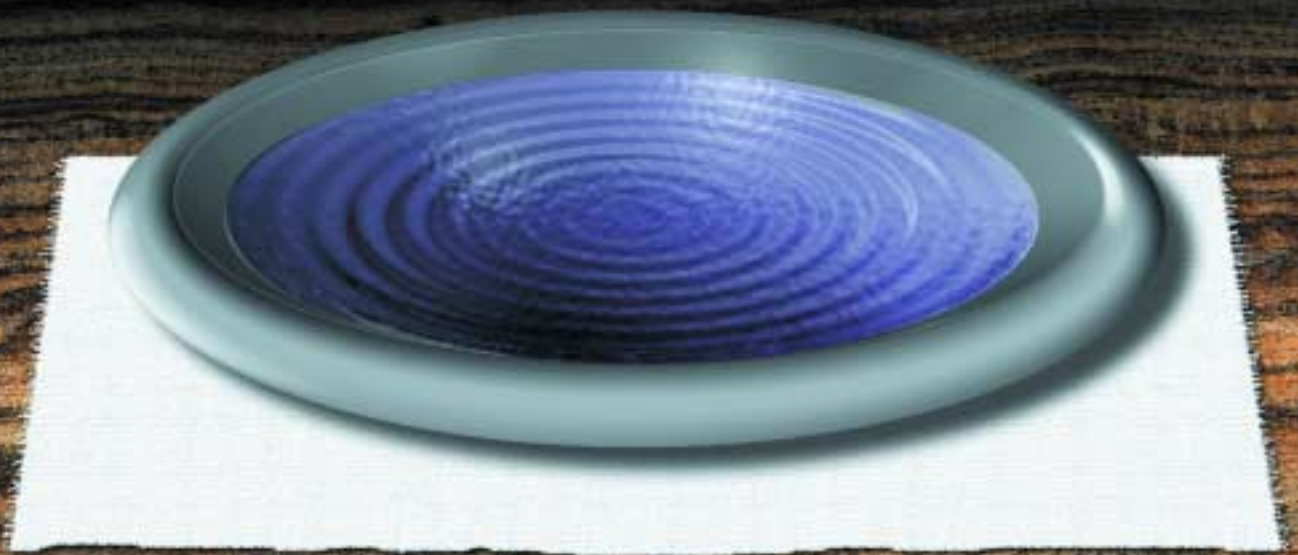


# UPLLOOK

MAY 2000

*If I then,  
your Lord and Master,  
have washed your feet:  
ye ought to wash  
one another's feet.*



*The Nexte Thynge*

# THE NEXTE THYNGE

*Is it possible to walk in step with the will of God? Begin with the next step.*

I have discovered in life that it isn't the work you *do* that tires you; it is the work you *ought* to do but leave undone. In an old poetry book which I value there is an anonymous poem called "Doe the Nexte Thyng." It says:

*From an old English parsonage down by the sea,  
There came in the twilight a message to me;  
Its quaint Saxon legend deeply engraven,  
Has to my thinking the teaching of heaven;  
And on through the hours the quiet words ring  
Like a low inspiration: "Doe the Nexte Thyng."*

*Jesus would have you daily more free,  
Knowing the might of this royal decree;  
Ever in waiting, glad for His call,  
Tranquil in chastening, trusting through all.  
Comings and goings no turmoil need bring,  
His all your future: "Doe the Nexte Thyng."*

*Do it immediately, do it with prayer,  
Do it reliantly, casting all care;  
Do it with reverence, tracing His hand  
Who placed it before you with earnest command.  
Stayed on Omnipotence, safe 'neath His wing,  
Leave the results to Him: "Doe the Nexte Thyng."*

We are living in frenetic days, days so busy that they can squeeze eternity right out of our minds and hearts. Time's ever increasing pace sweeps us past the quiet place, the sanctuary of the soul, pushing us out into the stormy hours without even a glance at the map or compass, without a word to the Captain. Days turn into weeks...into years...into decades. The urgent things of life, rarely of eternal significance, push out the important things, which rarely seem to be urgent. I can always witness to my neighbor or study my Bible or visit the fatherless and widow tomorrow—or so my harried schedule tells me. But it isn't true, of course. I have no tomorrows, only today. And now is the time to *doe the nexte thyng*.

I think it's fair to say that every Christian who is at all listening for the Shepherd's voice generally knows what He wants us to do next. We may not know what to do regarding some big decision down the road, but the Lord didn't promise us wisdom for situations that have

not arrived yet. He is the God who is "*a very present help,*" a help in the nick of time.

Sometimes I don't do the next thing because I think other tasks would be more enjoyable to perform. The tough jobs slip to the bottom of the pile. But the Lord has promised that His will is "*good and acceptable and perfect.*" His commandments are not grievous. His yoke is easy, His burden light. Personal enjoyment (though thought to be man's inalienable right) is not the basis for a servant doing a work for God.

Sometimes I don't do the next thing because I feel I am not up to the challenge. But He is the kindest Master and never gives us something that is beyond our Spirit-aided capacity to do. He would say to us as He said to another: "*My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*" Paul's ready response: "*Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me*" (2 Cor. 12:9). If I respond to the nudgings of the Spirit, I can be certain of the following:

1. *The nexte thyng* for you to do will be a vital component of God's cosmic plan for the universe. The Lord is offering you and me the opportunity to have a significant part in the governing of the universe.
2. *The nexte thyng* gives us the thrilling privilege of seeing God turn time into eternity by taking our ordinary lives and doing extraordinary things in them.
3. *The nexte thyng* can certainly be accomplished because all the resources of heaven are made available to the child of God who is about his Father's business.
4. *The nexte thyng* could be the last thing on the Lord's list for me to do before His return. One of these days will be the last. Remember: you can never do a good thing too soon because you never know how soon it will be too late. *Doe the nexte thyng*.



*J. B. Nicholson, Jr.*

J. B. Nicholson, Jr.

# UPLOOK

Volume 66

May 2000

Number 4

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Fax: (616) 456-5522

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# The crying need today

*Farmers use machines and methods and muscle. But fruit needs more than that.*

On looking around at the Lord's work, and the vast amount of machinery of one kind and another in operation, it must strike even the most careless observer that the results are terribly small in proportion to the means used.

It is true that the gospel is to be preached for a witness; true that what is required of us is that we be found faithful; true that the people being taken out of the Gentiles for His Name are a "little flock" compared with the world around. Yet, making every allowance, does not a single glance convince us that there is a terrible lack somewhere?

There is a great lack; and we must not gloss it over, but look the matter straight in the face. With the appliances at work, souls ought to be flocking to the Christ of God; and there should be such a living power about every saint of God that the ungodly would feel in their presence as if standing within the confines of eternity. Is it so? We know it is not.

We thank God for the mighty wonders He has done in the past; and we praise Him for those of His saints—few though they be—men and women that we feel are living in the very presence of God. But do we not look on these few as exceptional cases? We settle down on our lees and are satisfied; yet we begin to wonder at the "insignificant results." We "can't understand" the worldliness of so many of the saints; and perhaps there are other things we wonder at, too. But need we wonder?

What we need is to be filled (Eph. 3:19). There needs to be room in us for God to fill us with Himself.

If "consecrate" means a filling of the hand (as the margin has it in 1 Chron. 29:5), then we must be filled with God; and, if filled with Him, there is room for nothing else. You may call it "full surrender," or any other name; but it is the reality we want—the fact accomplished in each one's experience that I am God's. It is easy to sing "All for Jesus," but we want to live in the power of it—to dwell in the secret place of the Most High (Ps. 91:1), abiding under the shadow of the Almighty.

Thus abiding, what does God say shall be the result? "*Much fruit*" (Jn. 15:5); not the meager results of long and laborious striving; but the spontaneous outcome of a life hid with Christ in God. Ah! that is what we want. And it is within reach of every one of us—yes, every one.

We all have the same storehouse, the resources of the risen Christ of God. If we were abiding in Him, what would happen then?

The gospel would be preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven (1 Pet. 1:12). God's Word, going forth out of His mouth would not return to Him void (Isa. 55:11), for it does not always go forth out of His mouth. Then, speaking out from God's presence—His very mouthpieces—the saints of God would hear His voice in our simplest utterances. Speaking in the calm consciousness of the power of the Holy Ghost, every word would be as a nail in a sure place, a messenger of God.

Mere filling up time would be out of the question. Having simply "a nice meeting" would be no object. Business done for eternity—that

would be it. And the dear saints of God, who look to some of us to be lifted above themselves into the very presence of the risen Lord, would not be disappointed. They would be borne upwards as on eagles' wings.

That is the cure for growing worldliness—God's remedy for ease in Zion. It may be, some will say, that this is just a dream. If so, we shall be sorry; for to them it will be but a dream. But it will be no dream to those who long to see the saints of God a testimony for Him in more than profession—a testimony that shall bring glory to His Name, and cause all around to declare that "*they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.*" Why should it not be so? "*Feeble folk*" though we be, is there anything to hinder our testimony from being what is described in Song of Solomon 6:10, "*Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners*"?


When we see Stephen "*full of faith and power; he did great wonders and miracles among the people*" (Acts 6:8); when we behold Barnabas "*full of the Holy Ghost and of faith,*" and how much people were added to the Lord (Acts 11:24), we ask: Were these "*men of like passions*" with ourselves? (Acts 14:15). They were. But in immediate connection with the mighty results, the Holy Ghost has taken care to record that they were men filled with Himself. That's it—filled with God. That explains the wonderful results.

Do not misunderstand us about results. We do not mean success as it is called in so many quarters—great crowds, great popularity, and much

profession. We mean results as God reckons results—fruit to the praise of His glory; fruit in the godly walk of His saints; fruit in sinners turned to God—fruit that shall remain (Jn. 15:16). O, then, to be filled! Everyone needs to be filled. The humblest saint needs to be filled—for the silent walk with God, for the life bright with His praise. What a power is there!

As those redeemed by the precious blood and delivered from the graveclothes of men's traditions, we are affectionately desirous of the saints (1 Thess. 2:8). We joy in beholding their order in the Lord, but long to see each one spreading around him a savor of that Name which we have found to be above every name. Shall we

not then go in and possess the land? (Num. 13:30). Shall we not walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it? (Gen. 13:17). "Follow thou Me" (Jn. 21:22), said our Lord. At every suggestion of Satan the adversary, that "it's no use," "impossible," and so on, let us reply, "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mk. 9:23). "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). And, like Caleb, speaking of the land given, let us "go up at once, and possess it."

"That ye might be filled." Such, and nothing more is the purpose of our Father in heaven. Let us see to it that we are content with nothing less. 

JOHN T. MAWSON

## The parable of the peach trees

Acres of peach trees spread over the hillsides of a fertile valley through which we were speeding in the Sydney-Melbourne express. They were clothed in pink and white blossom, standing as a fair bride to receive the smiles and kisses of the sun which looked upon them from a cloudless sky like a radiant bridegroom. Full of promise were those acres of delicious fruit trees for the multitudes in the crowded cities in the months yet to be. It was kindly nature, under God's supervision, preparing her stores of refreshment against the day when the summertime would test the strength and mettle of the people with heat and drought and dust.

As my eyes feasted on that lovely valley I held communion with it. "Tell me," said my heart, "tell me, peach trees, your secret. Why are you able to stretch out your charms before the sun today, and to promise arms laden with fruit for the hot months ahead?"

And I got my answer definite and clear. "We should have neither beauty today nor usefulness tomorrow were it not for a process and power that the eye of man does not see. Our roots strike downwards, and bidden away from all interference we draw from the soil continually the nourishment that gives and maintains the vigor of our inward life. Our life within, sustained in secret, shows itself in its season as you see it. If this secret life of ours failed, or if it were interrupted by any intrusion from without, we should wither and die."

As our train sped on, I took my Bible and read, "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall

reward thee openly" (Mt. 6:6). Are any of us mourning our lack of fruitfulness? Do we feel how little we manifest the divine life which is in us, resulting in blessing to others? We may be sure that the whole cause of it is the neglect—more or less—of the secret life with God. We know that it is so.

This parable enforced its lesson on me from another side. I thought again of the testing time of the year for this southern land, when the sun blazes from the heavens in its summer strength, scorching and withering almost everything of lesser growth. Yet that same sun only serves to bring the fruit of those trees to perfection, imparting to them a sweetness they could not possess without it.

So it is with every trial of life; they all have their sure effect on us. We are either scorched and withered by them, or they bring our Christian life and fruit to maturity. Which of these two effects is realized in our case is determined by our secret life with God. If we strike our roots downward in the knowledge of the Lord, and draw refreshment and strength from the hidden springs in Him, we need not dread the trials that may come. We may glory in tribulation, for it will but serve the will of God and work for our good, enabling us to stretch forth hands laden with sweeter fruit to the weary and distressed all around us.



# See the Maples growing

*There are encouraging signs of new life in Winnipeg*

**F**or the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee" (Ps. 84:11-12).

In 1975 two men, Dr. Clem Wyke and Mr. Murray Taylor, who were in good standing at Arlington Gospel Chapel in Winnipeg, Manitoba, felt God calling them to start a Christian work in the Maples community. The Maples was at that time a new and fast growing area in the northwest corner of the city and it had no evangelical church.

The Lord called Dr. Wyke home two years ago then a year-and-a-half ago, Murray Taylor and his family moved to London, Ontario. God has prospered the efforts of these men and through the loving relationships of people, God has built a caring church with a wide variety of programs and ministries. The Lord has




blessed the assembly with a vibrant young adult group and a growing Sunday School.

After 25 years of meeting in a school, we are thrilled to be erecting a physical, visible testimony of the Lord's work in the Maples community. Despite the challenges of meeting in a school, our assembly has grown to over a hundred people

meeting on Sunday mornings. Each Sunday since we began we have had to set up and break down all the chairs and tables for our meetings, and we have had little visibility in the community.

On June 6, 1999, we held a ground-breaking service and we are now about halfway through our building project. The main auditorium will seat 240 and the building will encompass 5,800 square feet. Lord willing, we will be in our building this spring. We are doing as much of the construction work as possible in an effort to keep the cost to a minimum. We are very grateful for the encouragement that the local Winnipeg assemblies have shown, and for a loan from Stewards Foundation.

Please rejoice with us for the work God is accomplishing through our assembly in the Maples community. Also pray with us that we will remain faithful servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'til He come. 





## Upward Bound

Upward Bound is a two-week program that will be held Saturday, August 14—Friday, August 27. The first week will be a time of serious Bible study and fellowship at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, ON. Lord willing, Boyd Nicholson will present types of Christ seen in the garments of the High Priest; Frank Burgess will speak on the names of God; Brian Russell will look at practical lessons from the life of Paul; Randy Amos will study Old Testament pictures of the New Testament Church and Sandy McEachern will lead seminars on how to study the Bible.

If your schedule permits, plan to stay for the second week and take a canoe trip into the interior of Algonquin Park—a journey you'll never forget.

The minimum age is 18 years old. The cost is \$390 (Cdn.) for both weeks, or \$200 for the first week. This includes meals and accommodations. A late fee will be charged to anyone who registers after July 1.

For more information, contact:  
Sandy McEachern  
(519) 638-2928  
sandymceachern@hotmail.com  
<http://welcome.to/UpwardBound>

Lord willing. The meetings are scheduled on Friday at 7:30; Saturday at 3:00 and 6:30 with dinner served at 5:00; Sunday the Lord's Supper at 10:30, lunch at 12:00, ministry at 3:00, dinner at 5:00 and ministry at 6:30 and 7:30.

### WORD ALIVE WEEK

Saints are invited to a Word Alive Week July 2-8, 2000 at Faith Bible Camp, Victoria Beach, Manitoba (on Lake Winnipeg, 60 miles north of Winnipeg). This will be a week of intensive Bible teaching and discipleship training for anyone of any age who wants to be fed, equipped, and motivated to serve the Lord Jesus Christ and His people.

There will be lots of food, fellowship, sun and sand, but the focus of the week will be the ministry and training received in the teaching sessions and practical workshops.

Our speaker will be Mike Attwood (GA), Lord willing. The theme of the week will be the gospel. The morning sessions will cover the doctrines of salvation and the evening sessions will be taken up with the Feasts of Jehovah.

Workshops will include topics such as how to prepare and present your personal testimony, how to lead an evangelistic Bible study, and dealing with objections to the gospel.

Ron Hampton  
874 London St.  
Winnipeg, MB R2K 3P7  
Canada  
Tel: (204) 669-6026  
Fax: (204) 669-1694  
rhampton@mb.sympatico.ca

### MEMORIAL DAY CONFERENCE

The believers of Olney Gospel Hall look forward to their annual Memorial Day weekend conference May 27 and 28, preceded by a prayer meeting on Friday at 7:45. The meetings will be held at Olney Gospel Hall (314 W. Chew Ave., Philadelphia, PA). Ministry and gospel meetings are scheduled for 2:30 and 7:00 both days with Alan Parks (SC), Mark Kolchin (NJ) and Keith Keiser

(PA). Accommodations are available.  
Harry Wiegand  
321 Asbury Ave.  
Melrose Park, PA 19027  
(215) 635-0822

### CONFERENCE IN WORCESTER

The saints at Bethany Gospel Chapel (Worcester, MA) are would like to announce their Memorial Day conference on May 26, 27 and 28 with Doug Kazen and Randy Amos,

**COMMENDATIONS**

**Gary and Diane Goodkey**

The believers of Marathon Bible Chapel in Marathon, ON, wish to amend the commendation of Gary Goodkey to include his wife, Diane. Gary was married to Diane Service of London, ON, in December. They are making their home in New Liskeard, ON, where they are assisting with the work at Bethel Gospel Chapel. Gary has an itinerant preaching ministry in Northeastern Ontario and other areas as the Lord leads. Diane will be using her many talents to assist in the work as well as pursuing her studies through correspondence. Gary and Diane plan to assist with the work at Northlands Bible Camp during the summer months.

**Larry and Wanda Price**

The saints at Hiawassa Bible Chapel (Orlando, FL) join with the saints at Southside Bible Chapel (Jacksonville, FL) in commending Larry and Wanda Price to full time ministry. Larry has been very active in preaching and teaching by invitation throughout the US and abroad. They have both been in fellowship with the assembly here at Hiawassa Bible Chapel for a number of years and have been a blessing to the assembly.

While Larry and Wanda have been commended workers for many years, the saints at Hiawassa think it is appropriate to add their commendation as well.

**SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Hilltop Manor Home**

Applications are being accepted for the position of administrator for Hilltop Manor Home which is situated in the Vancouver suburb of Langley. The Manor is across the parking lot from the Langley Gospel Hall and is designed to accommo-

date up to 10 believers in a congregate setting.

This is a live-in position involving care for the spiritual, social and physical needs of the residents.

Inquiries should be sent to:

David Chesney  
#Unit 29, 21924 - 48th Ave.  
Langley, B.C. Canada, V3A 8H1  
Fax: 604-530-0252  
dchesney@uniserve.com

**Pittsboro Christian Village**

Pittsboro Christian Village needs a Health Care Administrator for its forty bed rest home. This person must have excellent interpersonal skills to manage a staff of 20 nurses, and interact with residents and their families. A North Carolina Administrator's license, or the ability to obtain one, is required. This individual must be a leader with a servant attitude and have a desire to serve the Lord's people. Contact:

Dave Dewhurst  
Phone: (919) 542-3151  
Fax: (919) 542-5919  
wdew@juno.com

**El Nathan Home**

If you have a desire to serve the Lord in a vital ministry and have a love like the Lord's for His elderly saints, a Christian retirement home has an impending need for a nurse or licensed practical nurse; an administrator and a kitchen manager/cook. El Nathan home (Marble Hill, MO) is in a pleasant and convenient location. Rent-free home and/or apartment is available. This is a ministry based solely on faith in God's ability to provide. Contact:

Charles Bollinger  
Phone: (573) 238-2869  
Fax: (573) 238-3634  
chasbol@juno.com

**Gaspé, Quebec**

The brethren at New Carlisle

Bible Chapel are seeking a brother to help in their area, both in the gospel and in the ministry of the Word. For further information, please contact:

Jarvis Flowers  
PO Box 25  
New Carlisle, QC G0T 1Z0  
(418) 752-6667

**USED EQUIPMENT**

**Postage Machine**

A used mailing machine is available from Uplook Ministries. It will need general service and the rental of a postage meter.

Chris Cairns  
(616) 456-9166  
chris@uplook.org.

**Slides and Projector**

A collection of glass lanterned slides which cover the Old Testament with projector is available.

Jim Pizzulli  
(908) 534-2698  
jaykar@net-lynx.com

**Filmstrips**

Our Sunday School has 32 filmstrips illustrating stories from the Gospels with accompanying audio cassettes and a film projector in a durable carrying case. Contact:

Barry Williams  
pandbhome@juno.com

**Wanted: Song Books**

We have started a small work with university students and young adults on Sunday nights. We are in need of song books.

Bill or Carol Moore  
127 East O'Neil Dr.  
Ames, IA 50010  
(515) 232-1167

**NEW ASSEMBLY**

**Oregon City, OR**

A new assembly has begun holding meetings in Oregon City, OR.





Grace Christian Assembly generally has about 50 people in attendance, including children. The Breaking of Bread meeting is at 9:00 on Sundays followed by a preaching service at 10:30. The assembly has an active Awana and young people's ministry.

For more information, contact:  
Ed Ahrens (503) 631-7713  
Michael Pearson (503) 656-4234

**Las Vegas, NV**

Art and Debbie Auld (OH) recently visited the fledgling assembly in Las Vegas, NV, and sent us the photo (above) of those now gather-

ing at the Las Vegas Bible Chapel. Please pray for these dear saints who are seeking to be a testimony in one of Satan's strongholds.

**SERVICES**

**Anapauo House**

We are a small assembly situated in the Crowsnest Pass, a beautiful area located in the Rocky Mountains of southwestern Alberta. As a ministry to serve missionaries and full time workers, we have established a home where they can take a rest. We have named the home Anapauo House, which means rest.

This is a three-bedroom home,

with a living room, dining room, kitchen, study, and has a full bath & laundry facilities. It is fully furnished and is located in a downtown area. It is adjacent to our assembly and we encourage anyone using the home to fellowship with us without any constraint to minister unless there is a desire to do so. This home is available at no charge although we do require a refundable deposit to assure a commitment to occupancy. We prefer a minimum of two nights' stay and on occasion have had missionaries stay for up to two months. Visitors are expected to provide their own food and personal items as well as covering any long distance telephone calls. We are a two and a half hour drive from Calgary and Lethbridge is 2 hours away. We are on Highway 3, the most southerly route through the Canadian Rockies.

Jim Blair  
Box 493  
Coleman, Alberta TOK OMO  
(403) 563 5381  
margjim2@telusplanet.net



**FELLOWSHIP IN TRACY, CA**

Brother Terry Wilson writes from Tracy, CA:

"We live in the town of Tracy which is approximately 45 minutes from Hayward. It has a growing population of more than 50,000 people. Twenty minutes east is Modesto, (population 180,000+), and twenty minutes west is Livermore, with more than 65,000 people. There is no assembly in any of these towns. We would like to see an assembly started."

If you, or someone you know, lives in this area, the Wilsons would appreciate hearing from you and welcome you to their home for a time of fellowship.

Terry or Shirley Wilson  
1755 Lilly Court  
Tracy, CA 45376  
(209) 830-0708  
lillyct@pacbell.net

## WHAT'S GOING ON?

**YOU'VE PROBABLY NOTICED?**  
 Noticed the new UPLOOK format? We have enlarged the magazine from 28 to 32 pages and are printing it on a better paper. And this is actually saving us money! We now are having it printed commercially, rather than doing it ourselves, saving us not only money but two weeks of production time. We're glad for more space because the number of conferences, gospel outreaches, and new assembly notices is increasing!

### CHRISTIAN RADIO in RUSSIA

Missionary radio broadcasters in Russia are wondering how the election of Vladimir Putin to the presidency will affect their work in the country. Far East Broadcasting Company's Victor Akterov says Putin's policies could have a direct impact on them.

"Nobody really knows what's going to happen to religious freedom. We have two licenses pending—one in Moscow and one in

Izhevsk for getting new frequencies and all the paperwork ready, but everyone is waiting to see what Putin is going to say." According to Akterov, Putin's election should concern many Christians. "There is no democracy in Russia. The real opposition to Putin is the Communist party right now. The Democrats are nowhere to be seen and this is a huge problem for us because if we don't have democracy we don't have religious freedom." —*MVN*

Responsiveness to the gospel is growing across the Arab Muslim world, according to Arab World Ministries. The agency notes a new spirit of prayer, more converts and Christian groups, and more former Muslims involved in Muslim ministry. "In places where there were no Christians 10 or 15 years ago, there are now significant numbers of new believers," AWM says. "In almost every Arab country, including the most closed and resistant, Muslims are coming to Christ. The numbers may still be small compared to converts in the West, but the percentage increase is many more times than we see in the West." —*Pulse*

Mauritania  
 Morocco  
 Algeria  
 Tunisia  
 Libya

**1979**  
 Believers Churches  
 0 0  
 300 8-10  
 1200 12-18  
 30 2-3  
 0 0

**1999**  
 Believers Churches  
 100 4-5  
 900 20-25  
 12000 60-80  
 150 5-6  
 8-10 0

### EVANGELISM in MONGOLIA

Mongolia's democratically elected government is pressuring Christians not to evangelize while doing their humanitarian work. Mongolia's constitution grants religious freedom, but proposed government rules would restrict the propagation of the gospel. The democratic government which was elected in 1996 has failed miserably to grant the religious freedom to Christians in Mongolia as they had hoped. Instead, it has done all that it can to restrict that very freedom. —*Pulse*

### POPE in PALESTINE/ISRAEL

Pope John Paul II did not make many friends among Israeli Jews while visiting the Middle East recently. At Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial, he stopped short of taking any responsibility for the Catholic Church's involvement in persecuting Jews in Europe during World War II.

### TURKISH CHRISTIANS FREE

The court freed two Turkish Christians after spending 30 days in prison. Necati Aydin and Ercan Sengul were imprisoned after an operation by the gendarme in Kemalpaşa, near Izmir, because of promoting the gospel. The hearing for Aydin and Sengul was postponed until May 11 although there are no complaints against them or applications to the court to that effect from villagers nor any criminal evidence. At the court all the witnesses refused to stand by their statements against Aydin and Sengul and they made it clear that their evidence was taken under pressure from the gendarmerie. —*Turkish Daily News*

### PAY UP

The Supreme court ruled against U. of Wisconsin students who protest having their student fees used to support gay and Socialist groups. ⓘ

# What's my role?

*You're in this group picture somewhere*

**M**uch can be said about the role that each of us *ought* to play in the local assembly in the future. But wouldn't it also be helpful for us to stop and think about the role we have now? For, make no mistake, each of us already has a role, whether we realize it or not.

At the risk of over-simplifying, might we suggest that in any assembly there are four obvious roles. Some are edifying; some are not. Where do you fit?

## THE WHINER

Sooner or later most assemblies end up with someone to play this role. Under the pretext of shrewdness, the whiner proceeds to systematically criticize and discourage as many people in the assembly as possible. Nothing (at least nothing done by anyone else!) is perfect, and the whiner's passion is to make sure we know it. And so no matter what godly and edifying service is undertaken, and no matter how much the rest of the assembly is encouraged by it, the whiner can be count-

ed on to "call the assembly back to reality."

The whiner thinks himself incisive and revolutionary, but Paul would tell us that grumbling is anything but new—there were murmurers in the wilderness, too. The Lord wasn't impressed by their "shrewd" insights on the life of the people of God, for we are warned, "*Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer*" (1 Cor. 10:10).

This role is an appealing one for many reasons. To begin with, it is the easiest. It requires no skill, no effort, no self-sacrifice, no suppressing of the flesh, no prayer, and no Bible study. It's much easier to point the finger at others than it is to confess and repent of *our* failings.

When playing the whiner, one is never short of ammunition; there's always lots to whine about. After all, the assembly is made up exclusively of sinners. As long as our eyes are looking horizontally, we will find much to complain about. But how different our ministry would be if instead we were to look up! "*Set your [mind] on things above, not on things on the earth*" (Col. 3:2). Then we would see our brothers in Christ.

Are there problems in the local church? Without a doubt! Do our fellow believers have their faults? Certainly! But so do we, and if we expect them to put up with us, perhaps we ought to be as generous.

One more thing to consider: if we see a problem in the local church, wouldn't it

be better to try to solve it rather than complain about it? Perhaps, for example, we feel the church is cold and inhospitable. Instead of bemoaning it, why don't we try to remedy it by being a good example of love and hospitality? Maybe the Lord has placed us in the local church in order that we might help meet the needs that are there rather than gripe about them.

When we are tempted to complain and criticize, let's remember the example of our Lord Jesus. The Flawless One spent His days surrounded by a little group of stumbling sinners. He knew all their failings—even the hidden ones. He could have spent all His time listing those failings, but He didn't. He had better things to do. And so do we.

## THE WATCHER

The local church has often been compared to a professional football game in which there are 50,000 spectators in the stands, desperately needing exercise, watching 22 men on the field, desperately needing rest. In the local church it is easy to be a spectator. We may be moral, pleasant, enjoyable Christians. But are we just sitting in the stands watching the local church operate, or are we part of the activity?

There are many reasons we might fall into this role. Perhaps we think we have nothing to offer or have the mistaken notion that the only important roles in the church are those roles that are official: "preacher," "elder," "Sunday School teacher." But the Scriptures repeatedly teach that *all* of us have a vital role to play





in the local church. *“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God”* (1 Pet. 4:10). *“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal”* (1 Cor. 12:7).

Or perhaps we fully intend to get involved and serve in the assembly...tomorrow. There are just a few responsibilities in secular life that we need to get out of the way first. Let's realize that the devil is more than happy to have us *intend* to serve the Lord, just so long as we never get around to actually doing it. And this is why, over three millennia ago, Joshua gathered the people of Israel together at Shechem and told them that if they were going to serve the Lord they would have to do it *“this day”* (Josh. 24:15).

Don't be content to simply watch the work of God in the local church—pitch in and use the gifts that God has given you.

#### THE WORKER

In 1 Thessalonians 1:3, we are told of that church's *“work of faith, and labor of love.”* They didn't spend their time complaining about the problems, or watching someone else do the work of God. They were busy laboring for the Saviour. We read that in Nehemiah's day the people of God were successful in building the wall *“for the people had a mind to work”* (Neh. 4:6). Do we wish to see the local assembly built up today? It won't happen unless we too have a mind to work.

Someone has quipped, *“Too many people stop looking for work as soon as they find a job.”* Is that true of our role in the assembly? Work is an unpleasant word these days. Work means effort. Work means sacrifice. Work means commitment. Those aren't pleasant words these days either. Do we value our social calendars so highly that we are unable to commit to faithful and regular service in the assembly? Are we guilty of working harder for an earthly employer (and earthly pay) than for the One who bought us with His own blood? If we worked as hard in our secular jobs as we do in the assembly, would our employers decide it was time to *“break fellowship”* with us or would they be thankful to have such a hard-working employee?

How many times in the Bible are believers called *“servants”* or *“slaves”*? Surely each of these verses reminds us that we have work to do. But they also remind us that we have the best of examples, *“For even the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”* (Mk. 10:45, NKJV). If we will commit ourselves to sacrificially, faithfully, and humbly serve

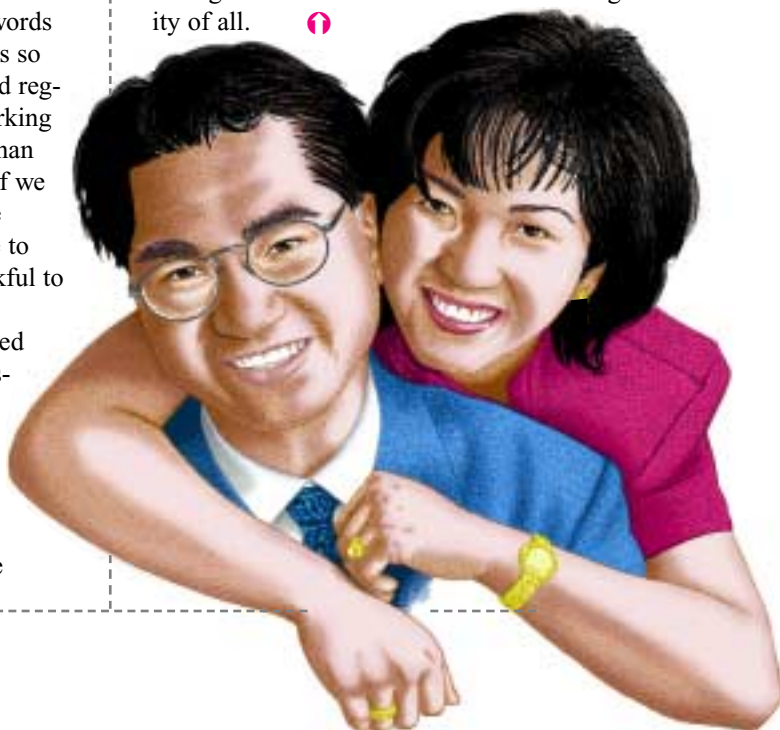
others, then we will be walking in the footsteps of the Perfect Servant. Will it sometimes be hard? Yes. Will it sometimes be tiring? Yes. Will it cost us that which this world considers treasure? Yes. But will it be worth it? YES! For the very One who is the best of servants, is also the best of masters. In this world our work for others can go unnoticed. But it's not unnoticed in heaven. Our Lord sees, appreciates, and rewards even the smallest of deeds done for Him. Even a cup of cold water given in this life yields eternal reward. *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord”* (1 Cor. 15:58).

#### THE WORSHIPPER

Even though there is a great deal of work to be done, let us never forget that first of all the Father is seeking worshippers (Jn. 4:23). Perhaps we are workers instead of whiners or watchers. But are we worshippers?

As valuable as service for the Lord is, apart from worship it is empty religion. It is work that is done out of love for the Lord Jesus that is the hallmark of Christian service. Work done for work's sake misses the point and cannot be sustained. Workers who aren't first worshippers will end up as discouraged whiners or watchers. But if we will put the Lord first, we will discover worship is actually the foundation for our work, for our worship will energize our service, transform our character, and delight our Master.

Worship is the occupation of eternity. We have the privilege to start early. Let's not let other activities—even good activities—distract us from the greatest activity of all. ❀



# Aunt Mabel

*We won't get the full story until we get Home*

**W**e watched the women prisoners file slowly from their cells into the common area. Their plain, dull uniforms seemed to match their expressionless faces. The team of four women from our assembly stood at the front of the room trying to urge a smile or even a mumbled hello. A few were obviously relieved by this opportunity to escape the monotony of their cells and managed to squeeze a tight-lipped smile—even though we were “church people.”

As we prepared to begin our little meeting, Anna made her way through the women, passing out hymn sheets. At the bottom of the page she had included the name and address of our assembly with the hopes that some might visit us when they got out of jail. Suddenly from the back corner of the group, a squeal pierced the flat murmuring. “Northwest Gospel Hall! I know that place—that’s where Aunt Mabel goes, isn’t it?”

Anna smiled. She knew Aunt Mabel many years ago, before she was called home to heaven. The gruff voice from the corner demanded the attention of everyone in the room as she regaled them with tales of a little angel who used to invite her and her sisters into her apartment for cookies and hot chocolate. Sandra dug into her childhood memories and retrieved every detail of that little upstairs apartment and the Bible stories that they had heard there. She remembered going to Sunday School and meeting other Christians in the assembly. Hers was one of many lives that had been

impacted by Mabel Carter and her love for the children in her neighborhood.

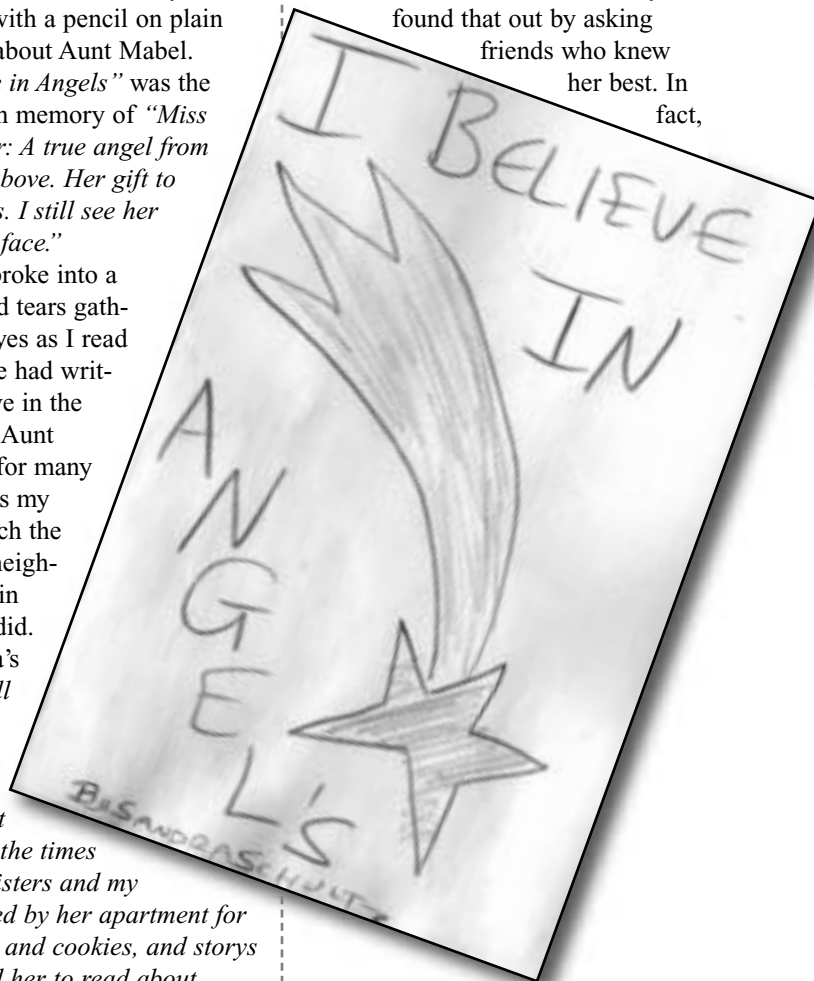
Two months later, our team stood in the same room in the jail with a group of inmates that were apparently entirely different from any of the faces we had seen previously. Then we heard a familiar gruff voice traveling towards us. Sandra came huffing out of her cell, late for the meeting, putting final touches on a special gift for us—it was a story she had printed with a pencil on plain white paper about Aunt Mabel.

“*I Believe in Angels*” was the title. It was in memory of “*Miss Mable Carter: A true angel from our heaven above. Her gift to me was Jesus. I still see her smile on her face.*”

My face broke into a huge grin and tears gathered in my eyes as I read the words she had written. I now live in the house where Aunt Mabel lived for many years and it is my dream to touch the lives of our neighbor children in the way she did. I read Sandra’s words: “*I will always remember her smile as a star, all the times me and my sisters and my brother stoped by her apartment for hot choclote, and cookies, and storsy that we loved her to read about*

*Jesus. She was such a sweet lady. I will never forget her. Miss Mable was a angel and worked for God...I know in my heart Miss Mable is in heaven. I have a deep feeling from her in my heart, I know anyone who knows her feels the same, I wish to be with her in heaven some day.*”

Surely someone who leaves an impression so deeply after almost twenty years must have been an outstanding Christian—unusually gifted and bold for the Lord! Not really. I found that out by asking friends who knew her best. In fact,



## AUNT MABEL



if there was one word to describe Mabel when she was first saved, it was “timid.” She was so timid that when she got a job at a Christian bookshop, she often prayed that no one would come in so she wouldn’t have to talk to strangers. (The bookshop soon had to close!) Her heart was burdened for her neighbors, but when she went to visit their homes, she said her heart was beating louder than her knock on the door.

But she kept at it.

Aunt Mabel continued to visit her inner-city neighbors, inviting them to meetings, entertaining the children in her home, and baking special cookies and treats for them.

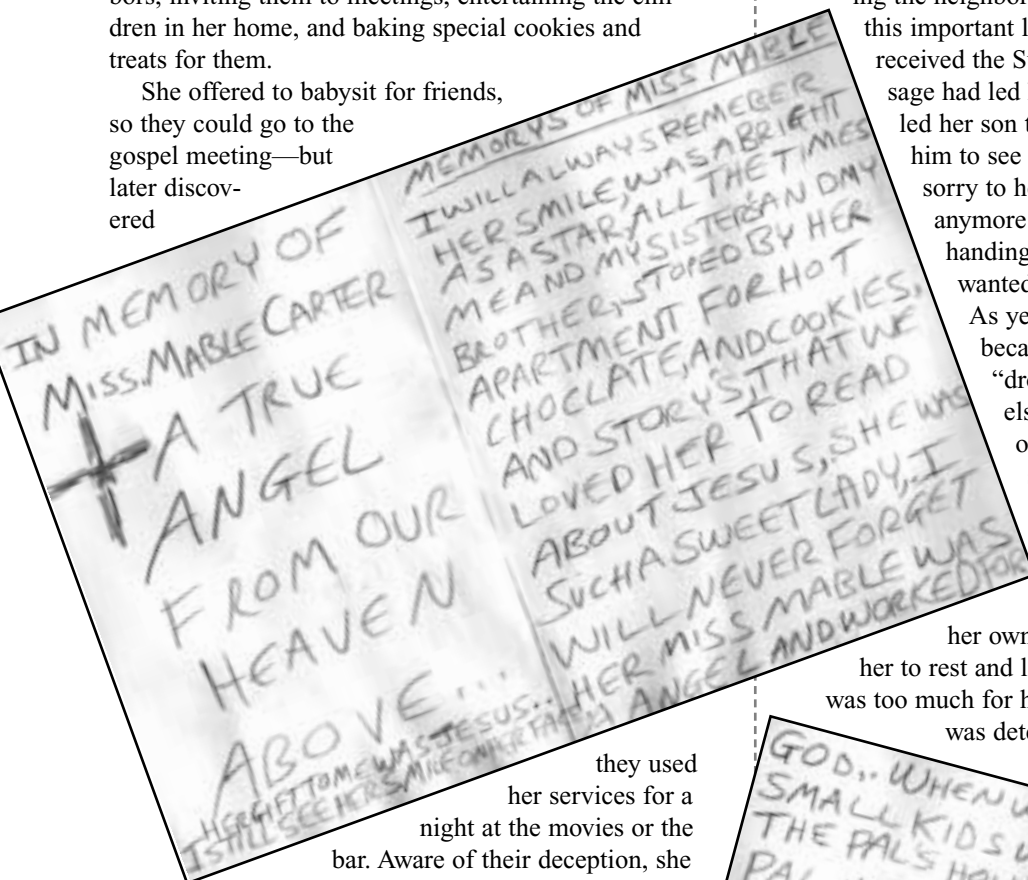
She offered to babysit for friends, so they could go to the gospel meeting—but later discovered

with a cookie to the neighbor children. Soon youngsters were traipsing from all around the area every week to receive the little gift.

One Saturday morning about three years ago there was a knock on the door of Gospel Folio Press. One worker had “happened” to stop by for a few minutes and curiously went to the door to see who would be there on a Saturday morning. It was a middle-aged woman with her son in his early twenties. She was visiting the neighborhood and wanted to show her son this important landmark in her life: where she received the Sunday School paper whose message had led her to salvation. And now she had led her son to the Lord, too, and she wanted him to see where it all began. They were sorry to hear that Aunt Mabel was not there anymore and disappointed that no one was handing out cookies anymore. But they wanted to return to say thanks.

As years passed, timid Aunt Mabel became a fearless witness. She eagerly “dropped in” on houses that no one else would dare approach. A couple of houses from her home was just such a house. One of the little ones was having a birthday so Mabel offered to prepare a meal for her family. By then she was not well and could barely move about her own kitchen. Friends tried to compel her to rest and let someone else do the work. It was too much for her, they insisted. But Aunt Mabel was determined: “I’ll do this if it kills me,” she said. She knew of no

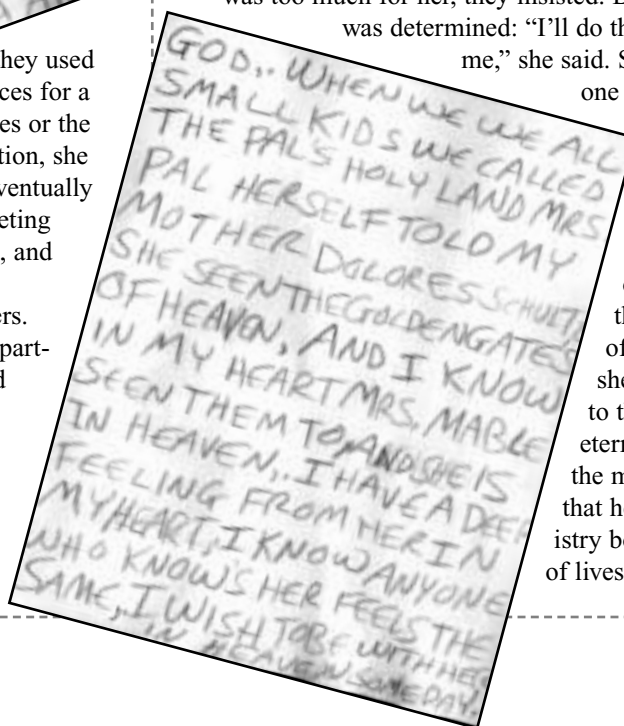
one who would be willing or able to take her place. Aunt Mabel thought she didn’t have anything much to offer, but what she had, she gave to the Lord. Only eternity will reveal the miraculous fruit that her unique ministry bore in hundreds of lives.



they used her services for a night at the movies or the bar. Aware of their deception, she kept going back, confident that eventually they would feel guilty enough to go to the meeting like they promised. Sure enough, both parents, and the whole family were eventually saved.

She hosted Bible studies for hippie teenagers. Sometimes they would steal things from her apartment, but she didn’t mind as long as she could slip a word in the gospel in with the stolen goods.

Since she lived near Gospel Folio Press, every Saturday morning Aunt Mabel would wrap up little bundles of blank scrap paper in Sunday School papers and hand them out





# Keeping the doors open

*We want to do a lot more than that. But it's a great start*

**T**here has been much work, effort, and expense in the establishment of local testimonies and their maintenance over the years. Now some saints are older and often tired and discouraged. They may even be tempted to give up. Some assemblies are in peril of closing. The consequences: lost testimony to our Lord Jesus Christ; and the gospel light being extinguished. Should we not make an effort to keep these doors open?

This situation often exists in small towns or rural areas. Younger believers have moved to larger centers to find work, sometimes to better their lifestyle. I recently observed such an assembly while visiting a small town in Ontario. The saints there are all up in years; many are in poor health. The doors will soon be closing unless the Lord intervenes. *"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain"* (Rev. 3:2).

## HOW TO KEEP THE DOORS OPEN

This picture could change if a young couple with children would move to the above assembly, and help keep the doors open. Dear young saints, if you would honor the Lord in such a way, he could give you the ability and means of earning a living in that area. *"If any man serve Me, him will My Father honor"* (Jn. 12:26). It's wonderful to have the Lord working behind the scenes. He does that, you know.

There are many advantages to living in a small town: a slower pace of life, a lower cost of living (often 30% to 60% lower housing costs), less violence in the streets, often bet-



ter schools. You can usually live five to ten minutes from work or from the assembly building, instead of commuting an hour or more in traffic, resulting in much loss of time and arriving home too exhausted to do anything for the Lord.

One of the delights, dear younger saint, of living in a small place is being needed and appreciated. Just to be at the meetings would be such a cheer to the saints, and all the while doing a work for the Lord. You

would mature and develop in your Christian life, as well as learn to take responsibility. This is a very worthwhile ambition.

By way of contrast, in a large assembly, you might be more inclined to lead a lazy Christian life by just coasting along, never gaining any maturity or leadership—while many older and tired saints in smaller locations are crying out for help. Will *you* help these saints carry on, and keep the doors open?

THE CHALLENGE

Dear younger one, I challenge you: try visiting a small assembly near you, and you will be amazed how cheered the saints are for that visit. Surely you will return home happier than when you left. After a few visits, you will see how much need there is, and how easy it is to help in these smaller assemblies. Perhaps then you might be exercised to move there and be of permanent help. *“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it”* (Mt. 16:25).

My own brother spent more than 25 years in a large assembly without taking any responsibility or any part in the meetings. Now for the past 11 years he has been in a small assembly, where he has developed and taken responsibility in all aspects of the assembly. He is able to give meaningful ministry on some of the deeper subjects of scripture, such as the Feasts of Jehovah, the Levitical Offerings, etc., and is certainly helping to keep the doors open.

THE COST OF KEEPING THE DOORS OPEN

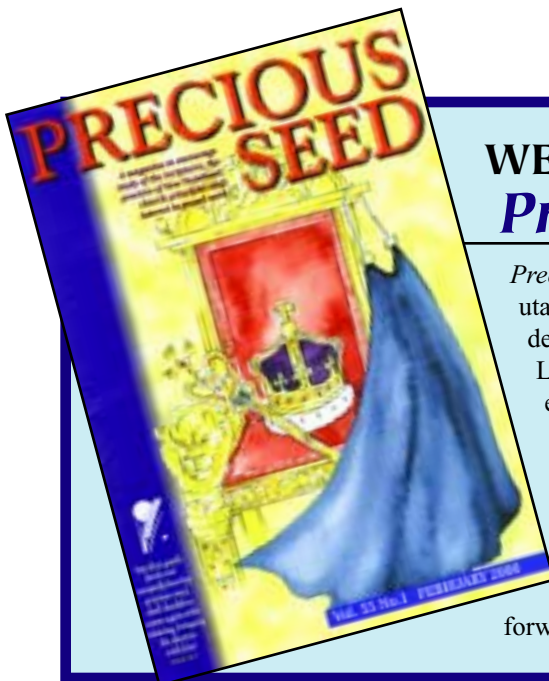
I would like to share with you some of my own experiences, trusting that the Lord may use them to be of encouragement to you. When we were first married, my wife had a contract to teach for another year in a New Brunswick city where there was only a small assembly. It had been my intent for us to remain there

only for the year, and then return to farming as this was the only life I knew, and my father was giving me the farm. When, however, I was confronted with the need in this small assembly, I decided to stay and do what I could to keep the doors open. On occasion, a Lord’s day morning would find just one other sister with us to remember the Lord. The Lord drew very near at those times. There were only seven saints in the assembly at that time. Having been saved just two years, I felt I was very little help at first. However, as I studied the Scriptures, and was exercised about being more help, the Lord enabled me to share the burden of caring for the saints, and eventually to take responsibility in the leadership of the assembly, and after 15 years the Lord chose to move us on. At the present time, there are two testimonies in that city with a goodly number in each. *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed”* (2 Tim 2:15).

“Did I get the farm?” you ask. No, but in looking back, I have no regrets, for the Lord blessed us, and had He not guided us there, that assembly would likely have closed its doors. Some of the saints were older, and some lived an hour away. The Lord could easily have brought someone else along to help, but I am thankful that He gave me the privilege of helping to keep the doors open.

At the judgment seat of Christ, my dear young brethren, will you be glad that you lived your lives as, and where you did, knowing that the Lord led you there?

*Only one life, ‘twill soon be past;  
Only what’s done for Christ will last.*



**WE RECOMMEND**  
***Precious Seed Magazine***

*Precious Seed* magazine is now in its 55th year of publication and its reputation has been built on the exposition of sound doctrine as well as devotional and practical articles. There are also extensive reports of the Lord’s work in the UK. Each quarter more than 14,000 copies are printed and distributed—including several hundred here in North America. For the year 2000, *Precious Seed* has been attractively re-designed and is printed in full-color throughout. It is sent free of charge to assemblies and to individuals.

*Uplook* recommends this magazine as a useful addition to every believer’s reading. If you would like to be put on the mailing list, please contact the Uplook office in Grand Rapids and we will forward your address to the Precious Seed UK office.

# THE OUTER APPEARANCE

*We know that clothes don't make the man, but do they tell us about him?*

**T**he Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

*"For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that wareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" (Jas. 2:2-4).*

Does it matter what we look like when we show up to assembly meetings? This question can stir a little tension sometimes. The above scriptures are often cited to support the idea that outward appearance is unimportant. It is the condition of the heart that matters. And that is true: the condition of the heart does matter. No amount of outward adornment will compensate for a poor inward spiritual condition.

But it is not enough to dismiss the subject at this point. While only the Lord can accurately assess the inward condition, we do well to see that the outward appearance is consistent. Here are a few things to consider in the matter of our assembly "dress code."

1. *Does my appearance attract attention to myself?* Assembly meetings are no place to make a fashion statement. We come together around the Lord. Attracting attention to myself in anything I do or say is out of place.

2. *Does my appearance promote modesty?* It should be obvious to every Christian that the world's ideas of fashion need to be tested by God's standards. Clothing designed by worldly people to encourage and promote ungodly behavior has no place in the Christian's wardrobe. My dress should be the same among believers as it is in the world (1 Tim. 2:9).

3. *Does my appearance promote a casual attitude?* Human experience shows that what we wear affects our attitude. North American business has adopted a "casual Friday" practice where employees are permitted to wear a more relaxed outfit to work on Friday. The idea is to

relax heading into the weekend. It is different from the rest of the week. What about my attendance at the meetings? Does my clothing suggest that the assembly meeting is a weekend social event with my friends? Or do I have the sense we are meeting the Lord?

4. *Does my appearance challenge the assembly?*

What is the general practice in my assembly in my town? Do I conform? Or am I interested in challenging the saints? Is there a hint of rebellion in my dress? For instance, if the elders request men to wear a shirt and tie on the platform, do I obey their request? Or do I feel the need to challenge this? Regardless of the justification

for their request, Christian behavior requires that I comply. Learning to obey is good training for all of us.

5. *Does my appearance speak well about the assembly?* Can you imagine showing up for a job interview in the same clothes you wear to cut the grass? Or wearing sloppy clothing to an important business meeting? In other words, my willingness to look my best (without excessive spending, 1 Tim. 2:9) says a great deal about how I value the person I'm meeting. It should be obvious that the Lord's assembly is worthy

of the best we can be, because of who we are meeting and what we are there to do.

But what about James' words to us? James is pointing out the difference between a rich man and a poor man. Partiality between rich and poor is to be rejected completely. What we are talking about here is not a rich man's clothes and a poor man's clothes, but a man or woman whether rich or poor in this world (but rich toward God) who shows by outward appearance that they take the things of God seriously. There is nothing in this that should make us think expensive clothing is necessary. The heart condition comes first. But a right heart condition will manifest itself in an appropriate way in the lifestyle of the discerning believer.



Brian Gunning



# Funerals: a time to minister

*Sometimes the darkest times can lead into the light*

It was a call of desperation. Though the brother on the line was an elder, this was the first time he had been called on to conduct a funeral. Since normally there are only two or three days given to prepare for a funeral message, a first time request can be frightening.

With great anxiety, the brother expressed his concerns: "I've never paid any attention to the order of the services I've attended. I've given little attention to what is generally said. Where do I start?"

His call to me was not only because I had been with him a few months earlier when we visited the young boy who had died. He also knew that I had been a licensed mortician and have conducted quite a few funerals. After much time on the phone, he conducted the child's funeral and reports from those who were there say he did an excellent job. For this we praise God.

Because there may be others in days to come who will find that they have little time to prepare for such an occasion, these notes are humbly shared, trusting that the Lord may use them to help others of His saints.

As in every service that we do for the Lord, keep in mind that the overall objective must be "that in all things He might have the preeminence." Also, as a minister of the gospel, never forget that a minister is a servant (2 Cor. 4:5).

## PURPOSES TO KEEP IN MIND

Being asked to conduct a funeral service should be considered a sacred responsibility that affords an opportunity to be a blessing to many.



There is no pattern in Scripture for conducting a funeral service. In every funeral attended by the Lord Jesus, the dead were raised. As you find yourself in different areas of the country or even in different funeral homes, practices and customs will vary. With this in view, here are some basic objectives:

1. *Paying final respect to the deceased:* This should be done in a personal way, but not ostentatiously. Respect can be shown without distorting the truth. There have been services in which no mention was even made of the deceased. On other occasions, preachers describe an individual as if he were the world's most outstanding saint while many in attendance knew of a life quite otherwise. Quoting appropriate reminiscences of loved ones can add a much appreciated touch.

2. *Comforting the family:* The Word of God is the best agent for doing this, whether or not the family are Christians. In cases where family members are extremely distraught as

the service begins, don't hesitate to continue reading God's Word until composure is evident. It is wise to have appropriate passages indicated in your Bible for such occasions. Past experiences have shown that just the reading of God's Word has tremendous impact on the bereaved.

3. *Presenting the gospel:* At a time like this, the family is generally softened and can be appealed to from the Word. Such an occasion may be used by God to warn family members of their appointment with death. This must be done in a sensitive and caring manner, trusting the Lord for the very words we use. The truth of Ephesians 4:32 should be kept in mind at these times.

4. *It may be a time of rejoicing:* This fourth objective is not for every funeral. Rejoicing is appropriate for a believer who has been known by all to have lived a godly, consistent life. That one is now in the presence of the Lord where he/she no longer experiences suffering, pain, or disappointment. We rejoice over such an entrance into glory, but must be mindful that loved ones will still sorrow and miss their loved one. That is only natural (see Acts 8:2).

## THINGS TO OBSERVE

You cannot start too early to prepare for your first or next funeral service. The next time you attend a funeral, be attentive. Take notes mentally, or write them down. Note:

1. *The order of the service:* For example, what comes first, when are songs used, etc.? Here is a suggested order: song; prayer; scripture reading; obituary; song; message; clos-

ing prayer. There are many variations, but it is good to have some order in mind.

2. Note the actions of the preacher, where he walks in the procession as everyone leaves the chapel, and also at the cemetery. Be aware that each funeral director will give his own instructions regarding where he wants your automobile in the procession.

3. Be alert for portions of scripture, poems, and songs that may be helpful in different situations. Keep a file of them and a record of each funeral you preach.

4. When you are called on to conduct a funeral service, take nothing for granted. Ask the family members and/or the funeral director the following questions and don't be surprised when you receive different answers: a.) What arrangements have been made for the music? Will it be taped, or will there be a vocalist? What about an accompanist? b.) If in doubt, verify that you are the only minister involved in the service. Sometimes the family has asked someone else to participate. On occasion, you may want to ask to have someone else share the service with you. c.) Verify if you are to have the graveside service and the location of the cemetery. Cemeteries are noted for being either very hot, very cold, or very wet places on so many occasions. For this reason, use the comfort of the chapel to give the major portion of your message and make your remarks brief at the cemetery, perhaps a brief Scripture reading and a word of prayer. d.) Before using a newspaper article or death notice as reference material, be sure to verify the accuracy with the family or the funeral director.

#### THINGS TO AVOID

1. Customs vary in different areas of the country. In areas where the custom has been to leave the casket open during the service, changing this practice will be difficult. However, whenever possible, have the casket closed prior to the service and not reopened following the service, especially not at the cemetery.

2. You will be of great help to the family if you can encourage them to leave the graveside prior to the lowering of the casket and the filling of the grave.

3. By all means, be honest, especially in your reference to the deceased. If you are not well acquainted or if it has been some time since you were with the deceased, things change and the audience may be aware of things in the life of the deceased unknown to you.

#### PURPOSES TO KEEP IN MIND

No two funerals are alike. They vary depending on the circumstances surrounding the deceased, the physical, emotional and even the financial condition of the

family and friends. Once a Sunday School child called and made arrangements for the minister to conduct her grandmother's funeral. Not being familiar with the family, the developing circumstances were disconcerting. The family insisted on an "open casket" service. Ten minutes into the message, three men walked into the rear of the funeral home. Two of them stood at the rear while the third man walked to the front and stood for several minutes staring at the body of the deceased. Though this was extremely distracting, he finally went and sat with the family. Later, it was learned that the two men in the rear were guards and the other was a grandson locked in the local jail. Expect the unexpected.

Some types of funerals you may experience:

1. *The funeral of a believer:* This is by far the easiest type of funeral to prepare for, though it can be an emotional strain, depending on how close your relationship was with the deceased. The joy of such a ministry, however, comes from the use of the Word of God and the many assurances that can be offered from it.

B. *The funeral of an infant or a child:* This type of service is emotionally hard on everyone including the preacher. Should you feel yourself "breaking down," do not look directly at the family. Rather set your sights just above their heads and concentrate on what you must say and not upon their reactions. Using a passage like Isaiah 55:8-9 can be very helpful.

C. *The funeral of someone you do not know:* Ministering under these conditions needs prayerful and careful preparation and wording. For example, you will hear such words as "Dad was a good man." This is the family's expression in view of their recent loss. It may by no means be an accurate description of how he lived and died. In such situations, it is best to sit down with family members and have them tell about the deceased: what kind of parent he was, his relationship with the Lord, did he attend a church, etc. As they talk, listen for something significant on which you can build.

4. *The funeral of an unsaved person:* When you deal with a situation where, to the best of your knowledge, the deceased died without Christ, again the best thing you can do is use the Word of God. You shouldn't preach to the family that the deceased is in hell. Rather, use the Word to warn, exhort, or encourage them as to their own relationship with the Lord. Remember, it is God's own inspired, living Word, and the Holy Spirit can and will use it for His own glory. Just use it.

5. *The funeral of a suicide victim:* There is much that neither we nor the family will understand in situations like this. Some die from a heart attack often caused by obesity due to overeating. Others die violently in auto

accidents where their own carelessness may have been the cause. Others cause their own death via suicide. Rather than be judgmental, direct the grieving family to passages such as 2 Corinthians 1:2-5 or Isaiah 55:8-9.

IN CLOSING


1. Even though you may be told that they just wanted you to know that a loved one has died and you need not come—even if it is in the middle of the night—you were probably called because your presence is wanted and needed. Get up and go.

2. Christian book stores carry such items as *The Pastor's Ideal Funeral Manual*. Personally, I have found these to be of little value, except that they group some Scripture passages by subjects that may be helpful.

3. For following up after the funeral, the booklet by

Lehman Strauss, *When Loved Ones are Taken in Death* may be of encouragement to the bereaved family.

4. It is often a much appreciated touch for the local church family to provide a meal after the funeral. Especially those from out of town will be helped. The fellowship will be of great comfort. Those who are grieving will be relieved of the burden of feeding visitors who would likely be inclined to “stop by the house” for a final visit before leaving town.

I trust these suggestions will be helpful, will bring encouragement to hurting families and glory to our God. A funeral can be a life-changing event in the history of many bereaved families. That's why “*It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart*” (Eccl. 7:2). 



## The Gospel in a Catholic Church

by Jean-Paul Berney

On July 3, 1999, the priest of the Roman Catholic Church at Girardville, QC, a village 200 miles (330 km) north of Quebec City, allowed two gospel preachers to hold a funeral service in the parish church.

A dear sister from the local assembly, Madame B. P., 95 years old, went to be with the Lord. The mother of 18 children (14 still living), you can imagine the large family of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Since our sister was converted after her family was raised, many of them are Roman Catholic. Over 200 attended.

There are about 120 seats in the Gospel Hall, so a member of the family asked the priest if we could use the church building. The clergyman agreed and said we could conduct the service as we wished.

My co-worker, brother Donald Cox, played the organ and sang two solos. The words of the songs were projected on a large screen so people could easily follow the words. At the request of our departed sister, the

writer preached the gospel emphasizing Ephesians 2:8-9.

Inside this church, on the front wall, there is a large crucifix on which is written in French: “Jesus l'unique Sauveur” (Jesus the only Saviour). I took the opportunity to stress these words. I did not say plainly that there is no purgatory. However, I did say that one has to be reconciled with God before leaving this world, as there is no waiting room in heaven.

After the service, the priest objected to salvation without meritorious good works. He also remarked that we did not pray for the dead. But that was all.

This event was a historic day for Girardville. The first converts were persecuted. In 1933, pioneering brethren Noah Gratton and John Spreeman were kidnapped and feared for their lives (see *Uplook*, January 1998, p. 11 and December 1998, p. 18). The Christians were portrayed as communists. Every business transaction with “Protestants” had to be reported to the confessional. In many cases the local savings bank would refuse to do business with Christians and even closed their accounts. The R. C. Church taught, for instance, that it is not a sin to rob a Protestant. The Christians were forced to have their own school and cemetery.

Until about 20 years ago, there was a special mass each year in the same church where we held the funeral service. The intention of this mass was that evangelical Christians would return to the R. C. Church.

Today things have changed (not all for the better). Many think everybody will go to heaven. People do not believe there is a hell. Not a few believe in reincarnation. Indifference is the trend of the majority. The spiritual need is as great as ever. The gospel is always God's answer to the fundamental need of humanity.



# Service for the Master

*How this message grips us across the centuries!*

The design of our heavenly Father in all His gracious work for us and in us is that we should willingly become His servants here, and in perfection His servants forever above. Should we not all press forward beyond the winning of personal security, to the desire that, by our influence, example, and labors, others may be turned from sin to righteousness, and so plucked as brands from the burning?

As the young Hannibal was brought by his father to the altar of his country, and there sworn to life-long hatred of Rome, so should we be, from the hour of our spiritual birth, the sworn enemies of sin, the enlisted warriors of the Cross, to fight on for the Lord Jesus till life's latest hour, when we shall be "*more than conquerors through Him that loved us*" (Rom. 8:37).

There are six words which I wish to fix in your memories as catch-words.

## UNIVERSALITY

There should be universality in the labors of the Christian Church. All her members should be at work, with no exceptions, unless it be such as extreme sickness or disability. We know by experience that the idle part of the Church is that in which sin has strongest hold. If a farmer should leave one part of his farm uncultivated, it would be a hotbed for weeds, and the nettle and thistle would from that center spread all over his estate.

The unworking part of the Church, like the mixed multitude that came out of Egypt, falls a lust-

ing, and brings mischief on the whole company.

In the human body, if a bone should become dead it becomes the origin and seat of disease. If any gland in the entire system should cease to produce its proper secretion, it begins at once to do mischief by gathering together or producing some foul prurient matter. Even thus, in the Church, if you are not serving God, you are hindering His cause; if you are not contributing to the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom you are a drag on its wheels. All Christians must take their share of holy labor.

Have you ever observed that exceedingly acute critics are usually wise enough to write no works of their own? Judges of other men's works find the occupation of the judgment seat so great a tax on their energies that they attempt nothing on their own account. Those who are doing nothing are sure to be great in discovering flaws in the manners of those who bear the burden and heat of the day. Surely they would be much more nobly and usefully occupied if they would show us our faults by doing better themselves.

## PUNCTUALITY

If ever the Church of God shall throughout all its parts be awakened to serve the Lord wisely, it will seize present opportunities now.

In reading the Gospel according to Mark, many of you must have observed that one peculiar idiom of that evangelist is the frequent use of the word "*straightway*." He constantly says of our Lord "*straightway*."



The Gospel of Mark is the one in which the Lord Jesus is peculiarly described as a servant, and if so, it is significant that "immediateness" should be the very attribute of Him who took upon Himself the form of a servant. To serve God now—to serve God at once—to serve God here and on the spot, immediately—this is the true way to serve Him. But to wait for opportunities, to be pausing to cross the river when the stream is lower, to be expecting to begin reaping when the sun is not quite so sultry, and the shadows lengthen into soft eventide—all that is to throw away precious time and to miss opportunities.

There are many who have a peculiar theory of how, when, and where they could lay out their talents to advantage. If they would abandon that theory and believe that *now* is the best time for service, that *here* is the best sphere, and that just *the very thing that is nearest hand* is the best thing to do, they would be nearer the mark. Solomon said: "*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy*"

*might*” (Ecc. 9:10). He does not say, “*open your eyes.*” There is scarcely need, in such a world as this to hunt far for work. Just put out your hand and something to do lies near. Whatever you put your hand to, do it with all your might. There is so much work to do that the Master’s harvest would be scarcely gathered though everyone were to labor. Go to the nearest point that offers itself, go to your own family, go to your own children, go to your own house, and there begin to serve God. If you idly wait for a favorable season, that favorable season may never come. “Now, now, now,” is the word which Christian men need to have sounded in their ears.

#### DETERMINATION

Christian workers need to be determined that souls shall be saved. I would like to feel with regard to any one who comes under my influence, “If that man is not saved, it shall be no fault of mine. I will throw it at last upon God, and leave it with Him, but the responsibility, as far as it ever was mine, shall not be mine any longer.” There are many men who make money, but I do not think that, as a rule, men make money without being determined to make it. Ready cash does not come knocking at the door for admittance. Men must give up many comforts to achieve the purpose of amassing wealth. So it is with soul-winning. It must become a passion with us to win souls.

You must be willing to resign anything, that you may be the instrument in the hand of God in bringing souls to Jesus Christ. No man, I think, will be the constant means of saving souls by accident. A man must resolve upon it, must cry after it, must be ready to die for it. Then it is, when he cannot live without conversions, that he shall see them.

We must resolve that we will find our way, by God’s grace, into men’s hearts—that they shall hear us by some means—that we will intrude the gospel even though it is not desired. It is not for us to stand upon dainty customs or forms of etiquette, but to resolve that by this, by that, by any, or by all means, men shall know the gospel of Christ.

This determination often cuts a way for itself. That eminent servant of God, Richard Knill, used to say that if there were only one unconverted soul left in the world, and he was residing in the wilds of Siberia, and if, in the purposes of God, it was ordained that he could not be converted except by all the million of Christians then living on the face of the earth, all going to him one by one to plead with him, it would be worthwhile for the Church to send all its members one by one to labor

with that one soul, that it might be turned to God. And so assuredly it would.

Let us be fired with holy determination that we will win souls—that if we cannot win them one way, we will try another. We must be determined that not a dark close, not a narrow lane shall be left unvisited—that not a single fortress of the Evil One, although he may dare to call it impregnable, shall be left unassailed. If we cannot climb over the wall, we will tunnel under it, that by some means or other the banner of Christ shall wave over every castle of the enemy.

#### ENTHUSIASM

That word is a noble one. Would God it were fully possessed in its strongest meaning by all Christian workers. We need to muster a band of workers who live only for Christ, and desire nothing but opportunities for promoting His glory—opportunities for spreading His truth—opportunities for winning by power, those whom the Lord Jesus has purchased by His precious blood. Men of one idea—these are they that shall do exploits in the camps of Israel. We need red-hot men, white-hot men—men who glow with intense heat—men whom you cannot approach without feeling that your heart is growing warmer—men who burn their way in all positions straight on to the desired work—men like thunderbolts flung from Jehovah’s hand, crashing through every opposing thing, till they reach the target they have aimed at—men impelled by Omnipotence. It will be a great day for the Church, when true Christian workers arrive at such a glorious state of heat as that. I do not say, as some have it, enthusiasm without knowledge. The more knowledge, prudence, and wisdom a man has the better, and then he needs only enthusiasm to set it all alight. We must have enthusiasm, but it must be combined with solid information, faith, and prayer.

#### ORIGINALITY

We find in the world that whatever seems to be perfect at one time is, ten years afterwards, left behind. The world is full of inventions; men all over are racking their brains to find out fresh things, eclipsing old systems and plans in every department of science and craft.

Now, ought we not to have invention as to modes of work in the Christian Church? “*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way*” (Isa. 53:6). Here is originality and inventiveness in sin. Should not everyone, when we are brought back to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, have his own way of holy work?

The plan too much admired by Christian people, is

all alike, as steel pens are made at Birmingham by the gross; but is that God's plan? I believe our Creator meant us to have angles and individualities. I cannot believe that the Lord wished the trees of His own planting to be clipped into one shape. He intended us, like the monarchs of the forest, by our variety to exhibit His creating skill. Variety is the rule of beauty, and variety in Christian work is the rule of usefulness.

We now look at the bows and arrows of our forefathers as only fit for museums, for our modern firearms have put them into the shade. Yet we are still fighting the devil in very much the same conventional and worn-out forms of evangelization as our forefathers did.

We have such a tendency to get tied up and hampered by rules and regulations that it is difficult to gain the victory over Satan. The best rule for a Christian soldier is to do for God that which a sanctified heart prompts him to do. I am much of the opinion of the soldier who, being brought before the Duke of Wellington and a committee of the House of Lords, on being asked if he had to fight the battle of Waterloo over again how he would like to be dressed, "Please, your Lordship, I should like to be in my shirt sleeves."

Depend on it, the freest dress is the right costume of war. There is nothing like the shirt sleeves for hard gospel work. Away with that high stock and the stiff coat, in which you find it difficult to fight when you come to close contact with the enemy. You must dispense with piping and bright buttons when it comes to blood, fire, and vapor of smoke. Many of the gewgaws of ministerialism ought to be thrown away.

The servile habit of mere imitation grows on Christians till it becomes an injury to them, whereas striking out a new path of usefulness would be the means of bringing to our churches those that have not been touched. If you want to find fields for conversion, where you can get a large percentage for your spiritual care, don't work among those who have had the gospel for years. If we could get at those who attend no place of worship, I believe larger results would follow our labors than among those who have heard us long. Let our originality lead us into new spheres. Let us labor in places where the Name of Christ is not known, and we may expect the grandest success.


#### EXCELLENCE

We must aim at excellence in all we do. We want to inculcate on one another that if we serve Jesus Christ we ought to serve Him with our best. The notion is that if we stand in the street and speak of Jesus Christ, people in the street shall be converted. No; whether we

preach well or not is known as well by those on the streets as by those within doors. I ought to do for my Lord and Master the very best I can. Every time I serve Him I ought to feel that I have prayed over and wept over what I say—that it comes out of my very soul and is a part of myself. If that is not so, I am giving to Him a lame sacrifice, a service I would not have presented to my fellowmen. How can I expect it to be accepted? Let us be all at it, and always at it. Let us throw our whole soul into what we do. Let us serve Him with might and energy; then He will make bare His arm.

Above all, we must work for God with confident faith in Him. "*Ye have not because ye ask not*" (Jas. 4:2). We have not success because we have not faith. A young brother said to me once, "I have preached in the streets, and I have seen no converts." I asked him, "Do you expect people to be converted every time you preach?" He replied, very humbly, "No, Sir." Then I said, "That is the reason you do not succeed, because you do not expect to do so." "*According to your faith be it unto you*" (Mt. 9:29). If you have faith in Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, you will see signs following. If you preach *hoping* you will have success, possibly you will get success. But if you preach *knowing* that the Word cannot return void, and believing that you are wielding an omnipotent influence, and that the Holy Ghost is with you, you will not have long to wait before your faith shall be rewarded.

Oh, for more prayer, and more faith. Oh, for more power with men for God, because we have more power with God for men. Were the doctrines we preach to fill our souls, heart and mind till we become saturated with them, then would our preaching, teaching, and working, be with power—then would the hundredfold harvest be granted us. "*And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever*" (Dan. 12:3).

I shall be thankful if by this message I stir up one brother to serve God—I shall be more thankful still, if I lead any young man to say, "I will go abroad as a missionary" and if another shall say, "I cannot preach, but I will work in the Sunday school." Oh! if I could stand at the door, and put the badge of Christ's service on everyone that loves Him, as you go out, and say to everyone who is now indolent, "*Why stand ye here all the day idle? Go ye also into the vineyard*" (Mt. 20:6-7). I wish that were possible. I must leave that with God, and God grant that every Christian worker may prosper. 

*From an address given at a large meeting of Christian workers in Edinburgh.*



# A school that's in 90 countries

*These little missionaries tirelessly travel worldwide, bringing the living Word*

**E**mmaus Correspondence School is in its 57th year of ministry. Courses are published in 120 languages and are being distributed in 90 countries. Last year, between the courses sold to prison co-ordinators in North America and the distribution of courses in foreign languages, based on reports, between 900,000 and 1,000,000 courses were distributed. There are about 1,000 distribution points around the world.

While every ministry of the Correspondence School, whether large or small, is important, there are two very large ministries. These are in French-speaking Africa and in Nigeria, where English is widely spoken.

A solid ministry has been established in Russia and Ukraine. The numbers of courses are not being distributed as we had thought, but approximately 30,000 to 40,000 courses are used each year.

The prison ministry in North America continues to be the largest area of distribution in the West these days. As the prison population is unfortunately on the increase, there probably will be a growing number of inmates using Emmaus courses in the next decade. If you or your assembly are interested in helping in this ministry, please contact:

Emmaus Correspondance School  
2570 Asbury Rd,  
Dubuque, IA 52001  
1-800-397-2425  
cfizer@emmaus1.edu

## A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I am a born Buddhist. I received a jail sentence for committing murder, and have been here for the last eight years. During this time, I had the opportunity of receiving an Emmaus Bible Course book from a friend of mine. I read the Sinhala Emmaus courses with great interest, and found great joy in my heart. I was always awaiting the day I would be released from prison to go home to my family, but now I feel that I must stay here in prison and proclaim His word to the other inmates of the prison. Having myself accepted the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, I found joy in Christ, and eventually turned the hearts of eight of my friends in accepting the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. We now all get together and pray to our Lord.

On one occasion, a friend in prison had a gum boil and it was very painful. He spat blood profusely. My friends and I commenced praying to our Lord, and after some time, the bleeding stopped and the pain eased, and he was seen in great relief. Truly the blessed Lord had heard our prayers.

I am most thankful to the staff of the Emmaus Bible School for the courses sent to me, and pray that the Lord will bless them abundantly in bringing many souls to the saving and satisfying knowledge of the blessed Saviour. Please pray that my wife and daughter too will be saved through Emmaus Bible Courses.

Signed,  
*Bendula Dissanayakeu*

# Certainties for us all

*In a world of shifting sand, what can you build your life on?*

It is of the utmost importance that the heart be established in the certainty of every *“Thus saith the Lord.”* These are days of research and criticism, when things are not taken for granted because taught by one’s forefathers. Everything nowadays is thrown into the crucible and tested, the most hoary and time-honored beliefs are being treated like everything else. The analyst and dissectors can keep their hands off nothing; even the Word of God is not too sacred for their fingers. With great pretensions to learning and superiority, the impious critics discuss the Sacred Oracles and audaciously pass judgment on what the Holy Spirit has written for our learning.

This is not an age of faith in and reverence for God. The world, like a drifting ship, is already in the shallows and will soon be on the rocks. Get clear of this world’s wreckage!

Thank God, Satan has not skimmed all the cream of scholarship. Along with this irreverent study of Scripture there are to be found pious men, nothing behind their contemporaries in learning, who are prayerfully examining the old Bible verse by verse and line by line, whose conviction of the Divine authorship of the whole volume is assured. These holy men exhort us: *“Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of”* (2 Tim. 3:14). Let us heed the exhortation, and stick with assurance to *“the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”*

Let us now consider a few things which in the Word of the Living God

are said by the Lord to be *“sure.”*

## A SURE FOUNDATION

*“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure”* (2 Tim. 2:19). If we were to believe the modern “prophets,” then the Church’s belief all these centuries has been quite wrong, and accordingly the bulk of Christian people are laboring under false conceptions of God.

These philosophers and scribes of the “new age” are pretending to be on the mountaintop, and calling to us to leave behind the “foggy mists” of those old doctrines for which many of our ancestors suffered martyrdom.

No, please God, we shall abide by the Book despite the sneer and ridicule of the modernists. As the winds of doctrine blow, we must believe God and stand by the old Book, being resolute in believing it from cover to cover and fearlessly proclaim its doctrines. Christ’s blood and righteousness is our plea, and around His Cross we rally.

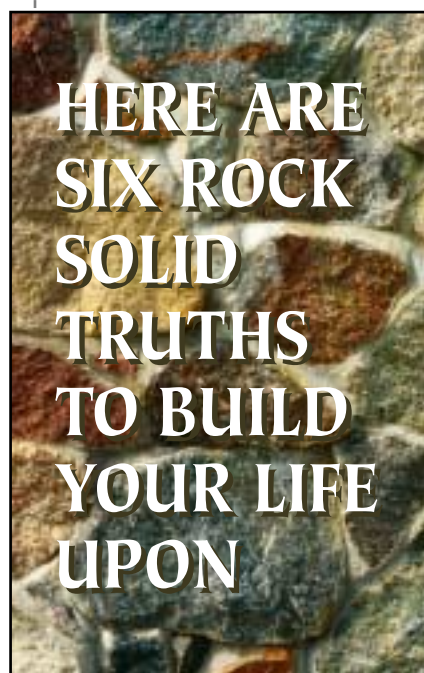
On Him must the soul build its hopes for heaven, and must see to it that its confidence is resting in the sacrificial work of Christ. Nothing can shake the Cross nor destroy the peace it gives.

## A SURE DWELLING-PLACE

*“And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places”* (Isa. 32:18). The poor world is all unrest, and the hearts of men are failing them for fear as they see the last great storm coming toward

them; there is no peace of heart, and nothing seems sure. Only the Christian whose faith is in the *“more sure word of prophecy”* can be unaffected by all around and wear a smiling face and sing, “All, all is well!”

*“A thousand may fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand”* (Ps. 91:7), but we have the preserving care of our Lord. Satan may come as a lion and roar against us, but we are assured the adversary is



not to harm a hair of our head, for they have all been numbered by our heavenly Father. Oh, the comfort of a peaceable habitation, a sure dwelling, a quiet restingplace; and the bliss of knowing that God does not forget His saints in this world. His eyes are upon them, and His angel encamps round about them for their protection. To whom or to what

can people go for peace and rest who will not have the Bible?

A SURE HOPE

*"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast"* (Heb. 6:19). Life with no hope beyond the grave is like a blind man wandering over dangerous and forbidden ground. He does not seem to know that at any moment he is in danger of falling over a precipice and meeting an awful end. The sun is so warm, the air so fresh, the birds sing so sweetly; he can hardly believe there is anything awful in Nature. Poor man! His views of Nature will meet a tragic end. Multitudes are just as deluded, being blinded by the god of this age to all danger; they can laugh at warnings and pooh-pooh the idea of God taking vengeance on His creatures. But suddenly they too are cast down into destruction, a dreadful fate befalls them, and the old Bible comes true. What height of folly to pretend to know better than God!

The Christian's hope is a thrilling hope. Should he be called to pass through the "vale of death" there is no such thing as "a leap into the dark" or entering into "the unknown." The Word of God, when received in faith, sheds a clear ray of light on the future which brightens as the end draws near. The believer's spirit emerges from the "shadow of death" into broad daylight, the light of the Saviour's presence. We shall see Him and be like Him in that day, and forever reign with Him. The Christian's hope is a blessed hope! Weary plodder, the far-off glory gleams through the portals of the heavenly city to encourage us along the way. As the hymn writer has stated: "Now to work, to watch, to war; and then to rest for ever."

A SURE WORD

*"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place"* (2 Pet. 1:19). Men are calling out for more light, and all the while they are rejecting the Scriptures apart from which there can be no light. Satan's wise men profess to throw wonderful light on all matters of faith and doctrine; but having the sun to guide us on our way, what need have we to borrow a lantern? Ah, these deceivers who beguile unstable souls, one day they must die, and the Word of God they pulled to pieces in life will be used at their funeral and later on will condemn them. Christ has said: *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away"* (Mt. 24:35). The devout soul says with the Psalmist: *"It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void*

*Thy law. Therefore I love Thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way"* (Ps. 119:126-128).

A SURE JUDGMENT

*"We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth...who will render to every man according to his deeds"* (Rom. 2:2-6). Nothing can be more certain than God's judgment of mankind by the Man whom He has ordained, Jesus Christ. *"Every one of us shall give account of himself to God"* (Rom. 14:12). To think of it is most alarming; but there it is. The ungodly of this world will meet at the Great White Throne; the people of God will meet at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The former will be judged for their evil deeds and their rejection of Christ, receiving eternal judgment; the latter will be judged as servants of God, their lives and service coming under review and valued as to what they are worth.

Notwithstanding the fact of one day meeting God, there is an indifference about the whole thing which is appalling; the unsaved people go on as though God does not know, or if He knows, He does not care, and will pass over matters very leniently; and Christians are to be found who trade on God's grace, who complacently fold their hands as they talk of their "standing in Christ," and can go on in worldliness, pleasure, and ease. Is there to be no reckoning for these? Is their life-account to pass unaudited? No, the day is coming!

A SURE REWARD

*"To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward"* (Prov. 11:18). There can be no doubt of this. Every little act of service, even to the gift of a cup of cold water in the Lord's Name, will not be overlooked. Much which has been faultily done will doubtless be highly valued because of the loving heart which did it to please. Many dear souls are badgered with the thought that their lives are of so little value that they need not hope for anything; others will get a reward, but they are too unprofitable. There is such a thing as undue depreciation of our efforts for Christ, and the tempter makes capital out of this morbid thought by tormenting the life of many who are really doing acceptable service. Such desponding thoughts can never be of the Holy Spirit, for while He will always teach us to set a modest estimate on the value of our work, He always desires to cheer us with the prospect of a sure reward for service rendered to our Lord. Thank God, the reward is a divine certainty as much as anything else.





# WORKING WITH CHILDREN

*If we don't get seed into children's fertile hearts, the devil will.*

In the late 1850's the well-known evangelist D.L. Moody organized the largest Sunday School in Chicago. Upward of 1,000 children from all over the city would make great efforts to attend. One day a young boy making his way to Moody's Sunday School, walked past several other Sunday Schools. A minister who was watching came out to him and sternly said, "Young man, why do you walk so far to get to Sunday School?" The young boy replied, "Sir, it's because they love a fellow over there."

Today in the year 2000, there is a great and urgent need to "love a fellow." There should be an urgency in winning children to Christ. Children are today's spiritual investment and tomorrow's eternal dividend. Yet children are increasingly found to be unwanted, mistreated, and abused at an alarming rate. A few years ago the Office of Child Health reported that 600,000 to 1,200,000 are sexually exploited and abused every year in America. Since 1970, the teenage suicide rate has increased 44% and 76% of teenagers use alcohol on a weekly basis. Of these, 50% will be drunk in a two-week period.<sup>1</sup>

What are we doing to reach out to children for the cause of Christ? Do you believe that elementary

school-age children or even younger can be genuinely saved? Do you believe this generation of out-of-control high school students can turn to Christ? This has been a great stumbling block for many Christians and Christian workers. Yet if we are to be faithful to the Word of God, we are to make every effort to reach all ages for Christ, and especially young people. William Kelly wrote, "It matters not if it is a child of ours, or that of another. Do we claim this child for the Lord? What is His feeling for a child? He is great, He is mighty; but He despises not any. Our Lord looked upon children with what interest! They are objects of the Father's love, for whom He gave His Son, and whom the Son came to save. Each has a soul: and what is its value?"<sup>2</sup>

Today, Bible clubs are proving to be an effective ministry in reaching out to needy children. Bible clubs are being established at an unprecedented rate in America. According to the National Network of Youth Ministries, there are currently 10,000 Bible clubs meeting across the nation. Many of these clubs meet on public high school and middle school campuses. There are 50 high school Bible clubs that meet in Long Beach, CA, alone and thousands of others nationwide. Throughout the nation, school-based Bible clubs have

been growing rapidly, mirroring what trend-trackers like Gallup have called "a nationwide spiritual revival."

In 1984, the U.S. Congress passed the Equal Access Act, sweeping legislation which gave Bible clubs the same status as other non-curriculum clubs, such as Students Against Drunk Drivers and Young Republicans. According to this bill, students are allowed to invite guest speakers, use the public announcement system to alert students to meetings, and put on special events. These clubs must be student-led and initiated, must meet when other non-curriculum clubs meet (at



lunch time or before and after school), and cannot discriminate against students based on political, philosophical, or religious distinction. Initially, many schools, especially those in the northeastern states, denied students these rights. However, in June 1990, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Equal Access Act as constitutional.

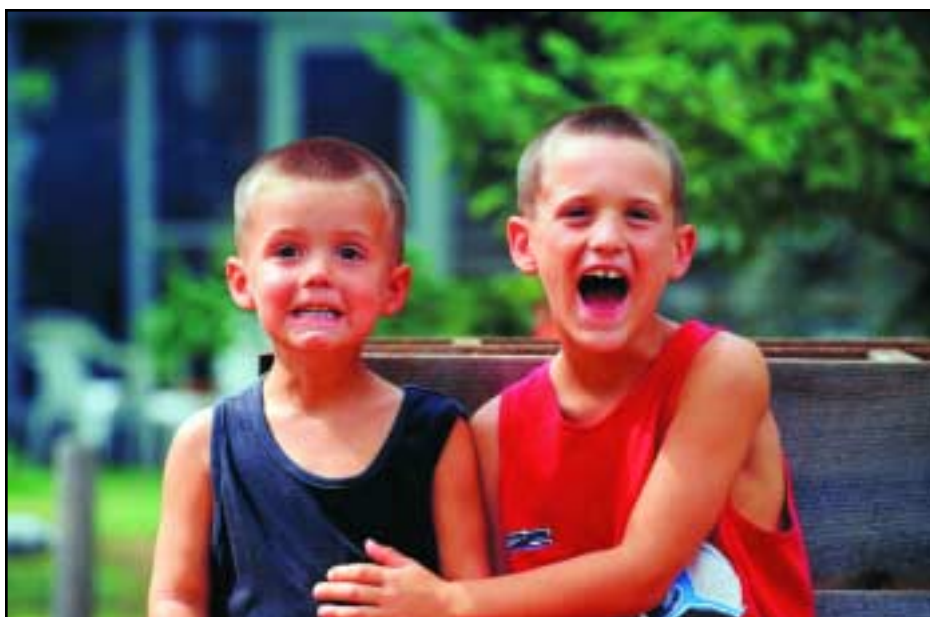
Unfortunately, this has not brought an end to court challenges to this law. Doug Honig, the public education director for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has said that the ACLU is very wary of religious clubs at public schools. This attitude led the Renton,

Washington, school district in 1993 to forbid Lindbergh High School students from praying and studying the Bible before school, citing the state constitution, which forbids religious activities on school property. However, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Equal Access Act took precedence over state law.<sup>3</sup>

Battling on the frontlines for the cause of Christ along with the thousands of public school-based Bible clubs, are many church Bible clubs and outreach ministries. These evangelistic clubs are winning thousands of children and are training a new generation of young



people to be fearless witnesses for Christ. Some of the better known national ministries are Awana, Word of Life Bible Clubs, Pioneer Clubs, and BCM International. These clubs have proven to be effective in reaching children of all



overhead costs, and support the ministry's missionaries or area representatives. In addition to yearly fees, there are other expenses such as uniforms, handbooks, student workbooks, conferences and leadership training. Some assemblies will also find it difficult to gather together the large number of workers needed to effectively run these programs. It is often suggested that there be one trained worker to every three or four children enrolled in the program.

Despite these costs and requirements, many assemblies have found these national ministries to be effective and worth the cost to the local assembly. These ministries make the centerpiece of their efforts memorization of Scripture and Bible teaching targeted to specific age groups. This primary goal is supported by kid-tested games, unique crafts, friendly competition, and the sensible use of incentives—usually badges and uniform pins.

How can believers interested in reaching children for Christ go about this important task? What are some keys to an effective evangelistic children's ministry in the local assembly? Whether the ministry is directed to the public school setting, a national ministry program, or simply a sincere effort by the believers in the local assembly, there are important principles many have found helpful.

1. One of the most important principles in youth ministry is to build into your program a "high touch" element. By this, it is meant to get involved in the lives of the young people, talk to them, and schedule time in

the program for them to talk to you. Allow them to see that you care about them in such a way that they can feel and hear the love of Christ for them. This is the “they love a fellow” principle of D.L. Moody that made his Sunday Schools so effective.

2. If possible, involve parents in helping children with Bible memorization, handbooks, and special work projects in the home. This serves a two-fold purpose: it exposes an unsaved parent to the Scriptures and it allows a parent to see the power of the Word of God in a child’s life. In our weekly Bible club, we award bonus points to younger children if they can memorize the books of the New Testament. Recently one unsaved mother asked if we could record the A.P. Gibbs song of “The Books of the Bible” on a cassette tape to help her four-year-old daughter memorize the books of the New Testament. She has been thrilled to see the spiritual progress in her children. This no doubt has served to



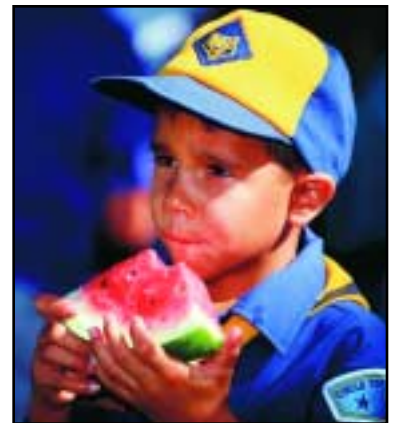
further open this mother’s heart to the gospel.

3. Use excellent Bible teaching materials. Well-prepared and doctrinally sound lesson materials are essential to a well-run children’s


ministry. Word of Life Bible Clubs and Awana have excellent material and are faithful to the Scriptures. Young people seem to thrive on them and evidence great spiritual benefit. However, this material cannot be used separately from membership in the national ministry. BCM International also has exceptional material and their material can be used as desired. Material can be ordered at BCM International, Inc., 237 Fairfield Ave., Upper Darby, PA 19082. Gospel Folio Press also has excellent material very suited to Sunday School or church-based Bible clubs. Call 1-800-952-2382.

4. Use incentives to motivate young people to dig further into the Word of God. The proper use of incentives is a tremendous way to encourage children in the things of the Lord. One child in our afternoon Bible club has recited numerous Bible verses including all of Psalm 23, the Ten Commandments, the books of the Old Testament, and the books of the New Testament. In our group, points are awarded which earn a pizza party

or a prize of a Christian book. We have found in ten years of working with children that the kind of incentive is not important. The awarding of expensive prizes is really not necessary; children find greater satisfaction in the sense of accomplishment and recognition among their peers and in the eyes of their parents than in expensive prizes.



An evangelist was once asked how many were saved at a certain meeting. He replied with a gleam in his eye, hoping to press his point, “Two and a half souls were saved.” The inquirer replied, “Do you mean to say two adults and one child?” “No,” he said, “I mean two children and one adult. The two children have their whole lives before them to serve the Lord; an adult has only half a life left.”

Truly, children are not the future of the church, but the present. Children properly trained and rightly encouraged can win others to the Lord and foster a win- some effect on others for the cause of Christ. Winning children to Christ must not be taken lightly, for this effort lies so near to the heart of God. Serious Christians should carefully and prayerfully consider how to best minister to the children of believers and children that do not know the Lord. In so doing, we will honor the admonition of our Lord, “*Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven*” (Mt. 19:14). 

*David Dunlap*

David Dunlap

ENDNOTES:

1. Fred Green, Office of Child Health, Washington, DC, quoted in *USA Today*, April 5, 1992
2. William Kelly, *Lectures on Matthew*, (New York, New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1926), p. 377
3. Joy Thompson, Knight-Ridder Newspapers, Sunday, June 11, 1995



# Christianity condensed

*A Glasgow lawyer lays out the case for the Christ life*

In Galatians 2:20 there are four words, each of one syllable, which indicate four distinct relationships to the Lord Jesus in which believers stand. The first two of these words taken in the order noted below, have reference to our Lord in His crucifixion, and the other two regard Him as He now is, subsequent to His death on the Cross.

The four words are: *for*, *with*, *in*, and *by*, and they open up to us this great passage.

1. *"He gave Himself for me,"* says the apostle, and, so saying, he speaks not for himself alone, but representatively for his fellow-believers. In this clause he and the Lord are seen as two. He stands apart, looking on the

Lord Jesus crucified as the dying Israelite looked at the brass serpent.


2. *"I am crucified with Christ."*

Here he is viewed, not as standing apart from Christ and beholding Him, but as fastened with Him on the cross. The first word shows the cross in the aspect in which it is the basis of forgiveness; the second word indicates its application to the life of him who has been forgiven. It may be asked whether, while the gospel of forgiveness is constantly preached, this second aspect of the cross is sufficiently insisted on in our teaching.

3. *"Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."* Crucifixion is helpless death; life is the capacity of enjoyment

and action. Death is for the old man (Rom. 6:6); life is the principle that actuates the new man.

4. *"And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God."* This is life, not in its essence and principle, but in its conduct. It is life lived by a faith which has constant reference to the Lord Jesus. It is true that we derive life from Him, and that He lives in us; it is also true that in pursuing our Christian course we live daily by a faith which lays hold upon the Son of God—seeing and dealing with Him who is invisible.

He died for me, I am crucified with Him, He lives in me, and I live by the faith of Him. That is Christianity. 

*"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good" (Eccl. 11:6).*

I attended a funeral recently. Stella Perry, 89 years old, who had gone to be with the Lord. Everyone at the funeral knew the devotion Stella had for her Saviour. She had served Him for many years at Rest Haven Homes in Grand Rapids, MI. She came to Rest Haven in 1970 with her husband who had suffered a severe stroke. Stella needed help with his care. Soon after arriving at the Home she found her way into the Rest Haven kitchen.

After her husband's death, Stella became a full-time worker at Rest Haven. She filled the Home with the aroma of cookies, pies or simmering soups. She loved to load up her old Buick with residents and staff and take off for the local farms, picking whatever produce was in season at the time. Her

sturdy old car became the main taxi for meetings, shopping, doctor's appointments, etc. It seemed that Stella was always serving.

This story was related by her son at her funeral:

Many years ago, during the pioneering days, T. B. Gilbert pitched a tent in the Knox, IN, area, out in a farmer's field. It rained while they were raising the tent, and kept on raining for days. Mr. Gilbert's helpers decided that, due to the rain and mud, the only wise thing to do was to close the meetings.

But, there was one man with five young children who faithfully showed up. Although professing to be saved, he had wandered away from the Lord but realized that his family needed to hear the gospel.

Bruce Gilbert decided that as long as that young man kept coming, the meetings would continue. The Lord blessed the effort and two of the little girls were saved—one of them was Stella. After many years, Mr. Perry related that he could count 143 souls, descendants of that young father, who had professed faith in Christ. —LOIS PELL

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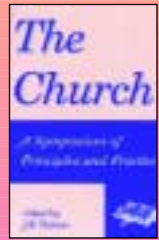


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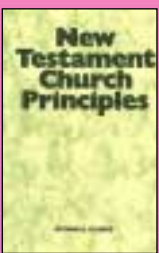


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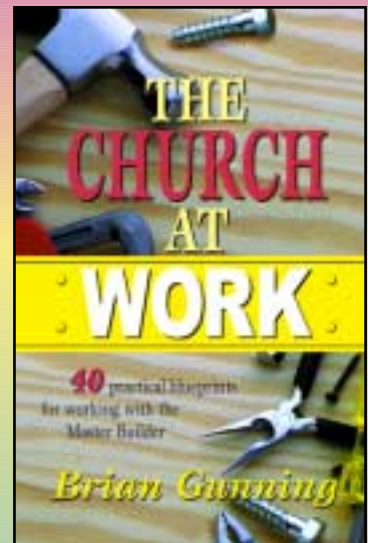
Undoubtedly saints of other ages will be anxious to know what it was like living in this unprecedented era. They will not be interested in our computers or our cars. They will want to know, "What was it like to have the whole Word of God in your possession, in your own language, and the freedom to read it?" They might ask, "What was it like to be able to offer to all the gospel of grace that they might be saved?" Others will inquire, "What was it like to have the privileges of a priestly ministry? To offer spiritual sacrifices? To offer yourself?" "What was it like," they will ask, "to enjoy the fellowship, joys and sorrows of fellow believers as you looked for the Lord to return?"

Well, what is it like? Do I really have any idea of what God is doing? What a privilege to be part of God's assembly! May the apostle's prayer be answered in our lives—that we may have the "spirit of wisdom and revelation" to enter into God's thoughts about this. Our Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of our willing participation in His great idea!

This volume was written as a series of articles entitled "Living Assemblies" for *Uplook* magazine, from March 1996 until December 1999. With this less restrictive format, the full text of many of the scriptures cited have now been included. These short essays are intended to emphasize the dynamics of the local assembly. They are not merely information but inspiration. These articles have been warmly received by many of the Lord's people worldwide. May these truths continue to edify, exhort, and comfort the people of God.

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If you cannot on the ocean  
Sail among the swiftest fleet,  
Rocking on the highest billows,  
Laughing at the storms you meet;  
You can stand among the sailors  
Anchored yet within the bay,  
You can lend a hand to help them  
As they launch their boat away.

If you are too weak to journey  
Up the mountain steep and high,  
You can stand within the valley  
While the multitudes go by;  
You can sing in happy measure  
As they slowly pass along;  
Though they may forget the singer  
They will not forget the song.

If you have not gold and silver  
Ever ready to command;  
If you can't toward the needy  
Reach an ever-open hand;  
You can visit the afflicted,  
O'er the erring you can weep;  
You can be a true disciple  
Sitting at the Saviour's feet.

If you cannot in the harvest  
Garner up the richest sheaves,  
Many a stalk both ripe and golden  
Will the careless reapers leave;  
Go and glean among the briars,  
Growing rank against the wall,  
For it may be that their shadow  
Hides the heaviest wheat of all.

If you cannot be a watchman  
Standing high on Zion's wall,  
Pointing out the path to heaven,  
Offering life and peace to all;  
With your prayers and with your bounty  
You can do what heaven demands,  
You can be like Hur and Aaron,  
Holding up the prophet's hands.

Do not, then, stand idly waiting  
For some greater work to do;  
Fortune is a lazy goddess—  
She will never come to you.  
Go and toil in the vineyard,  
Do not fear to do or dare;  
If you want a field of labor  
You can find it anywhere. —G. Grannis