This "revised dispensationalism" was taught by men such as John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie and Dwight Pentecost. Around 1980 some other teachers felt a need for further review and modifying of this approach to Scripture. Continued biblical study of certain emphases of the dispensational view led to what has become known as "progressive dispensationalism." Some teachers who write from that standpoint include Craig Blaising (who once spoke to our Louisville area church leaders' lunch), Darrell Bock and Robert Saucy.

We include that history in order to point out that not all dispensationalists today agree with the views we quote in this section. *But a number do teach it still.* Interestingly, over 70 years ago R. H. Boll disagreed with some of the views quoted here, though in general he took a dispensational approach and he died before the rise of either its "revised" or "progressive" varieties. Now notice carefully the following quotes.

Scotfield: The sermon has a "beautiful moral application to the Christian," yet "in its primary application it gives **neither the privilege nor the duty of the Church.** These are found in the epistles."

Arno Gaebelein: "The Lord mentions the church for the first time in the 16th chap. (of Matthew), and if *following* the 16th chapter He had spoken [the sermon on the mount] we might say that [it is for] the church. . . ." There is a misconception from which "has sprung a good deal of error. People attempt to make the sermon on the mount the standard of their lives."

Regarding the Lord's Prayer: "When the church is taken from the earth, a believing Jewish remnant . . . will undoubtedly use this prayer during the Great Tribulation through which they will pass."

Regarding the prayer "Forgive us . . . as we forgive": "This is a legal, an Old Testament petition."

Charles Feinberg: "The Sermon on the Mount is legal in its character; it is the law of Moses raised to its highest power."

L. S. Chafer: "As a rule of life, it is addressed to the Jew before the Cross and to the Jew in the coming kingdom [the millennium], and is therefore not now in effect." "This discourse is no more related to the Church than the Messianic, Davidic, earthly kingdom is related to the Church, and those who apply it to the Church seem little aware of the problems which are involved." "A *secondary* application to the church means that lessons and principles may be drawn from it."

Charles Ryrie: "The dispensationalist does recognize the relevance and application of the teachings of the Sermon to believers today.... He, however, views the *primary* fulfillment of the Sermon and the full following of its laws as applicable to the Messianic kingdom." [i.e. the Millennium.]

[avw asks: Will any of the following be relevant in the millennium? 1)Praying, "Your kingdom come." 2)Being "persecuted for righteousness' sake." 3)"If anyone forces you to go one mile..."]

Ryrie again: People object to **the dispensational belief that the Sermon is all law and no gospel**, but "Where can one find a statement of the gospel in the Sermon?"

[avw's answers: In the very 1st sentence!—"Blessed are the poor in spirit." Not those rich in righteous character and religious activities, but the poor--those who lack all merit. Anyway, this is not an evangelistic sermon, but Jesus teaching His followers about holy character and conduct. And Paul and especially James make many allusions to this sermon in their ethical teachings to Christians. For just one example, compare Matt. 5:43-47 with Rom. 12:17-21.]

Ryrie: "Dispensationalists point out the absence from the Sermon of Church truth.... This does not prove that the Sermon is not primarily for the Church, but it is very strange that this most complete of all the teaching of Jesus does not mention the Holy Spirit once, or the Church *per se*, or prayer in the name of Christ.... These are serious omissions from that which is [called by some teachers] 'the rule of daily life for the Christian believer.'"

[avw replies: So what? Does every sermon have to cover all subjects and aspects of truth? For instance, Jesus' sermon on prophecy (Matt. 24-25) never mentions the resurrection. But all that proves is that He had a lot to say besides that subject, which He

could expound on other occasions. It's the same here. This sermon sets forth Kingdom-ethics, for those who are Kingdom citizens – both Jesus' original hearers and disciples ever since.]

Ryrie: "If you abandon literal interpretation [of this sermon], whose understanding of the 'underlying meaning' is correct? If the laws of the Sermon are to be obeyed today they could not be taken literally, for every businessman would go bankrupt giving to those who ask of him. This is the dilemma every interpreter faces. **If literal, it cannot be for today; if for today, it cannot be literal.**" "Even the non-dispensationalist does not apply the Sermon fully today, even though he tries to apply it directly."

[avw replies:] Apply it as "literally" and "fully" as you do Jesus' command, "Forgive seventy times seven," and other such statements. In other words, the main principles are clear and have continuing validity.

By the way, the Mennonites do believe this sermon is *both fully-literal and for today*. Thus they teach absolute pacifism, etc. Many Evangelicals believe it is for today but not fully literal; see below.

Since we mentioned Bro. R. H. Boll's dissent with the above writers' opinions on this point, we shall quote him here. He wrote this in *Word and Work*, 1930, page 30:

"Does the Sermon on the Mount Apply? On one ground and another the Sermon on the Mount has been discounted and set aside, as not applicable to Christians. Some insist that it belongs to the old dispensation and was not meant for us. Some say that it is pure Law--the enforcement of "the letter that killeth." It was indeed spoken while the Law was in force, and it sets forth the spiritual requirement of the Law.

"But the Lord Jesus was addressing His disciples, who certainly stood in the grace of God. (John 1:14-17.) They had been begotten of God (John 1:12,13) and He tells them that God is their *Father*--a name never before so used. Moreover in the sermon itself the first beatitude throws the whole promise open freely, to all men, not for works, or merit, but only on condition that they feel their deep need, and come humbly, hungering and thirsting, to be filled with righteousness. The Father stands always ready to hear the call of His children--to forgive their sins, to save them from temptation, to deliver them from the evil one, and to supply them with every good thing--even the Holy Spirit, for compare Matt. 7:11 with the parallel in Luke 13:11. Here then we are in the realm of **grace**. There is no reason for repudiating the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, but a very grave reason for giving heed to it is found in Matt. 7:24-27."

Bro. Boll also differed from many other Dispensationalists on another, unrelated point. He did not believe in the restoration of animal sacrifices and temple rituals *during the Millennium*. Scofield, Walvaard, Hal Lindsey (and probably Tim LaHaye too) take that position, though the *New Scofield Bible* refuses to take a dogmatic stand on this point, as the original had done; see the *New Scofield's* note on Ezek. 43:19.

III. The Historic Evangelical View:

It Was and Is for Christ's Disciples Then and Now.

The sermon did not expire when the Church began. It is *expressed in general principles but illustrated with specific examples not intended to be laws.*

The New Bible Dictionary: "Proverbs are principles stated in extreme form. *Seek the principle that underlies the proverb.*"

Samuel Chadwick: "Proverbs such as 'resist not evil' state a **general but not a universal principle.** [That is, there are exceptions.] It is necessary to determine the extent of our obligation. So long as the wrong is personal and private, it is a Christian's duty to bear it in the spirit of meekness.

"The difficulty of a literal interpretation is its inconsistency with Christ's own example. He resisted evil and opposed wrongdoers (for instance, cleansing the temple), and when He was smitten He did not turn the other cheek (at his trial). He challenged the smiter. He did not answer force with force, blow with blow, but He exposed and rebuked the wrong. [John 18:22-23.]

"No doubt the literal interpretation is the easiest. For the most part, the occasions for obedience in these things are exceedingly rare. Face-slappings, robbery and compulsion are not too common in a free country. Most adults go through life without ever being required to turn the other cheek."

Richard Longenecker: This sermon unfolds the "law of Christ" referred to by Paul in 1 Cor. 9:21, Gal. 6:2. It is not a "detailed code which has a ready-made answer for every circumstance. Instead **Christ gives principles which point the way to the solution in the particular circumstance but which must be applied anew to different situations His precepts are not so much rules as illustrations. In every instance they involve a principle on which all the stress is laid; but it is applied to a concrete example, so that we may not only grasp it as a principle but also judge for ourselves how it works.**"

George Ladd: "The command to shut the door when praying (Matt. 6:6) is not a prohibition to public prayer. The command to give whenever you are asked (5:42) does not mean we should give a weapon to a madman or give an affirmative response to a prostitute's approaches, or that a businessman should not collect bills.

"Jesus did not mean that it is sinful to call a man a fool (5:22) but an innocent thing to call him an idiot; any [scornful taunt] which reflects an evil heart is sinful. The Jew who had journeyed from his home in Ephesus or Rome to worship in the temple in Jerusalem would find it impossible to return home to be reconciled to his brother before offering his gift at the altar. (5:23.)

"Such sayings do not embody a new legalism. They are radical illustrations of the kind of conduct which will characterize the life perfectly submitted to the reign of God."

Bernard Ramm: "In some statements it is the *spirit* of the statement that is to be our guide. We are ordered to cut off our hand and pluck out our eye if they offend. People who have had the courage to conform to this literally do not impress others with their spirituality but with their foolhardiness. Is not the *spirit* of the command that we should not pamper our sins, but deal with them with the utmost severity? If life and death are [at stake], then sin certainly must be treated with the greatest severity.

"Certainly when our Lord told Peter to forgive his brother seventy times seven He was not prescribing the number of times we are to forgive a brother, but was prescribing the *spirit* of forgiveness. The same holds true for commands to turn the other cheek, to go the second mile, to yield the second garment. **If taken literally, they become mechanical or external guides to conduct—the very thing they are intended to correct.**

"But if the inner spirit of the command be taken, these passages teach us lessons of generosity, of kindness, of helpfulness. Rather than being covetous we ought to be generous; rather than being goaded by a spirit of vengeance we should be prompted by a spirit of love; rather than being tight-fisted we should be merciful to the destitute."

R. V. G. Tasker: "The 'law' prescribed by Jesus is no external code of rules which can be followed to the letter, but *a series of principles, ideals, and motives for conduct....* Thus [we should] resist the temptation to regard the Sermon in a legalistic spirit. It was largely in opposition to that spirit that Jesus was speaking."

POOR IN SPIRIT < > < GracEmail

by Edward Fudge

A gracEmail reader in the Middle East writes, "Someone recently prayed for help in becoming 'poor in spirit.' I want to receive the blessing Jesus promises to those who are poor in spirit, but I don't know whether I am rich or poor in spirit now. What does Jesus mean by this blessing?"

* * *

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," says Jesus, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). The word translated "poor" here means destitute. It refers to one who by poverty is reduced to begging (Lk. 16:20-21; Matt. 26:11). By definition, such beggars do not present credentials. Not those genuine beggars one still encounters in third-world countries. Not the truly desperate in our own society. Not those who inhabited Palestine of Jesus' day. Beggars simply ask. No talk about deserving. No claims of merit. No argument or reason to justify the request. Two realities matter. They need -- and someone else has. So they ask. Beg. Plead.

This is the picture, says Jesus, of how one ought to approach God. When it comes to righteousness, we all are morally bankrupt. Not one of us deserves anything from a holy God. Spiritual credentials just don't cut it -- whether we think of personal morality, institutional religion or a record of good deeds. God is not impressed. Don't even try to convince God that you deserve his favor, Jesus tells us. Don't parade your pedigree. Forget your proof-texts and your rationalistic arguments. Don't bother with a resume. Come to God as a beggar -- destitute, hopelessly needy, persistently pleading -- "Give." Two realities matter. We need, and God has. The "poor in spirit" are spiritual beggars.

But what a stupendous surprise awaits us when we approach God this way! For to such people God does the unthinkable. The unbelievable. The impossible. He gives to them -- not a crumb but a kingdom! Not to the deserving, or the worthy, or the persuasive. To spiritual beggars. To those who make no claims. Who offer no reasons. Who know their own need and recognize God's supply. To the "poor in spirit." Blessed indeed! "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

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2nd Theme: Sharing God's Wonderful News

What We Need is Evangelism

Kenneth Alan Daughter
President, Emmaus Bible College

[See Oct. 2005 W&W, "Introduction to This Issue"]

The [Brethren] assemblies used to be known for their gospel meetings and missionary outreach: not so much anymore. Increasingly we have followed our culture in becoming more interested in our own needs and less on those of others. We tend to spend our resources and time building ourselves up to the point that we seldom reach out. We have lost our balance. To be biblical, we need to re-emphasize evangelism.

I am amazed at how many assemblies dot the countryside in the Midwest. They were planted largely as a result of traveling evangelists. These days we rely on transfer or biological growth, rather than reaching out to the lost. It has caused us to become ingrown and self-centered.

I'm not very old but I can remember the days when the majority of our budgets went to foreign missions. Not so anymore. We spend our resources on ourselves. We placate our consciences by suggesting that we, too, are a mission field. That is true, but we are not doing very well. If we were to examine the state of the assemblies in North America, we might be frustrated that we do not see greater health and strength. A good number of new assemblies are being planted, but we are losing as many as we are gaining. We also may notice that we see fewer young families and teenagers. The trend toward resident full-time workers has not solved the problem.

May I suggest that the missing ingredient is evangelism? We used to have Sunday evening gospel meetings. Why did we let those go? Were we preaching to those already saved? Did people lose interest? In Ephesians 6:15, part of our spiritual armor against the attacks of Satan is to have "shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace." Much of our vitality and enthusiasm is lost when we are not active in sharing the good news.

Many of our outreaches into the community only succeed in making contacts. No actual evangelism takes place. What we need is old-fashioned person-to-person witnessing. The easiest place for us to start is with our neighbors and friends. We need to witness to them and invite them to meetings where the gospel will actually be presented. It may well take time. Even seeker-sensitive churches do

not see immediate results. In an amazingly candid admission, Bill Hybels wrote, "Most of the conversions that happen at Willow Creek come after people have attended the church for six months or more. The secular person has to attend consistently for half a year and have the person who brought him witness to him the whole time" ("Speaking to the Secularized Mind," *Christianity Today*, 1989). Actually, the best place to have evangelistic conversations is in our homes. We should have people over for dinner, or dessert, and talk to them about spiritual things. From there we can invite them to special meetings our assembly has planned to reach out with the good news.

We should place a great emphasis on evangelizing children. They are much easier to reach. According to George Barna in *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* (Regal, 2003), children between the ages of 5 and 13 have a 32 percent probability of accepting Christ, whereas teenagers have only a 4 percent probability. I don't believe God is tied to statistics, but I do believe that Jesus reached out to children, and so should we. This realization argues for active Sunday Schools, youth groups, Awana, and camp work. Probably the most effective method assemblies are using today to reach people for Christ is camp work.

Many regions used to have missionary conferences and study classes because there was a greater interest in foreign missions. Support of missions work is declining. Whose fault is it? Where does our interest lie? I am suggesting that for our own health we must take our eyes off of ourselves and reach out. We are not biblical if we are not evangelizing.

--From *The Emmaus Journey* magazine, 2570 Asbury Rd., Dubuque, IA 52001. Used by permission.

This too is about evangelizing:

LIFTING JESUS UP

Nick Boone

In John 12, Jesus speaks of his impending passion and death in paradoxical language. He speaks of wheat, which must die and fall to the ground if it is to successfully germinate. He says that those who love this life will lose it, but those who hate their lives will gain eternal life. He speaks of the desire to be saved from "this hour" (presumably meaning his passion and death), but then says that his entire purpose hinges upon "this hour." A few verses later, Jesus makes a most memorable statement, one immortalized by one of our treasured hymns. He says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). John, in the next verse,

writes that Jesus said this to signify "what death he would die" (John 12:33). I'd like to propose that these verses, like other statements Jesus makes in chapter 12, are also somewhat paradoxical.

"Lift Him Up" is one of my favorite hymns. If it is sung when I'm in the right mood, it can easily bring tears to my eyes. I get emotional whenever I hear Jesus talk about giving his life so that sinners, like me, can have eternal life. He was willing to be crucified so that the very ones who crucified him could rest their hopes in him. The song, though, doesn't focus its attention on Christ's death. It mostly speaks of the need to evangelize. The song begins, "How to reach the masses, men of every birth?" For an answer, Jesus gave the key: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." It commands us, multiple times to "lift him up" so that the world will come to know Christ.

"Lift Him Up" is a wonderful song, but the command in its title may become somewhat troubling when we ask the question, "What does it mean to lift Jesus up?" Jesus said that being lifted up would allow the whole world to come to him. That's evangelization, and that is good—a positive thought. However, John tells us that Jesus' statement primarily signifies "what death he would die" (12:33). And who put Jesus to death, anyway? Who lifted Jesus up on the cross? I did.

I spat on him and struck him in the face. I twisted the thorns and jammed the crown down on his skull. I refused to wipe the blood away as it ran into his eyes. I threw him down on the ground and rolled him onto the cross. I stretched out his arms and nailed them to the beam. I drove a stake into the post through his feet. Then, once he was firmly in place upon the cross, I lifted it up, and slid it into the hole I had dug for it. The jolt rattled the beams, and his flesh tore against the nails as the momentum threw his body forward. I did it! I lifted Jesus up. I crucified him with my sins. But when I looked upon him, suspended between earth and sky, I saw only compassion, forgiveness in his eyes, and I cried out to him for my very life.

It seems to me that the command to lift Jesus is paradoxical because it calls us to think positively about the evangelization of the world, and at the same time asks us to consider the awful thought that we did indeed once lift up Jesus to be crucified. The command to lift Jesus up must cause us to consider our own guilt before Christ. Our sins sent Jesus to the cross, the very cross we preach about. So, in lifting Jesus up, as we must, we fulfill Paul's words about preaching "Christ and him crucified," and we bear in mind the awful truth that we crucified him. We testify about a Lord whom we put to death.

Often the secular world looks upon evangelism with disdain. They see the attempt to convert someone of no faith or of a different faith to one's own as an act of arrogance. How can *you* tell *me* (or anyone, for that matter) that I need *your* Savior?" Admittedly, evangelism can be an act of arrogance. We can easily get carried away with the idea of our own works, and we can begin to see ourselves as less guilty because we "lift Jesus up" to the world. But evangelism, lifting Jesus up, must be a supremely humble activity, for to lift him up calls to mind both evangelism and the crucifixion for which we are all individually guilty. When we evangelize, we must always keep the fact of our sinfulness, our need of Jesus' grace, in the forefront of our minds. Lifting Jesus up, with the humility of our own blood-stained hands in front of us, will indeed draw others closer to Jesus.

JESUS STYLE -- "I've often wondered where and how Jesus spent most of his time. Was it in the temple? Did he promote a 'come-to-the-temple and meet me' amid temple attendees? If we knew how and where Jesus spent most of his time and then used simple arithmetic to extrapolate and reassign areas of importance on a 'time given, time spent' basis would we be willing to adjust, adapt and change to become more like Jesus? Pay attention . . . here's the model Jesus left us. The Gospels record 132 contacts Jesus had with people. Six were in the temple, four in the synagogues and 122 were out with the people in the mainstream of life." -- Fred Peatross, "Abductive Columns." To subscribe, go to Abductive-Columns-subscribe@MyInJesus.com.

I Am NOT An Evangelist

Kevin G. Dyer

I have a confession to make: I am not an evangelist, and I don't have the gift of evangelism.

My brother-in-law is an evangelist. When he gets on a plane, he asks for the middle seat so he can talk to the people on either side. I like the empty row--or at least an empty seat between my fellow traveler and me.

However, I have learned over the years that even though I don't have the gift of evangelism, I still have the responsibility of sharing the good news that Jesus can bring hope, peace and forgiveness to those around me.

My wife, Eloise, has the gift of evangelism, and she builds relationships easily, but I have to work at it a lot more. I have a deliberate plan to help me keep at it, otherwise it will get lost in the other

things I do. Christ's love for me compels me to reach out to others with compassion (2 Cor. 5:14), so I do two things to help me keep on track:

1. Pray for those around me who don't know Jesus.

I made a list of six neighbors whom I wanted to come to know Christ as Savior. Over the years, four of them have become believers. One of the men on my list was an attorney. After two years of discussions, he trusted Christ. His wife, their four children and their four spouses, and their ten grandchildren, have all come to Christ. A whole family was transformed by God's power! But it all started with deliberate praying.

2. Build relationships.

You build friendships first and then out of those relationships you will have opportunities to share Christ. This past week we had a potluck supper at our house for the twenty-six adults who live on our street. Twenty-one came. We set up three tables and had six to eight at each. We asked that, at their table, each person should tell three things about themselves--one of which should not be true. The others had to guess which one wasn't true. There was talking and laughter going on at each table.

Afterwards people thanked us and wrote us notes telling us what a good time they had. It put us on a new level of relationships and it has opened the door for building deeper relationships on a personal level so we can share the love of the Lord Jesus with some of them.

So for me, the non-evangelist, it is specific praying and building relationships that lead me to sharing the good news of salvation.

-From *The Emmaus Journey* magazine, Fall 2004. Used by permission.

FROZEN AT THE MOUTH

The evening service was over and everyone was making their way out of church, or standing around in the porch talking about this and that. One young couple were talking about something rather special that had happened. The week before the girl had become a Christian. "When I went to work on Monday, everyone wanted to know why I was so happy," she said. "And I told them I had just become a Christian." How lovely to tell others so naturally about an event like that in her life. And why not tell folk--we tell them about other things? Yet talking about a spiritual experience seems different, so personal. Many find it hard and remain like Arctic rivers, frozen at the mouth.

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

Neighbor

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

Chatting

Another woman just chats about her Christian experience as the chance is given her. On a bus one day she got to talking to the woman in the next seat, who admired her jumper. "Oh, someone at the church made it for me," she replied. "Do you go to church? It's made such a difference to my life. I didn't always go, but one day I asked Jesus Christ to come into my life. And do you know, I haven't been the same person since. I've been a new woman." Her fellow traveler was interested. If we allow Jesus Christ to come into our everyday lives and affect the ordinary things we find ourselves doing, then as we chat about them, we shall find that along with them goes Jesus. Telling others about what he means to us and seeing others putting their trust in him is one of life's most thrilling experiences. Pray and God will give you the opportunities and the words to speak.

--The author is unknown

The 2006 NACC in LOUISVILLE

AVW

The NACC (North American Christian Convention) is the Christian Churches' annual gathering for preaching, teaching and fellowship (but not for making decrees for the churches). It is sort of like our Fellowship Weeks (one in the greater Louisville area and two in

Louisiana), except that the NACC moves from city to city year by year, and also it is lots bigger. In 2004 it met in Indianapolis, and had over 12,000 people! Ruth and I were richly blessed by being there.

The 2006 NACC will not only be in **Louisville**, but it also has a theme tied to **unity and cooperation**. For it was exactly a century earlier, 1906, that marked the "official" break between the Christian Churches and the Churches of Christ. Lots of folks now think that was a mistake, and that 100 years later something definite needs to be done about it.

This NACC is an attempt to reconcile and cooperate. The aim is not to merge, or have one "side" to swallow up the other, but to learn to work together as much as possible without compromise of major Biblical convictions. We encourage you to attend if possible. If you live near Louisville, it is a special opportunity.

Among the 8 main preachers this year are Rick Atchley, Prentice Meador, Dave Stone and Dave Faust. Four of the eight are from Churches of Christ! And Bible study leaders include Marvin Phillips (who has spoken at our Louisville Fellowship), and Joe Beam (who has spoken at our SBS lectureship). A multitude of workshops will be held on various topics. For example, workshops on "church health" include subjects like "Unleashing the potential of the smaller church," "Maintaining congregational harmony & focus," "Our church is changing—and that's good!", and 3 more. Other workshop topics include family, senior adults, women's ministry, eldership, worship, preaching, Christian education & discipleship, evangelism & missions, and the restoration movement. In other words, there is something profitable for everyone. There is even a teen convention that runs parallel to the main sessions. The former will be held at the Galt House, the latter at the Ky Convention Center – both in downtown Louisville.

The dates are June 27-30 (Tues. nite – Fri. noon). Registration fees are required to cover the convention expenses. There are 1-day rates for those unable to attend the entire time. Rates for those attending 4 days are \$25 for students, \$75 for individuals, \$135 per couple and \$155 per family...**IF** (note, **IF**) you register by April 30. After that the rates will increase (for example, \$20 more per couple).

For full information, contact NACC, 110 Boggs Lane, Suite 330, Cincinnati, OH 45246. Phone 513: 772-9970. Online: NACCTHECONNECTINGPLACE.ORG

VOICES from the FIELD

Cecil and Betsy Garrett
Dec. 2, 2005

St. Petersburg, Russia

We had an American style Thanksgiving supper with 17 present. We had written a brief history of the origins of Thanksgiving Day, the Pilgrims' desire to have freedom of religion, and put it into Russian. After reading it, Marina directed a skit (in Russian) of the developments, and some of our guests played the role of Indians complete with feathers in their hair, and pumpkin seeds to give to the pilgrims, and we finished off the meal with Tikvah pie (Pumpkin).

Daily Bible Study with our three girls is the only thing constant in our schedule (besides the almost daily trips to one or more grocery stores, about 3/4 of a mile one way.) We discovered that in spite of attending church every Sunday for quite some time, there was very little Bible knowledge in their memories, and no framework in which to put their reading in perspective. So we decided to go back to Genesis and ask questions about what they are reading, showing them pictures and maps. We went to a Christian bookstore and found some very nice Russian study booklets with colored maps and pictures, which serve to put things in perspective. During our Saturday Bible study with the boys from orphanage #6, we used a globe to demonstrate that Israel is due South of Petersburg, and then showed them more detailed maps of the Mediterranean area, and Abraham's origins, etc.

We have been attending a small Church of Christ in a very old building in the old part of the city. There is usually a "doska" (blackboard or a white board) in the room which we use when bringing a lesson to the assembly. A man named Vlad usually interprets into Russian, sometimes with the help of others in the group. The rest rooms are equipped with ancient toilet facilities like we encountered in the summer camp. But there is good news that they may be moving their meeting place to another building in January.

Marina, our director, wants to set up a web-site to keep folks informed about developments in the transitional homes. She also wants some book marks made, some in Russian and some in English, to hand out in the churches, with the aim of getting more older citizens to commit to helping the orphans adjust to the real world by being their "parents" for a couple of years. We have designed the book-mark, but the final publication is waiting for the creation of the web-site.

Report from Hwange: Hwange is a large coal-mining town. It is quite far from almost anything else and the major reason for anyone living in that area is because of the mining. The town is made up of five quite large but scattered separate residential areas with small houses built by the mining company.

Bro. Cossen Ncube is doing a good work here. He has established a congregation in Hwange and started two other congregations. One interesting thing about the church in Hwange is that he has converted four deafmutes. (Or he and his wife converted one and she converted the others). These are young women, some married, who were born deaf and cannot speak as a result. Although they live in the African culture where social customs are widely different from ours, they can communicate in written English! They went to a special school where they were taught to read and write in English. Sister Ncube usually sits with them during church services and as the sermon progresses translates it and writes down in English on a piece of paper the main points of the sermon and the scripture references. I have given them each an English Bible.

I find this fascinating - it evidences the truth that we were created in the image of God, with the innate God-given ability to learn of God, to find Him and to be found by Him in any language. *"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He send forth laborers into His harvest!"* There is need for a building there. The Hwange Mining Co. has given us a large and very nice site on which to build. We look to the Lord to provide.

Disaster - in the midst of blessing: The rains, although late, have started with a vengeance - lightening, thunder and hail. (More than 100 die from lightening each year countrywide.) This past week lightening struck and destroyed our perimeter alarm system, and I have no idea of how to repair it. There were about 4 strikes in quick succession. The same strikes wrecked my generator. We were sitting in our front room at the time and saw balls of fire rolling down the passage.

Because we experience frequent and lengthy power failures, we can hardly survive without a generator to keep the freezer and fridge going, a few lights, the alarm system, and to cook on a hotplate. (A storm a week earlier did a lot of damage to the roof of the Glen Norah church building.)

The alarm system, since installation, has discouraged and prevented thieves wonderfully well. Unfortunately, it is now broken and it may take a month or two to repair the damage because I have

to source components from South Africa, and, unfortunately, the Christmas season is often a time when thieves redouble their activities

500+ % Inflation this year: The average person is staggering under the impact of runaway inflation which drives up the cost of necessary foodstuffs. That, coupled with the drought, makes things very difficult for many. With funds the Lord has provided through you we have been able to assist some of the Lord's people in the worst affected drought areas.

Binga Women's Meeting: About 25 women from the Harare area churches participated and did most of the teaching at a women's camp meeting in Binga. About a 960 mile round trip. The people in that area are the Tonga, whose language and customs are quite different from the Shona. It is wonderful to see the interaction of otherwise diverse peoples brought together through the blood of Christ and made one in the Lord.

News of work in the Philippines extracted from Mae Broadus' report:

Sister Mae left Lexington, Kentucky on Oct. 17 and joined 3 of Victor's sisters to visit in the Philippines for some days. She of course met many friends and church members in greater Manila, where she and Victor lived from 1951-69. (He made many ministry visits after that too.) Polly and Frank Kwong are leaders in the downtown church. Polly took Mae to many different places. On Nov. 13 Mae wrote the following, which I have adapted some. -avw

Polly Kwong has been very active in helping in the church work in Mindoro, the island just south of Luzon (where Manila is). She makes several trips a year to visit the different works there and has been used to establish new works. I have never heard her teach a class but her life is a wonderful testimony. [She enabled one congregation to get electricity for their building, and helped other believers to get a boat to improve transportation from their island to the mainland.] She and I flew to Mindoro and spent 3 days there. There were many exciting things but one that impressed me was an elderly lady who for many years had conducted Bible classes in her front yard for children and young people. She kept attendance records for all the years and sometimes had as many as 50 students at a time. The church in San Jose has a large school for elementary students. This work was begun before World War II [by Celso de la Serna; later Harold and Vena Preston served there for some years].

Back on Luzon, of course I was anxious to visit the church and school where our home had been, in a suburb of Greater Manila. Vic

had deeded the property to the church after we returned to the U.S. The building has been added on to, both in the front and back. It is a school all week and then a church on Sunday. I feel sure there were over 100 children there the day we visited. The growth has far exceeded my dreams!

Brother Dave Moldez took me to many different works he is involved in. Besides serving for several years as president of Central Bible College [now called "seminary" due to government classifications], there is a large congregation near his home where he has preached for several years—as well as in smaller works. He is also involved in feeding very needy children—poverty that I have never seen anything to compare with here in the U.S.

It was a wonderful trip and I thank God for the opportunity.

Karen and James Ashley Solomon Islands Dec. 3, 2005

Many are wondering what has happened to the Ashleys. Here's the answer. We've been buried alive. No, we are not underneath piles of rubble from collapsed buildings, like the people in Pakistan. No, we are not covered by mud from landslides like whole villages in Guatemala.

Our burial is merely figurative----buried in paperwork and administrative tasks. Before we finished the final touches on the Sa'a New Testament, we took on the task of leading the translation group in the Solomon Islands. We knew it was a stressful job. We knew there was more work to do than we could realistically handle. We just didn't realize how much.

Translating the New Testament takes years. When unforeseen events interfere with progress, the completion date gets nudged a little further into the future, and the work plods on. Eventually the New Testament does get finished.

Administrative tasks usually come with deadlines. When unforeseen events interfere, the deadlines remain mostly immovable. Something has to give, and for the last year or more, the things that have been sacrificed are parts of our personal lives---sending out prayer letters, keeping up with personal correspondence, cooking real meals, cleaning out collected junk, performing computer maintenance, and even sleep.

On a typical evening, James comes home late from the office next door, finishes his dinner, usually around 8:00, and moves to the computer to check the personal email. In a few short minutes he is snoring. Usually he wakes up after an hour or so and goes back to

the office to tackle a few more letters and reports. Other nights he sleeps on, exhausted because he worked the previous night until the wee hours on reports and letters leftover from that day's work.

We know this is a recipe for burn-out. We have a new deputy director coming in another month to take some of the load, and thankfully, some of the other translators have seen the need and have volunteered to help with some neglected maintenance tasks so that James can focus on the real work of the director.

Please pray for God to strengthen us in this job. Those of you who know us well know that we aren't the type to run an efficient office operation. Yet this is where God has put us, and we can see why in many ways. We have made progress in some important areas in translation strategy and program development. James' many years of experience make him uniquely qualified amongst our colleagues here to guide the translation group at this time. But we do need God to keep shining strong through our weak areas.

One of the happier tasks that we are currently involved in is the planning and preparation for the Sa'a New Testament dedication. The date is now set--December 11th--and we are trying to work out the details of transportation, provisions, and distribution of the New Testaments. Please pray that it will all come together and that the dedication service will truly be a time of thankfulness and praise to the Lord that His word will finally be available to the Sa'a people.

Just one short week after the dedication we will be heading back to the US for Philip's wedding to fellow MK Heather Relyea on December 30th. Philip and Heather both grew up in tropical villages where their parents were Bible translators, and they met when we ended up at Ukarumpa after having to evacuate from the Solomons due to the coup and ethnic tension in the year 2000. Philip and Heather have one more semester to complete at Harding University, and they then plan to go to medical school with the eventual goal of becoming missionary doctors.

Our trip to attend the wedding will be a real whirlwind, as we must squeeze it into the short Christmas school break so that Susan can get back to boarding school in mid January. But first we will be taking her around to a few colleges to prepare her for making the choice of where to spend the next four years. It is hard to believe she is a senior! Please pray for her to know God's leading as she considers the options, as she is not a quick decision maker.

We would also ask you to remember Kent and Natalie in your prayers. They left Kent's youth and music ministry job in the Bahamas in May as the church there underwent some massive upheaval due to doctrinal disagreements. Currently they are in Midlothian,

TX (just south of Dallas) where Kent is working at the Fry's electronics store. Kent knows that this is not really where God wants him permanently, and he is looking for God to show him what is the next big step.

All of the above was written about a month ago. It never got sent because before James even had a chance to read it, we were thrust into another crisis. David Upwe, our dear friend and co-translator for the last 17 years came to Honiara to seek medical care for upper abdominal pain. The diagnosis was advanced liver cancer, and he passed into glory on November 4th. At the funeral service we sat in the front row with David's wife and children and listened as one of the village leaders told about the various things David had done over the years.

All the stories showed how David was an exceptional man, but it was clear to everyone that his most appreciated accomplishment was translating the Sa'a New Testament. People have said over and over how it is such a shame that David won't be there for the Sa'a New Testament dedication on December 11th. I disagree. Yes, we will miss him, and we will probably cry a few more tears when his contribution to the project is acknowledged during the dedication service. But David isn't crying. He's in a place that, according to the apostle Paul, is "better by far" than any feast the people of Small Malaita can throw.

Yes, the Sa'a New Testament is finished. But there are 40 more languages to go just here in the Solomons, and we daily face the challenge of keeping the translation group running so that those 40 language groups will someday be planning dedication services of their own. We are working on orienting our new deputy director and preparing to hand over the director's job to a colleague for the five weeks we will be away attending Philip's wedding.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill, BHill40482@aol.com

In Case You Haven't Heard, here's the excited response of a Christian who saw a special pre-screening of the film "End of the Spear," a dramatic telling of the events surrounding the murder of five missionaries in Ecuador 50 years ago. (See last month's W&W.) "This movie was very

well done and true to the real life events. The acting was first rate and the cinematography was as good or better than anything in the theaters today. It was powerfully moving. Here is yet another opportunity for the Christian community and lovers of morally sound entertainment to send a message to Hol-

lywood and our culture as a whole. This is a movie about how God can use ordinary people to do extraordinary things. It is about how God can turn evil into good.

A Good Opportunity in Texas: Restoration Forum XXIV will be held Feb. 20-22 as a part of the annual Abilene Christian University Lectureship. These forums are wonderful times of fellowship in Christ, plus challenges and encouragement from God's Word. They are co-sponsored by various church leaders of the Stone/Campbell heritage. Register (free!) at www.acu.edu/events/lectureship.html or contact Kate Miller: (325) 674-3750 or miller@bible.acu.edu.

Treasured Memories of a Godly Couple After reading an old W&W which he had not seen, Jim Goodwin wrote the following: I was shocked and saddened to learn [belatedly] of the death of George Galanis. Brother Galanis stayed with us twice and Sophia stayed once. Both of them were a delight. Several incidents occurred during their visits which we will remember. One time he rather scoldingly asked me why Janet didn't lead in prayer during our family devotionals. I really didn't have an answer, so from then on she did. Another time we visited Squire Boone Caverns. When the tour guide began to speak of the millions of years of age of the earth, Brother Galanis took him to task and began a debate on evolution and the age of the earth.

He used to practice his English as we traveled by reading aloud roadside signs. I adopted this practice when I was in Honduras as an aid to picking up the language. Janet and Sophia worked together to

prepare us a genuine Greek meal, although neither understood the other.

Janet and I always felt we were in the presence of a truly Godly man and woman when with them. They were an inspiration. Heaven is becoming an even more wonderful and desirable place as we see these great saints go on before us. May God bless his family with grace and comfort.

Excerpt from a letter A friend who was bereaved over a year ago is giving W&W subscriptions to 2 families. She says, "I read W&W from cover to cover and that helps me tremendously during this sad time of my life."

Highland Community Church in Louisville has already planned their schedule for 2006's mid-week classes. They will offer 5 different classes—each lasting 6 weeks—covering a variety of Christian topics.

The topics include the life of Peter (from the gospels & his letters), the letter of Philippians, a survey of church history, personal spiritual growth through the spiritual disciplines, and key issues in Christian theology and ethics.

Could / Would Your Church Use These? Longtime W&W reader Sandra Seitsinger was told by her church that she could have or give away a number of Bible movies for which they have no use. (These are reel-to-reel movies, not VCRs nor DVDs.) She is offering these f-r-e-e to any interested church or ministry.

There are 33 "boxes," each containing one roll of film, 2 film strips, 2 cassettes to go with film strips, 10 "student" guides called

Bibletimes Magazine, a Teacher's Guide, and a Projectionist's Script. Everything is produced/published by The Genesis Project, Inc. for The Media Bible. The film is the basic element (15-20 minutes) covering about two chapters. The filmstrips/cassettes are intended to follow the film. They use the American Standard Version. They claim there is "no doctrinal content. . . Theological interpretation is left entirely in your hands."

Some of the lessons are: *Creation, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Flood*, several about Isaac, Jacob & Esau, Joseph, and other Old Testament people. Those about Christ are mainly from Luke and include *The Last Supper, The Crucifixion, and The Resurrection and Ascension*. Also available with these are a screen, at least one movie projector, and several filmstrip projectors, all in good condition. Contact Sandra (Not W&W) at Seitsingers@aol.com, or by letter at 1104 Ebenezer Church Road, Cobbs Creek VA 23035, or by phone at (804) 725-0607.

Psalm 122:6 reminds us to "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." If there was ever a time - that time is now. Iran's fundamentalist President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declared that Israel should be wiped off the map and he assured a new wave of Palestinian attacks to destroy the Jewish state.

Bible Printing Press Confiscated in Cuba. Cuban police recently raided a home in the Cuban city of Colon and confiscated what officials later called "subversive and dangerous." But the contraband wasn't drugs, or pornography, or bomb-making instructions. What police confiscated were printed Gospels of

John and a small printing press. Voice of the Martyrs urges American Christians to pray for Christians in Cuba.

Good News from Hans Rollmann: Word and Works from 9/1913 - 1956 now available online! "Thanks to the two Ernsts, Ernst Stefanik and my son Ernst Rollmann, we have now online in digital format the entire extant journal *Word & Work* for the period that Stanford Chambers (September 1913 - December 1915) and Robert Henry Boll (January 1916 - 1956) were its editors. Enjoy! It can be accessed via the following address:

www.mun.ca/rels/rest-mov/digital/ww/WW.HTM

College President in Paradise! Some of our readers know Kevin Gilbert. During the time he studied for his ThD at the Baptist Seminary in Louisville, he and his family attended Community Church of Christ for some months. Kevin also preached at Portland Ave. a few times. When his wife Barbara, an Army nurse, was stationed in Hawaii, Kevin began ministering with a Church of Christ near Honolulu. He also teaches, and now has become president, at International College and Graduate School. This school was begun in 1972 by Dr. James W. Cook, descendent of the famous south-seas explorer, Captain Cook.

World Christian Broadcasting has arrived in Madagascar; Construction has begun An earlier ChristiaNet reported that the President of Madagascar has provided 84 acres of land for Franklin, Tennessee based World Christian Broadcasting to build an antenna--actually four antennas! Construction has now begun on

these new digital antennas that will send a radio signal comparable to a local sounding signal and will blanket Africa, South America, the Middle East, European Russia, south and west China and Indonesia —some **5 billion people!**

New United Congregation in Kentucky

Bluegrass Christian Community is a new church being planted in Lexington, Kentucky. According to founding Pastor Bryan Barrett the church has two major goals—“to take the good news of Jesus Christ to our neighbors and to inspire unity among Christians. We are simply Christians, non-sectarian, which communicates with this post-denominational world. We hope to be an inspiration among people in the three streams of our movement and all Christians to reclaim simple, genuine, non-sectarian Christianity and carry out Jesus’ prayer that we all be one. Christian unity itself is inherently evangelistic.” To know more about Bluegrass Christian Community contact Bryan Barrett at bryandbarrett@yahoo.com. Bob and Doris Ross are joining in this church planting.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!!!

(From Jo Ann Wiese) "We have been blessed these past years to be able to participate in our Lord's work in Africa. What an opportunity God blessed us with! And it is with mixed emotions that Nick and I must inform you of our intentions to hand over the duties of stateside treasurer for Robert & Joy Garrett in Ruwa, Zimbabwe Africa. This was not an easy decision. We have

been in prayer for the past few months considering what we should do.

The good news is that Bro. Bennie Hill, Bro. David and Sis. Betsy Harding, and Sis. Stanna Page are willing. Please be assured that all that can be done will be done to assist in a smooth transfer of the responsibilities to those at Church of Christ Worldwide at the Cramer Church of Christ in Lexington, Kentucky.

One last thing I must ask of you who have shown interest in this work over the years. Our mailing list has grown over the years to over 550 names & addresses. Many have not been heard from in years and with the cost of printing, mailing, etc. continues to escalate. Please confirm to me or CCWW if you wish to continue to receiving the newsletter (Rockwood Bible Camp). Some perhaps may wish to receive the newsletter via Email. Please let us or CCWW know your e-mail address. This would enable us to be better stewards of the resources God has given us.

Contact us at:

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Or

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**SISTERS—Don't miss the LID:
Ladies Inspiration Day**

**Its Theme: G-R-A-C-E:
God's Riches At Christ's Expense**

**Grace in Daily Living,
...in Family Relationships,
...within the Body of Christ,
...in Sickness and Suffering.**

**April 1, from 9:00 (registration) to 3:00
Held this year at Portland Church
2500 Portland Ave., Louisville**

(Also see the inside front cover regarding the SBS Annual Lecture-
ship, March 3-4.)