

1968

## 1968: Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures - Full Text

Jack Pope

V.P. Black

Bob Douglas

Akio Limb

Ed Rockey

*See next page for additional authors*

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# "CROWNING FIFTY YEARS"

Being the Fiftieth Annual

## ABILENE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE BIBLE LECTURES - 1968 -

J. D. THOMAS, LECTURESHIP DIRECTOR,  
EDITOR

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CROWNING FIFTY YEARS  
J. D. THOMAS, EDITOR

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FIRST PRINTING, February, 1968.

# DEDICATION

to

DON HEATH MORRIS  
Forty Years at ACC

WALTER HARRIS ADAMS  
Forty-three Years at ACC

LAWRENCE LEON CAMPBELL SMITH, SR.  
Forty-one Years at ACC



With appreciation and esteem from all the  
ACC family of all the years. May the Lord  
continue to bless!

Don Heath Morris, President of Abilene Christian College, was born August 13, 1902, in DeSoto, Texas, into a pioneer Dallas County family. After graduation from DeSoto High School in 1918 he enrolled for two years at Thorp Spring (Texas) Christian College. After graduating in 1920, he taught Latin and Mathematics at Red Oak High School for two years. He went to Abilene in 1922 at the age of 20 when he enrolled in Abilene Christian College. He was graduated in 1924 with a B.A. degree in Education, with an outstanding record as a member of the college debate team.

After graduation from ACC, Morris became a teacher and the debate coach at Abilene High School where he coached one state-championship debate team. During his tenure as teacher, he married Alberta Allen, his college sweetheart, on November 1, 1924. President and Mrs. Morris have three married children and ten grandchildren.

In 1928 Morris returned to Abilene Christian College as speech teacher, and within four years he became vice president. From 1932 to 1940 he served as vice president and head of the Speech Department. In 1930 he was awarded the M.A. degree in education by the University of Texas.

Dr. Morris became Abilene Christian College's seventh president in 1940, only 16 years after his graduation, and he was the first ex-student to become president of the College.

In 1956, McMurry College in Abilene honored President Morris with the Doctor of Laws Degree. In 1963, Pepperdine College conferred upon him the same degree.

Morris is a past-president of the Texas Council of Church Related Colleges. He has been honored with a life-membership in the Texas Conference of Parents and Teachers and is a member of the Texas State Teachers Association.

He is a member and past-president of the Abilene Rotary Club, and holds membership in Phi Delta Kappa, Alpha Chi and Blue Key. He serves as an elder of the College Church of Christ in Abilene.



DON HEATH MORRIS

Dr. Walter Harris Adams, dean of Abilene Christian College, was born on November 29, 1903, in Springtown, Texas. After graduating from high school at Chickasha, Oklahoma, in 1921, he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in education at Abilene Christian College.

Dr. Adams began his work with ACC in 1925 as an instructor in mathematics. In 1927 he took the M.A. degree in education from Stanford University, and he received the Ph.D. in guidance and personnel from Columbia University in 1932. He became dean of ACC in 1932 at the age of 29.

On September 7, 1927, he was married to Louise Harsh of Gallatin, Tennessee. They now have three children, Mrs. Amos Ray of Abilene, Mrs. Phil Boone of Abilene and Walter Jr., of Lubbock, Texas. He has four grandchildren.

Dr. Adams is past chairman of the Texas State Board of Examiners for Teacher Education, past president of the Association of Texas Graduate Schools, of the Association of Texas Colleges and of the Texas Conference on Education.

He is a member of the National Society for the Study of Education, the National Education Association and the Texas State Teachers Association.

Active in local civic affairs, Adams has been president of the Abilene Rotary Club, a member of the Regional Boy Scout Executive Board and a director of the Taylor County March of Dimes. He is active in Abilene Chamber of Commerce committees and is a frequent lecturer before civic and educational gatherings in West Texas.

He is an elder in the College Church of Christ and preaches by appointment.



WALTER HARRIS ADAMS

Lawrence Leon Campbell Smith, Sr., "Lawrence," or "L. L.," was born May 24, 1904, in Weatherford, Texas, the son of G. Dallas Smith, a prominent gospel preacher, and Katherine Lawrence Smith.

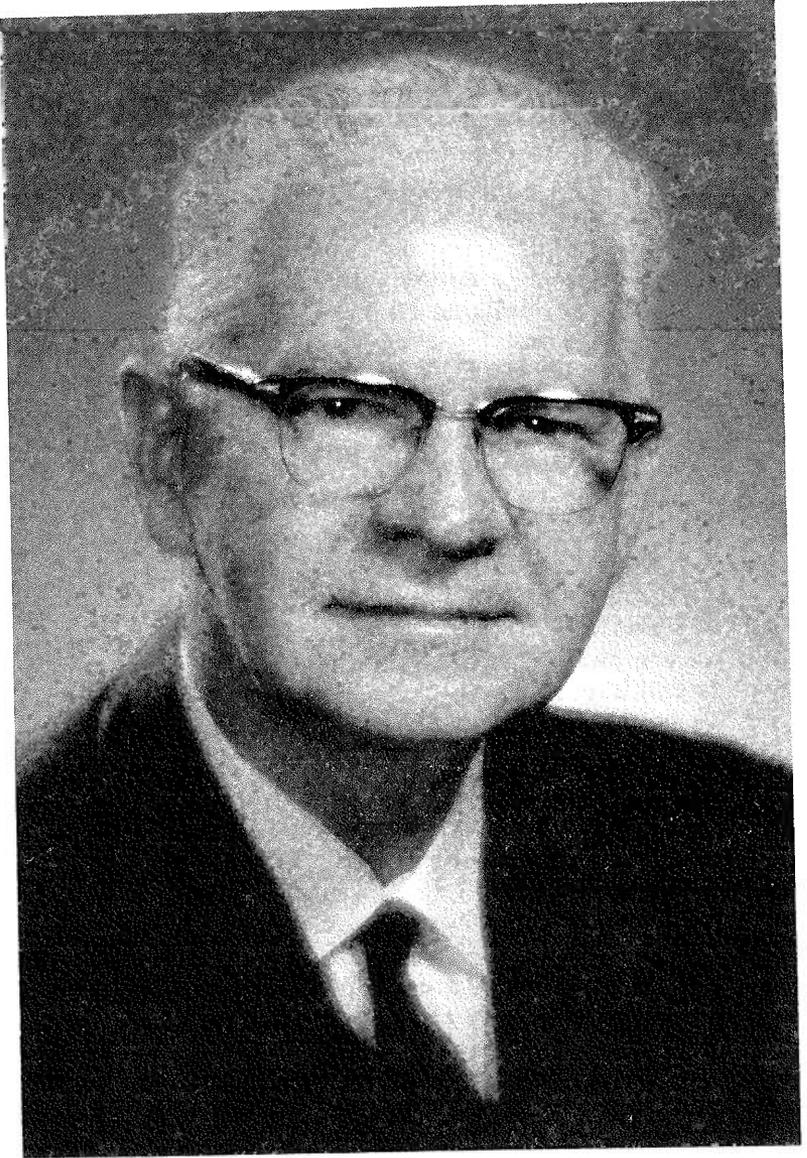
He was graduated from Cleburne, Texas High School and received his Bachelor's degree from Abilene Christian College in 1929. The University of Texas awarded him the Master of Business Administration in 1938 with emphases on Accounting, Law, Marketing, Statistics and Insurance.

Smith has taught and served as principal in the public schools and in 1927 began as the Business Manager of Abilene Christian College. He is the only full-time business manager in ACC's history. In the early days, he did all of the business office work without help and in addition taught 18 hours a week, including courses in Greek. He started the Business Administration Department of the College.

During his college years, Smith was president of his senior class, of the Student's Association and of the Drama Club. He was business manager of the *Prickly Pear*, columnist of the *Optimist*, member of the "A" Club, College Quartet, Men's Glee Club, Sub-T-16 and Alpha Chi. At present he holds membership in the Central, Southern, and National Associations, of College and University Business Managers.

Brother Smith has been preaching since the age of 16 and has been active "full-time" for the past 25 years as minister for congregations within driving distance of Abilene while also serving the College full-time as its business manager.

He was married in 1941 to Lula Lucine Cox and they are the parents of 6 children: Dallas Frank, Jo Katherine (Mrs. Curtis Bagley), Lawrence Leon Campbell, Jr., Lee Ann, Paul Bridges and Sharon.



LAWRENCE LEON CAMPBELL SMITH, SR.

# PREFACE

At the 50th Lectureship at Abilene Christian College, we are privileged to pause and reflect on the great accomplishments of the school over these past years, and we are happy to feel that the Lectureship itself has made some contribution to this.

The entire ACC family, regardless of the time they were on campus, delights to pay tribute this year to our three present administrators who have been with the College the longest: Don Heath Morris, Walter Harris Adams, and Lawrence Leon Campbell Smith, Sr. Each of these men is unexcelled in academic circles as to his tenure of service, as an administrator in his field, and in his real contribution to the College he has served; and together these men truly form "a great triumvirate" that has furnished a strong and solid leadership for Abilene Christian College over these many years. Only in eternity will we begin to know the value of each man's contribution, but we are aware even here of the fact that he has given his life and himself to the College and to all that it stands for. We honor them and pay our respects from the bottom of our hearts.

Also remembered and especially appreciated at this time are W. R. Smith, former vice-president, and James E. Freeman, former fiscal agent, both of whom have already retired, but each of whom gave himself completely for many long years in dedicated service to the College, and we remember them with great appreciation and thank both them and the Lord for their individual contributions to the cause represented by ACC. Smith began teaching at the College in 1936 and was elevated to the vice-presidency in 1940 where he continued until his retirement in 1962. Freeman's first assignment at the College as Head of the Business Administration department began in 1936 and his service as fiscal agent was from 1937 to 1967, the

year of his retirement. Both of these administrators served the College faithfully and well in their important and responsible capacities.

All of these administrators represent all others (here unnamed) who have served Abilene Christian College faithfully in years past and who have since retired. Many stout hearts have tread rugged paths before us in the history of our beloved school and to them we freely acknowledge our debt of gratitude. This moment, as we look back in appreciation to all who have made ACC what it is, does indeed "Crown 50 years."

This volume of the Lectureship book was specifically planned to be a souvenir and a memento of the 50th year celebration. You will note the new size, new format and unusual quality of work and materials, as well as the special content. The volume was also planned, in keeping with the planning of the Lectureship Program itself, to also be a repository of great gospel sermons, inasmuch as the 50th Lectureship is one that particularly pays its respects to the preaching of the gospel, the speakers being asked to give sermons of their own choosing. The titles of the two featured speeches, "Crowning Fifty Years," and "Reaching the Masses With the Gospel" describe accurately our real concerns at the time of the 50th Lectureship. To aid and help God's word in its changing of the world—this is our task!

J. D. THOMAS  
Editor

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**FEATURED  
SERMONS**



## CROWNING FIFTY YEARS

Jack Pope

Judge Jack Pope was graduated from A.C.C. in 1934 and from the Law School of the University of Texas in 1937. He practiced law in Corpus Christi until 1946 except for two years when he served as a seaman in the U.S. Navy. He was judge of the 94th District Court from 1946 to 1950, and was then elected to the Court of Civil Appeals where he served until 1965. In 1964 he was elected to the Supreme Court of Texas where he presently serves. In 1962 he was the President of the Judicial Section of the State Bar of Texas.

Judge Pope's professional services include the following: President of Nueces County Bar, 1946; Chairman State Bar Citizenship Committee, 1952-53; Chairman State Bar Committee on Rules and Statutes 1959-1960; Committee on Administration of Justice 1958-1964. He is a member of the Nueces County, San Antonio, Hill Country, Travis County and American Bar Associations; the American

Judicature Society, the Law-Science Institute, and the American Society for Legal History.

He served as President of the Metropolitan Y.M.C.A. in San Antonio in 1958 and holds the Silver Beaver Award from the Alamo Council Boy Scouts of America.

He served as elder of the Jefferson Church of Christ in San Antonio until he moved to Austin in 1965. He married Allene Nichols of Austin, and both of their sons, Jackson and Allen, are graduates of A.C.C.



Tonight we call back the past, for it was fifty years ago that ten Christian men, upon the invitation of Jesse P. Sewell and his advisors, came to the campus of Abilene Christian College to deliver some lectures on a program that was first described in the 1917 college catalogue as the Bible Lecture Week. The lecturers in January of 1918 spoke in a small hall to a few hundred hearers on subjects that were then very timely: Destructive Criticism, Verbal Inspiration, Organization of the New Testament Church, The Work of the Evangelist, Missions, Christian Education. Three hundred seventy-nine different speakers have delivered a total of eight hundred seven principal or theme lectures since that beginning. Most of these speeches are preserved in forty bound volumes. Preachers, professors of this and our sister colleges, college administrators, business men, doctors, dentists, druggists, lawyers, editors, and missionaries from around the world have here presented their thoughts and ideas in lectures which required perhaps a million hours in preparation. Tonight we begin the next fifty years. Let it be our hope that these lectures will be deserving to continue until the end of time.

The origins and development, the directors and their contribution, the themes and subjects selected, the speakers and the content of their lectures, the nature and growth of the hearing and reading audiences, the great religious issues and their treatment, cannot be discussed during the time of this one lecture. In fact, discussion tonight of the historical facts of this subject would be impossible without resort to the study and insights of Brother William S. Banowsky which came to fruition in his book, *The Mirror of a Movement*, published three years ago. I have borrowed generously from his book. Brother Banowsky studied all of the lectures for the first forty-six years of the Abilene Platform and he has interpreted them against the background of the nineteenth century restoration movement, the falling away at the beginning of this century, denominationalism which has chopped the church into em-

barrassing divisions, and the fundamentalist movement in America of which the churches of Christ now find themselves the heirs as defenders of God, Christ, the Bible, and the New Testament Church. *The Mirror of a Movement* is itself one of the trophies which crowns the lectures for the last fifty years.

The Abilene lectures have escaped the noose which strangled many earlier worthy religious movements in this and other lands. They have afforded a broad-based Christian fellowship and an avenue for communication with and encouragement of Christians. The lectures afford no place where votes are taken and church or brotherhood legislation is enacted. The lecturers have not insinuated themselves into and have never undertaken to bind any rule or opinion upon any church. The lecturers have stood as one against human and secular notions that seek to improve upon the simple and unadorned church described in the Bible.

The principal, featured, or theme lectures have been to thousands of Christians only one reason for their interest in the lectures. From the beginning, there have been special studies on selected and timely topics. There is no way to know how many people have attended the lectures so they might hear some special address or attend some panel discussion or training class. Opportunities to make known the needs or situation in Nigeria, Austria, Germany, The Far East, Rochester, or on the other side of town have been afforded. Methods of spreading the gospel through radio, the press, television, study groups, and the printed word have been explored in depth. Instruction on Christian living, the Christian woman, the eldership, family life, church discipline, singing, and the teaching of all people of all ages has been available at the lectures. It is significant that during the 1968 lectures, according to Dr. J. D. Thomas, Lectureship Director, there are fifty-eight daily classes in specific phases of the work of

the church. At the Abilene lectures the lights are turned on. Needs, problems, and responsibilities of which many of us are uninformed are here explored and illuminated.

### *A Changed Religious World*

Lecturers have for fifty years held fast to the simplicity of the church and New Testament Christianity. They have pleaded for Christian unity of churches ruled by scripture, nothing more, nothing less. It would be a mistake to underestimate the difficulties that have beset an unchanging church in a world of religious upheaval. Denominational unrest is still evident. Sincere religious bodies and people have searched for ways to absolve themselves of complicating practices. We have seen a number of changes which most of us never expected to see during our lifetime. Latin is dead. Clerical celibacy is questioned. We read of religious leaders who oppose ancient ecclesiasticism and the hierarchy. We hear of a spreading "authority crisis" in religious groups. External dress and vestments which date back to the time of Emperor Constantine are being discarded. We hear of a clamor for what is called more lay oversight over the church. Willingness to move toward an unpretentious and simple worship is happening now. But while that current moves in one direction, there is a surge in the opposite direction by some of our other religious neighbors. The protestant world seems bent on the erection of its own hierarchy, the selection and election of its own councils for decision making. If these trends continue long enough, with enough meetings, and if religious history is a useful preceptor, the World Council of Churches will eventually evolve its own Protestant pope.

The religious world of today is unacquainted with the Bible. Some books of the New Testament, Acts as an example, are actually read out of the Bible, and ignored. Religionists write books and essays about the extrinsic

church, the intrinsic church, the fortress church, the militant church, the servant church, and the underground church. They have forgotten about the Lord's church. What the Bible calls evil the religionists excuse as therapy. Standards which the Bible says are good, the religionists call deleterious. We have some non-Bible preachers who occupy American pulpits who deify man, sneer at things divine, scoff at the miraculous, apologize for Christ, and tell their hearers that God is dead or irrelevant. Skeptics and atheists are not new to God, but men in the pulpits who teach Christless Christianity, atheistic religion, and a Godless world are today blaspheming God. Scriptures are rejected as inspired authority. Today, the solution to most religious problems seem to lie in the magic word, "dialogue."

The religious world is adrift. You and I could be decoyed up these same alluring alleys. Well motivated people often forsake the gospel of the Bible for what is called the social gospel. So transformed are they to the things of the world that many of them devote their time and attention to the organization of marches and to the advocacy of the disobedience of society's laws. They teach that the means justifies the end. It is a shame, but hardly unexpected, that the preachers in American pulpits of 1918 who were teaching that the commands of the New Testament could be disrespected, should find their grandsons teaching that the laws of our society and country should be broken.

Today's world is reaping the whirlwind. Lecturers from this platform have been branded as narrow-minded legalists and members of a bigoted cult, because they taught that the worship of God through Christ should be no more and no less than that which is authorized in the New Testament. "Throw wide the gate," said the critics, "God's love is so boundless that he does not demand obedience." We have now lived to see the fruits of a generation which

was taught that this or that part of the New Testament is no longer significant. Is there any wonder that their children would arise and tell their parents, "You taught us that it was all right to ignore part of the Bible. We have decided to ignore all of it." When the plea was made for a simple worship with simple gospel singing, it was not heard. Is there really any wonder that the organ is being shoved aside also for musical recitals, interpretive dancing, jazz festivals, and guitar renditions which accompany the recitation of the 100th Psalm? If these are the fruits of "broad minded" religion, may God give us more humble but narrow-minded legalists who believe that the authority of the Bible and the commands of the Bible are important.

### *The Message of the Abilene Lectures*

The messages delivered from this platform during the last five decades have been varied, but five persistent themes have permeated the lectures from the first. They are lectures that (1) God is, and Jesus is His Son, (2) the Bible is the infallible and inspired word of God, (3) the church of Christ is a simple non-denominational institution which must follow the apostolic patterns and examples described in the New Testament, (4) evangelism means the whole gospel to the whole world by the whole church, and (5) Christian education in the home, school, and church are necessary to the attainment of a Christian life. A survey of these themes may be appropriate. Have we done any good? Are the issues settled? Can we now begin the teaching of different themes, since so much has already been said about those subjects?

### *God Is*

The Abilene Platform has afforded a forum for full discussion of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The speakers have stood together against the inroads

impelled to meet the rising doubts in the minds of people occasioned by a flood of literature about the hypothesis of creative evolution. They grappled with false deductions from new scientific fields of learning such as genetics, biology, and geology. They discussed the philosophical and psychological notions that man made God and that God is a mere cultural concept. No religious subject was more pressing in the beginning days of these lectures, and the speakers marshalled all of the historic and inspired proofs and arguments to meet the claims of those who sought to eliminate God and His Son. The printed texts of those addresses preserve some of the best thinking of our brotherhood on the subject.

It would be a great mistake to assume that this issue has been satisfactorily laid to rest by these earlier efforts. The denial of God is much older than these lectures. Men have been running from God for a long time, but as Theodore Reothke once wrote, "Running from God's the longest race of all."

Recently Thomas Altizer shocked religious people by speaking for a group of iconoclastic religionists in saying that God is dead. In his book which bears the enigmatic title, *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*, he writes that Christians should joyously announce the self-annihilation of God. Perhaps he was urged to his conclusions by Bonhoeffer who, during World War II, wrote letters from a Nazi prison cell expressing the same thought. This idea was an old one when Julian Huxley wrote his book, *Religion Without Revelation*, and dismissed in one paragraph belief in a personal God. It was old when Friedrich Nietzsche's madman, in his parable, asked "Does not night come on continually, darker and darker? Shall we not have to light lanterns in the morning? Do we not hear the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God, . . . God is dead! God remains dead. And we have killed him—" (The Joyful Wisdom, 1882). It was old when Robert G. Ingersoll

used to stand on the platform and dare God to strike him dead in five minutes. It was old when Friedrich Engles and Karl Marx wrote the *Communist Manifesto*. It was old when Hegel wrote in 1802 in *Glauben and Wissen*, "The pure concept, however, of infinity, as the abyss of nothingness into which all Being sinks, must denote infinite pain which previously was historical only in culture and as the feeling: God himself is dead. . . ." It was old when William Blake, two centuries ago wrote in *The Everlasting Gospel*:

"Thou art a man. God is no more  
Thy own humanity learned to adore  
For that is my Spirit of life."

It was old when the psalmist wrote. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God" (Psalms 14:1). Yes, it was already a very old theme when the Israelites renounced God at the foot of Sinai while awaiting the return of Moses.

Five decades ago, the attacks upon God came from men who had the decency and honesty to stay out of the pulpit. The only thing new about the subject during our times is the brazen practice of radical theologians in using the pulpits and seminaries for preaching godless Christianity. Our job is not done. The battle against atheism is as old as man, but it has to be fought all over again, beginning now.

### *The Bible Is the Inspired Word of God*

The authenticity and inerrancy of the Bible have been declared in seventy-one lectures since 1918. The lecturers taught that the Bible is the work of God, not men. False teachers had already come with "enticing words of man's wisdom" (1 Cor. 2:4). The speakers from the beginning defended the Bible against the rationalistic school of destructive critics, critics described in II Tim. 2:7, as

“ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Great preachers have here addressed their finest talents to this great issue of the ages.

Twenty-five centuries ago a lonely and sensitive man attempted to dissuade an indifferent people from their idols. Jeremiah lamented:

The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken; lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them? Jer. 8:9.

It was this same lack of wisdom that the lecturers have lamented from this platform. Twenty-six years before the first lecture, William Rainey Harper, president of the University of Chicago, once told a Chautauqua audience what was then a popular thesis:

\* \* \* The supernatural is ruled out. God himself is compelled to vacate. What is left? A few harmless stories; a few well-meant, but mistaken warnings; a few dead songs; and many unfulfilled predictions; a large amount of fairly good literature.

Many of the methods and theories employed in the attack upon God are used also in the attack upon God's word. Now, on the fiftieth anniversary of the first lecture here, we find the opening words of Brother George A. Klingman's address just as timely and perhaps even more significant than when he challenged his listeners with these words:

“The enemy has challenged us and must be met; yea rather, the fight is on, and we must meet the foe and give to the great hosts of young people who should and will be educated, the heritage of them that fear the Lord; we are under the obligation to show that the Bible stands the test of criticism; the present age makes that demand upon those of us who believe in God and accept the Bible as His inspired word.”

*The Church of Christ*

The church, its nature, organization, worship and mission have been discussed in more than one hundred sixty lectures. Its problems with the external world and the problems within the church have been aired and discussed. Denominationalism, sectarianism, modernism, the function of evangelists and elders, the difficulties which arose over benevolence, church discipline and the evangelization of the world have been among the scores of important subjects that have been considered. The plea of the church for simplicity and constancy was sounded often. Brother W. D. Campbell at the 1923 lectures expressed it well. He said what should still be our plea for the future:

“Let us, beloved, stand like a wall of fire for the Gospel, as the Lord gave it, and as his apostles preached it; and for the church of Christ, in its purity and simplicity as revealed in the New Testament and faithfully give our lives in restoring it, and in the coming crowning day— We shall stand on the winning side.”

The church of 1968 finds itself in a religious milieu somewhat different from that of 1918. The spirit of division was then still rampant and new human sects were still originating. The unity of Christians upon New Testament principles was not being heard or was counted unimportant. The spirit was one of conflict between religious groups. Often our plea for unity was transmitted in the form of bitterness, cold intellectualism, and debates which sometimes alienated as much and as many as they convinced.

The spirit of the times today is different. However wrong some of the present approaches to the problem of divisions may be, there is at least a generally accepted recognition of the fact that divisions are wrong. We have heard more about the ecumenical movement during the last decade than has probably been heard during the last two or three centuries. It was at least a step forward when

religious groups began to talk about consolidations and unions, even though that is still far removed from Christian unity. The point is that there is present today a desire to eliminate the divisions, and all of us should applaud that as the first step. Without that desire, efforts for Christian unity are in vain.

I am not sure that this change in attitude is the result of our own preaching. Rather, I think that the confusion flowing from divisions has been so compelling, the disappointments of dissected Christianity in the mission field so numerous, and the failures of man-made substitutions for God's will so self-defeating, that well-meaning people are for the first time in a long time willing to listen and try. Catholics are talking to Protestants. Protestant denominations are talking to each other. Efforts continue apace in their search of a common ground upon which this or that division can be healed.

The plea for unity patterned upon the simple church described in the New Testament, with the New Testament as the rule and guide, should now be asserted anew, not only to ourselves, but more especially projected to those who sincerely seek to eliminate this curse upon Christianity. Now is the time to re-teach the scriptures prayerfully and in humility. The world may not yet be ready to follow Ephesians 4:4-6, but it is more prepared now than it has been in a very long time: "One body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

The experience of two thousand years of experimentation has shown that no human plan will ever achieve unity. When worshipers of Christ trim away from the religious bodies to which they adhere all non-essentials without scriptural basis, all councils, synods, and other ecclesiastical assemblies and all organizations of human

origin not described in the Bible, there will remain a church that is so basic and simple, that there is little to debate about. There will be left simple New Testament congregations of people who can worship scripturally and survive anywhere, from the jungles of Africa to the jungle cities of our own nation.

*Evangelism of the World*

More than one hundred seventy-five speeches about missions and missionaries have been delivered at these lectures. It was not, however, until 1937 that the program was for the first time, devoted to the theme of world evangelism. Most of the lectures on this subject have happened since 1946. The tardiness of our attention to this subject is hard to understand when we recall that it was the issue of evangelism that first disturbed the Restoration movement. The lectures have provided open forums for the discussion of persecutions, mission problems, and opportunities in most places in the world. It is here that our successes and our mistakes have been discussed.

In 1952, Brother Claude Guild told this assembly that "the church in its first glory had one congregation, three thousand members and twelve preachers!" In forty years, every creature under heaven had heard the Gospel! Tonight there are more than twice as many present as were there in Jerusalem. Brother Guy Caskey in 1961 said:

There is probably concentrated upon this campus this week more potential for bringing mankind to Christ than has ever assembled in one place since the church was born. \* \* \* For even at this moment a man known only to his creator moves in the garb of humanity somewhere in the great marsh that lies along the Tigris River in Iran. Tomorrow this man will die nameless to you and to me. But I fear this man, for he may stand as my accuser in that day when my Lord asks for the return of his talents. These myriads of nameless, hopeless lost are the mute judges of the church of the 20th century.

God tonight is listening to dialects that you and I have never heard or heard about. Proud as we are of some worthwhile beginnings in mission work, it is to the discredit of me and most of you here tonight, that it has been our young people, inexperienced and untrained, who have had the courage to cut loose the strings which entangle us with the world and to set sail as missionaries. They are doing great work - theirs and ours too. The rest of us have grown accustomed to being satisfied with small accomplishments. We send money, but not enough to hurt very much. May the next fifty years find us at least as dedicated in mission work as our religious neighbors whose doctrinal errors we criticize.

### *Christian Education*

Brother H. E. Speck addressed the first Abilene Lecture-ship on the subject, "Christian Education." Since 1918 every president of A. C. C., from Sewell to Morris, has made his own intellectual and spiritual contribution upon that theme. Brother Banowsky's featured speech of last year, "Christ For the Campus," was the seventieth major lecture upon this general subject. Lecturers have not restricted the theme to that of formal education, however. They taught the significance of the home and the church as ideal teaching institutions. The Abilene campus has been the scene, and the exchange of ideas and communications between lecturers and students has been a prime object of all the lectures.

The Abilene audience has often been cautioned about the experiences of the early American religious colleges. I review them briefly again. Beginning with Harvard in 1638, most early colleges were established as religious schools. Almost all of them have forsaken their mission. Of the 247 colleges in the United States in 1860, all but 17 were privately owned. By 1900 all of them had turned

aside from everything except secular education. Colleges supported by members of the churches of Christ, for the most part originated during this century, and to now, they have avoided these digressive tendencies experienced by some of the older, wealthier, now larger, and more famous institutions of our nation. So long as lectures such as these continue on the campus of our schools that situation will continue.

The next fifty years will present greater dangers to Christian education than we have yet witnessed. Off-campus influences and the world in which we live threaten this campus and every other campus in our land. New philosophies shoot through all educational pursuits and every college everywhere. Exposure is inescapable. Revealed and solid values are daily attacked. They become suspect. Some are being abandoned. Raw knowledge accumulates faster than it can be computerized, while wisdom and spirituality suffocate. The most pressing problems of our generation are the problems of our children's generation.

The young people of today face a torrent of disturbing communications. Never did the world have so many babblers, setters forth of strange Gods (Acts 17:8). Unevaluated, unproved, spectacular, and newsworthy ideas pour incessantly forth in a daily staccato. There is no time for them or anyone else to measure and evaluate all that they hear, read, and see. Though it is often true that yesterday's communication of something as fact was a mistake, unfounded, the result of a misjudgment of the data; the proof never seems to overtake today's and tomorrow's new flood of information. Sooner or later, all new ideas, the good ones as well as the bad, congregate on the college campus.

Is there any wonder that a young student is disturbed about his world and himself? He looks upon our culture

with an emptiness. He regards his world as venal and materialistic, which it is. He feels that he is being crushed by a conformity and a formalism which he does not like and for which he is not responsible. He is confused by what he hears about naturalism, humanism, and pragmatism. He comes to believe that everything must be evidenced by a laboratory experiment. Overwhelmed, some of them rebel or quit.

People during the middle ages were perplexed by a similar world, and they withdrew from the world and found solace in monasteries. Today, uprooted sons and daughters join a sub-culture in the coffee houses and hippie colonies in rebellion against what they call the establishment, the managers and the dishonesties of our society.

In the years ahead, the Christian campus should be the fulfillment of the expectations of those who want something more in life than an empty material success. In Christ, these sons and daughters can find their model of One who sought no worldly possession or power, One who resisted the pharisaical legalism of the times, loved his fellow man, and lived in peace under the Roman Eagle. The answer to the bewilderment and confusion of people today is still Christ. Our campus must remain a campus where Christ is always at hand and welcome, where students, out of all the confusion, can read and hear words that restore their stability:

Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Col. 2:8.

### *We Look To The Future*

Brother Klingman's prophetic opening words to the first lecture fifty years ago are appropriate tonight as tonight we look again to the future:

It does not take a prophet to "discern the signs of the times," nor the son of a prophet to forecast the nature of the fight that must be fought within the next few years.

Our sensory society will continue with its inordinate appeal to the appetites, with all the mediums of advertising creating new and unneeded artificial wants that will make more and more people the slaves of possessions, money, drink, sex, and pleasure. These same old basic issues are still with us. They will arise again and again, though in new and more enticing disguises. The old errors will be dressed up in new and different styles. "The future is only the past again, entered through another gate."

The enemies of God and the church are inventive and resourceful in producing new onslaughts upon Christianity, and their future forms are now unknown. There will be those who will try to persuade us to quit talking about the Bible and to talk more about religion. They will use the social gospel as the reason to move religion into the world while, in fact, the church is gradually edged out of the world. There will be those who, in the name of tolerance, will wrap all religious groups together in terms of dogma, and then attack dogma as bigotry and tyranny. They will continue to substitute human ethics or situation morality for Christian discipline. They will decoy people who will not fall for the blunt idea that there is no God, with the more subtle appeal, "The god-hypothesis is irrelevant." To those who stand firm upon the inspiration of the scriptures, they will say, "Be more selective in your acceptance of parts only of the scriptures." All the devices of the enemies of God when translated, mean that they will take you and me on any basis they can get us. They are willing to make the best bargain possible and they are willing to give up as much of their position as is necessary to shake your faith and make of you one more Christian dropout.

The basic issues which our lecturers have been dis-

cussing for fifty years are just as important tonight as they were in 1918. They were the issues when confronted with Comte's positivism and the philosophy of humanism. They were basic to the Restoration plea. They were the issues during the so-called age of reason and the period of the new scientism. They were the issues during the Reformation and the Renaissance. The significance of these issues never fades. Once these issues become too tiresome for treatment, we shall have lost the fight. They are the issues of the future.

Present tonight are Christians whose memories turn far back to many of the earlier lectures. You recall some speaker who taught the truth as God revealed it. Perhaps you recall some face, some inflection, some gesture, some plea, some prayer that vibrated through the lecture hall and helped you reach some important personal decision. Many of those decisions have affected lives and churches all over the world.

The future of the Abilene Lectures must afford opportunities for decisions like those. Let us then press on with zeal to provide Bible answers to the seekers for meaning and purpose of self, of life and of knowledge of this world and that to come. May we prayerfully look to that time when, with the help of each other and of God, the Lord's church and the Lord's people will spread over the face of the world, when His church shall be the church of all people, not of one side of town, nor of a class, nor race, but of all mankind. Let us pledge to each other that the platform of the future will remain a place where the name of Jesus is exalted above every name, where every knee bows to his Name, and every tongue confesses "that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

## REACHING THE MASSES WITH THE GOSPEL

V. P. Black

Attended Freed-Hardeman College. Worked with the church in Booneville, Miss., 1938-42, worked with the church in Avon Park, Fla., 1942-44, has been with the Plateau Church in Mobile, Ala. since 1944. He is the author of, *My God and My Money*, and *Rust As A Witness*. Another book of sermons titled *Resurrection of the Body and Other Sermons* will be off the press in the spring of 1967. Brother Black holds from fifteen to eighteen meetings a year and for the last three years has delivered an average of four lectures a month on "Stewardship." He is Vice President of Alabama Christian College in Charge of Development. Brother Black is one of the elders of the Plateau Church and their located preacher.

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God in his divine wisdom planned and worked for 4000 years before bringing the church of Christ into existence. He gave a divine and perfect plan for the church.

The church of Christ has a perfect founder, foundation, and head. He is Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace and Priest of the most high God. Jesus Christ proved himself to be the son of God by going with the pale monarch of death into the silent darkness of the grave and

while there he broke his crown and took the keys of death and rode aloft to heaven and shouted as he went through the air, "I have the keys of death, hell and the grave in my hands."

We need to impress upon the minds of the people the urgent need of reaching the masses with the gospel. In this 20th century there is still an urgent need for simple New Testament teaching. Where men were once in a fog of confusion due to sectarianism, strife, and bitterness, they are in a denser fog today, produced by philosophies, theories, and confusion confounded. Hundreds of cults, social up-lift schemes, and materialistic propaganda thrust themselves upon the scene until men despair of knowing where to seek the truth. Many of these people turn to cynic indifference and fill their lives with worldly pleasures.

Men are weary with confusion and darkness, but endure it because they have never seen the light. There are millions of people who are now indifferent to Christ and his gospel, who would gladly obey the gospel if they could come to know the simple truths contained therein. With this New Testament message so badly needed, we cannot, we must not let sectarianism and bitterness become so strong that God's people will divide into camps so antagonistic that Christ will be put to shame and his church become stagnant.

People in the religious world are sick and tired of hearing ministers quote from 20th century philosophers instead of the apostles during the first century. People are weary of ministers quoting from newspapers and magazines instead of quoting from the New Testament. Unless we carry the same gospel message to the people of this age that Christ and his apostles carried to them during the first century, then all our efforts are vain.

We must recognize the fact that a social gospel will

not save the world. It may tickle the ear and appeal to man's pride but in reality it is as sounding brass or a tinkling symbol. A moral gospel won't save man from his sins. The best moral man that ever lived has committed enough sins to separate him from God for eternity. A ceremonial gospel won't save. One could live to be as old as Methuselah and obey to perfection every ceremonial law devised by man but unless he contacts the blood of Christ, he has no hope offered him in the word of God. Christ by his shed blood made it possible for us to be saved. We must preach Christ crucified, with his own sweat and blood creeping from his tender brow, dripping from his hands and feet, gushing from his side telling us that all the blood of all the animals of the world can never take away the sin of the world.

In this age when many are preaching a socialistic gospel, others a moral gospel, some a ceremonial gospel, and still others an ethical gospel, we must emphasize the gospel of the blood. We must preach this gospel because it has power to effect a reconciliation between sinners and God. Because it shows how the interest of all sinners was aimed at in the death of Christ. Because it proves that through the blood of Christ the sinner can be washed and made as white as the driven snow.

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Rom. 10:13-15). When Paul wrote this epistle, the ancient Roman virtue, the admirable simplicity, and the unconquerable courage had died away. With these things also died the old religion. The decay and corruption of it were accelerated by the engrafting of new

and dark superstition. The change in social life was startling and vice was deified. The pagan world knew not God. The sound of the gospel had gone forth and its influence upon their lives was startling. This gospel modified private individuals, social and state life.

Nations where this gospel has not been preached have been found practicing self-torments, devil worship, human sacrifices, and slaughter of wives. They practice constant wars, vendetta, slavery, polygamy, degradation of women, superstitions of priestcraft and witchcraft. But when the gospel of peace reaches the people it sheds light and ends fear.

This gospel that is to be carried to the masses is a report, a report that is divine in origin, unique in its character, authentic in its facts, authoritative in its statements, and marvelous in its declaration.

This gospel reports about a most wonderful love. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). Here we have a volume in a verse, an ocean in a dewdrop, a hemisphere of light in solitary luminary, an eternity of mystery and mercy! Eternity cannot exhaust its wealth of interest and wonderment! The greatest love story known to man is the love that God has for Adam's lost and recreant race.

This gospel report on the life of Christ, the life of Christ which the gospel makes known, has no parallel in the history of races. The mysterious conception was grandly confirmed by his mysterious career; unique in birth, he was unique all through. If one link in the chain can be found faulty, then the whole chain is faulty. But every link has been found a perfect link; his whole life wondrously consistent, complete, and unrivalled. For more than nineteen

hundred years this life has been stirring humanity to its very core and center. In philosophy he is the mightiest enigma! In the universe he is the highest attraction! In life he is the inimitable ideal. In the world he is the absolute ruler. From that wonderful life, as from a fountain of eternity, has flowed vital truths of freshness, beauty and blessedness wherever they have gone.

This gospel reports most wonderful provisions: provisions of mercy and of merit to avert the penal blow and cancel the guilt; of merit to redignify the acquitted rebel and reinstate him in God's eternal favor; provisions equal to the demands of one soul or a world of souls enough for each, enough for all, enough forevermore. There is multiplied grace, goodness and glory; there is a variety so great, a fullness so vast, a supply so magnificent and princely that the roll of unceasing ages will fail to exhaust either the one or the other. The gospel of Christ reports wonderful results. Obedient to the imperial summons of the master to, "go in the world and preach the gospel to every creature" the apostles and their co-laborers, those giants of the cross, embarked on their sublime but hazardous enterprise; beginning at Jerusalem, they sailed forth to regions beyond and preached Jesus and the resurrection. In less than fifty years after they started the gospel had sounded its report all over the Roman empire, and even in the ranks of Caesar's household.

This gospel eclipses all others, and stands out with a singularity and supremacy at once unprecedented and divine; reporting as it reveals and revealing as it reports Jehovah's mind and will, the sympathy and benevolence of his great heart, before which multitudes have bowed in reverence and submission. View it in what light you may, as a remedy, a revelation, a message, a system or history, it reports results most astounding and sublime. It is so simple that a child may understand it; yet so deep

that philosophers can never fathom its depth. So cheap that it can be had for the asking; so precious that millions cannot buy it. So full that it can never be diminished; so universal that none is outside its possible benedictions.

Our mission is to carry the gospel to the masses. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30). "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 13:3). We live in a world of sin and sinners and it is our duty to rescue those who are lost. Jails and prisons are crowded with criminals and the air is reeking with blasphemy. We are living in an age when more homage is paid to gold than to goodness. Go to the United Nations headquarters and there you hear only wrangling and argumentative speeches. We read of armies that rush to battle in a den of noise and in a cloud of smoke; blood flows and indescribable misery follows. We read of the strong overcoming the weak and wreaking their passions upon them, we read of cruel might marching through lands of right, burning, murdering, and ravishing until our soul is sickened and we turn away and cry, "All of this because of sin."

The only remedy for this sin-sick world is the gospel. The church has the responsibility of carrying the gospel to these people. The task assigned to the church in this matter of evangelization is no light one. So great is this task that we have no time to argue over the time of day we should partake of the Lord's Supper, whether one must kneel or stand while praying, or to what degree the Holy Spirit dwells in the child of God. We also need to stop arguing over *how* to carry the gospel to the world; we just need to get busy and do it.

We hear much about theories of inspiration, theories of atonement, theories of faith, theories of the Holy

Spirit and theories of the indwelling spirit. Oh God, hasten the day when we will accept the plain simple truths of thy word and then obey them. Regardless of all the claims we may make, unless the mighty working power of God is demonstrated in our lives by carrying his gospel to all parts of the world and by clothing the naked and feeding the hungry, we have no right to exist. The church was not established to entertain or to amuse the world but to save it; not to mock the world but to redeem it through Christ. When our pulpits become occupied with men who have a tongue of orthodoxy and a heart of heterodoxy, we will lose our identity, and when the church loses its distinctiveness, it has lost its power. Christ the head of the church continually walks among us, saying, "What do ye more than others?" It is only when we do more than others that we become a peculiar or a distinctive people. We have not begun, in the true sense of the word, to serve God until we do more than others; until we learn to work, sacrifice and put the Kingdom of God first, we are no more than baptized pagans.

World evangelization began with a company of only twelve men which grew into a church of three thousand the first day. In a generation churches were planted all over the Roman empire and the gospel became known to the world. The mission of the church is to turn the world from darkness to light; to convert a sin-lost and sin-ruined world from error; to lead them by the truth, the gospel, into the Kingdom, the church of our Lord and Master. This the church must do if it is to carry out the purpose of God our Father and Christ our Saviour.

The church would cease to exist in a generation if it were not for missions. We ourselves, whether we admit it and thank God for it or deny it, are the fruit of missions. Our forebears were naked savages. The gospel of Christ has made us what we are tonight. Christianity is essentially a missionary system. Missions inhere in the gospel just as heat does in fire or cold in ice or as light in the sun.

One congregation located in the city of Antioch (Syria) in the long ago sent out a missionary in the person of the apostle Paul. During Paul's stay with this church he taught them their duty in preaching the gospel to others. This great church sent Paul on one missionary journey then a second and a third one; and, as a result of these journeys and this one church, congregations were established in Perga, Antioch, Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Philippi, Ephesus, Thessalonica, Corinth and possibly many other places. These established congregations became radiating centers for the gospel. "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything" (I Thess. 1:8). "And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10).

The average congregation may be described by various adjectives, but one that does not exactly fit it is "evangelistic." This condition of being unevangelistic exists in spite of the fact that Christ has placed upon it the responsibility of preaching the gospel to every creature. In spite of all our pretensions, the average church is far from being evangelistic. The brethren meet and sing a few songs, have a prayer, study a lesson, have the Lord's Supper, take up the half-hearted offering and hear a sermon. Occasionally there is a gospel meeting consisting of eight days and few souls are saved. The Lord's-day morning service, usually the best attended service, is more formal than evangelistic, with very little time devoted to the preaching that God has ordained to bring sinners to repentance.

It is possible that there are many among us that do not know that the church exists primarily to convert sinners to Christ? For instance, ask any child why the fire department exists, and he will tell you to fight fires. Why do we

have doctors? To help people get well. Why do we have policemen? To put bad people in jail. Why does the church exist? The chances are he will not say, "The church exists to snatch souls out of hell and to help sin-sick souls to get right with God." Why will he not answer correctly about the purpose of the church? It is because we are not emphasizing evangelism very fervently. To solve this problem we must have compassion for souls. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few: Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matt. 9:36-38). If we are going to be successful in converting sinners, it will take more than a meaningless sermonette delivered in a dry-eyed manner. Those who play on the stage use the expression "sympathetic identification" to indicate that they have studied the character in question so carefully that they are able to act as the other would under similar circumstances. We need to sense deeply the need of those around us who are living without Christ. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost. That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh;" (Rom. 9:1-3). "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:20). "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23). Contrary to the things that we have pointed out from the New Testament, the lives of many professed Christians are spiritually "dry and parched." Whole churches in some

instances are satisfied to go through with some meaningless, dry-eyed perfunctory thing they call a worship service. While all around them and sometime in their very midst there are sinners who are not rebuked. The preacher in this pulpit is unlike the Christ whom he claims to serve.

To reach the masses with the gospel we must be zealous. If we are not zealous we will become like the church in Laodicea. This church was lukewarm about everything. It was dying as churches can die, of moderation and respectability. It may, in its apparently sound and safe prosperity, have been envied by other churches; nobody in the church brought any disgrace upon the Christian name. The church did not make the holy and inspiring witness of consistency in keeping things at a high spiritual level. It was unconcerned, indifferent, content to go on, aiming at nothing and doing nothing. The lukewarm are neither earnest for God, nor utterly indifferent to religion. They are perhaps best described as those who take an interest in religion, but whose worship of their idol of good taste, or good form, leads them to regard enthusiasm as ill-bred and disturbing. Those people have never put themselves to any inconvenience, braved any reproach, or abandoned any comfort for the cause of Christ, but hope to keep well with the world, while they flatter themselves that they stand well with God. Carlyle calls this, "The hypocrisy that does not know itself to be hypocritical."

The people of Laodicea were not cold, but they were not hot; they were not infidels, but they were not earnest believers; they did not oppose the gospel, neither did they defend it; they were not working mischief, neither were they doing any great good; they were not disreputable in moral character, but they were not distinguished for holiness; they were not irreligious, but they were not enthusiastic in piety nor eminent for zeal. They were what the world calls "moderates," they were of the broad-church school, they were neither bigots nor Puritans, they

were prudent and avoided fanaticism. Respectable and adverse to excitement, these people, no doubt, had prayer meetings but there were few present for they liked quiet evenings at home. When more attended, the meetings were still very dull, for they did their praying very deliberately and were afraid of getting too excited. It would have been an easy thing for such a church to consider vigor, zeal, and enthusiasm as being vulgar.

Such churches have Bible classes and all sorts of agencies; but they might as well be without them, for no energy is displayed and no good comes of them. They have elders and deacons who are excellent pillars of the church, if the chief work of pillars is to sit still and exhibit no motion or emotion. These churches have ministers but their wings have been closely clipped, for they do not fly very far in preaching the everlasting gospel; they may be shining lights of eloquence, but they are not burning lights of grace, setting men's hearts on fire.

These indifferent people are not so cold as to abandon the work, or to give up their meeting for prayer, or to reject the gospel; if they did so, then they could be convinced of their error and brought to repentance. Such people are not hot for truth, nor hot for conversion, nor hot for holiness; they are not "fiery" enough to burn the stubble of sin, nor zealous enough to make Satan angry nor fervent enough to make a living sacrifice for the cause of God. These people are like the amphibious animal that can live in water as well as on land. The half-hearted convert is one who can be at home in the world or in the church; one who can find pleasure in sin and also can find pleasure in hearing a sermon.

Men are less apt to repent when they are in the middle-passage between hot and cold than if they were in the worst extremes of sin. If they are like Saul of Tarsus, enemies of God, they may be converted. But if like

Gamaliel, they are neither opposing nor favoring, they will probably remain as they are till they die. Five thousand lukewarm members are only five thousand impediments in the church, but a dozen earnest, passionate spirits, determined to glorify Christ by winning souls to his cause are "more than conquerors." If God is worth serving at all he is worth serving with zeal. One needs a pure and fervent zeal to take his stand with the few or even alone, if necessary, to cry out against sin and wickedness. Righteous zeal is powerful; it can no more remain silent in the presence of evil than a roaring lion in the presence of its prey or a mighty army in the presence of its enemies. Zeal will attack the walls of Jericho with a ram's horn or go against a giant with a shepherd's sling. The Christians of this generation have the responsibility of carrying the gospel to every person of this generation. Yes, our responsibilities are great and our time is limited.



# CHAPEL SERMONS



## THE WORLD CHALLENGE

Bob Douglas

Bob Douglas was born April 16, 1935, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in a family that had been members of the Methodist denomination for many years. He was first introduced to the gospel of Christ while dating Miss June Harris, who later became his wife. In June of 1952, he was baptized into Christ by Paul Johnston, preacher for the Capitol Hill congregation in Oklahoma City.

Following graduation from high school, Brother Douglas enrolled in Abilene Christian College. He received his B.A. degree in 1956 and his M.A. from the same school the next year. He then moved to Lawton, Oklahoma, where he served the Sixth and Arlington church as evangelist for nearly four years. In January, 1961, he left Lawton to do mission work in the Middle East. The Sixth and Arlington congregation has sponsored him in those efforts from that time till the present, as well as provided his salary.

For more than three years, Brother Douglas preached in Cairo, Egypt, establishing the Lord's church there. Some forty-five people

obeyed the gospel in Cairo. Today two congregations continue to meet and work without American assistance. These years also produced the first gospel literature, including a Bible correspondence course, in the Arabic language. In September, 1965, the Egyptian government forced the Douglasses to leave Egypt. At that time, they went to Beirut, Lebanon, where they now live and work.



In addition to doing evangelistic work in Lebanon, Brother Douglas is also the founder and director of the Middle East Bible Training School, a program designed to give Arab Christians the train-

ing necessary to assume positions of leadership in the Lord's church in the Arab states. This school which began in the fall of 1966, is now in its second year of operation. Enrollment has increased from nine to twenty-five. This June the first graduates will be honored.

He has written a number of articles which have appeared in Christian publications in America and the Middle East. Brother Douglas was the principal speaker at the elders-preachers dinner at the 1964 ACC Elders' Workshop. He has also conducted meetings for most of the congregations meeting in the Middle East.

The Douglasses were married in 1954. They have two children, Paul, age 11, and Rebecca, age 8.

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Do you not say, "There are yet four months, then comes the harvest?" I tell you, lift up your eyes and see how the fields are already white for harvest. He who reaps receives wages, and gather fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." (John 4:35)

Jesus, as he said this, was viewing a tremendous whitened field, a field of humanity prepared for harvest, prepared by God, by providence, by the prophets of old. That field extended far beyond Samaria and Palestine. It stretched outward to encompass all the world and all time. As Jesus later said, "Go into all the world...preach to every creature...lo, I am with you always." With these words Christ issued a world challenge to the church, the magnitude of which His church was slow to perceive, and still is...a challenge which rings down through the ages to us. The challenge of today is still a worldwide challenge, but a world challenge twentieth century style. As we begin to consider our subject, we want to ask, "What is this world that challenges us in the twentieth century?"

In answer, we find it is a world that is both expanding and exploding. The nature of our world is seen most clearly in the population explosion. The three billion people of our day is ten times greater than the number of persons living in the first century. And this number increases by sixty million every year. By the year 2000, the earth's population will double, or even triple, to six to nine billion. By 1970 there will be four times as many Chinese as all the people in the world in Paul's day.

The expansion of the world is seen in the rise of new nations. Since 1945, seventy new states have been added to the family of nations, and this year will add even more. At the end of World War II, almost all of Africa and much of Asia consisted of colonies ruled by European powers. Now little is left anywhere of colonial domination. The resurgence of nationalism and the cry of self-determination rules everywhere.

The growth of education in under-developed areas is as phenomenal as the increase in new countries. Today more people can read and write, and more are learning to read and write than ever before. In 1900, twenty per cent of the world's people were literate. In our own country, one out of four could not read or write then. By 1965, the overall literacy rate had climbed to sixty per cent. In many lands a new school is started every minute. The publishing of reading materials has increased five fold in only twenty years. Half of the world's population is under twenty years of age. Among this age group few will lack education. And as this is a new, explosive generation, endowed with new knowledge, freedom, and determination, they will put their superior education to active use for good or bad.

At the same time scientific development has reduced the earth's size. Cairo and Beirut are just twenty-one hours from here by commercial jet. Telstar has made communications instantaneous. More people are moving farther and

faster than ever before. Man is advancing toward the moon. The SST jets are coming, making New York only two and one-half hours from Los Angeles. More ideas are being made available more instantly to more people than ever before.

Also, our world is a world caught up in the sweep of false, sinister ideologies. Communism controls one-third of the earth's people, while its basic philosophy is making itself felt even farther afield than that. Islam, unknown here except in the form of Cassius Clay and the Black Moslems, holds sway over more people than any other religion except Catholicism. Two-fifths of Africa and one-fifth of Asia follow Mohammed and the crescent moon. The Moslem religion is the most militant belief in the world today. Each year it sends out something like four thousand missionaries. Its dynamic appeal, its holding power, its elimination of concepts of sin, personal responsibility, and the need for radical personal change and commitment, make it a force to be reckoned with.

Then there is secularism, a spirit of the day in our part of the world. It stifles spirituality as a smothering fog. Its materialistic, live-for-the-moment disposition has even captured the hearts and imaginations of many members of the Lord's church. How current is the situation described in the parable of the rich fool. Jesus knew all too well what was in man. The principal character in this little true-to-life drama was all wrapped up in himself. He was, indeed, a fool. He thought of self and forgot others. He lived for now and ignored eternity. He built his life on material things, supposing to satisfy his soul by eating, drinking and being merry, all the while, never looking to the things above. A perfect picture of secularized man.

In the third place, ours is a world where time is running short. Do not misunderstand what I am saying to you now. I am not a sensationalist, nor a millennialist, but Christian-

ity says our world is going somewhere, namely toward its end with the coming of Christ. Each day that passes is one less day left for the course of human history. Paul was impressed with this fact. We also must be, if we are realists. In Romans 13:11-12, he said, "Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand."

The powers and philosophies mentioned earlier are cutting our time shorter and shorter, thereby raising the challenge. Each year some additional area of the world's surface goes under, pulled down by the powers of darkness. Each moment another soul is so far sold under sin as to be beyond redemption. Each moment another mind becomes so completely perplexed, entangled, and trapped by human rationalization and philosophizing as to be unreclaimable for unselfish, loving service to others. And above all, Jesus is coming again. He told us so. "Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming" (Matt. 24:42). "Therefore, you also must be ready, for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matt. 22:44).

God's patience with man has a limit. It is not everlasting. While we count His longsuffering salvation, we must never deceive ourselves into believing that another day must inevitably follow today. Remember the ancient world, Peter says, and we might add, Sodom, Israel, Jerusalem, and countless other nations, as well as individuals.

Fourth, it is a world that is lost. Masses march into eternity at the rate of twenty-one per second. Babies are born faster than we can reach mothers. Multitudes daily join the great flood of unsaved humanity, swelling the tide even more. At the same time, our efforts as Christians are feeble beyond words. As a brotherhood, we spend about four cents per week per member of the church on saving

the lost. As a nation, we spend five times more money on recreation than on religion. We have our fine buildings, widely advertised and highly promoted programs, and closely knit fellowships, while ten per cent of the members of any given congregation do ninety per cent of what is done. What is lacking is grass-roots involvement in practical Christian service. We have less than three hundred missionaries evangelizing ninety-three per cent of the world's population.

Finally, in considering the world that challenges us, we need to realize it is a world that CAN be reached. Jesus' orders are timeless. They are relevant today as always. The gospel is for "every creature" in "all the world." It requires that each generation never be content while short of the goal... "the end of the earth."

God never laid upon any men impossible responsibilities. Paul teaches us, "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength..." (I Corinthians 10:13). "And his commandments are not burdensome," John adds in I John 5:3. A deed once done can be done again. The world challenge can be met.

In fact, all circumstances favor us. Jesus said, "GO... preach." Basically that involves use of transportation and communications; modern science has made it possible for fewer people to go farther, faster, and say more to a larger audience more effectively than ever before. God, working through men, has given us the advanced means of keeping up with the great leap forward in population. Truly, we have every necessary factor to do the job.

There is sufficient manpower. Using today as a starting point, we number nearly two million, versus only twelve as Pentecost dawned. In this assembly there is a body of people the equal of the Jerusalem church after Pentecost, and I believe you have the same deep-seated convictions they had.

There is economic power. Members of the Lord's church in America are generally solid, middle-class people with above average earning power. Thus, they command and control more wealth than was dreamed of in the first century. You young people will be among America's upper middle income bracket. Because of your college training, you, in your lifetime, will earn an average of \$50,000 more than those who have no college training. What an advantage that gives you! As a group you have a potential of \$150 million more than the average man and woman!

Educational achievement—you are studying in an amazing age of enlightenment. More facts and their significance are coming to light every day.

Leisure time, with the forty-hour week, and labor planning a thirty-five-hour week, you can look forward to more and more time, which you can use as you choose. You have twice the time your fathers had for actively serving Christ. To properly channel that time to useful service will be a real challenge for your ingenuity. You will never lack for things to demand your time. On a church billboard I recently read, "The human soul is dyed the color of the activities that fill our leisure time." The only thing lacking is willpower. A greater awareness of God's grace can give us that unconquerable will which we need.

As the world challenge can be met, what is needed to meet it? It becomes a challenge to greater vision, faith and action, or to see, believe, and do as never before, and the task of getting it done lies with you, who are young in years and vibrant in faith. Let's consider each of these factors.

A greater vision must be forthcoming. You are the people capable of it. That vision must be such as sees at least three things.

First, we need vision that sees the world. It is God's

intention that vision begin at home and then ever widen out. Jesus spoke of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and unto the "end of the earth." The vision needed considers personal Christian living, local evangelism, world evangelism, edification, benevolence, the whole works.

Tragically, some never see "unto the ends of the world." Neither do they see outward even to "Samaria" and "Judea." They scarcely see even "Jerusalem." This spiritual myopia is not necessarily confined to those of hoary heads. Jesus said, "Lift up your eyes" (John 4:23), but many never see the world, because they never lift their eyes above the petty battles at home, or above the cares of life, the pleasures of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches. To too many, the whole sum of Christianity is a question of kitchens, communion order, and janitoring—keeping house in an orthodox manner.

The vision we are talking about sees that the world truly is a field still "white unto harvest." God has over the ages worked through so very many agencies to whiten this old world for your generation. It has been whitened through the influence of colonial powers. The French and the British in their imperialistic designs have spread law and order, education, and the English language from pole to pole. Our world has been whitened through the efforts of the denominations. Because of their longstanding efforts at preaching what they believed to be true, the world's people are accustomed to the presence of missionaries, Bible, religious meetings, and church buildings. The denominations have taught such basic concepts as God, Christ, sin, salvation, and the inspiration of the Bible. They developed written languages where such did not previously exist. They translated the Scriptures into the tongues of those we now seek to convert. They likewise opened the door for us in the very bankruptcy of their doctrine, for they left good, God-seeking people dissatisfied and hungering for something with greater spiritual substance...the truth.

Our world has been whitened through God's providence. Today the world's masses know more than ever before, and knowing more, they desire still more. Their aroused curiosity, their restlessness, their desire to chart their own course, all spells a greater receptiveness than was known only twenty years ago. And we must not forget the efforts of the dedicated Christians who went before us in preaching Christ to the lost. They, too, helped to whiten the field. They showed us the way. They laid the foundation we now build upon. We need a vision that sees all of this and more about our world.

Then, we need vision that sees Jesus Christ. What is your vision of Christ? What do you see in your mind's eye of faith? Is he the living, reigning King of Kings, who possesses all authority, and who supplies the power we need to get the job done? This is what the world challenge demands.

Our Christ is not a Christ hanging on a crucifix. He is not that disgustingly pale, pasty-faced, effeminate person of medieval art—watery and womanly. Neither is He a potential millennial king yet to come. Neither is He merely a wonderful counselor and master teacher. And what of that "little fellow" we let occasionally help us. Is this your vision of Jesus? God forbid. He can be none of these, for He is none of these.

It was a vision of the glorified Lord that provided the inspiration for the wonderful year and a half Paul spent in Corinth. It was such a vision that enabled him to undertake his journey to Rome (Acts 23:11) and view what had happened to him as serving "to advance the gospel" (Philippians 1:12). It was a dynamic vision of Christ glorified that was offered the suffering church as power to be victorious (Revelation 1:12). Friends, it is not possible to look forward before we look upward.

We must see Jesus' power and promises. Paul prayed

that "having the eyes of your hearts enlightened . . . you may know . . . what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe" (Ephesians 1:18-19). That power in us, he says, is the very same power that brought about the resurrection of Jesus from the bonds of death. We must see our seven-fold togetherness with Him. The Bible teaches that we were crucified together, quickened, raised and seated together with Him in heavenly places, that we are sufferers together, heirs together, and destined to be glorified together with Christ. Through these scriptural statements God reveals His plan whereby we accomplish His eternal purpose. It is in union with Him, drawing on His might. Seeing this, we will shortly find ourselves able to speak of "all God had done with us" (Acts 14:27).

In the third place, we need vision that sees daring ways of winning the world for Christ. It is so very easy to become tradition bound in our thinking and action, when there is no tradition worth being bound by. The churches of Christ are as susceptible to this as any religious movement in history. I am not advocating sensationalism, or difference merely for difference sake; but we do need some solid consideration of alternatives to the "mission station" concepts of the nineteenth century, which we have frequently borrowed. This applies both in local, regional, and world evangelism.

In Vietnam we are engaged in fighting a guerrilla war. The guerrilla lives by several laws of conduct we would do well to assimilate into our Christianity. For one thing, he changes his tactics as the situation demands. His is an attack characterized by flexibility and adaptability, but Jesus, our leader, did that long ago. Secondly, his weapons are fitting, if not conventional, but such was true of the Lord. How we need the same kind of approach in our struggle to win the hearts of men and women. Francis Bacon once said, "A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds." Do you have vision to see new, un-

orthodox opportunities for spreading the age-old unchangeable gospel?

Over the years brethren, without a fight, have written off too many areas of the world as "closed." These may be the communist countries, or areas of political instability, or the ghettos of our own metropolises, but when God shuts a door, He always opens a window. No area is truly closed so long as Christians have imagination. There are more ways of entering lost nations than just applying as "missionaries." Christians can go and stay as tourists, students, businessmen. There are vital communities from which "circuit riders" can be sent into areas where long stays are forbidden. The Mormon concept of young people sent out for a specific period and supported by their own parents has great merit. The various attempts at a spiritual peace corps are worthy.

At the same time, we must more and more employ mass media for the masses. Big thinking is still novel with many brethren; it suggests unscripturalness. But certainly there is nothing inherently wrong with thinking and planning on a scale that sees beyond the four walls of our own auditorium. In too many cities we are ineffective because we are spread too thin. The Herald of Truth, World Radio, the Schools of Preaching, Campaigns, Exoduses . . . more and more dynamic efforts of this kind are needed. Right now the Baptists have figured it would take them forty-thousand years to reach all the people in Japan with their present effort, if they could stop the clock, eliminating any further population growth, and preventing any deaths among the now living! Our task is more gigantic, for we are far behind the Baptists in workers sent, money spent, and vision to try every possible way of reaching people.

Yet, as we think big, we must never allow our vision to become so broad in viewing the masses that it cannot

focus so finely as to see each individual as an individual. People are won to Christ one by one; each soul is more precious than all the world for each bears the stamp of its Maker. From time to time individuals come along who alter the entire destiny of the world. Napoleon was such a person... Alexander the Great... Charlemagne. You may be a similar person. Peter was such... Paul, too. But remember that Peter owed his greatness, usefulness, and opportunity to a brother about whom we know little... Andrew. Yet, Andrew left his mark on history's course... he found Peter and brought him to Christ. This is person-to-person Christianity. While you may never be a Napoleon or Peter, you could easily be an Andrew. Every man has his worth and place!

Only mushrooms grow overnight. Instant success is never genuine success. The paper companies in our land are constantly reforesting, planting seedlings that offer no hope of productivity for half a century. They know that they must take the long range view of their business, for there is no other view. So with the gospel of Christ. We may be the one who plants a harvest that will be reaped most abundantly by our grandchildren. We must stop misreading our Bibles. Jesus did not say, "Go---reap," as we often think, or as is often demanded of workers. He said, "Go---preach." The growth is up to God. But with God, growth is always inevitable. The native power in a seed can cause a blade of grass to rear its head through a layer of asphalt. Or an oak tree can crack a concrete foundation or sidewalk as it expands. Such is the power of growth, which God created in nature. How much more so it is true of His word, the seed of the Kingdom. Look ahead. Look upward. See what God can do. Vision: "For the sons of this world are wiser in their own generation than the sons of light" (Luke 16:8).

Along with challenging us to greater vision, a challenge to greater faith is offered by the world. Some Christians see the task and proceed to melt before its size, complexity,

and cost. But faith is the answer...faith in God. For, "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Romans 8:31). And "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). The odds now are no greater than when Jehovah made his promise to Abraham, or when Gideon looked down on the Midianite camp, or when Jonathan scaled the heights of Bozez, or when the twelve received their commission to "go." As the writer of Hebrews tells us:

"And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in way, put foreign armies to flight." (Hebrews 11:32-34)

And they were men "of like nature with ourselves." Faith is truly the victory that overcomes the world.

Vision and faith are closely related. Vision calls for faith, and faith calls forth vision. Vision can be no greater than faith, and faith can do no more than vision sees. Lack of vision is a symptom of a deeper ailment—unbelief (Revelation 20:8). Some never see precisely because they do not believe. When we plan only what we are dead sure we can do with our own present resources, we are not planning by faith to meet the challenge. Trust in God leaves room for God to operate along side of us. In Philippians 4:19, Paul says, "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Paul's God is our God too. A lack of trust in God and His promises short-circuits the whole Christian cycle.

Have you ever heard of the Spaniard who always put on his glasses to eat cherries? By wearing the glasses he

made them look larger and more appetizing. Our glasses are the glasses of our faith.

Finally, the world challenge is a challenge to greater action. Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:18-19, and even Romans 10:14-17, are fundamentally verses of action. The same thing can be said of all Christianity. While there is the need for vision and the demand for faith, both are little more than mystical dreaming until they are put into practice. It is good to debate methods, theorize about approaches, and discuss proper preparation, but sooner or later, we must act, and act decisively. As H. A. Dixon has pointed out, "The real reasons we have not evangelized this world are, (1) We have never convinced ourselves that the world is lost without the gospel, and (2) We have never convinced ourselves that we are lost if we don't take it to the world." Lloyd Jones said, "The men who try to do something and fail are infinitely better than those who try to do nothing and succeed." With Christ, vision, faith, sound planning...there is no failure. Until action comes, vision is mere pipe-dreaming, and faith, folly. Young people, you are the key to meeting this challenge. You have the faith, the vision, the determination. You have not yet been sold the bill of goods that says it "can't be done." You are the dynamic catalysis that activates, rallies, motivates God's people.

It is tragic to see congregations where members have no vision...where the young and inspired can see more and want to do more than their elders. Do not let anyone pull you back or rein you in, in doing a righteous work. It has been correctly said that "not failure, but low aim, is crime." Indeed by aiming low, we miss the mark, and that is sin. It has also been said, "Success lies not in achieving what you aim at, but in aiming at what you ought to achieve and pressing forward, sure of achievement, here...or if not here, hereafter."

Meeting the world challenge calls for efforts on the part

of each of you as daring and as great as was David's in meeting Goliath. You must become pioneers for Christ. Paul tells us that it was his purpose to preach Christ where he was unknown, lest he build on another man's foundation (Romans 15:22-23). This same spirit of breaking new ground must abide in your heart, if you would do your part. Don't settle in the old ruts of your friends and forefathers. Go where you are needed. Every obstacle that would deter you from your goal must fall. As Jesus tells us, "If your hand offends you, cut it off and cast it from you..."

How interested are you in rising above the Christians round about you? How much more than others are you willing to do? How deep and genuine is your desire for Christ...for others to know Christ? Where people "hunger and thirst" after righteousness, they are filled. Our need is to truly "hunger" and "thirst." All the words we use are colored for us by the circumstances of our living. That is true of these two terms. We have an idea about hungering and thirsting, but not in the way it was understood by Jesus' hearers. We have never really been hungry. The longest period of time we have gone without water amounts only to minutes. We may occasionally miss a meal through oversleeping. But we have never been really hungry. In the Middle East of Jesus' day, famines occurred. They do today. Men had to live on less than the scraps of our simplest meals. In that arid land, water was more precious than gold. Traveling by foot through the parched land, facing a burning, sand-laden wind, left people overwhelmed for want of but a taste of liquid.

The opposite situation exists in the Lord's church spiritually...most of us have never really hungered for God. We may have a desire for righteousness; we may hope and pray that the world challenge be met. But we are far from hungering and thirsting for Him. The human need for food and drink is the strongest instinct known

to man. Denied food and water, he will go to any length to get it, even to killing his fellowman. Thus, we're talking about a strong emotion, an overpowering urge, a life and death matter. Is that what Christ's cause is with you? Only when it becomes such... only when you feel so strongly about it... only when it is the all-consuming urge of your life... only then, will you be filled and satisfied. Only then will Christianity be the meaningful experience God meant it to be for you. Only then will the world challenge be met. God help us.

Earlier mention was made of our lack of willpower. When we fully see the extent to which God has blessed us... when we understand that it is His doing... not our own or others, or chance... then we will have the motivation needed. For pure Christianity motivates men, not through commands and ordinances, but through grace and gratitude.

How wondrously God has favored you and me. In I Corinthians 15:10, Paul wrote, "But by the grace of God I am what I am." This statement comes at the close of the list of resurrection appearances he enumerates in the first verses of this chapter. Paul is referring to the fact that he is a Christian and an apostle. He is no longer Saul of Tarsus. God did not owe Paul his vision of Christ on the Damascus road. There was not a debt that had to be paid off by appointing Paul to the apostleship. It was all a matter of grace; unearned, undeserved favor.

What wondrous undeserved blessings the Father has showered on us in so many ways. Have you ever stopped to think that none of us asked to be born? We did not choose our parents. We did not pick our nationality. It was not our decision that brought us into the twentieth century. The circumstances of our lives... economically, educationally, physically, mentally, and even spiritually... were not of our own design. By the grace of God we are what we are.

You could have just as easily been born in the mountains of Tibet, or in a mud hut on the upper reaches of the Nile, or in Soviet Turkestan. You could have been born blind, mentally retarded, with congenital heart disease or some other affliction, as well as the healthy, normal person you are. You could have been born five-hundred years ago in Central Europe as easily as in this century. And what would any of these changes have meant for your lot physically, and above all, spiritually? You could have been born into a family that had been so fanatically Catholic for so many generations that you would have never owned a Bible, let alone read one. By the grace of God, you are what you are.

And how is it that you did come to know and obey your Lord's will? Was it through the guidance of godly parents? Or a devoted grandmother? Or did you by chance meet a person who took time to talk with you of your soul, or give you a tract, or encourage you in enrolling in a correspondence course? By the grace of God, you are what you are.

You are God's favored people. And the fact that He has lavished His grace on you so abundantly places upon you responsibility that is equally great. Paul tells us in the last half of verse 10 of Corinthians 15, "And his grace towards me was not in vain." Paul did not take all that he enjoyed for granted. He did not overlook or shirk his privilege of serving. Thus, he wrote to the Romans, "I am under obligation, both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish; so I am eager to preach the gospel to you who also are in Rome" (Romans 1:14-15).

We, too, are under obligation to all men. We, too, must give our all to carrying the good news to our world. We cannot allow it to be said that God's grace to us has been in vain. "We entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain" (II Corinthians 6:1). For failure to see our task

and to meet our challenge spells disaster...for us personally, for our nation, for generations yet to come. Jesus taught the dire consequences of the failure to meet privilege with responsiveness as He said, "Woe to you, Chorazin! woe to you, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you" (Matthew 11:21-22). And so it shall be for us, if we fail.

## THREE DIMENSIONS OF GREATNESS

Akio Limb

AKIO LIMB was born in Nishinomiya, Japan, on May 5th, 1931.

While attending Kansai Gakuin University, Nishinomiya City, he won the General MacArthur Trophy, awarded to the top orator in the National Inter-Collegiate Oratorical Contest. He received a B.A. degree in Economics from the same university.

In 1951, while still a college student at Kansai Gakuin University, he was appointed President of Risseikan Gakuin Institute, Nishinomiya City.

In 1955, he won a scholarship to study in the United States. He holds an M.A. degree in Religion from Harding College, Memphis, Tenn., an M.A. degree in Psychology from George Peabody College, Nashville, Tenn. and a B.D. degree in Theology from Vanderbilt University. While studying at Vanderbilt University he met and married the former Miss Shirlene Willcutt of Hueytown, Alabama.

They have three children, Cynthia, 6, Rebecca, 5, and Rachael, 4.



He has served the following churches:

Smith Springs Church of Christ, Nashville, Tenn.

Bellshire Church of Christ, Nashville, Tenn.

Grant Street Church of Christ, Decatur, Ala.

While serving in Decatur, he was a regular Television Lecturer on Station WMSL. In 1960, he was also mission evangelist for the Druid Hills Church of Christ at Atlanta, Georgia.

In 1964, Akio Limb re-

turned to Japan, together with his wife and three children, to take up missionary work in the western part of Japan. He has also resumed his Presidency of Risseikan Gakuin Institute.

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TEXT: Matt. 20:20-28

## INTRODUCTION

It is reported that when Colonel John Glenn made the first orbital space flight for America on February 20, 1962, many mothers who gave birth to baby sons in American hospitals named their sons "John Glenn"—John Glenn Smith, John Glenn Johnson, John Glenn Brown, and so on. We all admire great men. Ours indeed is the age when greatness is not only admired and coveted, but very much demanded.

Mothers of today are no different from the mothers of two thousand years ago in desiring that their children be great, for we see in the Bible the mother of James and John coming to Jesus and asking him to give her sons the position of greatness in his cabinet. From the question that Jesus threw at them, it is evident that the idea of greatness which they cherished was quite different from what Jesus had in mind. Evidently James and John thought they had to be VIPs to be great, but Jesus set before them a different standard of greatness. What then is greatness as Jesus conceives it?

### I. A GREAT MAN IS A HUMBLE PERSON.

A great man is he who is humble. "Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:4). The humility of a little child—that is greatness, says Jesus. What do we know about a little child? The first thing we notice is that it is so completely void of pride. Of all the sins listed in the Bible,

God hates man's pride the most, because it is a spiritual cancer which eats up the very possibility of love and growth. A proud person is he who does not recognize his need of God and automatically shuts God out, whereas a humble person is one who knows that he lacks something that only God can fulfill, and has openness to God. One of the best examples comparing a proud man and a humble man is found in the drama demonstrated in the eighteenth chapter of Luke. Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus, "God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get." What a way to congratulate himself before God! He throws the spotlight upon himself and tells God what a good boy he is while downcasting his neighbor. He is claiming his greatness not on the basis of his own inner quality, but on the basis of the badness of the other man. He seems to believe the worse his neighbor is, the better he becomes. Take a look at those who are always criticizing their neighbors. Usually, it is because it is the only way they can claim their own goodness. Returning to the temple scene, the tax collector kept his distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven, but beat upon his breast crying, "Oh, God, be merciful to me a sinner!" Jesus tells that this man who was humble went home justified, and added, "For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:14). Frank Crane, a popular press columnist of a generation ago, defined true humility thus: "It is the wish to be great and the dread of being called great. It is the wish to help and the dread of thanks. It is the love of service and the distaste for rule. It is trying to be good and blushing when caught at it." A great man is he who is humble enough to know that he does not know everything and hence is forever making an effort to learn. It was Albert Einstein, one of the greatest figures in physics for his contribution to the theory of

relativity, who said: "Every day I stand at the edge of vast ignorance!" If anyone aspires to be great, let him first be humble.

## II. A GREAT MAN IS HE WHO IS DEVOTED TO A CAUSE GREATER THAN HIMSELF.

At this point, take a look at Jesus himself. What more capable man would you find in all history? A man with ability to change water into wine; a man who can walk on water; a man who can heal the lame and raise the dead; a man for whom the word "impossible" does not exist, and yet look at this man in the garden of Gethsemane! In anguish he prays unto God, the Father, under the weight of the burden of facing the cross, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). With all his ability, He realized that there was Someone who was greater than Himself to whom he owed allegiance and whose will He must obey. Not the life for Himself, but for a cause greater than Himself. That is greatness!

A large American oil company wanted to set up business in China, but lacked representatives who could speak both English and Chinese, and who were well-versed in things Chinese. As a last resort, they came to a missionary who had been in China for over thirty years, and offered him a salary twenty times bigger than what he was receiving as a missionary. When the missionary refused the offer, they came back to him doubling the salary, and again the missionary refused. They came back a third time offering three times the initial offer, and when he still refused, the company representative expressed how incredible it was that he would turn down such an offer, but the missionary replied: "It is not your salary that is too small for me, but it is your job, for I am serving the greatest Company on earth."

In stark contrast with this missionary's attitude, is the story of a rich young ruler. What more could a man ask? He had *wealth*; usually you have to be fairly well up in years to be rich, but he was *young*! He had a fine *social status*, as he was a ruler of the Synagogue. In addition to that, he also seems to have had a *respectable religion* because he says before Jesus that "All these commandments I kept from my youth up." And yet Jesus still told him, "One thing thou lackest"—what was it? "Go and sell all thou hast, and give it to the poor and come follow me." Obedience to a cause greater than Himself is what he lacked. He seemed to have a great life, but it is a fake greatness when one lives only for himself and unto himself. Jesus wanted to pull him out of his own prison which he had built around himself and set him free, but he wouldn't obey, and the Bible says he "went away sorrowful" (Mark 10:22). So many people today have plenty of things to *live with*, like this rich young ruler, but because they fail to commit themselves to a great cause to *live and die for*, they continue to dwell in their misery.

There is no getting away from it. No matter how great one may seem on the surface, if one does not abide in God's eternal moral laws, he will fail. There are three laws of navigation. One is *laissez faire*—the navigator will give a free rein to his rudder and let his boat drift whither the winds and tides would carry him. He is a man without any principles: no rules or regulations. Such a man claims that he enjoys freedom, and nobody is going to tell him how to navigate. Such a man usually tries to get away from all the conventional codes of living and style. As a drifter in this world, such a man has little chance of making a goal in life.

The second way of navigation is a dogmatic one. The navigator would set his own rules of navigation and set the rudder in a certain position. If he were told by others

how dangerous his method of navigation is, he would flatly refuse the warning, saying that he does not like to be told how to live his life or to have his rights violated. He would dogmatically go his own way. When the storms and testing winds of life come, such a navigator often ends up in a shipwreck.

The third navigator is one who is obedient to the laws of navigation. He realizes that there is such a thing as the law of cause and effect, and wisely, he adjusts his rudder according to the commands of the compass. He adjusts his behavior according to the dictates of the compass because he realizes that for him the compass is the authority for navigation for the very fact that the compass always points to the North Star which is changeless. A Christian is he who adjusts his mode of living according to the dictates of the Bible, aware that the Bible is always pointing to the unchanging reality of God himself. Apostle Paul says: "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption: but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:7, 8). There is a natural law, and there is also a spiritual law. We dare not be disobedient to the natural laws, for we know the consequences. How unwise and how unscientific it would be to recognize only the natural laws and disregard the spiritual. There can be no greatness without obedience to God's law of living.

### III. A GREAT MAN IS HE WHO REJOICES IN SERVING.

A great man is he who serves. "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave" (Matt. 20:26-27). Greatness is often misconceived in terms of occupying high positions and making other people feel

the weight of one's authority in the secular world, but with Jesus, it was the very opposite. Jesus is very eager that we really understand this. It is not the one who is waited upon that is the greatest, but the one who serves. Greatness is not something that is claimed, but it is something that is rendered. A leader is not somebody who seeks a high position, but is somebody who rejoices in giving the services he renders, and who gladly assumes the responsibility that has become his.

The shepherd is a leader not because he mounts on a horse with armour and commands his cavalry, but rather because he tends to his flock. His leadership or masterhood is rooted in his servanthip. God is our Lord, but his Lordship is always rooted in his servanthip. Service then is the basis for greatness. Read the New Testament and you will find that next to the word "love," the word that is most emphasized is "service." Love is the motive, and the service is the deed. Love is the greatest thing in the world and the service is the greatest expression of that love. Long ago, Napoleon, the man of force, said in his younger years, that God was on the side of the strongest battalions. But in his later years on the island of St. Helena, he reversed that and said, "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself have founded empires. Upon force we founded them, and they have crumbled into dust. Jesus alone has founded His empire upon love, and at this hour, millions of men would die for Him whom they have never seen."

Let us remember that howsoever humbly endowed or circumstanced we might be, when we master the life of service Jesus challenges us to walk, then the greatness that shall outlast empires and kings is within our reach.

An alpine guide was buried in an avalanche. On his tombstone were engraved the words: "He Died Climbing." If any one of us aspires to be remembered as a great man, let the words on his epitaph be: "He Died Serving."

# PERSPECTIVE ON COMMITMENT

Edward Hugh Rockey

## Education:

B.A., 1952, New York University, English major.  
Advanced study, 1952-54, Biblical Seminary in N.Y.  
M.A., 1962, City University of N.Y., Public Address.  
Ph. D., 1967, New York University, Communications.

## Ministry:

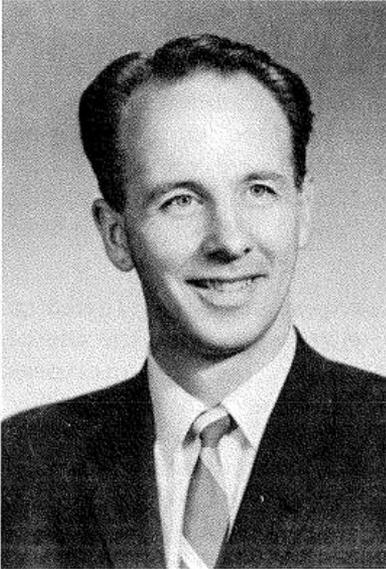
White Plains, N.Y., Red Bank, N.J., Flushing, N.Y.  
Seven years at Bethpage on Long Island.

## Teaching:

Asst. Professor, Brooklyn College, C.U.N.Y., since 1963.  
Formerly instructor at N.Y.U. and L.I.U.

## Service:

Dr. Rockey has spoken for churches, community organizations, conferences, and collegelectureships in many places. He has edited columns and published articles in several religious periodicals. He served as a correspondent at the Ecumenical Institute in 1965 and at the World Congress on Evangelism in 1966.



## Professional groups:

He is a member of both the Speech Association of America and the Speech Association of the Eastern States. At annual conventions of the latter he presented papers on the ethics of rhetoric (1962) and on modes of delivery in classical rhetoric (1963).

## Family:

He married Ruth Lois White-  
man in 1948. They have three  
sons.

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In our century Adolf Hitler demonstrated commitment. So did Albert Schweitzer. In the first century the apostle Paul manifested commitment. So did the band of men who reported, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul."<sup>1</sup> Commitment, like faith and hope, is a neutral concept. Its value depends upon the virtue of the object. Devotion to what? A pledge for what goal?

## I. THE SOCIETY OF THE MISCOMMITTED

Consider the miscommitted. Here we must be selective. There are the pathological miscommitted—dedicated racists, for instance. There are the unrespectable miscommitted—loyal members of gangland brotherhoods, for example. But in our "respectable" surroundings, how can we identify with these? Let us center on the respectable miscommitted.

Perhaps the focal point in our exploration of respectable miscommitment should be success, American style. Millions of us are willing to pay any legal price in order to hear those hallowed words said of us, "He has arrived." The cost of arriving is high: some crack up on the way; some arrive only to find emptiness, disenchantment, and phoniness. But arrive we must.

Let us draw a picture of a young American striving to arrive. We will call him Bill. This picture is not of any particular person. Bill is a composite representation, reflecting several sociological studies. But if we scrutinize Bill's portrait closely, we might recognize some familiar features, after all.

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 23:14

Bill is a sales manager for a large pharmaceutical company. Not bad for a twenty-nine year old. He belongs to three clubs. Actually, he has joined them not primarily from a sense of fellowship or benevolence. He has joined them in order to climb socially and to develop as a leader. Later on, if he reaches the top, he will join more exclusive clubs. A basic motive then will be to use these more snobbish and powerful groups to manipulate the community.<sup>2</sup>

In order to arrive, Bill must sell more than the company product. A successful executive in Bill's company must sell himself. He must accept the dictum that persons are vendible. He must barter a cheerful disposition for success, even if he feels depressed. He must offer ambition and aggressiveness, even if he feels defeated. He must present a ready smile, even if he despises the person with whom he is dealing. In his company, goods and services are not the only products. *He* is a commodity. He exchanges his appropriate disposition, cooperativeness, and way of life for security and recognition.<sup>3</sup>

Even in his college days Bill devoted himself to what was commercially exchangeable. The development of critical thinking, the pursuit of truth and beauty, appreciation for a classical heritage—all this took a back seat. His strongest motivation was to be ready for the personnel men at graduation time and to get the highest bid when personalities as well as abilities were auctioned. In summary, Bill accepted the contemporary stress on "techniques of self-display and the generalized knack of handling people, rather than on moral integrity, substantive accomplish-

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2 Max Lerner, *America as a Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), Vol. II, p. 636.

3 Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960), pp. 67-82, and C. Wright Mills, *White Collar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 182-188.

ments, and solidity of person.”<sup>4</sup>

Bill’s sense of direction in life has not come from an urgent, serious contemplation of such questions as “Who am I” and “What is my destiny?” The trend of his life is determined by the mores of the people who surround him and by the images of the mass media.<sup>5</sup>

One of the products which Bill promotes was originally purchased by his firm in bulk form from France. Without spending any money on research, his firm packaged it in tablet form and proceeded to make a seven thousand per cent profit.<sup>6</sup> Bill must not think of the marginal-income patients who must buy the drug. His job is to encourage the salesmen to push the product.

Bill and his wife have two sons. One of them is normal—competitive, popular, resourceful. One day he will surpass his parents financially, educationally, and socially, even as his parents surpassed his grandparents. One day he will possess the good life—a secure position, a plush suburban home, advancement, expensive gadgets. But the other son is a source of worry. He is contemplative. He is non-competitive. He will never “knock-’em dead.” He needs therapy.<sup>7</sup>

Bill’s sons are reminded in Sunday School, sometimes at the dinner table, and occasionally at school, that there are supreme virtues, such as freedom and truthfulness. Actually, the real animating forces and motivational drives

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4 Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

5 David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 21.

6 J. Robert Moskin, *Morality in America* (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 125.

7 Lerner, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 571-572.

they are exposed to by observation and osmosis are success, prestige, money, power, and security.<sup>8</sup>

Bill and his family live in a homogenized upper-middle class neighborhood. Jews and Negroes are not welcome. There is no written law to that effect, but everyone in the neighborhood follows the unwritten code, Bill included. Since Bill is striving to arrive, he knows that he will not live in that neighborhood for long. When his income goes up, he will move to a more exclusive section, near the golf course. He is even considering a change in his church membership. Most of the "best" people in town attend a certain prestigious church. The group he was brought up in is definitely not upper crust.<sup>9</sup>

Bill drives a company-furnished Buick, but he must park it in the company's general parking lot, alongside the Chevrolets driven by the salesmen. As he enters the door to the building he notices the company-supplied Lincolns and Cadillacs parked in labeled spaces near the door. He knows that the men who drive these cars carry executive washroom keys, eat in a higher-echelon dining room much nicer than the one he eats in, and travel to company-paid-for health resorts accompanied by their wives.<sup>10</sup>

He knows that part of the success game involves submitting to personality tests which will pry into his childhood, his marriage, his esthetic taste, his social life, and other matters. He will submit; it is part of the price one pays in arriving. He knows that he will do well on the

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8 *Ibid.*, pp. 690-692.

9 Moskin, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-229, and Vance Packard, *The Status Seekers* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1959), pp. 61-92 and 194-206.

10 Packard, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-127.

tests if he appears extroverted, happy with the status quo, and uninterested in the arts.<sup>11</sup>

Bill wants to steer a company-supplied Cadillac into a parking space that bears his name, a spot near the main entrance. He wants to jingle an executive washroom key alongside a country club locker key and other status keys. He wants to dine on linen with the company elite. He is committed to achieving these goals. He will pursue them diligently. They have become ends in themselves. He has no sense of stewardship to higher values.

In order to enjoy the "good life," Bill needs more money. He is a reflection of the poll which revealed that most Americans think they would be happy if they had a twenty-five percent increase in income. The man who makes \$4,000 thinks he would be happy earning \$5,000. The man who receives \$8,000 believes that the magic figure is \$10,000. Bill expects to find happiness in an increase to \$20,000 from his present salary of \$16,000. By then, of course, he will be eyeing the \$25,000 slot. Then there are several steps up to the hundred thousand dollar a year presidency. But even the president of the firm envies the heirs of the company's founder; they are millionaires.

## II. THE RANKS OF THE UNCOMMITTED

Bill has devoted his energy, his education, his personality, his privacy, his family life, his very essence—his soul—in order to arrive. Some people in our society find this way of life so full of hectic pressures, vacuous activities, and tawdry values that they disengage themselves from the strife. They say, in effect, "The rat race isn't

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<sup>11</sup> William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956), pp. 189-222.

worth running; even if you win, what are you but a rat?"

In recoiling from the emptiness of materialism and the vanity of status seeking, these disenchanting ones, usually young people, alienate themselves from the institution of modern life. Political, educational, commercial, and even religious structures are past redemption, they believe, and dropping out is "the thing."

A modish, vivid example of disengagement carried to the ultimate is seen in the life of many hippies. Some devotees of hippiedom seem to be dedicated to a cause; they want to convert the world—to redeem straight society. But they are trying to convert people to nothing, to vagueness, to dropping out. They have no program of renewal, no specific goal. Some psychologists believe that many hippies are incapable of committing their lives to either one goal or even one person.

Many hippies do not work, or buy food, or pay rent, or purchase clothing. They do not know the date of the month or the hour of the day. They religiously avoid traditional business or leisure clothing. They care nothing for convention for convention's sake.

The hippie movement cannot be dismissed lightly, and we must ask ourselves honestly what it has to say to straight society. Before we attempt to do that, we might note the inconsistency of those who will not work, but accept food from those who toil eight hours per day. Many hippies panhandle openly on the streets.<sup>12</sup> The incidence of drug usage among hippies is appalling.<sup>13</sup> Many acid-head hippies risk an L.S.D. trip at a time completely unknown to them for up to two years after taking the drug.

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<sup>12</sup> *New York Times*, Aug. 27, 1967.

<sup>13</sup> *Time*, July 7, 1967, p. 21.

Belying the notion that their "Make love not war" message is purely spiritual, hippies have brought about a startling increase in venereal disease.<sup>14</sup> Fatherless children wander through hippiedom; what love or commitment is there in siring and abandoning a child?

We must see also that the hippies are not offering us a real discussion of meaningful alternatives. True, they will not walk on Ulcer Blvd., or Mammon Rd., or Status St., but so many hippies are either on the road to nowhere or the path to a psychiatric ward.

But there is a message for modern man in the hippie movement. First of all there is a lesson in the fact that most hippies have come from "respectable" middle class homes. Most hippies are "carefully nurtured and educated beyond the average."<sup>15</sup> The very people who are most shocked by them have produced them. Some hippies were reared in the church. A gospel preacher who serves in a metropolitan area reports that he often receives anxious messages from parents who are members of the church and whose children have moved into the hippie community in his area. Why have these young people placed membership in the Temples of Eros or the Shrines of Psychedelia rather than in the church of Christ? What in our way of life has disaffected them? Why do they not wish to imitate our faith?

Another lesson hippies teach us involves getting a perspective on modern life. Consider the following parody of a traditional pious saying. With his flower girl, a hippie is sitting on an apartment house stoop at 8:00 A. M. on

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14 *Ibid.*, and William Hedgepeth, "Inside the Hippie Revolution," *Look*, Aug. 22, 1967, p. 64.

15 June Bingham, "The Intelligent Square's Guide to Hippieland," *New York Times Magazine*, Sept. 24, 1967, p. 25.

a weekday morning. They have spent the night sleeping in a park, and soon they will pick up a free breakfast. As they strum a folk tune, they watch an eager young man dash down the apartment house steps and jump into a taxicab. His ivy league suit is neatly pressed and his attache case is full of office homework. As the young executive fades from view, the hippie shakes his head slowly, turns to his flower girl and says, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." The hippie finds something tragic, pitiable, unenviable in those who march off to conventional life without ever asking "Why?"—without ever challenging traditional behaviour. "Test all things" is a Bible principle. We apply it to theological doctrines. Dare we apply it, as hippies do, to the American way of life?

Despite their inconsistencies, hippies remind us that there are qualities and ultimate values that man is not responding to. Some hippies are on a quest to find what life means. In this quest they often resort to mysticism and contemplation in an almost monastic sense.<sup>16</sup> They are at least searching for absolute reality and spiritual meaning.

Of course there are others in the ranks of the uncommitted, people in more conventional circumstances than the hippies. A colleague tells me that every year at a teacher-training college he asks hundreds of prospective teachers if they have "a conviction or a relationship which they would go to prison for rather than forsake." For over a decade he has noticed the unnerving response: one out of ten has such a conviction.

Then there are the myriads of alienated citizens who "pass by on the other side." In a recent experiment in

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<sup>16</sup> James Hitchcock, "The Christian and the Hippie," *Christian Century*, LXXXIV (Aug. 16, 1967), pp. 1040-1042.

England the police staged an abduction in order to test public apathy, or to test public involvement, depending on how you view it. In broad daylight some men dragged a thirteen year old girl to a car. Though she screamed for help and struggled with the men, not a single person came to her aid. Some did not even stop to watch. No one even took the license plate number of the car. Similar incidents have occurred in the United States, but with one startling difference: they were not staged; they were horribly real.

Non-commitment holds terrifying prospects in wasted young lives, in abdicating responsibility, in abandoning eternal values. But while we shrink in dismay and disgust from non-commitment, let us remember that the society we have helped to create "too often discourages human wholeness and integrity, too frequently divides men from the best parts of themselves, too rarely provides objects worthy of commitment."<sup>17</sup>

### III. THE COMPANY OF THE COMMITTED

As Cortes led his men into Mexico in 1519, they looked back upon a startling and unforgettable scene. The ships which had brought them to Mexico were being scuttled. This was Cortes' way of saying, "You are now totally committed to this mission; there is no turning back." Jesus envisioned a band of disciples who would realize that they could not serve both God and mammon and who would seek first the kingdom of God. To the vacillating he said, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).

One exemplary member of the fellowship of the com-

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17 Kenneth Keniston, *The Uncommitted: Alienated Youth in American Society* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1965), p. 424.

mitted described his own dedication in this way: "This one thing I do...I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:13, 14). A study of Paul's personal commitment to the Lord will conclude our perspective on commitment. He urged all who have identified themselves with the death and resurrection of Jesus to yield themselves to God (Rom. 6:13). In what sense did Paul offer his life to God?

*Paul offered his material possessions to the Lord.* As a learned Jew, Paul had no doubt been familiar with those passages in the Mosaic law<sup>18</sup> which decreed that the poor, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow were allowed to take gleanings from the harvest. In fact, any Jew had the right to enter another man's vineyard or grainfield and eat his fill. Possibly Paul had heard of John the Baptist's instructions to the multitudes: "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise" (Luke 3:11). Probably he had heard of Jesus' picture of the judgement and of the wrath against those who refuse to feed the hungry or clothe the naked (Matt. 25:31-46).

He must have known that the early Christians sold their possessions and supported a benevolent program. At one period this program was carried on on a daily basis. Barnabas, one of Paul's co-workers, had been one of those who sold property to support the relief work (Acts 4:32-37; 6:1). Peter, James, and John instructed Paul to remember the poor, and he related that he was "eager to do" that very thing (Gal. 2:10).

During Paul's ministry at Ephesus, he supported other people, and he demonstrated that "by so doing one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus,

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18 Lev. 19:9, 10; Deut. 23:24, 25; 24:19-22; and Ex. 22:25-27.

how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' '' (Acts 20:35). Paul believed that love was greater than faith or hope (I Cor. 13:13). He taught that "if any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (I Tim. 5:8).

Paul's life did not consist in the material objects he possessed. He gave them to God by giving them to others. He wrote, "if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (I Tim. 6:8). What he treasured could not be contained in vaults or closets or lockers.

*Paul dedicated his intellect to God.* Trueblood has observed that "a faith cannot be enduringly effective" without "the full commitment of mental powers."<sup>19</sup> Paul apparently made such a commitment.

At Athens he encountered, among others, Stoics and Epicureans. These were probably the most vital philosophies of the day, both intensely interested in man's destiny and the blessed life. Stoics believed in duty and virtue and held that the animating spirit of the universe, materialistically conceived, was God. The Epicureans sought happiness in enlightened pleasure and they conceived of the gods as removed from our sphere—banished to a realm of celestial bliss. To them the human soul was made up of tiny particles which dissipated at death, thus bringing an end to man's existence.

Paul adapted his message (Acts 17:22-31) to the particular interests of the Athenians. In this adaptation he followed a principle exemplified in Jesus' teaching (Matt. 16:15-21 and John 16:12). Paul offered rational

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<sup>19</sup> Elton Trueblood, *The Company of the Committed* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), p. 8.

arguments concerning God's eternal nature. He demonstrated that he had observed Athenian religious devotion first hand, and he discussed the issues beforehand publicly and daily. He did not quote from the Old Testament, as he had done in the synagogues; this would have been meaningless to the Athenians. In fact, he quoted from sources his audience recognized, from pagan poetry.

*Paul hazarded his life for the Lord.* In the very first city in which he preached after his conversion, people conspired to kill him (Acts 9:23). In Philippi he was beaten with many blows and thrown into prison, his feet locked in stocks (Acts 16:22-24). On his last recorded trip to Jerusalem, brethren pleaded with him not to go there, but he replied: "I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13). In writing to the Corinthian believers, he catalogued an astounding record of sufferings he bore—pain, injury, hunger, thirst, danger, anxiety (II Cor. 11:23-29).

*Paul consecrated his service to the Lord.* Necessity was laid upon him: "Woe is unto me if I do not preach the gospel" (I Cor. 9:16). He sometimes worked as a tentmaker, supporting himself with his trade. He knew that he had the right to accept support from the brethren, but he relinquished that right so that he might not burden anyone, and so that he might demonstrate exemplary behaviour (II Thess. 3:7-9).

He labored in season and out of season. He admonished people day and night with tears in his eyes. He travelled from city to city and nation to nation. He proclaimed Christ in some of the greatest metropolitan centers of the Mediterranean world. Often he preached and discussed every day for prolonged periods. And every day he felt "anxiety for all the churches" (II Cor. 11:29). Small wonder that the Ephesian elders wept, and kissed

Paul and embraced him when he left them for the last time (Acts 20:37).

*Paul crucified his will for the Lord's sake.* Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Jesus had said that those who wished to follow Him were to take up the cross and deny self. Paul counted as loss all his former prestige and status in order to gain Christ (Phil. 3:1-11). A motto of his life was "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). He fought a good fight. He kept the faith. He finished his course. When he wrote, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1), surely many early Christians saw more of Christ in him and less of Paul.

## CONCLUSION

Those who live in an age when millions are starving and who do nothing to relieve that misery can hardly be numbered among the committed disciples of Jesus Christ.

Those who isolate themselves from other religious groups, refusing to read and observe that they might more effectively serve, cannot be said to follow in the steps of such a committed apostle as Paul.

Those who drop out, who give up, who disengage themselves from life and responsibility, cannot claim to imitate Paul even as he imitated Jesus Christ.

Those who set their affections on the trivial, cheap status symbols of modern life and devote themselves to acquiring mere wealth for wealth's sake cannot be numbered among the disciples of Christ.

Those who accept uncritically the American success route without considering the moral dimensions of vocation and stewardship are not followers of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). It is foreign to the New Testament to say, in effect, "I have observed certain outward ceremonies; I give mental assent to correct doctrines; therefore, I am a committed Christian." If a man does not love God with all his heart, all his mind, all his soul, and all his strength, and his neighbor as himself, he has missed the very first principles of God's will. Correctness in practice and in teaching should be but one part of an utter loyalty to the Lord which captures every aspect of a man's life.

For a truly committed Christian, his vocation, his education, his marriage, his talents, his intellect, his very being are all dedicated to God. He does not "go to church" as a Christian and then go to business as a businessman. His commitment is total. Every aspect of his life has been dedicated to Jesus Christ and every aspect finds meaning and direction in that relationship.

He has but one goal in life—to press on toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ. All activities, relationships, and values develop and find their destiny and worth in that quest.

As Harold Thomas has written:

This is the meaning of Christian discipleship—daring to look unveiled, directly, upon the glory of Christ (II Corinthians 3:18), honestly willing to face up to the sharp, crisp features of him, humbly and painfully chipping away all of those qualities in ourselves that are unlike him until "from glory to glory" we attain his likeness. For us today this challenges a study of

Jesus few have made, and it calls for a total commitment.<sup>20</sup>

How many professed Christians among us have taken the very incarnation of the Lord and let it be a formative influence on our minds? (Phil. 2:1-8) How many have obeyed Him by loving even as He loved? (John 15:12)

Perhaps it is in the idealism, the fresh vision, the unintimidated courage, the sincere faith, and the fundamental honesty of young men and women in the church that we will see a great restoration of real discipleship. Perhaps young people will rise up and show what it really means to live the fundamentals of the Way. Perhaps they will speak every word and perform every act of their lives in the name of Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17). Perhaps they will give an example to those lost in professionalism, materialism, apathy, status seeking, and unbelief and lead us to true commitment.

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20 J. Harold Thomas, "The Power for Discipleship," *Mission I* (August, 1967), p. 46.

# WHAT REALLY MATTERS?

M. Norvel Young

Born: October 5, 1915, in Nashville, Tennessee

Graduate of:

David Lipscomb College, Nashville, Tennessee  
Abilene Christian College, Abilene, Texas, B.A., 1936  
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, M.A., 1937  
George Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee, Ph.D., 1943  
California College of Physicians and Surgeons, D.H.L., 1964  
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Further graduate study:

Columbia University  
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Teacher:

David Lipscomb College (high school)  
George Pepperdine College (Social Sciences), 1938-41



Minister:

College Church, David  
Lipscomb College,  
1941-43.

Broadway Church of Christ,  
Lubbock, Texas, 1944-57.

Master of Ceremonies  
"Family Bible Quiz" TV  
program, 1944-57.

Leader in church relief work  
in Germany after World  
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Now preaches by  
appointment and  
preaches in 4 or 5 series  
of meetings each year.

Elder—Vermont Avenue  
Church of Christ, Los  
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Writer:

Books:

- Author, *History of Christian Colleges*, 1949.
- The Church is Building*, 1956
- Great Preachers of Today*, 1963.
- Editor, *Preachers of Today*, Vol. I, II, and III,  
1952 and 1959, 1964
- Churches of Today*, 1961

Magazines.

- Co-founder: 20th Century Christian, 1938
- Editor and Publisher: 20th Century Christian, 1945-
- Founder and Editor: Power for Today, devotional guide, 1955-
- Staff Writer: Gospel Advocate magazine.
- Firm Foundation magazine.
- Teenage Christian magazine.

Newspaper:

- Weekly column Lubbock, Texas, Avalanche-Journal, 1944-57.

Lecturer:

- Frankfurt, Germany, 1949, 1956
- Far East, 1959
- Iron Curtain countries, 1961

Educational Organizations:

- Member of Advisory Board, Abilene Christian College
- Advisory Board, Lubbock Christian College
- Member of Board of Directors, Ibaraki Christian College  
Foundation, Ibaraki, Japan
- Member Phi Delta Kappa (Education)
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Civic Organizations:

- Member of Board of Governors, Los Angeles County Museum of  
Natural History and serves as Chairman, Acquisitions Committee
- Trustee, Los Angeles County Art Museum
- Rotary, Los Angeles No. 5
- Jonathan Club, Los Angeles
- California Council on Crime and Delinquency
- Board, American Institute of Family Relations

Business:

- President of Board  
Christian Publications, Inc. Nashville, Tennessee
- Board of Directors:  
Public Savings Life Insurance Co., Charleston, South Carolina
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Recipient:

George Washington Medal of Honor from Freedoms Foundation,  
Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 1961 and 1963.  
Alumnus of the Year, Abilene Christian College, 1958.

Family:

Married Helen Mattox Young, 1939  
Four children: Emily Mattox (February 1946)  
Matt Norvel III (October 1947)  
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World Study Trip, 1937  
Europe and Near East, 1949  
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Attended World Congress on Evangelism, Berlin, 1966  
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A university chemistry major who was imprisoned in Russia for two years said, "Since I have returned to this country it seems to me that most people in their amusements and everyday activity are desperately trying to forget something. Their lives seem meaningless. What they are living for is just not worth living for." What are you living for? What is really important to you? What really matters? All of us have only one lifetime to discover who we are, why we are here, and where we are going. Nothing

is more vital than an individual's own search for the ultimate in life. Wrong answers can be fatal.

Is man a creature of chance? Is there no meaning to life? Is the grave its end? Through the centuries learned men have wrestled with these questions. Famous philosophers and religious leaders have written innumerable volumes in which they offered their answers. Schools of philosophy and religion have resulted. Multitudes have followed, hoping for answers, only to find greater conflict and frustration.

As one example, Coue, the famous French philosopher and father of positive thinking, coined the phrase "every day in every way I am getting better and better." Millions around the world were caught up with the appeal of this liberating phrase, only to be saddened and disillusioned when the originator of the idea, Mr. Coue himself, committed suicide.

But two thousand years ago there came to this earth one who claimed to be the answer to every need in the human heart. He said, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the father but by me" (John 14:6). This one, Jesus of Nazareth, changed the course of history. B.C. now stands for before Christ, and A.D. anno Domini, in the year of our Lord, dates all history after his birth. As Charles Malik put it: "Jesus Christ is the hinge of history." To this hour knowledgeable men of many lands and religions and of no religion at all hail Him as the greatest leader, the greatest influence for good the world has ever known.

But to find the true meaning of life which brings peace and purpose and power, we say to you, accept Christ as more than the greatest influence the world has ever known,

accept him as the truth-about life-about you, accept him as God in human form and the *Lord* and master of your life.

The apostle Paul, known as Saul of Tarsus, was a brilliant scholar, a religious zealot, and a leader of the persecution of the followers of Jesus Christ. After his remarkable conversion he found the meaning of life in his relationship with Jesus Christ. He said of Christ, "He existed before God made anything at all. He was before all else began and it is His power that holds everything together" (Colossians 1:15). "In Him lie hidden all the mighty, untapped treasures wisdom and knowledge... don't let others spoil your faith and joy with their philosophies their wrong and shallow answers built on men's thoughts and ideas, instead of on what Christ has said. For in Christ there is all of God in the human body; *so you have everything when you have Christ*, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ. He is the highest ruler over every other power" (Colossians 2:3, 9, 10—Living Letters). You will never be disappointed in Christ.

If you are a Christian, yet you are not finding meaning in your life, is it because you are not letting Christ have His place of authority on the throne of your life to answer your needs to give your life meaning? You need to pray "Dear God I need you, I know that I am sinful, forgive my sins and take control of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be. Thank you for hearing my prayer, forgiving my sins, and for leading me." He will answer your quest for meaning. Robert Browning said, "The acknowledgement of God in Christ accepted by thy reason solves for thee all the problems in this world and out of it."

Even nominal Christians can live meaningless lives—lives that are outside God's will. Perhaps this is why Paul tells us "live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility,

not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life, but as those who do. Make the best use of your time despite all the difficulties of these days. Don't be vague. Firmly grasp what you know to be the will of God" (Ephesians 5:15, 16).

In Christ you will find the answer to the loneliness you often feel. In a recent album, Peter, Paul, and Mary sing twenty-four songs. One is a camp meeting styled spiritual, two are humorous, two are about death, five are about wars, six are about crime, ten are about lovers parting, and ten are about loneliness. Loneliness, strangely, is one of the major ills resulting from the population explosion. No matter how frequent their contact with other people, men are afflicted with loneliness. In a jam-packed elevator, in a crowded auditorium, in line for a theatre ticket, men are still lonely. That men in general endure dismal loneliness is not news to a Christian, because we know to be without Christ is to be without God, and to be without God is to be without hope in the world. Augustine said there is an emptiness in every man's heart that can only be filled by God. That the world *feels* this loneliness is encouraging, for it is a gift of God to prepare men to receive the one who wants to provide eternal fellowship. The songs of Peter, Paul, and Mary sound like a modern parable of the prodigal son, except that the trip home does not materialize. But what if the lonely, despondent man knows that there is a prepaid reservation waiting for him? What if he knew he could board the big 707 any time he chose? He could come home where the ache is gone from the heart, where there is a father that loves and accepts and forgives and gives purpose. There is good news waiting for all the lonely people in the world, for all the aching hearts. But we who have already taken that free trip are to deliver their reservations to them. We are to show concern, and share our friendship. We are to tell them that the way is already paid. That Christ died to pay the fare to the way where the sun always shines, the way home to the One who loves.

"I have tried everything from LSD and sex to living the good life, and I still have not found myself. I am still in conflict." This is what thousands of hippies or pseudo-hippies are saying. "I dedicated myself to materialistic pursuits, and, in the process, have acquired houses and land and all the accoutrements of wealth, but I have not found real meaning. My life is still empty and there is an aching void." This is what millions of middle class church-goers are saying. From the cradle to the grave, the human heart still cries out for answers to these perplexing questions: "Where did I come from, what is my purpose in life, where am I going when this life is over?"

There are certain things that are often considered important which do not matter in the final analysis: the length of life doesn't matter supremely. It is natural for us to want to live as long as we can. As Christians we are taught to take care of our bodies, since they are temples of the Holy Spirit, but Christ taught us not to fear those who could destroy our bodies, but rather to fear God. We are truly obsessed today with the physical and the small extension of human existence which can be achieved even at the sacrifice of more important things. Methuselah lived 969 years and yet we know nothing else of significance about him. Jesus Christ lived only a third of a century, and yet His life is the greatest that has ever been lived. It is obviously *the quality* of a life that matters rather than the quantity. Don't make the choices of your life merely on the basis of physical survival. There are some things worth dying for or worth wearing yourself out for.

The "success" which we might achieve in making money does not matter supremely. Christians are taught to work, to be thrifty, to be truthful, to use what God gives them as good stewards. Never before have so many Christians enjoyed such affluence. As a student at Abilene Christian College during the depression, I can recall the great empha-

sis our generation put on getting ahead financially and staving off failure and deprivation. You have many times the material goods we had and yet I see encouraging signs of your recognition that material success as an end in itself is not important. God isn't going to judge us by the size of our houses, the number of acres that we own, or the amount we have in our estate. He is not going to consider the accumulation of wealth as meritorious unless it is used to His glory.

Financial success as the great goal is a false goal. This is not to say that if you have the ability to make money you should be lazy and careless. I believe God expects you to use that ability to His glory, just as He expects you to use your artistic ability, your ability to speak, or write, or any other talent. But it is not an end in itself. Recently, the *Saturday Review* ran an entire issue on "California—the Nation within a Nation." It emphasized the state's wealth and cultural development, but concludes with this statement: "California is still so young, after all, so belligerent, and has so much to learn, that one may shudder at the thought that it is a window to the future or that California today may be America's tomorrow. Rapid growth and vigor are not goals, but symptoms. Newness and bigness should not be objects of search in today's society. In dedication and direction, California flounders like America, and with its flair for overstatement, the California lack of purpose can be monolithic" (September 23, 1967. Page 109). Our world needs to find out from you its purposes — what really matters.

Jesus taught us that man could never be satisfied by bread alone. Carl Jung said, "the central neurosis of our time is emptiness." But the apostle Paul could say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11). This doesn't sound like the modern Californian, Texan, or American, does it? Contentment is found in Christ.

Another thing that really doesn't matter in the final analysis is the opinion or judgment of fallible men and women. Never before have we been able to sample the opinions of other people as we do today. Opinion polls and statistics are very effective in politics. The radio, television, and the press enable us to know what other people are thinking about us. As young people, I am sure you are very conscious of what your peers think of you, and probably you are very much aware of what your parents and those of their generation think of you. The apostle Paul emphasizes the fact that we are to consider what others think of us only in a secondary way. We are to think of what God thinks of us and to put that first: "Who are you to pass judgment on someone else's servant? Whether he stands or falls is his own Master's business; and stand he will, because his Master has power to enable him to stand" (Romans 14:4). Again, "For no one of us lives, and equally no one of us dies, for himself alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. Whether therefore we live or die, we belong to the Lord" (Romans 14:7, 8). "Let us therefore cease judging one another, but rather make this simple judgment: that no obstacle or stumbling-block be placed in a brother's way" (Romans 14:13). It is so easy to seek approval of others, to seek to be popular, rather than to seek God's approval and the approval of one's own conscience.

We are living in an age of creature comforts. We not only want to be successful, but we want to be comfortable. We want to be happy—often in the hedonistic sense of that word. Jesus has taught us that we can become happy only by forgetting ourselves and serving others. Our selfishness is perhaps our greatest hindrance to pleasing God and to really being happy. It is so difficult to put one's finger on it. Most of the great people of the world have not been comfortable. Most of the great literature has been written under duress. Artists without adequate food, cloth-

ing, and shelter have painted masterpieces. Some of the greatest songs have been sung by those who sang in pain. Creature comforts are desired by all of us, but they do not matter most. They are not essential to pleasing God. In a time when people have more luxuries than ever before, we find suicides and crime increasing. The universe was not created for your comfort or mine. This is not what really matters.

What really matters is that we find *God*. This means that we study His word and search for Him daily in the world of faith in action. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." The great distinction of the Christian religion is that we believe that God has visited this planet and has revealed himself to us through Jesus Christ. That he has sought man and provided for him salvation. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

Without God, we are like a child groping around a dark room looking for the light switch. You remember the feeling of insecurity. You never know what you will stumble over, what you will break, when you will fall and injure yourself. But when you find that switch there is all the difference in the world—there is light—you can see your way clearly. You can find what you are after. That light is Christ. He is the switch to turn on the light in your life. He *is* that light.

The wonderful thing about realizing that God in Christ matters supremely is another discovery that always attends that supreme discovery, and that is that *you* matter. That you, that one individual, different from everyone else, with your own troubles, potentials, aspirations, and failings matter very much to God. Christ came to tell you that good news. God cares. Nothing you do or think or feel is unimportant to him. You are loved. Deeply loved.

Christ came to tell you this. "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life" (John 3:16). In all the world of news you will never hear better news than this. "There is no greater love than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Christ died for you. He said, "I have come that men may have life, and may have it in all its fullness" (John 10:10). When you consider what matters, never forget that you matter and that you are loved. John Henry Newman wrote: "God created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not given to another. I have my mission. . . ."

Becoming like Christ matters. "You must therefore be all goodness, just as your heavenly Father is all good" (Matthew 5:48). Jesus is the simplification of God. Our purpose here is to glorify God, and we do it by "becoming" like Jesus. This means that we find meaning in being good, unselfish, and loving. Dr. Victor Frankl in his book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, says: "Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life; everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfillment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated. Thus everyone's task is as unique as his specific opportunity to implement it. If you fail to do your task, then one chord in the symphony of the world's music will be missing. If God knows how many hairs are on your head, then he is concerned about your development into the likeness of Christ. It really matters what you are and what you are becoming.

Next, the church matters. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you." This kingdom is not limited to one century or a few nations. It encompasses all those of every age, race, and sex who have been born into it by the power of God through the gospel. It is not a building

or a thousand buildings. It is not limited to the dedicated few who take the lead in formal worship or organized benevolence. Only God can add to it or take away from it. These disciples are the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

Although this kingdom contains human beings, it is not limited to human elements. Jesus is the head and the Holy Spirit dwells in each Christian. To sow discord among brethren, or to oppose the church, or to neglect her claims is to bring one's self into conflict with the divine will. When Jesus left the earth he left one body—the church.

William S. Banowsky, in emphasizing that we must not limit our thinking of the church to the institutional functions which she performs, states that at the Broadway Church of Christ there are 2,400 members, but only 400 would be needed to take care of the organized visitations, the preaching, singing, etc. Yet each member is needed in the body because he is serving the Lord and is a part of the church in his vocation as a farmer, a city manager, a college professor, a nurse, etc. A church can never fulfill its mission of being salt and light if it withdraws into a fortress and tells people to bring their families into this fortress and close the door if they would be safe. Jesus, in His prayer for His disciples, did not pray that they should be taken out of the world—rather that they should be perfected as they went out into the world: "I pray thee, not to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are strangers in the world, as I am. Consecrate them by the truth, thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world and for their sake I now consecrate myself, that they too may be consecrated by the truth" (John 17:15-19). It matters what you and I do on Monday as well as on Sunday.

It matters whether we are expressing the righteousness and love of God as we deal with our neighbors, as we show Christ's concern for the poor, the sick, and the helpless. Some have seemed to miss the point. They think that their job is to glorify the church, or the human beings who compose the church, or the institutional church. They develop a denominational concept of the church and urge people to become a member of the right denomination. They seem to think that God's greatest glory will come in finer buildings or more prestige that can be brought to the institution whose name they have limited to one of the descriptions used in the scriptures. As presented in the scriptures, the church is not a denomination. It has no sectarian name, but is called by a number of names in the scriptures which describe different attributes of it. Paul teaches that we are to give glory to God in the church. The church is priceless because Jesus paid the price of His own blood for it. But its worth comes from its relationship to Jesus Christ. The church is a living organism with Christ as the head and each one of us individually as members. In Ephesians 3:20-21, we read: "Bow to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or conceive by the power which is at work among us. To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus from generation evermore. Amen." The kingdom of God matters because it is in the kingdom that we are to glorify God and to serve those for whom Christ died.

As a corollary of this point, I would emphasize that people matter rather than things. Someone has said that one of our great temptations is to love things and use people rather than loving people and using things. After all, at the very heart of the gospel is the unselfishness of God, and at the very heart of our response is our love of God which leads us to love each other. It is so easy to spend one's life getting and spending, laying waste one's powers and neglecting to see in the people around us the men and women for whom Christ died. The Pharisees in

Jesus's time were denounced by Him because they had neglected justice and mercy in dealing with their fellowman. They could feel that the important thing was a technicality concerning the way they took an oath or some of the ceremonies in the temple, while they were cheating the people who were bringing their sacrifices and stealing from widows and orphans. Again, as Paul expressed it: "In a word, as God's dear children try to be like Him and live in love as Christ loved you and gave himself up on your behalf as an offering and sacrifice whose fragrance is pleasing to God."

Jesus taught over and over again that only by unselfishly losing ourselves would we really find ourselves. This is so obvious, but it is too easy to overlook. In the Christian religion it is like oxygen that we breathe. I believe we need to stress I John more as he emphasized over and over again the importance of loving our fellowman. "If God thus loved us dear friends, we in turn are bound to love one another" (I John 4:12). It really matters whether or not you learn to love your neighbor and even to love your enemy. This love must be more than a vague, good disposition. It must express itself in action. Again, as John puts it, "My children, love must not be a matter of words or talk, it must be genuine and show itself in action" (I John 3:18). Or again, "But if a man has enough to live on and yet when he sees his brother in need shuts up his heart against him, how can it be said that the divine love dwells in him?" (I John 3:17).

In our world today, most people who are blessed with material possessions are becoming richer, and those who have little are becoming poorer in comparison. This is one of the conclusions of a seminar at the California Institute of Technology after an intensive study of the changes in the world. Christians cannot solve all the poverty, but they must be loving and sharing, they must be concerned, they must be interested in helping others who are in need,

as the Samaritan helped the man in the ditch. Of course, the greatest expression of this love is not to be found at the physical level, but at the spiritual. The greatest thing you can do to show love is to express genuine concern for a man's soul. It is our love which will lead us to share Christ with others. The great commission of our Lord matters and your part in carrying out that commission may be the most meaningful action you will ever take.

In the 173rd Airborne Brigade, which is in action in Vietnam, the men do not salute an officer by saying "Good morning, sir." They say, "All the way, sir." And the officer replies, "Airborne." We need to go all the way with God since Jesus went all the way to the cross for us. In Airborne vernacular, they call a man "legs" when he is a man who hasn't nerve to jump out of an airplane. Certain men are not "jump-qualified." Are you a "leg-Christian?" Are you in God's army but haven't laid hold on His promises and His Spirit enough to go all the way with Him? Total commitment matters.

# MISSION SERMONS



## COMMITMENT AND MISSIONS

L. Wesley Jones

The Park Street Church, Bowling Green, Kentucky, fully support and direct the work of the L. Wesley Jones family in Barrie, Ontario. By this means the Church was established in Barrie in 1962, and this start has been blessed by a growing Church. Brother Jones is a member of the Board of Directors of Great Lakes Christian College, Beamsville, Ontario, and of Grove Park Home for the Aged, Barrie. He is also leader of a group of five families committed to Mission work in Indonesia in the early 1970's.

L. Wesley Jones was born November 6, 1926, near Wingo, Kentucky. The family moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1939 and he grew up in the Tenth and Rockford congregation. Post-High school work was at Freed-Hardeman, Franklin College, Indiana, Louisville Bible College and Western Kentucky State University. Beverly Jean Yates of Tulsa became Mrs. Jones in 1946. Their children are Galand and Kay, students at Great Lakes Christian College, and Todd, age two. A foster daughter, Mary, is married to Keith Weston in Hamilton, Ontario. The Joneses became Canadian citizens in the fall of 1967.



Preaching since a teenager, brother Jones has done local work in five States, preached in meetings, campaigns, college lectureships and missions workshops in twelve states, the Republic of Panama and five Provinces of Canada.

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On a recent Sunday evening a large Canadian television audience was captured by an electronic confrontation of Hugh Hefner and Billy Graham. We were alternately shocked and interested by hearing Hefner assert that he is as close to the teachings of Christ as the established church (even in his Hedonism); and by hearing Graham offer suggestions as to how believers might be more effective in bearing witness to Christ in a pleasure seeking world.

Hefner and Graham both represent something of the monumental challenge of Christian mission. While Christ would no doubt have borne witness of His Father to the *Playboy* Editor, we cannot imagine any way to even get his attention. On the other hand, he has no trouble getting an audience for his slick sluice of slime. Graham gets a different kind of audience, but admits that believers are fighting a losing battle, and that he and his organization have not reversed the trend to secularism and sensualism.

While the world was thirty per cent Christian, in some sense of the word, in 1868, some estimates place it as low as twenty-eight per cent today. It is generally acknowledged that infants are being born more than three times as fast as the name of Christ is being even heard by this population. In cities where the Lord's Church is growing the fastest it is still growing slowly in comparison to population and many social and philosophical movements. Some speak openly of this as the Post-Christian era.

Christians are concerned. Will our grandchildren know anything that can be reasonably called a Christian nation? Less selfishly, will the children of the present Chinese Red Guard ever have a reasonable opportunity to know Christ? Even in the awakening which the church has experienced in the last twenty years few successful thrusts have been made in preaching Christ to the world in this generation. We must be fair and apply Dr. Gamaliel's test of prag-

matism to our methods and ask ourselves if it is any wonder that the world does not know that we are "of God?" It is so easy in these exciting assemblies to feel strong and secure, but the world does not even know who we are.

Graham and Hefner represent opposite methods of getting attention. But neither of them has "turned the world upside down" like our brethren of the First Century. Whether we can continue to claim this kinship with them, posing as the church restored when we lack the first Century missionary zeal, is something about which we should search our conscience.

### We Cannot Do It!

The last twenty years may have taught us one important lesson. World evangelism is *too large a task* for us to undertake and complete. With all of our money, with our very best public relations men, with the best departments of mission studies we can develop in Christian Colleges; with widespread use of functional buildings, film strips and home study charts; with the very best use we can make of radio, television, airplanes and the press, we are not big enough or clever enough to evangelize the world in this or any other generation. The racial barriers, the financial odds, the cultural curtain and the population explosion are too, too much. There are just not that many film strip projectors, church buildings, dollars, printing presses and Christian Colleges. We are overwhelmed. We are making about as much impression on the world as Lincoln Rockwell made on Israeli in either living or dying.

You may consider this a very dark picture of the world and the church from one that would not have you to be pessimistic. But the truth is that things are always dark in the belly of a whale, and that is where we are. God has sent us to Ninevah, and we have fled into our church

buildings. The investment of talent and money in the local programme is seen as competition for the outreach of the church, and vice versa. Our only hope is that God will arrange for us to be vomited out on dry land so that we may proceed with our mission. In the meantime our world deteriorates before our eyes, while we stand by helplessly with the world's only hope in our hearts. Every opportunity to buy any permanent form of peace seems snatched from us. We are on a mad, mad, mad buying, spending, fighting spree. Some have compared the universe to a hot rod on a crooked road driven by a careless teenager. Dr. Duke McCall suggests that this is the generation which will be known for producing DDT to kill bugs, 24D to kill weeds, formula 1080 to kill rats and  $E=MC^2$  to kill ourselves.

Who will move into this vacuum? The secularist with a fresh dose of venom for the believer? Some of the Eastern religions who are now in fact "evangelizing" North America? Communism with a new thrust of dialectic materialism? Roman Catholicism with a more charitable religious autocracy? Some evangelical form of Protestantism with a dedication that transcends truth? A new ecumenical church which by its very formation obscures the reality and power of the gospel? Or a renewed, strengthened, alerted and committed Church of Christ?

### We Are Not Alone

Yes, alone in this kind of world the task is too great for us. But we are not alone. We are partners with God. We can claim that partnership by placing missions where He placed them. He sent His only Son as a Missionary to an unlovely world. Christ has sent us as He was sent. We can lay claim to this Heavenly partnership by loyalty to that message which centres in Christ and His Church as revealed in the Last Will and Testament. This partnership with God is ours because He said that it is. And, however

unbelievable such a blessing may seem to be we are reassured by His affirmation (I Cor. 3:9).

There is no more certain way to live happily in this partnership than by full and final commitment of self to Him in the occupation of world evangelism. Our Father has done a fantastic and exciting thing—He has made possible an exchange of commitment. To Timothy Paul wrote, "... I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). Then almost immediately he said, "That good thing which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us" (2 Tim. 1:14). And this is quite similar to the exhortation of I Timothy 6:20: "O, Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee..." The faith, the gospel, had been committed to Timothy and all such servants of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:19), and such as Timothy in return were to commit themselves unto God, as Peter says, "... in well doing" (1 Peter 4:19). It is God's commitment of the faith to us which makes us Ambassadors. It is our commitment of ourselves to God which makes us productive Christians. It is this mutual commitment which makes us partners with God in the ultimate reason for human existence. The simplicity of this commitment may be seen in other words used to translate the original. These are "deposit," "entrust," and "commend." God has placed His message *on deposit* with us. To succeed in glorifying Him in proclaiming His word, we must place ourselves *on deposit* with Him.

### Commitment Is

Ancient men found strength in commitment. Job said, "I would seek God, and unto God would I commit my cause." David declared, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou has redeemed me, O Lord God of truth" (Psalms 31:5). And, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him and he will bring it to pass" (Psalms

37:5). Solomon in his wisdom preached, "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established" (Prov. 16:3).

A young lady ponders a proposal of marriage. Is she ready for married life? Is this the time to establish a home and "settle down?" Then, hesitation behind her, moved by love, she answers, Yes. She is committed. An aircraft is lined up with the centre stripe of the runway. As the pilot moves the throttles forward the craft rolls. As every instrument is carefully read, speed is gained and the point of safe abort is passed. The plane is committed to flight. A jungle beast skillfully stalks its prey; waits, poised for just the right instant, and then springs. The animal is committed to the kill.

A local church does not send twenty men to the field, when it can send only ten and stay comfortable, if it is not a committed church. The preacher who does decide to go to a mission field is only there two or three years, if uncommitted. An eldership will not go on a mission-adventure with Christ involving great unknown factors, or steps of real faith, if an uncommitted eldership.

### Obstacles

The task of world evangelism being too big for a Church-of-Christ-of-men-alone, God having offered a partnership in commitment, the yearning in our hearts being what it is today, let us investigate the course to commitment. This is not a course for the prideful. One who views the church as having arrived, who thinks of the church as successful, who takes pride in our soundness and orthodoxy, will not find the road to commitment. Pride goes before destruction, not dedication.

Pride is idolatrous self-worship. Arrogance is its priest; greed is its sacrifice; flattery its ritual. The Shipibos (Peruvian Indians) go to the heart of the matter when they describe pride as "declaring 'I outrank others.'"

Pride deifies self, even in the guise of humility; it stains the character and leaves the soul untouched by spiritual truth. Pride breaks through in a thousand ways, even in the Sunday-school teacher who finished the lesson about the proud Pharisee and the repentant Publican and then suggested to her class that they all thank God they were not like the Pharisee.<sup>1</sup>

A defensive posture will bar the door to commitment. If the great strength of the church lies in keeping what we already have, then we are enslaved by what Masumi Toyotome recently called the "Fortress Mentality."<sup>2</sup> Such a pose will make us afraid of missions on the college and university campus, for we will fear that Christianity cannot survive in an academic environment, and we will run scared of everyone who achieves academically. Such a mentality will keep us out of "heathen" lands, for we will be afraid that the church's North American image will be distorted by exposure to those crude masses. And we will never go where Christ went with the gospel — on missions to the Twentieth Century publican and sinner, for the rules we preach from our ivory towers make us blush to think of such a venture.

### God or Goods?

All avenues of commitment are barred by our present state of respectable materialism. Respectable materialism is that materialism which we defend as "just enough of this world's goods to keep us respectable." But is it not true that we are tearing down our barns to build those with another bedroom, or to buy those with another hundred horsepower? Physical security and personal comfort we can arrange for ourselves, with the right investment,

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1 Eugene A. Nida, *God's Word in Man's Language*, Harper and Brothers, Copyright, 1952.

2 *Christianity Today*, Vol. XI, No. 24, September 15, 1967.

hard work, retirement plans and insurance programmes. We pass along this independence from sustenance God provides to our children by explaining to them that each year of education will produce so many thousands of dollars of earning in an average lifetime. By example and instruction we demonstrate to them that psychological stability comes by living in a home one owns in the right part of town. Sustaining the family on an upper middle class level, like all of the sinners around us, has become a major pursuit in everyday living. The ability to provide everything for ourselves has taken the adventure and the need for trust out of life. Indeed when everything that gives meaning to our lives can be deposited in a bank, what need is there to place anything on deposit with God?

Finally, as we speak of hindrances to commitment, there are the excuses for past failures. Let us remember that in our time as a people we have done some pretty effective preaching against excuses for not obeying the gospel. But we are guilty of using some of the same rationalization to justify our mission failure. There is only one ultimate answer to all excuses, whether they be financial, emotional, or logical. This answer is illustrated in the life of a young preacher. He completed formal education and began church work. He was very successful. His pulpit was powerful, and his life dynamic, and soon the small congregation with which he began preaching was growing into hundreds-strong. One day he attended a meeting of his brethren in which a missionary was to be chosen. Lots were cast, and no choice was made. Feeling strong direction from the Spirit he offered himself to the group.

They protested that he was too successful in his local work. Who could do such a work as he was doing, they asked? His local usefulness was pointed out and it was observed that God evidently had great things for him to do right where he was. To all of this he answered only that he was content to leave the time and the place and the means of his work in God's hands.

Friend, brother, and loved one came to him one by one with an appeal to change his mind, and one especially close friend would always close his appeal by saying, "The cannibals. You will be eaten by the cannibals." To this the young man answered, "I confess to you that I can but live and die serving and honouring the Lord Jesus. It will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms; and in the Great Day my resurrection body will arise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen redeemer."

Excuses are easy to find, and if you are a loyal church member, a well-intentioned Christian, or a reasonably productive preacher or church member, you can at this moment no doubt find some excuse as to why you should not recommit yourself to Christ with a greater concern for missions.

### A Call to Commitment

Our call is for those who will rise above pride, a defensive posture, materialism, and excuses. For those who are willing to turn again there is something in the offing indescribably lovely and exciting. It is like the transition from selfishness to selflessness described by the song writer in "None of Self and All of Thee."

O, the bitter pain and sorrow That a time could ever be,  
When I proudly said to Jesus "All of self, and none of  
Thee."

Yet He found me; I beheld Him Bleeding on th' accursed  
tree,  
And my wistful heart said faintly, "Some of self, and some  
of Thee."

Day by day His tender mercy Healing helping, full and  
free,  
Bro't me lower while I whispered "Less of self, and more  
of Thee."

Higher than the highest heavens, Deeper than the deepest  
 sea,  
 Lord, Thy love at last has conquered "None of self, and all  
 of Thee." <sup>3</sup> \*

The question is, where to start on the road to commitment. Peter associates the "idle and unfruitful" life with one who has forgotten his cleansing from his old sins (2 Peter 1:8, 9). Our route to commitment may very well lie in a refreshed view of the new birth—of our own new birth. It may be true that we have avoided some ideas of dramatic and emotional conversion so utterly that we have lost some of the impact that the new birth does have in the sinner's personal encounter with the Lord. It is here by grace through the cleansing blood of Jesus that a new life begins. This is no mere educational process, but a miraculous and marvelous total alteration of one *in whom all things are become new*.

Some of us are putting ourselves beyond the missionary calling by saying, "But I just wasn't born to go out and talk to people about Christ." Or, "I am just not made that way—to take my family and go into some desolate place with the gospel!" True, but we all have been born again. We have all been remade. And, to what end? Not that we might be branches withered and cast into the fire. Not that we be idle and unfruitful. But to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, the leaven of the whole lump.

Such a look back at our conversion will raise some questions: Perhaps the Christianity we are now practicing should not be taken into all of the world? Does our own faith and fellowship need deepening before there is anything to share?

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<sup>3</sup> From Christian Hymns Number Two, Gospel Advocate Company, Copyrighted 1948

Observers of the North American religious scene would all probably agree that

The half-doubting, half-believing Church goes of today do not feel the deep conviction that led the early Christians to gladly risk their lives for the faith. They want comfort, not challenge, and counsel in time of trouble. They want therapeutic sermons that do not strike at the roots of their deep prejudices. <sup>4</sup>

If the well must be deepened before we can draw more from it, perhaps the first area to explore is a historical examination of our rebirth.

Asking God in prayer for opportunity and knowledge of how to commit ourselves is a second avenue open to us. God has said, "Ask and it shall be given." Do you really want to live a committed life? Then ask Him how to begin.

A young doctor, fresh from complete training, including postgraduate work, was about to accept a lucrative practice in a large city. He prayed about it, and the Lord brought influences into his life that led him to open a leper's hospital in Africa.

Prayer lifts us from the earth and gives us strength beyond ourselves. The mythical Antaeus was a giant who lived in Libya. His mother was Gaea, the Earth.

He conquered all until he met Hercules. The two began wrestling, and it appeared Antaeus would win.

Then Hercules noticed that whenever he lifted Antaeus off his mother Earth, the giant's strength left him. Whereupon the strong man clasped the giant around the waist, lifted

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<sup>4</sup> Harold H. Martin, *Saturday Evening Post*, April 24, 1965, p. 20. Copyright Curtis Publishing Company.

him off the ground, and finished the fight. . .

Millions of moderns, like Antaeus, get their strength from the earth and its products. That which God intended as a means to the end of glorifying Him has become the end—the supreme pleasure for many people. Lift the materialists away from their earthy gods and their strength drains away.

But not all are afflicted with the madness which results from worship of earthly things. Those who trust and follow Christ; those who lift their eyes in prayer to a higher and better God; these are “strong in the Lord and the power of His might.” Lift them from the earth and their strength remains—they even become stronger for they are that much nearer to God.<sup>5</sup>

The God who has always done great things for those who have prayed will not give you a stone when you ask for bread. Be warned of this, however; if you ask God to show you how to live a committed life, and mean it, you must step aside and be ready for His will to be done.

We are really not known as a praying people. Our level of activity in comparison with our prayer life might suggest that we think we can get things done better than God can. We may even be in danger of preaching something we do not practice, for we do preach on prayer.

Willie, on a visit to his uncle in the country, admired a colt. “Uncle, give me that colt, will you?” he asked. “Why, no, Willie,” said his uncle. “That’s a very valuable animal, and I can’t afford to give it to you. If you want a colt so badly, why don’t you pray for one. That’s what I always do when I want a thing very badly and I’ve discovered when I do that it always come to me.”

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<sup>5</sup> *Illustrated* by James Hefley, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. p. 27.

"Is that so, uncle?" said Willie eagerly. "Well, won't you please give me that colt then and pray for one for yourself."<sup>6</sup>

### Christ Centred Missions

In recent years there has been a de-emphasis on the gospel accounts of the life and mission of Christ in studying the mission of the Church of Christ. The church began on Pentecost and there seems to be an assumption that we will find everything we really need to conduct the affairs of the church in Acts and the Epistles. Without an attempt to create a competition between two sections of Scripture let it be noted that such treatment of the life of Christ robs us of our major motive for commitment. This motive is found in Christ and His mission. Our only reason for existence as a church is to continue what He began—the salvation of mankind. Our entire reason for living must be to make Him live. If you cannot find the substance for a committed life in anything else, you can find it here in This Life.

While Christ cared so much that He died for all, He cared so little for the negative opinions of men that He never allowed them to interfere with His mission (Matt. 22:16). Those who were sent out by Him took the same tact (1 Cor. 4:3). While we place a premium on the opinions of men and yield to the influences of power structures and falter before the threat of the poison pen, Christ never hesitated before the vilest railings. He did not care what men thought because He cared so much for men. Learning to care, to love our fellowmen with a Christ-like compassion, will be a start toward commitment. And such a care as He had will make it unnecessary for the

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<sup>6</sup> Jacob M. Braude, *New Treasury of Stories*, Prentice Hall, Inc., p. 301

work of world evangelism to come almost to a stop every few years because of the opinions of men.

Christ loved all perfectly, but He could not save all. Why did He not die only for those who would be saved? His was not that kind of love, and like His Father, He was not a respecter of persons.

Until something happens to us that has not yet happened, our love is minimal like that of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. We love Him. We speak kindly of Him, and we believe in Him. But we are dismayed and doubtful. Our enthusiasm is cool, and there is an appalling flatness in the church. We are geared for survival rather than revival. Our indifference to the lost may be illustrated by the missionary who had served for years in a leper colony, never dreaming that he had the disease himself. One day he spilled scalding water on his feet and could not feel it. Are we not past feeling for the lost? Will we not be momentarily stirred by what we see and hear in this lectureship and soon go home to forget?

When I ponder the lost billions I wonder why I was born in the South of the U. S., reared by parents in the church, taught the gospel when I was young and given every encouragement to preach it. God is no respecter of persons. Jesus did not die for me any more than He did for Mao Tse Tung or Fidel Castro. How am I to account for my blessed situation?

There can be but one accounting. You and I have been loved to love all others, like our Lord. We have no right to decide who will be saved. Our only right is to see that all hear, now, in this generation. Only the commitment to this Christ-like love will make this possible.

The scribes mocked Him on the cross and said, "Others he saved; himself He cannot save." They were right. Christ could not save Himself and others, and

neither can we. We cannot save our time, our money or our children, and save the world. We need yet another Exodus movement, and that is Exod/us—a movement out of ourselves, our comforts. We must believe that the same God who made possible the deeds of valour for David before Goliath and Gideon before alien armies is a God who lives today and who will bless us when we place ourselves on deposit with Him, by guiding us into lands to be conquered and giants to be slain.

### The Challenge Is Immediate

There is no time to lose. There are so many ways to illustrate the pressure on us. A sophisticated nuclear physicist with the U. S. Government has estimated that we will have a seventy-five minute warning if there is a Third World War, and that such a conflict will last about three to four hours. In San Francisco on Easter Sunday, 1906, preachers were doing what most preachers usually do—delivering addresses on the Resurrection of Christ. One plea was particularly impassioned and the speaker urged his hearers to receive his message as if it were the last they would ever hear. Many, most, turned a deaf ear for they had heard preachers make such statements before. But before the next Sunday the great earthquake and fire now historically famous took many of these auditors into judgement.

Time not only presses us but we must be impressed with a sense of responsibility, born of the knowledge of Christ with which we have been blessed. In the *Taste of New Wine*<sup>7</sup> Keith Miller tells of a patient in a hospital ward suffering along with his roommates of a dreaded disease. This particular patient was introduced to a physician

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<sup>7</sup> Word publishers, Waco, Texas

who knew the cure for his illness, and before long he was well. After this he spent his time, still living in the ward, walking up and down the aisle, flexing his muscles, breathing deeply and singing, moving furniture about the room and eating anything he wanted. Before the amazement of his fellows he blushed not to keep his secret and leave them in agony. Is this something of the picture of those of us who know the Great Physician?

### Conclusion

All of my life I have warmed my hands at the fire of Jesus' love. Perhaps you have, too. But for much too long, like Peter, I have denied Him. O, not with oaths and cursings, but by not saying anything to my lost neighbours; by staying at home in the Bible belt when I could hear the Macedonian Call; by remaining comfortable rather than following the discomfiting Christ. But if your hands are as warm as mine, we will join them in telling the world that Jesus has come, and gone, and is coming again. Because we believe we will speak. Because we are entrusted with the gospel, we will now entrust ourselves to Him, and find in this re-committed life the strength to do all things. Our frantic motions will slow down while we take the time to become God's light and leaven.

A criminal condemned to die in England began that last long walk to his punishment. Guarded on each side, he was followed by a Chaplain who read the Scriptures in a monotone. After several minutes of this, the accused stopped and turned back to the Chaplain and said, "You do not read that as if you believed it. If I believed what you are reading, it would change my life. If all of England were covered with broken glass," continued the condemned man, "I would crawl on my hands and knees over it all until every human being had heard what you are reading so indifferently."

We conclude by saying that if we enter into the very

spirit of this sermon, or even go beyond it, if henceforth we live only for Christ, so as never to know pleasure aside from serving Him, nor success save in the spread of His gospel, we shall have made a beginning. We are God's creatures. For whom should a creature live but for his Creator? We are His new creatures, twice born. Should we not live so as to glorify Him who has given us new life? As many as believe in Jesus and obey His will are products of the divine wisdom and power that raised Jesus from the dead. Shall they not then live in newness of life?

God has worked out such a plan for us as that He has made us twice. He has then made a new heaven and a new earth that we might dwell there forever. How can we but serve Him with all of our hearts? There is then the fact of redemption. We are not our own, for we have been purchased with a price. We dare not live selfishly. But even more we must not let self be considered aside from God. In all of this we find the reasons and the motives for the committed life which will make possible the evangelism of the world.

There is, however, the ultimate motive. Turn your eyes to the cross and see Him whom heaven loved bleeding there alone. O, bleeding heart of Jesus, my name is engraved there. O, tortured brain, your thoughts are all of me! O, Christ who loved me then and who loves me still, I can but serve you with all my being. Must it not be so, brethren? Is not Christ your very self? Are you not bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh? "O, Father, help us to never finish this sermon. In Jesus Name, Amen."

# CHRIST IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Parker L. Henderson

Name: Parker L. Henderson

Birthplace: Miami, Florida, Nov. 29, 1924

Education: University of Florida; Abilene Christian College B.S. 1950 (magna cum laude); Union Language Center, Bangkok, Thailand

Wife: Donna J. Deacon, Altus, Oklahoma

Children: Larry 17, Jeanie 15, Rebecca 11, Priscilla 6

Began preaching: Herndon Chapel, Anson, Texas 1947

Churches served: Cocoa, Florida 1950-52; Tullahoma, Tenn. 1952-56; 14th St., Gainesville, Florida 1956-57; University Avenue, Austin, Texas 1957-



## Books:

*Church History*, Tullahoma, Tenn., 1957

*Soul Saving Lessons*, Singapore press, 1964

In September 1957 began working in behalf of missionary work in Thailand, under the oversight of the University Avenue church, Austin, Texas. Entered the field five months later as the first evangelist supported by churches of Christ in America. Joined four months later by the Kenneth Rideout family; four years later by the Dorsey Traw and Jesse Fonville families; a year later by the William Beck and Robert Davidson families. By the combined effort of the

American evangelists and the converted Thai nationals, in the ten years 1400 persons have been baptized and forty congregations have been established.

Currently: Instructor at the Sunset School of Preaching, Lubbock, Texas. Expects to return to Thailand June 1968.

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The subject topic, "Christ in Southeast Asia" refers to the hope of glory in Southeast Asia, for this is what Paul says, "... Christ in you, the hope of glory."<sup>1</sup> I am not referring to his rightful ownership of Southeast Asia, for it is a granted fact that by the right of creation, the world and all therein belongs to Him. I am referring to Christ in the people of Southeast Asia, which greatly limit our Lord's presence in that section of the country. Using Thailand as an average or representative country, it is claimed that only six-tenths of one per cent of the people believe in Christ, and those who have become real Christians are limited to FORTY-TWO TEN-THOUSANDTHS OF ONE PER CENT (.42/10,000). The percentage of Christians is so small that the devil could boast that Southeast Asia is more than 99 99/100 per cent his. By such statistics the devil could make the ivory soap boast of 99 44/100 per cent pure sound like contaminated refuse unfit for human use.

Sometimes we are heartsick because the door to so many countries has been closed to Christ. China with its 700,000,000; India closed to American preachers with 500,000,000; Burma with 30,000,000; Cambodia with 6,000,000; North Vietnam with 15,000,000: a billion two hundred fifty-one million souls! Add Russia to the list and the total would be over one billion, five hundred million people to whom we cannot, in our usual manner, take the gospel at the present time. But what difference

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1 Colossians 1:27

would it make? Who cares? There are ten times as many people in Thailand as the state of Oklahoma, and we have American evangelists living in but two Thai cities. Singapore and Malaysia have nearly twice the population of Texas, and we have sent American evangelists to live in but five of its cities. Hong Kong has a population greater than Arkansas, and we are yet to have more than four groups with which American evangelists are working. In the past ten years we have kept no one there long enough to become really fluent in the language. In spite of the good work done and the sacrifices made, we have not made a dent on the population. In the Philippine Islands good work seems to be being done in only about three or four centers. While this has spread into over a hundred congregations, sixteen workers find it most difficult to reach a population three times as large as Texas. South Vietnam can boast the largest number of American workers in this decade, but with over 400,000 American military personnel insufficient for that warfare, how do we expect a few proven workers to lead thirty youths, brave though they may be, to the evangelization of that war-torn country with a population three times as great as Tennessee! There is Indonesia with its 105,000,000 people—fifth largest in the world—where people by the hundreds of thousands are flocking to nominal Christianity, and to this good day, not a congregation of the Lord's people among them! Only in 1967 did we even send anyone to them and that limited to just one family. Weep over China and India? Not us for your life! We do not care! Laos has a population about equal to Alabama and a six month's visa can be secured for one U. S. dollar. One little congregation is there, started by two American girls: Miss Vina Hall with the U. S. embassy stationed in Vientiane and Miss Ellen Donnell in the Peace Corps, stationed on the Thai border across from Laos. We have not yet been able to persuade one preacher to go there. Time fails me to talk of Ceylon and the tens of thousands of islands in the South China Sea where millions live and nobody is going, nobody has ever been, and nobody is even thinking about beginning

to commence to start to go. Christ in Southeast Asia? I fear that such is just a myth, a wishful dream. The reality is that the devil is in Southeast Asia! That is the rule and the standard. Christ in Southeast Asia is only the exception, the places are rare and the persons are few and far between.

Others have not been so slow in taking their false religious doctrines to Southeast Asia. It is said that there are over 700 denominational missionaries in Thailand alone. The Presbyterians have been there one hundred thirty-five years. The Episcopalians and Methodists have been in Malaysia over one hundred years. The Baptists marched into Burma a hundred years ago, and today boast of 500,000 followers and hundreds of churches. Five years ago there were one hundred twenty Christian Missionary Alliance missionaries in South Vietnam alone, and the Catholics have been there for more than three hundred years. Pentecostal groups, Plymouth Brethren, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Northern Baptists, Independent Baptists and the Mennonites are all there.

There is an indication that a brighter day is dawning for the churches of Christ. Ten years ago today, there seem to have been only eight workers from churches of Christ in America that were working in Southeast Asia. Today there are eighty-eight on the field or enroute to the field—an increase of eleven hundred per cent. If this rate of growth can be maintained for another decade, we will see nearly a thousand workers supported by churches of Christ in Southeast Asia. For the 218,000,000 people there is a faint hope that some day they may have an opportunity to hear that there is a Christ in Southeast Asia.

The needs of this great section of humanity is multi-fold. First of all, we need preachers to go. Of all people on earth that should understand the importance of obeying the commands of Jesus Christ, we should lead the

crowd. As long as you have attended the services of the church you have heard such passages as: "Not every-one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21); "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15); "Ye are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14); "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46); "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3); "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (I John 2:3-5); "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8,9).

One of the commands of the Lord that is clear and in no need of misunderstanding is the first part of the great commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matt. 28:19,20). "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15,16). The first of these passages is just as clear as the latter part. One of the commands of the Lord certainly is to go into all the world with the gospel of Christ. Every member of the church of Christ has this responsibility to the extent of his ability. There is no clergy-laity division in the church of Christ. Every member is clergy, all are ministers, ser-

vants, proclaimers of the word. In New Testament times our brethren went about everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4). Each generation has this task. Of the full time workers in the church about 94% are limited to work in the United States where about 7% of the world's population lives. Souls here are just as important as souls anywhere on earth and everybody cannot cross the ocean; but honestly, don't you think that 94% of the preachers preaching to 7% of the world's population is just a little out of line? Sound, proven preachers of the word are needed out in the fields that are white unto harvest. Some of you who are teachers, government workers, and businessmen could get into some countries where preachers cannot go, so why not launch out! When we sing "Anywhere With Jesus I Can Safely Go" let's mean what we sing! Too many of us are like the congregation in Florida whose preacher wanted to go to Thailand. I was invited to speak to the congregation about sending him. Just before I was to speak, the song leader led the song, "Oh, Love That Will Not Let Me Go." Let us not forever put off doing that which the Master commanded. Let us Go!

A few weeks ago I was in South Vietnam preaching out in a village where the mortars and shells could be heard during the night. As Don Wright and I slept on the floor of that little church building, all night long we were conscious of the bursting shells and rifle fire. It was obvious that when Uncle Sam called, thousands of American boys answered that call. Hundreds and even thousands of our boys—members of the church—have gone. They went right into the heart of danger, even death. Yet, when the King of Kings calls for his people to go into the heart of Asia to spread the good news of the Prince of Peace, less than one hundred can be found in Southeast Asia, answering the call. Why is it? Do we answer only when forced, or do we love our country more than our God? We need men in Asia, we need women in Asia. We need you, young men, to prepare yourselves and come. We need you, young

women, to marry as many gospel preachers as you can (up to one apiece) and come over and help us. The situation is urgent—the need is great.

The second thing we need in Southeast Asia if people will ever see Christ there, is for Christ to be seen in America. We need strong churches in America in order to develop strong churches in Asia. By strong, I do not mean strong in numbers, but strong in faith. We are reported to have grown the fastest of any major religious body in the United States during the last fifteen years. I am glad to hear such news; but if we are not careful, in the next twenty-five years, we shall have become about like the Methodist Church of today. I heard of a couple who moved away from their home congregation. They wrote back home saying, "There was no Church of Christ here, so we joined the next best thing." There is no next best thing to the church of the Lord! We need to see a lot more Bible study in the homes, in the classroom and even in the pulpit. The gospel is still the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 16:16). That which we hear coming from many pulpits and study in many classrooms is no more like God's "dynamite" than face powder is like TNT.

For Christ to be seen in the churches in America, the churches must be working at the task of saving souls at home. The purpose of the church is not to build buildings (though buildings are essential), and pave parking lots (though that is certainly a right of the church); but our purpose is to save souls. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:4). The very purpose of our being married to Christ is that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit" . . . . . "Herein is my

Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:1-2,8). Just a casual glance at the publication *CHURCHES OF TODAY* is all that is necessary to prove that many congregations with large memberships and powerful preachers are reaching but a pitiful handful of lost people each year. Personal work on the part of every member is so acutely needed that elders should put it on a crash program basis. Cornelius Abbott tells the story of a young man who appreciated the value of keeping in daily contact. When he had to be separated from his lady love for a whole year, he bought 365 post cards and wrote her every day so that she would not forget him. At the year's end he rushed home to make her his bride, only to discover that just the day before she had married—the postman. You cannot beat that personal contact!

We can never take the gospel into all of Asia unless we at home begin to pray more and then live like we pray. Often we pray for the Lord to do the things He has asked us to do; then we never help Him answer the prayer. We are a praying people, and we believe prayer changes things. Yet, how long has it been since you invited someone over for prayer? Imagine the shock of some, should you telephone saying, "I'd like to come over and pray with you." Thinking they had misunderstood, they would likely reply, "Sure, come on over. I'll have the card table set up and be ready to play as soon as you get here." We need to be very careful for what we start praying, if we are going to really live like we pray. If we pray for much at all and live like we pray, we are going to have to straighten up our lives, clean up our habits, pay up our debts and live like God's children rather than the devil's. When a student at Abilene Christian College, I read a poem that has been very close to me through the years, entitled *LIVING THE WAY WE PRAY*.

I knelt to pray when day was done  
and prayed, "Oh, Lord, bless everyone."

And then I woke one day  
     and carelessly went on my way.  
 I did not try to wipe the tear from any eye.  
 I did not share the load  
     of any brother on the road.  
 I did not go to see the sick man  
     just next door to me.  
 But once again when day was done,  
     I prayed, "Oh, Lord, bless everyone."  
 But as I prayed there came to my ear  
     A voice that whispered clear,  
 "Pause, hypocrite, before you pray,  
     Whom have you tried to bless today?  
 God's sweetest blessings always go  
     By hands that serve him here below."  
  
 And so I hid my face and cried,  
     "Forgive me, God, for I have lied.  
 Let me but live another day,  
     And I will live the way I pray."

Author Unknown

World evangelism is impossible if we are not willing to live like we pray.

My final suggestion in taking the gospel to Southeast Asia, that Christ may be a reality in that part of the world, is money. Many of you cannot personally go to Thailand and other countries nearby. If everyone decided to go, there would be no one to send. However, you can send. Paul declared,

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Rom. 10:13-15)

There are three kinds of Christians as far as world evangelism is concerned: those that go, those that send,

and those that neither go nor send. How is it with you? How is it with the congregation where you worship? Do your housekeeping expenditures eliminate sending into the densely populated areas of the world? According to the latest information I can obtain, the religious organization giving the largest per member contribution for mission work per year is the Evangelical Mennonite Church, which gave \$34.29 per member per year.<sup>2</sup> If 2,500,000 members of the church of Christ gave that much money for mission work, we would have \$85,725,000.00 for mission work each year. That would be over \$200,000.00 per American preacher outside the United States of America! Is it possible that the "I do not want to be involved" attitude that causes Americans to turn deaf ears to calls for help from robbery victims on the streets of America is also working on the hearts of Christians in reference to world evangelism? Nearly twenty years ago I heard a world known speaker tell this story.

Once a man advertised that upon a certain date he would roll a wheelbarrow across the Niagara Falls on a tightrope. At the appointed time he began that daring feat. A large crowd gathered and cheered loudly when he made the trip successfully. Then he announced that he was going to roll a sack of fertilizer across the falls. Though more cautious and with more deliberation, he made the trip safely. The applause was thunderous. Then he announced that he would put a man in the wheelbarrow, and roll it across the falls, and the crowd roared. He asked them, "Do you think I can do it?" "Yes, yes," they all shouted. At the front of the crowd was a young man who was especially enthusiastic, jumping and shouting, "You can do it, yes, you can do it!" The tightrope artist pointed his finger at the young man, saying, "All right,

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<sup>2</sup> Reader's Digest 1966 Almanac p. 370

YOU, young man, come get into the wheelbarrow. But the young man could scarcely be seen in the crowd as he ran the other way.

Isn't this the picture we have all helped paint in our feeble efforts at world evangelism? Haven't we just been afraid to get into the wheelbarrow? Let's all get into the wheelbarrow by going and sending the gospel into all the world in the generation which now breathes. We can if we will. We have the financial power, the intellectual power, the communications power, the congregational power, the membership power. About all we lack is the WILLPOWER. Getting into the wheelbarrow with willpower will do the job.

There are people in Thailand and Southeast Asia that are actually praying for someone to come teach them the truth. I taught a lady by the name of Huang for many, many weeks in Bangkok. She was a Seventh Day Adventist. After learning the truth more perfectly, she said, "Mr. Parker, why didn't the Lord send me to you nine years ago when I went into the Adventist Church? I was looking for the truth." I mumbled something about being in America, then changed the subject. She was praying for the truth, yet at that time we did not have one single person within 1,500 miles to whom the Lord could lead her. She did obey her Lord, and has been instrumental in the conversion of about fifty people, including three denominational preachers.

There are people praying for us to come to them with the gospel. They are actually asking the Lord to lead them to the truth. Are you willing to let the Lord use you in answering their prayer? Then get into the wheelbarrow and let us really go into Asia with the good news of Christ.

## WHAT MISSIONARIES NEED

Stanley Shipp

Stanley Shipp was born in Lueders, Texas and received his B.S. Degree in Chemistry from Abilene Christian College. He has also done some work on a Masters Degree in the Biblical field. Stanley has had twenty years of preaching experience, ten of which was done in local work and ten in mission work. His mission work has been in Wyoming and in Lausanne, Switzerland. He has helped to conduct many campaigns for furthering the cause of Christ throughout the world, either directing the personal work or doing the preaching and in some cases both. It has been his privilege to preach the gospel of Christ in twenty-six countries and most of the fifty states. He has frequently spoken at young people's gatherings, mission workshops, and college lectureships. He has recently completed campaigns in Malaysia, Perth, Australia, and Suva, Fiji Islands in which he directed the personal work and preached each evening.

Stanley's family consists of his very devoted wife and capable partner in the Lord, Marie, and three Christian daughters. Pam and Penny are attending Abilene Christian College and Patti is a student in Junior High School.



The family as a whole is very interested in mission work and has opened their home to missionaries and those interested in mission work at every opportunity.

I know Stanley Shipp to be a true Christian in every respect; one that loves God more than anything in this world. He is loved and respected throughout the world but few love and admire him as this writer does.

Highland church is very thankful to God to have him directing our mission program.

It is our prayer that God will bless him with many years in which to serve Him and bless his family as they sacrifice a husband and father that Christ may be preached to every creature.

A. L. Haddox, elder  
HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST

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It is true that this generation of the Lord's church, with its big buildings, big budgets, and big membership rolls, has let more unevangelized people die than any other generation in history. It is true that one-half of the world's population has never heard the name of Jesus Christ as God's Son. It is true that nuclear weapons have caused us to re-evaluate our efforts to evangelize the world. It is possible that we race toward a finish line that might not even be there unless we reach it quickly.

The *evangelization of the entire world* is the command of Jesus Christ, the son of God, in Matthew 28:18-20. An urgent command, not only to the apostles, but to us. In the light of these truths, we have neither the time, the money, nor the personnel to be able to afford an ineffective program of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. But what is a good program of evangelization? How do we go about telling others the story of Jesus Christ, and doing it according to God's plan? What has happened to past mission programs of the Lord's church? Can we profit by our successes and our mistakes? Are we willing to constantly re-evaluate? Can two and one-half million people carry the message of salvation in Christ Jesus to three billion people on the earth today? We shall attempt to discuss the answers to some of these questions in this talk, *What Missionaries Need*.

Having spent more than half my preaching life in the mission field and having traveled throughout the world

on several occasions, preaching and teaching the gospel in more than twenty-five different countries, I have seen a great need for an increased effectiveness in our work for God.

In evangelizing the world, we face an "impossible" task. Mathematically and humanly speaking there's no possible way for two and one-half million people to carry the message individually to three billion. Racial barriers, language barriers, international boundaries, and dozens of other very real barricades stand in our way. Humanly it is impossible. However, we serve a God that does the impossible. Therefore, I am confident that with God's help, and following God's plan, this world can be evangelized in our generation. The question is, will we let God do it through us.

Like every generation of God's people, our generation seems to operate in a vicious cycle as we discuss any of our problems. Mission work is no exception. To determine our present position we must view our past mission efforts. I shall not go into a history of mission work in the Lord's church in the past hundred years, (not that it would take too much of our time because too little has been done), but I would like to suggest that great mistakes have been made and great successes have been achieved. I take my hat off to those men who have, without opportunity of really adequate training, gone into the far-flung fields of the world to do their best to tell others of Jesus Christ and His saving gospel. Many mistakes have been made, and almost every missionary would tell you that if he had his work to do over, he would make some changes. However, I find the same thing true of local preaching here in the United States of America. It would be a very sad mistake on the part of the church of the Lord today, to say that all the past mission work has been bad, and therefore, we should call every missionary home and quit doing the little amount that we

are presently doing. I can only thank my God for that which has been done, but I view the present situation with increased hope for the spreading of the kingdom of God.

Once we learn our weaknesses from the past and our strong points of the past, we must study that which will make us more effective in the future. The prospects are much brighter now, primarily because men have gone and men determined their needs right in the field. We have the benefit of years of experience on the part of many returned missionaries and those who presently are in the field. Most of us are doing everything we possibly can to establish congregations of the Lord's church that will be totally independent and self-sufficient. Training programs have been and are being inaugurated for developing better missionaries. Courses on missionary methods confronting new cultures, communication, language problem, and so on, are being taught in our Christian colleges and in other programs. Mission workshops are being held each year on Christian college campuses. Congregations of the Lord's church have taken it upon themselves to have mission workshops in various areas of the United States for congregations in their area. We are doing some real thinking about the quality of an effective mission program and what missionaries really need, both from the standpoint of their personal needs, the needs for their work, their objectives and plans and the needs of the congregations who send them.

This lecture combines the thinking of dozens of men who have been in the mission field and most of the information has been gained first hand from the missionaries themselves, as well as from books that have been written concerning this subject by brethren and by people in various religious organizations who have done a great deal of study of the methods involved.

What do missionaries need? What qualities will produce an effective mission program? I believe the following should be included:

### DEPENDENCE ON GOD

Evangelism is God's idea. It was the Holy Spirit who said, "separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2). They were sent out with prayer and fasting. Truly, mission work is God's work. God must come first. Too often God is an afterthought in our mission work. We ask Him to put His "rubber stamp" on our "package deal" plans. We must learn to go to Him for guidance, not merely approval. Our God is real. Let us demonstrate in our plans the fact that God is with us. We must really believe Romans 8:31 and Philippians 4:13 and like passages.

### A MODERN-DAY EXAMPLE

Jud Whitefield, now of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, has been one of the greatest inspirations of my life as he demonstrated dependence on God. Jud became a Christian at the age of thirty-five. He had led a life serving Satan and, therefore, had many things to give up. He detested standing before a group of people to do anything, but Jud saw the need to teach people about Christ. The first time he got up to lead a song in Riverton, Wyoming, sweat poured from his body. The first time he volunteered to preach a sermon in the public worship he could hardly stand. The sermon would certainly not have won a prize in a speech contest, but Jud did it. I asked him how he could accomplish these things and his response has stuck with me through the years. Jud said, "*I'll do things for God I won't do for anybody else.*" This is the kind of dependence on God it takes to make good mission-

aries and the only kind of attitude that will ever make it possible for us to spread the gospel to the entire world. Moody once said, "If God be your partner, make your plans large." I believe we can plan large now!

### WELL DEFINED OBJECTIVES

Someone says, "I am going to the mission field." I ask the question, "What for?" It seems a simple question but it is not seriously asked often enough. Having a warm, fervent desire to go to just "do something for Jesus Christ" is not enough. It seems that Jesus Christ was very clear on the "why" of preaching the gospel, when he said in Matthew 28:19, "Go make disciples of all nations." This was the reason Jesus said we are to go. Paul was clear on why he went (Acts 26:29)—he was preaching the gospel of Christ to Agrippa. Agrippa said to Paul, "with but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian" and Paul said, "I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds." Paul was trying to lead people to Christ.

The missionary does not go to take education, medication, or sanitation, but salvation. Because he has a Christian heart he is sensitive to many needs, but he must never forget the primary purpose for which he went. I do not want to be unjustly critical of those who have gone to take these things to people, because I know that a part of real Christian compassion is providing for the needs of people, but again I stress the fact that the *primary purpose* is to preach the gospel. The missionary does not go to change the habits and culture of the people where he goes. That which he preaches is no more "American" than the law of gravity. He is a foreigner in another nation, and the guest in the home of another. He must

adapt to cultural changes. He is not a political representative, nor is it his job to teach someone to drive on the other side of the road, or to count his money in dollars and cents. His job is to make disciples.

On the other hand, he must be very daring in his desire and his work to make disciples. Juan Monroy, Spanish preacher of the gospel of Christ living in Madrid, Spain, who has been responsible, with the help of God, for a great restoration movement in Spain, has led hundreds to Christ, had a very interesting experience in Lima, Peru in September of 1967. Juan had gone to Peru, along with members of the Highland congregation in Abilene to discuss the possibility of radio time in Central and South America for the spreading of the gospel on the air waves. While he was there this very talented preacher, who is an accomplished journalist and dedicated servant of God, walked along the streets of the large city of Lima, Peru, one evening. He walked a few blocks and came upon a large square and here were twelve hundred miners. They and some of their wives and children had walked for nine days into the city of Lima, hoping to call attention to their needs for higher pay in the mines. They had run completely out of money, they were cold, because the night was cold, they were hungry, the children were crying and brother Monroy began to inquire concerning their condition. Upon learning their plight he said, "I cannot get mixed up in your political problems, nor your problems for higher wages, but I do see here a great *need*, therefore, I shall attempt to do something about it. One lady suggested that he go on the air on some radio station in Lima. He inquired concerning the stations, learned the name of one, took a taxi and said, "take me to this station." Arriving there, he knocked on the door, because it was rather late in the evening. The engineer came to the door, asked him what he wanted, and he said, "I would like to speak." The engineer said, "Who are you?" He said,

"I am Juan Monroy from Madrid, Spain." The man asked, "Do you have permission to speak?" Juan said, "No, I just want to speak in behalf of some people here in the city who are cold and hungry." The man said that would be utterly impossible because all the programs were planned. Juan said, "I insist that I speak to the owner of this station." The man said, "It shall do no good," but Juan insisted and finally the phone number was given to him and Juan phoned the owner of the station and said, "I'm Juan Monroy from Madrid, Spain, and I would like to speak on your radio to tell the people of Lima about a terrible condition that exists here where people are hungry and cold and naked and need the help of other people in the city. The man covered the receiver and turned to a friend who was in his house and said, "Say, a fellow wants to speak on my radio station in behalf of the miners who are down in a certain square." The man asked him, "Who is the fellow who wants to speak on the radio station?" and he said, "His name is Juan Monroy from Madrid, Spain." Very quickly brother Marv Steffins, a member of the Highland congregation and the very man who at that moment was talking to the owner of the radio station said, "Juan Monroy! That's our man! He is the very man that I'm talking about preaching on your radio station." The owner of the station then went back to the telephone and said, "*Take five minutes on the air.*" Brother Monroy took fifteen. He told the people of Lima of the great need and said, "Meet me there with money and clothing and food." He went to the park after fifteen minutes of speaking and people began to pour in. One Indian lady came with her hand outstretched and said, "Here is all the food I have in my house." Her other hand had all the money she had and strapped on her back was a little baby. This woman had heard the broadcast in bed and had gotten up out of bed and brought what she had to help. Needless to say, brother Juan Monroy had the chance that night to preach the gospel of Christ with people *begging him* to tell them about Christ and

about His church. This is true evangelization. He had the chance during that time to get the names and addresses of some very important people in the city to continue his contacts because they came to fill the needs of these people who were burdened. The government sent trucks and all the people had a place to stay that night, and plenty of food and money was given to a committee of men, chosen from the group by brother Monroy, and these people will never forget what one man, who was a Christian, did for them. Many people shall be converted to Jesus Christ as a result of this. In fact, brother Monroy talked and preached most of the night that night.

I shudder to think about what many of us might have done in a similar situation, without having in mind what we really want to do to make disciples. Even the boldest among us would only have gone to the group and said, "Stand up everybody and listen to me, I want to preach Jesus to you," but I am sure the message would have fallen on deaf ears. Once brother Monroy, following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, had "compassion on the people" and had the courage to do something about it, the people began to ask him, "What must we do?" This is a real example of a man with well-defined objectives.

### A SPECIFIC PLAN

I believe there is a scriptural precedent for an overall objective for mission work. In Acts 1:8 Jesus said, "And ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the world." In Acts 13:5; Acts 13:14; Acts 14:1, we see what the apostles did. They went first to the synagogues and then they went to the community at large, Acts 13:6, verse 44, and 14:6,7. They knew where to begin and then how to fan out into the areas to contact the individual

people. They taught both publicly and from house to house. Unless a planned program for reaching the population is inaugurated, a missionary can spend all of his time arguing with Mormons, or Jehovah's Witnesses, and dealing with welfare cases that could never really build a foundation for the kingdom of God. Early disciples realized the danger of the daily ministrations distracting from the ministry of the word, Acts 6:4.

When the apostles taught, they turned the world upside down. Visualize two apostles walking down the streets of some great city of the first century. There were not men with great power such as the Roman army had, but they were just men of God who could shake a city because they knew where to begin and they knew how to make an impact on the people with a real message that challenged their thinking.

Let me stop and sound a warning here, given by brother Gordon Hogan, a missionary in Lahore, Pakistan. He says, "While I am a believer in sound methods, I fear we have become (generally speaking) convinced that they, the methods, are more essential than Jesus and His message of salvation. Methods, unless translated into fruitful action, will become only a platform for debate and discussion, resulting, I am afraid, in a sterile, do nothing, mission skeleton. There is no substitute for teaching and practicing Christianity every day from house to house and in the market place." I believe he is right.

We have a growing group of people in the church today who have never actually been to the mission field, but who seem to know all the details of the methods involved in carrying the gospel to others. I am certainly willing to listen to them, but I'd like to see their methods put into practice before I would base my entire life on their plan. A part of any successful plan would quite naturally include adequate personnel and tools. Paul knew the value of dependable *workers*, II Timothy 4:9-22. He knew the value

of having *several workers* in one place. Dale Graham, successful evangelist in the City Beach Church of Christ in Perth, Australia, has this to say concerning group evangelism: "The history of the Lord's work in Perth reveals several things. The team method, with good sound backing, makes for success. Team members work together in the overall program, yet each moves in his own sphere of influence and opportunity." He continues by saying, "I believe world evangelism has some basic requirements that really are universal. The prime tasks of *teaching* and *doing good* apply in Australia and Asia just like they do in Tennessee or Texas. People need to be taught so they may believe and obey, therefore, the need to communicate is as real on the other side of the international date line and below the equator as it is across the street from ACC campus. It is easy to say 'there should be planning and preparation and supervision,' but who could presume to set these down in minute details. I do believe there are some skeletal guide lines that range from motivation of all concerned to communication among all concerned, and that these produce the confidence that helps lead to success." It must be stressed here that adequate personnel and tools vary with various sections of the world. Buildings, equipment, professional counsel, guidance, advertising, teaching programs, evaluating public reaction, preaching, personal workers, secretaries, preacher training personnel, printers, music teachers, ladies to grade correspondence courses, and so on vary with the country the gospel is to be preached in. I know of no man alive who can lay down a broad general statement concerning the personnel and tools needed for the entire world. Europe is much different from Africa. Africa is much different from Asia. Asia is entirely different from Australia, and Australia is different from the Pacific Isles. Therefore, each work must be looked upon as an individual work, and proper personnel and tools must be provided.

The one outstanding principle that must be stressed

is that, according to New Testament principles, we must go into the heavily populated areas of the world and from them go into the highways and hedges of the earth, always with emphasis on SELF RELIANCE.

*Discipleship* is one of the key words in teaching as Jesus taught. I'd like to use the word "indigenous church," but that word is rather loaded in our day and, therefore, I prefer to stress *discipleship*. In mission work we are to make disciples. Disciples are active followers of Christ, not "spiritual bed patients." Let's see how Jesus did it. He *trained*. The twelve and then the seventy were trained, and *then* they went out and converted others and taught them to convert others. Paul made converts and soon appointed elders. Jesus and Paul both put more emphasis on teaching converts to accept the responsibility to teach others and to carry on their own program of work than most missionaries do today.

One of the greatest examples of independent congregations of the Lord's church I know of outside the United States is Perth, Australia. It would do well for people who are planning to go into an English-speaking work to investigate how this has been accomplished in Perth.

I recently heard Dr. Farrar speak about Nigeria, and the fact that when missionaries were driven out of Nigeria, the converts continued to preach and teach and carry on all the work that was being accomplished there. This is what we are looking for.

We must develop leaders in the church of the Lord—men who can preach the gospel of Christ. I'm speaking of local people in a country. Wes Reagan, a very effective preacher of the gospel of Christ, who has spent most of his preaching life in the mission field (and now works with one of the largest congregations of the Lord's church any-

where) says, "The best test of a missionary's work is not what *he* does, but what the *converts* do." This is certainly true.

We need to expect a lot from the converts. We must go into a city and seek out those people who are capable people. Those people who, once they learn the gospel of Christ, can really lead others to Christ. We need the leaders, the people who have an influence in the city, and then we need to expect a lot of them. When we expect a lot, we receive a lot, and God's work is blessed. Much was expected of brother Jud Whitefield, therefore, he has done much.

Dale Graham once again says, "You know of the lovely substantial converts here, many of whom have proven leadership and success in their own fields of endeavor." Here is another key to success. For when they truly learn they are "saved to save others" and communicate properly, you get the snowball effect. Surely that's why the disciples multiplied greatly in the first century."

Brethren, let's build churches, not benevolent cases. Self-supporting, self-perpetuating, and self-governing churches. This should be the goal of every missionary.

I have recently heard a great deal of talk about keeping the church in the mission field from depending too much on the evangelist. I think this is a worthy goal and just as soon as we can get it accomplished in America, perhaps we can do something about accomplishing it in the mission field. However, I can pray to God that we will be able to accomplish it in foreign fields even before we are able to do it here. As sending congregations, we must be very careful to keep in close touch with the missionary, and we must do everything we can to encourage him, but even at that, we must not expect him to accomplish that which we cannot accomplish here at home with all the help we have.

## RESULTS

The early church had measurable results. They measured their effectiveness by their results. The growth and impact of the church is often specifically noted in the Bible. Three thousand obeyed on Pentecost. The number of men came to be about five thousand, Acts 4:4. The number multiplied, Acts 6:1. The number multiplied and many priests obeyed, Acts 6:7. These people made an impact. They had converts, martyrs, imprisonments, selling of possessions, multiplying of crowds, increasing opposition. They were making an impact, they knew it, and the world knew it.

Again Wes Reagan has said; "It is easier to explain away the ineffectiveness of a program than to face it and correct it." The man who sells insurance has no difficulty figuring out how he is doing financially, however, only rarely do you talk to a preacher who says his work is not going well. He talks in vague terms about "spiritual growth," "improved attitudes" and so on, and it seems, the worse his work is, the more vague the terms. It reminds you of a man who said the operation was a success but the patient died.

We are all certainly aware of intangible values that are extremely important, but they normally bear tangible fruit. It is certainly true that you cannot always go by visible results, but it's also true that there are many missionaries in the field who have not worked efficiently enough and hard enough to produce the results, and this is just an excuse for ineffectiveness. When the man works and does God's will, when he gives the credit to God, and when he has a specific plan, results may be slow in the beginning, but ultimately they will come. In this case, it would truly be right to say, "You can't always go by visible results." I do not want to encourage the feeling that if our missionary does not have a certain number of baptisms we will

discontinue our support. I want rather to encourage a realistic evaluation and programs of work geared to get results, not merely to churn up the water.

It would be good if we looked at programs of teaching being done by various religious organizations, because they, too, have had difficulties in propagating that which they teach. All programs are not equally effective. Between 1940 and 1960 the combined membership of the Lutheran, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Evangelical, United Brethren, Baptist, and Episcopal Churches in Puerto Rico grew from fifteen thousand to eighteen thousand—twenty per cent in twenty years. Methodist and Disciples grew from six thousand to thirteen thousand—one hundred and sixteen per cent in twenty years. The Assembly of God, Church of God, and Seventh-Day Adventist grew from six thousand to twenty-three thousand—two hundred and eighty-three per cent. Here is the same field, the same period, and yet different programs produced different results. May God help us to have the honesty of heart to improve our methods and to work hard in learning how to measure our progress. Then we will convert others to Christ.

### SERVING WITH THE HEART

Some ask us whether we feel a man should be a missionary because of his "head" or his "heart." We refuse to choose, because we believe it takes *both*. We may have an intelligent, effective, and well-planned program that is at the same time a compassionate work. Well-laid plans to teach the gospel will lead to all kinds of possibilities to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, raise the orphans, help the sick, care for widows, etc. We will demonstrate compassion without compromise.

### COMMUNICATION

The relationship between the sending congregation,

the missionary, and the receiving congregation is well summed up in a statement by Dale Graham; "Stanley, I know these are general platitudes, but mostly you know I have seen only the good side of work like this, sent by people who know us and love us, who communicate well with us, (it's a two-way street), who provide adequately for us, who pray with us and for us in every decision and every teaching situation. One of our elders who recently visited us here in Perth, knew every member of the church here, more than sixty of them, when he arrived, as he had seen them in slide reports and knew their background and stories of conversions from tapes and letters."

This is certainly the ideal in relationship between congregations and missionary.

The Highland congregation in Abilene where I work is inaugurating a program that I believe will have true heart involvement. The best involvement one can have is to have his own son, daughter, grandchild, or life-long brother in Christ in the mission field and when they are there, your heart is there. We, in the Highland congregation, are in a program whereby we hope to send every one of our boys and girls into the mission field for at least two years of their life, supported by their own parents. This program begins in the third grade, continues through high school. We hope to give proper motivation, training, and support to these young people as they go into the fields of the world to help those who are in established works. We believe that this one congregation can send more people into foreign fields between now and 1980 than all the rest of the congregations of the church of Christ in the world are presently sending. We already have that number of boys and girls who are interested in this work. Once this really begins to function, the heartbeat of the congregation will be the heartbeat of those who work in mission fields.

## WHO CAN GO TO THE MISSION FIELD?

Brother Gordon Hogan of Lahore, Pakistan, says, "In this business of missions, I am convinced that the church must put the total talent of its membership to work. If a good Bible teacher, preacher, secretary, printer, music teacher or whatever, is available for one month, or however long, let's use that talent. Our greatest problem stems from a lack of dedicated, Christ-submitted workers. Trained, zealous servants of Christ could be brought to almost every mission point during vacations, leaves of absence, or upon retirement. However, these people must be brought into an organized program and given specific duties in order to realize their greatest potential."

He goes on to talk about the training of local workers. "The Bible Training Program envisioned in Kuala Lumpur will be a vehicle for using the available talent just waiting to be tapped. It will provide the very best medium for training capable leaders, preachers, and teachers. Students will be trained in their own cultural and economic setting, and this point cannot be over emphasized. If we send students to America, we are sowing seeds of jealousy among those who are not sent. The student soon becomes wrapped up with the American way and even if he returns to his home country, which is not likely, he is a misfit and almost useless to the cause of Christ. By sending students to America, or encouraging them to go, we almost invariably spell their doom spiritually speaking. If this one message could be conveyed to the administrators of our Christian colleges, I am convinced we would be years ahead. What is the alternative? *Establish Bible-training programs in the foreign field.* It is much wiser, cheaper and more fruitful to send a teacher to many students than to send the students to the teacher. Christian college teachers could profitably spend their summers teaching students in organized Bible training programs in the foreign field. At least three major benefits would come immediately from

such a practice. First, foreign students would receive training from highly qualified people. Second, the cost of training would be minimum, releasing money to be used in literature and other soul-winning work, and third, almost every teacher who experienced teaching in such a situation would be converted to the real necessity and joy of world evangelism. Such a teacher could not possibly return to America without instilling into the hearts of his American students the same imperative." This is a part of the answer to the question, who can go? It has been my privilege to encourage many people to go to the mission fields. Most of them have been successful and happy people and all of them have gained spiritually from the rich experiences they have found there.

### CONCLUSION

We are seeking and searching for effective mission programs all over the world. No one has all the answers except God. Countries of the world vary immensely; however, there are basic principles that God has laid down in His word that should be our guide lines. Let us begin with God, know where we are going, know the route that will take us there, seek adequate personnel and tools, build self-reliance into the work, measure our progress objectively, put our heart as well as our head into the work, but certainly let us not forget the most important thing of all, let us go make disciples of all nations.

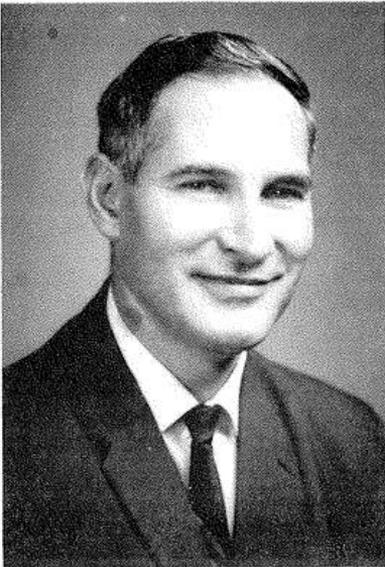
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## OPPORTUNITIES IN MEDICAL MISSIONS

Henry Farrar, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Born in Nashville, Tennessee, December 20, 1926. Baptized into Christ in 1938 by Brother Harry Pickup at the church known today as West End Church of Christ. Attended Harding College from 1944 to 1947 where decision was made to become a medical missionary to China. Received B.A. and M.S. degrees from University of Tennessee in Knoxville and the M.D. degree from the University School of Medicine in Memphis in 1954. Became a Diplomate of American Board of Surgery in 1963 and a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons in 1964. Medical missionary to Nigeria, West Africa for three years sponsored by Nashville's West End congregation. He is married to the former Grace Johnson who holds the B.S. degree from Harding College in addition to being a Registered Nurse from Bethesda Hospital School of Nursing, Cincinnati, Ohio. The Farrars have five children and are now living in Dickson, Tenn. and plan to return to Africa in 1970, to the Christian Hospital near Aba, Biafra or Nigeria which they helped to establish.



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From Nigeria, Africa, in 1963, evangelists from American churches of Christ serving there called me to help them. As they went about preaching the word in Africa, the missionaries found themselves constantly besieged by the sick asking for physical help. The missionary wives conducted "clinics" at the back doors of their homes each day; and all through the day trips to distant denominational hospitals to assist the very

ill who had no way to get to the hospital had to be made in the cars of the missionaries. Like Jesus, the missionaries came "to seek and to save the lost," but as they preached, all about were the lepers, the feverish, the sick and dying. Compassion for these sick demanded that the missionaries "interrupt" the preaching by word to attend to the sick. I emphatically contend that these "interruptions" were not a sidetrack to preaching the gospel—to obeying the great commission. These so-called "interruptions" of caring for the sick were and are as much a part of preaching the gospel as preaching it by word of mouth. Surely being a missionary is "more than carrying a Bible under one's arm and preaching the gospel by word of mouth. The missionary must maintain the form of sound words, but he must also engage in a practical manifestation of the spirit of the gospel with concern not only for the life which is to come but also for the life which now is."<sup>1</sup>

He healed them all.<sup>2</sup>

And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them.<sup>3</sup>

... great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.<sup>4</sup>

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.<sup>5</sup>

When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it

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1 Lindsell, Harold, *Missionary Principles and Practice*, (Westwood, N. J., Fleming H. Revell Co., 1955), p. 222

2 Matthew 12:15

3 Matthew 15:30

4 Matthew 19:1-2

5 Matthew 21:14

might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.<sup>6</sup>

In the last quoted scripture, please note that Jesus' healing of the *physical* diseases of the people was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

The Gospels record twenty-six cases of individual healings accomplished by Jesus Christ. In ten cases, healing of several or many sick people is mentioned without always stating the nature of the diseases which were cured. On four occasions it is said of Him that He went about "healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people...<sup>7</sup>

These scriptures clearly emphasize the healing part of Christ's work. Jesus healed because he had compassion on the people. If the *only* reason for his miraculous healings was to produce faith, then He would have done many mighty works at Nazareth. Instead, scripture tells us:

And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.<sup>8</sup>

Today many will contend that the gift of healing is no longer available and that this argument for medical missions is based on shifting sands. It is true that miracles of healing were attestations of the divinity of Jesus Christ and that they were evidences of the apostolic office in the Acts of the Apostles. But they were more than this. They were a practical manifestation of the spirit of compassion in the ministry to suffering people. Can it not be said without apology that the healing art in the service of the gospel of Christ is in line with the methods and intentions of God Himself? Christ and

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6 Matthew 8:16-17

7 Martin, Bernard, *The Healing Ministry in the Church*, (Richmond, Virginia, John Knox Press, 1960), p. 19

8 Matthew 13:58

the disciples preached the gospel by word and deed, *and the church today ought to do the same.*<sup>9</sup> (Emphasis mine HF).

### ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL

The beginnings of the Christian Hospital which we established at Onicha Ngwa, Africa, by the providence of the Lord, followed these events: American Evangelists, preaching the gospel by word of mouth in Africa and with no medical training found themselves confronted by sick people, often in large numbers. These missionaries were filled with compassion and felt bound to respond in a sacrificial, loving way. Thus Patti Bryant told me she had to neglect the work in her home and her children in order to treat the sick at her back door all through the day and she wrote me, "Where are our Christian doctors who are needed so much to help these sick and dying people here and manifest mercy to them?" Rees Bryant and the other missionaries wrote me urgently, telling how they would have to leave off in the middle of a lesson at Onicha Ngwa Bible Training College in order to take some desperately ill woman in childbirth, unable to deliver, to one of the distant denominational hospitals. These men of God were not like the Priest and Levite passing by on the other side in the face of physical suffering. They scripturally stopped, temporarily, preaching the Word to bind up wounds, taking the sick to "the Inn" (hospitals), and they often "...took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, 'Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.'"<sup>10</sup>

As the missionaries thus gave first aid and help to the suffering, there was a sharing of burdens and a binding of

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<sup>9</sup> Lindsell, Harold, *op. cit.*, p. 224

<sup>10</sup> Luke 10:35

heart to heart of the healer and the healed. The patient felt that the missionary loved and cared for him, and since the deed was in the name of Christ, the pagan native was brought to some knowledge of the love of God. Dr. Livingstone is often quoted as saying "God had only one son, and he gave him to be a medical missionary." In those humble, backdoor clinics, the healing power of Christ was revealed. The famous Dr. Ambroise Pare said: "I have tended the wound and God healed it."

Because of such events as these, we were in Africa to establish the Christian Hospital. Please let it be clearly understood that our efforts were not merely "humanitarian" and not merely "social gospel." Christian Hospital was established to assist in the preaching of the gospel. We call it "medical evangelism." Luke was not called "the beloved physician" by accident. Luke was often a companion of the Apostle Paul on missionary journeys.

Preaching the gospel by acts of kindness may often be more effective than the spoken word. Thus we read:

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the manner of life of the wives . . .<sup>11</sup>

Healing was at the beginning of the gospel. Through the healing acts of Jesus, men saw God at work, and God coming to them; God triumphing over evil, God creating wholeness and health; God restoring community. Healing was a demonstration of the gospel.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> I Peter 3:1

<sup>12</sup> Davey, T. F., *The Forward Planning of the Church's Medical Work in Eastern Nigeria*. (Unpublished address at Umuahia, Nigeria, 1967), p. 2

THE PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN AVAILETH  
MUCH *TODAY*

We can see that healing of the physical body was a prominent feature of the preaching of Jesus in the Gospels and of the church as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The church, with regard to physical disease, is enjoined by God:

Is any among you afflicted (suffering)? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed . . .<sup>13</sup>

In my opinion, one reason why the church of the Lord today fails to carry out the injunction read from James, the fifth chapter, is because we are busily engaged in the negative business of fighting the so-called "faith healers." In thinking of Christian healing, we are so busy refuting the error of sensational religious quacks, that we have not taken time for the positive side of Christian healing delineated in such places as James, chapter five.

Do not misunderstand me to say that "divine healers" should not be exposed and opposed. As a medical doctor, you know that I am deeply concerned how men have exploited innocent and suffering sick people for financial gain. We definitely should teach against all false and fraudulent teachers. However, at the same time, we must preach clearly what the Bible says positively about praying for the sick.

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13 James 5:13-16

Jesus plainly said, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."<sup>14</sup> Medicine (a lump of figs) was used by the prophet of God to heal a boil which endangered the life of Hezekiah.<sup>15</sup>

### THREE ASPECTS OF THE HEALING WORK OF THE CHURCH TODAY

Thus the use of physicians and medicine has divine approval. However, we must realize that medical science has limitations. There are many situations where the church has a definite responsibility in healing. Three obvious realms of this are:

1. In areas of the world like Africa, where our evangelists serve as missionaries and their hearers have no access to proper medical care;
2. In those cases of mental illness such as alcoholism where spiritual help is so necessary;
3. In every case of illness, as in every aspect of our lives, we should pray for the power of God to heal.

By the way, who is it that heals anyway? Does God heal with the doctor's help (as Dr. Pare taught us) or does the doctor heal with God's help? We have our prayer turned around backward when we ask God to help the doctor to heal! We should rather ask that God use the doctor or any means he sees fit to liberate the sick from the evil power which is disease. The unbelief of Christians lies in their refusal to seek healing from God, who alone can give it, with or without medicine and the physician. This is clearly taught in scripture:

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<sup>14</sup> Matthew 9:12

<sup>15</sup> II Kings 20:7

And Asa in the thirty-ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great; yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.<sup>16</sup>

...the Chronicler does not stress the fact that the king consulted the physicians so much as his lack of faith. "Yet in his disease"; even at the time when the leader of God's people is put to the test, he does not turn towards God. The Book of Chronicles shows that in spite of the faithfulness of this king in the abolition of idolatry and the fact that his heart "was perfect all his days," he committed a grave error: relying on the help of the king of Syria to fight against the king of Israel. All through the Old Testament that attitude is stigmatized as showing a lack of faith in regard to the sole protector of its people: the Lord. And the fact that the king put his trust in physicians only when he was struck by disease, stresses this lack of faith still more.<sup>17</sup>

### HELPING THE MENTALLY SICK

Certainly, from a medical viewpoint, this is the age of psychosomatic illness. Prescriptions for tranquilizers by today's physicians outnumber any other type of medicine prescribed. Physicians fully realize the psychogenic overlay in so many illnesses. The real basis of such disease as peptic ulcer is deeply involved in the thinking of patients suffering from this malady. There is a very long and definite catalogue of psycho-physiological disease. Severe pain and disability of every organ system in the body is often due to the mental attitude of the patient. Besides those diseases such as peptic ulcer, "irritable colon," migraine and many others, there is a wide spectrum of diseases such as psychoneurotic depressions and dependence upon alcohol and drugs where the thinking of the patient must be altered.

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<sup>16</sup> II Chronicles 16:12

<sup>17</sup> Martin, Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 48, 49

I respectfully submit that the church has a real responsibility in helping these people in cooperation with the medical doctor. Many of these patients need the sympathetic friendship of a truly Christian helper more than they need tranquilizing or mood elevating medicine. Often we refer these patients to agnostic and unbelieving psychiatrists and psychologists for help. I am sorry to say so, but I know of no branch of medical specialization where there is more skepticism concerning the Bible than in psychiatry. It is my opinion that the mentally ill are often better off with a genuine Christian friend for counsel and a general practitioner of medicine for medical help rather than the psychiatrist or psychologist.

Just the other night a chronic alcoholic came to me begging for tranquilizers. His begging was pitiful as he told me how his drinking had cost him his job, the love of his family and his own self respect. He said, "I really want above all else to stop this drinking—it has ruined me and I can't stand life any more and I have to have alcohol or sleeping pills or I will go crazy! Help me in God's name!" He had already been in mental hospitals several times, and he had been helped little except for easy sobering up. Alcoholics Anonymous had helped the man temporarily by an appeal to God; but this organization was and is so often variable. I am convinced that Christians have a responsibility in such cases, and with God's help can exercise a real healing work in these disturbed people. Sympathetic friendship is needed more than pills—obey God, and "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed . . . ."

### CHRISTIAN HEALING IS PERSONAL AND IS MORE THAN CURING

The materialistic concept of illness today exalts the scientific aspects of curing. In contrast to this, the Christian doctor acknowledges a higher power involved in the

equation. Dr. T. F. Davey, an internationally distinguished physician in the field of leprosy, emphasizes the following sequence when a patient consults a doctor with a Christian outlook:

1. When a patient goes to the doctor, he acknowledges his need for help and realizes his own resources are insufficient. Illness brings a person to this realization of the frailty of life. It is an act of faith to go to a doctor for the patient cannot have knowledge of the outcome.
2. The Christian doctor receives the patient with compassion and implies "I will help you and we will bear this burden of sickness together."
3. The personal encounter of patient with doctor proceeds as the patient freely tells the details of his sickness. The patient submits to examination and strips himself naked and his secrets are revealed. A confidential trust develops further between doctor and patient. The Christian doctor implies his understanding that the patient is a creature of God.
4. "By applying scientific technology (God's creation) and his own self (God's creature), the physician proclaims the power of God to the dethronement of evil."<sup>18</sup> The physician and patient participate in an invasion of the kingdom of evil and darkness and sickness.
5. Whether the sickness increases or diminishes, the patient and physician are changed because both more fully realize their dependence on God. In the fiery furnace of trial by the evil of sickness, the attitude of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego should be manifested: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you,

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18 Davey, T. F., *op. cit.*, p. 2

O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.”<sup>19</sup>

In this scripture we see confidence in the power of God evident with a concomitant realization that the will of God must be done. The Hebrew children are saying, “God will deliver us from this evil, but if not at this particular time, we will be delivered from evil in the final analysis or transaction.”

If impersonal medicine effects a cure, all is well; but if this fails, then there remains only hopelessness and fear of death. Thus Christians need to take responsibility in trying to increase the number of Christian physicians so that Christ may be brought more fully into the doctor-patient relationship.

## MEDICAL MISSIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

In medical missionary work, there is this tremendous possibility of introducing Jesus Christ into a person's life at a most opportune time. There Christ and the church literally surround the patient who is sick, full of his realization of need from higher powers for help.

Traditionally medical missions have not been philanthropic or just humanitarian. The philosophy undergirding this form of missionary work has been the idea that it is an agency which bears the stamp of divine approval and embodies the spirit of the gospel, enabling men to further the work of reconciling man to God. The function of the medical missionary was held to be that of an evangelist.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel 3:17-18

<sup>20</sup> Lindsell, H., *op. cit.*, p. 225

Now there is no hidden motive in medical missions to proselyte. The effort to change men into Christians is unobscured. The sick are not compelled to come to the Christian Hospital. The Christian Hospital at Onicha Ngwa has clearly indicated in every way from the beginning to all patients that the hospital has a spiritual goal. If men and nations say they want medicine without any gospel preaching, they are welcome to try to obtain such. However, as long as true Christians work with the sick it is natural for them to witness about Christ. The church working in medicine and education realizes that these things are means to an end.

When missionaries go among the unreached tribes to reduce their spoken language to writing, they do so with the idea that the Word of God shall come to them in their own tongue. And, of course, the plain and unvarnished truth is that any means or agency which does not include the determined effort to make disciples and to present Christ is not missionary work and is therefore not to be included within the scope of missionary endeavor.<sup>21</sup>

Now in Nigeria there is only one doctor for each 35,000 people, while here in the United States the ratio is one doctor for 900 people. Therefore in preaching the gospel to those people of Nigeria, the situation is much different. As the American workers enter into living with these people, Christian empathy develops. In the case of Dorcas Ezeribe, the daughter of a Nigerian gospel preacher, this is illustrated. Dorcas, a bright girl of 13 years of age, had an unrepaired harelip which gave her a terribly grotesque appearance. In the United States, such defects are repaired soon after birth so the child can suck better and so that the parents will not be embarrassed by such a distressing deformity. But Dorcas had spent 13 years with this situation

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<sup>21</sup> Lindsell, H., *Ibid.*, p. 227

where her mouth was never closed to outside viewers, where the gums and teeth protruded markedly from the center of her face. One missionary described it as being so terrible that you couldn't look at it, but so remarkable that one could not help staring at it. God gave us the medical skills to repair this defect. Churches who supported the work of Christian Hospital would be happy to see the changes wrought in the appearance of this young lady. Now with a normal appearance, she faces the world and her future with a different attitude. The privilege and joy of helping such people provides much real and lasting compensation for me personally, also. This sharing of burdens of the sick and deformed is truly the work of the church of the Lord.

What can you do about this? Well, certainly if you are a doctor you can be a medical missionary. A doctor can spend a week, or a month, a summer, or years in one of our Christian hospitals, and the work done would relieve suffering in the name of the Lord. One does not have to be a doctor and he does not have to go to Africa either to participate in this work. Financial support is needed. "How can they go, except they be sent?"

### DO WE FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS?

Preachers in churches of Christ have been long upon the subject of the "marks of the New Testament church," and I think this is justified. One of the marks of the followers of Jesus is helping the sick.

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers

are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up,  
and the poor have the gospel preached to them.<sup>22</sup>

Now of course we cannot perform the miracles that Jesus did, but we can follow him where we are able to do so. With His help *we are able* to help the blind receive their sight, help the lame walk, the deaf hear and cleanse lepers through modern medicine and surgery. It is not a faithful disciple who says that because we cannot do *all* Jesus said in this passage, we will neglect also the things we are able to do.

When people in your community ask, "Is the Church of Christ the one that should come, or do we look for another?"; I hope that the reply can be: "Go and tell the inquirer that through the efforts of this church, the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Brethren, we cannot do all things in this very day, but we must go as far as we are able to go in following the example of Jesus.

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,  
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave . . .

# TO THE WHOLE WORLD

Dewayne Davenport

PARENTS: Mr. and Mrs. Clark H. Davenport of Chattanooga, Tennessee

DATE OF BIRTH: June 3, 1934

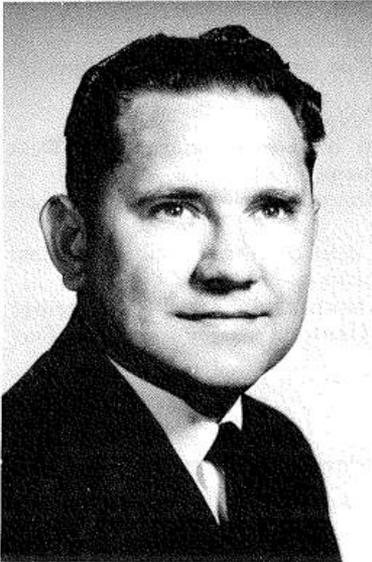
PLACE OF BIRTH: Chattanooga, Tennessee

FAMILY SITUATION: Wife: Jane Russell Davenport; Son: Russell Dewayne (Age 3 years)

HIGH SCHOOL: Tyner High School, Tyner, Tennessee

## COLLEGE and SEMINARY EDUCATION:

1. Freed-Hardeman College—1953-1955, Henderson, Tennessee
2. Harding College—1955-1957 (B.A.), Searcy, Arkansas
3. Temple Theological Seminary—1957-58, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



4. Crozer Theological Seminary — 1958-1961 (B. D.), Chester, Pennsylvania
5. Harding Graduate School of Religion—1964-65 (M.A.), Memphis, Tennessee
6. Harding Graduate School of Religion — 1966 (M.R.E.), Memphis, Tennessee

## MISSIONARY WORK:

1. West Chester, Pennsylvania — 1957-1961, Church of Christ, 1326 Park Avenue  
Sponsored from 1959-1961 by Madison, Tennessee, Church of Christ
2. Kumasi, Ghana, West

Africa—1961-1967, Sponsored by the Madison, Tennessee, Church of Christ

PREACHING EXPERIENCE:

1. Congregations in Tennessee, Alabama and Arkansas while in college.
2. Church of Christ—1957-1961, West Chester, Pennsylvania
3. Church of Christ—September 1967, Rhome, Texas

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

1. Ghana Bible College—1962-1964, Kumasi, Ghana
2. Summer Seminar in Missions—1964, Harding Graduate School of Religion, Memphis, Tennessee
3. Fort Worth Christian College, Fort Worth, Texas—1967-
4. Summer Seminar in Missions—1968, Abilene Christian College, Abilene, Texas
5. Present Position: Instructor in Speech, Bible and Missions; Dean of Students, Fort Worth Christian College, Fort Worth, Texas

WRITING EXPERIENCE:

1. Articles for the "Firm Foundation"
2. Correspondent and feature writer for the "Christian Chronicle"
3. Articles for the "Gospel Light"
4. Author of "The Missionary and African Studies"
5. Co-Editor of the magazine "The Mission Studies Quarterly"

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION:

1. Has produced and preached on radio programs in West Chester, Pennsylvania and Ghana, West Africa.
  2. Has appeared on several Annual Mission Workshops on Christian College campuses.
  3. Has made special study of missions and African Studies.
  4. Has written Thesis on "Animism in West Africa."
  5. Member of Rotary Club of Downtown Fort Worth. Former member of Club in Kumasi, Ghana. Past President and Secretary of the Kumasi Club.
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*(Speech delivered for the Bible Lectureship at A. C. C. in February 1968)*

## INTRODUCTION TO AND BASIS OF MISSIONS

Mark 16:15 in the Phillips translation reads: "You must go out to the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature." Three phrases stand out in this verse: "go out," "whole world" and "every creature." It seems that Mark did not intend for us to miss the message of this passage. In these words are found the marching orders of the church and the individual Christian. However, long before this unchanging commission was given, God was interested in missions.

Ultimately, missions find their origin in the heart of God. It was God who gave us the redemptive plan. It was God who gave His only begotten Son in order that the world might be saved through Him. It was God who was, "in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation" (II Cor. 5:19-R.S.V.). This passage tells us that the whole world is to be reconciled and that *we* are the ones to take the message. To emphasize this point, we notice the following verse: "So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us..." (II Cor. 5:20-R.S.V.). The word missionary could easily be substituted here for ambassador.

True mission ideals are not based on a few so-called "missionary texts." From beginning to end, the Bible conveys the missionary spirit. As Douglas Webster expresses it, the missionary idea

is the great theme of the Bible. It is implicit in Genesis 1 with its great doctrine of God the creator, from whom all things took their origin, the one God, the God of all the world. It finds its fulfillment in the majestic

completeness of the city of God in which the nations walk, envisaged in Revelation 21 and 22.<sup>1</sup>

The God of the Bible was and is interested in all men, everywhere and always. Remember that the purpose for which God called Abraham was that *all* nations of the earth might be blessed. The Israel of the Old Testament was given a universal mission, even though at times she did not execute this mission. The second Israel, the Church, seems to have inherited far too much of this attitude from its spiritual ancestor.

The great prophets of the Old Testament saw God as a universal God, not the exclusive God of Israel.

The word of the Lord came to Amos for Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab as well as for Israel and Judah. Isaiah's conspectus went even further and included Egypt and Assyria.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the Psalms are nothing more than missionary prayers and thanksgivings. The entire message of Jonah is missionary. It is written to remind the Jews of their missionary vocation which they had forgotten.

While the Old Testament presents very plainly the missionary idea, we do not see this theme in full bloom until we cross the threshold of the New Testament. The very heart of the New Testament is missions. Robert H. Glover stated:

The New Testament is uniquely and preeminently missionary—the greatest missionary volume ever produced.

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1 Webster, Douglas, *What is a Missionary*, 4th Imp. (London: The Highway Press, 1958), p. 44.

2 *Ibid.*

Every section of it was written by a missionary with the primary object of meeting a missionary need and promoting mission work.<sup>3</sup>

Missions Professor W. O. Carver once said,

If there had been no Commission, or no obedience to its spirit, there would have been no need for the New Testament writings and no occasion for their production. A product of missions, the New Testament can be truly interpreted only in the light of the missionary idea.<sup>4</sup>

Another writer puts it this way: "The New Testament draws its breath in missions, it incarnates missions, wherever it goes it creates missions."<sup>5</sup>

When it is realized that the missions theme is "the great theme of the Bible," then Mark 16:15 becomes not an isolated text of some missionary begging for support, but one of the most prominent and challenging verses of the Word of God.

The importance of missions is enhanced by the fact that Jesus, the most important person in the Bible, and Paul, perhaps second in importance, were both missionaries. Considering that the word "mission" expresses the idea of one sent, then John 3:17 becomes a vital mission text. John says: "For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (R.S.V.). As the great missionary to Africa, David Livingstone, expressed it: "God had only

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3 Glover, Robert H., *The Bible Basis of Missions*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles: Bible House of Los Angeles, 1946), p. 22.

4 Carver, W. O. Quoted in *The Bible Basis of Missions*, *Ibid.*

5 Quoted in *The Bible Basis of Missions*, *Ibid.*

one Son, and He was a missionary." The missionary nature of Paul is well known to every Bible student.

Having noticed the basis of missions, we now turn to the motives and methods of taking the Gospel to the whole world. To assist us in this task, we call upon Kipling's six honest serving men: What, Why, When, How, Where and Who.

## I. WHAT ARE MISSIONS?

Dr. Carver, who taught over 7,000 students in mission classes, said: "Missions is the proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom where it is *News* . . ." <sup>6</sup> This means mission work can take place anywhere people have not had the opportunity of hearing of Christ and His Church. The location of the field is not what determines the definition of missions. Our major concern is only that the good news is proclaimed where it is news. This will automatically rule out areas where churches are to be found in every community. But more on this under the where of missions.

In one sense, any group sent anywhere to do a job could be called a mission. Those of us who have worked overseas are very familiar with diplomatic and trade missions. The American ambassador in any foreign nation is nothing more than a missionary for the U.S.A. There can be no doubt that Communism has a world mission. It is, therefore, all the more important that Americans be actively engaged in a world missionary effort in the diplomatic arena. How much more then the Church of our Lord!

The word apostle and missionary have the same

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<sup>6</sup> Carver, W. O., *Missions in the Plan of the Ages*, 5th ed. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1951), p. 11.

meaning. "Apostle" comes from the Greek *apostello*, while "missionary" comes from the Latin *mitto*. Both of these terms have exactly the same meaning—"I send." A missionary, then, is a sent one. The work which he goes to perform is called a mission. Since the missionary is a "sent one," we might very well refer to the Acts of the Apostles as "The Doings of the Missionaries." Certain brethren have objected to the terms missionary and mission. Both terms, however, seem to have a solid Biblical foundation. We should not shun their usage.

The idea is not so much that the church *has* a mission, but that the church *is* a mission. Its mission is its life. As Webster expresses it:

When the church is looking up to God it has no option but to worship. When the church is looking out to the world it has no option but to evangelize. The nature of its own life determines this, wherever the church is *being* the church and not just a collection of religious people.<sup>7</sup>

If we take from the church its sense of mission, then the church will bear little resemblance to the church of the New Testament. A church without this mission can hardly announce to the world that it is the only true church and that the only Christians are found within its ranks.

The true mission of the church is to seek and save the lost wherever they are found, whether it be within the boundaries of the U.S.A. or the most remote village of Asia, Africa or South America. The following mottoes will give us an insight to the mission of the church:

"The mission of the Church is missions." "The Church that does not evangelize will fossilize." "Only as the

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<sup>7</sup> Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

Church fulfills her missionary obligation does she justify her existence." "The supreme task of the Church is the evangelization of the world." "The first work of the whole Church is to give the Gospel to the whole world."<sup>8</sup>

## II. THE WHY OF MISSIONS

This brings us to our next question, why do mission work? Why should a congregation or individual be concerned about taking the whole gospel to the whole world? The answer to this question lies in what mission writers call "the motives of missions." These we divide into two categories, which we refer to as worthy and unworthy motives.

### UNWORTHY MISSION MOTIVES

Many unworthy motives have driven men and women into a foreign land. Ranking near the top of this list is the idea that going overseas gives one a shortcut to heaven. I have at times given this advice to people interested in going to Africa: "Remember that you can go to heaven just as easy from America as Africa, and maybe easier." The mission field has caused more than one man to lose his faith. The trials of a foreign field usually result in a survival of the fittest. The faint-hearted should never attempt the task.

Even though in the minority, some brethren have hit the fund-raising trail in an attempt to "raise their stock" in the brotherhood. Serving on the foreign field usually serves to isolate one rather than increase his popularity back home. Unless he is in the class of mission promoters, he will find that the longer he serves overseas, the more he

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<sup>8</sup> Smith, Oswald J., *The Cry of the World*, rev. ed., (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1959), p. 60-62.

loses his contacts. The mission field is not the place to become a "big preacher."

The desire to "see the world" has caused a few to raise money for a ticket to Timbuktu or Waikiki. After two or three months, you will have seen all the country you wish and have taken all the slides you can afford. The remaining months and years will lengthen into what seems an eternity and you will curse the day you yielded to the tourist urge.

It is possible that the sponsoring congregation or eldership could engage in missions for the wrong purpose. One elder may say to another, "Well, you know we are the only church in the city not doing any mission work. Don't you think we should discuss this in our next meeting?" This congregation may send a man halfway around the world simply because it's the vogue to sponsor a missionary. (May God speed that day!)

### WORTHY MISSION MOTIVES

Turning now from the negative to the positive side of mission motives, we notice a few worthy and Biblical motives for missions.

The first and probably most important in the New Testament is the motive of obedience. If you wish, we could put love first; however, obedience is nothing more than the evidence of a true love for God.

Of all the motives which have been ascribed to the great missionary Paul, we must conclude that the primary one was obedience. It was obedience to his Lord that drove Paul to the regions beyond. Paul expressed his mission philosophy to King Agrippa many years after his conversion in these words, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19).

David Adeney once described the book of Acts as, "one long record of obedient witnesses."<sup>9</sup> Philip was having a very successful gospel meeting in Samaria. Yet, he left to go teach one man about Christ. The reason he left Samaria is found in Acts chapter eight: "But an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza' " (Acts 8:26, R.S.V.). Philip gave no excuses about how much more work he could do in Samaria, he simply "rose and went."

The command to go came to Peter in this manner: "the Spirit said to him, 'Behold three men are looking for you. Rise and go down, and accompany them without hesitation; for I have sent them' " (Acts 10:19-20, R.S.V.). Peter's response to this command is given, "he arose and went with them." We can clearly see that the "main motive in missionary service is not a consciousness of a great need, but rather a sense of commission — love manifesting itself through practical obedience."<sup>10</sup>

Another compelling motive for missions is the realization that people will be lost without Christ. Acts 4:12 expresses this most vividly: "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12, R.S.V.). The idea of some brethren is that we should leave the pagans in their ignorance, for through this ignorance they will be excused in the judgment. This concept is completely foreign to the Scriptures.

Not only does their salvation depend upon our taking the gospel to them, but so does our own. What kind of

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9 Adeney, David H., *The Unchanging Commission*, (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1955), p. 43.

10 *Ibid.*

God would let a person or church into heaven who had totally ignored the untold millions? Certainly not the God I read of in the Bible! An individual or congregation ignores world-wide missions at the risk of losing their own soul.

Our list of worthy mission motives could go on endlessly, but the time limit demands that we pass to a discussion of the who in missions.

### III. THE WHO IN MISSIONS

Is it true that missions are only for a handful of men in the brotherhood, to which we refer as missionaries? This is the feeling of far too many of our leaders, preachers, and others. Those of us who serve on foreign fields have come to the inescapable conclusion that many of our local preachers are the greatest hindrance we have to the cause of world missions. This you do, fellow preacher, at the peril of your soul. Preachers, elders, deacons, indeed all members of the Lord's church have a direct command from the Bible to be concerned about missions.

Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, . . ." (Matt. 28:19, R.S.V.). Your response to this may be that this command was given only to the apostles. For the sake of argument, we grant this. However, look at the next verse, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . ." (v. 20). One of these commands was to "make disciples of all nations." The command is thus passed on to each generation of believers just as surely as if they were the apostles themselves.

Missions is an individual responsibility. We need the dedication of Isaiah. When the voice of God came asking, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?, Isaiah's immediate response was, 'Here am I! Send me' " (Isa. 6:8).

We may not be able to go overseas in person, but we can go in spirit by supporting and praying for those who do go. One of the greatest losses to our worldwide mission effort is the failure of missionaries to return to the field once their first or second tour is concluded. A contributing factor to this is the feeling on the part of the missionary, whether right or wrong, that the brethren back home are not backing his activities by prayers and active support. One letter of encouragement may be enough to keep a missionary going in the face of myriad trials and discouragements.

Missions is also a corporate responsibility. Each congregation, as well as the entire brotherhood, is commanded to take the whole gospel to the whole world. There can be little doubt that one reason for the rise of missionary societies was the failure of local congregations to take their part in world missions. Not only are such organizations unscriptural, but we would have no practical need for them, if each congregation would assist in taking the gospel to every creature.

In Acts, chapter thirteen, it was the local congregation at Antioch which sent Paul and Barnabas, after they had been selected by the Holy Spirit. May God raise up more modern Antiochs!

More and more we are beginning to see that those whom we send should be better educated generally and in the field of missions specifically. The idea will soon vanish from our ranks that "missions is something you do, not something you study," as one preacher said to me. Missionaries must be qualified spiritually, educationally, physically, and mentally. And the sooner elder-ships realize this and begin turning down people who do not meet these qualifications, the better off our foreign program will be. Too many members have the idea which my father expressed to me when I told him I was going

to Ghana. His immortal words were: "Son, ain't there no place in America that will let you preach for them?" Let us pray for the day when the quality as well as the quantity of our missionary force is improved.

#### IV. THE WHERE OF MISSIONS

One of the most debatable questions in the realm of missions is "where." It is nothing short of inspiration as to how the Bible explains missions in every detail, even down to the geographical aspects. This divine map is found in Acts 1:8: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." These words of Jesus on the day of His ascension should be held in high regard by His disciples whether of the first or 20th centuries. These words were His last upon this earth. The church has been very disrespectful and virtually ignored this last command of Jesus. Many of us have been content to start in Jerusalem and stay there.

Acts 1:8 gives the order for world evangelism. Translated into a modern version, this verse might read: "You shall be my witnesses in Dallas, in Texas, in the U.S.A. and to the whole world." Substitute your hometown for Jerusalem and you will see the Bible order.

In the early part of our study, we noticed that, "Missions is the proclamation of the good news where it is news." This means missions can take place within the U.S.A. or even within the state, provided there is no present opportunity for that locality to hear and accept the gospel. More dramatically, it means that most of the nations outside the U.S.A. are still waiting to hear the good news. True, there is still much work to do in the States, but every one of the fifty has a congregation or more of

the Bible church. How can we say we are following the commands of Christ, if we stop in Samaria? Far too many brethren have the idea that missions should extend only from the southern border of Canada to the northern border of Mexico.

Since we do not have the missionary force to place men in every nation, we must necessarily exclude certain nations by our choice of others. Upon what basis should our selection be made? The primary concern in any decision should be that of the receptiveness of the citizens of the nation. We should not be interested in "doing mission work" but in making converts. Paul could have continued on and on doing mission work among the Jews, but when he saw that they would not respond, he went to the Gentiles who did respond. If this philosophy was good enough for Paul, then why not for us? The idea is not just to go, but to go where they will listen and obey.

## V. THE HOW OF MISSIONS

We have now arrived at the section of our lesson which concerns the methods of missions. The modern trend in missions is on the indigenous method, in contrast to paternalistic. Yet most of our churches and missionaries are still practicing the archaic methods of the 19th century. Due to our lateness in entering foreign missions, we are adopting methods which the denominations are beginning to abandon. An intensive study of mission methods and an application of the better ones on the mission fields is the only answer to our problem.

One of the greatest advocates of the indigenous method was Dr. Roland Allen. His two major works in this field were: *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours* and *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*. His philosophy of missions caused no little stir among the missionaries and students of mis-

sions. His ideas, however, were largely ignored until recently.

Allen based his ideas upon the methods of the Apostle Paul. He feels Paul's methods could be outlined as follows:

1. Begin the work in strategic centers of population and influence.
2. Do not aim at any particular class.
3. Do not take money from the people to whom you are ministering at the time.
4. Do not take money from other churches to give to the mission church.
5. Do not administer local church funds.
6. Make the churches self-supporting from their inception.
7. Preach a simple doctrine as Paul did.
8. Organize the churches in a simple New Testament pattern.
9. Encourage self-discipline on the part of the new churches.

How to get the job done is a matter which concerns the churches as well as missionaries. The only way to evangelize the world is to educate the membership to the concept of world missions. This will be a massive program but it can be accomplished. We must begin with our Bible schools and make missions a vital part of the curriculum. Leaders must see that members receive and read magazines and papers which stress world evangelism. Congregations should organize special programs such as an annual mission workshop.

Within some congregations, committees have been set up for the specific purpose of studying missions. From this study certain recommendations are made to the elders. The surest way to instill within any congregation this world vision is to put men in the pulpit who have it

themselves. There is no substitute for personal contact with missionaries.

The time has also arrived when the Christian Colleges must include a variety of mission courses in their catalogs. Two of our colleges have taken the lead in this and it is our prayer that the others will soon follow their example.

## VI. THE WHEN OF MISSIONS

We conclude our study of missions with a look at the time element. When should we start mission work on the scale capable of converting the world? The answer is obviously *NOW*. Many doors are now closed and others will soon be. It is becoming increasingly difficult to get missionaries into many nations. Only recently the CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE reported that the visas of missionaries in India will not be renewed, nor will any new ones be issued. Nigeria and the Middle East have been closed because of war. The tragedy of all this is that Churches of Christ did not take advantage of the opportunity when the nations were opened. Let us ask God to forgive us and pray that He will again open up these trouble spots to His gospel.

Churches of Christ are about 100 years behind in the field of foreign missions, but we are not too late. Donald McGavren, the noted missions scholar, has said that our late arrival in the field should actually be to our advantage. He feels that we can profit from the mistakes of others and thus be able to do a more effective job.

The response of Paul indicates when we ought to go into the whole world with the whole gospel. Luke tells us of Paul: "After he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them" (Acts 16:10). IMMEDIATELY is when Paul went. Immediately, *now*, is

when we must go! If we cannot go, then we must send. As one has ably put it. "If God wills the evangelization of the world, and you refuse to support missions, then you are opposed to the will of God."<sup>11</sup>

I ask you, my brethren, "Why should so few hear the gospel again and again when so many have never heard it once?" Why do the untold millions remain untold? Only this generation can reach this generation. I close with this warning, "If we have not enough in our religion to drive us to share it with all the world, it is doomed here at home." Indeed, brethren, the first task of the church is to give the whole gospel to the whole world.

A hundred thousand souls a day,  
Are passing one by one away,  
In Christless guilt and gloom.  
Without one ray of hope or light,  
With future dark as endless night,  
They're passing to their doom.

Oh Church of Christ, what wilt thou say,  
When in the awful judgment day,  
They charge thee with their doom?<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.



GENERAL  
SERMONS



## THE IMPERATIVE OUGHT

Charles Chumley

Born Yuma, Colorado, March 25, 1918. Baptized by A.J. Rhodes at South Sherman Street church of Christ, Denver, Colorado, 1930. Education in public schools of Denver and Englewood, Colorado; David Lipscomb College; Abilene Christian College; University of Illinois. Located work in Alabama, Illinois, and Tennessee. Write for *Twentieth Century Christian* and *Power for Today*. Now in fifteenth year as minister for college church in Nashville and as "Man With the Bible" on "Know Your Bible," local television program.

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The city of Caesarea, located on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea about twenty-three miles south of Mount Carmel and thirty miles north of Joppa, is noted for many things. Built by Herod the Great, it was named



in honor of Caesar Augustus. In New Testament days it served as the Roman capital of Palestine and the home of Rome's procurators. The waters of the Mediterranean still beat against the remains of the great sea wall which formed the back drop for its artificial harbor; and scattered white marble columns, along with portions of marble floor, testify to the grandeur that must have characterized this once-great city.

Still, in this twentieth

century, you and I remember Caesarea—not because of the Roman ruler whose name it bears, nor for its wonderful artificial harbor, nor for its once magnificent buildings and the pomp and ceremony of its rulers—but primarily because of two relatively unimportant incidents at the time which are recorded on the pages of the New Testament: the conversion of the Roman Centurion Cornelius and the imprisonment of the Apostle Paul. Were it not for these two incidents and a few other references we would think no more of Caesarea than we do of Byblos, farther north, or of Ashdod, farther south. We are concerned at this time with the conversion of the Roman Centurion at Caesarea.

The “beloved physician” Luke tells us that here one time an angel of God appeared to Cornelius, the devout, God-fearing, generous, prayerful centurion of Rome, with instructions to “send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter”—but let us read the inspired account.

There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italianband, A devout man, and one that feared God will all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 10:1-6 (KJV).

This last statement is an interesting one: "he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." We might wonder why the angel did not simply go ahead and tell Cornelius what God wanted him to do if we did not know of Jesus' great commission to the apostles.<sup>2</sup> In that commission He gave orders that the message of the gospel should be preached to all the nations, and He placed the responsibility for preaching it upon the apostles. This is the reason we read the statement of the Apostle Paul: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."<sup>3</sup> Inasmuch as the responsibility to preach the message had been placed upon men, even angels refrained from declaring it.

Let us notice also that the angel of God said, "he shall tell thee what thou oughtest *to do*." Here, emphasis is placed upon doing, and this suggests the importance of our being ready to obey God's will.<sup>4</sup>

Luke details the journey to Joppa and the return to Caesarea and tells us that when Peter arrived he found Cornelius, along with his kinsmen and near friends, waiting for him, ready to hear whatever was "commanded him of the Lord." He spoke of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth; he made known the Lord's charge to preach to the people and to testify that "this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead"; he declared the witness of all the prophets "that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins"; and when, to the amazement of those with him, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word, Peter said,

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2 Matthew 28:18-20

3 II Corinthians 4:7

4 See also such passages as James 1:22, 25; 2:8; II Peter 1:10; Matthew 7:21; Revelation 22:14; Luke 6:46

Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.<sup>5</sup>

The apostle Peter preached as he had been charged to preach by Jesus Christ in His great commission.<sup>6</sup> In doing so he told Cornelius what he ought to do. Cornelius responded obediently to the will of Christ, according to the Lord's promise received the remission of his sins, was added to the church of the Lord, and as a Christian was ready to begin to walk worthily of the high calling wherewith he had been called.

The Apostle Peter presented to Cornelius and his household what I have chosen to call "The Imperative Ought," the will of Christ with its responsibilities which cannot be evaded or avoided. They confront every man to whom the gospel is made known.

In every age of the world men have longed to know what they "ought" to do. In an attempt to offer some solution to the problem, the thinkers among men—scholars, historians, philosophers, sociologists, scientists—have given their time and their lives. And the search goes on. A recent nationally distributed magazine recounted the weird, rather pathetic attempt of the "hippies" of our generation to find some meaning and purpose in life—to find out what they "ought" to do.

This word "ought" is among the most interesting and challenging in our language. As we think of it, such questions as, "Where did it come from?"; "How did it find its way into our vocabulary?"; "Why is it so sig-

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<sup>5</sup> Acts 10:47, 48

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16

nificant?" immediately come to mind. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* points out that the word is used "to express moral obligation, duty, or necessity." Here is a word that expresses the compelling sense of obligation, of duty, of necessity that all men feel; and it suggests further that that obligation, that duty, that necessity is right. In our use of the word we acknowledge our recognition of some standard by which our conduct may be measured, and even though we may find that the actual standard of moral conduct may vary with the different peoples of earth, we do not find any people entirely devoid of some consciousness of moral obligation or duty. We find that there are certain actions that are everywhere considered wrong and evil and others that are considered good and right.

Some find a satisfactory explanation of the very presence of this word in our vocabulary an extremely difficult, if not impossible task. The atheist, who acknowledges no ultimate source of authority, is at a loss to explain either the existence of such a word or any need for its existence. The materialistic evolutionist, in his explanation of the process by which life moved from lower to higher forms, encounters an insurmountable difficulty when he tries to account for the development of rationality in man—the growth of this sense of righteous obligation, or moral necessity.

The Bible considers matters as they are and deals with them in a practical way. Just as the inspired writers accept as self-evident realities the existence of God and the problem of evil, so they accept the existence of a moral consciousness in man, and they apply themselves to a consideration of what man "ought" to do. One thing they emphasize is that man, even though divinely endowed with the marvelous gift of intelligence, is not able to direct his own way through life. We read in Jeremiah's prophecy, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not

in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”<sup>7</sup>

In spite of his accomplishments in many areas, it remains true, even in our twentieth century, that “it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”

One of the assurances given to us by God is that He has revealed His way to man; He has told him what he “ought to do.”

### Man Ought to Acknowledge the Sovereignty of God

Man’s very existence demands that he acknowledge the sovereignty of God. Speaking to the intellectuals of Athens, the Apostle Paul said, “Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.”<sup>8</sup> Some years ago, two university students, one a believer and the other an unbeliever, were trying to find some common ground as a point of departure for a discussion of the subject, “The Reasonableness of the Supernatural.” After the believer had suggested one possibility after another only to have them rejected, he posed this simple question: “Will you admit that you exist?” The answer, after several studied moments was, “No.” The young man was brought face to face by this question with the very line of reasoning set forth by the Apostle Paul. That reasoning, which was sound then, is equally as sound today. Man, who is the offspring of God, ought not to think of God as something that he himself has produced. His own capacity to reason is conclusive evidence of the unlimited capacity to reason

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<sup>7</sup> Jeremiah 10:23

<sup>8</sup> Acts 17:29

on the part of the One who gave him being. It is then neither necessary nor right for man to think of God as something he has made, whether it be an expression in gold, silver, stone or in the nebulous imaginings of his own thoughts. Contrary to the concept of evolution, God produced man; man did not produce God.

The phenomena of nature requires that man acknowledge the sovereignty of God. In accounting for the present sinful state of the world, the Apostle Paul writes to the church at Rome.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.<sup>9</sup>

The normal course for man is to see in nature the work of God and to be thankful. When he rejects this course and turns away from God, he becomes vain or empty in his reasoning. Without God at the center, man becomes off-balance, and his condition affects his every decision. His unwillingness to accept God's way leads him into moral difficulties. This is the reason that one man, upon being told by another that he was having difficulty believing in God and that he was plagued with doubts regarding the will of God, replied, "Your problem is not intellectual; it is moral." His conclusion is true in many instances. A man is intent upon satisfying some fleshly desire which he knows he ought not to do. He begins to question the will of God; he may even question the existence of God Himself. Hence Paul tells us that when men refuse to have

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<sup>9</sup> Romans 1:20, 21

God in their knowledge, God gives them up to all kinds of wicked and hurtful lusts. God's handiwork leads us to acknowledge the existence of God.

The claims of the Bible insist that man acknowledge the sovereignty of God. The Bible begins with the words "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It continues with assurance from beginning to end, with never a doubt or question regarding the existence of God. It is worthy of note, also, that the Bible speaks, not of a nebulous "Unmoved Mover" or of an even more vague "ground of being," but of an all-powerful, all-wise, everywhere-present, just, severe, at the same time, gracious, loving, heavenly Father.

So overwhelmingly convincing is the evidence of nature and the revelation of the word of God that one who denies God in the face of such evidence is dismissed as a fool. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."<sup>10</sup> It would be hard to find a description more concise, more accurate. Man ought to acknowledge the sovereignty of God. To do so is not only necessary if we are to please Him, but it is also right.

#### Man Ought to Give the More Earnest Heed to the Word of God

Jeremiah uttered a truth supported both by history and our own experience when he said, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."<sup>11</sup> One of the humbling acknowledgements man must make is that for all his vaunted accomplishments, he is not able to direct his own way; he

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<sup>10</sup> Psalm 14:1

<sup>11</sup> Jeremiah 10:23

cannot plot the course of his own life. The Bible claims God has not left man without direction or guidance.

The writer of the Hebrews says that God "Hath in these last days spoken unto us..."<sup>12</sup> Here is the marvelous assurance of the Scriptures. "God has spoken unto us." The Creator of the universe, the Giver of life, has made His will known to His creatures. Can we understand Him? Can we come to know His will? Do we possess the ability to obey Him? The Bible tells us of the existence of God. It claims that God is all-powerful, that He knows, that He loves, and that He has spoken to man. The New Testament claims to be the final, complete, settled revelation of His will.

Such claims are not to be treated lightly. They have a direct bearing upon every life. It is no wonder that the writer of Hebrews should say, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."<sup>13</sup> The "things which we have heard" are made up of "the word spoken by angels" and the "salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him..."<sup>14</sup> The writer warns against the neglect that will lead those once enlightened to drift away from the word of God and the salvation that word offers.

So much, however, depends upon our attitude toward the word of God. Through the centuries, for example, men have acknowledged the word to be what it claimed to be: the word of God, a revelation of God's will to man. In more recent years men have denied that it is a

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<sup>12</sup> Hebrews 1:2

<sup>13</sup> Hebrews 2:1

<sup>14</sup> Hebrews 2:2, 3

revelation at all, contending rather that it is a record of man's groping search for God, paralleling the evolutionary development of life from primitive to more highly developed forms. Such a change in thinking rests, strangely enough, not upon an accumulation of scientific discoveries, or recently unearthed facts, but upon nothing more basic than a completely different mental attitude.

Looking at the same facts that have been known through the centuries, some today are bold to declare, "This is not the word of God." How different the attitude of those early Christians, who when they heard the word rejoiced in its divine origin. To the brethren at Thessalonica, Paul writes,

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.<sup>15</sup>

The question is not, "May we believe or not, as we please?" but "Ought we to believe? Must we believe?" It is not only necessary but right for us to give the more earnest heed to the word of God. To fail to do so or to refuse to do so involves the loss of salvation.

### Man Ought to Obey the Will of God

If, as the Bible claims, God is and has spoken, it surely, behooves man to listen attentively to the will of God. It is not only necessary but also right for man to obey God. When confronted by the temptations to offer his allegiance to man, he needs to hear the words of Peter: "We ought to obey God rather than men."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> I Thessalonians 2:13

<sup>16</sup> Acts 5:29

Sometimes men seem to ask, "How much of God's will must I obey?" "May I choose between the commandments of God?" Jesus' reply would call for man to obey all of God's will for him. Speaking to the religious leaders of His day, He said,

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.<sup>17</sup>

Here Jesus warns against the extremely dangerous practice of making distinctions between the commandments of God. There have always been those who will allow a scrupulous observance of certain of God's commands to justify in their own eyes the oversight or outright rejection of others.

A man ought to be baptized into Christ, but he also ought not to forsake the assembly of the saints. He ought to pray without ceasing, but he also ought to pay his just debts. He ought to sing with the spirit and with the understanding, but he also ought not to allow any corrupt communications to proceed out of his mouth. He ought to provide for his own, but he also ought not to turn away his ear from the cry of the poor.

In our consideration of the imperative "ought," the compelling consciousness that what God has asked of us is not only necessary but right as well, let us not be unmindful of the great love wherewith He loves us. It is God's love that leads Him to make known to us what we ought to do. Our answering love for Him prompts our obedience to His will.

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<sup>17</sup> Matthew 23:23

May the example of Cornelius encourage all men to hear the word of God, to turn from every evil and upon the good confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, to be buried with Him in baptism that they may be raised to a new life in Christ Jesus. For this is what all men "ought to do."

## IN VIEW OF VAST ETERNITY

Willard Collins

Willard Collins probably comes as close to being known wherever churches of Christ have been established as any other man of our time. As an evangelist, he has spoken to congregations, large and small, throughout the United States, including many great area-wide meetings; and he has also spoken in Japan, Korea, Formosa, Hong Kong, and the Philippines. As a religious writer, he has penned books and articles that have been widely read and studied. As a Christian educator, he has influenced thousands of students at David Lipscomb College, Nashville, Tennessee, during the past twenty-three years.

He is a native Tennessean, having been born in Lewisburg as the only child of the late Mr. and Mrs. Walter M. Collins, and the respect in which he is held in this state has been attested in his appointment as a Colonel on the Staff of two Tennessee Governors. He is married to the former Ruth Morris of Atlanta, Ga., and their two daughters, Carole and Corinne, are now Mrs. Bobby Demonbreun and Mrs. Ed Slayton. He was graduated from Lipscomb at the junior college



level in 1936 and received both the B.A. and M.A. degrees from Vanderbilt University, Nashville. Pepperdine College conferred on him the LL.D. degree in 1965. He joined the administrative staff at Lipscomb in 1944 as associate director of the Lipscomb Expansion Program and became vice-president in 1946. In the latter position he serves as director of chapel services, publications, student recruiting, athletics, Lipscomb Lectures, and the Artist Series, and assists the president in development. He is also responsible for student life and behavior and is a member of the faculty in the Department of Bible.

In addition to serving on the editorial staffs of the *Gospel Advocate*, *20th Century Christian* and *Minister's Monthly*, he has written four books, including Volume VI in the *Great Preachers of Today* series. He began preaching in Farmington, Tennessee, in 1934, and has served two churches as local minister — Old Hickory, Tennessee, 1939-1944; and Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, 1946-54. He was the speaker in the Collins-Craig Auditorium Meeting that opened Nashville's \$5,000,000 Municipal Auditorium in October, 1962 — an event which still holds the attendance record for this building, 90,467 for eight evenings. His preaching in gospel meetings from 1955 through 1966 has resulted in 2474 baptisms, 1977 restorations, and 286 individual memberships placed.

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TEXT: Ecclesiastes 12:5, "Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets."

One evening after I had closed a gospel meeting in Beaumont, Texas, I was driven to the airport of that city in order to catch a plane and return to my home in Nashville, Tennessee.

After a stop at Houston where I changed planes, I flew over the city of Houston toward Dallas, Texas. As I looked down from the airplane window, it seemed that I could see hundreds of thousands of lights. As I passed over the beautiful city, it was easy for me to think, What will it be like when I take off from this earth to go to eternity?

A number of faithful brethren have prayed just previous to a gospel service, "May he speak at this time in view of vast eternity." I would like to use as my subject, "In View of Vast Eternity."

Many years ago the late T. B. Larimore began a sermon on the subject of eternity with these words,

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isaiah 57:15)

This beloved gospel preacher then said,

“I have quoted this verse because I wish to call attention to a word in it that occurs nowhere else in all the realm of God’s revelation to man: the wonderful, incomprehensible word Eternity.”<sup>1</sup>

Eternity and despair are two words in the Bible which man may never really comprehend in this world. History teaches that when a well-known American statesman was on his deathbed several years ago, and his trusted physician, when pressed to tell him the truth, assured him that he had but a few hours to live, that this man called for his card. The statesman handed his own card to the doctor and asked him to write on it the word “Despair.” The doctor wrote the word and returned the card to the dying man, who looked at it silently and thoughtfully a few minutes, then handed it back with the statement, “Sir, you have not the remotest conception of the meaning of the word ‘despair.’ ”

It is also very difficult for mortal man to comprehend the real meaning of the word “Eternity.”

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<sup>1</sup> See Larimore, Mrs. T. B., *Life, Letters and Sermons of T. B. Larimore*, (Gospel Advocate Company, 1931), p. 396.

## SEVEN BASIC POINTS

It is my purpose at this hour to present the lesson around seven basic points. If you will center your mind upon these points, it is my hope that I may bring the lesson to you in an effective way.

In the first place, the Bible plainly teaches that man will live again after his earthly existence. The writer of Ecclesiastes presents life, then death, and then man's long home. It is my hope that you will remember the passage in Ecclesiastes 12:5, "man goeth to his long home and the mourners go about the street."

The transfiguration of Christ presents the lesson that Moses who had died physically was still alive (Matthew 17:1-3).

One of the most beautiful passages in the New Testament tells about life which exists somewhere besides this earth (John 14:1-3).

Jesus taught the resurrection, the judgment, and life beyond (John 5:28; Matthew 25:45; Matthew 25:31).

Paul had no doubt but that there would be life beyond the grave (II Timothy 4:6-8).

Jesus taught that physical death is not the end of life (Luke 16:19-31).

## THIS TRIP IS CERTAIN

When I read from Ecclesiastes, chapter 12, verse 5, "that man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets," I remind you in the second place that this trip to eternity is certain. Every person must take this journey. I do not know exactly where it will end; neither

do I know the means of transportation. But I believe that men, women, boys, and girls who die shall leave the body. Ecclesiastes, chapter 12, says that "the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." When will this happen? "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was." The physical body shall go back to dust, but as living souls we shall return to God. Just as people get into their cars and drive home at the end of a work day, likewise when life's entire work day is over, we shall leave this earth and go to eternity. Think how many of us in this assembly may go to eternity within the next ten years. Wonder how many of us will make our trip to eternity within five years? I remind you that the trip is certain. Men may know how to split the atom and build the hydrogen bomb, but men do not know how to change this law of the Lord because "man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets." In this space age we die, and the funeral processions still go about the streets in sadness.

But as I read the text from Ecclesiastes, chapter 12: "Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets," I remind you in the third place that physical death is the point of departure. Hebrews, chapter 9, says "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." The text of Ecclesiastes 12 says "And the mourners go about the streets." Here are two vivid pictures of physical death and the resulting sadness upon the hearts and minds of loved ones. Yes, the trip is certain, and physical death is the point of departure.

The New Testament presents two attitudes toward death. The attitude which is applicable to the life of each individual depends upon the way he lives. For example, in Luke, chapter 16, the Bible says that the rich man died, and in Hades "he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip

of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." Here is a man who in life was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But he died, and beyond the grave he was in torment.

The second attitude toward death is the one given by the apostle Paul. In II Timothy, chapter 4, Paul said, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." For Paul death was a glorious experience. In the mind of Paul death was not the sunset, but the sunrise. When a Christian dies it is like leaving an old house and going to a new one. A person leaves the old physical body of pain and disease and goes out to receive a new body. When he is a Christian, "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13). I Thessalonians, chapter 4, states "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep (or dead), that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." We therefore as Christians, members of the Church, the body of Christ, believe that Jesus is God's Son. We try to live as the New Testament directs. We do not believe that death is awful; we believe that it is a glorious sunrise. That is why some of the best friends I have tell me in old age, "It is not sad to be old when you are a Christian." They know they do not have many more years to live. They realize that they will be going to that eternal home before long. They are still happy. They believe that one of the happiest experiences they will ever have will come when they die and look out yonder and beyond as individual Christians to the glory of the new Jerusalem and know what it means to go to heaven. Yes, the trip is certain, and the point of departure from this earth to eternity is the point of physical death. It can be a glorious

experience for the Christian. It is a terrible thing for the sinner.<sup>2</sup>

### IT IS THE LONG HOME

When a person leaves this earth to go to eternity, he goes to his long home, and he does not return to live in the flesh again upon this earth. In II Samuel, chapter 12, David said that he could not bring the child back, but that he could go to the child. A man and wife may live together fifty years. Then the day comes when the husband dies. The wife may weep because she will miss him, but there is no earthly power to bring him back. A mother may watch a baby be killed in an accident and that mother may cry, her teeth may almost gnash together, but there is no power on earth to bring the baby's life back. We feel helpless when some disease takes hold of this body and doctors say there is nothing that can be done. We pray for guidance and do all that we can, but we know that disease will ultimately kill. A mother may say goodbye to a son. She may be killed, and the boy will never see her again upon this earth. Recognize the fact that you live in a world which you can leave any day with the understanding that according to the Bible you will not come back. In the wonderful world in which we live, there is no power which can bring back the dead when people go home to eternity.

The Bible states that it is the long home. When a patient goes to the hospital for twenty-one days and he remains seven, he only has fourteen left. When a young person enters college for four years and he continues in college for one year, there are only three left. However,

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<sup>2</sup> Some of the material used in this sermon may be found in the sermon, "Going Home" from *Sermons of the Collins-Craig Auditorium Meeting* (published by the Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, Tennessee, 1962).

when one has been in eternity for a thousand years, there is no less time to remain.

The late T. B. Larimore in illustrating the length of eternity said,

“We may number the leaves of all the trees of all the earth through all the ages, and multiply that number by the number of blades of grass that have grown on the earth since the earth was made, then multiply that by the grains of sand upon the earth, and multiply that by the number of drops of water in existence; then let each unit in that final, inexpressible product represent ten thousand ages, and all the time represented by that wonderful combination of units, each unit representing ten thousand ages, is inexpressibly small in comparison with eternity, and may be deducted from eternity millions and billions and trillions of times and eternity would bestill the same awful, boundless, limitless, fathomless, inexpressible thing it was before.”<sup>3</sup>

## JUDGMENT DAY IS THE ANNOUNCEMENT TIME

Jesus taught that judgment day was the announcement time for a person on the way to eternity. It is difficult to make many people believe that the judgment day is real. The gospel of Jesus Christ in describing the reality of judgment gave three vivid pictures.

Judgment day is just as real as the resurrection of Christ.

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;

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<sup>3</sup> See Larimore, Mrs. T. B., *Life, Letters and Sermons of T. B. Larimore*, (The Gospel Advocate Company, 1931), p. 406.

whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17:30,31)

The individual who believes in the second coming of Christ also believes in the reality of the judgment.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." (Matthew 25:31,32)

Judgment day is just as real as physical death, a funeral home, and a cemetery. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

There are cars parked outside this building where we have assembled and these cars are real. I can place my hand on the pulpit and I know it is real. Judgment day is just as real as parked cars outside the building and as real as this pulpit at this present moment.

Judgment day is real and this is the event where Jesus will pronounce eternal destinations.

### THE SIXTH POINT IS MOST SOBERING

Five basic points have been given so far in this lesson. Number six may be the most sobering to you because it states that there are but two dwelling places in eternity. Each person must spend an eternity in heaven or hell. There is no middle ground. Out yonder in eternity, beyond the judgment, there will be a heaven for the righteous and eternal torment, or as the Bible speaks of it, a hell for the lost. You are either headed right now for everlasting punishment or for eternal life. See Matthew 25:31-46.

## PICTURES OF HEAVEN

What does the New Testament say about heaven and everlasting punishment? God gives three vivid descriptions about everlasting punishment in Revelation 21 and Matthew 25: a lake of fire that burns with brimstone, the second death, and everlasting fire. This was written to material people. I have never seen everlasting fire. Never have I seen a lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Almighty God, in warning people what sin would do to them, said that if we think more of Satan and sin than of his Son and if we live in sin and never turn to Christ, sin will take us into everlasting fire, into a lake that burns with fire and brimstone, and the second death where we will be separated from the presence of God.

In Revelation, chapter 21, we also have a vivid picture of heaven. It says that heaven is new. I love new things, don't you? Almighty God knew that we would love the new and therefore, he made "a new heaven...the holy city, new Jerusalem." Second, Revelation 21 teaches that heaven is beautiful: "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." I think of a beautiful bride, a girl dressed as beautifully as she has ever been dressed, as she comes down the aisle of a church building to be married. And number three, there will be no death, no sorrow, no crying, and no pain, according to Revelation 21. Won't it be wonderful not to shed tears? Won't it be wonderful to know that you can live forever and never be lost over there? Number four, we will be with God in heaven. The Bible says that God shall wipe away all tears. We shall be so close to God in heaven that he will wipe the tears from our eyes forever.

On the left there is a lake that burns with fire and brimstone; on the right, a beautiful city. On the left, we know the second death; on the right, we can live with God. On the left, there is everlasting fire; on the

right, no sorrow, no death, no crying. This is a contrast, and I must spend eternity in one of these two conditions.

## THE GREAT PRIVILEGE OF A GOSPEL PREACHER

God has given his answer to this predicament of modern man. How miserable we would be if we had nothing but sin, and nothing to expect but everlasting punishment. There is an answer. Almighty God has given a way to heaven. As the final point in this lesson, I remind you that God proclaims the fact that there is a way to be saved. God said of Christ in Matthew, chapter 17, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." In John's gospel Christ says "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Luke declares in Acts, chapter 6, verse 12, "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Jesus is my way. Years ago I made up my mind that I would follow Christ and go to heaven with him. I have decided to put my trust in the resurrected Savior, and to do what he tells me to do to the very best of my ability. May you wear his name, be a member of his Church, let his gospel be your message of faith, his Father be your Father, and may you try to reproduce his life in your life. This is the plea we make to a world which is on fire with sin.

Since Christ is the way to heaven, individuals need to be concerned about being in Christ. There is one way to get into Christ according to Galatians 3:27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Scriptural baptism must be preached by great faith made known in the confession and the truly penitent

heart. Christ died and was buried. The sinner must die to sin and must be buried in baptism. As Christ was raised, the sinner is raised from the waters of baptism. Saul of Tarsus was a blasphemer, but he died to sin. He was buried in baptism and was raised as a new creation, and this new creation became Paul, the Apostle. True conversion is God's way of making old men new. Read Romans, chapter 6.

Many years ago, a twelve year old boy worked on a farm in order to help support his mother. He would work hard from Monday morning through late Saturday afternoon, and about dusk dark he would start from the farm to his mother's cabin. He went down a road and had to go through a big woods. It was always dark on Saturday when he would come to the woods, but that boy would call out through the woods, "Mother, are you waiting for me?" From across the woods, the mother would answer, "Yes, Son, I am waiting. Walk on down the road into the valley of the forest and I will meet you there." The boy would be as brave as possible and he would walk on down the country road and through a part of the woods and into the valley. There mother would meet him and she would take him by the hand and they would go home for the weekend.

When I come to the valley of death, it is my hope that I may meet my Savior and that we can go home not for a weekend, but for eternity.

The following poem expresses it well, and it means a great deal to me:

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer  
Thought it scarcely worth his while  
To waste much time on the old violin,  
But he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bidden, good folks?" he said;

"Who'll start the bidding for me?"  
 "A dollar." "A dollar." Then, "Two!"  
 "Two dollars! and who'll make it three?"

"Three dollars, once. Three dollars, twice!  
 Going for three?" But no!  
 From the room far back, an old gray haired man  
 Came forward and picked up the bow.

Then, wiping the dust from the old violin  
 And tightening the loose strings,  
 He played a melody, pure and sweet  
 As the caroling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer  
 In a voice that was quiet and low  
 Said, "What am I bid for the old violin?"  
 And he held it up with the bow.

"A thousand dollars! and who'll make it two?  
 Two thousand! and who'll make it three?  
 Three thousand, once! Three thousand, twice!  
 And... Going... and Gone!" said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried,  
 "We do not quite understand  
 What changed its worth?" Swift came the reply,  
 "The touch of the master's hand."

And many a man with life out of tune,  
 Who is battered and scarred with sin,  
 Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd,  
 Much like the old violin.

A mess of pottage, a glass of wine,  
 A game, — He travels on.  
 He's going once! He's going twice!  
 He's going—and almost gone!

But the Master comes! and the foolish crowd  
 Never can quite understand  
 The worth of a soul, and the change that's wrought  
 By the touch of the Master's hand!

—Anonymous

It is my hope that you realize the worth of your soul, and the change that can be wrought by Jesus Christ, the Master.

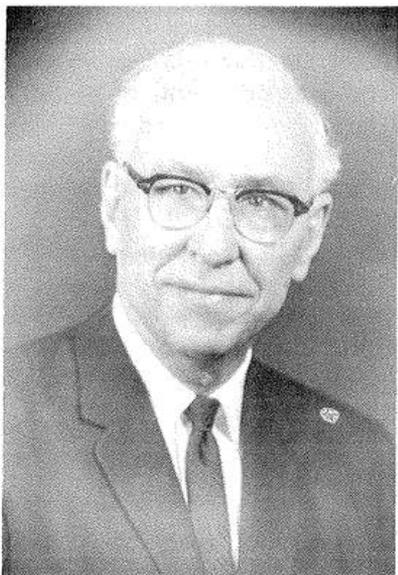
# PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Gus Nichols

Gus Nichols was born in Walker County, Alabama, January 12, 1892, as the oldest of ten children. He was married to Matilda Francis Brown in 1913, and to this union were born four sons and four daughters.

Brother Nichols' first school was in a one-room schoolhouse near his home. He was baptized into Christ in 1909 during a mission meeting in this schoolhouse and there he also preached his first sermon. He started a congregation in the same building in 1914, for which he then preached regularly. He was the first in his family to obey the gospel, but later his parents and all his brothers and sisters also did. Three of his sons are full-time ministers and the other is part-time. Three of his daughters are married to full-time ministers, the other to a Christian businessman. There are eighteen preachers among his close relatives, and there are about 100 preachers who have been baptized by him or by one of his "sons in the gospel."

In early life Brother Nichols made his living by farming and was



very studious in his spare moments, even while plowing. He began his studies at the age of 27 in Alabama Christian College. He has been regular minister at Cordova and Millport, Alabama, and since January 1, 1933, has been local minister at Jasper, Alabama, where the congregation has grown from 47 to about 600 members. In 1933 he began a Friday night training school for preachers at the Jasper church building, and thirty-five preachers from the Jasper congregation alone have been developed in this "Gus Nichols College of the Bible."

Brother Nichols has preached in 27 states, has bap-

tized approximately 11,000 people, including several denominational preachers. Eight of his debates have been published. He speaks publicly about 700 times yearly. He conducts two daily radio programs—one now in its 21st year and the other in its 11th year.

He is staff writer on the *Gospel Advocate*, has edited *Truth and Love* and now edits *Words of Truth*. He is a trustee of Alabama Christian College and Childhaven Orphan Home. He has participated frequently in all the major college lectureships and in 1963 was given the Christian Service Award by Pepperdine College. He received the LL.D degree from Magic Valley Christian College in 1964. He and Sister Nichols toured the Holy Land in 1962 as a gift from friends.

The new \$400,000 library building at Alabama Christian College, which is now being planned, will, in his honor, be called the *Gus Nichols Library Learning Center*.

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It affords me great pleasure to be back on the campus of Abilene Christian College, and to rejoice in the great progress that has been made here. We thank God and his generous people for the recent support of Christian Education everywhere. As a trustee of Alabama Christian College, I bring you greetings from our great and growing school.

In the simplest way that I can, I want to lead us in a brief study of some "PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION." It is implied in this subject that the Bible is to be interpreted by those who read it, and by all who would teach it unto others. The word *reading* means "to interpret the meaning or significance of"—Webster. Hence, without interpreting and understanding what one reads, he is actually not reading at all.

### A MISUNDERSTOOD SCRIPTURE

Some have misunderstood Peter to teach that the scriptures can't be interpreted, and that the Bible needs

no interpretation. Let us examine the passage carefully and properly interpret it. He says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20-21). Catholics have given this reference and quoted this passage to prove that the masses of mankind cannot understand the scriptures, for they are "of no private interpretation." Therefore, they think the world must come to the Catholic Church for an understanding of the scriptures. But let us carefully observe some facts overlooked by them.

1. Do they think that the rest of the world can understand only one scripture, and it a passage that says we can't understand any of the rest of the Bible? If we can't understand this one, why do they cite the reference and quote the passage orally and in their writings? If we can understand this one passage, why may we not also understand others? If God could make himself to be understood by the world of men in one verse, why not in others?

2. Furthermore, if we cannot understand the Bible, then it is no revelation of God to man, as it claims to be. John says in introducing the most difficult book of the Bible that it is, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it unto his servant John" (Rev. 1:1). Unless man can understand the Bible, it is no revelation. John also says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein" (Rev. 1:3). Paul wrote and said, "When ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3:4). And why would God judge the world *by his word*, if man cannot understand it? (John 12:48)

3. The apostle Peter did not say that any of the

scriptures cannot be understood, or interpreted by individuals, or privately interpreted. He was not speaking of the study of the scriptures, but of how the scriptures *came into existence*. And he was not speaking of all the whole body of scripture, but of *prophecy of scripture*. He said, "No prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Pet. 1:20). The prophet did not by his great knowledge, like Drew Pearson, interpret the trend of his time and give us his prediction or prophecy. His prophecy was not the result of his own interpretation of the signs of the times in which he lived. It is wrong to take a statement out of its context, and give it an interpretation contrary to its setting. The next verse is speaking of how the prophecy came to be, or was *brought from God to man*. Listen to it: "For the prophecy CAME NOT IN OLD TIME BY THE WILL of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). Anderson's translation says, "No *prophecy of scripture came from* private interpretation" (2 Pet. 1:20). The American Bible Union version says, "No prophecy of the scripture *comes of* private interpretation; for *prophecy was never brought by the will of man*; but moved by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God." Living Oracles translates it, "No prophecy of scripture is of private impulse: for never, at any time, was *prophecy brought* by the will of man; but the holy men of God spoke, being moved by the Holy Spirit."

### ONCE GIVEN WE CAN INTERPRET

Since the prophecy of scripture, and all scripture, as to that matter, came by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we can now interpret and understand it, and Peter did not deny this, but urged us to add knowledge, to grow in knowledge, and to grow thereby, and in this very chapter, (2 Pet. 1), said God had given us all things that pertain to life and godliness "through the knowledge of God" (vss. 2, 4).

Therefore, we can study and learn the meaning of the scriptures. And those who already understand can help others to know the truth. When the Israelites returned from captivity, they were gathered together, and the scriptures were read unto them distinctly, by men who "caused the people to understand the law" (Neh. 8:7). "And so they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (Neh. 8:8). O! Yes, we can understand and interpret the scriptures for ourselves, and teach and help others who need correct instruction as to what the Bible says, and the true meaning of it. True *exposition* of scripture is to get out of it what God put in it; while to put something into it which God did not place there is *imposition*. But it is a fact that the scriptures are no revelation unto those who do not understand them. A true and correct understanding of the scriptures is as important as revelation itself. We might as well have no revelation from God as to have a "revelation" which could not be understood or interpreted. And those who fail to understand and to believe and follow this revelation are worse off than if we had no revelation from God at all.

## PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

We should use the same principles of interpretation in the study of the Bible that we would use in the study of any other book. The author of the Bible is also the creator and designer of the mind and intellect of man. The Bible is, therefore, addressed to our intelligence, by One who is infinite in knowledge and wisdom. The principles of understanding God when he talks to us in the Bible are within us, or at least within our reach. The principles of interpretation are not man-made rules, but principles discovered in the study of the Bible itself. They are principles which God Himself has observed and recognized in addressing man in the scriptures.

## IN MAN'S OWN LANGUAGE

God has always addressed man in man's own language. The Bible was written in the languages of the people living upon the earth when it was written. God uses men in teaching, reaching, and saving men. He gave the Bible through men which he inspired (2 Tim. 3:15-17). He has also charged men to preach and teach His Word (2 Tim. 4:1-3). And implied in this duty is the task of translating His Word into the languages of the peoples of the world. This barrier was first overcome by the gift of miraculous tongues on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-12). Those who translated the Bible into English helped me to understand the Bible. Even commentaries written by honest Bible students and scholars often shed a flood of light on some scripture. They simply point out to us "diamonds of truth" often lying upon the surface, heretofore unseen by us. Instruction in Bible classes and sermons help us to better interpret the scriptures. Of course, we should screen everything that is offered by what the scripture itself says. No interpretation which denies what the scripture says can be its true meaning.

## NOTE WHO IS SPEAKING

Not only does God speak in the Bible, and speak to us through inspired men (Heb. 1:1-2), but other good men speak in the Bible who were not inspired. They may have been speaking the truth, or they may have been in error. It was the blind man who said, "We know that God heareth not sinners" (John 9:31). He was not inspired, but was right in his statement. He knew this by the scriptures (Isa. 59:2; Prov. 15:8, 29; Isa. 1:15-20). But inspired men were always accurate in their teaching (John 16:13). Note who is the speaker, for bad men and ignorant men, and even Satan, talked in the Bible. God always speaks the truth, but men are liable to err through ignorance, and some are full of deception.

## THE BIBLE IS ALL TRUE

One may ask how the Bible is all true, if even Satan is permitted to talk in the Bible (Job 1). This is very easily answered. When God says someone said something, it is true that he said it, as God records it. But what the man said may not be true. The Bible is in part a record written by God of what has happened, and this record is true, but all that is said and done by every character depicted in the Bible was not always right. Those who wrote the record for God were inspired and made no mistake in their writings (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21). Job did not write or speak all that is in the book of Job. His pretended friends did not always tell the truth.

## WHO IS ADDRESSED?

It is also important to observe who is being addressed in any given scripture. Some scripture is addressed unto Satan, some to the Patriarchs, as from Adam to Moses, a period of some 2500 years. What was commanded then is not necessarily required of us now. Then from Moses to the death of Christ God addressed men under the law of Moses, or old covenant, which was taken away at the cross, a period of some 1500 years (Eph. 2:11-16; Col. 2:14; Rom. 6:14; 7:4, 6). And what Christ taught during his personal ministry before the cross was not always applicable to us and to the Christian age, which began when the great commission went into force on Pentecost (Acts 2), which is now a period of about 1900 years.

## SAINTS OR SINNERS?

Though you may be reading material from this side of the cross of Christ, or His death, where His last will and testament is in force, and where His full and complete will and plan of salvation for us is to be found, still you will need to note who is addressed by the writer or

speaker. For there are two classes of accountable persons addressed under the great commission, and in the New Testament where we live—saints and sinners.

If one is a sinner and is needing salvation or remission of past or alien sins, he should note what is said to sinners (Acts 2:22-41; Mk. 16:15-16). But if he is an erring child of God needing forgiveness, he should note that there is a different law of pardon to God's children (Acts 8:13-24; 1 John 1:9; Jas. 5:16). What is said in a letter to a church is not necessarily applicable to outsiders, and what is said unto an individual is not always applicable to a church or congregation. We must rightly divide the word (2 Tim. 2:15).

### USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament scriptures are just as true and as much the Word of God as the New Testament scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It was written for our learning (Rom. 15:4). While we have in the New Testament the same great principles found in the Old Testament, we have much more. Now the Christ of prophecy *has* come. His church *has* been built, His kingdom *has* come and we are in it (Matt. 16:18-19; Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:28-29). To go back to the Old Testament for our authority in Christianity is to fall from grace (Gal. 4:9-11, 21; 5:1-4; John 1:17). Whatever God left back in the Old Testament, and did not make a part of the New Testament, is not bound on us. We must not ignore this fact and go back to the Old Testament for authority for mechanical instrumental music, or for incense or animal sacrifice in our church worship. Many other such-like things are being brought over and tacked on to Christianity without divine authority.

### WHY USE THE OLD TESTAMENT?

We might give a thousand reasons why we should use

the old Testament Scriptures. We have the same God they had, and sin is the same. The home is virtually the same. Great principles of morality are often found to be the same in both Testaments. Also, we could not understand much of the New Testament without the Old (John 3: 14-15).

But the positive commands and ordinances are not the same in both Testaments. One must come to the New Testament to find salvation in Christ (John 3:16; Heb. 5:8-9; Heb. 12:2; Mk. 16:15-16). Our system of worship in the New Testament is not the same as that in the Old Testament (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). The church of Christ in the New Testament is not the same as the Old Jewish church, and the two covenants are not alike (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13; 9:15; 10:8-11).

For the sake of information, for edification and hope, for example and warning, for patience and comfort of the scriptures, we may preach and teach everything in the entire Bible, provided we rightly divide it, and do not apply to Christianity that which was only characteristic of Patriarchy, or of Judaism. All the duties and obligations bound upon us in the New Testament which are also found in the Old Testament may now be emphasized from texts in both Testaments. But we must not go back to the Old Testament for authority to do what is no part of the new covenant under which we live (Rom. 6:14; John 1:17; Gal. 4:21; 5:1-4).

## THE FOUR GOSPELS

What is commonly called the Four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, except the last chapters of each book—record things which occurred under the law of Moses, before it was taken away at the cross (Col. 2:14). Christ was born under the law and kept it (Gal. 4:4; Matt. 5:17-18). He kept the Sabbath, or seventh day of

the week (Matt. 12; Mk. 3). Though He violated human traditions (Mk. 7:3-13), He kept the Passover (Mt. 26), and many other requirements of the law. When he had fulfilled it, He abolished it in His death (Eph. 2:14-16).

After that, His last will and testament went into force (Heb. 9:15-17). This law of Christ included all of His teaching which was to be a part of Christianity, even though, as in the sermon on the mount (Matt. 5, 6, 7), whatever He taught before the cross in view of the church and the gospel is now in force as a part of His will and testament; for instance, His command to "...tell it unto the church" (Mt. 18:15-18); though not repeated after the cross, this is now in force, for there was no church yet established to "tell" it to before Pentecost (Matt. 16:18-19; Mk. 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4). Likewise, what he said about remarriage for the cause of fornication is now applicable (Matt. 19:3-9; 5:31-32). Jesus' teaching on the new birth is now in force (John 3:3-5).

### WHAT HE TAUGHT HIS APOSTLES

What Christ taught his apostles, *as apostles*, is not applicable to those not apostles, such as His charge to take no thought what they should say, and that the spirit would give them what to say (Matt. 10:19-20). His command for them to heal the sick, raise the dead, etc., would not apply unto all disciples (Matt. 10:8). And so was His promise to give them miraculous power not for all disciples (Acts 1:1-8). But all the moral and spiritual obligations resting on the apostles *as disciples* are bound upon us also, for we are disciples (Acts 11:26).

### STUDY THE CONTEXT

Someone has said that a text apart from its context may be a pretext, instead of a text. The Bible may be made to appear to teach almost anything imaginable by

taking texts here and there out of their context and contrary to their proper and divine use. The main pronouns in Mark 16:17-20 refer back to the plural noun "eleven" of vs. 14, and not to the singular noun "creature" preached to in vss. 15-16. The signs of vs. 17 followed the apostles, even when they laid hands on others to this end (Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4; Acts 8:18; 19:6).

### ASSEMBLE ALL THE FACTS

The proper interpretation of many of the scriptures depends upon gathering and assembling all the facts pertaining to a given subject. One may not take the time to use all the scriptures given in a complete concordance on a subject, but he should consider all the material facts: otherwise, he is sure to be misled in his interpretation.

One man has argued that Crispus only believed, and was never baptized (Acts 18:8). But he overlooked the fact that Paul said he baptized Crispus (1 Cor. 1:14). Had he collected all the facts he would not have made this blunder.

Another said John the Baptist only *preached* the "baptism of repentance," *and did not administer it* (Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3). By ignoring one fact, these verses might be interpreted to mean this. Paul said, "*John verily baptized* with the baptism of repentance" (Acts 19:4). This denies the false theory or interpretation given.

One man has argued that Melchisedec was the Holy Spirit. But the theory is spoiled when the Bible says he was a man (Heb. 7:1-4). An *Englishman's Greek Concordance* is here recommended to preachers; as well as *Young's Concordance*. Remember to accept all that is said on a given subject.

In commenting upon 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, a radio

preacher once argued that every dollar a congregation is to spend must be contributed by its own members. This doctrine ignored the fact that that very contribution was to be sent to Jerusalem, to another church, for it to use and spend in its work of benevolence (See vs. 3). And the church in Judaea received a contribution from the brethren in the church at Antioch. This was money to spend in benevolence that was not collected from its own members (See Acts 11:29-30).

A hobby-riding preacher has argued that one congregation cannot scripturally help another to preach the gospel, or send another money to help pay for radio time for preaching the gospel, or churches could not cooperate in contributing to the same need in preaching the gospel in another church. But again, a material fact is overlooked and ignored. Paul said unto the church at Corinth, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you (the church at Corinth) service" (2 Cor. 11:8). These churches cooperated with each other, and contributed to the same need, which was the support of the preacher to preach to the church at Corinth. Also, Paul, somewhat complained that no church contributed to his needs in a mission field, except the church at Philippi (Phil. 1:5; 4:15). This was equal to saying other churches could and should have contributed to his support. This, likewise, as a fact overlooked, proves churches may cooperate in supporting the gospel, the church being "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

Another has preached on the radio that no church in the New Testament was ever authorized to sponsor any kind of work which would aid another church, except in benevolence. This ignores Paul's command that the church at Colossae aid the church at Laodicea in evangelism and edification. He said, "And when this epistle is read among you, *cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans*" (Col. 4:16). Here is one church causing the

Word of God to be taught in another church. This is shown to be a fact, by a consideration of 2 Cor. 11:8, where Paul took wages of churches to do the church at Corinth service. Ignoring facts promotes false teaching, divisions, and strife (Rom. 16:17-18).

### SPECIFIC AND GENERIC AUTHORITY

A specific command is one which specifies that some certain thing is to be done. When the command does not specify any details, methods, or means to be used in doing the thing required, then the command becomes a generic, or general command, as related to carrying out the command. The thing commanded must be done without addition, subtraction, or substitution. And when the method, or way to do what is commanded, is also specified, then this becomes a part of the specific law and must also be respected.

But when a thing is authorized, and no certain or exclusive method of doing it is specified, then the details are left to human judgment, or opinion, and we may use our option as to what is most expedient as a method, way, etc. A generic, or general command, is one which does not give all the details involved in doing what is commanded. "Go" is a generic command (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15). It does not specify how to travel in going. The command to walk into all the world and preach the gospel would have been specific, and not generic. "GO" leaves us liberty as to the choice of method. WALK would have left us no choice as to method of travel. "TEACH" is also generic—leaves us liberty to choose the method—radio, TV, printed page, oral teaching, class teaching, use of literature, visual aids, etc. Details specified would have excluded all this liberty.

Singing is a specific kind of music, and is authorized (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Mechanical instrumental music

would be an addition to what is commanded (Matt. 28: 20; 2 John 9). The command to build the ark of gopher wood is illustrative of the point in mind. The command to build the ark of WOOD, would have been a generic command, for it would have left the liberty to use the wood of Noah's choice. But God excluded pine, hickory, oak, and the like by specifying the kind to use—gopher wood (Gen. 6:14-16). And if God had in the New Testament authorized us to merely make *MUSIC*, then we could sing or play, for both are music. Or we could have chosen the kind of music wanted. But God did not say make *MUSIC*, but he selected the kind of music, and said he wanted "singing" (Eph. 5:19). This excludes playing from worship, as gopher wood excluded pine, oak, etc., from the material of the ark. These are Principles of Biblical Interpretation which must not be violated.

The command for the church to relieve the poor and needy is a generic command. God said, "Relieve," and did not say how nor where. This leaves the church at liberty to choose its own method of giving the relief (1 Tim. 5:16). The church may choose to send a bill of groceries to feed hungry and destitute children, just as the individual of the same verse. Whatever a dead relative might have done had he lived, the church can do in the last analysis.

### DON'T MAKE LAWS FOR GOD

Liberalism trifles with specific law by setting it aside, and doing as it pleases. It is a lawless attitude toward divine authority, and shows very little or no respect for the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). It will change God's plan of salvation and say, "He that believeth and is prayed for shall be saved." It will change the organization of the Lord's church and change the items of worship, write for itself a human creed, and reject the Bible from being an all sufficient guide in matters of faith and

revelation (2 Tim. 3:15-17). In a word, liberalism makes its own laws and its own church and religion, with a flavoring of enough truth to make it acceptable. Following the doctrines and commandments of men, its religion is vain (Matt. 15:9; 2 John 9-11).

Radicalism goes off in the opposite extreme and trifles with generic authority. Where God failed to specify details it makes its "anti" laws and restrains God's people from exercising the liberty given them under generic authority. Some of them demand that the churches give up all simultaneous Bible classes on Sunday morning, the use of literature in classes, and women teachers of children, ladies' class, etc. Others of them demand that the churches give up their individual communion cups. Another group objects to the church using song books. Another objects to the church permitting funerals and weddings in their meeting houses. One of them objected to the church owning a meeting house, and requested that the church give up the house and follow him to the YMCA to start a scriptural church. Others object to the church training the young people to sing apart from any regular worship service, though they say it is scriptural to have them study the Bible in a group apart from the regular worship services of the church. They make their "anti" laws against churches cooperating in any very effective manner, and without the loss of any autonomy. They are against the church caring for orphans at all, and in any manner or place. But the issue is not the orphans home. Their proposition for debate says, "It is a sin for the church to take money out of its treasury with which to buy food for hungry, destitute children, and those who do so will go to hell." They teach that the church cannot help a home of any sort, natural home or any other kind. These, and hundreds of other such man-made laws, are added in the realm of human liberty under generic authority. They change general authority into specific authority, just as liberalism changes specific authority into generic authority.

## SOME PASSAGES ARE DIFFICULT

Some scriptures are hard to be understood (2 Pet. 3:16). These should be studied in the light of plain passages whose meaning is easy of understanding. Instead of bending the plain passages and twisting them out of their true meaning to make them fit some fantastic theory based upon some imaginary meaning of difficult passages, we should let the difficult passages easily yield their meaning to fit the plain passages whose meaning cannot be misunderstood.

## FIGURATIVE AND LITERAL

It is a Principle of Biblical Interpretation that the easy and natural, or primary meaning of words be accepted, unless forced off by some facts to a figurative meaning. John 3:5 says "born of water"—and means literal water of baptism (vs. 23). "*Living water*" and "*water of life*" are figurative, and are so qualified by the extra words as to show it. If a literal meaning is absurd, then try the figurative. And if the literal meaning contradicts some other scripture, try the figurative. But the easy and natural meaning is the rule, and figurative language is the exception to the rule.

## APPROVED EXAMPLES

An approved example should be carefully examined to see whether or not it is bound upon us, or loosed. If the point in an approved example is in a background command, it is an item bound upon us, for we are under the same specific law they were under in the first century. But if the detail under consideration is not specified in background law, but is under generic law giving them liberty to choose, then that item is loosed, or is a matter

of liberty with us, as it was with those who left the example. We do not have to do things under generic law in the way the apostles and others did them. Under generic law they left us examples of selling all they had and having all things common (Acts 2:44-46; 4:34-37; 5:4); the example of "fasting" in connection with the appointment of elders (Acts 14:23); the example of laying on of hands (Acts 13:1-4); sending a contribution from one church to another by two men (Acts 11:29-30); example of Lord's supper only at night (Acts 20:7-15); sermon in connection with the supper continuing till midnight (Acts 20:7-15); supper in an upper room, or third loft (Acts 20); example of one cup in the supper (Lk. 22:17); confession made at the water (Acts 8:35-39). Must we follow all these approved examples? Are all of them binding upon us?

But we have examples of baptism, Lord's supper, singing, preaching, prayers, teaching, giving, benevolence, evangelism, church cooperation, liberality, faith, and faithfulness, courage, personal work, etc., all of which are approved, and that under background specific authority. These examples are bound upon us.

Time would fail me to discuss all the Principles of Biblical Interpretation. You can see that by a necessary inference, under general authority, the Bible authorizes details and incidentals which it does not mention by name.

And we do not have to have uniformity in practice under generic authority, but we should obey and be uniform in doing what is specified. However, we should maintain unity in all things: (1) By all doing what is specified; (2) By all refusing to make any positive or negative laws in the realm of liberty under generic authority.

## TRIUMPH THROUGH FAILURE

Hulen L. Jackson

Hulen L. Jackson has preached for the Trinity Heights Church of Christ, Dallas, Texas, since 1942 when he moved from Shawnee, Okla., where he had preached for two years for the Central congregation. His first work, fulltime, upon graduating from college, was in San Saba, Texas, where he served five years. He has also served the Preston Rd. church in Dallas for five years.

He is a native of Denison, Texas, and having graduated from the schools there first attended Abilene Christian College, then Southeastern Okla. College where he received a B.A. degree and attended later Austin College. As a student he belonged to Alpha Phi Sigma, Phi Beta Sigma, Kappa Delta Pi, Blue Key, and Pi Kappa Delta. While completing his college work he preached for the church in Commerce, Texas.

Mr. Jackson in 1938 was married to Guille Wallace, youngest daughter of the late Foy E. Wallace Sr., and to them three children have been born: Mrs. Robert Hatter (A.C.C. '63), Mrs. Gary Tuttle



(A.C.C. '66) and Foy Oliver Jackson. Mr. Jackson first spoke at the A.C.C. lectures in 1938 and has appeared several times since then and has also spoken on the campuses of most of the Christian Colleges. He conducts on an average of five meetings annually and has held meetings in about half of the different states of the U.S. He writes for the Christian Teacher, Power for Today, 20th Century Christian, Firm Foundation, and the Gospel Advocate, and serves as a member of the board of Trustees of Abilene Christian College, a board member of Voice of Freedom, and a trustee for Bell Trust of Dallas and also for the Philanthropic Institute of Ameri-

ca. He and his wife have done some of the pioneering work in teacher training schools among the church in various sections of the country.

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“We are pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed.”<sup>1</sup> A paraphrase of Paul’s language here by Macknight could be most helpful. The apostle likely had in mind the combats in the Grecian games and is comparing the apostles to these athletes in their struggles for victory. They might be hard pressed but not to the point of being unable to finish the contest. They were not suffocated by the enemy, nor had they been stunned in the fight to the point of despair. Maybe they had been thrown down by this enemy, yet they were able to rise again and continue the conflict.<sup>2</sup> The Pulpit Commentary has Paul exclaiming that he was “at a loss, but not utterly at a loss.” That same writer continues by explaining the apostles might have been thrown to the ground but not doomed.<sup>3</sup> Though to the enemy he had been defeated and perhaps to many of the disciples the apostles apparently had failed, yet by his faith in God Paul knew out of this apparent defeat would come victorious triumph. Triumph through failure has ever been God’s plan for God’s people.

When have we really failed? What is failure? Are we sure we know? And, when have we really succeeded? Could it not be true that often an apparent failure becomes a success in the end? Is tragedy never a blessing to us? Does not God often over-rule momentary failure and make

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1 Cor. 4:8-9 (American Standard Version)

2 Apostolical Epistles by Macknight, page 223 (Baker Book House)

3 Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 19, page 90

of it victory? Must we not consciously and conscientiously so live as Christians because of our trusting faith in God who rules our lives? Horace once said,

"Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents, which, in prosperous circumstances, would have lain dormant."

Those here present who have gone far down the pathway of life no doubt have many times realized that adversity, tragedy, failure, was the best thing that could have happened to you at the moment.

Likely no church loved the apostle Paul as did the Philippians and they were greatly disturbed in hearing of his arrest, his trials, and his imprisonment. From Rome Paul wrote them the wonderful and comforting book and at the outset discussed his tribulations and apparent defeat at the hands of his enemies in Jerusalem, Caesarea, and in Rome. But, note Paul's attitude toward and his concept of these unfortunate and discouraging circumstances. "Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel."<sup>4</sup> God called this man to be an apostle of our Lord, Jesus appeared to him to make him a witness and minister; he received the Holy Spirit to guide him and to enable him to confirm his preaching with signs and wonders and mighty deeds, but in the midst of great success in preaching Christ and in establishing churches of the Lord, God allowed Paul to suffer defeat and end up in prison. Was it a misfortune really? Had he been defeated? Not in the least, he assures these beloved brethren. These circumstances ultimately resulted actually in opening doors of opportunity for the preaching of Christ which might have been forever shut otherwise. Paul truly triumphed through failure. Paul might have thought his work

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4 Philippians 1:12

was over, but not God, for He knew better. God could and did over-rule this misfortune and but used it for the advancement of His Cause on earth. The apostle then in this same chapter, verse 14, shows that his trials did but encourage and give strength to the other preaching brethren, so much so that they more abundantly spoke the Word of God without fear. What great results from an apparent failure. Paul's mind concerning adversity and failure ought to be today in us.

May we briefly consider several more Biblical examples of this great truth of God. Did they really and truly fail? Did not the Lord bring triumph out of failure? Go again to Rome with Paul there in prison, yet being allowed to preach in his own hired house. No one would believe Paul suffered these many things because God wanted him to do so, but rather we believe God for some reason, unrevealed to us ordinarily, did allow him to suffer. Here is the great apostle to the Gentile world in chains in prison, with his freedom denied him. If God wants him to preach to the world, why not set him free or better still, why allow him to go to prison in the first place? This but shows how finite our thinking is. Did this failure in Rome bear fruit in the work of the kingdom? Could it be that Paul in that way accomplished more than he could have otherwise? Think. Think again of the two results mentioned to the Philippians: he preached to the whole Praetorian Guard and to the rest and his bonds made the other disciples bolder in preaching. There in prison he converted Onesimus and sent him back with a letter to Philemon; from that prison several epistles in our New Testament were penned by Paul the prisoner. Could I say that the New Testament today might not be as it is IF Paul had not "failed" there? Somehow Paul converted several in Caesar's own house and sent greetings from them to the Philippians.<sup>5</sup> Paul's defeat meant success in the end especially for

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<sup>5</sup> Philippians 4:21

these good people in Rome. Let your imagination determine how much good for the Lord was accomplished through the years as a result of the conversion of these people. Paul might have lost a battle but he did win the war. For at least two years the apostle continued that preaching as a prisoner in his hired house. Paul aimed much earlier to go to Rome<sup>6</sup> to preach, but God changed his plans and finally shipped him in chains, on a prison boat (to some a defeated man), to accomplish God's purposes there as yet unrevealed to the apostle or to anyone. Who could be brazen enough to say that Paul's plans would have been better than the Lord's? Oh, yes, his God did permit momentary defeat, he lost round one, but he triumphed gloriously in winning the fight in Rome. Who would doubt it?

Turn the pages of history back a few years before this trip to Rome and you find this same devoted and trusting apostle locked up in the dungeon in chains with his back's flesh cut and bruised there in Philippi.<sup>7</sup> It was God Himself Who called him to go to this city in Macedonia to preach.<sup>8</sup> And, just as they were getting started and having some success, God allowed Paul and Silas to be arrested and in these chains suffer in that city jail. But, why? We ordinarily don't know why, yet trustingly we believe that God has a plan and a purpose and can and will bring triumph out of failure or through failure. I've always felt Philippi had one of the "great" churches of New Testament days. Does it seem strange to you that God brought this about as a result of and through this very imprisonment? Had they not been incarcerated, would the results there have been as great? Who knows? God didn't will this suffering and agony, but allowing it, He did again over-rule it to His own glory and good. We haven't failed until we think we have failed.

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<sup>6</sup> Romans 1:13-15; 15:24, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Acts 16:23-25

<sup>8</sup> Acts 16:9-10

With believing enduring faith on our part, God will turn it into success. Let Him.

Maybe Joseph was broken-hearted, discouraged, and felt defeated when the wife of Potiphar lied about him and caused his imprisonment;<sup>9</sup> however, the Bible doesn't really say about that. Prison makes most men feel as failures; perhaps it did Joseph. Moses in writing the record, however, clarifies one point: Jehovah was with Joseph and blessed him in everything he did.<sup>10</sup> Recall hurriedly the other details of that beautiful and moving story. Think of the results of that imprisonment. If Joseph had not been placed in prison, he may not have met the butler and the baker, one of whom later befriended him in his time of need, and this act of kindness changed the history of Egypt and greatly affected the history of Israel. Maybe we would have felt that God, in blessing Joseph and carrying out His plans for this great and good man, should have kept him out of the prison, but God's ways are not always our ways, neither are His thoughts our thoughts.<sup>11</sup> The wisdom of heaven dictated that Jehovah allow Joseph to go to prison, to apparently fail, but to leave that prison to become soon the prime minister of all mighty Egypt and to thus be used of God in preserving the people of God in their infancy. Defeat viewed from afar shines in all its brilliance as glorious triumph. God knew this all of the time, but man often doesn't. Have faith in God and in all His ways.

Has adversity ever caused you to feel down and out for good? Have you let apparent defeat really defeat you? Does a handicap to you spell failure or discouragement you can not overcome? What if Zacchaeus had not been a short man?<sup>12</sup> Would he have seen the Lord and received salva-

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9 Genesis 39:7-23

10 Genesis 39:21-23

11 Isaiah 55:8-9

12 Luke 19:1-10

tion from Him? Who knows? This little man knew how to handle and overcome what to others would mean adversity or failure in life. Be a Zacchaeus; don't give up or give in. What a contrast between this little Jew in Jericho and the first king of Israel, Saul, who was "from his shoulders and upward higher than any of the people."<sup>13</sup> Saul was a miserable failure as a man and as a king whose apparent success turned into failure. Zacchaeus knew what he needed to do to overcome his handicap if he saw Jesus passing by that way, so he climbed up the tree. He would not be defeated.

As Israel was about to cross Jordan into the promised Canaan, Jehovah instructed them not to offer their sacrifices just in any and every place, but in the place that God would choose in one of their tribes, and only there should they burn their offerings.<sup>14</sup> Many years later God selected Jerusalem in one of their tribes; there God placed His name, and there and there only could Israel offer their sacrifices unto Him. Yes, it thus became the Holy City, the sacred spot to all Jews. There God's name was, for there they met God. It would appear to us that heaven would preserve Jerusalem "come what may," as long at least as Israel remained His people. But, heaven didn't always preserve it, for God allowed the Babylonians to sweep over their land, destroy completely their temple, and burn their city. Was this failure of God's plans for Israel and for them as His people? Their idolatry had brought about this change in God's plans for the city and God was determined if possible to cure them forever of idolatry. Into the land of captivity they went for 70 years, out of which God finally allowed them to return, but they never returned to the worship of idols. It did eliminate this sin from Israel. God used this adversity to accomplish His purposes. It is not ours to wonder why

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13 1 Samuel 9:2

14 Deuteronomy 12:13

God didn't use some other method, but by faith we know God turned failure into triumph for His people. Time and time again He did. He will do the same, too, for us now if we will but believe.

Likely some more New Testament examples would prove impressive and effective to us as Christians today. From virtually the beginning of time God was planning the church as today we know it; promise after promise He made concerning it; prophecy after prophecy was spoken as God unfolded gradually His divine blueprint for that kingdom; defeat after defeat He turned into triumph in the lives of His people and the nation of Israel in order that they might bring to the world the foundation for that glorious kingdom of heaven; kingdoms rose and kingdoms fell, with the Roman empire controlling the world in keeping with heaven's plans; and then in the fullness of time God sent His Son to say "Upon this rock I will build my church."<sup>15</sup> On that memorable Pentecost day<sup>16</sup> heaven's plans for His kingdom were effected and the church was here among men. Men doubtlessly had wondered how God was through the seed of Abraham going to bless all nations. Angels wondered, too, about the Father's will and plan. That glorious church, the one body of Christ for Jew and Gentile alike, for bond and for the free, is the disclosure of that manifold wisdom of God,<sup>17</sup> not only to all men here, but also to "the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places"<sup>18</sup> according to this eternal purpose of God. As we view it with our finite understandings, heaven could not now afford to let anything or anybody interfere with the establishment or growth of this kingdom on earth. However, the church had hardly begun when the mighty arm of the Romans was stretched forth

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15 Matt. 16:18

16 Acts 2

17 Ephesians 3:10

18 Ephesians 3:11

to kill one of the twelve apostles<sup>19</sup> and to put two more of them behind bars.<sup>20</sup> I would have thought and you would have thought the church is about to fail before it really does get started. Jesus had only 12 apostles and three of them can no longer work with one killed and two others imprisoned and prohibited from preaching anymore in Jesus' name. As a religious movement Christianity was about to fail and God's plans had been thwarted somehow, but it didn't fail, did it? Why not? God can and will allow adversity, but can bring forth from that tremendous good which we would not have known or experienced. The death of James and the imprisonment of Peter and John maybe to some of the early disciples spelt impending failure for their Cause, but not to heaven. With divine wisdom God could work it all out in His own way and He did just that. Disaster they likely thought but not heaven. A temporary set-back may not be a set-back at all when we're on the Lord's side.

That early persecution against the Jerusalem church which scattered the disciples<sup>21</sup> save the apostles is one of the strangest and most baffling chapters in the history of religion in the entire world to some. Why would God start the church, give to men this religion of Christ, and then allow such persecution to arise almost immediately which from almost every standpoint was going to destroy this new religion before it was firmly established? Why should God do that? I should think the God who gives at will to men their thrones would and could keep everything favorable for the growth of His newly founded church. But, this is the one thing He didn't do. I can almost hear the devil laughing at the death of Stephen and the beginning of the wave of persecution over Jerusalem over his apparent

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19 Acts 12:1-2

20 Acts 4:1-3

21 Acts 8:1

successes in "nipping in the bud" this new religion. Perhaps most felt Satan had won and God had lost this time, but was this true? As the disciples leaving the city under persecution went everywhere preaching the word,<sup>22</sup> they established dozens of churches for the one the devil thought he had destroyed, and they converted thousands for the few Satan had killed there in Jerusalem. Yes, "the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the kingdom" as God turned failure into another glorious triumph for the Cause of right and righteousness. If Luke's history of the early church had closed with Acts 7 we might have known to our own satisfaction why the church did fail and didn't survive its early days in Jerusalem. No cause could survive such opposition and such persecution but the Lord's Cause did. God was in it and with it and through it effecting His plans for all mankind. All the powers of hades could not prevail against it.<sup>23</sup> Those trusting disciples forced to leave their city didn't feel they had suffered a set-back, but kept preaching the word wherever they went, and God continued to give them increase in all parts of the world. One of the biggest mistakes in judgment Satan ever made was in trying to throw up a roadblock in the path of God's church, for the Lord drove right through, and brought as a result of this persecution to His struggling and trusting Ones the most remarkable and I might say miraculous beginning in the history of the world. In less than a generation the Gospel covered the earth as the waters cover the seas. Was it defeat? Had they failed? They were pursued, but not forsaken; smitten down, but they were not destroyed; perplexed, but not unto despair. Thank God for their faith and thank God for His providence which turned defeat into conquest and brought the church into the future generations stronger than ever. The enemies of Christ no doubt gloated over their notable conquest and defeat of this infant church, not realizing that

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22 Acts 8:4

23 Matt. 16:18

the God of heaven could transform that defeat into a glorious triumph by using their mistakes against the Cause of Righteousness as the very fuel that would spread the flame of the Gospel into all the world. One has to be impressed with this thought as he reads the Biblical history of the early church and its remarkable growth midst persecutions and trials. You can't win fighting against God. Gamaliel knew this and tried to show the other Jews.<sup>24</sup> Our affairs rest not in the hands of men, but in the hands of God. He alone determines and decides the final outcome and result.

From one of the most helpful and most inspiring books on Revelation I've ever studied, may I quote the following: "Whenever in history the church is faithful to its calling and bears testimony concerning the truth, tribulation is bound to follow. Aside even from this fact, the church is in the world. Hence, it suffers along with the world. Children of God do not escape the horrors of war, famine, and pestilence. The church needs these tribulations. It needs both the direct antagonism of the world and participation in the common woes that pertain to this earthly life as a result of sin. The church, too, is sinful. It is in constant need of purification and sanctification."<sup>25</sup> Truer words were never spoken by man than these. In this fine commentary on Revelation the author emphasizes one great thought over and over again and again: things are not as they seem to be. We all have problems in understanding and in interpreting Revelation with its many metaphors and symbols, but we have missed the one great message of this book of God if we haven't learned that lesson: things are not as they seem. Souls of the martyrs may be at the moment under the altar, but eventually they will be sitting upon majestic thrones ruling and reigning with Christ. God will see to that. The beast and the dragon at

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24 Acts 5:40

25 More Than Conquerors-Hendriksen (Baker Book House) page 99

the present moment may appear to be able to envelop Christ and His kingdom in order to destroy them, but not so. Christ reigns supreme and still rides the white horse of triumph. God's way always wins and when we faithfully serve Him He assures us ultimate victory also. His church continued to win the battles, all battles with the enemy, until that church forsook God and His way and became an apostate body. God didn't lose the contest over Job with Satan and He will not lose the contests today with Satan. Believest thou this? Surely you believe. Read again the marvelous book of Revelation with this comforting and reassuring thought in mind. Let God through it speak to you. You will not be defeated. You can not be defeated as long as you're on the Lord's side. Things are not as they seem. Never forget it.

Imagine yourself back in the days of Jesus as one of His enemies. What would you have thought or how would you have felt when you knew that He was finally dead? To you He was a blasphemer and an impostor, a revolutionist among the Jews in Judea, an idealist with his head in the clouds who really was better off dead lest he mislead more people. The word of His death was good news to you and you could at last relax and forget Him. But, could you really? The Romans felt they had carried out the letter of the law in crucifying Him on that Roman cross and Jews rejoiced, not that an enemy of Caesar had been put out of the way, but that one who mistaught the people about Moses and his law to Israel had received His just dues. To the Romans and to the Jews the victory was complete; the battle was over, the spoils had been divided among the conquerors; the enemy had been vanquished once and for all, and they could all settle back down to normal living in their beloved land. Even His disciples thought that was the end. In disappointment they went fishing, forgetting anything He had said about the future. The most devoted disciples He had, the women, came to the tomb having

"bought spices, that they might anoint him."<sup>26</sup> There was no faith there in the future, for they thought He had failed. Had He said something about rising again after three days? If so, they apparently couldn't recall it or didn't. Surely they thought, if this is the Son of God, He has been defeated. When Jesus did die there on Calvary, the sun refused to shine, but it was even a darker day in the hearts of His few disciples who had tasted defeat everywhere. But was it actually defeat? Had Jesus failed? Could God, His Father, do nothing further? What did He do? Early Sunday morning as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, the third day since His crucifixion, God merely spoke and the entire world was frozen in fright as the Son of God came forth from that tomb to be man's living and reigning resurrected Lord. The guards became as dead men, the large stone was but a pebble, and the chains of death but tiny threads when God, who for His people always turns failure into triumph, called His Son forth from that borrowed tomb. If Satan in all time ever won a victory, a complete and final victory, it was over Jesus when he had Him placed in the tomb, but that victory lasted but three days and nights. Then God made a mockery of it all in transforming this defeat into the most sublime event in the history of man; he made that death of Jesus the very act that would release all mankind from the bonds of Satan and sin. God could laugh at Satan now, for He had taken from him his greatest device. What a glorious triumph out of an apparent defeat. What is defeat anyway? When have we really failed? Are we sure we know? To a Christian defeat is giving up and giving in to adversities. We're not defeated till then. Listen to Henry Austin's words,

"There's no defeat, in truth  
save from within  
Unless you're beaten there  
You're bound to win."<sup>27</sup>

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26 Mark 16:1

27 "Perseverance Conquers All"

With a genuine Christian there is no such thing as complete failure, for in every case God will bring victory out of defeat if we will but let Him. In this sense all things will work together for good to them that love the Lord.<sup>28</sup> In a graphic way A. J. Cronin has said it,

“One should remember that the defeated still have everything if they still have God.”<sup>29</sup>

When I'm on the Lord's side, He is always on my side and will see me through it all. When you think you are defeated or have failed, move over and give God a chance to work it out. He will, for He always has for His people. The Lord who turned the water into wine and who turned a boy's lunch into a banquet for thousands can easily solve our little problems and turn any hazard into a help. Why not let Him?

“Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever  
on the throne—  
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind  
the dim unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadows, keeping watch  
above his own.”<sup>30</sup>

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28 Romans 8:28

29 Keys of the Kingdom (Part 4)

30 The Present Crisis—James Russell Lowell

# THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS

1 Corinthians 1:18-24

Leonard Mullens

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First-century Corinth was a great commercial city, with a population well in excess of a half a million. A typical Grecian center, it was famed for much, but defamed by its morals. The very name of the town had become a synonym for luxury and dissipation. On the top of the Acro-Corinth stood the temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, where a thousand women prostitutes served as priestesses. Corinth was a Roman colony on Grecian ground, the seat of the Roman government in that area, and a proud, wealthy city. It has been called the "Vanity Fair" of the Roman Empire. Corinthian Greeks were known for their shallowness. They argued purely for the sake of argument, and they were proud of their knowledge. In fact, they felt that they knew about all there was to know!

Into such a city walked a Jew named Saul, better known to us by his Gentile name of Paul. Armed only with one weapon he came, and that weapon was the preaching of the cross. In a letter written later to the congregation which he founded there, the Apostle declared, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 1:2). In this same letter, Paul speaks of the "preaching of the cross," which is our message just now.

### PREACHING THE CROSS IS FOOLISHNESS

Paul told the members of the Corinthian church that the preaching of the cross was foolishness to those who perish. Perhaps the revised versions render more correctly the Greek verbs: they indicate continuous action in the present. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us that are being saved, it is the power of God." What was true in the age of Paul is true today. The preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing! Men filled with the delight

of the world's wisdom, men who take pride in the philosophies of earth, cannot understand how another, dying on a piece of wood in such agony and shame, can save them from that which they most fear—death and eternal darkness. In many ways, conditions about us are similar to those in ancient Corinth. Among the residents of that city were men greatly admired in such fields as philosophy and speech. But Paul did not seek to win Corinth to Christ through "excellency of speech or of wisdom" (1 Corinthians 2:11). The Apostle preached the cross!

In the expression "the preaching of the cross," (verse 18) the word translated "preaching" is "logos" which means "word" or "message." Thus reference is made "not to the act of preaching, but the substance of the testimony, all that God has made known concerning the subject" (Vine's "Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words"). Paul has already spoken of the "gospel," which finds its center in the cross of Christ (verse 17) and around "Christ crucified" (verse 23). So the "word of the cross" is truly the message of the gospel.

This message of salvation by the death of Christ is "foolishness" to many people. In the original language, that word means "dull" or "stupid," and not foolish in the sense of being comical. Paul does not say that because these people are perishing they consider the gospel stupid, but because they are filled up with worldly wisdom, they reject the gospel; therefore they are perishing. The world has not generally realized that the One Who died upon the cross is the only begotten Son of God. He came at the command of God to atone for our sins. Peter says that "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). God in His heavenly wisdom has allowed the learned of this world to seek out through their worldly wisdom the solution to man's problems of misery and suffering. But never have men been able to discover the secret they pursued—the end result of all man's vaunted knowledge has left man without the

knowledge of the cross of Christ. God has literally stepped into human life in the form of Christ, "the Word... made flesh" who "dwelt among us," (John 1:14), and by what worldly philosophers consider foolishness has proceeded to save us as we accept the life that is in His Son.

Both in the day of Paul and in our own, people are hindered from receiving this great salvation by preconception and by prejudice. The Jews were always looking for a physical, material sign. The Greeks earnestly sought some wisdom—some cleverly involved human reasoning. Paul said, "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom" (1 Corinthians 1:22). Yet the Jews were spiritually blind and refused to accept the many signs that Jesus gave to them. That the Messiah, whom they had pictured as coming in great glory and pomp, should suffer and die on the cross of a common criminal, was to them a stumbling block (verse 23). The Greeks considered the message too simple, insufficiently intellectual, dull, and stupid. They desired some intriguing dialectics, so to them the preaching of the cross was foolishness (verse 23). But then and now, thank God, there are those who will turn from their preconceptions and their prejudices to hear and to embrace in faith the message of our salvation. These people find in the message of the cross the wisdom and the power of God!

### SATAN DOES NOT WANT THE CROSS OF CHRIST PREACHED

It is certain that the Devil does not want the message of the cross to be proclaimed. Satan is opposed to the preaching of salvation in the blood of Jesus. The Devil is working always, to blind the eyes of men to this great fact—that the forgiveness of sins is found in the power of the blood of the Lamb of God! It is to be remembered that Paul informs us that the warfare in which we are engaged is a spiritual conflict. He says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,

against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). The source of evil, the source of sin is the Devil. And Satan does not want the world to believe that God has sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins. In our generation, a certain sophisticated part of society will call the teaching of salvation in the blood of Christ a pagan philosophy and a slaughterhouse religion. They will tell us that such a belief is out of date—that modern man has outgrown such a doctrine. "How could the blood of a man shed nineteen hundred years ago be of any value to us today?" they ask. Bishop John A. T. Robinson in his popular volume, *Honest to God*, holds this view. He says that the doctrine of the cross which holds that Christ made a complete sacrifice for the sins of the world needs more demythologizing than even the resurrection of Christ.

Thus in greater and lesser degrees, the preaching of salvation in the blood of Christ has been abandoned. What does the Word of God teach about salvation through the blood of Christ? Since it has already been established that the preaching of the cross involves all that God has made known on the subject, it is proper for us to consider other Holy Spirit testimony in reference to such preaching.

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT ON THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

Paul, in speaking to the elders of the Ephesian church at Miletus, said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God (or of the Lord), which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Again this Apostle writes to the Roman church, saying, "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we

shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:9). In his letter to the Colossians, he declares that Christ "made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Colossians 1:20).

The Apostle Peter has spelled it out quite clearly by writing, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18,19).

The burden of the song of the four beasts and the twenty-four elders of whom John writes was "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9).

Passages from the Holy Spirit like these could be continued, but the point is established. Salvation comes to us through the blood of Christ.

### THE CROSS IS THE DRAWING POWER

No doubt, the Devil knows more about the power of God than we do. He knows what will defeat him, and that is preaching a crucified Christ, Who died on the cross for our sins. These words from Jesus come before us, and it would be well to memorize them and make them a part of our hearts, for He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John 12:32). If the Devil can hide the death of Christ for our sins in a sea of theology, he can succeed in holding men under his sway. The "preaching of the cross is . . . unto us which

are being saved . . . the power of God." The resurrection of Christ is a tremendous event, unsurpassed in the history of men, and it proves His divine Sonship. Yet the resurrection of Christ would have no spiritual meaning for us as sinners unless He had died for our sins. Even if we were told of the resurrection of the Master, without being informed that He died for us, we would probably ask, "So what?" The drawing power in the gospel is the "lifted up" Christ, Who loved us enough to die in our place on Golgotha. The mission of the church that wears the Saviour's name is to "LIFT HIM UP!" As did Paul in Corinth, so must we in our day preach "Christ crucified."

#### WHY IS THE CROSS THE POWER AND THE WISDOM OF GOD?

This question may be answered by asking another: "What does God find wrong with the world?" Surely it is not our abundance of culture or our lack of it; surely it is not our knowledge of the world in which we live. Man was placed here to "multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28).

God must find fault with us, not because we can speed through the air above the speed of sound, or send a message along a wire around the world, or throw a picture through the air across a continent; but because we have sinned and broken His laws. At the same time that which has stirred up the wrath of God against man has moved Him also to infinite love, causing Him to give His Son to "die for our sins." A study of the Word of God shows that God has one all-consuming passion in reference to us. He wants us to be rid of sin; He desires our forgiveness. God wages war against sin, and the weapon that He employs is the cross of Christ. The word "power" in the Greek is "dunamis," from which is derived our word

“dynamite.” Let us face ourselves. Sin is entrenched in the hearts of men. We “fall in love” with sin. Man is surrounded with that which appeals to his flesh and satisfies his senses. He lives in a world that is so fitted to his lusts that he may indulge these pleasures. There is no real happiness in sin, but obviously there are pleasures of the flesh in sin. Men love sin, and they commit sin until they are bound in its chains, and it takes power to blast that love of sin from the hearts of men. That power is the cross of Christ! No other such power to break men’s hearts, as hard as rock with pride and with rebellion, will ever be known on earth or in Heaven. Dynamite can remove great barriers where a highway for progress is being opened, and never was there such an insurmountable barrier as that which sin had raised. Isaiah wrote, “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2). Indeed the “wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), whether written in the Bible or not! How shall this great barrier between God and man, more impregnable than a thousand Gibaltars, be removed? Behold here the power of the cross of Christ, which removed that barrier by the grace of God. The door of mercy was opened wide at Calvary, and it cannot be closed by all the imps of hell. The power of the cross, which manifests the love of God, blasts from man’s heart the love and therefore the practice of sin, and we fall in love with God and Christ, because “He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Our wills are changed in repentance and we are baptized into the death of Christ for the remission of sins. Thus the preaching of the cross is the power of God.

The cross of Christ is the judgment of God upon sin. You will never grasp the reality of sin and its hold on the world until you come to Calvary. It was your sin and mine that nailed Christ there. When we honestly face the cross, all the bastions of self-excusing and rationalizing, behind which sin seeks to hide its reality, are shattered. Its death

rays break down every illusion and the truth about sin stands revealed. As we look upon the cross, and by the eye of faith see Christ there, we must cry out, "This is what sin has done." If modern man is not worrying about sin, it is because he has never gone to Calvary! Calvary was not alone the deed of the Jews or of Pilate. It was my deed and yours. The Negro spiritual asks, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" And in a very profound way we were all there! In that tragedy was the blindness of religious leaders, who thought they possessed all truth. There was the selfishness of business interests, enraged that their traffic in the Temple had been disturbed. There was the disloyalty of Judas, who considered his own gain; there was the political expediency of Pilate, who sought not justice, but advantage. There was the cowardice of the disciples, who ran when tested, and there was the bloodthirsty, thoughtless mob crying out "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Yes, we were there when they crucified my Lord!

### HIS DEATH WAS NECESSARY

Sin made necessary the cross and sin makes necessary the preaching of the cross. With Paul we say, "For necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16). The writer of the Hebrew letter says that "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). As this epistle is read, it becomes clear that "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). The only conclusion is that the death of Christ was an absolute necessity. Were this not true, God would never have permitted the crucifixion.

"Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Man has spurned the majesty of the greatest law in the universe—the law of God. Now the majesty of that law

must be maintained, for if God does not uphold His law, He ceases to be God. Yet God loved man too much to allow him to be eternally lost. What could be done, with man in rebellion against God?

The problem was two-fold. There was one—and only one—way by which it could be solved. There must be an incomparable manifestation of divine love, a divine offering that would demonstrate God's love for man and overcome the rebellion in his heart, while it would at the same time demonstrate by its extravagant cost the sublimity of the violated law. Through the counsels of the Godhead, the solution emerges.

Divine law had been violated. Disobedience to human law incurs a human penalty and calls for a human offering in some form to meet that penalty. There was absolutely nothing that man could do to provide an atonement for his transgression. At this point, God's love operates, and **WHAT MAN COULD NOT DO FOR HIMSELF GOD DID FOR HIM**. God provided the divine offering, His own Son from heaven, and that Son willingly gave Himself as the propitiation for our sins. "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). God is holy and He cannot tolerate sin. He must deal with sin, and this He has done through the cross. In this again there is the wisdom of God, so different from the wisdom of man.

Here we are pointed to the substitutionary, vicarious suffering of the Master. Such a death for the Suffering Servant of God was foretold by Isaiah when he wrote, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Peter declares that "Christ suffered for us" (1 Peter 2:21), and that it is by His stripes we are

healed (1 Peter 2:24). He further elaborates by saying that "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). Paul writes that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3), and so He died **INSTEAD OF US BECAUSE WE ARE THE SINNERS!** The vicarious suffering on the cross by the Lord, as a substitute for the sinner, is definitely established by the New Testament. Truly it was necessary that Christ dwell in the flesh to die on the Hill of the Skull for us that we might be justified by His sacrifice.

### THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS

The offence of Christianity to man's wisdom and philosophy is found in the cross. The teaching of the atonement has been called a "bloody gospel." But sin cannot be ignored in the sense in which the Bible describes sin. The cause of sin, the effects of sin, and the cure for sin are found in the wisdom of God portrayed in the Master's cross. Man cannot worship the intellect, while he overlooks the heart, for out of it are the issues of life. When the death of Christ is presented to the world only as "the supreme example of sacrifice and obedience to the will of God," how hell must echo with laughter! Satan is never alarmed at this type of preaching for this is not the preaching of the cross. The Word makes it clear that Christ died through the great provision of God's mercy and justice; that God might remain just and yet be the Justifier of those who accept Jesus. Hear Paul, speaking of Christ, saying "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time, His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:25,26). Language cannot express the issue in a clearer

fashion. On the cross, Christ took the sinner's place; He drank the sinner's cup; He was cut with the sinner's stripes; He was bruised for the sinner's disobedience, and He died the sinner's death! It is only when Christ is preached as the atonement, as the divine Bearer of man's sins, as the One that God "made . . . to be sin for us, who knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21) that we preach the cross as the power and the wisdom of God. Whenever we leave out the Bible teachings of atonement, and of propitiation, the offence of the cross is gone. This is the doctrine that the world scorns and which hell fears most! That this doctrine of the "blood atonement" is offensive to the world admits of no doubt, but that it is the teaching of the apostles is equally certain.

During Civil War days, two boys grew up in the same community in Virginia. They were good friends, but both fell in love with the same girl. When she married the young man of her choice, the other accepted that decision graciously, and was a friend to both. When the fighting started, the married man—the other never married—was called for duty in the Union Army. He was concerned about leaving his wife and children without any support. While he was debating the situation, his friend went to the recruiting officer and enlisted in his place as a substitute, which was permitted then. He was killed in battle. The other man found his grave and over it erected a stone with these words: "He died for me." And that is exactly what Christ has done for us. Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

### MAN'S PRIDE

There is in man a trait that only the preaching of the cross can destroy. That is man's pride, the very center of man's sin. Men are prone to trust in themselves—in their

abilities, their wisdom, their philosophy, their plans, schemes, and ways. Pride is the very essence of sin, and man becomes so filled up with himself that he has no guilt of sin.

It is here that the cross is the "power of God," for dynamite destroys. It blasts to pieces mighty rocks. That citadel of pride in man's heart is so strong that even though it end in hell, it will not surrender! The Law cannot jolt it, and the strongest angel is powerless before it. Men have gone to prison, to torture, to death rather than surrender pride. It is the strength of the sinner in his revolt against God. But there is power in the preaching of the cross to dissolve this mountain of human pride.

In Paul we find an example. He was a proud, unbending Pharisee! He was an Israelite who glorified in his Jewish connections. But when he confronted the cross, that citadel of pride was shattered and we hear Paul shout, "I am crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20). Once Paul saw the cross through the eyes of God, it became his only glory, and he said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14). Saul was dead, for Christ lived in Paul.

And so must it be with us! Our human pride must be destroyed by the cross of Christ. This is so necessary for our salvation, for as long as we glory in our talents, in our wisdom, in our traditions, in our religion, in our creeds, in our philosophies, we shall remain unsaved. Let us be done with human pride. Let us empty ourselves that we may be filled with the Lord! Let us come to the cross, recognizing our sinful acts, and smitten by our own unworthiness, let us say, "Oh Lord, I put my confidence in Thy blood and its power. Oh Lord save me, a sinner!" Let us know that behind our human pride

stands the Devil. 1 Timothy 3:6 certainly implies that the cause of Satan's fall was pride, and that pride he has passed along to man. The cross does away with pride and so we come to the cross, trusting in no merit of our own, but seeking justification through the blood that Jesus shed on the hill of Golgotha.

### THE CROSS IN YOUR LIFE AND MINE

What does the cross say in your life and mine? It proclaims power through weakness, life through death, and resurrection through crucifixion. How can we come to know the benefits of the cross? It is when we exhaust our resources; it is when we lay aside our ambitions, our prejudices; it is when we throw our so-called intellectual approach into the garbage; it is when we humble our pride that we can look upon the cross with saving faith. It is when we reach that place where we shall say, "Oh Lord, I am willing to be nothing. I am willing that myself, with all its pride, its self-righteousness, its ego, be crucified with Thee." It is when we say, "Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy Cross I cling," that redemption is found. This does not rule out our obedience to the gospel plan of salvation, for "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:8, 9). God gives, but we must receive that gift in saving faith.

And then as the children of God, we find that we are not finished with the cross, nor it with us. John says, "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Here is an amazing fact for God's people. The blood of Christ is forever operative. The verb "cleanse" in the Greek is

present active tense. The blood never ceases to cleanse the Christian who walks in the light. Some moderns have felt that this expression of John's is out of date. To them, there ought to be a better way of stating the facts. Surely there is a "less offensive" way of expressing this teaching. The answer is that the "offense of the cross," to borrow from Paul (Galatians 5:11), still remains. And it is offensive to the sinner, repeated over and over in the Word of God, that Christ died for sins. The cross remains the divine measure of sin's heinousness. Truly the precious blood of Christ not only cleanseth, but it is always keeping the child of God clean. The sincere Christian, who desires to live in an unbroken fellowship with his holy Father, would despair, in such a world as this, if it were not for the blood that keeps us clean as we walk in the light. Once again we marvel at the wisdom and the power of God expressed through the cross.

### LET US GO BACK TO THE CROSS

In 2 Corinthians 5:19, Paul writes that the ministry of reconciliation is "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." For this reason, the world must come to the cross. To the church is given the work of preaching this reconciliation to God, but the world will never come to the cross unless the church begins there!

A great rallying cry of God's people in the past has been, "Let us go back to the Bible!" This plea must not be abandoned, but let us add to it this word: "Let us go back to the cross!" It is true that we can be right in doctrine only as we go back to the Bible; it is true also that we can be right in spirit only as we go back to the cross. A man or a church can be right in teaching, but wrong in spirit, in heart, and in attitude. The cross of Christ is the cure, for here the love of God overwhelms us and destroys our human pride by its power.

“And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left” (Luke 23:33). Jesus was not crucified in a church house between the baptistry and the communion table. He was nailed to the cross between two thieves on the town’s garbage heap! And if the church of Christ, for which He died, is to win the world, we must go back to the cross, out in the world of sinners, preaching the wisdom and the power of God.

What a scene that must have been when Jesus died on Calvary! Angels must have wept, while devils cackled in fiendish glee. The sun refused to shine, for its Maker was dying. The earth shivered and shook, for its Creator had come to die. A wooden cross seemed to have conquered the eternal Christ. Hope that had soared so high dipped its wings into the dust of man’s despair, prejudice, hate, and ignorance. Profane hands had driven nails through the holy hands of love, and man’s sin had broken the Master’s heart. The burly Roman soldier, impatient at the delay of death; cruel and indifferent to the suffering of the Son of Mary, thrust his spear into the side of the Prince of Peace, and that weapon of war was stained with the blood of the Lamb, shed for the sins of the world.

How dare anyone to claim to preach the gospel when he ignores the cross of Christ? Men’s souls are wounded to eternal death by the power of sin, and the only balm that heals is the Master’s blood. “For the preaching of the cross . . . is the power of God.” Let us, just now, have no other thought upon our hearts but this: “The preaching of the cross is the power of God.” There is no other way but the blood of Jesus! Many false prophets may cry out, “Peace, Peace” where there is no peace, for peace is found with God in the blood of Christ. If ever the scenes of Glory shall come before our astonished eyes, it will be through the cross of Christ; if ever we shall lift our

voices to sing with the redeemed the Song of Moses and the Lamb, it will come through the cross of Christ. If ever you and I shall find rest from the torments of the world, the flesh, and the Devil, it will come through the sacrifice of our Lord.

If ever the world is saved, it must come to the cross of Christ, and it can be brought there only by the preaching of the cross, the power and the wisdom of God. Let us, my brothers, go back to the cross. Let us look again into the eyes of Him Who has been nailed there, and behold anew His great redeeming love. Let us look again upon the face of Him Who is altogether lovely and ever to be adored, and let us know that in Him alone can man find the shining ray of hope in the midst of encircling darkness.

Let us, my brothers, go back to the cross, and take our all, and lay it down at the feet of the crucified Christ. Let us bring to the cross all of the buildings where the saints meet, from the massive brick in the metropolitan centers to the small wooden frame house standing alone on the windswept prairie, and devote them to the Master's use. Let us bring all the educational institutions among us to the cross, and place them at the feet of Jesus, that they may be used to glorify His name. Let us bring our intellect, our scholarship, our education, our ability, our wealth—everything that is ours, and lay it down at the foot of the cross, that Christ may be honored.

For if ever we win the world for Christ, and try to win it we must, because He has asked us to do so and we are the "sheep of His pasture," we shall not win it by the magnificence of our church buildings; we shall not win it by the academic excellence of our education institutions; we shall not win it by the weight of our human intellects; we shall not win it by our scholarship; we shall not win it by our social prestige; but we shall win the world only by preaching Christ and Him crucified!

Let us never be guilty of diluting the gospel to suit the prejudices and the unbelief of the age in which we live. God save the church from such weakness! God save us from becoming lighthouses where the light has been put out by our worldly wisdom and our human pride! God save the church from becoming a lighthouse that flashes out the false lights of human wisdom and philosophy. The gaping wound in the Master's side is large enough. Let us never make it wider by our rejection of His truth or our failure to preach Him as the only way to salvation! Let us preach the cross, for in its preaching is the power of God.

Let us go back to the cross and leave there our doubts; let us leave there our prejudices and our pride; let us leave there all our haunting unbeliefs and our gross neglect; let us leave there all that divides us and whatever casts a stumbling block before us. Let us arise from the foot of the cross, and go out preaching its power and its wisdom. The world has scorned it and ridicules it still. The philosophy of human reason has denied its power, **BUT THE WAY OF THE CROSS LEADS HOME.** Let us shout it out and spread it far and wide that here is the fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins; that here is our glory in the cross of Christ—the power and the wisdom of God.

I must needs go home by the way of the cross;  
There's no other way but this;  
I shall ne'er get sight of the gates of light  
If the way of the cross I miss.

I must needs go on in the blood-sprinkled way,  
The path that the Savior trod,  
If I ever climb to the heights sublime,  
Where the soul is at home with God.

Then I bid farewell to the way of the world,  
To walk in it nevermore.  
For my Lord says "Come," and I seek my home,  
Where He waits at the open door.

The way of the cross leads home,  
The way of the cross leads home,  
It is sweet to know, as I onward go,  
The way of the cross leads home.

Who will come and walk the way of the cross?

## OUT OF WEAKNESS

### Hardeman Nichols

Hardeman Nichols is minister of the Walnut Hill Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas. He was born March 16, 1928, in Millport, Alabama, to Gus and Matilda Nichols. The influence of his parents and the surroundings of preachers and preaching can be seen in this family where there are eighteen gospel preachers, including his father, three brothers, three brothers-in-law, uncles and cousins. He attended public schools in Jasper, Alabama, where his father has served with the same congregation as minister for thirty-five years. He received his college education in Freed-Hardeman College and West Virginia University. He was married to Virginia Nell Montgomery of Moundsville, West Virginia in 1948. They have two daughters: Judy, age 17, and Beth, age 15.

He is on the editorial council of Power For Today and is a partner in Nichols Brothers Publishing Company. Among other activities, he has been a speaker on lectureships at Abilene Christian College, Harding, Pepperdine, Lubbock Christian, Alabama Christian, Fort Worth Christian, Oklahoma Christian, Christian College of the Southwest, and Weyburn Christian College in Saskatchewan, Canada. He is a frequent speaker at church lectureships and he has held meetings in eighteen states.



Formerly, he preached at the "A" and Tennessee Street church in Midland, Texas, (1956-1965); Sunset in Lubbock, Texas, (1954-1956); and Cordova, Alabama, (1947-1954). Since the beginning of 1965, he has been with the Walnut Hill church in Dallas.

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And what shall I more say? For the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong....<sup>1</sup>

What strange reasoning is this! Strength from weakness? Have not the multitudes been taught to despise failures and to scorn frailties so that they can scarcely bring themselves to think about the possibility of anything commendable coming out of weakness? To admit that such a blessed thing as strength can come from weakness would be even more difficult. Men generally have accepted without question the view that strength is nothing less than strength; consequently, they have assumed that out of weakness comes nothing more than weakness.

The inspired words of our text challenge this view by producing numerous examples to demonstrate that power can result from pain and frailty does not necessarily bring defeat. And as if knowing that the proof is inexhaustible, this passage concludes by referring to those men and women who lived by faith and utilized their weaknesses in such a way that these produced the strength for their victories.

One of life's most valuable lessons is learned when we appropriate the strength of weakness. God must place extreme importance in this principle, for he chose a method to reveal it which challenges even the casual reader to pause, and ponder—instead of passing over it without notice. It appears as a paradox. If a tenet is so important and consequential that it must not be overlooked, one of the best ways to assure its notice is to state it as a paradox—a state-

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 11:32-34

ment which appears seemingly contradictory, opposed to itself and common sense. The assertion is really true; yet it is clothed in language that makes it look at first glance as if it were impossible. H. Leo Boles defined a paradox as "Truth standing on its head to attract attention to some principle." While we may not notice any individual in a crowd if all of them behave in an ordinary fashion, every eye will soon focus on a topsy-turvy. Using this attraction in II Corinthians 12:1-10, Paul forces our consideration of the paradoxical blessings which can come from buffetings:

I must needs glory, though it is not expedient; but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven. And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not; God knoweth), how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. On behalf of such a one will I glory: but on mine own behalf I will not glory, save in my weaknesses. For if I should desire to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I shall speak the truth: but I forbear, lest any man should account of me above that which he seeth me to be, or heareth from me. And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Out of weakness, Paul was strong. He gave this paradox—this truth standing on its head—to compel us to stop and set it on its feet again in the hope that, in the meanwhile, we shall see its deeper truth and be blessed thereby.

However, before we peruse this principle, there are some implications in this scripture to which we call attention.

### STRENGTH MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS

Paul's acceptance of Christ's answer lays down a general law. He states a general truth, one not peculiar to spiritual values, though it is applied there in all its noblest aspects. It is just as true in nature's realm; for here is a universal principle that strength can be made perfect in weakness.

### THE WEAKNESS OF STRENGTH

The antithesis is also implied in these verses: "When I am weak, then am I strong," implies the converse: "When I am strong, then am I weak."

Paul had been granted marvelous power and unusual blessings, including the glorious revelations and visions of the majestic dwelling place of God, the third heaven. But while he was so blessed, there lurked a weakness born out of this strength: it was the danger that he "should be exalted overmuch." Pride would have meant his downfall. The apostle understood well this danger in strength and he had warned the Corinthians, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Thus the strength of weakness is considered in II Corinthians 12:10, while the weakness of strength is treated in I Corinthians 10:12.

What things men have valued as their strengths can become their greatest weaknesses. For example, who usually live the longest? No, not the strong and robust; but the chronic weak who have learned to take the proper care. Generally, those who do not know their own strength (or should I say, weakness?) overexert and break their health or drive themselves until at length they are snapped

into eternity by things like strokes and heart attacks. Their strength becomes their weakness.

Every warrior knows the weakness of strength. Continents have changed hands because some fortification was considered so strong that it did not bear attention. Extreme caution forced a vigil of what were considered the weak points. Surprise attacks are not successful against a guarded weakness, but at those points so inaccessible that they in carelessness are neglected or in pride are staffed in overconfidence.

There is a potential weakness in all that we consider as our personal strengths. When good things are perverted, they become curses unto man.

### THE WEAKNESS OF WEALTH

The strength of material wealth often becomes an obstacle to the rich. Like thorns it can choke out the good seed (Luke 8:14). Solomon said, "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great wealth" (Proverbs 13:7). Those who are "rich in faith," though they may be the "poor as to the world" are chosen of God to be the "heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him" (James 2:5).

Israel, who "waxed fat and kicked," had been warned: "And it shall be, when Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land...and thou shalt eat and be full; then beware lest thou forget Jehovah" (Deuteronomy 6:10-12).

Churches can develop a Laodicean laxity in times of prosperity, boasting, "We are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17). The favor of God is not procured by the number of late model

expensive automobiles in the parking lot; neither by the houses the members live in, nor by the size of their bank accounts. Weightier matters demand precedence over these considerations. Earnest care should be taken lest congregations develop the attitude: "There are so many calls for help that we can't possibly hear all of them," and therefore refuse to hear any! Or, "There are so many good works: we can't afford to give to all of them," thereby excusing themselves from every good work! Paul instructed: "Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not highminded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed" (I Timothy 6:17-19).

The weakness of strength! It is not only true of men and nations and churches, but also of homes. Many young brides and grooms are saying, "I do," when they haven't even heard the question. Too often, their vows degenerate into a recitation which to them has no meaning. They are not aware that blessings can be dangerous. Take the words, "In sickness and in health." Why specify both? It would seem that if a person promises to be faithful when there is sickness that would be enough; but maturity and experience teach us that is easy: the difficult times are often in health when other distractions and temptations are more likely to intervene. "For richer or poorer?" That also seems superfluous; surely one will be faithful when all is going well. When times get rough and we are poor, when calamity comes and the bills stack up, then a man and woman ought to be required to stay together; but when times are easy and there is plenty...? One may assume that any marriage would succeed then; yet every day we are confronted with examples of marriages that survived and thrived in poverty which flounder and fail in prosperity.

One recently suggested that he would like to hear the preachers start out the ceremony, "Dearly beloved, I don't think you know what you are getting into; so I am going to tell you something before I ask for your solemn promises. When I get to that part where I say, "In sickness and in health," I mean what I say. And when I say, "For richer or poorer," don't say you do unless you mean to continue to love, honor, and cherish each other, as long as you both shall live. Jesus said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Now, if you are sure you know what these vows mean and if you are prepared to be faithful, even if you strike it rich, then let's get on with the wedding!"

### THE WEAKNESS OF TALENTS

The talents of an individual may be misused and lead to trouble. A great intellect and a vast accumulation of technology and knowledge may lead to pride and into modernistic doubt and atheism. At Corinth, "Not many wise men after the flesh" were called; for most of them considered the gospel of the cross foolishness. "But God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise" (I Corinthians 1:21-30). Education is power; but if Christ is not sanctified in the heart of those possessing it, destruction and ruin will result. Scholarship is needed in the church; but if a man thinks he knows so much that he pities in a scornful way the uneducated who are not so blessed as he, then his strength becomes his weakness. "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know" (I Corinthians 8:1,2). Paul is saying there are two ways to be big—swell up in pride, or grow up in love, and only one way is accepted by the Lord. One cannot be a Christian without being humble and teachable as a little child (Matthew 18:1-4).

Beauty and personality can also be means of possible deception and immorality. In one without discretion, these blessings become as out of place as "a ring of gold in a swine's snout" (Proverbs 11:22).

### THE WEAKNESS OF MORALITY

Even goodness and a life of virtue and sacrifice can become the source of weakness. Like the proud Pharisee in Luke 18:9-14, we can have a good eye on self and a bad eye on others and no eye on God! None is so good that he can afford to be without Christ. Jesus said, "Apart from me, ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). No man is more completely insufficient than the one who imagines he is self-sufficient. Self-confidence is a good thing so long as we remember it is only a step away from the chasm of self-conceit.

It is "not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5). In our weakness Christ made us strong: "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Boasting is excluded by the law of faith (Romans 3:27); unmerited favor saves us. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich" (II Corinthians 8:9). Faithful obedience is required for salvation; but it does not merit salvation for us, it only appropriates God's saving grace to us. It is Christ who is still the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). Jesus has reminded us, "When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10).

## THE WEAKNESS OF PUBLIC IMAGE

Popularity and worldly favor can bless the church as well as an individual. Luke says the Jerusalem church had "favor with all the people" (Acts 2:47). But God pity either church or individual which becomes so intoxicated by praise that truth and character are compromised! Those who love "the glory of men more than the glory that is of God" have misplaced affections (John 12:42,43).

## RECOGNIZING WEAKNESSES

Progress is made by recognizing potential weaknesses. A man who knows he is weak and Christ is strong can become as strong in Christ as he is weak in himself. There is nothing inherent in weakness to give it virtue in itself. Paul's thorn was a "messenger of Satan"; but God who is able to make the wrath of man to praise him (Psalm 76:10) can turn the buffeting of Satan into a blessing. The strength of weakness lies partly in our attitude toward a weakness. Paul was not gloating in suffering flesh, nor failing health, nor material losses; it was in his faith that whatever he had to bear would, by God's purposes and grace, become the medium of something better. All weakness—physical, mental, economic, social, and emotional—can be avenues of grace, and each of these is mentioned by the apostle in II Corinthians 12:10.

## WEAKNESS ELIMINATED

Some weaknesses are overcome and replaced by strength when they are recognized. With growth and practice we conquer them. Demosthenes stuttered and his lungs were weak. Furthermore he had a harsh, discordant voice. But he drove himself to all sorts of self-disciplines until he had attained his goal and had become the greatest of all Greek orators.

## WEAKNESS ALLEVIATED

However, many weaknesses cannot be eliminated; they can only be alleviated. We must learn to live with these and use them to advantage. I understand that the makers of Ivory soap were almost dismayed when they tested it and found their product was not like other soaps in buoyancy, until they decided to capitalize on this difference. Since then, it has been known by this distinctive feature: "It floats." Someone has said, "If the world hands you a lemon, make lemonade." Or, "If you find a worm in your apple, have fish for dinner." A little creative imagination helps. I heard one time that high heels were invented by a wife who had just been kissed on the forehead!

Strength can come from weakness if we will focus our attention on bearing it in grace, instead of being made miserable by it. The object of Christian training has always been to make one strong. There is no encouragement in God's word for us to cherish our weaknesses and never exercise our souls, and become discouraged and self-sympathetic. Weakness is not designed as a good thing of itself; if we merely suffer, it may only mean the endurance of pain. The key is to be found in a determination of spirit to make it work for good.

Beside the jungle pathway on either bank of the swollen stream were large flat rocks. Before a native crossed, he would stoop and lift to his head as heavy a rock as he could carry; then he would wade into the rushing water depending on the weight of the rock to keep his feet from being washed from under him. The weight of our burdens has a way of keeping us from being swept off our feet. Paul said, "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh . . . that I should not be exalted overmuch" (II Corinthians 12:7). In this case, his weakness was a preventive. The spiritual constitution of the great apostle was apparently too weak at this point to sustain him under the effect of unspeakable

revelations; so God permitted the thorn to defeat pride and to make him more conscious of the need for Christ.

A statement in Judges 20:16 engages the mind with a kind of nimble curiosity each time it is read. It concerns the Benjamites: "Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men left-handed..." The word Benjamin means "son of right hand." How very odd to find left-handed men in the "right-handed" tribe! Especially in such numbers! It is interesting to note that in both instances where the expression occurs in Scripture it refers to individuals belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. (The other time is Judges 3:15 where Ehud the left-handed judge delivered Israel from tribute to the Moabites.) Here these seven hundred are described by a combination of words in Hebrew "signifying literally a man whose right hand is impeded or lame..."<sup>2</sup>

In those days, disarmament really meant just that! When an enemy was captured, what better way was there to assure that he would not fight again than to cut off his right hand! Thus maimed, they couldn't use a bow or sword and shield; yet these seven hundred were "chosen men" who had developed an effective talent to alleviate their weakness. "Every one could sling stones at an hair-breadth, and not miss." They, through patient practice, had attained an excellence with the sling which usually was not to be found with men even of two good hands. That is the strength of alleviating a weakness which cannot be eliminated.

### THE BLESSINGS OF WEAKNESS

In his memoirs, G. J. Rosseau of Africa described the locust swarms when large ones, six or seven inches long, flew by the billions on to the crops. They darkened the sky

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<sup>2</sup> International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. Art. Left-handed. p.1865

as they descended with voracious appetites, eating everything that was green until all crops, all green grass and vegetation, were consumed in the area where they settled. Natives hurriedly rounded up the cattle and drove them, stampeding across acres of locusts, trampling their bodies into the soil before they had a chance to lay their eggs. That year of the locusts, famine came. But the next year, the best crops—bumper crops—were harvested, fertilized by billions of corpses of last year's trampled locusts. Those years when nothing seemed to go right are not lost; they can be useful and can teach us many things.

Let us appreciate the ways that weakness works for us:

1. It makes its subjects cautious and puts them on guard against temptation. Paul said, "When I am weak [in human strength], then am I strong [in strength divine]." <sup>3</sup> When children of God are most sensible to their own weaknesses and most distrustful of their own strengths, the power of Christ can make them strong.

2. Knowing our weaknesses keeps us faithful to God. A sense of human weakness diverts our trust from self and directs it to the Lord. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

3. Our recognized weaknesses cause us to concentrate our energies on answering our needs with such careful discipline and repair that we accomplish more. Christ assures, "My strength is perfected"—fully developed—"in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9).

Reverses have a way of working *for* us instead of *against* us, if we let them. Paul's chains and the things which happened to him had "fallen out rather unto the progress of

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<sup>3</sup> Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon. Astheneo, p.80

the gospel; so that," he says, "my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest; and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear" (Philippians 1:12-14). David said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I observe they word." Therefore he gratefully acknowledged: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I may learn thy statutes" (Psalm 119:67,71). Paul's infirmity remained; but he also had learned that, far from being weaker for it, it had made him strong. Christ did not merely promise to perfect the apostle's strength in this particular weakness; he said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness"—any weakness—Paul's and ours, if we appropriate His grace in an obedient faith. God has promised to "make all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

4. Our own weaknesses can make us sympathetic in dealing with the weaknesses of others. Man can "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way" when he recognizes that "he himself is compassed with infirmity" (Hebrews 5:2). Jesus our great high priest can rightly say to us, "I know." "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest... For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:17, 18). We can be mellowed by weakness. If we sit where others sit, like Ezekiel, we will be amazed.

5. Our burdens provide eternal benefit for the soul. Paul says, "For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal

weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:17, 18). Afflictions can help us eternally, only if we keep our eyes off the troubles and on the Lord. If we merely suffer, it may only mean the tolerance of pain, unless we look to the eternal benefits accruing to our record. Our reverses work for us, says Paul, "*while*"—meaning "as long as" we do not focus on the temporal.

6. Christ perfects his strength in us through our weaknesses. Power of any kind, from whatever source you name, is developed at the expense of pressure. Water undergoes the flame to become steam; gasoline is energized by compression and combustion. Whoever wants power must have pressure. Fine china doesn't come from placing clay in the spring sun to dry; it is the result of going through the white heat of the kiln. A few pieces may be broken in the process; but those that come through are no longer clay. And so it is with those who have come through the fire and pressure of human weakness and suffering. "Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord" (James 5:11). Job had expressed his confidence in the providence of the Lord: "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). Trials removed the dross.

7. Afflictions become the crucible of spiritual character. At first, Paul earnestly prayed for deliverance. Christ could have dealt with Paul's situation by removing the thorn and making it easy for him. Instead of reducing the pain and leaving him to wrestle with the monstrous problem of pride, Christ wisely increased his grace and let the thorn remain. The character of Paul was made the better by it. God's answer to our prayers may not be the subtraction of pain, but the addition of grace:

The cry of earth's anguish went up unto God —  
 "Lord, take away pain, —  
 The shadow that darkens the world Thou hast made,  
 The close-coiling chain  
 That strangles the heart, the burden that weighs  
 On the wings that would soar, —  
 Lord, take away pain from the world Thou hast made  
 That it love Thee the more."

Then answered the Lord to the world He had made,  
 "Shall I take away pain?  
 And with it the power of the soul to endure  
 Made strong by the strain?  
 Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart  
 And sacrifice high?

Will ye lose all your heroes who lift from the flame  
 White brows to the sky?  
 Shall I take away love that redeems with a price  
 And smiles through the loss, —  
 Can ye spare from the lives that would climb unto mine  
 The Christ and His Cross?"<sup>4</sup>

If the Author of our salvation could be perfected as our sacrifice through sufferings (Hebrews 2:10), and Paul could come to know the blessings of his buffetings and write, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings" (Colossians 1:24), then all of us in loving gratitude can "walk worthily of the Lord... strengthened with all power, according to the might of his glory, unto all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Colossians 1:10-12). "And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you. To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (I Peter 5:10, 11).

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4 God and Pain, George Stewart

Till from the straw the flail the corn doth beat,  
Until the chaff be purged from the wheat,  
Yea, till the mill the grains in pieces tear,  
The richness of the flour will scarce appear.

So, till men's persons great afflictions touch,  
If worth be found, their worth is not so much,  
Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet  
That value which in threshing they may get.

For till the bruising flails of God's corrections  
Have threshed out of us our vain affections;  
Till those corruptions which do misbecome us  
Are by thy sacred Spirit winnowed from us,  
Until from us the straw of worldly treasures,  
Till all the dusty chaff of empty pleasures,  
Yea, till his flail upon us he doth lay,  
To thresh the husk of this our flesh away,  
And leave the soul uncovered; nay, yet more,  
Till God shall make our very spirit poor,  
We shall not up to highest wealth aspire;<sup>5</sup>  
But then we shall; and that is my desire!

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<sup>5</sup> From an early English poet, George Wither. R.C. Trench's, *On The Study Of Words*, 1865 ed., p.39.

# NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

Tex Stevens

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:** Texas H. Stevens, 415 Kelly, Houston, Texas 77009

Born: DeWitt County, Texas, April 9, 1925

**SCHOOLS:** Graduate, Cuero High School, Cuero, Texas, 1942; Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tennessee, Graduate, Victoria Junior College, Victoria, Texas, 1944; B.A. Abilene Christian College, Abilene, Texas; All work on M.A. except oral examination, Perkins School of Theology (Southern Methodist University), Dallas, Texas. LL.D. from National Christian University. Presently studying psychology, University of Houston.

**CHURCHES SERVED:** While in A.C.C.: Cross Plains, Texas, 1944-46.

Associate Minister with Melvin Wise at the old Sears and Summit congregation, now Skillman Avenue in Dallas, 1946-47

Minister at Ferrie, Texas, 1947-48

Elmwood in Dallas, 1949-1954

Bloomington, Texas (Mission Work) 1954-55

Highland Hills in San Antonio, Texas, 1955-1961

Lindale in Houston since October, 1961 (520 members, 7 elders, 17 deacons)



**MISSION WORK:** Three tours to Canada (lecturer at Radville Christian College, and gospel meetings); Two tours in Jamaica, one month in 1959, and two weeks in 1961, preaching, and counselling with Jamaican brethren; Took part in campaign in Wellington,

New Zealand, January, 1963, personal work and preaching. Has been associated with L. O. Sanderson each summer since 1947 (18) years, serving as a member of his faculty teaching singing in churches over many states.

EDITOR of CHRISTIAN NEWS REPORTER, a newspaper for churches of Christ in the Greater Houston area.

Has taught Bible school teachers, and been keynote speaker for such sessions in several states, and ACC lectures. Authors booklet for Teachers of Seniors, "In The Days of Thy Youth."

Married Pansy Dodson in 1947. Three children: Jo Ellen (born July, 1949); Mark (born October, 1951); Hugh (born November, 1954).

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The name of John Hancock is known all over our nation and one of the country's largest corporations bears his name. Comparatively few people, however, know the name of Thomas McKean and yet both of these men had the same chance to live in history.

John Hancock's name appears as the first signature on "The Declaration of Independence." When Hancock signed his name he knew he did so at the peril of his life and property. All of the original signers were serious about that statement in the declaration: "... we mutually pledge our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor." Hancock reached for the pen saying, "I will write my name so large that old King George can read it without his eyeglasses."

Thomas McKean also was a signer of the Declaration. However, his name appears at the very last of the list. In fact, he signed the document five years after it was composed — after the die was cast and victory belonged to the colonies. All the danger was over.

There is something about a man who takes a stand for

what he believes that almost everyone likes. This gives an added dimension to the statement of Paul in Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

This statement becomes even more meaningful when we consider the various elements in the Roman Empire, and especially in the city of Rome, which would tend to make many ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

The entire Roman Empire was permeated with a spirit of militarism and the very core of militarism was the capital city of Rome, itself. In a militaristic society it is easy for the worth of the individual to be lost and for human life to be cheap. This was true in Rome. With this attitude toward human life so rife among the populace came the temptation to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ which ran counter to the popular conception that human life was cheap.

Concurrent with militarism in the Roman Empire, profligacy and moral decline existed. The excesses of Caesar's court, where every vice and lust of the Emperor was promptly satisfied, oozed its way throughout the populace. To stand for the gospel of Christ and its code of ethics was to be out of step with the times and to be classed as prudish and narrow. It was not easy in those days for a person to admit to or to live his Christianity. He had to stand against the tide of public opinion and ridicule.

While the seat of learning in the Roman Empire lay in Greece, the Greek penchant for learning had traveled throughout the empire. The city of Rome had its share of philosophers, many of them advisers to the imperial courts and some used as tutors for royal offspring. While education has always been a friend to Christianity, intellectual

pride has always tried to dismiss it with a sneer. It was this inordinate love for the mind of man, this enthronement of man above God, that was so prevalent in Rome, which formed another facet of the environment within which many were tempted to be ashamed of the gospel.

Regardless of these negative influences, Paul is bold to declare to the Christians in Rome, "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

Militarism — profligacy — and intellectual snobbery: These remind us of the society within which Christians live today. Almost half a century either of wars or military preparedness for war has left a similar mark on the United States. With the break-up of homes in a military society and the cheapness of human life has come the inevitable downswing in morals. Coeval with these influences one can also see intellectual pride enslaving many Americans. Even in the classrooms of the public institutions of learning the Bible is ridiculed and those who believe that it is the word of God are held up to scorn.

But there is no more need to be ashamed of the gospel today than there was in the days of Paul long ago. Those who truly live by the gospel and enjoy the blessings of a life in Christ feel no need to apologize at all, but to empathize with those who have not accepted the one way of life that can give meaning both for this life and the life to come.

If a Christian were tempted to be ashamed of the gospel in the midst of today's militarism, materialism, and intellectualism, just of what part of the gospel of Christ would he be ashamed?

Can anyone be ashamed of the Christ of the gospel? Need any apology be made for his claims?

No man ever claimed more than He. When the woman at the well of Samaria mentioned the Messiah to come, Jesus boldly proclaimed to her, "I am He" (John 4:25-26). What a claim! Jesus was saying that He was actually the one towards whom the Jews and their fathers before them had been looking for centuries. But He claimed even more. In John 6:38 He claimed in the presence of a whole group of Jews, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me." Was this claim actually true? Could anyone make such a claim today, and, if he did, would anyone dare believe? But Jesus made other claims, also. For example, He claimed to be the exclusive way to God. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me" He stated in John 14:6. In the same passage He promised to return again to His disciples after He had gone back to Heaven to be with the Father (John 14:3). Only the true Son of God or a mortal gone mad would dare make such claims. But His claim concerning the resurrection of the dead at the sound of His voice must have seemed to some more fantastic yet. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).

What claims Jesus made! Was He able to sustain them? Was He laughed out of existence by His contemporaries or was the force of His works, His person and His teaching so overwhelming that even His enemies had to accept His claims?

The devils in Mark 5:7 acknowledged Him as "Jesus, thou Son of the most high God." Enemies of Christ they might be, but the imps of Hell dared not deride His claims of divinity and power. The soldiers who once came to arrest Him came back empty-handed overwhelmed with His teaching (John 7:46). The disinterested centurion at

His crucifixion had nothing to gain nor lose by his attitude toward Jesus. However, when he saw Jesus die and noted the consequent rebellion of nature itself, he concluded from the evidence, "Surely this was a son of God" (Mark 15:39).

The friends of Jesus, the apostles themselves, were never ashamed of His claims. They believed them with all their heart and sealed their testimony with the gift of their own lives in His defense.

Today the Christian need never be ashamed of those claims Jesus made. On this side of the cross and Jesus' resurrection we know He has been proved to be the son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead (Romans 1:4). Every claim He made stands substantiated and hundreds of successful lives have been lived within the confines of this faith.

Just as there is no reason to be ashamed of Jesus or His claims, neither is there any cause to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ because of its age.

Actually the fact that the gospel is almost 2,000 years old is one of the best reasons for believing its testimony and keeping its precepts. While Jesus was still on earth He promised to His apostles that He would send them the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth. The Holy Spirit was to bring to their mind the sayings of Jesus (John 14:26), assist them in bearing witness of Christ (John 15:27), guide them into all truth and show them things that were to come (John 14:13). This promise was fulfilled in the first century, during the lifetime of those receiving the promise. The four gospels were produced telling us of what Jesus taught, the book of Acts tells how apostles bore witness of Christ, the epistles of the New Testament furnish all the principles needed for a triumphant life in Christ, and the Book of Revelation

shows us things to come. If the gospel of Christ were any younger than a first-century production it would not be worthy of our belief. We should rejoice that it is old.

Why should anyone be ashamed of anything merely because it is old? Does age necessarily imply uselessness and non-applicability? We do not feel this way toward antiques, as anyone can testify who has ever tried to purchase an item which has found its way from a junk pile into an antique shop!

No one would dare dispute that we are living in a new and glorious age. In the few hundred years since the Renaissance, man has come an incredibly long way in the acquisition of knowledge and technology. With computers compressing months of calculations into minutes of electronic impulses, knowledge of nature and her processes, as well as other fields, is growing at such a fantastic pace that men now talk of the knowledge explosion. The amount of knowledge held by mankind has doubled in the last fifteen years and educators calculate that it will double again in the next five years! It has been said that 95% of all research scientists who have ever lived are alive today.

Along with the knowledge explosion has come the snowballing advance in technology, the handmaiden of knowledge. For example, in the early nineteenth century Americans were little concerned with European politics because by the time news of some political upheaval reached America from England the people in the United States knew that the emergency was over and some kind of synthesis had occurred. Today the news is flashed all over the world in pictures in micro-seconds of time as the events actually occur. Because of rapid communications, nations can now instruct their ambassadors in moments of crises and corporations can keep high-level decisions flowing through channels to their operations throughout the world.

Our age has been called the Atomic age, but more recently the space age. Space technology is making rapid strides and in just a few short years man will probably be walking the surface of the moon. Over 1300 pieces of "space junk" are in orbit around the earth; used-up nose cones, rockets and satellites that no longer work. Someone characterized our age with the following parody of a well-known poem:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star  
 I don't wonder what you are.  
 I surmised your spot in space  
 Before you left your missile base!  
 And any wondering I do  
 Centers on the cost of you.  
 And I shudder when I think  
 What you're costing us per twink!

Viewing the huge increments of knowledge by modern man even 20 years ago, Dr. Wesley C. Davis expressed this attitude:

... the fact must not be obscured that the world-view of the New Testament is altogether unscientific, because pre-scientific, and that it is not untouched by mythology ... This is what the new science has done for us, this is the kind of world it has built for us: a world so vast that we are lost in it, so mechanistic that we are terrified by it; a world in which man is too infinitesimal to count, and where God is all but crowded off the stage by his own creation... As has already been suggested the time came, with the advent of the scientific spirit, when the Biblical view of the universe became a positive embarrassment.<sup>1</sup>

But does the message of Christ as written by the apostles still speak to this age? Has man so multiplied his

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<sup>1</sup> See Davis, Wesley C., A Christian world-view. The Perkins School of Theology Journal, (The University Press in Dallas) Spring, 1948, pp.5, 6.

knowledge of God's creation that man, himself, has become too infinitesimal to count and God is all but crowded off the stage? Is the Bible view of the universe something to cause embarrassment in our enlightened age? Have the teachings of Jesus become outmoded because they originated 1,900 years ago?

First, we should remember that all of our present-day advancement in knowledge is rooted in the past—those "pre-scientific" days. Without the basis of millennia of study and research to build on, today's scientists would still be drooling, blabbering alchemists. Every time a scientist designs and completes an experiment, his conclusions are based upon Aristotelian principles which were systematized and verbalized in the 4th century B.C. And, believe it or not, they still work! It seems a little inconsistent to appeal to 2,300-year-old Aristotelian logic to try to prove that the New Testament is no longer applicable because it is 1,900 years old! A close look at the contributions of Aristotelian thought will show that those thoughts which are still vibrant and meaningful are in accord with Biblical precepts.

While human systems, human productions and much of human learning change or pass away in time, the Bible remains relevant and meaningful for all ages. For example, Dr. L.S.B. Leakey, one of the world's foremost anthropologists, cites the fact that in just five years the previously accepted theories in tracing the origin of man have become obsolete:

The discovery of *Homo habilis* culminates a dramatic five-year period in anthropology. During this time scientists have ripped the existing textbooks to shreds... The old four-stage theory lies in shreds on the museum floor.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See, Leakey, L.S.B., *Man's beginnings*, The 1965 World Book Year Book (Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1965) pp. 110, 122.

But the Bible is even more fresh and vibrant for today's world than tomorrow's newspaper. Its ageless principles fit man's basic needs for all time. In spite of man's differing cultures and changing modes of expressing, he basically remains the same as ever. Cutting through the peripheral aspects and sifting out those things that are shaped merely by cultures and times, the New Testament sets forth the basic principles without which no civilization can be great, or even endure. In contrast to man's system, the New Testament has not changed, for it needs no changing to fit the real needs of 20th century man.

In those few areas where the Bible does rub shoulders with the empirical sciences, its statements remain accurate through the ages. For example, the Christopher Columbus of today—our aquanauts and astronauts—must take with them wherever they go, under the sea or in outer space, some of earth's atmosphere. They must breathe a mixture approximating the normal atmosphere of the earth—79% nitrogen and 21% oxygen, with a few inert gases. The atmosphere they take with them to breathe must surround them with a pressure in the vicinity of the 14 lbs. per square inch they have been accustomed to on the surface of the earth.

How could this principle be better stated than in the inspired language of the Apostle Paul in Acts 17:26 "... God...hath determined...the bounds of their habitation..." Thus one of the greatest problems of the space age, how to take some of earth's atmosphere with space travelers to keep them alive, is in keeping with this Bible statement of what God has ordained concerning where men can live.

So many today are tempted to be ashamed of the gospel because of the mistaken idea that religion is a sign of weakness. Sometimes young people feel that only "sissies"—adults would say effeminate—lead in prayer; and

sing God's praises. But let the young people who hold this idea tell it to Bob McLeod, until recently a tight-end for the Houston Oilers. A few short months ago Bob visited the church in Lindale (Houston) and a large number of young people came to hear him tell of his love for God and then urge the young people to live for Christ. His huge 6-foot-plus frame seemed almost to swallow the large pulpit stand when during the services he leaned over toward the audience with closed eyes and began a prayer "Dear God, our heavenly father . . ."

Or think of what a "weakling" is the deeply religious Jim Ryun, who has run the mile faster than anyone in the history of the world since records were kept, and, I am told, runs 18 to 20 miles every day just for practice. A recent news story on Ryun in LOOK magazine stated that he is still a good baby-sitter when his coach wishes to take his wife out for the evening!

Another person who might like to hear an exposition on how effeminate a person must be to be religious would be Randy Matson, the giant athlete from Texas A & M who has thrown the shot-put farther than anyone in history. He is so interested in the gospel that he has taken special courses in addition to regular attendance at services just to be able to talk to groups of young people about their service to Christ.

There is nothing in the gospel of Christ that is incompatible with manliness and vigor. Those who are athletic-minded can still say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

Actually there is not a more powerful force on earth than the gospel of Christ, and this is just another reason why we can say with Paul "I am not ashamed . . ." Victor Hugo said that nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come. God sent His son into the world

in the "fullness of time." Since then the gospel of Christ has wielded power over the entire earth, even swaying the course of history. The power of the gospel is needed in our twentieth century civilization just as much as, if not more than, ever before.

In spite of our great technological advances we live in a world of cynicism, disillusionment, moral revolt, and war. The crime rate outstrips the population explosion, while our courts can no longer distinguish between right and wrong, or between decency and pornography. In our society the loss of peace, integrity, self-respect, and appreciation of the good, the true, and the beautiful is accompanied by the exploitation of cultural values by shabby art, a wholesale trend to stand in awe of mediocrity and to call the ugly beautiful and the beautiful ugly.

In an incisive look at today's world, with its mountains of learning and its superb technology on the one hand and its moral decadence on the other, E.H. Ijams has drawn a true picture and isolated the real needs of today's world:

With all the achievements of science and technocracy since 1945, people are not secure or happy. Instead of being optimistic, generous, chivalrous, humble and happy, people are boastful, aggressive, worried and dangerous. Instead of producing poise and peace, great inventions and discoveries have intensified desires which disappoint... It is a practical certainty that Western people are less stable and less secure than before the startling material gains of the nineteen fifties and sixties.

There is little incentive to undertake high and holy missions in a society where people deny the existence of anything really great or holy. To a people so dead in soul they cannot believe in their own worth, interplanetary trips — if such trips are ever made — will mean little. Push-button conveniences — if such people retain material conveniences — will not satisfy those who are dead in soul. Nothing matters much when there is nothing to live

or die for. When people lose themselves it is obvious that everything else goes.<sup>3</sup>

As suggested by Ijams, the answer to the gnawing problems of the world today is the correction of man, himself, and the only cure for this problem is reclamation of spiritual values. What the world needs today is men with principles, men with spiritual attitudes, men with respect for the dignity of human beings, and men who follow avidly in the footsteps of the Prince of Peace. What the world truly needs is the ancient but up-to-date gospel of Christ.

More than ever before man needs a guiding force for his life, an all-consuming purpose toward which he may climb. He needs desperately to have the moral and spiritual values necessary to use in wisdom and for good the giant powers he has released through his technology.

In all these things we are pointed inevitably to the gospel of Christ. Far from being ashamed of the gospel, men should cling more closely to it. The gospel is the most powerful force in the world today, not only to advance civilization, but first of all to save it.

Since the gospel has power to save a nation and even civilization itself, it certainly has the power to save an individual. The gospel still has power today to lift man up from the dregs of degradation and place him on the pinnacle of righteousness through the blood of Christ. To those without purpose or moorings, the gospel gives direction and foundation. To those without hope it brings heavenly expectations. The gospel can enter into the heart of the drunkard, the profligate, the dope addict, and the hippie, give them purpose and direction in life

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<sup>3</sup> See Ijams, E.H., *Power to Survive and Surpass*, (New York: Pageant Press, Inc., 1964), pp. 69, 213.

and the hope of Heaven for eternity. Countless times this has happened. We should never be ashamed of the gospel, because it is the most powerful force on earth.

In Paul's day men were tempted to be ashamed of the cross of Christ. To die on the cross in the days of the apostles was the same as dying in the electric chair or gas chamber now. Because the centuries have covered the cross of Jesus with a halo of glory, modern-day Christians tend to forget that fact. But even in the midst of a people among whom death on a cross was a shame and disgrace Paul could state, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (Galatians 6:14). Today we echo Paul's faith when we sing, "It was on that old cross, Jesus suffered and died, to pardon and sanctify me."

Let us never be ashamed to sing:

Upon that cross of Jesus mine eye at times can see  
The very dying form of one who suffered there for me.  
And from my smitten heart with tears two wonders I  
confess:  
The wonders of His glorious love and my own worth-  
lessness.

Almost twenty centuries have passed since Paul stated, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." With the passing of each year his statement has become even more meaningful, valid, and appropriate. As we see Jesus proved to be the son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead; as we see the timelessness of the gospel, filling a useful purpose in every age and for every culture; as we see the gospel espoused by strong men who realize the worth of spiritual values; as we can recognize the gospel as the most powerful force on earth today for men as well as nations; as we see the power of the gospel in the lives of those about us, but even more experience its power in

our own lives, our hearts are filled not with shame but with humble gratitude to God and His Son.

There are nineteen centuries more reasons for us to say today as Paul did in the first century, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

## YOU AND YOUR CONSCIENCE

Trine Starnes

Trine Starnes is currently engaged in his fourteenth year of gospel meeting evangelism. Prior to this work he labored as local evangelist in Mineral Wells, Texas, (1937-1942), Broadway, Paducah, Ky., (1942-1948) and Columbus Avenue, Waco, Texas, (1948-1954).

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Warren E. Starnes. His late father preached the gospel for over half a century. The son was baptized by his father in San Angelo, Texas, when twelve years of age.

He was graduated from Abilene Christian College in 1936. It was while a student in 1932 that he began preaching the gospel of Christ, and conducted many meetings even during his college years.

Active in student and extra-curricular activities in College, Trine Starnes took advantage of the training in debate, extempore speaking and oratory, for which advantages he has ever been grateful. Two of his orations gained publication in the National Yearbook of College Oratory (1934 and 1936).



Starnes has preached in over 500 gospel meetings, and in over half the states of the nation.

He was married to the former Malissa Claxton on Sept. 1, 1939. They make their home at 2200 Meadow Road, Waco, Texas, and have three children, one daughter and two sons.

He entertains the ambition of having a personal part in preaching the gospel of Christ in every state of his nation before his labors are ended.

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In Psalm 139:14 the Psalmist declared, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." Just a casual glance at some of the inexplicable marvels of our bodies both confirms and enhances our appreciation of this sublime declaration of praise to God for our fearful and wonderful make-up.

Consider this summary of interesting facts:

In the human body there are 206 bones. The muscles are about 600 in number. The length of the alimentary canal is about thirty-two feet. The amount of blood in an adult averages thirty pounds, or fully one-fifth of the entire weight.

The heart is six inches in length, and four inches in diameter, and beats seventy times per minute, 4,200 times per hour, 36,792,000 times a year, and at each beat two and one-half ounces of blood are thrown out of it: 175 ounces per minute, equal to 656 pounds per hour, or seven tons per day. All the blood in the body passes through the heart in three minutes. This little organ by its ceaseless industry, pumps each day what is equal to lifting 121 tons one foot high.

We breathe on an average 1,200 times per hour, inhaling in that time about 100 gallons of air, or 2,400 gallons per day. The aggregate surface of the air cells of the lungs exceeds 20,000 square inches, an area nearly equal to the floor of a room twelve feet square.

The average weight of the brain of a grown man is three pounds, two ounces; of a woman, two pounds and twelve ounces. The nerves are all connected with it directly or by the spinal cord. These nerves, together with their branches and minute ramifications, probably exceed 10,000,000 in number, forming a 'body guard' outnumbering by far the greatest army ever marshalled. The atmospheric pressure being fourteen pounds to the square inch, a person of medium size is subjected to a pressure of 40,000 pounds.

Each square inch of skin contains 3,500 sweat glands

or perspiratory pores, each of which may be likened to a little drainpipe one-fourth of an inch long, making an aggregate length on the surface of the body of 201,166 feet, or almost forty miles long.

Man is indeed marvelously made. If you are eager to investigate the curious and wonderful works of Omnipotent wisdom, there is no need to wander the wide world round to seek them.<sup>1</sup>

As amazing as these and countless other physiological facts are, they can by no means overshadow the marvels and mysteries of our delicate, sensitive and immortal spiritual nature which makes us akin to God as we wear and bear His image. It is this precious and tender part of spiritual life that we wish to analyze and exalt in this message—YOU AND YOUR CONSCIENCE.

There is a time-honored and oft-repeated analysis of the human heart in scriptural terminology. For want of a better approach to this aspect of our study, let us review these salient facts.

The human heart includes our INTELLECT, our EMOTIONS and our WILL.

With the INTELLECT:

1. We think: (Proverbs 23:7; Acts 8:22).
2. We understand: (Matt. 13:15).
3. We believe: (Romans 10:10).

With our EMOTIONS (sensibilities):

1. We desire: (Ephesians 2:3).
2. We love: (Mark 12:30).
3. We trust: (Proverbs 3:5).

With our WILL:

1. We intend: (Hebrews 4:12).
2. We purpose: (2 Corinthians 9:7).
3. We obey: (Romans 6:17).

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<sup>1</sup> See Gospel Advocate, Nov. 7, 1946, page 1045.

Entwined throughout all this network of functions and feelings of man's heart—to which the love and will of God are addressed—is a delicate and sensitive spiritual power called "conscience." The work of conscience in human behavior is interwoven with the activities of our intellect, our emotions and our will power.

### CONSCIENCE DEFINED

Literally, the word "conscience" signifies "a knowing with oneself." Derived through the Latin language (*conscientia* from *consciens*) the word expresses that by which a man becomes conscious to himself of right or wrong. Cruden's Concordance suggests, "that faculty within us which decides as to the moral quality of our thoughts, words, and acts."

Some have referred to conscience as being like "a wheelbarrow we push around any way we want it to go." Of course, this represents an abuse of conscience to which far too many of us surrender. Some say that it is "the voice of God in the soul." This can be true only when the voice of God is heard. Others think of conscience as "the silent policeman of the soul," arresting us when our steps take us into forbidden paths, and when our tongues stammer their way into sin. And some speak of "that inner voice warning us that Someone is watching."

### THE UNIVERSALITY OF CONSCIENCE

There is a sense of moral consciousness in all nations and tribes of humanity, howsoever ignorant or distorted the standards may be. As the grain grows upward, and the flower in its unfolding beauty turns toward the sun, so all kindreds of humanity worship some being higher than themselves. Along with this natural longing to reverence a

higher being, there is an accompanying sense of conscience and accountability.

Paul explains the state of the Gentile world, when they were outside the Revelation of the Law of Moses.

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.

Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.<sup>2</sup>

### FUNCTIONS OF CONSCIENCE

The divine office of conscience can best be determined when we begin to grasp the divine functions of this unquestionable voice within the soul.

The protective work of conscience manifests its divine mission even in little children before they become fully accountable to law. A mother leaves her little child in the care of another. Before departing, she gives careful instructions to her little boy. Upon her return, the wise mother can detect whether or not his behavior has conformed to her demands. If he has obeyed, he greets her with a ready smile of welcome, an open countenance and a happy heart. If he has disobeyed his mother and disappointed his own tender conscience, his countenance is fallen, his spirit is drooping, and he dreads to face his mother and the moment of reckoning. Have we forgotten our childhood days—our moments of delight—and our moments of tears—as our tender conscience was growing up with our bodies?

It was never the purpose of our Creator that con-

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<sup>2</sup> See Romans 2:14-15

science should become a substitute for law. Conscience does not determine what is right or wrong; divine law decides that. But conscience does sit in judgment over our actions and motives, approving us when we live up to our knowledge of right, and scourging us with remorse when we do that which we conceive to be wrong.

A watch is a safe guide as to the hour of day or night only to the extent that it is in tune with the standard regulation of time. A compass is a safe guide as to direction when one is lost, only when it points to its "true north."

Conscience convicts us. One of the most touching scenes in the ministry of our Savior occurred when some designing, self-righteous, and unscrupulous men brought into His presence a woman who was guilty of adultery. They were more interested in destroying Him and His heavenly work, than in either the guilt or forgiveness of the victim of sin. When they dared to ask Him, "Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" (John 8:5), Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with his finger. They persisted in asking Him. Upon arising, Jesus said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (v. 7). Again he stooped down and wrote. "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one..." (v. 9).

This sensitive part of our spiritual nature also bears witness. Paul expressed his heaviness of heart in behalf of his lost kinsmen by declaring, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 9:1).

An enlightened conscience also serves to help in discerning good and evil. We read in Hebrews 5:14 of those "...who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." A perceptive eye

can determine colors; discerning ears can distinguish sounds; so, a protective function of conscience is to aid us in discriminating between moral and spiritual acts and motives which are either good or bad.

### KINDS OF CONSCIENCE

Among the varying kinds of conscience described in the Scriptures, we find the following: Consciences that are weak, defiled, evil, good, pure, and even seared.

Many are victims of a weak conscience. Such are devoid of adequate knowledge and need more instruction in truth. Concerning the eating of meats offered to idols, Paul explains that an idol is nothing, but hastens to add:

Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.<sup>3</sup>

The apostle further explains that in the realm of liberty and expediency, we should be careful to protect a weak brother from stumbling or offending God.

For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See I Corinthians 8:7

<sup>4</sup> See I Corinthians 8:10-12

Honesty of feeling is not enough. One can be honest, yet honestly mistaken. One can be religious, but religiously wrong. One may be very conscientious, but conscientiously in error. This Bible truth is most apparent. Feelings can deceive us. Jacob mourned for years over the death of his beloved son, Joseph. Yet, his son was alive and prospering in Egypt. Believing false testimony produces the same effect or feeling as though it were true.

Saul of Tarsus was in his early years the victim of a weak conscience, yet his conscience felt good. So, as he described the years during which he admitted he was the "chief of sinners," he asserted, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). He further testified, "...I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1). This includes the hour when, as a young man, he held the clothes of the men who stoned Stephen, and was "consenting unto his death."

#### "IT IS HARD FOR THEE TO KICK AGAINST THE PRICKS"

What a wonderful warning is couched in these words of Jesus to Saul on the Damascus road. Inherent in the imagery of this challenge was a scene familiar to all in ancient Palestine. Oxen were common beasts of burden. By nature they are very stubborn, and often balk and refuse to pull their load. To coax them on, a goad was used—a long wooden instrument with a sharp, pointed end. The tender flesh of the ox was pricked to urge him on. In rebellion the stubborn animal would often kick back toward the one goading him.

Saul was hereby reminded that it would be hard for him so long accustomed to having a good conscience, to rebel now and kick against the pricks and pleadings of a conscience enlightened by the truth. How wonderful

for the world that Saul did surrender to the faith he once destroyed. Upon being told what he must do, he was baptized, and immediately preached the Christ he once persecuted. Our world is a better world than it would have been, because Saul did obey the gospel and transfer his talents and loyalty to the Cause of Christ.

Some are defiled in conscience.

Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.<sup>5</sup>

There is the evil conscience. The remedy is suggested in Hebrews 10:22, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." In Hebrews 9:14 we read, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Some are blessed with a good conscience. "Now the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (I Timothy 1:5). "Pray for us; for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly" (Hebrews 13:18). "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21).

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<sup>5</sup> See Titus 1:15-16

There is a conscience which is pure. "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (I Timothy 3:9). "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day" (2 Timothy 1:3).

No wonder that Paul was the stalwart, courageous soldier of Christ that he was. Here is his controlling motive of life. "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16). How different our lives might be, if, at the close of each day we could truly say, "Now I lay me down to sleep—with a conscience void of any offense toward God or men!"

But one of the most tragic powers ever to hold a man in its sinister clutches is that of a seared conscience. That once sensitive nature now benumbed and impervious to any remorse or compunction for sin. Some are described in I Timothy 4:2 in these words, "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." I have seen cowboys on the ranches of the West branding cattle. The branding iron is removed from the fire, the red hot iron is applied to the flesh of the animal, the hair burns, the flesh fries, the nerves are deadened, the flesh is seared. This is what can happen to a conscience that once had feeling, when sins are repeated and the pleadings of a Wonderful Savior are continually disobeyed.

And behold some of the frightful consequences of this searing of conscience.

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.<sup>6</sup>

Like many insidious diseases that stealthily and unnoticeably attack our bodies, so, repeated sins with small beginnings gradually gain control over the conscience and sear it. We are warned in Hebrews with these words:

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.<sup>7</sup>

There is "a point of no return" in our obstinate and constant rejection of God's mercy. Sins continued will harden the heart. Such helpless, irretrievable souls, become "abandoned souls." There are some so deeply enmeshed in the filth and mire of sin that even God has given them up.

Behold this sad picture. "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves" (Romans 1:24). "And for this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature" (Romans 1:26). "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Romans 1:28). ABANDONED SOULS! What a pity! And all of them at one time had feeling.

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<sup>6</sup> See 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

<sup>7</sup> See Hebrews 3:12-13

## THE BOY WITHOUT FEELING

In Pembury, Kent, England, there is a boy who cannot feel pain. His malady is termed by medical science "ganglioneuropathy." Something is wrong with the ganglia (nerve centers), which transmit the sensation of pain to the brain. As a little boy, he was scarred from head to feet from injuries he never felt. At the age of nine months he almost completely gouged out one of his eyes, yet felt no pain at all. Physicians were amazed to discover he needed no anesthetic.

When he was two, he was found kneeling on the open door of a hot electric oven with his hand and knee cooking — yet he felt no pain. The final sentence in the feature article which I read stated that the boy's father realizes that life has played a cruel trick on his son "by denying him the gift of pain." Never before had I realized what a precious gift "pain" is. Thank God, as normal human beings, we can feel pain.

How much more precious it is to be shielded from continued guilt of sin by consciences that can feel compunction and remorse for sin, and shed tears of "godly sorrow" that worketh repentance.

## PAST FEELING

In Ephesians 4:19 some are described in these words: "Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." One variety of that dreaded, loathsome disease of leprosy is styled "anesthetic leprosy." It is the most common tropical form. At first it attacks the peripheral nerves, resulting finally in complete loss of sensation. Such victims are "past feeling." We could pour a cup of boiling water on such a leper, and he would feel no pain.

## WHEN I'M ALONE

What do you think of yourself, if suddenly awakened at three o'clock in the morning? How do you feel when you peep at yourself in the mirror, and while beholding your image, reflect upon the purity or guilt of your heart? One of the inexplicable blessings of enjoying "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," is the accompanying peace with self, which should be precious to all of us.

Edgar A. Guest has written a poem which expresses in a beautiful, poetic way some of the rewards of a clear conscience.

## MYSELF

I have to live with myself, and so  
 I want to be fit for myself to know,  
 I want to be able, as the days go by,  
 Always to look myself straight in the eye;  
 I don't want to stand, with the setting sun,  
 And hate myself for the things I've done.

I don't want to keep on a closet shelf,  
 A lot of secrets about myself,  
 And fool myself, as I come and go,  
 Into thinking that nobody else will know  
 The kind of a man that I really am;  
 I don't want to dress up myself in sham.

I want to go out with my head erect,  
 I want to deserve all men's respect;  
 But here in the struggle for fame and pelf,  
 I want to be able to like myself.  
 I don't want to look at myself and know  
 That I'm bluster and bluff and empty show.

I never can hide myself from me;  
 I see what others may never see;  
 I know what others may never know;  
 I never can fool myself, and so,

Whatever happens, I want to be  
Self-respecting and conscience free.<sup>8</sup>

## YOU AND YOUR CONSCIENCE

Please do not carry away from this, or any other service of worship, the burden and pain of a violated conscience. In a few moments, within a few steps of obedience, through a few tears of Godly sorrow you can be free. You can be at peace again with yourself and with your God.

You are real. Your conscience is real. You can escape the gaze of public eyes. You can run away and hide in the cover and seclusion of darkness. You can grasp and hold in secret your innermost thoughts, longings, and desires. You can flee from the haunting scenes of dismal failure. You can run away from the pressing calls of duty. You can retreat from the demands or expectations of friends. You can even withdraw from the sight and painful watching of your enemies. You can run away from sorrow and disappointment. **BUT YOU CANNOT ESCAPE YOUR CONSCIENCE!**

It can be shunned. It can be postponed. It can be ignored. It can even be seared and benumbed. But **YOU CANNOT ESCAPE YOURSELF!** Your conscience is the last vestige of God's hold upon your soul.

When you lie down at night to rest, lo, it is there. When you awaken in the morning, it is with you still. When you stroll along the paths and lanes of life with the one of your love and devotion, your conscience takes every step you take. When you walk across the platform

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<sup>8</sup> From *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*. Ed. by James D. Morrison. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers.

to receive your diploma, your conscience is with you still. When you walk solemnly to the altar to say your vows of love, and contemplate the building of your very own "castle of love"—your conscience is with you in every step and every promise.

When your home is blessed with that precious gift from heaven, a little babe, your own offspring, a bundle of immortality to be molded into God's nature and returned to Him for His glory, your conscience will be with you. It will either haunt you with the memory of past sins, or console you in the memory of past days beautifully and dutifully spent. As you sing your lullaby and rock the babe to sleep, as you kiss away the hurt, and lavish upon your little one the devotions of an unselfish heart, your conscience is with you every moment. You cannot hide it away, or lock it in a closet.

You can barricade the doors and bar the windows against the criminal and the thief, but you cannot shut out the shadows. They will creep in through the cracks and peep through the crevices. Beware of the haunting shadows of a wounded conscience.

As you finally slip downward into "the valley of the shadow of death," your conscience will be with you still. And when we all stand before Christ at the great white throne of judgment, our consciences will be there to haunt us or console us. If, at that hour, we stand self-condemned because of having died in our unforgiven sins, then throughout the anguish of everlasting doom, we carry our sin-laden conscience with us.

The rich man in his tormenting thirst heard Abraham from across the great, fixed gulf, say, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things..." (Luke 16:25). "SON, REMEMBER!" If there were no fires to torment us but

the unquenchable fires of a tortured conscience throughout eternity, it would be too much to bear! Yet, in that realm of "the second death" which was prepared not for man, but "for the devil and his angels," we are assured that "...their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44).

In Isaiah 66:2 Jehovah said, "...but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." How wonderful it is to have feeling, to be able to tremble at the thundering tones of words of the Almighty Creator. Let us not reach the sad state of the aged man who said, "Here I stand, with snow in my hair, with winter in my blood and with ice in my soul. Would to God for a return of those days when every sermon was like a sword thrust in my heart!"

# PREACHING: ITS SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE

Stanley Lockhart

Stanley A. Lockhart, a native of Parkersburg, West Virginia, began preaching in 1943 in Elizabeth, West Virginia, and has completed 24 years in the ministry. He served churches in Texline, Friona, and Levelland, Texas, before assuming his present post on July 4, 1956, as full-time minister of the Johnson Street Church of Christ (formerly Harris and Irving) in San Angelo, Texas. His tenure at that church represents the longest uninterrupted service of any previous minister in the history of the congregation. As a gesture of their appreciation, the eldership awarded him an expense-paid trip to the Holy Land on his tenth anniversary at the Johnson Street Church.

Mr. Lockhart began his college work at Freed-Hardeman College in Tennessee, and he subsequently graduated from Abilene Christian College with a BA and from Eastern New Mexico University with a MA degree. He also has studied at Murray State College in Kentucky. He serves as a staff writer for *Power for Today* and contributes articles for the *20th Century Christian*. He has conducted a weekly



television program for the past 11 years, has had his sermons broadcasted on radio twice monthly for the same length of time, has participated in lectureships at Abilene Christian, Lubbock Christian, Pepperdine College, and Harding College and preached in the United States Army Retreat at Berchtesgaden, Germany, in May, 1967.

He is married to the former Carolyn Randolph, and they have two daughters, Lyncolyn, a sophomore in high school and Sherry, a seventh grader. They reside at 2558 Nasworthy Drive in San Angelo.

The word euaggelion means "gospel" or "good news," and when we come to study it we are of necessity at the very heart and centre of the Christian faith... The proof of the centrality of this word in the Christian message can be seen from the fact that euaggelion occurs 72 times in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>

The apostles rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day in the temple and at home they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as Christ" (Acts 5:41, 42). "I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome" (Romans 1:15). Paul counted it a privilege to be a preacher: "and I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (I Timothy 1:12).

### PREACHING MUST NOT BE SCORNE

I am glad that I am a preacher of the gospel—in this particular age! In our convulsive world, preaching has been relegated by many to a place of insignificance. Some ignore it, others scorn it. For many years it has been fashionable to speak disparagingly of preaching. We hear such remarks as, "quit preaching to me"; "dull as a sermon"; "whatever you do, son, don't preach"; "he's preachy." Some apparently feel that science is now man's savior and preaching has become obsolete. The prophet of old asked, "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?" (Lamentations 1:12) Today's answer is quite clear, "Nothing!"

T. S. Eliot stated a profound truth when he wrote, "The church must be forever building, for it is forever decaying within and attacked from without." The preacher's task is to edify and build, and, with indomitable courage,

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<sup>1</sup> *A New Testament Wordbook*, William Barclay, pp. 41, 42.

meet unflinchingly those attacks that would cause deterioration within the body of Christ. Perhaps preaching will never be the most popular work in the world for many reasons, not the least being because God's judgments are pronounced against all ungodly deeds. However, we would do well to remember that history shows that the periods of decadence have been those marked by loss of power in the pulpit, but where the pulpit was strong people were moved to live better lives.

Some preachers have scorned preaching by the way they have lived. Some have made merchandise of the gospel; others have neglected the Book because their hearts and minds were on other things; a few have brought reproach upon their work because of their manner of life. But dare we scorn the work of preaching because of this? The church ought to remember well the words of Charles R. Brown who said,

There are any number of men and women... who are both competent and willing to give attention to civic and charitable interest...but...you are the one and only man in that church who stands in the pulpit, dealing with truth in the large...<sup>2</sup>

## THE SCOPE OF PREACHING

The preacher should certainly be biblically oriented and theologically informed in order to have the maximum impact in the pulpit and community. Robert Cleath realized the importance of such and related in *Christianity Today*, September, 1967, "Faithful study of the Scriptures should be augmented by the study of works by Christian scholars and writers that help one handle the biblical record and comprehend the swirling moral and theological issues of

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<sup>2</sup> *The Art of Preaching*, MacMillian Company, pp. 7, 8

our day." In some localities it is nearly imperative that preachers have sound academic backgrounds. Let us never be guilty of undercutting scholarship. There seems to be a movement among us today that is undermining scholarship and advocating, if not directly certainly by insinuations, that some of our brethren are of no use to the church because they have degrees from certain universities. Moses must have been a knowledgeable person; Paul outstripped many of his age and sat at the feet of Gamaliel. Although some of the disciples were unlearned and ignorant men, they were also inspired, and it is not their ignorance that we emulate, but their message.

But we also need to remember that preaching involves more than *intellectual* demands. We cannot adopt the approach to preaching that it is merely a literary essay where style and charm are the primary factors and the rhythmical inflection of the voice and one's mannerisms become more important than the content. In churches where such has been the case, the pulpit has become a sham. The criterion of preaching is not whether the minister can impress people with his wisdom, but whether he himself knows the Christ whom he preaches and can introduce Him to his audience. Dr. Halford Luccock made an astute observation that also has an application to preaching when he wrote, "Too much history has been written by highly trained bores; too much knowledge has been sealed deep in pyramids of pedantry."<sup>3</sup>

During the second World War *The New York Times* carried an article about a merchant seaman who, because of a dangerous voyage on a ship loaded with explosives, was paid a bonus of one thousand dollars. He was given two five hundred dollar bills and since the banks were closed the day he returned to the States, he found that

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3 In *The Minister's Workshop*, p. 47

he could buy nothing, and he wound up at a police station asking for food. There is a tremendous preaching truth to be learned here. The preacher may get up to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ and have the most valuable treasure on earth, but his pedantic exposition may leave his audience starving to death. Milton may have had this problem in mind when he wrote:

The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,  
But, swoln with mind and the rank mist they draw,  
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:  
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw  
Daily devours apace, and nothing sed.<sup>4</sup>

Someone has observed that when God wanted to define "oakness" He made a tree. Just so when God wanted to demonstrate the scope of preaching, He presented Peter to us for serious study. Read his life and letters. They are not filled with information concerning how one may escape tribulations, or have an easier life, or win friends, or be popular. One sees in his life and epistles the road Peter traveled and that road had its hills and chasms. His life was filled with all the pathos of stumbling. The bitter knowledge would remain with him until his death of that night when his soul slithered away from Christ and his tongue cursed and uttered, "I don't know the man." And yet it was through this groveling experience, out of bitter tears and regrets, that he came to know Christ better. And what power he had when he preached a few days later, "This Jesus...you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised Him up..." (Acts 2:23, 24).

There is *antagonism* in preaching. To preach a lifetime and never bring about any opposition must surely be an indication that the speaker has never dealt with the real struggles of sin and lawlessness and his message is nothing

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4 Lycidas, II, 125-129

more than chatter. Preaching is more than "good news" — it is also a disturbing pronouncement: "I came not to bring peace but a sword," cried Jesus.

On the other hand, it is unfortunate that some feel that preaching is a continual harassment of the congregation. They honestly believe that if the preacher is not cutting somebody down or finding fault with something he is not preaching. Some object to this with the retort, "I dislike going to worship and having gravel thrown in my face every time I go!" The preacher's business is to plant the seed of God in the hearts of his hearers and not to raise "Cain" everywhere he goes. To illustrate what I mean, a few years ago a man came into my office who was about to retire from the Army. He had been making talks through the years and stated that he wanted to preach when he got out of the service. But in the meantime he was still in the service and needed to find a place to worship. He stated that he had visited another congregation the past Sunday but that he certainly could not worship there because they had a kitchen and when he began preaching he would condemn such practices.

"But," someone objects, "the apostle Paul was a great disputant." True, but he argued over *real* issues, such as whether Christ was the Messiah or an imposter and whether the Gentiles needed Christ plus the law of Moses.

## THE PREACHER PLEASES GOD AND NOT MAN

The message of Paul to the Galatians has rung out in many pulpits in the brotherhood, "Am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10). We have long applied this verse to doctrinal preaching. That is certainly one application of the passage. There is a danger that the preacher will attempt to please man with doctrine. Maybe he knows what doctrine the congregation wants and he

gives it to them. But does not this scripture also apply in other ways? In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul wrote, "...so we speak, not to please men, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never used either words of flattery, as you know, or a cloak for greed, as God is witness; nor did we seek glory from men..." (I Thessalonians 2:4-6). Unfortunately, evangelism is looked upon in the brotherhood today as a success or failure according to the visible response from the audience. For that reason there are extraordinary appeals to fear, the hypnotic effect of rapid-fire preaching, the soft singing of hymns and an electrifying mood in the service. The evangelist must certainly plead, persuade and pray, but he must be careful not to coerce. Let the minister remember that he may plant the seed of the kingdom or water it, but it is *God* who gives the increase! People must not become digits to inflate the ego of the speaker. Jesus Christ had more love for a lost soul than we could possibly have, but when the rich young ruler turned away, our Lord did not endeavor to make such an emotional appeal as would get the man to return. Pure emotionalism tends to produce counterfeit Christianity. People who have responded through pressure have to live on a high pitch and they can't and therefore they lose their interest and zeal. They feel that they have been betrayed.

We cannot win people into the kingdom of God by subtle subterfuge, nor by being spiritual hucksters offering salvation on the bargain counter in order to swell our membership or to appease our people. Effective preaching brings about a confrontation with Christ, and men and women leave the worship saying, "What am I going to do with Christ?" When these results are seen, preaching is important. The concept of great preaching today is so much *human* centered it attracts people to the preacher, but until the preacher gets men past himself and to Jesus Christ he is seeking the praises of men and impeding the gospel of Christ. The difficulty of getting people to see

beyond the speaker is not a new problem. Gilbert Burnet, an English bishop in the 18th century, wrote, "That is not the best sermon which makes the hearers go away talking to one another, and praising the speaker, but which makes them go away thoughtful and serious, and hastening to be alone."

### ONE MUST HAVE A BURDEN ON HIS HEART

Do preachers sometimes find themselves speaking empty words, cliches and pious blather? More than a quarter of a century ago, Alfred Garvie said, "Preaching will not be the power and the wisdom of God unto the salvation of sinners and the perfecting of saints unless the preacher is himself convinced, and can convince his hearers, that he has a message from God to deliver..."<sup>5</sup>

The minister must really believe his message. A little fellow came home from his Bible school one day and said to his mother, "You know my teacher's brother died and he believes that he is going to see him again sometime." His mother replied, "Yes, son, I know your teacher's brother died." "Yes, but he believes that he is going to see him again." "We all believe that, dear." "Yeah, but mom, he *really believes* it!"

The apostles and prophets were men who believed that their messages were the articulations of the mind of God. When they preached they believed that they spoke the word of God. The power of God's preachers was this: "We believe and therefore speak." Note the times Jeremiah said, "The word of the Lord came to me." These men had burdens on their hearts. Jeremiah had to preach: "If I

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<sup>5</sup> *The Christian Preacher*, Alfred E. Garvie, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921, p. 14

say, 'I will not mention him, or speak anymore in his name,' there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot" (Jeremiah 20:9).

J. W. McGarvey said of Benjamin Franklin, the preacher, that his preaching was great for three reasons: (1) he knew the Bible thoroughly and richly treasured it; (2) he had a way of pressing his message to the heart; (3) his whole soul was wrapped up in it.

The preacher is not one who stands above the people calling on them to repent; he stands with them in the same dilemma, realizing that he too is a sinner. It has been said that preaching is like one beggar telling another beggar where he can find bread. The minister does not speak down to his audience as though he were not among them. Paul said, "Christ came to save sinners . . . of whom I am [not was] chief."

After the Jews had been in Babylonian captivity for seventy years, the Persian kingdom broke their power and the king of Persia encouraged a Jewish remnant to return to their country and city. Fifty thousand returned immediately and began rebuilding the temple, but became discouraged because of opposition. Years later another group of Jews returned under the leadership of Ezra. More than a hundred years after the first return of the Jews to Jerusalem, Nehemiah was called upon to undertake the task of rebuilding the walls. Nehemiah had inquired about the survivors in Jerusalem and heard that they were in great trouble and shame and that the walls of Jerusalem were still broken down. "When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and mourned for days; and continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven" (Nehemiah 1:4). The reason there is no more service in God's kingdom today than there is, is because there are not enough tears shed over the lost. The preach-

ers, elders, Bible school teachers, and members are dry-eyed! Why do we have a lack of Bible school teachers and why are there empty pews? Because, unlike Jeremiah, we are not concerned enough yet to weep and pray about these matters. There is no burden upon our hearts. Paul said that he had worked with the church at Ephesus day and night with tears (Acts 20:31). His heart's desire and *prayer* to God for Israel was that they might be saved (Romans 10:1).

The preacher who just slips into the Lord's work as a hobby will probably also slip out.

If preaching is so vital, why is there such a shortage of preachers in the church? And why do so many preachers quit preaching? Perhaps the home is responsible for much of this. Too many Christians are satisfied with haphazard church attendance and others are often critical of the sermons, which mean that their sons will probably never preach.

Possibly another reason why some quit preaching is the conflict with the leadership. Ministers frequently prepare themselves to preach only to come into a congregation where some of their decisions are overruled in a harsh manner and where they are told that they must do everything from janitor work to visiting all of the members. Their preaching is the most insignificant part of their work.

No doubt another factor involved in men leaving the pulpit is their materialistic view of life. Let the minister ask himself these questions: am I arranging my life so that I can do things I couldn't do as a preacher? Have I been enticed by the world? Am I tired of church work? Am I using the weakness of the brethren as an excuse? Have I lost faith in the power of the gospel? Our young men can see the disparity between the pulsating, vibrant

preaching if Jeremiah, Amos, Peter, and Paul and the anemic, ineffective preaching of today.

The preacher needs Paul's overpowering sense of being the trustee of the word of salvation in a benighted world. Our world is filled with religious error, allurements, sports, and drama; the church is either drowned out or almost completely subdued. Someone has aptly described our age as "a wilderness crying for a voice!" More preachers need to feel the burden of preaching and love their work as Samuel Chadwick, a Methodist preacher in England, loved his work:

I have loved my job with a passionate and consuming love. I would rather preach than do anything else I know in this world...I would rather preach than eat my dinner, or have a holiday, or anything else the world can offer. I would rather pay to preach than be paid not to preach...I wish I had been a better minister, but there is nothing in God's world or worlds I would rather be.

Whereas Jesus went from the carpenter's shop to preaching, many today are going from preaching to the carpenter's shop.

### RELEVANT PREACHING

Two years ago Mr. Milton Ferguson wrote in *CHURCH ADMINISTRATION* that we live in a new age: "Chanting ancient shibboleths in the 'language of Zion' will no longer do. In this age of social upheaval we've got to make the gospel relevant." Of course we recognize that the *gospel* is relevant in every age but the *relevancy of the*

*gospel* in our age doesn't mean that our *preaching* will be relevant. This truth seems never to have dawned upon those who belittle the idea of "relevant preaching." People are not so much tired of preaching as they are tired of *our* preaching, because it is not meeting their needs. A professor once stated after listening to a miserably prepared sermon, "The first thing I do when I sit down to worship is to look around and note with sadness that hardly one of my colleagues from the other faculties is sitting in the pews. But when the sermon is over, I usually say to myself: what a good thing none of them was here!"

Relevant preaching meets the needs of the people. The preacher should preach the gospel so that the people listening will know that it has their name and address on it. The minister needs to keep in mind that in his audience there may be the woman who has just lost her husband, an individual who has just found out from the doctors that she has an incurable disease, parents whose child is giving them considerable trouble, a business man whose business is about to go under, or a husband who agonizes as he watches his wife struggle for breath. As I write these words, two faithful families have been pacing the hospital corridors and we have shed tears together as we see a faithful husband and a devoted wife in the throes of death. These people are eagerly listening for a message that will give them the strength to carry on and how important will my preaching be to them? The whole world seems to be tumbling in and they must have something to sustain them, something to undergird their faith. What do you as a minister have to say to these people? If God "sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world," did He send us into the world to condemn it?

Relevant preaching meets the needs of the people by grappling with their sins. Every preacher ought to have the capacity for moral wrath. This does not mean that he

has a bad temper, or that he constantly scolds the people. There was a time in Christ's life when He had to say, "You hypocrites... you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?" James Clarke once said that the preacher can be so delicate, judicial, and diplomatic that he really doesn't strike out at issues but rather licks boots. The preacher must be bold, but not bitter. He must "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

The preacher can "miss the mark" in his preaching; he can "strike out." He may be answering questions that nobody is asking, but it is also possible that people aren't asking pertinent questions. A man who was traveling overseas was writing his wife faithfully and she was writing to him, but he was not receiving her letters. The wife said it was a most frustrating experience because, although she was receiving his letters, he was never answering any of her questions or showing any awareness of happenings at home. It is possible that the preacher's sermons show no awareness of his audiences.

Our buildings are better equipped; we have fine offices, desks, phones, carpets, but what about our preaching? How many sermons are really challenging the thinking of the congregation? How many are really stirring the conscience of people? Our sermons must not be just the echo of the spirit of the pew. Relevant preaching means cracking the shell and getting down to the kernel.

Relevant preaching involves hard work. Sermons that are thought-provoking, well organized, and convincing come as a result of sustained, fatiguing, and methodical toil. William Elliott has commented, "Preaching that grips the heart, persuades the mind, stabs the conscience is inevitably the result of mental drudgery." J. W. Jowett expressed it this way: "Preaching that costs nothing accomplishes nothing. If the study is a lounge the pulpit will be an impertinence. He who does not bleed cannot bless."

## HOW ELSE WILL PEOPLE KNOW CHRIST?

Preaching is important because it is God's way of bringing the good news of salvation to the world.

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart." . . . For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (I Corinthians 1:18, 19, 21-25).

The message was Christ crucified and raised. This was a stumbling block to Jews because it was incredible that the Messiah should be killed on a cross; it was foolishness to the Greeks because they could not comprehend a God who suffered. But to those who accepted it, the gospel was God's power to save: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). Someone has suggested that there is *nothing* right about the "natural man" (the unsaved man): there is something wrong with his head—he is a sorehead; there is something wrong with his eyes—he is blind; there is something wrong with his mouth—it is an open sepulcher (he has spiritual halitosis); there is something wrong with his neck—he is stiff-necked; there is something wrong with his heart—it is hard and he needs surgery; there is something wrong with his soul—it is lost!

The church began with preaching (Acts 2). When Paul was in Athens the best way he knew to enlighten those people about the God of heaven who made all things

good was by preaching to them (Acts 17:22). When he stood before King Agrippa to make his defense, he preached the gospel to him (Acts 26:2).

Preaching is important because it brings people to Christ, and without Christ even great men do not know what life is all about. Ernie Pyle, known as a faithful reporter during World War II, struggled with the question of life and death when his mother died. He wrote these poignant words, "It seems to me that life is futile and death the final indignity. People live and suffer and grow bent with yearning, bowed with disappointment, and then they die. And what is it all for? *I do not know!*" Contrast his words with those of the apostle Paul's when he wrote, "To live is Christ, to die is gain." What makes the difference? CHRIST! This is what preaching is all about.

Preaching is important because the results are eternal. The teacher's work is important. Who would want to live in a world of intellectual darkness? For instance, the math teacher is indirectly responsible for building better roads and better buildings. But the message of the gospel goes on for eternity! Therefore, the preacher seeks not only to teach facts about the meaning of repentance, but he endeavors to get the people to repent; he not only presents Christ crucified, but strives to bring the people to the foot of the cross. The preacher's message is an endeavor to kindle the imagination of his hearers in such a way that they will be moved to feel the importance of the message and resolve to act accordingly.

## CONCLUSION

In May, 1967, my wife and I visited Baalbek during our trip to the Middle East. Baalbek received its name from *Baal*, the name of the Phoenician god, and *Beḳ*, which meant "city of the son." Amos, the prophet, spoke of a valley near Damascus as "the valley of Aven" (which

meant emptiness or vanity) in which Baalbek was situated. These people had three important gods, Jupiter, Bacchus, and Venus, and they eagerly built temples in their honor. Some of the stones that went into these temples weighed 1200 tons. It took 100,000 Greek slaves 250 years to build a temple of such magnitude and splendor. Excavations show findings of Phoenician foundations dating back to the 15th and 16th centuries B.C. But now all that remains of Baalbek are ruins. What brought about its downfall? The guides say, "wars and earthquakes." That is partly correct, but the *preaching* of God's prophets undoubtedly played a great part in it as they changed the hearts of people.

Study the book of Jonah and, after reading about the weakness of the man, hear him take God's message to that great city of Nineveh crying, "yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Here was probably the greatest response to preaching known in the history of the world as the whole city repented, including the king "who removed his robe, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes" (Jonah 3:6). We have a greater message to preach than Jonah had. Think of the souls that will be saved on the day of judgment, who, upon hearing the word preached, repented and obeyed the gospel of Christ.

Gerald Kennedy said in his book, *God's Good News*, "The great reward of our ministry will not be in particular honors that might come to us, it will not consist in salary or position to which we are elected by our brethren. It is rather in the changed life of some person who found redemption through our words and ministry."

## THE MIND OF CHRIST

Frank J. Dunn

Frank J. Dunn preaches for the Beacon Hill congregation, San Antonio. He began preaching in his home town, Conway, Arkansas, in 1940. Beacon Hill is the third church he has served in San Antonio since 1943.

He served two congregations in Dallas, 1946-1956, and was the first minister of the Monterey church, Lubbock, 1963-65.

He is a graduate of Abilene Christian and attended S.M.U. and Trinity. In 1944 he married Yvonne Campbell of San Antonio. They have four children: Frank, Jr., Rodney, Chris, and Holly.

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“Rejoicing in the Lord always” is the theme of Philip-  
pians. It is an epistle of joy on the ground that Christ  
lives in each of us who can say with Paul, “For me



to live is Christ” (1:21).  
“In the four chapters,  
Christ successively, is our  
life, our example our ob-  
ject, and our strength.”<sup>1</sup>

Interweaving the  
bright thread of joy is the  
strong cord of Christian  
unity, “in one spirit, with  
one soul” (1:27), “having  
the same love, being of

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<sup>1</sup> Bell, R. C., *Studies in Philippians*,  
(Austin: Firm Foundation Pub-  
lishing House, 1956), p. 6.

one accord, of one mind" (2:2). This ideal state of unity and joy is attained not "through faction or through vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind, each counting other better than himself" (2:3).

Paul continues, in one of the most sublime passages in the Bible. He offers the high challenge, "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (2:5), as the supreme example of the lowliness of mind that the Christian should have. To possess the mind of Christ, what a thought!

The difficulty of plumbing the depths of the mind of Christ and of imitating his spirit may explain the scarcity of sermons and books on this subject. Libraries are stocked with volumes on the mind of Plato, Napoleon, and Poe, of Dante, Keats, and Kierkegaard. But few are studies of the Supreme Mind. Some of these are written by liberals who explain the mind of Jesus in terms of his earthly development and environment.

What mind was in Christ Jesus?

Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. (2:5-8).

Unfortunately this paragraph has been a battleground for theological disputation. Paul used these verses as practical, powerful persuasion to Christian humility and love. Not one of the creeds formulated in controversies over the nature of Christ make reference to the mutual regard that Christians must have for each other in imitation of his selfless example. Noting that Christianity still suffers from the pride of intellectualism, R. C. Bell wrote:

If all Christians could have...admitted that "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness" (I Timothy 3:16), and in faith accepted Christ as the God-man without trying to explain him, ambitious, divisive heresies about his person could not have arisen.<sup>2</sup>

### *What Is This Mind?*

A careful examination of English versions from Tyndale to Phillips and of expositors from Origen to Barth reveals two schools of thought on this difficult passage. Does it enjoin Christians to treat one another with the same spirit as they experience in Christ? Or, does it mean that we must have the same frame of mind that Christ exemplified? In more than fifty works examined, scholars favored the latter meaning about ten to one.

More often than any other the translation is "mind," not meaning intellectual activity, but the mental *disposition* or *attitude* of Christ, as several express it, or the *spirit* which was in Christ, as others read.

C.R. Erdman suggests that Paul is admonishing Christians to be conformed to the "divine disposition," not merely trying to imagine and do the things that Christ would do, but "seeking to cultivate the spirit and disposition which Christ revealed . . . his moral temper, his way of thinking, and specifically his humble and unselfish devotion."<sup>3</sup>

According to James Macknight it should read, "Wherefore, let this disposition be in you which was even in Christ Jesus," a humble benevolent disposition; or literally, "let

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Erdman, Charles R., *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1932), p. 72.

this be desired by you, which was even desired by Christ.”<sup>4</sup>

Kenneth Wuest gives it, “Be thinking this in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,” which he explains, “Let the same purpose inspire you as was in Christ Jesus.”<sup>5</sup>

This must not be a fleeting fancy but the fixed state of the mind. “Keep on thinking,” or “keep minding” this. How we need to keep our hearts tuned to the channel of Christ’s disposition and display it in an uninterrupted frame of mind. Our Lord’s example of self-humiliation is the strongest encouragement Paul could give to Christians to constantly maintain the selflessness he enjoined in the foregoing verses.

### *The Form of God*

Paul sets the mind of Christ in opposition to the mind of self-seekers. The power of this example could be exhibited only in view of the glory that Christ had with the father before the world was (John 17:5), “who existed in the form of God” and was equal with God. “In the beginning...the Word was God” (John 1:1). He was the brightness or effulgence of God’s glory, “the very image of his substance” (Hebrews 1:3), “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15).

Christ was “in the form of God,” but he took “the form of a servant.” The Greek, *morphe*, has no exact equivalent in English. This construction is used only here and in Mark 16:12, where Jesus “appeared in another form” to two of his disciples. Besides “form” it is translated variously as shape, nature, divine nature, being,

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4 Macknight, James, *A New Literal Translation of the Apostolic Epistles*, (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1960 reprint), p. 360.

5 Wuest, Kenneth S., *Bypaths in the Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954), p. 81.

character, essence, likeness, fashion, manner, majesty, and glory.

Whatever the form of Christ was, he divested himself of it when he became a man and took the form of a servant. In the form of God he was spirit. When he became man, he was manifested in flesh. He did not give up his divinity, for Jesus said, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30) and "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). If the God-man had stripped himself of his deity, he could not have raised himself from the dead or have accomplished our redemption. He said that he had power to lay down his life and power to take it again (John 10:18). He "was declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).

"In the form of God," then, must denote the pre-earthly majesty that the Word enjoyed with God, being equal with God, worshipped by angels. He laid aside his state or glory, not his deity. In some measure that glory became visible when his appearance was changed on the mount of transfiguration. Christ now dwells in light unapproachable, "whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (I Tim. 6:16). This is the form of which Christ divested himself while on earth and in which form he again exists, "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

Thus Christ became man so that he might appear as a slave, the form of existence which presents the greatest contrast to the form of God. His act of transformation no one can duplicate, but his disposition of lowliness that produced this act of voluntary humiliation we must imitate. Not until we have this mind can "Christ be formed" in us (Galatians 4:19). His example shows how far we should go in our submission to God and selfless service to each other.

*Christ's Self-Emptying*

Our text recounts two acts that reveal the mind of Christ: his self-emptying in exchanging his divine form for human form and his self-humiliation in offering himself upon the cross.

According to the King James Version, Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." What does "robbery" mean? This term is used in no other place in the Bible. Literally, "a snatching away," it applies not to the act of robbery, but to a prize or booty seized. Various readings are: a thing to be grasped, plunder, rapine, treasure, and a thing to be retained. According to A.B. Bruce, Christ "did not deem equality with God a thing to be clutched and held fast at all hazards, as a robber holds his booty."<sup>6</sup>

One thing is clear. In his pre-earthly status, the Word was equal to God. He did not look upon this equality as a prize to be retained. He did not let it keep him from changing "His mode of expression from that of the glory of Deity to the humiliation of Deity incarnate in humanity. It was the King of Glory willing to step down to the place of a bondsman."<sup>7</sup> He did not regard his glory as something to cling to for his own benefit, but on the contrary he who was pre-eminent over all, became the servant of all as the supreme example of a self-emptied life. Thus, Paul was not warning the Philippians against coveting things they did not possess, but exhorting them after the example of Christ to give up for others possessions and rights that were theirs.

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<sup>6</sup> Bruce, Alexander B., *The Humiliation of Christ*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955 reprint; Glasgow: 1894), p. 365.

<sup>7</sup> Wuest, *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Christ did not simply experience emptying and humiliation. The whole drama is one of self-examination. Christ was a free agent. He poured himself out. He humbled himself. He willingly shed his divine glory. The self-emptying mind of Christ is evident in his coming into the world, his continued submission to God's will, and his death upon the cross.

Just as Jesus laid aside his garments, girded himself with a towel and washed the disciples' feet, so in his incarnation he disrobed himself of royal splendor, clothed himself in the flesh of humanity and the guise of a slave, and offered himself to take away sin. Similarly, we must gird ourselves with humility if we would "be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven" (I Peter 5:5; 2 Corinthians 5:2).

#### *Why Did Jesus Empty Himself?*

When Jesus stripped himself of his former glory and donned the apron of a servant, he laid aside the insignia of his majesty for the following reasons:

(1) To demonstrate what God is like—to reveal the nature, sovereignty, love, and the truth of God. It took the life and death of Jesus to tell men what God is like. Jesus was the perfect replica of the character of God in human form. He brought proof that God's love is individual, that he knows us by name (Exodus 33:17), and is an inviting, forgiving, seeking God. Jesus' message to men is good news from God and about God, that "God loves each one of us as if there were only one of us to love."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Augustine, quoted in Barclay, William, *The Mind of Jesus*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 98.

(2) Jesus was the perfect revelation of what man ought to be. He did not masquerade as man, but became really so. He assumed all the attributes of man, with all innocent infirmities of humanity. In all things he was "made like unto his brethren" (Hebrews 2:17). He grew tired and hungry, was tempted and tried, divested himself of knowledge to some degree (Luke 2:52; Matthew 24:36), suffered and staggered under the weight of his cross, and died as a common criminal. "He became what we are to make us what he is."<sup>9</sup> He is our clearest revelation of the will of God for the life of man, of what man's potentialities are (Matthew 5:48), and what life is all about. He demonstrated the before and after, the inward and outward man. He proved that man is not as much a body with a soul as a soul with a body.

(3) Jesus made God accessible to men. He brought God to man in order to bring men to God. He emptied himself that we might be filled with all grace. He was born of a woman that we might be born of God (Galatians 4:4,5). He was made a curse that we might have all blessings (Gal. 3:13, 14). He became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5:17). He was made poor that by his poverty we might be made rich (2 Cor. 8:9). In his ministry he was a servant, but he spoke and acted with the authority of God (John 3:2). In his manhood he became the one mediator between God and men (I Timothy 2:5). In his Godhood he reconciles the world unto God (2 Cor. 5:19).

(4) He was fully identified with men. "The first man is of the earth...the second man is of heaven" (I Cor. 15:47). He came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a woman, from the glory of heaven to the shame of the cross, in order deliberately to identify himself with

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<sup>9</sup> Irenaeus, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 259.

men. This self-identity with men began at his incarnation and was culminated at his cross. By this means he became the perfect representative of mankind, learned obedience, became the author of everlasting salvation, shared the feeling of our infirmities, acquired sympathy for human trials and sorrows, became the friend of sinners, and prepared himself to be "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:19). He seemed the same as sinners in his baptism, his crucifixion, and his being forsaken of God like an accursed one. He was identified with sinners so that sinners might be identified with God in him. The sanctified and the sanctifier are one (Hebrews 2:11).

(5) In his self-emptying and self-humiliation, Jesus was our Great Exemplar. He never taught a single principle that he did not exemplify in his own life and death. In all things he said, "Follow me." Above all Jesus was our example in perfect obedience to the will of God. Peter says that Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example (I Peter 2:21). The apostle had in view the line of perfect handwriting at the top of the copy-page. Christ's people must imitate his mind, heart, and conduct as seen in his perfect example of humility and sacrificial service.

In the 1957 lectures here, James Bales, speaking on this same topic, listed some things that Christ did not submit to, such as the world's materialistic scale of values, the practice of returning evil for evil, and the traditions of men that perverted the word of God.<sup>10</sup> In this, too, he is our example.

(6) In the scope of our text, Christ accomplished the

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<sup>10</sup> Bales, James D., "The Mind of Christ," *Abilene Christian College Lectures 1957*, (Austin: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1957), p. 26.

redemption of mankind. Paul calls this "the mystery of godliness":

He who was manifested in the flesh,  
Justified in the spirit,  
Seen of angels,  
Preached among the nations,  
Believed on in the world,  
Received up in glory. (I Timothy 3:16).

It is a mystery, indeed, that the eternal purpose of God and the worst crime of men should be exhibited on the cross. Jesus was "delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" when the Jews "by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay" him (Acts 2:22, 23). Here we see how far sinners will go in hating God. At the same time we see how far God will go in loving sinners and seeking to save them. In the name of the resurrected Christ, whom they had crucified, Peter offered the Jews repentance and baptism for the remission of their sins. "The Son of man came...to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

(7) Christ was exalted, not for his own sake, but for the benefit of all mankind. We do not bow before a crucifix, to a body still hanging. We glory in the empty cross, through which the world is crucified to us and we unto the world (Gal. 6:14). The power of the cross must be viewed through the open tomb. Following his submission to the cross and his resurrection, "God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11). He was made higher than the heavens and as our great high priest has entered into the holy place to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25, 26). Therefore we "have boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus"...

And having a great priest over the house of God; let us draw near in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:19-21).

In summary, for these seven reasons Christ exhibited his mind in the acts of self-emptying and self-humiliation: (1) To show men what God is like; (2) to demonstrate what man ought to be; (3) to make God accessible to men; (4) to be fully identified with men; (5) to become the supreme example of the self-emptied life; (6) to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and (7) to return to his former state of glory not for his own sake, but for the benefit of all mankind.

### *Characteristics of the Mind of Christ*

It is evident from the reasons given for Christ's self-emptied life that his was a mind of *complete and selfless love*. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). But Jesus' love was greater than this. He died for his enemies. He died for sinners. He gave himself for those who could never deserve the gift. And by this act he commends his love toward us (Romans 5:6-10). "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John 3:16). This disposition of love seeks the good of others and not its own good only (Phil. 2:4; I Cor. 13:5).

Christ's was a mind of *Humility*. Upon leaving heaven he began a continued downward movement that ended on the cross. It was not forced upon him. His selfless, sacrificial, serving disposition impelled Christ to humble himself. He was "lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29). How we need this Christ-like quality, "in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself" (Phil. 2:3). Let none of us "think of himself more highly than he ought to think," but "in honor preferring one another" (Romans

12:3,10). Preachers must need this lesson because we have the words and example of Paul, who wrote, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bondservants for Jesus sake" (2 Cor. 4:5). R.C. Bell suggested that "humble men do not think meanly of themselves; they just do not think of themselves at all."<sup>11</sup>

The mind of Jesus was an *open mind*, open always to the word and will of God. He said, "I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak" (John 8:28). Jesus condemned the Jews because they had closed their minds to his teaching (Matthew 13:13-15). To his disciples he said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." Wise are they who hear and believe and obey the word of God (Matthew 7:24-27; James 1:22-24).

His was a mind of *complete and chosen obedience* to God. He came to do his Father's will (Mark 14:36). He pleased not himself but always did the things that were pleasing to God (Romans 15:3; John 8:29). Opposite to the mind of Christ is the mind of sin, which is pleasing self in self-will and self-trust. The sins that Jesus condemned most sternly were self-righteousness (Luke 18:9-14) and hypocrisy (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16; 23:13f). To Jesus sin is primarily an attitude of the heart. Sin happens when one declares his independence from God, as the prodigal did. Such selfish disregard for the Father's will results in divisions, broken homes and hearts, neglected loved ones, a good time at any cost, and lack of concern for others. One cannot have the mind of Christ and have his own way. He cannot be indifferent to how his sin will affect God, himself, and others. As Jesus emptied himself of *self* we must renounce ourselves, as he said, "If any man would

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<sup>11</sup> Bell, R.C., *Ibid.*, p. 29.

come after me, let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

Christ had a mind of *prayerfulness*. He was the Man of Prayer. (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; John 11:41; 17:1f; Matthew 26:36-39). On occasion, Jesus prayed all night (Luke 6:12). He went up into the mountain to pray, and while praying, he was transfigured (Luke 9:28, 29). Continued prayer was inseparably a part of his self-emptied life and submission to God:

Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:7-9).

If he who knew no sin needed so to pray, how much more ought we who sin in everything pray and with thanksgiving let our "requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6). Someone said, "Hem in both ends of the day with prayer, and then it won't be so likely to unravel in the middle."

*Forgiveness*, also, is the mind of Christ. Jesus did not condone sin, ignore sin, or disguise sin. Neither does he simply make us conscious of sin, convict us of sin, nor condemn us when we sin. He came to forgive sin (Matthew 9:5, 6; John 3:17; Luke 23:34). He received sinners (Luke 15:2). He so loved sinners that "he became sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21). In the parable of the prodigal he said to the Pharisees, "You do not understand the nature of God." In his death on the cross he said to all men, "You do not understand the nature of sin." God being who he is, and sin being what it is, Jesus had to become the "curse for us" (Galatians 3:13). Sin had to be punished—the penalty had to be paid—so that sinners could be saved and set free. If Christ had saved himself from the cross,

he could not have saved men from sin. "He bore our sins in his body upon the tree" (I Peter 2:24). As Christ forgives us, so we must forgive one another. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:15). "Put on a heart of compassion . . . forbearing one another, and forgiving one another," (Col. 3:12).

Jesus was pre-eminent in his *meekness in suffering*. He taught his disciples not only to endure suffering, but to rejoice in trials and persecutions (Matthew 5:5, 10; James 1:2-4). We do not relish suffering such as disease, poverty, and war may bring. But it is a high privilege to be a partaker of Christ's sufferings. We should thank God that we are "counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name" (Acts 4:41; I Peter 4:13-16). According to Origen and other early church writers, the example of Christ's humiliation (Philippians 2:6f) sustained the martyrs in their suffering. In the chapter of our text, Christians are commanded to "do all things without murmurings and questions" (Phil. 2:14-16). This forbids complaining about anything whatsoever. "All murmuring is treason against the mind of Christ."<sup>12</sup>

Jesus had a *courageous* mind, a strong mind. He displayed great courage in facing the tempter (Matt. 4:1-11), in preaching sermons that contradicted popular concepts (Matthew 5-7), in walking straight into the midst of his enemies even when they regarded him as an outlaw with a price on his head (John 11:56f), when he helped the arresting officers to take him (John 18:6-11), when he confessed to the high priest that he was the Christ, intentionally giving the testimony that cost him his life (Mark 14:62), and when he gave himself to be nailed to the cross. It is one kind of courage to do some gallant

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<sup>12</sup> Bell, *Ibid.*, p. 28.

deed on the spur of the moment. "It is another and far higher kind of courage to know that there is agony and torture at the end of a chosen road, and to go steadily on to meet it," as Jesus did.<sup>13</sup>

Jesus is the supreme example of *singleness* of mind. Great men, such as Caesar, Luther, Edison, and others, have possessed a single ideal and have given their lives to attain it. But no one can compare with Christ. Not once did he waver in his determination to fulfill the righteousness of God. "He set his face" and nothing could deter him from his great purpose. He said, "My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (John 4:34). Like David he could say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Psalm 40:8; John 6:38).

His was a mind of *simplicity*. Although his wisdom is "too wonderful for me" (Job 42:3), his knowledge too deep, his judgments unsearchable, "and his ways past tracing out" (Romans 11:33), his lessons were taken from simple, everyday life, and his teaching was in the fewest of words. Take, for example, his understanding of the sabbath in contrast to Jewish doctrines. In the *Mishnah* regulations about the sabbath were detailed in twenty-four chapters!<sup>14</sup>

They had made theirs a religion for experts and in doing so they made void the law of God and their worship became vain (Matthew 15:6, 13). No wonder the Lord of the sabbath sought to lift the heavy yoke of tradition from the neck of the Jews by declaring, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27, 28).

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<sup>13</sup> Barclay, William, *The Mind of Jesus*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 245.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

Other expressions of the manifold mind of Christ are exhibited by his concern for the kingdom (Matthew 6:33), righteousness (Matt. 5:20), truth (John 1:17; 14:6; 17:17), life (John 10:10), freedom (John 8:32), the souls of men (Luke 19:10), unity (John 17:20, 21), purity (I Peter 2:21, 22; Matt. 5:8), fruitfulness (John 15:1-7), readiness (John 9:4), benevolence (Acts 10:38), sympathy (John 11:35; Luke 19:41), loyalty to God (John 14:28; 17:4), and thoughtfulness of loved ones (John 11:3f; 19:26f). Thus, Christ was concerned about all of the right things. We cannot be Christ-like without loving the things Christ loved, despising the things he despised, and being concerned with the things that concerned Christ.

Besides all of these, the mind of Christ was one of *complete confidence* in his ultimate triumph. He saw the glory beyond the cross (Heb. 12:2). He was in constant contact with God. He said, "I lay down my life... No man taketh it away from me" (John 10:17, 18). Never did he seem to be on trial. In contrast to Jews crazed with hate and Pilate, the picture of frustration, "Jesus is the supreme example of serenity in the face of injustice."<sup>15</sup> With certain knowledge that Caiaphas would charge him with blasphemy, but also with calm assurance, Jesus said to the high priest, "I am the Messiah... Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:63, 64).

His trust in God was fully justified. The head that wore the crown of thorns was soon to be crowned with glory and honor. Beyond the shame of the cross there was victory over death, and beyond the tomb, exaltation and joy! God gave unto him the name that is above every name, authority in heaven and earth, and worthiness to be worshipped by angels and men.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

James Macknight pointed out a new honor that God gave to Christ. Besides restoring his former glory, "God conferred on him the dignity of Savior of the human race."<sup>16</sup> Returning to heaven, Christ "took mankind, a salvaged priceless treasure, on his shoulder with him."<sup>17</sup> The name "Jesus" given him by Gabriel is *the name*, and it means "savior." All intelligent beings throughout the universe, good and bad, will one day acknowledge him both Lord and Savior, "to the glory of God the Father."

### *Conclusion*

When our Lord comes again, how many of us will he find who have in us the mind of Christ? Will it be as it was when Paul wrote to the Philippians that only Timothy was "likeminded, who will care for your state. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 2: 20, 21).

We pray that this will not be the case. Rather, let each one continue to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you" (Phil. 2:12, 13). "Set your mind on the things that are above" (Col. 3:2), for "they are enemies of the cross... who mind earthly things."

For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself. (Philippians 3:20, 21).

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<sup>16</sup> Macknight, *Ibid.*, p. 361.

<sup>17</sup> Bell, *Ibid.*, p. 20.

## SERVING ONE'S OWN GENERATION

A. Waldrep Johnson

A. Waldrep Johnson was born May 18, 1914, at Centre, Ala., and was reared at Vernon, Ala., where he received his elementary and secondary school training. He was graduated from Freed-Hardeman College in 1934 and began preaching in that year. He attended Harding College for one year while preaching at Wynne, Ark. He received his A.B. degree from Centenary College in 1937 while preaching at Shreveport, La., and attended Louisiana State University while preaching at Baton Rouge, La.

He is married to the former Iva Mae Barton of Lynn, Ala., and they have three children: Dale Waldrep, Janice Lyn, and Mrs. Julia Ann Vetrie.

He has served as local evangelist in Louisiana for 20 years, at Shreveport, Baton Rouge, Monroe and Lafayette, and held a number of mission meetings in the state. He has also served as local evangelist at Jacksonville, Fla., (6 years) and at Ardmore, Okla., (3 years), and is now in his fourth year with the Oakdale congregation in Mobile, Ala.

Gospel meetings have taken him into all of the Southeastern states.



He has done extensive radio work, and weekly television programs in Ardmore, Okla., and Mobile, Ala., where he served as panelist on the "Know Your Bible" television broadcast for two years.

Other activities include serving as Sooner Youth Camp director for two years while in Ardmore, Okla.; serving for two years on the Board of Directors of the Greater Lafayette (La.) Area Safety Council; currently Board member of the Christian Foundation,

Inc., at Mobile, an organization designed to conduct a student-center program at the University of South Alabama in Mobile, and the Gulf Coast Bible Camp near Mobile.

He has had one debate each with Baptist, Mormon and Seventh-Day Adventist.

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“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.” (Acts 13:36-37).

In this excerpt from Paul’s sermon at Antioch in Pisidia we find one of the most significant concepts of service to be found anywhere. Of David it is said he “served his own generation,” or literally, “ministered to his own generation.” Here we see Christian and spiritual effort drawn down to a definite nucleus. We are reminded of the statement of Jesus, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). In a similar vein Paul said,

“For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2).

In this sublime observation concerning David we are taught to concentrate our service on “this present time”; to serve our own generation during our own life-time, the only period allotted us in which to serve.

The chief argument of our passage is that Jesus, not David, saw no corruption, being raised from the dead. The seal of His messiahship was His resurrection. The Messiah, by virtue of His being the Messiah, serves all generations, which the service to humanity done by any mere man, however great and powerful, is necessarily con-

fined to his own generation. Thus "David, after he had served his own generation . . . fell on sleep." Any individual can serve only his own generation. God may preserve the influence of this service as beneficial to future generations, both by example and/or by practical benefit. Or He may use it to the fulfillment of His future plans, as He did David in bringing the Messiah through his seed. But the individual's responsibility is to his own generation and times alone.

At first thought to "serve one's own generation" may seem little, an insignificant time of service. There are those who disdain a service which they cannot envision as being age-lasting and world-wide in its scope. They have visions of grandeur. They fail to grasp the significance of God's challenge, "For who hath despised the day of small things?" (Zech. 4:10). They cannot grasp the spirit of Christ's challenge:

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. 10:42).

But when we consider the full significance of one's own generation we must have a more exalted view. Consider what an important length of time is a whole generation. Consider the multitude and variety of people that it is possible for us to deal with in a whole generation. Here is a potential weight of solemn, thrilling interest in human affairs; a wonderful challenge in individual consistency in Christian character and service. Here is sufficient expanse of time for education and training and for the application of this education and training to the duties of the Christian life. Indeed so great is the significance and scope of one single generation that only the infinite mind of God can read the full volume of one generation through.

It is true that there is no remote reach of space to lend fascination to the view. There is no magnificent perspective to flatter the mind of the would-be great. There is no vague, indefinite scope to captivate the ego of the overly ambitious. And yet how full and sufficient is the definite scope that is granted to each individual. "Blessed are those servants who when their Lord cometh shall be found watching" and serving, even through a generation's length, from youth even to old age.

### OUR INDIVIDUAL RELATIONSHIP TO OUR PARTICULAR GENERATION MAY DIFFER

We may serve our generation well even though our service may differ in its impact on that generation. There are those who serve their generation by being before it. They are men of vision who lead on to greater plateaus and vistas of excellence. They may be like John the Baptist who gave expression in his generation to the thoughts and truths belonging to the age that was yet to be. They serve to prevent the fixations of tradition or habit from becoming a yoke that stifles Christian endeavor and progress in righteousness. Such is the missionary leadership of today that dares to "launch out into the deep." These men do a great work by anticipating the growing vision of God's people and the enlarging horizon of the work. They prevent the transitions to greater performance from being too abrupt. They must accept the hazard of being misunderstood and criticized as long as they live, and only recognized as heroes and forerunners by a future generation, if indeed ever at all on this earth.

Others may serve their generation by being behind it. They, too, are needed to "hold the lines" against the penetration of unscriptural innovations so frequently carved out of the pride of man's intellectual attainments and presumptive freedom. Their constant cry is "back to the old paths." They are the Jeremiahs who cry:

"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer. 6:16).

Their thoughts and feelings often seem to belong to times past and gone. Their lives among us seem queer and old fashioned and their very talk sounds strange and oftentimes trite. And yet they are needed servants. They tend to restrain us, lest in the pride of our present visions and attainments we should forsake the tried and true, and lest we should drift from that which is authorized by our God. They, too, must accept the hazard of misunderstanding and criticism. They will be called "narrow-minded," "old-fogies," and men who are "afraid of their shadow." But each generation must not forget the past out of which it has come. Nothing is superior merely because it is old, but oftentimes so-called progress, in the realms of idealism and authority, breaks over the bounds of God's approval. They, too, serve God who stand and wait—wait for the definite instructions of God.

Still others there are who serve their generation by belonging precisely to it. They seem to perceive its peculiar needs and to adapt themselves to serving those needs in an admirable manner. They see the spiritual and moral sickness of their times. They see the wants and needs of the human soul as those wants and needs are generated and augmented by the peculiar spiritual and sociological conditions of their day and of their environment. Jesus addressed himself to the peculiar conditions of His generation when he said:

"O *generation of vipers*, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. 12:34-35).

The evidence of the Bible and of sociological studies of past ages surely indicate that human nature never changes. Yet the special temptations and trials of the different generations are obvious. The rank idolatry of the people of the Jewish age differed greatly from the prejudice against Jesus of the Christian age. While in neither age did the Jew draw close to God, still the background of morality and spirituality were vastly different. These differences necessitated a different approach and emphasis on the part of the spiritual leaders of the respective times. Whereas the Old Testament prophets cried day and night for moral reform in the keeping of the statutes of Jehovah, the apostles of the New Testament pled for the acceptance of Christ and the Grace of God through Him. Not without repentance and moral reform, to be sure, but their plea was more positive and forward-looking. While the basic needs of the people remained the same, and will throughout all generations, the background, and consequently the approach, were different. The same is essentially true of the differing generations throughout time. Even within the same generation, the approach of the apostle Paul to idolatrous Athens differed from the approach of Peter to the pedagogically prepared Jews on Pentecost. Hence the assumption that differing generations, and differing environments within one generation, require a different approach and emphasis; though always the same gospel in its simplicity and truth.

In description of those who belong precisely to their own generation, R. Tuck has the following to say:

“They are exactly adapted to it; they never get beyond it; they are born into its thought and feeling; they live in it, work for it, worthily express it, and pass away with it; usually leaving no name only the good fruitage and the silent seeding of their good works. These

are the thousands of the unknown ones, but they are the "salt of the earth!"<sup>1</sup>

### SERVING ONE'S OWN GENERATION REQUIRES A CERTAIN HUMILITY

It is impossible to estimate how much service to Christ and His Cause is lost in every generation because of the many who cannot see the magnitude of service in a limited sphere, or else do not have the humility to serve in this limited sphere. While men long for greater strength, more wealth, and for more knowledge and ability, they deprive the church of the strength and wealth and knowledge they do have. Whether our talents be one, two or five, God requires the best use of our available strength, and that we soberly improve our given talents. If only we would be willing to use AT ONCE all that we are and all that we have, the kingdom of God would begin to grow by leaps and bounds.

While men dream of the unattainable distance, they sinfully neglect that which is close by, and that which they most certainly could accomplish. As Professor P. C. Barker said:

"The PRESENT time, the PRESENT place, the PRESENT tasks are the time, the sphere, the toil for the servant of Christ. Between dreams of the past and visions of the future, the priceless opportunity of practical duty has too often irrevocably slipped past."<sup>2</sup>

The tendency to wait for the more showy opportunities to serve Christ overlooks His beautiful and comforting assurance concerning "A cup of cold water only" given in

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1 Pulpit Commentary, vol. on Acts, Page 434

2 Pulpit Commentary, Vol. on Acts, Page 426

His name. Nor did our Saviour overlook the poor widow who gave but a mite into the treasury of her Lord. He not only did not overlook, but called the attention of all to this generous, but humble, service. It was seeking the ostentatious and showy place and manner of service that led Jesus to condemn the religious people of His day;

“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in Heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doest; That thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly” (Matt. 6:1-4).

Throughout the history of the church many have been humble enough to concentrate on the humblest service to Christ and His Cause in their generation. They were not seeking earthly fame or recognition, but were simply content to serve their Lord to the best of their ability. Though not seeking such, many of them have achieved honor among their contemporaries, but, more significantly, they have the assurance of the approval of God. Their example has inspired others and benefited their generation beyond measure. Even the most noted servant accomplishes his greatest good through others who are challenged by him to the humble service of every-day living. It is in this respect that the poet has said, “I’d rather see a sermon than to hear one any day.” We need today, and in every age, more who are willing to serve their generation in relative obscurity. If we but have the humility to serve, God will utilize that service to His own glory in His own time and in His own way.

## THE CLEAR DUTY OF THE CHILD OF GOD IS TO SERVE

It is obvious that we best serve our generation by serving God, and we best serve God by serving our own generation by the will of God. When God brought Israel out of bondage in Egypt, and made of them a nation for His own possession He said, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, AND SERVE HIM, and shalt swear by His name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you" (Deut. 6:13-14).

Later, as the Israelites were being settled in the promised land, Joshua said:

"But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and TO SERVE HIM with all your heart and with all your soul" (Josh. 22:5).

Still later, during their residency in the land, near the end of the period of the Judges, Samuel said:

"If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord and SERVE HIM ONLY: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines" (1 Sam. 7:3).

During the period of the kings of the united kingdom David gave the following instructions to his son, Solomon:

"And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, AND SERVE HIM with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever" (1 Chron. 28:9).

The Psalmist sang, "SERVE THE LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling" (Psalms 2:11). Service was the characteristic of the life of the apostle Paul: he said to the elders from Ephesus:

"Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you in all seasons, SERVING THE LORD with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:18-21).

Paul exhorts the Galatians:

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love SERVE ONE ANOTHER. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Gal. 5:13,14).

In David's charge to Solomon (quoted above) he said, "Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind." Thus proper and acceptable service to God must be preceded by an unimpeachable knowledge of God and His will. There is much excitement, effort, and service rendered without any personal acquaintance with God. This usually speaks well for the zeal of a servant or worshiper, but does not assure approval and acceptance with God. True knowledge will always beget service, and faithful service will in turn deepen real knowledge. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17). All the graces of Christian character act and react on each other. Hence the mutual reaction of knowledge and service.

Then from the background of this knowledge we are

to serve Him with a perfect heart—i.e. with an undivided mind; with the whole heart. "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (Jas. 1:8). Hence not a heart that will follow Jesus only when it is convenient, but not when it is inconvenient. Not a service that will be rendered only "in season," but not "out of season."

Along with this perfect heart there must be a willing mind. The disposition of the mind should always be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Not alone of giving is it true that "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath" (2 Cor. 8:12). It must be also true of every act of service rendered to God. Solomon might have demurred from the magnitude of David's charge. He might have said, "This is a wonderful work, and the encouragements to it are indeed great. But I am young and tender. Where will I get the materials, and how do I know the people will support me in building such a magnificent temple for Jehovah?" But out of his undivided heart and willing mind he said no such thing. It was the task of his generation to build the temple. To hesitate would be to take one step backward. Such a backward step it was not his inclination to take. The encouragement of his father, David, was sufficient for him to undertake the task:

"And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord" (1 Chron. 28:20).

We may reflect upon how much David yearned to build the house of the Lord himself. But such was not destined to be the work of his generation; rather it was the work of the generation of his son. Even so, David served his own generation in the tasks that did belong to it, and was also in a real sense a forerunner of the next generation in that he made all preparation possible even toward the building

of the temple. He had the plans for the temple drawn and ready to turn over to his son. So might it be that the work of one's own generation may have its limitations. But if we serve Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind we can still be counted faithful by doing that which is available for us to do. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:10).

To serve is to work for and obey. Common sense tells us that we cannot serve two masters. So also declares the Bible: "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24). "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4). "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt 12:30).

The memory of the beautiful life of Jesus is the greatest incentive to serve. To this beautiful life of service He has also added this directive: "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:27). He who "hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows"; and was "wounded for our transgressions" and "was bruised for our iniquities" (Isa. 53:4,5), hath also bound up the wounds inflicted by humanity, comforted the hearts of the sorrowing and given hope to the hopeless. He refused not to stoop and wash and dry the feet of his fellowman. He served them in every practical and idealistic service. It is the memory of Him in all this humble service, in His obedience to His Heavenly Father, in His explicit devotion that reproduces a similar service in all His

faithful servants on earth today, leading them to serve their fellow-men, and their "generation" without fail. Thus we are led to serve the poor and needy, the sinful and those in despair, the untaught and the mistaught, and all who long for the fullness of the blessings in Christ.

### HOW TO SERVE ONE'S OWN GENERATION

We may serve our own generation by letting our lives be a witness for God. Every generation needs those who really believe in God and make it plain to everybody that they really do believe in Him. In one way or another the belief in God is put in peril by every generation. Sometimes it is an intellectual peril on the part of those who say, "I cannot rationally accept it." Sometimes it is a practical peril on the part of those who say, "I cannot live consistently with the belief." But every generation produces its skeptics and infidels who say, either openly or in their hearts, "There is no God." Thus we need those who will serve our generation by counteracting this evil and soul-destroying influence; men who will clearly and constantly witness to the living God and His rightful rule in the hearts and lives of men. We need those who will witness, not as by word only, but by a life consistent with the fear of the Lord; men who will set the tone of their lives and thoughts and duties by the teaching of God. We need men whose lives indicate that they are living under the "all-seeing eye of God," in full realization of the abiding sense of His presence. This practical testimony, along with the preaching of the word, is the greatest need of "our generation" and of every generation.

We can serve our generation by being the best possible in it. For every generation needs a constant inspiration to the highest and best of godly living. This is the ever-present need of every environment from the lowest to the highest. We must not think that the lowest of moral and spiritual environment cannot be touched and moved by

such models and examples as will be to it a constant inspiration. Nor must we feel that the highest moral environment is without need of such models and examples of true devotion to God and His Cause. Thus, wherever our lot is cast, there is always one thing we each can do: we can keep the moral standard high and raise it even higher by our example and influence and by the sheer force of our personal character. What we are individually may well be the needed leavening force in our generation and in our particular sphere. "Ye are the salt of the earth," "Ye are the light of the world." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:13,14,16).

We can serve our generation by manfully resisting all of the evils that afflict it. Every generation has its conflict with evil. Satan, the enemy of God and of righteousness, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). This arch enemy of mankind never sleeps and never rests. We must be ever sober and vigilant to overcome his evil force which is in all the world, and in EVERY environment. It has been said that the progress of evil is assured by good men merely doing nothing. We need, therefore, good and holy men who will oppose themselves actively against the evils of the world and of their environment in their own generation. It is true that the best opposition to evil is a solid, steadfast persistence of a godly character. But we cannot consider ourselves fully faithful to our God or to our own generation if we see any phase of evil grow up in our generation unchallenged and unresisted. Consider the forthright denunciation by Jesus of the Pharisaic conceit and Sadducean laxity. He always called things by their right names, and always, with wholesome reproofs and warnings, sought to purify a wicked and corrupt generation. But we, too often to the contrary, are a great generation of apologizers for evil, carrying tolerance to the sinful extreme of "winking at sin"; excusing, rather

than reproving, the sinner. We too often abuse utterly the injunction "judge not that ye be not judged," by ignoring "by their fruits ye shall know them." We must learn to recognize sin and error for what it is, and resist it manfully throughout our generation.

It is also true that "our generation," if we are fortunate enough to live long lives, will overlap at least one more generation. Our responsibility to future generations is therefore indicated. This responsibility, too, we must meet by preserving the simplicity and authority of the Divine will. We must train our children and youth who will in turn serve "their" generation in the same time-tested and authoritative way of righteousness. Paul said to Timothy, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). Thus is the perpetuity of faithful gospel preaching provided for. We, as individuals, can have but very little influence on future generations. But the Bible CAN, and MUST, through the faithfulness and integrity of preaching the same gospel to all succeeding generations. If each generation will teach this to the next generation it will serve God in the best way possible. Our faithfully serving our own generation is, beyond all compare, the greatest and best service that we can possibly render to all future generations.

#### BY WHAT RULE ARE WE TO SERVE OUR GENERATION?

Our text states that "David, after he had served his own generation BY THE WILL OF GOD, fell on sleep." It is the tragedy of human thinking that many think they serve God when they do not so. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and

in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22,23). Thus there must be some standard in addition to the sincerity of the human heart. Our service must be "by the will of God." Too many crimes against righteousness and truth are committed in the name of sincerity alone. None can doubt the sincerity of the Jews at the wailing wall in Jerusalem. Nor the sincerity of Paul when he was persecuting Christians before his conversion to the authority of Christ. None can doubt the sincerity of Uzzah when he put forth his hand to steady the ark when it seemed that it would fall. But none of these were following the revealed will of God. Sincerity alone is insufficient. We must also DO THE THING required of God. Too often the right purpose and intention have been substituted to cover a certain non-performance of God's stated will. Sincerity we must have, but we must also have the truth. "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

Too many have questioned man's ability to know the truth. It was evidently in this spirit that Pilate asked "What is truth?", trying to cast doubt on man's ability to know it. Those who question this ability would try to deprive the believer of the very basis of his faith. It must surely take a lot of religious self-confidence to systematically undermine the religious faith and devotion of any individual without giving a superior faith and devotion to replace it. But in how many cases do the critics and faith-destroyers try to give something superior to the revealed will of God? Indeed what COULD be superior? Hath not God said, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps?" (Jer. 10:23). And again, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11). How else then could we know the things

of God but by His revelation? "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10). But too many people prefer the free, unrestrained personal spirit to the discipline of the study of God's revealed will. The study of God's will requires the same discipline of thought processes as any other study or discipline, e.g., mathematics, physics, history, etc. But the advantage in religious study is that God has graciously and mercifully given us the source material for our study. But He still requires us to study it with the same respect for His revelation that we would have for the materials of other studies. Surely if He loves humanity enough to reveal His will He will also love us enough to preserve that truth for those who diligently seek after Him. Not that He has directly inspired the individual copyist and translator, but through His providence and through the abundance of accumulating source materials from antiquity, He has surely preserved the integrity of His revealed will. Did not He say, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away"? (Mark 13:31).

Serving God acceptably is an exacting discipline. Note again "according to the will of God." Thus we cannot follow the presumption of the free-thinker, but him who is willing to bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). If God had intended that service to Him should be free of restraint He would never have given us the guidance and counsel of His Word. It is always contrasted with the thoughts and doctrines of men. "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

David the sweet Psalmist of Israel, said, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue" (2

Sam. 23:2). Hebrews 1:2 declares that God "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Thus His word hath been revealed. There is not so much need for new truth as that the old should be utilized. How much of dead truth lies in the mind of every man.

We must approach the study of God's word with a proper attitude. It must be listened to in a right spirit; with fresh interest, reverence and self-application, and with a determination to put it into practice. When the heart is prepared the truth is invested with new meaning and power. It must be our solemn purpose to serve God in reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28). "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth... serve ye the Lord" (Josh. 24:14). When Barnabas went to Antioch, and when he had seen the grace of God, he was glad, "and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23). Whole congregations perish for lack of purpose. Each individual Christian must purpose personal faithfulness and personal evangelism.

In Acts 20:28-37 Paul reviewed his life and work among the people of Ephesus. He pointed out how he had been with them at all seasons, "SERVING THE LORD with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations." He could feel that he had served well in his special sphere, and had done his work faithfully, as in the eye of Christ Himself. "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you," "have taught you publicly, and from house to house" (v. 20). "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (v. 27). "I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (v. 31). He had thrown the utmost energy of his soul into the work. He had wrought good with both hands earnestly. It will be a sorry thing to call to our memory duties hardly and punctiliously discharged, just barely gone through decently and with average and general credibility; and still worse to have

to recall duty left undone or miserably mismanaged. But it will be pleasant and gratifying to feel that we went to our work with agile step and eager spirit, performed it with conscientious care, and gave it our utmost strength. Only then can we expect to hear our Saviour and Judge say, "Well done my good and faithful SERVANT, enter thou into the joys of the Lord." What an ample reward for faithfully serving our own generation!

"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God FELL ON SLEEP." Here we have the tender description of Jesus of the death of the faithful. This is the blessed condition reserved for those who die "in the Lord." Here they "rest from their labors" (Rev. 14:13). But even then their work of serving their generation is not over, for "their works do follow them." What wonderful assurance, and what wonderful reward, for those who "serve their own generation by the will of God"!

## WHO CARES IF MY SOUL IS LOST?

George Tipps

George David Tipps, Jr. was born in Childress, Texas, July 7, 1924. His parents still reside in that town and his father still serves as an Elder in the Church of Christ there.

Mr. Tipps was graduated from Childress High School in 1941, and he received his B.A. degree from Harding College, Searcy, Arkansas, in 1945, having majored in Bible, Biology, and Social Science.

He was married to the former Miss Claire Camp of Trenton, Kentucky, in 1945, and went immediately to Abilene Christian College, Abilene, Texas, to teach Biological Science until September, 1946, when he became associate minister for the 14th Street (now 16th and Decatur) Church of Christ in Washington, D.C.

The eldest of their three children, Sheri, was born in Washington, D.C. in 1947, and is now a Junior at Harding College. A second daughter, Beverly, a high school Junior, was born in Louisville, Kentucky, while Mr. Tipps was minister for the Bardstown Road Church of Christ in that city. During his ministry in Louisville, he also attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. A son, David, now a high school Freshman, was born to the Tippses during the ministry in Jackson, Tennessee.



Since 1954, with the exception of two years spent with the 15th Street Church of Christ in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Mr. Tipps has lived in Fort Worth, Texas, where he has served the Riverside, Birdville, and Eastridge Churches of Christ, in that order. He will begin the fourth year at the

Eastridge congregation this Fall.

Mr. Tipps serves on the Board of Trustees of Fort Worth Christian College, the editorial council of *Power for Today*, and has been featured on the *Herald of Truth* television series. He conducts special services over the entire nation and has appeared on many Christian College Lecture programs.

Mr. Tipps lists quail-shooting, woodworking, and flying as his hobbies. He is a licensed private pilot.

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A timid knock sounded at my study door. It was Saturday afternoon, and I was putting the "finishing touches" on my sermon for the morrow. The knock was not altogether unexpected; for one of our very fine Christians had told me she was going to try to send her niece to talk with me, in the hope that we might be able to be of some help in reclaiming a life already badly mis-spent.

As I opened the door to invite my guest to enter, it was immediately obvious that this attractive young woman was most resentful at having been urged to come and "talk with the preacher" about her problems.

Her problems were many, indeed. It was difficult to imagine that one so young had sunk so far into sin. There were not many gaits she had not gone. She literally glowered as I spoke to her. "Let's talk about your soul," I offered, as she took a chair opposite my desk. Her response was index to all her bitterness as she snarled her answer, "Who cares if my soul is lost?" (That is not precisely what she said, but she got her message across.) She was convinced there was not anyone who really cared one whit about her soul.

Then and there my sermon for the next morning was changed. As I tried as best I could to counsel her about the many who truly cared about her life and her spiritual

well-being, a new sermon began to take shape in my heart. As I pondered our conversation and prayed for her after she had left, I thought of the many millions who must have known something of her bitterness and desperation so as to cry out, "Who cares if my soul is lost?" This was to be the theme of my newly-planned sermon.

In response to the Lord's invitation, she came. Resentment had melted into tears of remorse, and rebellion had given way to repentance. I do not know if she has remained faithful over the years which have intervened. I only know she came to understand that there was someone who cared if her soul was lost, and that there are multitudes who will come to the Savior if we can only persuade them that Jesus knows and cares.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops. Be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:27-31)

The great God of the universe knows all about it when any sparrow is felled by snow or rain; and because I am of more value than many sparrows, He knows me and He is able to supply my need. His knowledge of me is so comprehensive that He even knows the number of the very hairs of my head. I am known of Him and valued of Him not just because of my physical person, however, but because of my eternal soul. Thus, our Lord saw fit to show forth man in his exalted state, in one hundred eighty degree opposition to the materialist whose belief is that we are purely physical. He further seeks to teach the universalist, whose belief is that none is going to be condemned, that it is possible for men to be lost in hell. "Only one is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is

able to save and to destroy" (James 4:12). Make no mistake; the righteous shall be saved, and the wicked shall be destroyed, and both shall be by the power and authority of the God who created us. Nevertheless, He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

### "NO MAN CARETH FOR MY SOUL"

David fled to Gath from before the jealous rage of Saul, after that the people had sung of David's storied exploits in battle. Feigning himself to be mad that he might find refuge, he later escaped to the cave of Adullam. It is thought to be here that the following words of his desperation were penned:

Look on my right hand and see;  
For there is no one that knoweth me:  
Refuge hath failed me;  
No man careth for my soul. (Psalms 142:4)

Today this same agonizing cry is being heard from across the land and around the world. Rising up from university campuses, the hard core of the inner city, and sprawling suburbia, the crescendo builds. In languages not understood by you and me and with words that do not fit upon our English-speaking tongues, this searching query will continue to roll like the mighty ocean's crashing tide until we take the time, and spend the money, and make the sacrifices, and travel the distances, and exploit every known means to let them know that someone cares if their souls are lost.

### TRUE FRIENDS CARE

Confucius is said to have declared that genuine friendships could be built only upon honorable relationships.

Any friendship that seeks to draw another away from high aims, morals, and ideals, is not friendship in the truest sense. No true friend of mine will put his bottle to me (Habakkuk 2:15); nor will he seek to cause me to dissipate my physical person in any way (I Corinthians 6:19-20). He will not cajole me into doing anything which would wound my conscience (I Corinthians 10:29), or cause me to compromise my morals (Proverbs 1:10-19).

We must not think of friendship solely as it affects us, but we must think of it in terms of our effect on others. I will not cause my friend to do that which will damn his soul; this is actually worse than to do that which would take his life.

Friendship not only follows the course of not doing the harmful, but it also gives itself positively to the teaching of our friends unto the salvation of their souls. The centurion Cornelius, upon learning that Peter would declare unto him words whereby he might be saved, made haste to call together his kinsmen and his near friends (Acts 10:34). He was indeed a friend, for he cared whether their souls were lost; he wanted them to enjoy the salvation he had been promised. Am I that kind of a friend? Or do I weakly excuse myself by saying I probably could not reach my kinsmen and near friends because they are "too close" for me to teach?

### LOVED ONES CARE

It was a matter of concern among New Testament Christians that one's husband, or wife, or children, or brothers, or parents might also become Christians. Such statements as "I could wish myself anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:3); "How knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O

husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" (I Corinthians 7:16); "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4); "If any obey not the word, they may be gained by the behavior of their wives" (I Peter 3:1) are clear statements of the import of our concern for our loved ones.

One cannot fail to smile fondly as he remembers the families he has helped become one in Christ. When I remember the tears of great joy and the warm and tender embraces between a husband and wife recently come to Jesus, it reminds me that loved ones truly care.

I have had a privilege relatively few men can ever hope to enjoy. It has been my joyous lot to take the confession of faith of each of our children, then to go down into the waters of baptism with them that God might there take away their sins. I can truly rejoice with parents who clasp a wet and trembling teenager to their breasts and offer prayers of thanksgiving to God that their own children have been saved.

Do not wait to speak that word of encouragement to your yet unsaved loved one. Let him know, lest it be too late. It is better to weep in joy at water's edge than to weep hopelessly at graveside.

### PREACHERS CARE

"God would have all men to be saved... Jesus gave himself a ransom for all... the testimony is to be borne... whereunto I am appointed a preacher" (I Timothy 2: 5-7). Link by link the chain is thus forged between God's desire that all men might be saved and Paul's appointment to be a preacher. Preaching has an undeniable place in God's great plan of salvation (I Corinthians 1:21), so long

as it is the preaching which God bids us preach (Jonah 3:2).

“How shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14). This searching question succinctly states the stark fact: someone must care enough to bear the testimony that Jesus gave himself a ransom for all.

The men who really care are preaching full time and encouraging others to do so full-time, part-time, or at least some of the time. No man starts to preach so that he can start to care; but because he does care, he preaches.

I am thankful for an increasingly large army of Christians who, armed with cottage meeting materials, are going forth to tell others. I am also thankful for those preachers who inspired them by word and deed to manifest their care for the lost of earth.

The reason a missionary like Glenn Owen goes into Brazil is that he cares for the lost there; the reason an evangelist like C. E. McGaughey packs his suitcase every week to go on to another area to proclaim Christ is that he cares for the souls of men.

No less noble is that band of gallant preachers who week by week pursue the single aim of the salvation of the lost in local congregations small and great throughout the land. I believe in them and in their care for the lost. They are the ones who push for the furtherance of the gospel, at home and abroad, becoming all things to all men that they might save some (I Corinthians 9:22).

I have fervently prayed that I might be able to say something in this hour that would strike the fire of evangelism into the heart of some young man that he might be unquenchable in his desire to be the preacher who cares, that someone else might be saved. I have no less fervently

prayed that every preacher and every Christian who hears might become burdened with an even greater passion for souls.

Once I heard a man preach, "Every time you look at me, I want you to think, 'There is a man who believes I am lost.'" Much depends on what is in a man's heart and what shows upon his countenance when he makes a statement like that. But people knew he cared, and he consequently led many a man to the Master.

God neither demands, nor expects, nor promises that every preacher will be a smashing success; but He does expect every man who accepts the mantle of the ministry of the gospel to try. The Spirit teaches that Noah was a "preacher of righteousness" (II Peter 2:5). But his success was that he reached his wife, his sons, and their wives. We all can do that much, only if we genuinely care.

### ELDERS CARE

Once a never-dying soul has been saved, this earnest care cannot cease, and has been ordained to continue in the hands of a select group of saints who "watch in behalf of souls" (Hebrews 13:17). These are the Elders of the churches. As surely as the Savior is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (I Peter 2:25; 5:4) and watches day and night before the throne of grace in our behalf, so these under-shepherds are deployed in a duty of pastoral care.

When an Elder calls upon a negligent Christian to urge him to be restored to duty and faithfulness, he is showing that he cares. When he stays up half the night to plan some necessary work in which Christians might be more actively involved, it is because he cares for their souls. When he takes the lead in asking that the church with-

draw itself from an impenitent brother who walks disorderly, care for that man's soul is the driving force. When he carefully weighs the import of a matter pertaining to the mundane business of the church, is he not even then exercising a watch in behalf of souls? When he bows his head in prayer at the side of a hospital bed to ask God to restore the sick, if it be His will, I believe he obviously cares for the soul of the man lying there. When he reads his Bible, and also keeps abreast of brotherhood problems and progress in the various journals, it is another manifestation of his care for the souls in his charge. Whenever he urges the church to help in sending a missionary to the field, or to preach the gospel by radio, campaign, or television, it tells of his care for the souls in his keeping, as well as the souls of those far away.

A good elder friend of mine once confided, "When I go to bed at night, I simply lay all my problems down on the floor beside my bed, along with my shoes. I can do that with every problem except those relating to the church, and these stay right up in the bed with me." He cared; he watched in behalf of souls; he knew he was going to give account.

### THE CHURCH CARES

An ancient adage opined, "Like priest, like people." A more current refinement has it, "Like pulpit, like pew." When those who are ministers of the gospel of Christ truly care, the church will care. The church in Antioch of Syria had an outstanding array of prophets and teachers, among them Barnabas and Saul, who ministered unto the Lord (Acts 13:1-2). The Holy Spirit directed that this church should separate Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto He had called them, and after fasting, prayer, and laying on of hands, the church sent them away. I believe this is a declaration of the care that the Church of

Christ in Antioch had for the souls of men and women in the Mediterranean World.

Upon their return to Antioch many months later, having fulfilled their assigned work, Barnabas and Saul gathered the church together to let them know that a door of faith had been opened unto the Gentiles. These men knew the church cared, else they would not have been sent forth to preach; they knew the church would want to know what had been done by God's grace; they doubtless believed the church would want to do more when they had heard what had been done.

Give the church where you worship a chance to show that it cares for the souls of the lost, and it will respond. It can show its care in many ways, not the least of which is the gospel meeting. Gospel meetings are not dead nor inadequate. We know of one church which worked six weeks before the meeting and ten days during the meeting, spent nearly \$3,000, and baptized 86 people. (Most of our churches do not care quite that much and are satisfied with fewer souls.) Another congregation has at least two dozen people actively engaged in teaching from house to house. Still another church sends a large group to the county jail each week to teach prisoners in a given cell block. At least two congregations among us have shouldered the burden of responsibility for world-wide radio programs. Yet another church of Christ stays busy with "campaign" work which has reached international proportions. Two sizeable, healthy, evangelistic, and responsible churches in Fort Worth are in the process of merging forces that the newly formed congregation might have the personnel and economic power to reach regions in a way that the two, as separate groups, could not accomplish. And we could go on and on.

The pulpits in churches of Christ must resound with sound sermons exposing error and must reverberate with

strong sermons against every form of evil that condemns men's souls. Filthy movies, dirty stage shows, suggestive television programs, and pornographic literature should raise the ire of every righteous Christian so that in word and in deed he determines to show a more excellent way.

May our Lord give us the desire, the determination, and the drive to have all mankind know that we are not only "the church," but that we are "the church that cares."

### THE HOLY SPIRIT CARES

We have long been taught the wonderful truths that God purposed the salvation of mankind, that Christ secured it in the blood of His cross, and that the Holy Spirit revealed it that all might have obedient faith. Certainly this tells us in a most majestic way that the Holy Spirit cares if our souls are lost. If He had not cared, He would not have taken the trouble to let us know about it.

It was no coincidence that Luke, who recorded that the church sent Barnabas and Saul away on the first missionary journey, also recorded that it was the Holy Spirit which "sent them forth" (Acts 13:4). There can be no doubt that the Holy Spirit had a personal part in sending Barnabas and Saul to preach to the Gentiles. Specifically, He cared for the Gentiles in Asia Minor, as He did for the Jews on Pentecost.

Additionally, the Holy Spirit has a very special concern about the Christian, in whom He dwells.

Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body. (I Corinthians 6:19-20)

He therefore makes intercession for me "with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26), which intercession is "according to the will of God" (Romans 8:27).

There is but one mediator between man and God (I Timothy 2:5), and the Holy Spirit cannot serve me in that capacity which only Christ can fill. He can, however, intercede, and does so. Only the Savior could make the offering of His blood, by which I can approach the throne to entreat God for pardon from my sins as His child. But the Holy Spirit takes up my part as one who, though unable to pay the price of my forgiveness, still desires to stand by my side in the hour of prayer. He utters that which I cannot utter.

The Scriptures do not teach us that, the word having been confirmed, we shall be able to perform the miraculous, but they do speak plainly of God's having given the Spirit to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32), and of the intercession of the Spirit in the Christian's prayers.

So let us lift up our heads and our voices and tell our religious friends very certainly of our faith in the Holy Spirit and how He truly cares whether our souls are lost.

## GOD CARES

The Word of God is a continuing, unfolding, developing account of God's intricate design for the salvation of my soul. From the creation of man, to the development of the races, to the formation of the one nation of which Messiah was to come, to the providential care of that people, to its Law and types and shadows, to their splendor as an international power, to their destruction and captivity, to their return to their own land, to the coming of the virgin-born Son of God, to that dark hour when Jehovah gave His Son upon the cross on Golgotha, it is all divinely

given that I might have some concept of the eternal love of God for my soul. It is all wrapped up in the death of the righteous "seed of woman," for the unrighteous "seed of Adam."

God cared when His only begotten cried out in the throes of bitter pain and anguish, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). Only a father can know how these tearful words tenderly touched the infinite love of His eternal heart.

More than fourteen years have passed since our eldest daughter, now a graceful and talented college junior, was suddenly taken ill. I shall never forget the Fall afternoon when I reached into the rear seat of our car and lifted the stricken little body of our first grader into my arms and made my way carefully up the flight of stairs which led to the office of our pediatrician.

A number of tests were made, the results of which were indicative, but inconclusive. He feared she had poliomyelitis, and asked my permission to make a spinal tap that he might rule out everything else. They bathed her little back, and painted it red with merthiolate, then told me I was to hold her bent taut and still across my chest. Even now I can hear her cry, "Daddy, daddy, daddy, please don't let them hurt me!" The precious spinal fluid dripped through the needle, and our fears were confirmed in the conclusive test. In time she recovered, and we shall ever be thankful to a merciful Providence.

And I shall always be thankful for the great love of my God and His willingness to see His Son suffer and die that I might live.

## JESUS CARES

To say that God cares is also to say that Jesus cares

if my soul is lost, for He was the willing sacrificial Lamb of God. He emptied himself.

Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement of our peace was upon him; And with his stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5)

Isaac Watt's noble verse makes it possible for us to give expression of our praise for the care of our gracious Redeemer. We know the verse as the hymn, "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross," and our spiritual lives have been made richer in the singing of it and meditation upon it.

The Holy Spirit used the words of the Apostle Paul to frame the truth as follows:

Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all that obey him the author of eternal salvation. (Hebrews 5:8-9)

### DO YOU CARE

All the great forces of time and eternity which have worked together for the salvation of your soul have now come squarely upon you. You are the one who must now accept or reject, believe or disbelieve, obey or disobey. What, therefore, began as your question, must end with your decision. What shall it be?

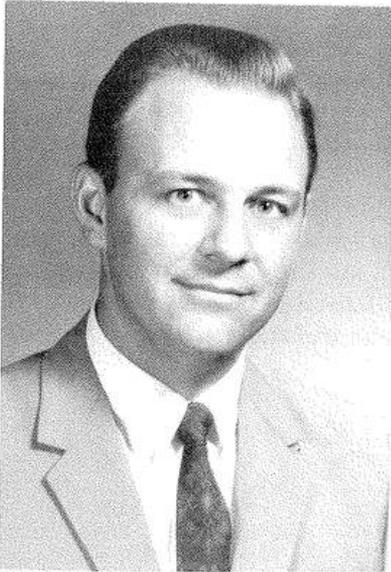
## IF CHRIST REALLY CAME

Jess H. Hall, Jr.

Jess Hall, Jr. is the preacher for the Green Lawn church in Lubbock, Texas. He is serving now in his second year with the church which serves as the campus congregation for Lubbock Christian College. During his first year with Green Lawn some 56 people were baptized into Christ.

Jess is a native of Fort Worth, Texas. He was born August 23, 1936. His father Jess Hall, Sr., is also a gospel preacher and has served churches in Texas, Kentucky, and Michigan. Brother Hall received his B.A. degree from David Lipscomb College, and in addition he has attended Abilene Christian College and Texas Tech. He is married to the former Millie Sue Brown, whose father is an elder in the Central church, Birmingham, Alabama. They have two children, Jessalyn Sue, age 8, and Eric Brinn, age 5.

Since his graduation from Lipscomb, Jess has served three congregations in addition to Green Lawn: Sunny Slope, Paducah, Kentucky; Dix Road, Jefferson City, Missouri; and Riverside, Fort Worth, Texas. In addition to his preaching he taught school for three years in Kentucky.



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One of the greatest weaknesses of man is that he tends to take so many things for granted. Those acts which are often repeated seem to decrease in the importance which they have for us. It has been truly said that familiarity breeds contempt and I think we might safely say that familiarity is *expert* at breeding contempt.

In an age when children freely discuss interplanetary travel, it no longer makes news when a satellite is orbited it has become so commonplace. A number of years ago, you will remember the alarm that swept the world when we learned that Russia had put into orbit Sputnik I. Newspapers, radio reporters, TV commentators, and news analysts around the world rushed to their different media to proclaim to the world that something new had come. But, you see, after a number of these had been orbited, we lost our interest and we just took it for granted that another day would bring another satellite put into the heavens.

But then something different happened again. It was announced that Russia had sent up a satellite and inside of it was a man, and the news media of the world had another field day. Now this is commonplace, and instead of being excited, instead of being thrilled, instead of realizing that we are watching history in the making, we grumble and we groan because our favorite television program, perhaps our favorite daytime serial, has been preempted in order for us to see live from Cape Kennedy the launching of a space ship with Americans on board.

I suppose that if little green men from another planet were to visit the earth today, the news media again would have a field day and it would be broadcast far and near. But I am also convinced that if these men came with increasing frequency it would not be long until we would be seeking to arrange inter-planetary football games and tourist travel would boom as we sought to go to the world from whence they came.

Yes, one of man's greatest weaknesses is taking for granted the wonders of the world that God created and that man through God-given ability has discovered. But while this is bad, the greatest tragedy of all is that man takes for granted the greatest wonder of the world's history—

the coming of Jesus Christ into it.

John describes the coming of Jesus on this wise:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men and the light shined in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness to bear witness of the light that all men through Him might believe. He was not the light, but he came to bear witness of the light. That was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, but the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, but His own received him not. But to as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of the will of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of Grace and Truth." (John 1:1-14)

If this be true, if Christ really came, His coming is of the greatest importance for humanity. May I suggest four thoughts in this connection.

In the first place if Christ really came there must have been a great reason. God's history, both old and new, reveals unto us that, for every crisis which has arisen in God's dealing with humanity, God has been able to raise up an instrument equal to the task. On one occasion it might have been that God raised up a judge who would sit over Israel and judge Israel and deliver Israel from oppression. On another occasion it might be that God raised up a mighty warrior, perhaps like David, to smite a Goliath, to lead Israel into battle, to deliver God's people. On another occasion it might be a prophet. When the

trend of the nation of Israel was downward, God would send among His people a prophet, who, through his fiery denunciations, would change spiritual shallowness into spiritual fervor. On rare occasions when it seemed that no man was equal to the task, God would send an angel, and the angel, as the messenger of God, would do what needed to be done. But on one occasion, the crisis was so great and the need was so extreme that neither the best of men nor the highest of angels could suffice. There was a crisis in heaven that demanded such extreme action that only God could do anything about it and so God the Father sent God the Son into the world.

If Christ really came to this world, if the need was so great, there must have been a great purpose, and therefore it is logical that we seek the purpose for which Christ came. We don't have to look far, for in Luke 19:10 the Lord tells us why He came to the earth: "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost." Jesus came into the earth because man needed to be saved. In Romans 3: 23 the apostle Paul tells us that "We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God," and this being so it was impossible for man to do what needed to be done. There was not a man who had not sinned, who could deliver those who had sinned. Someone might ask, "Why not send an angel?" Simply because an angel could not give unto fallen man, sinful man, what man needed more than anything else. Man needed salvation and angels could not give it. Man needed the forgiveness of sin, and angels could not deliver it. Man needed to be remade in the divine nature which had been marred by the sins of Adam and the sins which he himself had committed and only Jesus Christ could enable us to become partakers of the divine nature. Yes, if Christ really came, there must have been, and there was, a great purpose. But if we stop here, we fail to really comprehend the entirety of the purpose of God. For the purpose of God in sending Jesus Christ was not only to lift us up out of sin, but the purpose of

God in sending Jesus Christ was also to continue that lifting power until we had been lifted into the very embrace of Almighty God.

The poet described it this way:

There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin.  
He only could unlock the gates of heaven and let us in.

And how true that is. If Christ really came there was a great purpose and that purpose is found in the fact that you and I are sinners and we need to be delivered from our sins and become again partakers of the divine nature.

In the second place, if Christ really came, how great was His love. I think we ought never to forget that Jesus Christ could see the cross from the cradle. I think we ought never to forget that He who came to Bethlehem knew that the road which led away from Bethlehem eventually would lead to Calvary. I do not doubt but that this knowledge weighed heavily upon the heart of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ knew that He would die. He knew the method by which He would die, and I am convinced that this was one of the greatest temptations that the devil had to get Jesus to sin. "If you will bow down and worship me, you will not have to go to the cross." And we must know that the human nature of Jesus Christ recoiled from the agony and the pain that needs must be endured on that day. He often spoke of it with his disciples: "And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed and after three days rise again." Mark 8:31. Yet in spite of the increasing bitterness toward him, in spite of the sure realization He must have had that the day was drawing nigh, in spite of the crescendo of events in the last days and weeks of His life, and in spite of the hatred which became thicker and thicker, Jesus continued as if

these things did not exist. His every act continued to be an outpouring of wonderful manifestations of His marvelous love. Every miracle that He performed, every sermon that He preached, every word and every deed of His ministry until the very end thereof was a manifestation of His love for you and for me. We see Jesus Christ as He lifted the little children into His arms and they loved to be lifted. We see Him as He walked down the way and touched the untouchable lepers, and they never forgot that moment. We see Jesus Christ as He brought heaven to homes and peace to troubled hearts because He loved man, because He loved you and He loved me.

Indeed as we think of the great love that Jesus showed if He really came, is there any adequate way that we can describe it. Is it within the human mentality and capacity to understand the love of God. I think not. When Nansen, the Arctic explorer, was searching for the North Pole, he discovered one day that his boat had come to very deep water and so he told the men to plumb its depths and see how deep the water was. They took the plumb line and they dropped it over the side of the ship, but it would not reach the bottom. They brought it up. The next day they tied on more line and dropped it over the side and it went down to the end thereof, but still it didn't reach the bottom. They brought it back up on board the ship and the next day Nansen commanded that every bit of rope and yarn on the boat be brought and tied together, and in one great string they lowered it all over the side and still it did not reach the bottom. When Nansen went back to the log of his ship, he noted the latitude and the longitude, he noted the length of his plumb line and said concerning the depth of the water, "deeper than that." What better description could be given of the love of God. Say of it what you will, describe it how you might, when you have finished, the only thing which can be said is, "It is deeper than that." I think the words of the poet Whittier may have summed it up rather well:

Through all the depth of sin and loss  
 Drops the plummet of the cross.  
 Never yet abyss was found  
 Deeper than the cross could sound.

And so the love of Jesus Christ dropped down to the very depths of sin and will raise the sinners therefrom because Jesus loved them and died for them.

In the third place, if Christ really left heaven, if Christ really came to earth, how great is man's opportunity. A possible objection might be that while this was true for Christ's day, it is not so for those of us so far removed. In moments of nostalgia when we are not thinking, we say, "Oh, I just wish that I could have lived when Jesus lived. If I could have walked the dusty roads of Palestine with Jesus. If I could have sat at His feet and listened to the sermons which He preached. If I could have just seen the miracles that He performed. If I could have been at Lazarus' house when his lifeless body was raised from the dead, how wonderful it would have been." It's a sentiment expressed by many. Even the poets have expressed it. One of them wrote:

I think when I read the sweet story of old  
 When Jesus was here among men.  
 How He called little children as lambs to His fold  
 I should like to have been with Him then.  
 I wish that His hands had been placed on my head,  
 That His arms had been thrown around me.  
 And that I might have seen His kind look when He said,  
 "Let the little ones come unto me."

Yes, in moments of nostalgia we are attracted by the sentiment, but if Christ really came and if Christ was really whom He claimed to be, then surely we must believe that Jesus Christ spoke the truth in John 16:7 when He turned to His disciples and said, "It is expedient for you that I go away." I just know that the disciples had a difficult time in understanding that. "Why, Lord? Why

must you go away? We love you, we love your company, and we need you Lord. We'll fall apart and we'll be no good without you. How in the world can it be expedient for you to go away and to leave us?" Jesus continued, "For if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you." When Jesus lived upon the earth, His physical presence was confined to one point in time and space, just like your physical presence and mine are. It was impossible for Jesus' physical body to be in two places at the same time. Therefore, Jesus said, "It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go I will send the comforter unto you." And the Holy Spirit who has come into the world, who lives and abides in those who are God's children is able to be everywhere at the same time and for those who believe in Jesus Christ we believe that through the Spirit the incarnate Word is now the omnipresent Savior and so if Christ really came, how great is man's opportunity. Why? Because Jesus came, Jesus returned, Jesus sent the Spirit and now by the Spirit, wherever men are they have the privilege of drawing nigh unto Jesus Christ.

Let me assume that I had lived in the days of Jesus. Jesus never wandered very far from the place of His birth. What if I had lived outside the geographical circle where Jesus lived and moved? I could not have drawn nigh unto Jesus. But today how great is my opportunity, for I do not have to go unto Palestine to draw near unto Him, but I can draw nigh unto Him in Abilene or Africa, Lubbock or London. I can draw nigh unto Him now in this building, I can draw nigh unto Him tonight when I go to bed, I can draw nigh unto Him in the morning, Lord willing, when I rise up and I can walk with Jesus, and countless thousands of people throughout the length and breadth of the land, wherever they may be, may draw nigh unto the Son of God. Yes, if Christ really came how great is the opportunity of man.

But then in the fourth place, if Christ really came—

but how can I know if Christ really came? How can I know that Christ left heaven, that Christ came to earth, that Christ was what He claimed to be—the Son of God?

Some in answering the question would say, "Well, look at the calendar. It's divided into B.C. and A.D.—before Christ and in the year of our Lord or after Christ. His birth and His life stand central in the history of the world. All the years preceding the coming of Jesus Christ looked forward to his coming and all the years since the coming of Jesus Christ look backward at that coming." Certainly that's so. No one has made an impact upon the world like Jesus Christ has made. You take out of the world everything that refers to Jesus Christ and you take away immediately much of the great music and the great art and the great architecture that the world has ever seen. It would be a barren sphere without Christ and all the things that pertain to Him and relate to Him.

Another man in answering the question would say, "Well, look at the writings of the historians. I read them and I find in them references which though scanty are adequate enough to convince me that a man by the name of Jesus Christ really lived and walked and talked in Palestine."

But I believe that a man who is asking that question today is a man who has considered these evidences and who, for his purposes, has found them lacking and is looking yet for something else in addition to these things, or beyond these things. How can I know that Christ really came? I believe with all of my heart that the greatest evidence that Jesus Christ came into this world, that He was who He said He was, that He was indeed Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God, is to be found in the power that Jesus left which changes the hearts and the lives of men: the power that Jesus gave that is able to lift the drunkard out of the gutter and to set him on his way as

a firm citizen in the community and in the kingdom of God, the power that is able to cast out the devil of filthy thought from the minds of man, the power that Jesus left inherent in His Word, which is able to cast out the demon of filthy language and make a man pure in mind and pure in speech.

The best way to vindicate the veracity of the statements of Jesus Christ is to put the promises of Jesus Christ to the test. You know I've thought how foolish it would be for me to extend an invitation and say to mankind, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I, Jess Hall, I will give you rest." I would be afraid to offer an invitation like that. I would be afraid to extend it because I would be afraid that somebody might respond and I would not be able to give it. As a preacher, I might be able to offer counsel for a troubled heart. If I were wealthy, I might be able to give money. If I owned vast housing estates, I might be able to offer you a place to live, but no man, no man can offer and no man can give rest because rest is something that pertains to the soul. No company manufactures it, and you cannot buy it in any store for any amount of money, and yet this is just the invitation that Jesus Christ extends. "Come unto me," said Christ "all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I, Christ, will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." And I say unto you that Jesus Christ is able to perform that which he has promised and I challenge you to put Jesus Christ to the test. Do you need rest for your soul? The answer must be yes! Where will you find rest for your soul? The answer is you will find it in Jesus Christ. And thanks be unto God that this is exactly what hundreds, yea thousands, of people throughout the length and the breadth of this world have done. And now they are able to say:

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'Come unto me and rest;

Lay down thou weary one,  
Lay down thy head upon my breast.'  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
Weary and worn and sad;  
I found in Him a resting place,  
And He has made me glad.

Jesus can make you glad — glad in the reception of the forgiveness of your sins, in the salvation of your souls, in the hope of life eternal, if you will come to Him now.

## CHRIST AND MODERN MAN

James R. Wilburn

James R. Wilburn began preaching twenty years ago while he was a student at Abilene Christian College, and has served several churches, including those in Wisconsin, where for five years he helped begin several new works, in Winters, Texas, and most recently in Wichita Falls, Texas, where he began with the initial six years at the Midwestern University Bible Chair, under the oversight of the 10th and Broad Church of Christ. His father, James O. Wilburn, is a gospel preacher, as was his grandfather, C. C. Morgan, who spoke on the Abilene Christian College Lectureship thirty years ago.

Wilburn has produced two sets of filmstrips, used by over 3,000 congregations, and has authored two books: *Leadership for Christ in the Local Church*, and the *Life of Tolbert Fanning*. The former book has been used by over 10,000 men in local training programs and has been required reading in classes to train church leaders and preachers in five Christian colleges. He has also served as co-editor of the *Bible Chair Journal*.



In addition to the B.A. and M.A. in Bible and Church History from Abilene Christian College, Wilburn holds an M.A. in History from Midwestern University and currently is in a Ph.D. program at the University of California in Los Angeles, in the History department. His wife, nee Vivian Taylor, is also an ex-student of Abilene Christian College; their two children, Susan and Gregory, are 13 and 10 years of age.

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Historians have long delighted in studying the characteristics of a particular period of time and then devising some quaint, catchy phrase which seems best to echo the sounds peculiar to that age. There was, according to some, the "Age of Enlightenment" and the "Age of Reason." There were the economic discrepancies of the "Gay Nineties" and the apparent moral breakdown of the "Roaring Twenties." The sons of the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries thought of themselves as especially modern and superciliously and erroneously dubbed the preceding centuries, "The Dark Ages." Theirs, of course, they called the age of re-awakening, the "Renaissance."

Such phrase-making is not new. Paul surveyed the Mediterranean world in his own day and was impressed that God was at work, feverishly preparing for the coming of Christ. He called it the "fulness of time."<sup>1</sup>

Our age has already earned from serious students of history such foreboding designations as the "Age of Despair." W. H. Auden, the contemporary poet, calls ours the "Age of Anxiety" and a paper-back book which currently is breaking sales records in many college bookstores is entitled *Man Alone*. Its essays, by a dozen modern writers—Eric Fromm, Karl Marx, Ignazio Silone, the incisive Negro intellectual James Baldwin, the Russian novelist Dostoevski, and the American surveyor of corporate life, William Whyte—all conclude with alarming monotony that modern man is "Alienated from nature, from his gods, and from society." In an increasingly mechanized, atomized, and depersonalized world "he is unable to achieve an identity and a relatedness to others."<sup>2</sup>

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1 Galatians 4:4.

2 Eric and Mary Josephson (eds.), *Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1966).

*Causes for Despair*

There is much about modern life which bends man to a cowering posture of despair. In a world already weighted by enough nuclear bombs to equal ten tons of T.N.T. for every individual man, woman, and child on earth, where ten nations will soon have the power to destroy life as we know it with the push of a button from the thumb of a madman, there is the sickening possibility for mass suicide.

Man's feelings of futility are caused in no small part by one of Western Civilization's proudest monuments—the Industrial Revolution. The same forces which, through massive spending and government spurring of the economy, make possible the super-highways on which you may have driven to be here, also demand a bigness in government and business which is harshly freighted with hazards for individual value and worth.

Then, too, to a far greater extent than we realize, our beliefs and attitudes are accommodated to the needs and the goals of the industrial mechanism which, through mass psychology and subtle advertising, pressures us to buy, eat, dress, and even think, in such a way as to enhance corporate profits.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps none of us knows who within him would respond if he were suddenly commanded, "Will the *real* you please stand up!" Of what value am I and what difference do I make in a world where I exercise such negligible control?

Another threat to man's security has been his move from the country to the city. Here he is cut off from the message of nature from which Jesus drew so many illustrations, and which gave the Psalmist of the Old Testament

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<sup>3</sup> John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1967).

such tremendous grasp upon God. A. D. Nock of Harvard describes modern man as one who is far removed from his food supply. Solomon sounds amazingly like a 1967 intellectual, in rebellion against the concrete and steel claws of urbanized, mobilized, industrialized society, when he cries, "All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied."<sup>4</sup>

The disparity between the rich and the poor also appears to be an unbridgeable gap for modern man. And as the instigator of most modern wars, the disparity is growing. The aggravating truth is that even after two decades of massive foreign aid to underprivileged nations, America now has ten percent more food per person and the poorer nations have people who are now hungrier and poorer per capita than they were a decade ago. The combustibility of humans in such want is great, and virtue finds it difficult to grow in such staggering misery.

Strange as it may seem, even man's growing storehouse of knowledge is partly to blame for his sickness. As his technological knowledge gallops ahead, doubling every ten years, he faces the problem of even storing his discovered data in some internationally expedient way, thus to await some future generation to try to evaluate its implications.

Not the least cause of man's despair is the threat posed by the most rapid change which mankind has yet experienced. Before a new machine can be put into production it is obsolete. The inevitable advance of the tide of chaos and the relentless dissolution of cherished traditions has caused one poor soul to cry out, "Everything fastened down is coming loose!"

Many of these changes have frightening implications for

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4 Ecclesiastes 6:7.

man's moral bulwarks. Almost every magazine now hits the news-stands with an article about the effect of "the pill" on the "sex revolution." When Huxley's "Brave new world" seems alarmingly possible, many of the time-worn, cob-webbed, easy answers too often appear as splintered cliches under the complex pressures of an atom-splitting society. Because much of the past speaks to modern man only as a stranger from a distant shore, multitudes have been persuaded to throw away Christian morality, tragically casting out the baby with the wash-water, only to learn through broken lives that man's creator knows him better than he knows himself.

Others, though fanatically and vocally certain of their standards, have discovered late in life that their neat system of values has collapsed. Willie Loman, the hero of Arthur Miller's play, *The Death of a Salesman*, stressed for both himself and for his red-blooded, all-American sons, that what really counted in life was "to get ahead." Ambition, drive, and resourcefulness were the key qualities. The movie based on Miller's play is now making the late night movies on T.V. and many of you will recall that Willie Loman's company, to meet changing needs, changed its policies late in his life and discarded him as superfluous. This modern man, who found his meaning in life by joining the American success cult, found that his standards led only to suicide. Such is the tragic picture of modern man.

#### *Ways Men React to Despair*

Whatever modern man is, like all men he is free to react to pressures. But his reactions are varied. They run the gamut from those who retreat or those who lash out, to those who simply talk about their despair or commit themselves to simplistic panaceas.

And there is even more than one way to retreat from life's despair. Most of us are acquainted with the more

likely channels of mental breakdown or alcohol. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of the hippie's LSD is not its physiological hazard, but its manifestation of an attitude toward life which has decided to "tune in," "turn on," but then "drop out"—to retreat from life—to run away.

Others retreat from this cruel puzzle they cannot put together by searching for the novel, the new, and the different: a new thrill, a new hobby, a new illicit love affair in another city, a new job, a new intellectual fad. In fact, the real failure of the agnostic and the nihilist is their negative reaction to life's realities. The agnostic seldom harms one's faith. He does refuse to be responsible. It is so much more convenient to go through life gathering evidence, asking questions, and postponing decisions, than it is to commit oneself to the risk involved in faith.

Still others retreat by immersing themselves in compulsive work. We know them as the fast risers in their corporations. The truth is that they work ceaselessly because if they stop to ask why they are working, life's meaninglessness will suffocate them. They are so enamored with getting the gold ring on the merry-go-round that they do not hear the beautiful music. Nor do they realize that even if they succeed, all they are entitled to is another ride on the same merry-go-round.

This retreat from life's basic issues is all the more enigmatic if it is given the imprimatur of religion. Most tragic of all is the fact that the church, including us preachers, may run away from the really difficult issues of life for which the world seeks solutions, by permitting ourselves to be swept up into a whirlwind of mere busy work. Organizational drudgery offers a way to work out feelings of guilt. Setting a new record in attendance can become ultimate, eclipsing genuine creative religious action. When church members go to church, where the search should be aided, too often they find that involvement in trivia makes

the search for purpose in life seem even more desperate. Some begin to suspect that the search itself is pointless when even church activity leads further into the maze of life's superficiality.

But while some retreat from the battles of life, there are others who react to life's despair by frantically lashing out against whatever they can use as a whipping boy for their frustrations and fears. With vocal violence, some react by saying, "So what if we burn down our own neighborhoods? At least you will know how deeply we hurt!"

The new student left, with its lawlessness and lack of respect for others, is a good example. Or, just as senseless, the radical right which lashes out against its neighbor, looking for a Communist behind every class-room door, assassinating character and slandering the innocent. The phenomenon always appears in times of rapid change. Jesus had to assure even his own disciples that his new vocabulary did not mean that he came to "destroy," but to fulfill. It is with pity that we watch those whose lives find purpose only in their frantic crucifying of others.

One preacher told of a dog he had when he was a boy. He was his best friend and went everywhere with him. But one day when he got tangled in a barbed wire fence and became painfully afraid, he bit his master when he tried to free him. Sometimes, when we hurt very deeply and are frozen with fright by things we do not understand, our frantic desperation leads us to lash out with little logical concern about whom we hurt. It is possible that even in our efforts to guard the truth we may forget the command of our Lord, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." In a time of despair and fear, such illogical and destructive reactions seem always to come, and unfortunately they are not limited to the college campus.

Then there is the self-appointed Messiah who reacts to

life's despair with the simplistic panacea—the big idea—the one all-encompassing scheme which will make everything right. There have been those who look at man's predicament and declare that education is the answer. Others suggest some political or economic plan. But even experienced men in the State Department, through many years of all types of foreign aid, have concluded that a renovated way of thinking on the part of individuals must come first.<sup>5</sup> A further demonstration of the failure of such schemes was the promise of one leading educator several decades ago who claimed that if we could give every youngster in America a high school education we would eradicate juvenile delinquency. We have virtually done what he advised, yet the problems he promised to solve remain to haunt us.

Significantly, Germany—the nation from which we borrowed the Ph.D. degree and the nation from which the main streams of intellectual movements have come to America; the nation which boasted the finest universities on earth and the most educated populace—gave birth to and stood all too silent before a Hitler. Many of the professors in the German universities were embarrassingly silent. When man is in the depths of despair, as the Treaty of Versailles left Central Europe after World War I, he is vulnerable to the simplistic panacea and the Messianic patriot who exploits fear and builds on suspicion.

But we need to give the lie to the notion that mere education makes people moral. One of the obvious needs served by a school like Abilene Christian College is demonstrated by the fact that mere knowledge is morally neutral and education in the hands of unregenerate people can simply provide more sophisticated weapons with which to inflict hate.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Lewis P. Fickett, Jr. (ed.), *Problems of the Developing Nations* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1966), p. 17.

Science has also made promises which it has not been able to deliver. The astronaut may appear super-human on the T.V. screen, but he, too, is man as well as modern. At home he still must carry out the garbage. At work he must be concerned about the way he looks at his secretary. When he tucks his son into bed, he must wonder what in the world he can tell him there is that is worth dying for.

While some react to despair by retreating, some by lashing out frantically and senselessly, some by fanatic commitment to a simplistic panacea, there are others who react by simply expressing their despair. Picasso, the Spanish artist who has become almost synonymous not only with modern art but with modern man, stands back and with genius creates a gigantic nightmare on canvas. With an eye in one corner and an ear in another and a mouth which is gruesome to behold, the picture is not senseless. The artist is saying that life appears senseless and ugly. Sometimes he does not even bother with form at all but simply belches up color and casts onto the canvas the carmine red of the blood of children butchered by an atomic explosion. His deep blues and somber greens tell of the depression of modern man. The artist today is painting not what he sees but what he feels—not a landscape but a soulscape.

The modern musician, too, using a completely new scale, may grind one note against another so that it hurts the ear. He is saying that life is dissonant. Into a series of neat four-four measures of rather nice music the Beatles will unexpectedly throw a three-four measure and then suddenly change keys in an effort to make the same comment on life. The novelist and the short story writer follow suit with wearisome predictability. The lonely crowd—William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, and Scott Fitzgerald—the young men who went off to fight Woodrow Wilson's grand battle to end all war and to make the world safe for democracy, afterward found themselves, like all their

generation, extremely disillusioned. They became convinced, along with the rising existential philosophers, that life was out of joint and uglier than even they had suspected.

The modern stage, right up to some of the most recent of Albee's productions in the "theater of the absurd," is filled with the din of despair. Someone asked Tennessee Williams about his plays: "What's the matter, don't you know anyone nice to write about?" And the answer of modern man surely is, "If there is anything nice and beautiful, I have not found it—yet."

But man, even modern man, is not built to live without answers. No way of life can survive the inevitable winter winds if there is no beauty and no faith to follow doubt. James Thurber has asked, "How long can the needle of the human gramophone stay in the rut of *Angst* (anxiety, anguish) without wearing out and ending in the repetition of a ghoulish gibbering?"<sup>6</sup>

And so the modern poet and artist have given us a series of variations on what Kenneth Hamilton describes as "A cry that has steadily grown more shrill in each decade; a long lament over the loss of man's wholeness; and a running commentary on the stages of his disintegration."<sup>7</sup> But wise men find reason to rejoice in this dreariness. When man begins seriously to ask the right questions, and he most surely is doing that today, then he may be nearer than ever before to a really meaningful encounter with Christ. When T. S. Eliot, in his epoch-making poem, "The Waste-Land," describes the handiwork of modern man as "rubbish," he is strangely reminiscent of a poet of another day, the Psalmist, who, yearning for God,

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6 Wylie Sypher, *Loss of the Self in Modern Literature and Art* (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 6.

7 Kenneth Hamilton, *In Search of Contemporary Man* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1967), p. 15.

described his surroundings as "a dry and thirsty land where no water is."<sup>8</sup> We should remember that it was in the depths of despair, as the prophets of Israel saw economic discrepancies wedded to a bankrupt morality and sanctified by hireling religious professionals, that God led his messengers to see him most clearly as the suffering God. (The difference, of course, between those prophets and the Social Gospeler of the early 1900's, was the fact that while economic discrepancy forced valid questions upon both, the Old Testament prophets understood that man's problem was alienation from God rather than a faltering economy. And modern man is best seen as man without God rather than man without a job. In fact, the largest chapters of Alcoholics Anonymous are to be found not among the poor but in the favorite haunts of the jet-set—the fat and affluent resort suburbs of the U. S.)

### *Christ and Modern Man*

But what happens when Christ does confront modern man? To begin with, man becomes suddenly aware that anxiety is, after all, ageless. (The current college folk-singer should be reminded that he is not the first generation to be born into a world where there is pain not of his making.) Even the modern threats to man's security are really only conduits into a deep reservoir of anxiety which is basic to the human predicament. In what some believe to be the oldest piece of literature in the Bible, the author of Job wrote,

Man that is born of a woman is of few days,  
and full of trouble.  
He comes forth like a flower, and withers;  
he flees like a shadow, and continues not.<sup>9</sup>

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8 Psalms 63:1.

9 Job 14:1-2.

Long before Shakespeare described life as "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing," the author of Ecclesiastes concluded that all is a striving after the wind. "Vanity of vanities" the broken record repeats. "All is vanity and a striving after the wind."

The psychologist might be tempted to blame repressed aggression for man's despair. The anthropologist might suggest that one day man the animal stopped to ask about his origin, his purpose, and his destiny, and from that moment of self-awareness he doomed himself to despair. Yet the anthropologist fails to explain why man asked such ultimate questions to begin with. And it is just here, when man has gone as far as he can go, that the Bible is most incisive in its diagnosis. The Bible says that man was created for fellowship with God—in God's image. The word of God reveals that man is incomplete if God, the ground of his being and the origin of his life, is not a part of him. God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . ." So "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female he created them."<sup>10</sup>

The Bible also says that it was the removal of Jehovah from the God-shaped void in man which came with man's rebellion. It was the inevitable product of his pride, his self-centeredness, his choosing of *his* way rather than *God's* way. Isaiah wrote,

Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot  
save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear;  
but your iniquities have made a separation  
between you and your God,  
and your sins have hid his face from you  
so that he does not hear.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Genesis 1:26-27.

<sup>11</sup> Isaiah 59:1-2.

Man the creature of despair is man the sinner. Man the victim of anxiety is man separated from God. Man alienated from the world and from his neighbor is man at enmity with his Maker.

Sigmund Freud said that "man wants to be loved" more than anything else in the world. Carl Jung, his successor, said that more than anything man "wants to feel secure." Adler believed that "Man wants to feel significant." Perhaps even better than these, however, was Karen Horney's statement that "Man wants to be God." That is the message of Genesis. In the Garden of Eden, at the altar of Cain and Abel, in the tragedy of the flood, and the heartache of the tower of Babel, the author, a holy man of God, moved by the Holy Spirit, is spotlighting the source of man's predicament. Man demands to replace God as the supreme will of his life, and it is this second will which alienates man not only from the person of God, but from other persons as well. This message of the Bible is not outdated. Modern man hungers to know it as much as man in any previous age.

But what of the solution to man's basic dilemma of separation? Here, too, the Bible is both explicit and dependable.

The message of the Gospel of Christ begins not with man but with God. It was he who took the initiative and accepted sinful man, not on his merits, not after he had asked for forgiveness, but "While we were yet sinners," Paul says, "Christ died for us."<sup>12</sup> Just as I am, I come to God. I come as one who is broken, sinful, blind, sick, and despondent—without one redeeming quality to my name—and he *accepts* me.

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<sup>12</sup> Romans 5:8.

How the world needs that gospel of God's love and acceptance. If there is anything which characterizes modern man, it is a stifling sense of guilt.<sup>13</sup> The couches of psychiatrists are filled with men burdened by a sense of guilt, unaware that at Calvary, God accepted them as they are. So many times we fail to accept ourselves even after God has forgiven us. But the Bible says,

Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.  
But he was wounded for our transgressions,  
he was bruised for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,  
and with his stripes we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned every one to his own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.<sup>14</sup>

This message of God's free gift of salvation by grace through faith is one of the most renovating acts of history.<sup>15</sup> That God, the maker of heaven and earth, should love man and accept him as he is shatters man's selfishness. It is utterly devastating to pride.

But the sacrifice of Christ also opens the way for reconciliation to God. Paul says that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them."<sup>16</sup>

I heard my father tell a story which impressed me greatly when I was a boy and now I can appreciate it

13 See for instance the treatment of Franz Kafka's *The Trial* in William R. Mueller, *The Prophetic Voice in Fiction* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1965).

14 Isaiah 53:1-6.

15 Romans 4:4; 5:1-8; Ephesians 2:8-9.

16 2 Corinthians 5:18.

even more. There once was a small girl who, after suffering the heartache of a broken home, learned in addition that she had an incurable disease. In her hospital room her estranged father and mother, who had come to be with her, stood on either side of her bed. Understanding that they probably could never have met without the pressure and fusing power of this ultimate moment, the little girl grasped the hand of her mother in her own fragile hand and the hand of her father in her other hand and pulled them together, joining the hands of these two alienated persons over her own painracked body. In a sense, it took her supreme sacrifice to unite these two. And in a more marvelous way this is the message of the cross. Christ, in the ultimate hour of history, grasped the hand of God and the hand of hopeless, helpless man. Across his own body he reconciled man to God through the cross.<sup>17</sup>

This is the message for which the world waited and it is the only water able to quench the thirst of modern man. It is the message which can make his search worthwhile. It is the healing for his emotional and psychological problems as well as his spiritual frustrations. It is the end of his guilt feelings. It is this "foolishness" which, though a stumbling block to some and utterly ridiculous to others, is yet the power of God to save man. And its power remains, whether man lives in an adobe house and rides a mule, or searches his destiny along limitless halls of space at supersonic speeds.

This message is designed not to be defended but to be declared. It carries within itself its own validation. When all human efforts at self-analysis have been exhausted, this message declares its answer to life's riddle at gut-level, at the center of man's self-inquiry.

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17 Ephesians 2:16.

Furthermore, the results of this message are the very results for which modern man searches most doggedly. In a time when machines threaten to dehumanize me into helpless insignificance, the gospel of Christ comes to prove my worth. Human reason alone can find no logical explanation why I am worth more than the \$10 I am valued by the test-tube of the chemist. Only because gold is desired and treasured by men is it of value, and it is as God desires and treasures me that he creates value in me, through the cross of Christ. It is this message which can motivate the underprivileged to value human life—to heal the wounds of the ghetto and to make survival worthwhile.

This reconciliation to God also makes possible reconciliation to our fellowman—to a husband or a wife, to a child or a parent. It bridges the generation gap. It binds across lines of culture and color. After all, those who have been accepted by God live in an atmosphere which permits them to have both power and desire to accept their neighbor—just as he is.

This gospel which makes persons count also provides an ethical homing-in device, a kind of moral gyroscope to keep man on course in a changing and turbulent society. It reminds him that morality is, after all, caring for the persons around him—those for whom Christ died. By doing what is best for his neighbor he is able to “advance the changeless” even in morality. And the centrality of the cross in a man’s life, becomes not a way to look at certain things but a certain way of looking at everything.<sup>18</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Modern man has been forced to face his aloneness, his

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18 I Corinthians 2:2; Galatians 6:14; Romans 12:1-2.

lostness, his alienation, his despair, as no man before him. As never before he is anxious for a Christ who can bring him wholeness, hope, and assurance. If there is a tragedy greater than modern man's despair, it is the fact that the modern church has so often failed to hear and interpret his cry for help. It has too often scorned the very literature where the cry is heard most clearly.

Today is rich with potential. Just imagine. Now, in an urban technological civilization, if an individual professes religion it is because of personal choice rather than the pressures of the surrounding culture of West Texas and Middle Tennessee. Yet man is still free to choose, and it is still "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord" who "will be saved." Hopefully man will choose to claim the covering of Christ's righteousness, available to those who through baptism have "put on Christ."<sup>19</sup> Yet while man remains free to choose we must admit the blood curdling possibility described by Kenneth Hamilton, the danger of our "perishing through exposure to the cosmic cold of a pitiless sky as we shiver, like abandoned orphans, in the open field of the world." It is just possible, and this might be just as tragic, that man will make terms, with his despair and refuse to move even when something better is offered to replace his "intellectual refugee-camp existence." But whatever the choice, the demands of God weigh heavily on the shoulders of His church. Modern man is yearning not for religious trivia, not for a time-worn adornments of folksy-religion, not for a self-seeking priesthood, but for wholeness and reconciliation to God. And to us has been entrusted the message which can bring him meaning in life and courage to exist.

Through Christ, even modern man can give to his son an assurance which will make effort worthwhile. I can share

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19 Galatians 3:27.

with modern man a Savior who is near, even should my son one day have only worn-out tools with which to re-build a world whose technology has turned to atomic ashes in his mouth—a world whose monuments remain only as twisted, charred steel and whose only music is the orphan's wail from the arms of its dead mother—even then there will be a faith by which to survive in Christ.

I suppose the most uncomfortable question for me personally is Paul's insisting query, "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed. And how shall they believe on him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Jane Addams, when she began Hull House in the slums of Chicago, issued a challenge which is especially appropriate for us, as Christians living in the slums of a sinful, heartsick world. Though realizing her task to be almost futile beyond belief, she begged someone to hear the urgent cry, to kneel in compassion, and to begin with sympathy. She concluded, "Where, if not here? Who, if not you? When, if not now?"

## IT IS GREAT TO BE A CHRISTIAN

George H. Stephenson

George H. Stephenson is a native of Collinsville, Texas, the son of Mr. and Mrs. N. L. Stephenson. He was baptized at the age of twelve by E. R. Watson and began preaching at the age of fifteen. He was graduated from Abilene Christian College in 1936 *magna cum laude*. His wife is the former Alice Miller of Collinsville. They are the parents of three sons. Their oldest son, Gerald, is a preacher and an instructor in Harding College.

Stephenson has been preaching for the Southside church in Fort Worth since January of 1963. Other churches he has served as local evangelist include the Broadway church in Lubbock, Texas, the Highland Street church in Memphis, Tennessee, and the Tenth and Broad Streets church in Wichita Falls, Texas. He has conducted gospel meetings in various parts of the nation and has appeared on college lectureships of nine of our Christian Colleges. He is on the editorial staff of the *Twentieth Century Christian* and *The Firm Foundation*. He is one of the trustees of Boles Home and has served on the Advisory Board of Home for Aged in Gunter.



### Scripture Texts:

“If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”<sup>1</sup>

“Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether-

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 4:16

er such as I am, except these bonds."<sup>2</sup>

It is great to be a Christian! I am here to remind you of what Peter and Paul and the saints of every age declare to be true. Our confused, bewildered, and anxious world needs to know that man's greatest needs find their fulfillment in genuine Christian living. The Bible speaks of "so great a salvation."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it is great. It is great in the price paid for it, great because of the Saviour who brought it, and great because of the way of life it teaches us.

Who is a Christian? If we are to tell you of the greatness of the Christian life, we must understand clearly what is included in being a Christian. A Christian is not just someone who has been baptized. Of course, it is essential for a penitent believer to be baptized if he is to become a follower of Jesus. In the New Testament, we read that we are to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins,<sup>4</sup> that baptism puts us into Christ,<sup>5</sup> and that baptism saves us.<sup>6</sup> Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."<sup>7</sup> While we understand that baptism is essential for one to become a Christian, we should realize that this is just the beginning of a life lived for Christ. One must be sure that he builds a proper foundation, but a foundation will be useless unless the building is erected on it. One must enlist in the army before he can be a soldier, but mere enlistment does not guarantee that one is a good soldier. Many have been baptized but have never really grown or matured in their Christian living. Bumblebees are larger at birth than at any other time. Some are

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2 Acts 26:28, 29

3 Heb. 2:3

4 Acts 2:38

5 Gal. 3:27

6 1 Peter 3:21

7 Mark 16:16

like the bumblebees; bigger at baptism than they are ever again.

A Christian is more than a "church member." This is not to belittle nor to speak against the church. It is true that Christians are members of the church, but not all "church members" are genuine Christians. In the New Testament all of the saved were "added to the church."<sup>8</sup> All of God's children were in His family which Paul declared to be the church of the living God.<sup>9</sup> But there are many who have their names on church rolls whose lives are not dedicated to the Lord. Many have no interest in becoming a Christian because they do not like what they have seen in the lives of some who call themselves Christians. We are not defending, in this lecture, the lives of all those who at one time were members of the church. Reproach has often been brought to the Lord's church because of the ungodly living and un-Christlike behaviour of some of her members. Some months ago a popular magazine told the details of the life of one whose scandalous behaviour attracted national publicity. This character had been suspect of many crimes and the article told how she was a "non-attending member of the Church of Christ." I am glad that at least she was described as a "non-attending" member. We have thousands of "non-attending" members, though, of course, most of them have not gained such national notoriety!

Who is a Christian? About the best definition I know of a Christian is that this is an individual in whom Christ lives. It is one who can say with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave him-

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8 Acts 2:47

9 1 Tim. 3:15

self for me.”<sup>10</sup> Does Christ live in your heart? He can not live in a divided heart. You must crucify self if Christ finds a place to dwell. Someone has said that in every heart there is both a cross and a throne. When Christ is on the cross, then self is on the throne. But when one puts self on the cross, then Christ is on the throne. Let us let Christ live in us and then we will be living the greatest life in the world.

It is great to be a Christian, because those who have been genuine disciples of Jesus declare it to be so. If we should judge the value of any product, it is best to listen to those who have used it. If we want to know the value of Christian living, let us not ask those who have never really been Christians. How foolish for us to listen to the counsel of the unbelievers regardless of how wise they may be in other matters! How could they possibly tell us as much about Christian living as those whose hearts have been filled with faith in the Lord and love for His cause? True Christians are best qualified to speak of the advantages of Christian living. If we listen to them, we will know that it is great to serve Jesus. Have you ever known one who really was a sincere, dedicated disciple of Jesus who regretted the life he lived? Has anyone ever come to the end of such a life and expressed the desire that he had not lived the Christian life? Never. But on every hand we hear the expressions of disillusionment, disappointment, and grief over lives of sin. How often such people have cried for other opportunities and for a chance to erase the bitter shame of their ungodly living.

We should listen to the testimony of the great saints of the New Testament as they tell us of the greatness of Christian living. We should ask Stephen, the “first Christian martyr,” if it is worth while to be a Christian. His enemies

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<sup>10</sup> Galatians 2:20

took him and stoned him as a snake in the grass. They beat the life out of his body, but they did not beat the radiance from his face as it glowed with angelic likeness. And they did not beat the good will from his heart as he followed the example of his Lord in praying for his enemies, saying, "Father, lay not this sin to their charge."<sup>11</sup> They did not beat the hope from his heart as he was able to look up and see his blessed Saviour and say, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Should we ask Stephen, "Is it worth while to be a Christian? You gave your all—your very life in defense of the gospel. Is it worth that big a price?" We know that Stephen would reply, "Yes, indeed. My Lord gave His all for me. Gladly would I give my life for Him."

Surely no one is better qualified than the great apostle Paul to tell us if the Christian life is really worth while. No one has ever done more for the Lord than he did. His life for Christ was one of labor, suffering, persecution, slander, beatings, imprisonments, stoning, and at times hunger and want. Finally, he gave his life for his faith. No doubt Paul could have enjoyed a very prosperous life with the many advantages and opportunities which could have been his as a well trained, brilliant man with the added advantage of Roman citizenship. Paul sacrificed so much in order that he might fall at the feet of a crucified Jew and tell the world that He is our Saviour. Should we ask Paul, "Is it worth the price you paid?" Without a moment's hesitation this grand old soldier would reply:

"Yet every advantage that I had gained I considered lost for Christ's sake. Yes, and I look upon everything as loss compared with the overwhelming gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I did in actual fact suffer the loss of everything, but I considered it useless

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11 Acts 7:60

rubbish compared with being able to win Christ."<sup>12</sup>

Again Paul could say, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."<sup>13</sup> There is a pathos and sadness about his final imprisonment in Rome as he waited execution at the hand of one of the most wicked tyrants, Nero. But we soon forget the sorrow when we see Paul reflect on his past, a past with many heartaches, but a past of which he was unashamed and about which he could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." And he could look beyond the executioner's ax and see the joys of that great day of rejoicing as he continued: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."<sup>14</sup>

We urge you to listen to the testimony not only of great Biblical characters, but to listen to those godly men and women you have known whose lives are a benediction to others and whose influence will be for good as long as time shall be.

The Christian life offers for us a way of forgiveness through Christ. The altars and shrines erected in all ages and in all parts of the world tell of man's effort to find forgiveness. The thousands with their guilt ridden consciences seeking some relief through psychology or psychiatry for their troubled souls tell us of man's need for forgiveness. It would be sad if men did not feel guilty when they are guilty. The Bible declares that all of us are guilty, that "all of us have sinned and come short of the glory of

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12 Philippians 3:7, 8 (Phillips New Testament in Modern English)

13 2 Corinthians 4:17

14 2 Timothy 4:7, 8

God.”<sup>15</sup> There is relief from our guilt. There is the promise that through God’s grace our sins may be forgiven. We have the assurance, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>16</sup>

Every preacher and every other individual could recite from his personal experiences the knowledge of those who have found relief from the burden of sin when they came to the Lord for salvation. Well do I remember a young man whose guilt was so great that he wondered if God could forgive him. It was a pleasure to turn to the second chapter of Acts and read with him about the three thousand who obtained forgiveness on Pentecost. When we read how Peter told his audience that they were guilty of perpetrating the greatest crime of history, of demanding the death of the world’s noblest and best man, the young man could see that his sin could be no greater than that of the Pentecostians. We read together how these convicted sinners were told, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>17</sup> What a privilege it was to assist the young man in his obedience in baptism following the confession of faith in Christ. There was a peace he found in knowing his sins were now forgiven.

As Christians we enjoy the wonderful privilege of continual forgiveness of sins. As we follow Jesus there is a constant cleansing of our sins in the blood of Christ. We have the wonderful assurance, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth

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15 Romans 3:23

16 Titus 3:5

17 Acts 2:38

us from all sin."<sup>18</sup> This verse does not teach that we achieve sinless perfection, or that our walking in the light means we are without sin, for then we would not need the cleansing of our sins. But it does teach us that as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus—walking in the light—although we sometimes falter and fail, there is a cleansing for our sins. There is further provision for those who depart from Christ that they may have forgiveness in these words: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."<sup>19</sup>

The Christian life also provides man with a purpose and a mission in life. Thousands take their own lives every year, because for some reason they have not found life worth living. We like to find a cause to serve or ideal to fight for because we want to feel there is some purpose in life. The restlessness and frustration of many of our time are the result of lives without meaning. Finding no meaning in the world of reality, many are turning to the world of unreality through powerful and frightening hallucinogenic drugs.

The story is told of some laborers who spent all of one morning digging holes three feet deep and then immediately filling them. Apparently, there was no reason or purpose in digging the holes. Finally, the laborers rebelled and said, "We will not dig another hole." The foreman replied, "Then we will never find the leaking pipe." The workers said, "Oh, then we'll dig some more." When they saw a meaning for their work they were ready to work again.

Animal trainers tell us that even animals trained to

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18 1 John 1:7

19 Acts 8:22

perform tricks learn to look forward to their performances and seem to be better satisfied and live longer than animals with less interesting and exciting work to do.

We need a purpose and Christ has given us the noblest purpose and the greatest mission. A Christian realizes that his life belongs to the Lord and is to be lived for His glory.<sup>20</sup> He serves his Lord by rendering service to his fellow man.<sup>21</sup> He must love his neighbor as himself and proves to be a neighbor as he helps others.<sup>22</sup> He has the responsibility of teaching others and of baptizing the taught into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.<sup>23</sup>

True greatness, according to Jesus, comes through service. He taught the world the great lesson, "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, the Christian life provides us with the highest ideals. Man is not going to be content to remain in the gutter. He seeks to rise to noble heights. J. Wallace Thompson, in his interesting and inspirational book, *Serendipity*, says:

"I wonder if you've read the late Dorothy Thompson's answer to Frank Lloyd Wright. Mr. Wright was an architect, and an exceptionally good one; but when he sounded off, as he frequently did, on the meaning of life and religion, he was somewhat less than inspired. He once said that

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20 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20

21 Matthew 25:31-46

22 Luke 10:25-37

23 Matthew 28:19, 20

24 Matthew 20:27, 28

public rooms should be only about twelve feet high so that people in them would not have to feel inferior or insignificant.

"Dorothy Thompson read that speech and romped all over him. 'The G. I. Joes,' she said, 'whom I saw standing awestruck in the Salisbury Cathedral, or watching the robed procession climb the vast stairs of Canterbury, or kneeling under the lofty arches of Notre Dame, or staring upward at St. Peter's at Michelangelo's immense dome were not feeling insignificant. On the contrary they were realizing that life has a grandeur and a beauty and a significance above and beyond themselves that wakened in them high aspiration. The terrible heresy of our time is that every thing must be keyed down to man's understanding, lest he get an inferiority complex. Books must be written in the language of the gutter. The height of inspiration must be put at twelve feet, twice the measure of man; one must not expect him to lift his eyes beyond his own stature.

'This is scientific dribble. Every boy or girl, be he mechanic's child or hod carrier's, wants to be something better than he is and other than the mass. He does not want a ceiling put over his life. Emerson did not advocate a twelve foot ceiling when he said, "Hitch your wagon to a star." He knew the wagon would never reach the star, but it would stay out of the gutter. The height to which man grows is commensurate with his vision. Set his ceiling at twelve feet and he will eventually be living underground.' '25

We may or may not agree with all that Dorothy Thompson says about religious architecture, but I am sure we do agree that man must have lofty aims and noble ideals if he is ever to achieve a sense of greatness in life.

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25 *Serendipity*, J. Wallace Hamilton, pp. 48, 49, Published by Fleming H. Revell Co.

It is tragic that in our day we do not have lofty ideals instilled in our young people as they were in generations of the past. A modern novel or a modern movie is not supposed to have heroes who are clean in heart and life. We are told that such would be hypocrisy. We must be told only the sordid, the evil, and the filth in modern novels and movies. We can not expect to rise to heights sublime unless we do have ideals for which we strive and lofty goals we seek to achieve. The Christian life does present to us noble aspirations. It presents for our pattern of living, Jesus Christ.<sup>26</sup> He is the ideal of every Christian. While we know our lives never reach the majestic heights of His life, yet day by day we seek to draw nearer to Him and to be more like Him.

Another need of ours which is supplied if we are Christians is that we are constantly assured of the love of God and we also grow in love for others. Man needs to know that somebody loves him, and he also needs to experience love for others if his life is to be complete. All of us need others for it is still true that "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."<sup>27</sup> It is always interesting to build a fire in a fireplace and to watch it burn on a cold winter day.

It is very difficult for one log of wood to burn alone. It burns readily when surrounded by other pieces of burning wood. All of us know that a burning ember soon loses its glow and ceases to burn when moved from the other pieces of wood. We must have the association and fellowship of others if there is to be the glow of faith and love which all of us need. As Christians we share together the wonderful fellowship which comes to those who share together forgiveness, hope, worship, and service.

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26 1 Peter 2:21

27 Romans 14:7

It is said that the precious pearls which were among the royal gems of a certain ruler in Europe, after a period of time, would lose some of their luster. When this happened the pearls would be immersed for a time in the salt water of the sea and the luster would be restored again. We, too, lose the luster of our souls but on every Lord's Day, as Christians, we gather to remember the love of a Father who gave His Son to die for us. We are reminded of His body and His blood given for us. Our souls once more regain their luster as we become immersed, as it were, in the wonderful love of God.

Not only does a Christian realize he has the love of God and love of fellow Christians, but soon reaches out in love for all mankind. The greatest joy of any individual will be found when he is used of God in helping others.

It is great to be a Christian also because in this way our influence is for good. We can never measure the influence in the life of one human being. Our influence is very precious and we need to exert it for good in the lives of our companions, our children, and our friends. The greatest thing we may do for our children is not to provide them with great sums of money, although we should care for their physical needs when they are too young to care for themselves, but the greatest thing we may do is to provide Christian influences in their lives. I want whatever influence I may have on others to be for good, and therefore I want to be a Christian.

Finally, it is great to be a Christian, because a Christian does not live for time alone, but for eternity. Some day, unless the Lord returns first, you and I must die. Somewhere there is a tomb waiting to receive our bodies. But if we are Christians we expect to live forever. We hear the words of Jesus, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall

never die.”<sup>28</sup> Death to the Christian will not be the end but only the beginning. It will not be a defeat, but a victory. It will not be a terminus, but a thoroughfare. It will not be the beginning of night, but the dawning of a glorious day. It will not be the end of our plans and dreams, but only the fulfillment of our noblest and highest aspirations.

Because we believe there is a future life, our present life is more meaningful. We do not prepare for eternity and forget about the present. When we live in view of eternity, our present lives should be more noble and more helpful of others. Our present life is not cheapened, but enriched, when we realize that this life is merely the foyer of a great building, this life is the foreword of a marvelous book which will be finished in glory. Every sacrifice, every trial, becomes trivial when we think of the joys waiting for us in heaven. “The toils of the road will seem nothing when we’ve come to the end of the way.”

It is great to be a Christian!

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28 John 11:25, 26

## SPIRITUAL SURGERY

John Gipson

John Gipson is a native of Odessa, Texas. He received his education from Abilene Christian College and is presently serving as minister of the Meadowbrook Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas. This church fully supports eight men in the mission field and oversees Christ's Haven Home for Children. Brother Gipson has served churches in Stratford, Sherman, Odessa and Lamesa, Texas, before moving to Fort Worth. In addition to his local work, he conducts six meetings a year. Married to the former Beth Stirman, the Gipsons have one son and two daughters.

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I was shocked! But there it was on the front page of the *Fort Worth Star Telegram*. The burglar was being taken to the hospital instead of to the jail. The police were



startled by a man trying to cut off his right hand. When questioned he explained that he had been a thief all of his life and that Jesus commanded the surgery. I suppose that he must have had reference to the principle set forth by our Lord:

“And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter

halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9: 43-48).

Now these words of the Master seem harsh. But we must agree with the Great Physician. Is not the life of the whole body more valuable than any one of its dispensable members, regardless of how precious? If the doctor explains to us that an operation is necessary, we may dread the ordeal, but we will give our consent. Despite the pain involved, a diseased member threatening our existence must be cut off. That is all there is to it!

### IS JESUS SUGGESTING LITERAL SURGERY?

What about the thief that cut off his hand? Is this what Jesus wants? While some would answer "Yes," I believe that the man made a terrible mistake. Such a remedy deals with the outside rather than the inside. It treats the symptoms rather than the disease. How will this solve his problem? When your TV stops working, it won't help matters to dust off the cabinet if the picture tube has gone out. And in the case of a sinner, the hand is not the real offender in stealing anymore than the eye is in lusting. Jesus said, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man" (Matthew 15:19, 20). If stealing springs from the heart instead of the hand, then somehow the heart must be corrected. In Proverbs 4:23, we read, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." James says, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14, 15). With these facts before us, it would seem a little strange

if physical surgery were the requirement Jesus commanded. Cutting off the right hand without changing the heart would allow the left hand to continue what the right hand formerly accomplished. How could this prove effective?

A second consideration is the fact that God wants our bodies as well as our spirits.

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Paul pleads, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). These members of the body which have served sin should now be devoted to righteousness. “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Ephesians 4:28). If we begin to cut off our physical organs we destroy that which should be given in service to Christ.

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Romans 6:12, 13).

It is well to remember that Jesus often used figures of speech. He called his disciples the “salt of the earth” and “the light of the world.” These statements are true, but His followers did not attempt to be seasoning on meat or set themselves ablaze to furnish light by which to read. And when Jesus speaks of plucking out the offending eye and cutting off the tempting hand or foot, I am persuaded that He isn’t talking about scalpels or operating rooms.

Very often sin expresses itself through parts and members of the body.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, then henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6).

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13).

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5).

Now it is obvious that sin is to be put to death. It must be destroyed. Just as Paul could say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," so one can cut off the offending member of the body, nevertheless it remains attached, yet not for purposes of sin; but for righteousness. Isn't this what Christ had in mind when He spoke of "cutting off" the offending member of the body?

### THE TERRIBLENESS OF SIN

Our text presents the terribleness of sin, a fact which is not easily accepted today. One modern teacher has written an elaborate book on the meaning of religion. When it was called to his attention that he had not even mentioned sin, he said, "Oh, well, there ought not to be any such thing." But sin cannot be ignored. In a vain attempt to gloss over sin we refer to it as a misuse of freedom; anti-social behavior; immaturity; indiscretion or weakness; rather than hear the hiss of the serpent in the word "sin." But we have not changed the evil by giving it another name. Did you see the cartoon of the little boy swinging a hammer against his mother's mirror? When questioned, he calmly explained to the aghast adult observer: "I'm not naughty; I'm neurotic." Those of us who are older

rationalize and justify our own iniquities with sugar-coated titles: We are not selfish... we are practical; we are not dishonest... we are shrewd. If it is not possible to overlook the sin, we will just call it something else. But the prophet Isaiah said, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20)! While we are playing sin down and winking at it, Jesus says it is so terrible that it must be cut off at any cost.

Sin has the ability to make cowards out of us. It caused Adam and Eve to hide in the garden and it still makes men run today. It will even make one afraid of his own shadow. Solomon said, "the wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1). Sin is terrible because it will make you a craven coward.

Sin will take away your peace and make you miserable. The preacher was urging a man to become a Christian. He replied, "I'm satisfied just like I am." "But," said the preacher, "you have no peace." The man was startled. He asked, "How did you know that?" In answer the preacher quoted:

"The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:20, 21).

Do not think that it will be different in your case. There was no peace for David. He said, "I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me" (Psalm 52:3). He said,

"When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer" (Psalm 32:3, 4).

There was no peace for Judas. He went out and hanged himself. There was no peace for Herod. He feared that

John the Baptist had come back from the dead to haunt him. And there will be no peace for you if you yield to sin.

Sin is serious because it will separate you from your Maker. Isaiah says:

“Behold the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isaiah 59:1, 2).

Can you think of anything worse than “having no hope” or being “without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12)? And yet this is exactly the condition to which sin will bring you. It pays to be in a covenant relationship with God. It paid for Daniel when he was cast into the den of lions; for Jeremiah in prison; for the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace; and it will prove invaluable for you! God’s favor is too precious to sacrifice for the pleasures of sin.

Just think of it! Fellowship with the Devil is the fruit of iniquity. Listen to the terse statement of John: “He that committeth sin is of the devil” (I John 3:8). Walking hand in hand with the prince of the power of darkness is not something to be viewed lightly. But this is the comradeship which springs from sin. Is it any wonder that Jesus insists upon its crucifixion?

Only when we see the tragic consequences can we understand how terrible sin really is. Jesus tells us plainly that if the offending member is not cut off we shall be cast into “hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.”

As long as sin robs us of courage, steals away our peace, separates us from God, unites us with Satan, and brings about our eternal destruction, we cannot afford to

act as if it doesn't matter. Sin must be cut off at any cost.

### THE NEED FOR SELF-DISCIPLINE

"If thy hand offend thee, cut it off" is a clear call for self-discipline. Anything which would cause one to sin must be put to death. And even those things which appear innocent and harmless enough within themselves should be included in the surgery.

Perhaps it is a hobby that must be sacrificed. Some time ago I read of a very famous doctor who loved to play the violin. But one day he walked in, took the violin from the mantelpiece and cut the strings. Why? It wasn't that he had suddenly lost interest in playing. The violin was just taking up too much of his time. His medical practice was more important than his personal pleasure. Therefore he exercised some self-discipline. Now to make an application: If that hand of yours loves a saw, a golf club, or a fishing rod so much that it interferes with your church attendance *then cut it off!* If that foot is so busy taking you to your friends, or to places of innocent entertainment, that you cannot find time for study and prayer and meditation, *then cut it off!* If your eye has become so fond of TV that you do not have time to visit the sick or engage in personal work *then pluck it out!*

You may discover the need of giving up some of your closest friends. But if they cause you to sin, you will be better off without them. Remember that "evil companionships corrupt good morals" (I Corinthians 15:33). "You can't run with the goats without smelling like them." Do not protest that it will be hard to give them up. Of course it will. The diseased hand is not cut off without pain, but sometimes the operation is needful to save the body.

Or is it your business which needs to be cut off? It is possible for the "care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches" to "choke the word" to such an extent that one becomes unfruitful. Letting your business control all of your time isn't seeking first the kingdom of God regardless of how you look at it. Have you heard of Walter Lapa in Sao Paulo, Brazil? Dope-addiction had marred his life before his conversion. After becoming a Christian he faced a tremendous battle. His clothing store exposed him daily to dope pushers operating in the local suburb. In Bible Class he read: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee" (Matthew 5:20). Walter reflected: "My shop is an offensive right eye; I must pluck it out lest I stumble." Immediately he sold his store and took employment in downtown Sao Paulo. Walter lost financially, but in the next four months he led six souls to Christ and became the first evangelist solely supported by a Brazilian church of Christ. Mr. Heinz, the originator of the famous 57 Varieties, had a motto that would be well for all business men to remember. "God first; others second; pickles third." This is the right order. All too often pickles take the number one place.

Now this is to be self-discipline because my problem might be completely different from yours. Of necessity we will have to make the corresponding application in our own lives. But of this we may be sure—Christ demands discipline if we want to be saved. No life is developed into maturity without cutting off something. There is too much difference in the Christianity which is demanded by the Bible and that liberal brand of religion which demands nothing of us today. How many of us are really willing to look at our jobs, our friends, our recreations and say, "I will give up anything that keeps me from the Lord"? Someone has well said, "Too much religion today is a spiritual cosmetic—adding just a touch of color to a countenance not radically changed." Christ doesn't offer comfort—but the cross. He doesn't offer an excursion—but

an execution. Paul reminds us, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24). And a crucifixion is slow and painful. Our theme should ever be:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2: 20).

A crucified Christ demands a crucified life of His followers. Yet, self-control, discipline, and crucifixion have not been characteristic of our generation. All too often our lives relate the fact that we have been undedicated and uncontrolled.

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:13).

Throwing off all restraints and living as we please have never solved our problems. The prodigal son tried it and ended up in the hog-pen. If we follow in his footsteps we will surely arrive at the same destination. It is strange that we should even talk of doing as we please in a world where modern science has come. No scientist thinks in his special realm that he can do as he pleases. He knows there are countless ways of "missing the mark, finding nothing and coming out nowhere." And when it comes to heaven, Jesus says:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13, 14).

So if you approach the strait gate and find it so small that you will have to cut off your hand or foot to enter—then cut it off!

### IT IS BETTER FOR THEE

If you inquire why you should "cut off" the offending member, Jesus answers, "It is better for thee." He has no desire to see you suffer eternal punishment. But this is reserved for those who refuse discipline. Three times Jesus speaks of being cast "into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." If there is no punishment for the wicked, then why did our Lord speak of it three times in this one passage? Hell is a reality and Jesus does not hesitate to warn us about it. What is the pain of an operation compared to the alternative? Where is the man who will not lie down on the surgeon's table, and have his right hand cut off rather than die? And so it should be with spiritual matters. It is better to suffer the pain of discipline than hell. An operation is always attended with pain, and we would not tell you that it is easy to live the Christian life, or painless to crucify the flesh. It is not! Christ does hurriedly tell you however that it is better for you. Be willing to endure present loss for future gain.

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Hebrews 11:24-26).

Whatever interferes with the attainment of eternal life must go. It is better to go to heaven without enjoying the things that cause us to sin, than to enjoy them here, and then be lost. Heaven is so valuable that it will be well worth any price that we are called upon to pay.

Some glorious day we will forget the battles fought, the sorrows and sufferings, the privations and persecutions. Then will we know the full meaning of the wondrous words:

“For I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

There will be:

“Only glory by and by,  
Only glory by and by;  
Every heart ache gone forever,  
Only glory by and by!”

So if your hand causes you to sin—cut it off! If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off! If your eye causes you to sin—pluck it out! “It is better for thee.”

# PANELS



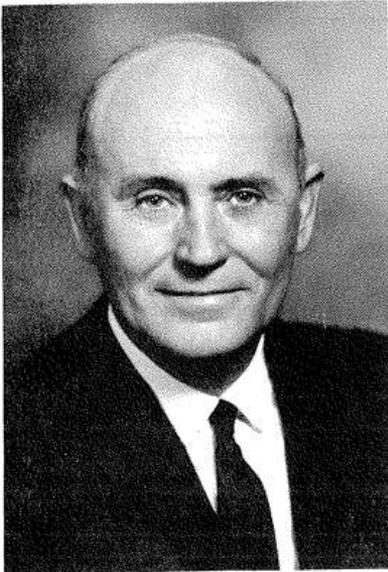
## THE RECEPTIVENESS OF THE WORLD

Reuel Lemmons

Reuel Lemmons was born July 8, 1912, in Pocahontas, Arkansas. He moved to Oklahoma as a boy and was graduated from high school at Tipton. It was in Tipton that he preached his first sermon in 1930.

Lemmons was graduated, cum laude, from Abilene Christian College in 1935 and returned to Tipton where he preached for eight years. While at Abilene Christian College he was president of the Press Club; business manager of the student newspaper, *The Optimist*; was a member of the Pickwicker staff, the college literary magazine; and was a member of the college debate team.

In 1934 Lemmons became minister at the Central Church of Christ in Cleburne, Texas, where he served for 12 years. During that time he spearheaded a drive to plant congregations of the church among the people of the Union of South Africa, and helped raise support for several missionaries to that area. In addition, he was heard for years over a powerful radio station in Mozambique, Portuguese East Africa, which carried his sermons to the English-speaking people of Africa. It was out of this radio contact that our present work in Nigeria has grown.



He has continued his interest in mission work, and in recent years has encouraged the expanding work in Central and South America through visits to several of these countries and by helping missionaries to raise funds for the work in the Latin-American nations. He founded the Pan-American year in some Central or South American country.

In 1955, Lemmons be-

came editor of the *Firm Foundation*, one of the leading journals published for members of the Church of Christ, and continues in that capacity today. He has served on the staff of *20th Century Christian* for 10 years, and is the author of one book, *Abundant Living*. He edited the *Majestic Hymnal*, a hymn book widely used by Churches of Christ. In 1966 he edited *The Revision of Smith's Bible Dictionary* for Doubleday & Co.

He continues his extensive schedule of gospel meetings, conducting more than 30 each year. In addition, he has appeared on a number of college Bible lectureship programs and at teacher training programs. His preaching and travels on behalf of the church have taken him coast to coast and into foreign lands, and he has played important roles in establishing several new congregations. He has preached on every inhabited continent on earth, and has done extensive work at the invitation of the United States Air Force around the world.

Lemmons has been a member of the Board of Trustees of Abilene Christian College since 1950 and currently serves on several committees of the college's 10-year Design for Development program. He also serves on the Advisory Board of three other colleges.

His wife is the former Imogene Mayes. They were married in Abilene, Texas in 1933, and have two sons, Norvel, born in 1935, and Leon, born in 1942. The family home is at 5801 Wynona, Austin, Texas.

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In an effort to refocus our sights upon the world as a field in which the gospel must be preached, and to fix attention upon the changing situation, is the burden of this message, in which we shall attempt to point out some encouraging signs of receptivity.

An evangelistically concerned church is just as essential to carrying out the great commission as is the opportunity. Sometimes each of these encourages the other. The concerned church either ferrets out the opportunity, or makes one. The opportunity often inspires the church.

A tribe of believers springs from the blood of martyred missionaries in Ecuador. A swarm of missionaries rush to take the place of a fallen doctor in the Congo. The fall of Communism in Indonesia opens the door to unbelievable results of missionary effort. A Hindoo victory in India makes a modern Restoration possible. Even out of the Iron Curtain countries is coming an ever-increasing crescendo of reports that persecution has again insured the perpetuation, and even the growth of the "Christian faith."

It is a fact that the gross amount of error mixed with the truth they teach greatly limits the effectiveness of denominational efforts, but, nonetheless, the amount of truth they do teach is finding a soft spot, and the heralds of even a perverted gospel are meeting with phenomenal success.

### WHY THE WORLD IS READY TO HEAR

It would be wishful thinking to assume that even a goodly portion of the world is ready to hear the gospel. The world has never been anxious to hear the good news. Israel would not hear its own prophets. The Jews of Jesus' day put their fingers in their ears. Rage has been the normal reaction to gospel preaching through the centuries. From Pentecost to the Reformation the preachers of truth met fanatical opposition. Reformers died a thousand deaths. Preachers of the Restoration era were vilely treated, defamed, slandered, and sometimes subjected to bodily harm. Any among us who think that the world in general is anxious to hear the gospel are mistaken. The modern effort to water down the preaching of the gospel so that it will not be offensive to the world is a misdirected notion. The world never did and it never will hear the gospel. It looks upon Jesus as a misguided fanatic and his disciples as dupes. To the world, religion is the opiate of the people.

However, throughout time there have been soft spots where the gospel would, temporarily, be favorably received. Pentecost was such a time. Berea was such a city. Samaria was such an opportunity. Opportunities are not of perpetual duration. They blaze like the sun and disappear. They blossom like a rose and fade.

Receptivity does not remain constant. In areas of the world where the church once flourished, it is non-existent today. It is a little unusual for the church to remain strong even for two or three centuries in any place on earth. This makes us wonder if we may be in the twilight in the South where the church is so strong.

In the twenty years since World War II the change in attitudes has been terrific. Our former political enemies are now our friends, and our former friends are now our enemies. The re-alignment of nations, and the emergence of a host of new nations presents both a problem and an opportunity. It is easy to lose our perspective. The church must never lose sight of the fact that even a fragmented world has a universal need for the gospel, and that the command of Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to the whole world has never been rescinded. We should, however, cast as few pearls before as few swine as possible.

There are certain parts of the world more receptive today than others. We believe there are valid reasons why. It may also be assumed that the areas most receptive today may be totally alienated tomorrow, and that areas where we have little or no chance to preach today may be the opportunities of tomorrow.

Throughout time there have been certain forces that have impeded the evangelistic thrust. Those same forces hinder, and make hard the task today. *Rationalism* makes Europe a hard field. *Materialism* has almost excluded America as an evangelistic opportunity. *Nationalism* has practically

destroyed all opportunity in Africa and the Middle East. *Totalitarianism* greatly hinders efforts throughout Asia. These historic enemies of evangelization still bar the door to the entrance of the gospel throughout much of the world.

There are, in contrast, some areas, such as Latin America, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Japan, as well as islands of opportunity in otherwise untouchable areas of the world, where the people seem anxious to hear the message of salvation. In general these will be recognized as areas where Rationalism, Materialism, Totalitarianism and Nationalism are not so strong. These peoples are just escaping the fatalism of an underprivileged society. For the first time in their lives they are beginning to participate creatively in a free society. They have suddenly discovered that they are human beings — with souls. Chains of intellectual and religious slavery are falling away. For the first time in world history they are thinking of themselves as individuals, with individual responsibility.

Affluence is marching with seven league boots across some lands. Backward nations are jumping, in a generation, chasms that it has taken other nations millenniums to creep across. Underdeveloped peoples, no longer frustrated by the hopelessness of their situations, are responding to the benevolence of their more fortunate neighbors.

In every age, during its struggle to affluence, nation after nation has been intensely religious. Even among the heathen has this been true. Trace the progress of crystallizing civilization through the Middle East and Europe and it is true. In the growth of America it was true. Now, as following feet tread this same pathway, we can expect the same opportunities among rising nations. While alien and paganizing forces rail against the church in lands now heady with the wine of accomplishment, in those peoples where a sense of destiny moves them there is a deep yearning for the guidance of God.

## THE REMNANT

Even in areas where the people's eyes were closed, their ears stopped, and their hearts hardened, there has always been faithful remnants. There was Noah, and Abraham, and Lot, and Daniel. And in later years there has been a remnant. History will bear out the fact that not a generation has passed since Pentecost in which there was not a minute minority trying to stand for truth and righteousness. Even among those lost in the labyrinth of error, there were courageous souls who would not be content with their bondage. Consider Martin Luther or John Calvin. As organized religion sinks lower and lower into the quagmire of liberalism and modernism today, we will become more conscious of the rugged remnant whose faith is too strong to be seduced.

Such efforts as the Ecumenical thrust of the World Council of Churches, the revision of the Philadelphia Confession by the Presbyterians, and the Restructure of the Disciples are going to leave countless communicants as men without a country. They will not follow their former leaders into religious nonentity. They believe too much Bible to be so led. These constitute a sizeable element of Bible-believing, religious people throughout the world who are more receptive to the gospel than most people realize.

Among this group are religious leaders. They have been beaten by the liberals in their own communions, and the feeling of frustration is intense. The desert isle upon which their respective denominations have abandoned them is a lonely place. Many of them would dance with joy at the sight of a ship! This is the right time for the ship of Zion to appear on the horizon.

## OTHER ELEMENTS AT WORK

In the past twenty years other powerful elements have

been at work which swing the wind around in our favor. We have entered the nuclear age. Not since the discovery of fire, or the invention of the wheel, has humanity made such a technological advance. We are in the process of passing out of the age of organic fuels into the age of nuclear power. As we learn to use this almost unimaginable force for either good or evil there will be apprehension in the hearts of all sensible people. We may all, either by intention or mistake, be hurled into eternity unceremoniously.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! And all men know it. Even among those who profess that they believe God is dead, there is the subconscious fear of finding out for sure that he isn't. It is a solemn thought, even among atheists, to contemplate changing worlds. Even though science has not produced a single thing that has not been with us always, the new knowledge we have of its presence makes us conscious of the fact that we stand on the brink of chaotic catastrophe.

As this knowledge sinks in, religion, buried deep in the heart of every human, seeps out. People begin to look for God. They want a place of refuge where they can be assured that over them are the Sheltering Wings, and underneath, the Everlasting Arms. People are going back to church! Granted, they are scared stiff, but they are at least showing signs of contrition.

Quickened to an awareness of this critical situation, people are not as content as they once were with the dogmas of the denominations and the platitudes of the preachers. They want Bible. They are taking the old book down off the shelf and dusting it off. They are opening it up in their laps again. In this crazy, mixed up world, they want a word straight from God! They are reading the Bible expectantly, seeking the wisdom that comes from God alone. They will need that to cope with their present situation.

## THIS IS OUR OPPORTUNITY

Inspired by the magnificent ambassadors of Christ, who challenged the world and conquered it with the gospel in a single generation, we ought to gird ourselves with the whole armour of God, and swing the sword of the spirit with a vengeance. This is our day. We will perhaps never see another in which a waiting world with bated breath awaits the message from Heaven as does this one. It is true that the majority will not hear. It is true that whole countries and continents can hardly be touched. But this should not discourage us, for there are other whole areas anxious to hear. There are regions where the people lie in darkness like the shepherds on Judah's hills when they heard the chorus of Angels proclaiming "peace on earth and good will among men." Wise men have faintly seen a star! More so than at any time since the first century, multitudes are awaiting a new birth.

The modern mind can no longer be content with philosophies and vain deceit. We know too much to be fooled by the traditions of men. We know the fallacy of the rudiments of the world. Because too much religion was of this calibre, the world lost confidence in it. There was too much sham in religion. The ear was not confirmed by the eye. And our generation can tell whether we who preach it really believe it. We who propose to speak for Christ must first of all settle forever in our own hearts any feeling of inferiority. The centuries have seen the rise and fall of many philosophies and religions. If we are convinced that Christ and Christianity are not one with them, but rather is the one and only religion of Heaven, let us assert it clearly and unashamedly. The gospel is not some sort of inferior religious hypothesis to be avoided in polite or intellectual society. It is the Truth; the indestructible, irrefutable truth. It can be proclaimed with boldness and with power. And honest men will be convicted by it.

There is considerable pressure today to get Christians to live by the standards that dominate the lives of unregenerated men. Much effort is being put forth to dedicate the church to the procurement of creature comforts, and the fighting of political battles. The temptation to build great buildings, engage in great programs, amass great wealth, or to achieve a place of eminence or wide recognition gnaws at the very vitals of the church. We cannot do these and at the same time be faithful to the evangelistic thrust of the great commission.

The world we seek to save is smart enough to know that when we go after these things we are hypocritical in our professed interest in the salvation of lost souls. A world interested only in its salvation could not be blamed for rejecting the credibility of a gospel whose very messengers were not consumed with a passion for lost souls.

Christ needs men. He needs strong hearted men; men so full of their message that they cannot be intimidated. They need not be particularly concerned with methods and strategy; but they do need to be concerned with the lost condition of those to whom they go. If God can find a man, that man will find a way!

The whole world is an Areopagus. It is filled with its Epicureans and its Stoics. Some of them will chide, "What will this babbling say?" But there will be some who will listen, and who will say, "You bring strange things to our ears." The Lord needs a man to stand in the midst of it like Paul stood on Mars' Hill; a man who knows the will of God and who is not ashamed of it. The Lord needs a man who is not cowed by the intellectualism he faces nor the mocking of unbelievers. The world is willing to listen to any man who stands straight and tall, and who speaks with reason, conviction, and power. If a world is to listen, the preaching must be worthwhile. We are not in a position to command the world's attention. After all, Christ does

not force himself upon anyone. What we say must be worth their listening to.

After all, there is just one Christ and just one gospel. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Him." The world must be made to know that "unto us a Savior is born; unto us a Son is given." It needs this knowledge as badly now as it needed it then. And when they hear, the wise among them will come, and bow low, and bring forth out of their treasures gold, and frankincense and myrrh.

## MOTIVATING BRETHERN TO TAKE THE WORD

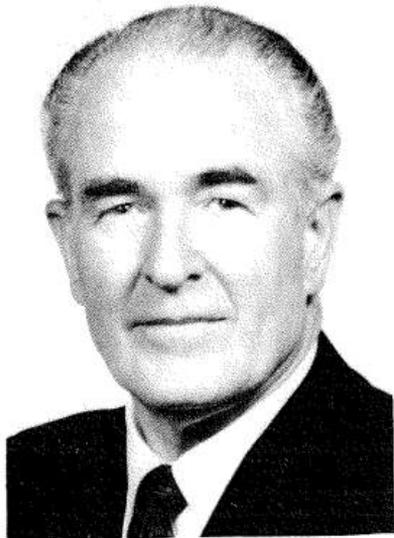
Otis Gatewood

Born August 27, 1911 in Meredian, Texas, where he was baptized by J. K. Bently in 1926.

Married the former Alma Morgan of Abilene, Texas, December 25, 1936. After 26 years of married life, Alma passed to her reward January 18, 1963. Two children were born into this union—David, 24, who is now a student at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and Michael (deceased). One child, Darlene, 20, was adopted in Germany. She is now a student at Abilene Christian College, Abilene, Texas.

**EDUCATION:** Otis Gatewood received his B.A. degree from Abilene Christian College in 1936, his M.A. degree from Pepperdine in 1945, and his L.L.D. from Pepperdine in 1961. He has also attended Texas Technological College in Lubbock, University of Utah, and University of Frankfurt, Germany.

**MISSION WORK:** The Broadway Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas began supporting him for mission work in 1937. This support was continued for 22 years. During this time, Otis did mission work in Las Vegas, N. M.; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Frankfurt, Germany.



**TRAVEL:** He has travelled extensively in behalf of mission work in the U. S. having raised over five million dollars for mission work. He has just recently completed a round-the-world trip in interest of mission work. He has been in the Soviet Union on five different occasions and he is now working

under the direction of the elders of the church in Falls Church, Virginia, in an effort to establish the church in the Soviet Union and the satellite nations.

*AUTHOR, EDITOR, STAFF WRITER:* He is the author of five books: *You Can Do Personal Work*, *Wichita Forum Sermons*, *Preaching in the Footsteps of Hitler*, *Gatewood-Farnsworth Debate on Mormonism*, and *Gatewood-Jensen Correspondence on Mormonism*. He is currently writing scripts for broadcasts into Iron Curtain nations under the theme, *There is a God in Heaven*. These are being translated into Russian, German, Chinese, and Japanese for use in these respective speaking countries. He is editor of *CONTACT*, a pictorial missionary magazine, and staff-writer for *The Gospel Advocate*, *Twentieth Century Christian*, and *Power for Today*.

*EDUCATOR:* For five years, he served as President of Michigan Christian College, Rochester, Michigan, 1959-1964. For eight years, he was administrator of the Frankfurt Bible School, Frankfurt, Germany, 1949-1957. He has taught Bible at Pepperdine, the A.C.C. Academy, Michigan Christian College, and Pepperdine Year-In-Europe Program in Heidelberg, Germany. He is now serving as Chancellor of Columbia Christian College, Portland, Oregon, and as Professor of Missions at Harding Graduate School of Religion in Memphis, Tennessee.

*PREACHING:* He preached two years for the church at Las Vegas, N. M., seven years in Salt Lake City, Utah, and ten years in Frankfurt, Germany. He has led campaigns in Germany, Austria, England, Canada, and the United States; has held meetings in 24 states and has lectured on the campuses of all of our Christian Colleges. He holds from six to eight meetings each year.

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It was 7 p.m. August 19, 1967, as Air India Flight 115A left Tokyo Airport for Bombay, India. Below us is Tokyo, the largest city in the world, with more than eleven million souls. Each one of that eleven million bears the image of our Heavenly Father, most of which do not know God in the forgiveness of their sins. For eight days I lived and preached in this city. The Japanese are a wonderful people in so many ways: industrious, kind, polite, friendly, intelligent, devoted, and religious.

Their shrines and temples declare that they give their best to support their faith. The Americans who have lived among them tell me that the Japanese are honest, truthful, and trustworthy. Cars are left unlocked, bicycles are left outside, and the doors of the homes do not need to be guarded because of fear of theft. The Japanese people are practicing many moral principles of Christianity. They are basically prepared to accept Christianity in its totality. Japan is the most prosperous nation in the Far East with an annual average income of \$2,500.00 per wage earner. Their honesty, industriousness, integrity and devotion are needed in the kingdom of God. Many people in many lands with characteristics similar to the Japanese are needed in the kingdom. These morally-prepared people should motivate us to go that they may not be only "almost" but "altogether" Christians.

The Japanese are receptive and even curiously seek information. One young man came into the church building in Tokyo one afternoon while I was there alone and said to me: "I want to learn about the Christ." Over three hundred students are enrolled at the Keimei Christian Academy (where Brother O.D. Bixler has laboured for over thirty years), most of which are not Christians. Their Buddhist parents pay for their training at Keimei because they want their children to be educated under Christian environment. As I walked through the brand-new, sound-proof, air-conditioned building that cost almost a million dollars — paid for entirely by the Japanese government because they appreciate the work Brother Bixler has done and want their young people to know about Christ — I thought: "We should teach these people with all diligence because they are now receptive." I was delightfully astonished to learn that fifteen hundred students are enrolled in Ibaraki Christian College, most of which are not Christians, but desire to know about Christ and are willing to pay our brethren to teach them. More non-Christians are enrolled in this college than any Christian college in our brotherhood. It was fully accredited after the first year of operation as a senior college because the Japanese officials appreciate the work that is being done. What a challenging, thrilling opportunity! Many similar challenging oppor-

tunities throughout the world motivate us to go as never before because the fields are ripe and because those who are lost plead for us to teach them.

Four hours after we left Tokyo, our plane landed in Hong Kong. Even at midnight the towering office buildings and apartment houses glistened like diamonds against the dark background of China. And, as our plane took to the sky again we did not see evidences of thrift and industry in China as was true in Japan. All was dark and quiet on the Chinese coast. One would think that no one lived among those hills, yet there in China, behind that dark background, live seven hundred fifty million souls—the largest population of any nation on earth! There is little visible evidence that a single soul lives out there in that dark unknown. But wait—lightning flashes in a distant stormcloud, as if to proclaim that turmoil exists in the midst of that dark unknown!! And this turmoil bids us look to the flashes of light and remember that the gospel is needed most urgently where the darkest night prevails. Out there in the darkness the flashing lightning reminds us that there are people who have exploded several atomic bombs, and this should be grim reminders to us that if we do not teach them to be Christians, they will kill our sons on the battlefields. Fear of the exploding consequences of sin is a good factor to motivate us to teach the gospel with urgent diligence!

Oh, Lord, help us to go to these people who are our brothers because of creation but who are now alienated from us because Satan our archenemy has erected false barriers which must and can fall by a true proclamation of thy Holy Word! Help us, Lord, to be true bearers of the torch of life, that turmoil may cease and give way to the rising sun of righteousness. Help us to know that if we do not go we will sink into despair with them and that the flashing rays of hope will cease. Help us to go because we, through Thee, love them, and because their cries which have reached heaven and caused sorrow to thy holy heart have pierced our ears and rent our hearts! Oh, Lord, give us wisdom to know how to go, and help us to fear the awful results and judgments if we do not go.

As the air currents shake this plane, may the anguish of those who are lost trouble and arouse our hearts to bring the only message of hope this world has ever known.

Our failures in the past should teach and pressure us to go or suffer. Within the lifetime of many of us China was open and receptive to the gospel of Christ. But we sent too few too late. Now China is closed and there are threats that our sons who did not go as ambassadors of peace must meet them on the battlefield.

We had no sons to send to Germany to preach the message of peace, so we experienced the agony of seeing them fight Germany in two world wars.

We were asleep spiritually while Communism built the iron curtain where gospel preachers are finding it very difficult to open the doors.

Christ placed the imperative: "Repent, or perish!" This is universally true that those who do not repent, perish! It can be as truthfully said, "Go, or suffer!" The sin of indifference carries with it great curses of war, bloodshed, suspicion, hate, opposition, persecution, and destruction. Such results should motivate us if other motives fail.

A few hours ago our plane landed in Bombay, India. Ah, India! A beautiful green land during the monsoon rains of August, but many of your inhabitants are so woefully poor. The stench and filth that comes from the open toilets, the hordes of dirty children, the buzzards that eat the dead Parsians, the scavenger crows, the boney cows which roam and sleep in the streets, the scrawny legs of men, women and children which proclaim starvation on every hand—almost cause one to despair and declare in hopelessness that the task of reaching these hordes with the gospel of Christ is too great. I look into the troubled eyes of the beggars who plead for a *baksheesh* (gift) and remember that our Lord said to such people: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you

and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden light" (Matt. 11:28-30). But alas, these people do not even know that Christ uttered such words! What a shame! Cursed with sin, downtrodden with ignorance, and yet how enthusiastically even the Hindu children listen as we tell them the story of Christ, as if they realize the great blessings they are missing by not being Christian. As I walked down the streets of Poona, India, they almost bowed before me as the Great White Man who symbolizes to them that there is a ray of hope yet in the world through those who are followers of the meek and lowly Nazarene.

Tara Pol, an Indian girl, after seven years of study in America, is now back in her home town, Poona, trying as best she can to hold up the ray of light that shines from Christ. I watched her teach Hindu children in their native Marathi tongue, heard them quote scriptures, sing Christian hymns, and pray prayers directed to the Christ they scarcely know but are learning to love. In one room, six by ten feet, thirty children sat on the floor as tightly as they could be packed while the small window and door were jammed with others. Outside children were being told by a guard to go away so that a few breaths of fresh air might enter. Brother George Bryan in Bombay, India, said: "We are suffering from the problem of over-attendance in our Bible classes and church services." What strange and dangerous words! What precious little souls! What brave soldiers of the cross who teach in that benighted land. Oh, Lord, bless Tara, Brother Bryan, Brother Bailey, and others who are leading us to a fruitful harvest in a land that threatens to close doors to all mission activity. And, please, Lord, keep the doors from closing entirely and give us wisdom and perseverance in knowing how to enter the few cracks which remain.

Our Lord has commanded us to go, and we should go because we love and want to obey our Great Com-

mander. But these other motives also inspire us to go. And in going we should not think that all the blessings are reserved for those who hear. We who go are blessed doubly because our Lord said that it is more blessed to give than to receive. What a peace of mind that comes from our labours of love as we strive to break to others the bread of life! We bear messages that angels desire to look into! By giving do we exhaust the supply? By no means, for by teaching the message becomes sweeter and dearer each time it is told. Heaven fills our souls as we realize that we have fellowship with an innumerable company of angels, that we have come to the city of the living God, and that we sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I have often thought, as I have pled for funds throughout our land that we may preach to those who have not heard, that it is almost a shame to ask members of the church to give again when they have responded only recently and given so sacrificially to another mission plea. It seems that in our time almost everyone is raising money for some mission project. Members of the church are besieged with appeals on every hand. With sad hearts at times elders say "No." At times it appears that the pressure for funds is too great. Fear is sometimes expressed that the work at home suffers because we give so much to the work abroad. At times this happens. The church at Jerusalem became so poor by giving that special contributions had to be sent to them. But who sent the gifts? Those who had heard the gospel because of their liberality. May God give us days like this again when we give so sacrificially that it will be necessary for us to sell our houses and lands and become so poor that others will need to give to us in return. When we have done this the doors of heaven will be enlarged to receive us and those who are blessed by our liberality.

Great anxieties are being expressed that the church in

America stands on the verge of another great apostasy. We need to fight it from within, it is true, but the best way to fight is to establish the church in as many lands as possible so that when apostasy comes in one land, missionaries may be sent from lands where apostasy has not come to preach the truth anew in lands where it was formerly known. It is good to become so poor by sacrificial giving that those who have been blessed, give to us again, but it is far better to have those we taught to bless us by leading us from paths of apostasy and sin and renew our souls in the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

By giving the gospel to others we receive into our own bosoms again full measure, pressed down and running over, and in the world to come, eternal life.

Brethren, I close by saying that I believe that we are living in the second great scattering of the church. The first scattering came with the persecution of the church at Jerusalem when the church there was scattered and went everywhere preaching the word. When the second world war was over there were churches in only twenty nations of the earth. Since then there has been a cold war that has scattered our brethren as soldiers, businessmen, students, preachers, teachers, and tourists into places where the church had never before been known. In addition, there have been planned exoduses which have scattered our brethren into new areas. And now congregations have been established in more than seventy nations of the earth. May we pray to God that this scattering may be intensified, for in such scattering we save both ourselves and those who hear us. Herein lies our salvation and the hope of the world. May the Abilenes, the Lubbocks, the Nashvilles, and the Little Rocks be depopulated in church membership because members of the church have sold their possessions and gone to places where the church is not known. If this is done others

will be blessed and the large congregations from which they came will be forced to work harder to convert others so that their pews might be refilled. If this is done the blessings of heaven will fill our hearts and souls.

## PRACTICAL PLANNING

George Gurganus

George Gurganus was born at Bankston, Alabama, July 21, 1916. He attended primary and secondary schools in Chicago. In 1935 he graduated from Lewis-Champlin High School in Chicago. He holds B.A. (Business Administration, 1939) and M.A. (Bible, 1954) degrees from Harding College and an M.A. degree in Speech from Syracuse University (1947). He was awarded the Ph.D. degree in Speech (Cross-Cultural Communication and Cultural Anthropology) by the Pennsylvania State University in 1963.

Irene Lynette Rout of Chicago, Illinois, a graduate of David Lipscomb College, became the bride of George Gurganus on March 22, 1941. Two daughters were born to this couple: Janet Kay (May 1, 1943) and Lynette Gay (April 24, 1947). Janet is now Mrs. David Jones of Stephenville, Texas, and Lynette is a sophomore at Harding College.

1939-43 — Worked in the employment of American Airlines at Chicago and Syracuse, New York.



1943 — He was called to serve as minister of the Church of Christ in Syracuse, which was begun by him.

1947-49 — Established and directed Camp Hunt, Hubbardsville, New York. Preached for Hubbardsville Church of Christ.

1948-49 — Taught speech and was debate coach at Colgate University.

1949-57 — Conducted Christian missionary activities in Tokyo, Japan. Established Yoyogi-hachiman Church of Christ in Tokyo.

- 1951-57—Established and directed Motosu Christian Camp in Japan in cooperation with Edward M. Brown.
- 1955-57 — Served as Education Adviser and Education Director of the U.S. Air Force Base at Tokyo International Airport.
- 1957-59— Chairman of the Speech Department of Freed-Hardeman College.
- 1959-62— Employed as Instructor and Graduate Assistant in Speech at the Pennsylvania State University.
- 1962— Appointed Associate Professor of Speech and Missions at the Harding Graduate School of Religion, Memphis, Tennessee.
- 1963— Promoted to Professor of Speech and Missions. Conducted the first annual Seminar in Missions.
- 1953, 1957, 1960, 1962— Toured the world four times visiting every continent and studying mission work.
- 1965, 1966— Director of Christian Youth Service and Evangelism Group in Japan, Korea, Okinawa, and the Philippines during the summers.
- 1968 — Professor of Missions, Abilene Christian College.

*Publications:*

*Christian Camps*, 1958.

- "The Institutionalized Behavior," *Today's Speech*, February, 1960.
- Dissertation: "An Audience Analysis of Three Missionary-Supported and Three Indigenous Christian Congregations in Tokyo, Japan," 1963.
- Papers read at Southern Speech Association Convention and Speech Association of America Convention.
- Articles written for various church publications.

*Membership:*

- Speech Association of America (Chairman of Committee for Cooperation with Foreign Universities, 1963 to present)
- Southern Speech Association
- Association of Professors of Missions
- International Platform Association

*Listings:*

Who's Who in the South and Southwest  
Directory of American Scholars  
Who's Who in American Education

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How important is it to have planning in world evangelism? In seeking an answer for this question, let us read from Luke 14, beginning with verse 28:

For which of you intending to build a tower sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he hath sufficient to finish it, lest haply after he hath laid the foundation and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock saying, "This man began to build and was not able to finish."

Sadly, this has been the situation in so many of our attempts at foreign evangelism in the past few decades. On just about every continent we have empty church buildings where missionaries of the churches of Christ have gone out to establish congregations. They have raised money in America and have erected edifices for these new converts; however, due to the lack of effective planning, in many places the church has died out, leaving an empty building as a testimony to all who observe that Christianity has failed at this location. Poor planning and the resulting failure on the part of the attempts by brethren to plant solid works in foreign countries have caused many elderships to become discouraged and to confine their mission work to the continental United States. Missionaries and elders as well are now awakening to the need for study and research in missions in order to be able to plan a more effective program for the world outreach of the church. Here is the statement of a missionary in Japan:

The day is long past when a missionary can go to the field equipped with little more than zeal and hope. And the day is surely here when we in churches of Christ had better take a hard, deep look at the methods we are using—even if that look makes us give up fifty percent of the methods we have used.

And again we notice a statement by a missionary in Italy:

We have learned many things by trial and error and I hope that new missionaries might learn of these experiences in starting their work. It hurts me to see us making the same mistakes we made here years ago such as drawing and baptizing people by handing out food and clothing; putting novice native Christians on the payroll of American churches, etc.

These are just two voices among many that are crying out for a more realistic approach to our task of world evangelism. In this lesson let us consider the following factors: (1) Much of the mission work of the past has been haphazard and ineffective. (2) More overall study and planning absolutely must be done if our mission outreach is to be effective in the future. (3) Elders of today are rapidly accepting the need for more planning and preparation in world evangelism. (4) There is no excuse today for ignorance in principles and methods of world evangelism.

I. Much of the mission work of the past has been haphazard and ineffective. Our methods have been compared to the cowboy hero who mounted his pony and rode off in all directions at the same time. Due to the congregational form of government among churches of Christ and the fact that missionaries are sent out by individual churches, there has been a lack of sharing in the accumulation of knowledge in reference to effective missionary principles and practices. As a result, when a congregation developed to the point where it could support a missionary in the foreign field, the elders chose the man

and sent him out. It was the rule rather than the exception for these elders to be operating blindly and for the missionary himself to have no preparation or understanding in reference to the nature of the project that he was undertaking. Under this system new missionaries were doomed to repeat the same mistakes made by their predecessors. Upon arriving on the field the missionaries of the churches of Christ usually followed the pattern set by denominational missionaries who preceded them. A great amount of effort was expended and tremendous amounts of money were spent with few results to show.

In the past, too, it was very difficult to obtain a realistic appraisal of a missionary program. Somehow missions was a sacred cow and anyone who dared to question or criticize a mission effort was immediately exposed to cries of blasphemy. Even today it is very difficult to obtain accurate information about missionary operations. Dr. Donald McGavran, who served twenty-five years as a missionary of the Christian Church in India, calls this cloud obscuring missionary understanding the universal fog. A rising number of brethren today are demanding a closer look at the foreign missionary enterprise. They ask for an "agonizing reappraisal" and they are asking such questions as: (1) Why doesn't the native church take hold and grow after having had a missionary working in the area for decades? (2) Why are so many missionaries returning home in frustration in about two years, before they even have opportunity to become productive on the field? (3) Why is there such a great loss of money in missions and why does it take so much money to support a mission project? Why doesn't the growth of the native church lessen the demand for finances from abroad? (4) Why are national Christians crying out loudly, "Missionary, go home!?" Yes, many questions are being raised, both by brethren at home and by missionaries abroad in reference to the mission outreach of the church. Those who are informed are calling for:

II. More overall study and planning as an absolute must if our mission outreach is to be effective. Some have questioned the ability of our brethren to really face up to the gigantic task that lies ahead and the problems that are involved in the cross-cultural communication of the gospel. I know that God's church can accomplish its purpose in the world, but the accomplishment of this purpose must be accompanied by the following factors:

A. Future planning must be accompanied by honest recognition of failures and weaknesses in our mission outreach. We must break out of our "prison of previous patterns" if these patterns have not proved adequate to the task. We have grown comfortable in *doing things* the way our fathers did them or even the way the denominations have done them. This *status quo* seems right to us and therefore has become rather sacred. There should be nothing especially sacred about tactics and strategy in missions. God has given us great basic principles. We make application of these principles in our methods of approaching peoples in reference to our task of world evangelism.

Most people are sensitive to any investigation of their work. Missionaries are especially so. As Jacob A. Loewen has said in reference to missionary defensiveness:

It is human to err, and yet everyone, including the most dedicated missionary, is sensitive about any exposure of his failures and shortcomings. It almost seems as if the more dedicated the person the more painfully he is aware of the gap between the ideal of his intentions and the actuality of his practice. The awareness of this uncomfortable gap often makes a person quite *defensive*.<sup>1</sup>

This defensiveness of the missionary has been the factor

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<sup>1</sup> Jacob A. Loewen, "Missionaries and Anthropologist Cooperate in Research," *Practical Anthropology*, XII, No. 4 (July-August, 1965), 167.

creating the universal fog of the past that has obscured an investigation of the missionary enterprise. This fog must be dispelled. Mission work must be opened up to critical inspection. Weaknesses and shortcomings must be admitted because this is the only way to clear the way for growth.

B. Future planning must be accompanied by an ability on the part of the missionary to separate the core of Christianity from culture. I doubt that there has ever been a missionary leaving from America to enter a foreign country for the propagation of the gospel of Christ that has not made the statement that he was going to Christianize the nationals and not to Americanize them. The difficulty comes in the fact that the untrained missionary when he goes out to preach to people in a foreign country does not understand the difference. He accepts practically everything about his own culture as being right and universal in application. Therefore, he has a superiority attitude in reference to his own culture and tends to look down upon every aspect of the foreign culture. This makes it extremely difficult for him to communicate to the people with whom he is working for two reasons: (1) he offends them with his superiority attitude, and (2) he offends them by walking roughshod over some of their most sacred ideas and institutions. The American who operates in a foreign country on the basis of his good American horse sense is bound to be wrong nearly all the time. A person can be sure that American horse sense will not operate as a common sense in another culture. Therefore, the American has to adjust to the other culture. The untrained missionary, however, goes out with no knowledge of what is expected, and therefore creates a little cultural America. He transplants the American church in the national country instead of planting the seed of the gospel and letting it grow and flourish in the environment in which it finds itself. This American structure that he has established may be so unnatural and even sometimes so offensive to the nationals

in their own culture that Christianity has a difficult time and cannot expect any general acceptance.

While I was in Tokyo I stood in front of the church building at Yoyogi-Hachiman where I labored for so many years, and considered the Japanese congregation. How truly Japanese was this congregation? After all, it was self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating, and had been for about twelve or thirteen years. As I stood there in front of the building and meditated, the following thoughts came to my mind:

1. The red tile roof was not Japanese. One of the deacons had told me that I had made a great mistake in putting a red tile roof on a religious building in Japan. He said that this "loud" color offended the esthetic sense of the Japanese people. They would never relate a red tile roof to a church building.

2. The architecture of the building was American. Of course, there was some slight modification to make it acceptable to the Japanese, but the larger part of it was American. As one enters the front door there is a place for removing the shoes and storing them and also containers for slippers to be worn on the inside. This is the Japanese part. Upon entering the building the interior is completely American. It has wooden floors, pews with song books, a raised platform for the pulpit, an American style pulpit with the baptistry behind it. If the Japanese had adapted the meeting house to their culture, I am sure that they would not have built the building this way. It is likely that they would have had straw mats on the floor with no pews. They would have sat on the floor.

3. The services of the church were typically American: Sunday school at ten, worship at eleven, evening services on Sunday, and evening services on Wednesday night. The order of the worship was about the same as that found in

the average American church. The hymns were based largely on American and European hymns with western style music. I would say that this was much more of an American church in its form and expression than it was Japanese. Certainly no one would say that there was anything wrong with this. The problem would arise in reference to the willingness of the Japanese, and the ease with which the Japanese could adjust to this strange and radical new religious form as well as doctrine. It is my feeling that the basic elements of Christianity could have been planted in Japan and the church developed in a Japanese dress that would have appeared much more acceptable to the Japanese. This would have eliminated the accusation of the enemies of Christianity in Japan to the most often heard criticism of Christianity, that it is a foreign religion. Brethren who are directing mission programs and missionaries who are going out to work in foreign fields absolutely need to have a concept of the nature of the local culture. They need to know what is the core of Christianity, separate from culture. They can then plant Christianity in a foreign country where it can take on the dress of the foreigners in such a way as could be far more acceptable to them.

C. Future planning must stress a need for honesty and understanding in promotion at home. Dr. Eric Fife, in a study made of young people who were prospective missionary candidates, found that many of them were turning away from missionary service and the most often presented rationalizations for not being a missionary were (1) dishonesty on the part of the missionary and the mission boards, and (2) high pressure of promotional work. So often the missionary or the promoter gives an exaggerated impression of the responsiveness of a particular field and of the growth there, when such is really not the case. Then missionaries are motivated to go to such fields with little or no preparation and with a faulty understanding of the nature of the situation that they will face on

the field. Such a condition leads to frustration and breakdown. Paul S. Rees says that:

Young people need to be motivated, not pressured. If they are not *informed*, it is useless—indeed it may be perilous—for them to be *inflamed*. Perhaps the dropout figure, which is higher than it ought to be for missionaries, would be cut drastically if we were more careful in our presentation of the requirements for this kind of ministry. The case for overseas service needs to be made honestly by sketching in with realism the tremendous challenge, the immense demands, the drudgery, the loneliness, the frustration, the exhaustion, and, along with all of this, the deep satisfactions that come from work faithfully done under the Master of all masters. What is needed in missionary recruitment is less of the *exotic* and more of the *exact*.<sup>2</sup>

Exaggeration in promotion may seem to pay off temporarily, but in the long run the cause is made to suffer.

D. Future planning must insist on humility as a basic virtue for every Christian. Ethnocentrism appears to be a universal trait of mankind. We are all proud of our group. As Americans we go out with a superiority attitude even though this may be an unconscious attitude. When the missionary with a superiority attitude approaches a national in another country who also has a superiority attitude in reference to his own culture, there is bound to be a clash. This frustrates the communication of the gospel.

The apostle Paul tells us and shows us how to overcome the barrier of a superior feeling. He demonstrated by himself becoming all things to all men. He taught the same principle in other places. Note Philippians 2:2-4. I like the Phillipian way of expressing this message.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul S. Rees, *Missions Today: Ten Urgent Needs* (Monrovia, Calif.: World Vision Magazine, 1966), pp. 23-24.

Do make my best hopes for you come true! Live together in harmony, live together in love, as though you had only one mind and one spirit between you. Never act from motives of rivalry or personal vanity, but in humility think more of one another than you do of yourselves. None of you should think only of his own affairs, but each should learn to see things from other people's point of view.

The apostle Paul believed in the principle of identification. He became one with the people in order that he might win them to Christ.

E. Future planning must be based upon a clear understanding of church growth. So many times in the past brethren have concentrated efforts and finances on fields that were not fruitful at all, while in other parts of the world the harvest was crying for reapers. Why flood areas with men and money in attempts to evangelize when very few people are baptized each year when the church could be working in areas where hundreds and even thousands are being baptized each year? It appears to me that the Lord is teaching this principle when he indicates that the seventy in the limited commission should shake off the dust from their feet when encountered by people who would not receive them. There is no excuse for a missionary or brethren who are interested not being able to find information concerning ripe fields. Much research is being put into this area at the present time. Most of the resources of the School of Missions at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, are expended for the purpose of determining the location of ripe fields and factors that contribute to rapid church growth. The church has its greatest success in areas where denominational groups are also reaping a great harvest. Such studies on behalf of denominationals can render a great service to our cause.

F. Future planning must be built upon the principle of every Christian a missionary and every congregation a missionary society. Study has shown that those groups which

are growing the most rapidly throughout the world are the ones that stress individual responsibility in preaching the gospel. Those groups who depend upon professionals to accomplish the task are either stagnant or dying. One of the reasons that the churches of Christ have expanded throughout the world in recent times is the feeling on the part of each individual Christian that it is his responsibility to preach the gospel. As a result churches have sprung up around the world when no full-time preacher was available. Hendrik Kraemer stated to a group of denominational preachers in Japan that the reason the church did not grow there was because they had the idea that in order to have a church one had to have a preacher and a church building. He went on to add that this idea had frustrated church growth. No spontaneous expansion of the church could take place because no small congregation of new converts could at the beginning provide for its own preacher and church building. As a result they became dependent upon outside help. This prevented the spontaneous expansion of the church. It is strange how many brethren in America feel that the church today must have a building and a preacher. Certainly these are desirable and helpful to a congregation that has grown to the point where they can afford these extra tools and opportunities for service. However, the early church for 250 years had no distinctive style church buildings and owned no property, yet it conquered the world for Christ. The Christians were scattered abroad and went everywhere preaching the word.

III. Elders are rapidly accepting the need for more planning and preparation in world evangelism. Instead of becoming frustrated by problems being faced on the fields at the present time, the dedicated and thinking elder is turning to an investigation of the situation hoping to find a solution because he realizes that world outreach is not an option but a necessity for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. In order for a congregation to do an effective job of mission work, the ones who oversee the formal mission program must be

informed in reference to missionary principles and practices. Otherwise, they are operating blindly. If the ones who oversee a program are operating in such a fashion, nothing but tragedy is likely to result. It is therefore necessary for the elders to become informed in methods and missions. Often the elders are older and not so receptive to the idea of intensive study. They are also often bogged down in an overwhelming amount of details in connection with the operation of the church program. Realizing this fact, many elderships have appointed missionary committees composed of young, dynamic professional men in the congregation. Often one or two elders serve with this committee. These men are much sharper in their youth and often are willing to spend more time in research in missions. Unless the elders can serve in this capacity, every congregation should appoint a missionary committee. This missionary committee should study missionary principles and practices very intensively, develop a missionary philosophy for the congregation, determine the criteria for the hiring of missionaries and the type of men desired, set up criteria for choosing a field, determine the type of training needed for the missionary prior to his entering the field, and develop a policy for the sending out and supervising of the men on the field. One very difficult problem for the committee to tackle is that of missionary support. How much money should the missionary receive on the field? Should he be the one to determine it? Should it be based upon the rate of pay for the employees of large American business corporations operating in that country? Should it be on the level of the native support of the people of their own preachers in that area? Should it be based upon the average support given to denominational missionaries in the area?, etc. Also, how much working fund would be wise for a particular situation? All of these questions are extremely vital and answers must be given. Yet, few elderships have put any real research into an effort to obtain the answers to these questions.

In addition to appointing a missionary committee to

do research in methods in world evangelism the elders should also see that the local congregation is educated in missions. Young people in the church should be stimulated to want to become missionaries or preachers of the gospel. The congregation at large should be encouraged to support the mission outreach of the church financially and also to engage in personal evangelism. The principal avenues open for the education of the church in missions is through the pulpit and through Bible classes. Both of these channels should be used for the purpose of motivating the church to greater mission outreach. Mission education should begin at the lowest grades in the Bible classes and continue on through the adult years.

IV. There is no excuse for ignorance relating to methods in missions in this enlightened age. We must readily admit that elders and missionaries of past generations may have had some excuse for operating as ineffectively as they sometimes did. Autonomous congregations sent out missionaries to all parts of the world. The missionaries who went forth had no knowledge of the need for a special orientation prior to departure for the mission field, and of course had no special training. Even the elders who sent them forth did not realize the need for such education for world evangelism in order to equip the missionary so that he could effectively communicate the gospel cross-culturally. There is little excuse for such lack on the part of elderships and missionaries today, however. The word is getting around and opportunities for education and research are becoming more and more available. We can learn from our own brethren and we can even learn a great deal from denominational sources. For example, the Missionary Research Library in New York City has nearly two hundred thousand volumes and thousands of periodicals on the subject of world evangelism. For generations the missionary enterprise has been somewhat of a sacred cow. It wasn't until the 1930's that an effort was made to fully study the work of missionaries. Today there is a wealth of material available to all who will take the time to investi-

gate, revealing the ineffective and effective methods of mission work in the past. Peter Wagner agrees that there is no longer any excuse for ignorance in mission policy and procedures:

Self-criticism, like surgery, is a painful process. But it brings worthwhile results. The evangelical missionary movement has done a heroic job in attempting to fulfill the Great Commission, but we could have done better. If we are to reach the present generation some changes in our thinking and strategy are in order.

...One of the most remarkable developments in contemporary missionary thinking is centered around the concept of church growth. Donald McGavran has done a great service to evangelical missions by awakening many missionaries (sometimes rather bluntly) to the fact that they have dedicated their lives to a cause with very little scientific knowledge of either their final objectives or the best ways to arrive at them. Our failure to promote research in our own specialization tends to put our work more on a witch-doctor level than on the level of modern medicine. God is a God of order. He is not satisfied with haphazard methods. In the past we might have pleaded ignorance as to how to go about it, but with the Institute of Church Growth at Fuller Seminary and a library of church growth books, we no longer have an excuse.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> C. Peter Wagner, "Reshaping Mission," *World Vision Magazine*, XI, No. 5 (May, 1967), 13-14.

## THE SUPERVISION OF MISSION WORK

Stanley Shipp (Panel)

Stanley Shipp was born in Lueders, Texas and received his B.S. Degree in Chemistry from Abilene Christian College. He has also done some work on a Masters Degree in the Biblical field. Stanley has had twenty years of preaching experience, ten of which was done in local work and ten in mission work. His mission work has been in Wyoming and in Lausanne, Switzerland. He has helped to conduct many campaigns for furthering the cause of Christ throughout the world, either directing the personal work or doing the preaching and in some cases both. It has been his privilege to preach the gospel of Christ in twenty-six countries and most of the fifty states. He has frequently spoken at young people's gatherings, mission workshops, and college lectureships. He has recently completed campaigns in Malaysia, Perth, Australia, and Suva, Fiji Islands in which he directed the personal work and preached each evening.

Stanley's family consists of his very devoted wife and capable partner in the Lord, Marie, and three Christian daughters. Pam and Penny are attending Abilene Christian College and Patti is a student in Junior High School.



The family as a whole is very interested in mission work and has opened their home to missionaries and those interested in mission work at every opportunity.

I know Stanley Shipp to be a true Christian in every respect; one that loves God more than anything in this world. He is loved and respected throughout the world but few love and admire him as this writer does.

Highland church is very thankful to God to have him directing our mission program.

It is our prayer that God will bless him with many years in which to serve Him and bless his family as they sacrifice a husband and father that Christ may be preached to every creature.

A. L. Haddox, elder  
HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Mission work is my first love. Making disciples of all the nations is the command of Jesus Christ and everything else in life is somehow secondary to that. To each of us who goes across the street to a neighbor, or to those who go across the seas to teach the word, there must be a certain sense of tremendous responsibility in the heart of each one who cares.

In the use of our term "mission work" we are describing a congregation's interest in another area of the world in which a man is sent to preach the gospel of Christ or in some way the message of Christ is introduced into the hearts of people, perhaps by radio or television or printing, with the specific desire to teach that person Jesus Christ and him crucified to the extent that he will become a Christian and lead others to Christ. These are our objectives.

In achieving the afore-mentioned objectives, there are many basic principles that govern our work. We often find that problems arise in doing mission work, especially where men are sent into various foreign fields of the world, and they are not properly and adequately trained, or perhaps their attitudes are not what they ought to be, and the difficulties arise. I have been assigned the topic "The Supervision of Mission Work." I am taking for granted this is referring to the supervision of the sending congregation over its missionary that has been sent by that congregation and not the supervision of the affairs and the decisions of the congregation itself in the mission field.

I am a very strong believer in very close supervision by the eldership of the sending congregation over the missionary himself. However, let me explain what I mean by this.

In the first place, the ideal is for the sending congregation to have a very definite part in the selecting of the field and the man to go to the field and his training. Ernie Gill of Perth, Australia says, "The field to be selected should be selected with the view toward the need in a particular place rather than one place in competition against another place. Each area must be judged on its own merit and not against another area." He also says the missionary and the supporting church must have complete confidence in each other and that the particular field must be chosen by the missionary and the sending church. This is the general opinion of all missionaries I have ever met.

After the missionary has become properly acquainted with the sending congregation, has been given adequate support and personnel and tools, has been sent out with a prayer on the lips of the elders and the congregation, proper communication lines have been established, basic philosophies of the mission work have been agreed upon, the general goal has been set and the man gets to the field, then what?

### CONSTANT RESPONSIBILITY

Oftentimes when the man arrives on the field, the sending congregation feels that the job is completed and that they have no further responsibility whatsoever. Nothing could be further from the truth. A sincere missionary realizes that the line of communication between the sending church and the man on the field should be more than just a check and a monthly report. There should be confidence, there should be sharing of problems and joys, but more than this there should be supervision by the congregation that has sent the man. This supervision involves at least the following things.

### AREAS OF WORK

Because most efforts today in the mission field are very wisely team efforts of at least two or more in a given work, careful consideration should be given to the men who are to work together. Definite areas of responsibility should be assigned, communication should be established well enough to prevent duplication of effort, and then each man should be able to go his own separate way, carrying out his responsibilities. Where two or three men are sent, the most desirable way is to have one area supervised by one sending congregation. If not, then a single goal or plan should be approved by all congregations concerned and the plan be the factor weighing most heavily.

The eldership, in supervising the problems of a missionary, should recognize the problem areas of the particular man from his past experience in other programs of work and have specific solutions before he goes. If two or more are going to work together, these men need to work together for awhile somewhere other than the field, if at all possible.

The sending congregation should try to instill in the missionary the determination to like his surroundings and accept the people as he finds them without being shocked. There is a tendency everywhere to compare other countries with America and try to insist on changes that are not necessary for people to obey the gospel of Christ.

### ELDERS SHOULD GO

The sending congregation should also be educated in the customs of the people being taught so that a bond of understanding exists between the two. Elders should oversee. The word "see" means to view, and view means to "eye." The sending of elders to the field to go and see what is happening with their man will make it possible for his work to be supervised.

## PLANNING

Supervision involves a plan. The plan must involve the work, and then any change in the plan can be made with proper approvals, because some things will not work. No plan is perfect, yet any plan that is thoughtfully and prayerfully put together can work to some degree of success when it is worked.

## FREEDOM

The supervision of the work should never be that which would hinder the freedom with which an individual needs to work in a country where bodily presence is absolutely essential in understanding the unique problems of that country.

In the matter of supervision, the elders should certainly encourage results in the mission field. When results are expected, they usually come. Those who supervise well will keep in close touch with the emotional condition of the missionaries and the families. They will keep in touch with the specific needs of the work and offer advice and counsel on the providing of these needs; they will encourage the spiritual growth of the new converts in any given locality, and along with the missionary himself, will see to it that the work is carried out in a successful way to a conclusion that will make it possible for the mission point to not only be able to "pay its own building rent," but also to lead others to Jesus Christ. When any missionary is not accomplishing that which he was sent to accomplish, it is the responsibility of the elders of the congregation to call that man back home to determine his difficulty and problems and to continue to support him in the field only if this man has proven himself to be capable of carrying on the work.

## THE LOCAL "MISSION" CONGREGATION

It is very definitely possible for the sending congregation's elders to supervise the work of the missionary

without in any way infringing on the autonomy of the local congregation in the field. They can still make their own decisions. They can still determine their own program of work, but the sending congregation definitely has a responsibility in connection with the missionary himself, and the work that he does, and he can be called back home at any time that the sending congregation so desires.

May God hasten the day in the church of the Lord when we will be more eager to supervise in a commendable and scriptural way the work that is being done by those men that we send out into the countries of the world.

#### THESE ARE THE CRITICAL AREAS IN SUPERVISION

*COMPREHENSION* - Know the man or men you send.

*COMMUNICATION* - Establish well-defined lines of communication before departure and during stay.

*CONFIDENCE* - Allow freedom to work in a situation where certain decisions must be made quickly.

*CONSIDERATION* - Let both missionary and sending eldership (and congregation) esteem each other highly, "in honor preferring one another."

*CONSISTENCY* - Do not become discouraged. Push for results, and provide supervision that will bring them.

Pray together, work together, keep the basic purpose in mind at all times. This will make for good supervision and guidance and a successful work for God.

## THE READER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Jim Bill McInteer

Home congregation—West End Church of Christ  
3534 West End Avenue  
Nashville, Tennessee 37205

Birth—Franklin, Kentucky—June 16, 1921

Baptized—Homer N. Rutherford—July 26, 1933

Wife—Betty Bergner

Married—July 20, 1943

Children—Marilynn 16 and Mark 13

Began preaching—Whites Creek, Tennessee 1939

Colleges attended—David Lipscomb College and Harding College



### Churches served—

Sheridan, Arkansas 1942-  
1946

Isabel, Kansas 1947

Locust Grove, Kentucky  
1948-1952

Grace Avenue, Nashville,  
Tennessee 1952-1956

West End, Nashville,  
Tennessee 1956-

### Papers—

20th Century Christian

Power for Today

Nashville Tennessean

Firm Foundation

### Books—

"The Tiny Tots Bible  
Reader"

"Great Preachers of Today,  
Vol. 10"

"Reviving the Gospel  
Meeting"

## Tracts—

- “How Shall the Young Secure Their Hearts”
- “The House Under Construction”
- “What Does the Bible Teach About Placing Membership?”
- “Johnny Pepper”
- “Introducing the Church of Christ”
- “From the Foundation to the Full Building”

## Meetings—

- Western Kansas (biannually since 1945)
- Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Colorado, Arkansas

## Permanent contact—

- Mrs. Jim Bill McInteer, Phone 292-0024
- 1100 Belvedere Drive
- Nashville, Tennessee 37204

## Other Facts—

- Serve as Business Manager of 20th Century Christian and Power for Today.
- On the editorial counsel of 20th Century Christian.
- On Board of Directors Harding College, Searcy, Arkansas.
- On Board of Directors Potter Orphan Home, Bowling Green, Ky.
- On Advisory Board of George Pepperdine College, Los Angeles, Calif.
- On Board of Directors Gospel Press, Dallas, Texas.
- Eastern Foundation for Christian Education, Nashville, Tennessee.
- A Tennessee Colonel.
- Director of the Fanning Board.
- Secretary Christian Publications, Inc.
- County Coordinator Davidson County for the Governor's Committee State of Tennessee Employment of the Physically Handicapped.
- Member of the Sons of the American Revolution.
- Director of the Tennessee School of Bible and Religion.
- Past President of the West End Civitan Club.
- Past District Chaplain of Valley District Civitan International.
- On the Advisory Board of the Royal Publishers, Inc., Johnson City, Tennessee.
- President, Board of Directors of Foundation for Christian Education.
- A Kentucky Colonel.
- Farm southern Kentucky.
- Serve as one of the editors of Christian Family Book Club.
- On National Public Information Committee for Abilene Christian College.
- Past President David Lipscomb College Alumni Association.

Recipient of Distinguished Alumnus Award Harding College, Searcy, Arkansas.

On Advisory Board of Camp Shiloh, Mendham, New Jersey.

Editor of "20th Century Christian Newsletter."

Business Manager of the "Potter Messenger."

Board of Directors Davidson County Anti-T.B. Association.

Conduct approximately five gospel meetings and five teacher training series per year.

I never remember missing a Lord's day worship. The closest call was when I broke my leg at 5:30 on Saturday night but was able to preach although sitting and with my leg in a cast the following Sunday morning. In fact, during that period I conducted an entire meeting both preaching, leading the singing and teaching a young people's class at Preston, Kansas while preaching from a chair with my leg in a cast.

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Borrowing a well aged rule of curriculum, the reader's responsibility in Christian journalism is partially summarized by the three R's; namely *reading*, *renewing*, and *responding*. If he will do these three things not only will he receive value from the works but will similarly impart power thereto!

### ON READING

The effervescent Ira North has well observed "the value of the subscription price of many gospel papers is fully received by just the physical presence of the paper in a home. Lying on the coffee table even unread, the paper exercises an influence for good." And amen!

But to achieve its greatest effect the paper must be absorbingly read. This suggestion to some raises a more elementary question: "Do people read any more?" Robert F. Black Associates, Clinton, South Carolina, a firm which specializes in advertising for religious publications only recently announced the results of a survey in U. S. A. and

Canada. Church and religious periodicals published totaled more than 85,116,606 in circulation, not including Sunday school or devotional literature. The breakdown was as follows:

Protestant	45,616,929	circulation of	1,211	publications
Catholic	28,205,917	circulation of	570	publications
Jewish	1,883,918	circulation of	77	publications
Orthodox	138,721	circulation of	22	publications
Other	9,275,121	circulation of	15	publications
Totals	85,116,606	circulation of	1,895	publications

Could it not be said that religionists at least *hope* someone is reading!

Reading and literature are not passe due to television's impact, and boats have not replaced the printed page. The Methodist Church just issued a new book whose advance sale was 2,150,000 copies, the biggest in the history of the publishing business for any book. That book is their new Methodist Hymnal. The *Methodists* think folks read when they sing!

In a New York address to the National Council of Churches' Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature, President Lyndon B. Johnson observed "few gifts within man's power to impart can equal the great liberating gift of literacy." The *President* thinks folks read—even the Gallup Polls!

The late John Kennedy said "Our young people constitute the greatest resource our Country has—and books are the nourishment essential to their intellectual growth into thoughtful and informed citizens." (The November 6, 1966 issue of "Vision" reported two Duluth high school students using that "nourishment" in a strange way. Stopped for speeding, their excuse to the policeman was "We are rushing to the library to return an overdue

book." One observed this demonstrates a book on hand is worth two in the shelves.)

Though illiteracy still abounds to an alarming degree, God wants the leaders of his church to be readers! The Holy Spirit records Paul's instruction to young Timothy to "Give attention to reading" (I Timothy 4:13). Oddly turn one book later to the same chapter and same verse and Paul requests for himself: "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus when thou comest, bring with thee, *and the book*, but *ESPECIALLY* the *PARCHMENTS!*" (II Timothy 4:13). Yes, *God* wants man to read!

Literature is atomic in its ability to move! John R. Mott said the alphabet was the most powerful invention God has committed to man. J. H. Hunter, former editor of "The Evangelical Christian" wrote in the October 1966 issue of CBMC Contact, "For good or for evil, no more potent weapon has been placed in the hands of mankind than that of the printed page...The present is being molded by them and the future, to a great extent, lies potentially unrevealed in the pages that are yet to be, but which are destined to influence the mind, the will and the heart of mankind." More than 100 years ago Daniel Webster prophesied

"If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country I do not know what is to become of us as a nation. And the thought is one to cause solemn reflection on the part of every Christian and every patriot. If truth is not diffused, error will be. If God and His Word are not known and received, the devil and his works will gain the ascendancy. If the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will. If the power of the Gospel is not felt through the length and breadth of the land, anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness, will reign without mitigation or end."

Pioneers in the Restoration Movement depended on men's willingness to read to launch their assaults of truth.

In the "Declaration and Address" Thomas Campbell advocated a "periodical publication" that "various anti-Christian enormities, innovations, and corruptions which infect the Christian church... and oppose the benign and gracious tendencies of the gospel" might be exposed. Alexander Campbell said he was "an author from choice... an editor from necessity." A. T. DeGroot in the "Disciples of Christ" wrote of Alexander Campbell and the "Millennial Harbinger." "This magazine forms the backbone of the periodical literature of the Disciples during the generation after the beginning of what Mr. Campbell himself called their separate 'denominational existence.'" Walter Scott was converted by means of a tract he read. Sam E. Stone, in the March 12, 1966, issue of the "Christian Standard," wrote, "An amazing number of first-generation converts to the Restoration were reached initially through the printed page. The scarcity of preachers combined with men's hunger for religious truth made journalism an ideal medium of evangelism." It was Scott's "Gospel Restored" that changed Moses E. Lard. On meeting Scott, Lard threw his arms around him and exclaimed, "Brother Scott, you are the man who first taught me the gospel."

Yes, the first duty of the reader is to read! If he will, things will happen. The power of the printed page can be illustrated by this story. One business man asked another "Do you really think it pays to advertise?"

"Certainly," was the reply. "Last week we advertised for a night watchman and that night we were robbed."

### THE SECOND DUTY—RENEW

Naturally a business manager of periodicals would be keeping sensitive to this need. But the suggestion is born of a deeper urgency than the financial!

Sustained reading, continuous absorption of the worthy

will produce a fine end product. If the paper is worth having, it's worth having all the time. If it's poisonous, though one may survive one dose, it's not needed at all!

To read this awhile, then that, then nothing is to rob the reader of the writer's growth. Stay with him! Let the writings become real. Geoffrey T. Bull in "The Sky is Red" said, "Better a grain of truth sown in the soft soil of the heart than a whole granary of truth stored in the dry chambers of intellect."

It's that reader who sticks to his reading that carries a wallop in his letter or phone call; when communicating, says "I've been a subscriber to your paper for ten years and-----." Immediately you come to attention! It's like the General who asked the computer "will there be war or peace?"

The computer buzzed, flashed, blinked and produced "Yes."

"Yes, what?" roared the General.

"Yes sir!" barked the computer.

Your "longevity" in the subscriber files has a way of adding emphasis to what you have to say. Need I say more?

That brings now the concluding duty.

### LET THE READER RESPOND

(In this final section it is my "necessary inference" part. You know what that is—it's making anything I want to have perfectly legitimate because it's "necessary" to my personal desires! It's that keen bit of reasoning(?) we do best in the Church of Christ while mystifying others concludes for us that I should scripturally purchase power from the TVA because there were "lights in the upper room." Our

"necessary inference" stretches farther than a worn out pair of galuses—and so does my "necessary inference" point on "*respond.*" Hmmmmm!)

If only the reader would respond! Letters to the editor—never business manager, please—are potent pieces. They do not have to be letters of disagreement—they could be letters of agreement and appreciation—I think??? They could be suggestions as to material you'd like to see covered. They could cover a multitude of matters.

Did you ever stand on the sea shore, the surf swirling about your feet, eyes affixed on the spot where tide and sand meet? There you are, waiting to claim your treasure—whatever the sea washes in! Did you ever know any prospector like this rewarded? Oh, a crab, a broken shell, a sand flea, or who knows, a whole sand dollar or a lonesome oyster—but you can't make a living sand searching! Don't let the editor just serve anything the sea washes up as you aimlessly sit back to read anything the mail washes in—tell him what you need. He'll appreciate it—I think??

This magic word of the 60's—"dialogue"—tried any of that lately? Go home and tell the preacher you want "a little dialogue" with him—you want to take issue with some of the things he states as a matter of judgment. You get dialogue? No sir, it's a monologue next Sunday and you "ain't" the one talking! Sadly there is not much give and take. We preachers take to correction like a chicken does to swimming. It seems the only place left for "dialogue" is either a gospel paper or a college lectureship. Write that editor—bless his heart, articles will appear treating subjects sermons never touch.

Be fair with your editor, as you respond. If he increases his subscription list from 10,000 to 40,000 he has four times as many "respondees" but there is still just *one* editor. Give him a little time to react. You might be

interested in this. Dartnell's of Chicago made a cost analysis of a letter. Here's what the price tag is: 50¢ to dictate it; 76¢ for transcription; 8½¢ for materials used; 5½¢ for carbon and filing; 11¢ for mailing; 17¢ in non-productive time at a total cost of \$1.68! Don't expect too many answers—the editor can't afford it!

Respond to good writing with your encouragement of it. Let it ring a bell, then you echo the lovely sound. Don't accept the non-conclusive ambling of space filled with meaningless words, like the weather man who spoke to a friend saying "Good morning—possibly."

Dr. John C. Bennett, president of Union Theological Seminary said editors of religious publications have a role of "incalculable importance" in dealing with controversial subjects. He continued "Editors can get away with a good deal." They "can be relatively independent religious voices which intrude in unexpected ways in circles that tend to avoid all real discussion of serious issues." No wonder one was moved to say "The Church of Christ does not have bishops, it has editors." But with an able truth-loving editor and an earnest truth-seeking reader there can be a rapport established which benefits, through their "dialogue," untold thousands of people.

Encourage him to speak on vital themes, rather than whether "acacia wood and shittim wood are from the same tree!" If the reader responds you will not be like the lady who sighed "I've been going to church forty years and no one yet has ever preached on what's troubling me!" So write to the paper you read. Even you will find nothing stimulates a fresh thought quite like sealing a letter!

If there ever was a double-edged sword the printed page is one. It can either curse or bless. The checks and counter-checks of the honest editor and the responsive reader can truly make it the latter. To put thoughts in

print can be dangerous—you could be mistaken, desire later to change or currently be misunderstood. But what great, noble thing, beneficial to man does not have seeds of danger in it—whether it's fire or water. The risk does not justify the failure to employ the medium. Let the reader's glasses be tinted with the blessed shade of love as he reads. Can't you sympathize with the husband as the doctor said to him "Tell your wife not to worry about that slight deafness, as it is simply an indication of advancing years."

"You tell her," defensively answered the husband.

Give the writer the benefit of the doubt—constructively help him to be clearer in the next article. He'll appreciate your response and find it helpful. Maybe he's still learning and you can be a wonderful teacher. A girl camper wrote home "Mother, there are snakes all over my bed and tent." An amazed counselor asked why she wrote that since it wasn't true. "Because I don't know how to spell caterpillar, that's why." Respond—and everybody learns something. One has said the person with a closed mind is like one who carries a bag of cement, all mixed up and permanently set!

Respond by purchasing a good book or a three year subscription for a friend. Get him something good. Jim Carty wrote in the August 6, 1967, issue of "The Christian," "Sixty one million people subscribe to one or more of the 1750 daily newspapers in America... and... spend 30 to 45 minutes reading them." Radios are in 90% of cars, 98% residences, and TV in 93% American homes. It's a competitive age for the mind of man. Be sure that gift for your friend is a worthy one! (Tried the "20th Century Christian" lately?)

Respond by your prayers. Remember those who write. Respond by your understanding. Don't give an editor a half truth, a personal grudge, or a pet project disguised as a

brotherhood matter when you write him. And when that writer "nods" as all inevitably will, respond with forgiveness. After all, everyone has to learn! The sales clerk was new. "Do you have an account here, ma'am?" "No, but I'd like to open one!" Triumphantly he marched her into the manager's office and announced, "A no-account lady to see you, sir."

Respond by obeying the truth taught. At an intersection is this sign "Cross Road—Best Humor It." Truth taught? Best obey it! If you aren't going to do the righteous deeds the editors seek to encourage, why take his paper anyhow?

### CONCLUSION

Thus as the writer pens '30' at the end of his article, without ever knowing the origin of this symbol, so must this paper close without ever knowing whether it's truly helpful to the reader or not. Let it close by re-stating the three R's for the reader. Please *read*, *renew*, and *respond*. Lifting words from two sources this challenge is laid to your heart. "Living in a day of destiny, witnessing the passing of an age and the birth hour of a new epoch, they are called to conduct corresponding to the quality of the crisis and calculated to be helpful in all the best ways to the fulfillment of the divine plan and purpose for the children of men"—(Speakers Bible, I Peter)—your sanity and your employment of the printed message can, like the challenge of old, help settle this old world. Alexander Campbell concluded the "Christian Baptist" with these words, "To Him we dedicate the talents, information, means, and every influence He has given us; and we trust the day will come when all shall see, acknowledge, and confess that our labors in the Lord are not in vain."

May such be true of every associate in every sphere of the work of every phase of Christian literature.

## THE EDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Frank Pack

Frank Pack was born March 27, 1916, in Memphis, Tennessee, where he attended the public schools and the Memphis Technical High School. He was valedictorian of the grammar school and salutatorian of his high school graduating class. He attended David Lipscomb College and received the B.A. degree from the University of Chattanooga and the M.A. degree from Vanderbilt University. He has served as local minister for the Reid Avenue and the Grace Avenue Churches in Nashville; the St. Elmo Church in Chattanooga, the Burbank, California, congregation, and the Northside Church in Abilene, Texas. He has taught in David Lipscomb College, in the University of Southern California, and served as professor of Bible at Abilene Christian College where he taught for fourteen years. He was professor of religion at Pepperdine College of Los Angeles from 1947-1949, and he is now Chairman of the Department of Religion and has recently also become Dean of the Graduate School at Pepperdine College.

Brother Pack holds membership in the following honor societies:

Phi Beta Kappa; Phi Kappa Phi; Pi Gamma Mu; Alpha Chi, and he served for several years as the sponsor of the ACC chapter of Alpha Chi. He holds membership in the Society of Biblical Literature, the American Academy of Religion, and the American Society of Church History.



He serves on the staff of the *Gospel Advocate* and the *20th Century Christian* and is a member of the editorial committee of *Mission*. He is the editor of *Our Bible*, a book of essays written as a *Festschrift* for six retiring faculty and staff members of Abilene Christian College.

Among Brother Pack's honors are the trustees' citation as Outstanding Teacher in Abilene Christian College for 1958, and the annual McGarvey award for the outstanding article in the *Restoration Quarterly*, "A Study of Papyrus Bodmer II." His dissertation study on the methodology of Origen in New Testament Textual Criticism received special mention in an article on textual criticism written by Dr. M. M. Parvis in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Brother Pack has had lengthy service on both the graduate council and the lectureship committee at Abilene Christian College, and for five years taught a course in Christianity and Communism in its American Studies Program.

He was married to Miss Della Carlton, June 22, 1947, in Los Angeles, California. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Pack, still reside in Memphis, Tennessee, as does a brother, Joe. Another brother, Charles Dwight, resides in New Orleans.

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The editor's chair is not an easy seat. This is particularly true for the editor of a periodical claiming to be a Christian journal. Since Elias Smith founded the HERALD OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY in 1808, the Restoration Movement has had a great number of papers wielding tremendous influence among a people who do not have a hierarchy or ecclesiastical organization pontificating for them. We have had almost all types of religious papers — news, opinion-forming, controversial, special interest, scholarly, and personality "sheets." What each paper's influence has been upon the cause of New Testament Christianity has depended largely on the way the editor has implemented the goals of the publication.

The editor of a religious paper has both general and specific responsibilities. His specific duties will vary according to the type of paper he edits. His general responsibilities concern us in this part of our panel. There are four major areas of editorial responsibility which demand our consideration: first, his responsibility to the

reader, second, to the goals or purposes of the paper, third, to the brotherhood, and last, to the writer.

His primary responsibility to the reader is to see that material of good quality suited to the needs and interests of his readers is provided, for the paper exists for the benefit of its readers. He must select articles from writers who have something worthwhile to say and who have some ability in saying it interestingly. He is under no obligation to publish whatever is sent to him by someone who wants to get something "off his chest." His is the difficult task of accepting or rejecting material in keeping with his standard of quality. Religious journals are in competition for the time of readers with the well-laid out, competently produced secular journals, and they cannot keep their readers' interest long with poorly written articles. This is the reason for recruiting a group of competent persons to act as a staff on a publication. Even here the guidance and imaginative suggestions of the editor are very important in encouraging good writing. A workshop bringing together persons of experience and ability in the field of journalism could be of great help to all of us who are trying to write for religious publications. Perhaps we can have a Christian Writers' Workshop soon sponsored by some of our publishers or by one of our schools.

Every paper exists to accomplish certain goals, and these are usually declared and re-emphasized periodically for the benefit of its readers. The materials appearing in the paper should fit into these goals. It is the editor's responsibility to act as a referee or judge here in selecting what shall be published in his paper. He is a guardian of the public good as well as custodian of the paper's usefulness. He realizes that when once a thing is printed, it is there and cannot be changed regardless of how bad it may be. There is a certain cold hardness about the printed word. As one who desires to advance truth, the editor must judge concerning the timeliness of an article. He must decide whether

enough has been said for now on a certain issue or problem, because there is always another day to be faced. He must be fair to other people as a Christian who not only believes the Golden Rule but endeavors to practice it. Yet he must recognize that the paper has a right to take sides. It is usually not a completely open forum although it may have a section reserved in which people may air opposing views. He may provide an open forum in which both sides are fully aired if this is the purpose of the paper, but he is not necessarily obligated to do so. Regardless of the policy of his paper, however, he must be Christian in his treatment of those differing from him or the force of what he stands for is weakened and his Christian influence undercut. In this area the editor has some of his greatest ethical dilemmas. How can he be fair to an opponent or an opposing position and at the same time forcefully advance what he believes to be the right side of an issue or question? In his acceptance or rejection of articles he must be guided by what his paper is to do, what place in the total spectrum of Christian journalism it is designed to fill, for his decisions will largely determine its character and usefulness.

These comments lead directly to and overlap necessarily the next area of responsibility—that to the brotherhood. He has a great responsibility to the brotherhood to be loyal not only to the scriptures, but also to truth generally, and make sure that his publication does not disseminate erroneous and damaging material against brethren, churches, or those outside the body of Christ. Because editors wield so much influence among us through their papers, they act as teachers and guides to the brotherhood. Their positions and attitudes have far reaching effect upon preachers and people alike. Men who are power hungry and desirous of building around themselves a power structure, or a sectarian following can do great damage. Neither editors nor papers should “run the brotherhood” and godly editors have no such ambitions. Every Christian

should desire to exalt the headship and authority of Jesus Christ and humbly to seek His way and advance His cause in the world. The editor's decisions must be made out of a deep longing to help the church he more nearly the church of the New Testament. He will not expect everything in his paper to please everybody. In fact, if it did he should become alarmed and critically evaluate what he is doing. He will need courage to stand for fairness and truth in times of great pressure, for tremendous pressures are exerted at times on editors to throw their influence in a direction that will please certain special interests. His goal can be stated in these words of Paul, "Our battle is to bring down every deceptive fantasy and every imposing defense that men erect against the true knowledge of God. We even fight to capture every thought until it acknowledges the authority of Christ." (II Cor. 10: 5. J. B. Phillips Translation)

The editor also has a responsibility to the writers in his paper. The more inexperienced a writer is the more sensitive he oftentimes is to any changing or editing of his material, as though there were something sacred about his writing. Yet any experienced writer will tell you that his material has oftentimes been edited and revised possibly more than once in preparing it for publication. Editors need to protect writers from themselves—from making mistakes of carelessness or overstatement which will reflect on them. Many times the way a thing is said is as important as the truth it expresses so far as readers are concerned. The need for clarity in expression and making one's self properly understood is basic for any writer. Editing material can be of great help to a writer. In fact, every experienced writer has profited by such editing. Yet it is also the editor's responsibility to edit the material in such a way that the writer's point of view is preserved and not altered or misrepresented. It would be better to reject an article than to be unfair to the writer's viewpoint. Editors can help make better writers through their

criticisms and suggestions. Holding up before us high standards of quality can enable those who write to communicate more effectively with the public the paper reaches and increase the circulation and readership of the paper thereby extending its impact for good.

## THE COLLEGE AND THE CHURCH

Don H. Morris

Don Heath Morris, President of Abilene Christian College, was born August 13, 1902, in DeSoto, Texas, into a pioneer Dallas County family. After graduation from DeSoto High School in 1918 he enrolled for two years at Thorp Spring (Texas) Christian College. After graduating in 1920, he taught Latin and Mathematics at Red Oak High School for two years. He went to Abilene in 1922 at the age of 20 where he enrolled in Abilene Christian College. He was graduated in 1924 with a B.A. degree in Education, with an outstanding record as a member of the college debate team.

After graduation from ACC, Morris became a teacher and the debate coach at Abilene High School where he coached one state-championship debate team. During his tenure as teacher, he married Alberta Allen, his college sweetheart, on November 1, 1924. President and Mrs. Morris have three married children and ten grandchildren.

In 1928 Morris returned to Abilene Christian College as speech teacher, and within four years he became vice president. From 1932 to 1940 he served as vice president and head of the Speech Department. In 1930 he was awarded the M.A. degree in education by the University of Texas.



Dr. Morris became Abilene Christian College's seventh president in 1940, only 16 years after his graduation, and he was the first ex-student to become president of the College.

In 1956, McMurry College in Abilene honored President Morris with the Doctor of Laws Degree. In 1963, Pepperdine College conferred upon him the same degree.

Morris is a past-president of the Texas Council of Church Related Colleges. He has been honored with a life-membership in the Texas Conference of Parents and Teachers and is a member of the Texas State Teachers Association.

He is a member and past-president of the Abilene Rotary Club, and holds membership in Phi Delta Kappa, Alpha Chi and Blue Key. He serves as an elder of the College Church of Christ in Abilene.

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The purpose of the Christian college is to prepare each student and to influence each student in such a way that he will follow closer to the Lord Jesus than he might have if he had not attended the Christian college. The purpose then of the Christian college is to enable every student to do more efficient work in the church, and it is the purpose of the Christian college to cause its students to want to do more in the church. The Christian college exists because of the strength that it can give to individual Christians and consequently the strength that it can give to the church of the Lord.

The Christian college will result in the building up of the church in numbers and in the increasing of the loyalty and zeal of the members of the church. It will also result, I believe, in a higher respect for the church and a better understanding of the church on the part of others. Every place that I know where there has been a Christian college, these things which I have mentioned have been the result. It is true in the Nashville, Tennessee area—it is true in Arkansas—in West Texas—in Nebraska, and wherever Christian colleges are.

If you ever hear an ex-student of a Christian college in Abilene, in California, in Oklahoma, Tennessee, or Michigan talk in such a way that he appears to emphasize the importance of the college more than he does the

church (and I have known of ex-students to do this), please understand that this is simply over-enthusiasm on the part of this individual. This happens just as sometimes individuals become over-enthusiastic about their hometown, their business, or some other organization of which they are a part. The real test of the Christian college and its work—the real test of its influence upon the church is the growth and the spirituality of congregations of the church in those areas where the ex-students of that college live.

Since the days of the earliest pioneers in the restoration, our people have been greatly interested in schools directed by members of the church whose teachers were members of the church. We have believed that the restoration of New Testament Christianity is helped when members of the church and especially leaders of the church are taught the Bible while they are securing a secular education. Through the years parents have been interested in their children being given this kind of education. Thinking men and women have been interested in all young people being given this kind of education. We as a people have believed that the restoration of New Testament Christianity has been built on scholarship. Our plea today and our success upon getting people to accept our plea still depends upon sound scholarship.

So we have always been interested in schools. And our schools have had an important part in our movement. The three centers of education in the 19th century restoration movement were: First, the Blue Grass Regions of Kentucky, with the teachings of Barton W. Stone in secondary schools, with Bacon College, and its successor, Kentucky University. Second, around Nashville, Tennessee where the Tolbert Fannings labored in Christian schools for some 50 years, resulting in the unusual growth of the church there and in the establishing of the Nashville Bible School by David Lipscomb, and finally David Lipscomb College. Third, around Bethany, Virginia.

It would help us to understand better our subject, "The College and the Church" to call attention to the early work of Barton W. Stone as a school man. In 1815, after a number of years of intensive evangelistic work, he began in Lexington, Kentucky, a "high school." In 1819-20 Stone accepted a position as the principal of an Academy in Georgetown, Kentucky. He says that many of his students at Lexington followed him to Georgetown and that the number of students soon became large. He also established in Georgetown a congregation numbering he says, "six or seven, which quickly grew into two or three hundred." It seems that his teaching and preaching went together. He said, "I was everywhere baptizing, sometimes thirty at a time. Many of them were my pupils. Some of them became useful preachers afterwards." It has been said that at least seven young men were influenced to preach by this one year's work by Barton W. Stone and by the association of these young men with him. All of these became prominent and useful evangelists. Among them were John Rogers, Francis R. Palmer, and John Allen Gano. Gano, who preached most successfully for 60 years, said of his training under Stone, "He led my youthful mind to contemplate and admire the beauties of some of the Latin poets. His deportment impressed me with the reality of religion. He it was who directed my erratic spirit to the Book of God." Stone's school work through John Allen Gano has come down to influence for good the church in Texas and even to have its effect upon the building and the direction given by the founders to Abilene Christian College. John Allen Gano was the grandson of John Gano, the well-known Baptist preacher who immersed George Washington during the Revolutionary War. And he was the grandfather of the Gano men who made up a firm of attorneys and who were leaders in the church in Dallas just after the turn of the century. Members of this firm wrote the Charter for Abilene Christian College and other early Christian schools in Texas.

Contemporary with Stone's early efforts were those of Alexander Campbell in the establishment of Buffalo Seminary in January 1818. Campbell enlarged his home and dedicated the addition to the training of young men, but after seven years discontinued this effort to give attention to debating and publishing as enterprises for spreading the plea for the ancient order.

Alexander Campbell's educational work was felt especially in the formation of Bethany College. Here he contemplated the training of the physical and intellectual man and said that, though these elements of the individual should not be neglected, this training of the physical and intellectual should always be kept secondary to that of the moral man. To achieve this it was Campbell's plan to make the Bible a textbook for daily use in the college. He said, "Education without the Bible and moral training is a natural calamity rather than a public benefaction." He advocated that the Bible be given to "every school in the country without one sectarian or denominational note or comment."

Bethany College, in the words of Alexander Campbell was, "the first college in the Union and the first known in any history accessible to us that was founded upon the Holy Bible as an everyday lecture and everyday study as the only safe and authoritative textbook of humanity, theology, and Christology."

Whatever mistakes Alexander Campbell might have made later in his life, let us be thankful for this conception of education, which comes down as a great heritage to us today. This one statement by Campbell, I think, signifies the relationship between the Christian college and the church.

The natural question is how do Christian schools help in the ongoing of the church. The answer is that Christian colleges take students who in most cases have already

been reared in Christian homes and influenced by congregations of the church. By attending Christian colleges they become better informed in the scriptures and more highly developed spiritually and as educated men and women make better informed leaders and teachers in the church.

Another reason that Christian colleges help in the ongoing of the church is that young men and women who attend these colleges in most cases establish strong Christian homes. Good Christian homes are the backbone of the church.

What should the relationship be, from an organizational standpoint, between a Christian college and congregations of the church? You and I are interested in the integrity of the New Testament church. We are interested in the church operating according to the New Testament pattern. To me this means that the organizational independence of the college (which is not mentioned in the New Testament) and the organizational independence of the church should be clearcut. The trustees and the faculty of a Christian college are responsible for the management of the college. Congregations of the church are led by elders and deacons. The college and the church, then, should both realize their independence of each other.

Yet the relationship between the college and the church should be very close—just as the relationship between a family of Christians and the church is close. At Abilene Christian College we want members of the church to have an important part in the college and we want all Christians to feel that Abilene Christian College is their school because they are Christians. We believe that every preacher, every elder, and every Christian should be interested in the college, the life on its campus, and what we teach. It means that he should use his influence in every legitimate way to help make Abilene Christian College the best Christian college possible.

At the same time we want every student and every faculty member to have an important part in the church and to carry out his responsibility in the church as he should. We want every faculty member to be vitally interested in and to be active in the church. We would like for every student to be the same. In fact, it is this kind of activity on the part of faculty and students—it is the beliefs and faith of faculty and students—and it is the influence for good on the part of faculty and students and board members that make Abilene Christian College a Christian college.

In our land the church and the school are the foundations of every community. They are the foundations of our nation and of our civilization. The life of S. N. Allen, who served many years as a trustee of Abilene Christian College, is an excellent testimony of the worth of both institutions. In earlier days when Brother Allen moved into a new community in the frontier ranch country of West Texas, he always did two things. First, he started a congregation of the church. Also, if there were not one already, he helped establish a school.

And so when we consider the Christian college and the church, we are thinking about two very important institutions. One is human; that is true. The other is divine. The church is the body of Christ. The college is important because it is enlightening to individuals and enables individuals to better serve in the church.

If I had my life ahead of me (and the most of it is behind me), I would want again for it to be spent in a Christian college with the best opportunity possible to live and work in the church of the Lord. I believe that by working in the school and serving in the church I would do the most effective work possible for the prosperity of the Lord's church and for the saving of souls.

## GOALS IN LECTURESHIP PLANNING

J. D. Thomas

J. D. Thomas is a Professor of Bible at Abilene Christian College, where he has taught since 1949 and from which he received the B.A. degree in Bible and Greek in 1943. The M.A. degree, with a major in Church History, was conferred upon him by Southern Methodist University in 1944, and the Ph.D. degree in New Testament and Early Christian Literature, by the Humanities Division of the University of Chicago, 1957.

Thomas served as Assistant City Manager in Lubbock, Texas, from 1939 to 1942 and as minister at the Northwest Church of Christ in Chicago from 1945 to 1949. He has been the director of the Annual Bible Lectureship at Abilene Christian College since 1952 and serves the Bible Department of the college as Graduate Advisor in the Doctrinal field. He is Lectureship Editor of the ACC publication, *ACC Today*.

Thomas is on the Editorial Board of the *Restoration Quarterly* and of *Ricerche*, and Italian scholarly journal, and is a staff writer for the *Gospel Advocate* and for the *20th Century Christian*. He holds membership in the Society of Biblical Literature (one time president of the Southwestern section), the American Academy of Religion, the American Schools of Oriental Research, the American Philosophical Society, the Southwestern Philosophical Society, the American Scientific Affiliation, the Evangelical Theological Society, and the National Association of Evangelicals.



He has been a frequent contributor to various periodicals, and in 1958 published *We Be Brethren*, a study in Biblical Interpretation. In 1961, he published *Evolution and An-*

*tiquity*. As owner-manager of Biblical Research Press, he is the editor and publisher of the sermon series, *Great Preachers of Today*, and of the funeral sermon volume, *Sorrow and Joy*. He published Volume I of *Facts and Faith*, a treatment of apologetics, in 1966, and plans other volumes in this series for later. He has written a *Self-Study Guide to Romans*; a commentary on *Romans* in *The Living Word* series; and is now working on *FIRST CORINTHIANS* in a New Testament Commentary series. He serves as editor and publisher of a Bible class series for adults, *The WAY of LIFE*, comprised of numerous titles of special interest to Bible students.

Thomas was the 1958 speaker on the Far East Fellowship in Tokyo, Japan, and he also spoke in Korea, Okinawa, Formosa, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

He is married to the former Mary Katherine Payne, and they have two children—Hannah, (Mrs. Dwayne Kissick), and John Paul—and three grandchildren—Davey, Sammy, and Lucky Fish.

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There are definite goals that govern the planning of the Abilene Christian College Annual Bible Lectureship and, we presume, the lectureships of other Christian colleges.

A primary goal of the Lectureship is to inspire and inform those present to better enable them to do an acceptable work for the Lord in their own communities. These "seasons of refreshing" do furnish needed inspiration. Most Lectureship visitors are found among the "choicest saints" in the several congregations from whence they come, but even so, all of us are aided by the "recharging of our spiritual batteries" on occasion, and five days of the sort of preaching and teaching which we hear at Lectureship gives us all a tremendous stimulus. There is also a great lift that comes from just being in attendance at a gathering like this, into which so many capable Christians have put so much effort—not only those who have prepared a part of the program, but also those who have made great financial or other sacrifices to come and be in attendance.

We are a part of a great, growing brotherhood, and to see and be a part of the Lectureship each year, as the brotherhood reaches out to new challenges, helps us feel the pulse and throb of the growth itself as it is taking place, and this furnishes us with a great spiritual thrill.

The opportunity to visit with our old friends—Christians whom we admire and appreciate, and to be brought up-to-date with their activities are very worthwhile experiences. Again, the opportunity to hear and make acquaintances with successful Christians in many walks of life about whom we have heard, or whom we know by reputation, increases the values of the annual February visit to Abilene.

The Lectureship furnishes practical values by enabling contacts, such as opportunities in Preacher Placement—elders contacting prospective preachers and, likewise, preachers learning about new opportunities for service—at times when changes are indicated. There is hardly a better place for missionaries and sponsors to find one another, because at the Lectureship there is opportunity for comparisons to be made and for appeals to be presented in their best form.

It is of great practical value to go through the tent and see what is new in books, publications, visual aids, and to learn of new ideas as to how best to disseminate the word. In our day the best thinking in the brotherhood, as well as good helpful aids used in the denominational world, are finding their way into print, and a person who is up-to-date with the thinking of his own generation is in the best position to apply the gospel message to the real needs of his day.

The Lectureship inspires by producing great preaching. Almost every preacher can do "great" preaching when given the challenge of the right occasion, and the Lectureship at Abilene Christian College usually calls out this greatness,

perhaps better than other occasions. It is no wonder that Lectureship audiences sit enthralled as they listen to the powerful word of God expounded by great preachers on a great occasion. The Lectureship further challenges us in general to the needs of many good works and keeps us constantly reminded that we too should be about our "Father's business." The mission emphasis is strong in every Lectureship and it is standard policy to make it as strong as we can each year.

The exchange of ideas as to *methods* of communicating Christ and His gospel to the unsaved world occurs at the Lectureship, not only in the tent where both new ideas and new devices are presented, but through Lectureship classes and lectures. Methods of "getting the job done" are brought here and set forth after having been gleaned from the four corners of the world. It is no wonder that Lectureship visitors are able to do greater and more efficient work for the Lord when they go back home.

### SPIRITUAL AID TO STUDENTS

A chief purpose in the early days of the ACC Lectureship was for spiritual gain of students at the College and this has never been lost sight of in our planning. Students are adults in a very real sense and can profit spiritually from the Lectureship just the same as others. Most students who come to the college and see the Lectureship in action undergo an enlargement of their spiritual vision as they come to realize more fully the great challenge of taking Christ to the world, and how it can be and is being done. They get new ideas concerning spiritual matters and it becomes a real inspiration to them to see the brotherhood in action in the planning, inspiring, and motivating of people in the Lord's work. This inspiration and enthusiasm "rubs off" on the students and furnishes them a powerful challenge to do great things for Christ. Sometimes the full im-

pact of the Lectureship on the ACC student is not realized until about ten years later, when he becomes more mature and settled down and is making his own contribution in the Lord's service; but even then, he still remembers the words and actions, the challenges and the hopes that were generated at the Lectureship.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

The ACC Lectureship furnishes some excellent "by-products" to its spiritual influence in that it is able to contribute a great deal to the Public-Relations program of the College. Inasmuch as the school exists, however, for spiritual ends, even these public-relations gains are ultimately spiritual in significance. The Lectureship is an opportunity for friends (and possible future donors) of the College to visit the campus and to see the impact of the College in a rather full way. Inasmuch as many supporters of the College are here at this time, there is opportunity for new friends to develop acquaintance with people who are dedicated to the school and its work. It is an occasion for the building of goodwill. Students and faculty continue classes, while leaders and loyal supporters are also in action making plans and discussing results so that the new friends can see the entire picture in one visit. The spiritual enthusiasm generated during Lecture Week contributes toward good public relations. All of these factors help toward student recruitment, toward financial help (through the opportunity to explain programs), toward faculty recruitment and toward the enlargement of support from numerous *individuals*, both within and without the brotherhood.

## DOCTRINAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE LECTURESHIP

Since the New Testament recognizes complete autonomy of local congregations of the Lord's church, there is no

organization of any kind that can make laws or pass legislation that will be binding upon anyone. Strictly speaking, therefore, the ACC Lectureship is not in the business of officially determining doctrine or making binding pronouncements. This illustrates the great genius of the Lord's plan for the New Testament church. Members, brotherhood-wide, are bound together with a spiritual "tie that binds" and we all have a vital interest in the true cause of Christ, anywhere and everywhere. We cooperate freely and fully. At the same time, there is no binding ecclesiastical authority over members of different congregations, and this the Lectureship recognizes at all times. In the spirit of a common interest, strong ties of fellowship, and genuine Christian love we do have many teaching values presented here. These are not "binding," however, on anyone, any more than any other preaching or teaching; and they carry obligations only insofar as they set forth truth and insofar as we can "examine the scriptures" and "see whether these things are so."

On the positive side, however, those who plan the Lectureship do have a doctrinal obligation as much as any Christian has to conserve the basic principles and teachings of the New Testament. In the planning of the program and the selection of speakers and teachers, we feel that we have responsibility, insofar as we can control it, to see that the Bible is upheld as the final and only authority in matters religious. Further, God's revelation to men is through the "propositional word" statements of the Bible as they are rationally and logically understood and appropriated by the normal human mind. There is no other revelation, such as by direct operation of the Holy Spirit, by existential experiences, or through any other subjective avenues. A passage of scripture is a logical, definite *fact* which must be fully taken into account in one's total religious outlook, and the total truth will be comprised of the complete harmonization of all of the Biblical passages that bear upon the point under consideration.

The Biblical records deal with historical facts, and our faith in Jesus Christ involves our accepting as literal history His birth of a virgin, His miraculous powers, His resurrection from the dead and His full and complete humanity, as well as His full and complete divinity. The Bible being God's objective and complete revelation, there is no other religious authority nor is there revelatory value in anyone's private experience. The *word-revelation* is a "public" revelation, universally applicable to all men on the same basis and is, therefore, classified as objective truth, in contrast with the idea of private truth or private revelation.

Lectureship planners are aware that the gospel does not change, neither does human nature nor human spiritual needs change, yet, we realize that cultures change and vary, so that the *application* of the gospel to the needs of men of different cultures (and even ages) need to be somewhat different. The apostle Paul recognized this principle of using different approaches—

And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews: to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some (I Corinthians 9:20-22).

All of this means that as leaders in the Lord's church we should be aware that our own culture changes. Scientific innovations and philosophical fads constantly change the thinking and the interests and, indeed, the needs of the peoples of the present age, and the Christian who would best communicate Christ to his friends and neighbors should stay up-to-date with what is going on in his world in order to know how to make efficient application of the unchanging gospel message to the needs of sinners

who are continually confronted with changing standards of conduct and constantly changing views as to what is valuable and what is important in the world.

The apostle Paul was well acquainted with Stoic philosophy, as evidenced by his speech on Mars Hill (Acts 17), where he quoted two of their own authors in support of his gospel proclamation. He was well aware of Gnostic inclinations—"knowledge falsely so-called" (I Timothy 6:20), and John was well aware of what was going on in his day when he condemned the activities of the prophets of the antichrist (I John 4:1-5). Cultural, philosophical and ideological changes do come, and the new situations constantly call for new applications of the gospel message. This is what is commonly meant by the statement that "preaching should be relevant." It does not at all mean that the gospel should be changed, but rather that we change the *application* of the gospel so that it will confront the real thinking and the present issues that are in people's minds. It would have been a mistake for Paul to have preached to Stoics as though they were of the Jewish tradition; and it would have been wrong for him to have preached to the Jews as if they were of the group that was "without the law." Paul was relevant in his preaching. He "became all things to all men" in order to save them, but he was relevant in that he became the right thing to the particular group to which he was preaching in each case. When we suggest up-to-dateness in preaching, we are simply saying that preaching ought to be applicable to the issues in men's minds today and not merely to nineteenth century or other issues or problems. The gospel has all the answers for both the nineteenth and twentieth century questions, but today's gospel preacher is not relevant if he tries to give nineteenth century answers to twentieth century questions, or if he doesn't know what the twentieth century questions are.

Those who plan the Lectureships feel the obligation to present programs that will help to meet the issues of the present day.

These are goals in Lectureship planning.

