

# UPLOOK

MARCH 2006

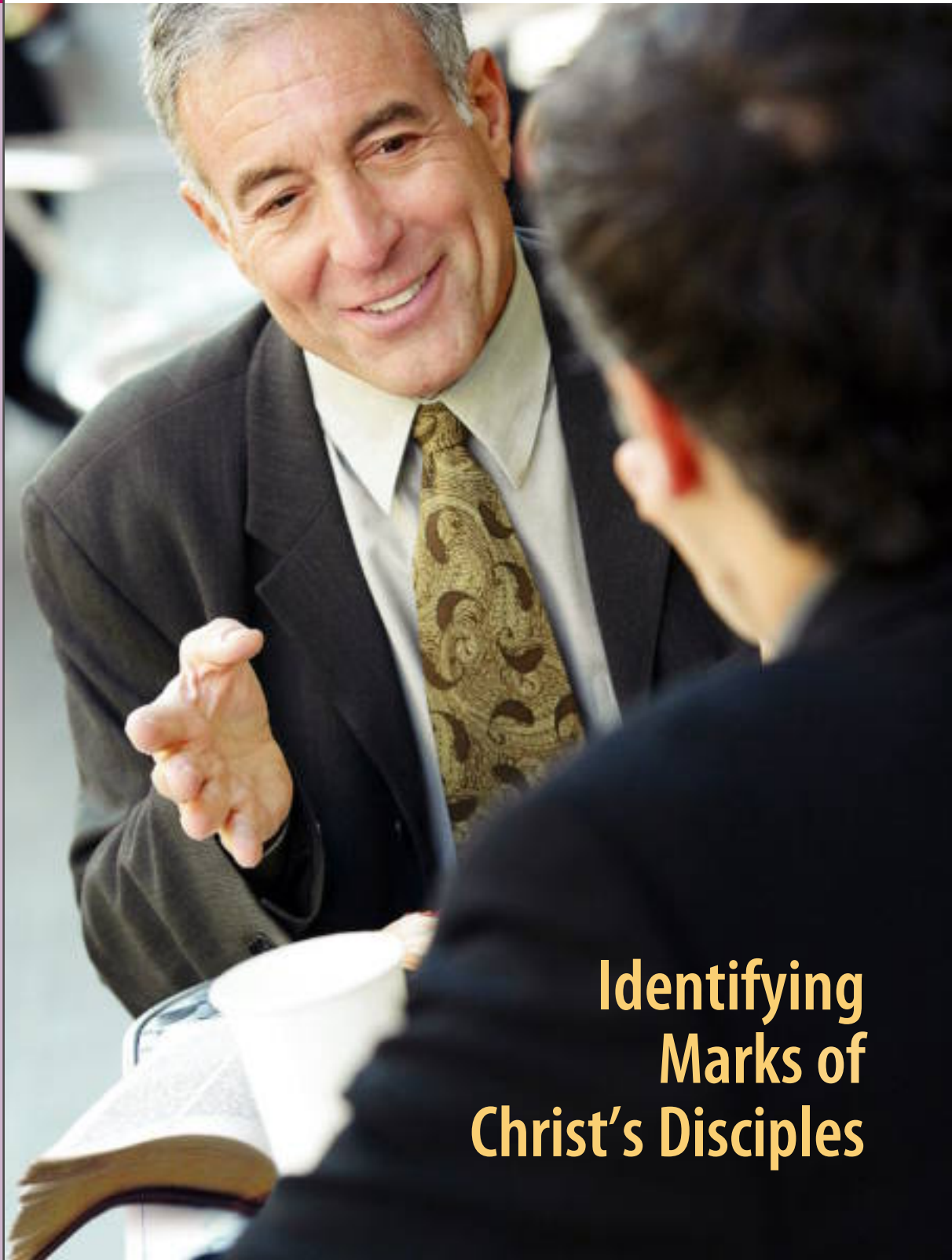
Assess the Need • Catch the Vision • Take the Challenge

## CLUES

REX  
TROGDON  
Four  
Would-Be  
Disciples

WARREN  
HENDERSON  
Babes to  
Faithful  
Men

PETER  
KERR  
Follow Me



Identifying  
Marks of  
Christ's Disciples



What should identify a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, and how is it being worked out in your life? This issue of *Uplook* drives that question home to our hearts and minds.

## Clues

Do our lives give us away?

**H**e had twelve. Twelve men to follow Him and learn His ways. Twelve men who would be known as His disciples.

The Pharisees had disciples (Mt. 22:16); John had disciples (Jn. 3:25); Moses had disciples (Jn. 9:28), all no doubt, with their own identifying marks. But what of Christ's disciples? What evidence would there be that a man was a follower of the Lord Jesus? This question is crucial to us because those original disciples were commissioned to produce more disciples (Mt. 28:18-20). So the question isn't merely what would identify the Twelve, but what should identify us? In John's Gospel, the Lord Jesus gives three sure signs:

**Christ's disciples abide in His word:** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, *"If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed"* (Jn. 8:31). A true disciple longs to learn from his teacher and, consequently, hangs on his every word. Christ's disciples are marked by a love for the Word of God. They crave it, feed on it, obey it, and share it.

**Christ's disciples love one another:** *"By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another"* (Jn. 13:35). A common Master and common goal unite Christ's disciples. In a world of rivalry, selfishness, and animosity, the followers of Christ ought to be obvious. They love to meet together. They put self last. They bear one another's burdens.

**Christ's disciples bear much fruit:** *"Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye prove to be My disciples"* (Jn. 15:8). Only the vine's branches can bear the vine's fruit – no one else has the vine's life. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) and genuine service for the Lord will set the disciples of Christ apart from anyone, and anything, the world and its religions have to offer.

And what was the Master's plan to develop these traits in His disciples? We discover the key when He calls them: *"And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach"* (Mk. 3:14). What is the secret? *"That they should be with Him!"* Intimate time with the Saviour is the root of discipleship. For how can we hope to be disciples if we spend no time with the Discipler?

Did it work? All we have to do is read a few pages past His ascension to see that it did: *"Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus"* (Ac. 4:13). These men had spent time with the Lord. And it showed. What about us? Do we spend time with Him?

A lost world is watching us. Why do the above qualities mark us as His disciples? Because really they're not *our* identifying marks, they're *His* identifying marks. Abiding in the Word? He is the Word (Jn. 1:14). Love for one another? He is love (1 Jn. 4:8). Bearing much fruit? He is the vine (Jn. 15:1), the source of all fruit.

The Word, love, and fruit: these are the marks of Christ. These are the signs of His disciples. These are the clues.

# U P L O O K

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Phone: (616) 456-9166  
Fax: (616) 456-5522  
Website: <http://www.uplook.org>  
E-mail: [uplook@uplook.org](mailto:uplook@uplook.org)

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UPLOOK magazine is intended to encourage the people of God in fidelity to His Word, fervency in intercessory prayer, labors more abundant, and love to the Lord. Believing in the practical Headship of Christ and the local autonomy of each assembly, this is not intended to be an official organ of any group or federation of local churches. The editor and authors take responsibility for materials published. For any blessing which accrues, to God be the glory.

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### Submissions

Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with all unsolicited material. News items must be submitted at least two months in advance of issue requested. Selected news items will be carried for two issues (if time permits). The editor reserves the right to determine those items best suited for the magazine. Editorial decisions are final. Photos accepted. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for photos you wish returned. Send news items to [frontlines@uplook.org](mailto:frontlines@uplook.org)

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## There's No Place Like Home

With everything God touches He leaves something of His glory behind.

Outer space is not a very inviting place to visit. There is no air or air pressure, no oxygen, no liquid water, no food, extremely high and low temperatures, and harmful radiation, to name a few features that don't match the basic requirements for life as we know it. We do visit space, but this requires intelligently engineered equipment to allow us to take our environment along with us. We must have oxygen-containing air at the correct pressure, otherwise blood would "boil" in the no-pressure vacuum of space. Food and water are essential, too, as is the right temperature for the biochemistry of life to run smoothly. And our DNA must be protected from damage by cosmic radiation. All of these conditions are already provided for us on earth. The physical conditions on earth exactly match the requirements to sustain human life with little or no effort on our part. Whereas it is with great effort that we take these conditions with us into space.

Earth-like gravity is also difficult to take with us into space. The microgravity environment of space looks like fun, but microgravity is actually harmful to humans. In the short term, with no gravity pulling blood down into the legs, blood redistributes into the head causing facial swelling. The inner ear, which normally controls our equilibrium on earth, is confused by the lack of gravity and many astronauts experience nausea and vomiting as a result. But more than anything else, the lack of normal "1g" gravity in space may limit human exploration of space because the under-use of muscles causes them to become weak and the progressive loss of calcium weakens bones also.<sup>1</sup>

Data from long-duration microgravity exposure during Skylab missions in the 1970s indicated an average bone loss of 1% per month.<sup>2</sup> To counter this decline, NASA

required astronauts to perform regular exercise in orbit and dedicated space shuttle missions to the evaluation of vacuum gravity suits and treadmills. While helpful, exercise has not prevented bone-loss during space flight.<sup>3</sup> In a sense, bones need gravity because they are designed to resist gravity and mechanical forces on earth. There is within bone a mechanism to sense where mechanical stress is placed on the bone and to call in bone-building cells to reinforce or "remodel" the bone. Since these

design features are not needed in microgravity, the body switches from using dietary calcium to build bone, to leaching calcium from bone—thus reducing bone strength.<sup>4</sup>

These concerns are not insurmountable. It may be that Arthur C. Clarke's vision of a circular, rotating spaceship, from the book and movie, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, will need to be realized in order to create an artificial earth-like gravity field which we bring with us into space. In the end, these considera-

tions should remind us that our earth environment and the needs of our human physiology are intelligently designed and constructed to be precisely matched and, while we may visit space, there is still no place like home.

—MICHAEL G. WINDHEUSER, PH.D.



1 West JB. Physiology of a microgravity environment: Historical perspectives: Physiology in microgravity. *Journal of Applied Physiology* 89:379-384, 2000.

2 Holick MF. Perspectives on the impact of weightlessness on calcium and bone metabolism. *Bone* 22(5):105S-111S, 1998.

3 LeBlanc A *et al.* Future human bone research in space. *Bone* 22(5):113S-116S, 1998.

4 Burger EH and J Klein-Nulend. Microgravity and bone cell mechanosensitivity. *Bone* 22 (5):127S-130S, 1998.



## Share Your Good Evangelism Ideas

"...by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22).

**A** past generation found innovative ways to take the good news into the world—tent meetings, open air preaching, gospel tracts and later radio and TV were at one time novel methods. Some of these can still be used and adapted for the 21st century. But we need to think carefully, creatively, and biblically about strategic ways to reach our generation. Effective new methods must be consistent with the character of God and the message we bear. Perhaps we can help each other with fresh ideas for methods and/or tools for gospel work. Please email us evangelism ideas you have found effective, or ideas you think may be used by the Lord to reach souls in our day to: [seedthoughts@uplook.org](mailto:seedthoughts@uplook.org). We will look them over carefully, pass them by evangelists in the field, and post the most helpful on [www.uplook.org](http://www.uplook.org)

### **TURKEY HILL RANCH BIBLE CAMP**

Turkey Hill Ranch, Vienna, MO announces their 2006 camps. *Volleyball Conference* Apr 28-30. Speaker: Mark Booher. *Memorial Day Family Camp* May 26-29. Speakers: Jon Brower (adults) & Tom Brammer (children). *Labor Day Family Camp* Sep 1-4. Speakers: Keith Trevolt (adults) & Buddy Hughes (children). Various week-long camps are planned for ages 8-17 during Jun and Jul. Those 15 or older are encouraged to prayerfully consider serving the Lord on staff. Visit [www.turkeyhillranch.com](http://www.turkeyhillranch.com) for schedule, applications or more details. Registration info 573-744-9293 email: [thrbc@turkeyhillranch.com](mailto:thrbc@turkeyhillranch.com)

### **CONFERENCE IN GRAND RAPIDS MI**

The Northwest assembly's annual conference is planned for Mar 17-19. Speakers: Dan Smith (IA) and Mike Fitzhugh (MI). A children's program provided. To be held at White Hills Bible Church, 3900 E. Fulton. Accommodations available. **Contact:** Robert Snow at 616-785-4096

### **FAMILY CONFERENCE**

Brooksville (FL) Bible Chapel is planning a Family Conference Mar 25-26.

The conference begins at 10:00AM Saturday and lunch will be served. Skip Elliott (SC) will be the speaker and his topic will include: *The Principle of Prayer, The Purpose of Prayer, The Power of Prayer, The Passion of Prayer*. **Contact:** Ed Anderson 352-382-4638 email: [andersedw@cs.com](mailto:andersedw@cs.com)

### **WEEKEND IN THE WORD**

James Comte (ON) is invited speaker for a conference to be held Mar 31-Apr 2 at Willow Valley Conference Center in Lancaster, PA. Topic: "*How Big is Your God?*" Conference begins Friday at 7PM and concludes with meetings and a noon meal on the Lord's Day with the Monterey assembly. Saturday evening dinner and sacred concert planned; area assemblies invited. Cost for weekend is \$230. **Contact:** Mark Kolchin, PO Box 305, Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734 email: [knowtheword@comcast.net](mailto:knowtheword@comcast.net) or [www.knowtheword.com](http://www.knowtheword.com)

### **IMPACT 2006, WINDSOR ON**

"Impact 2006," a conference for youth age 13 up to college-aged adults, is planned for Fri Mar 31-Sun Apr 2 at Oakwood Bible Chapel, Windsor, ON. The theme is "*Keep yourselves in the love*

*of God*"—Jude 21. Expected speakers are Jon Glock (IA), Gary Goodkey (ON), Steve Yuille (ON) and Jodi Greenstreet (ON). Cost is \$20 before Mar 12 and \$30 after. Register at: [www.oakwoodbiblechapel.org](http://www.oakwoodbiblechapel.org) [oakwoodimpact2006@hotmail.com](mailto:oakwoodimpact2006@hotmail.com)

### **DALLAS AREA CONFERENCE**

The Dallas Area Conference is scheduled for Apr 7-9, Lord willing. Charles Fizer (IA) and Joe Mikhael (ON) will minister the Word. Meetings held at Wheatland Bible Chapel, 1303 W. Wheatland Road, Duncanville, TX. **Contact:** John Daniels 972-424-9889 [john\\_marilyn\\_daniels@verizon.net](mailto:john_marilyn_daniels@verizon.net)

### **TORONTO EASTER CONFERENCE**

The Toronto Easter Bible Conference will be held, Lord willing, Apr 14-15 at Martingrove Collegiate, Martingrove & Eglinton West. Expected speakers are Mike Attwood (GA) and Dr. Joe Mikhael (ON) **Contact:** Charles Tempest 905-892-2792 email: [charlietempest@hotmail.com](mailto:charlietempest@hotmail.com)

### **VANCOUVER EASTER CONFERENCE**

The Vancouver Easter Conference, sponsored by seven local assemblies, will be held Apr 14-16 at Granville

## FRONT LINES *continued*

Chapel, 5091 Granville St., Vancouver, BC. Speakers: Jonathan Brower (VA) and Keith Keyser (PA). Children's programs Fri and Sat afternoon. **Contact:** Norman Chandler 604-271-1083 email: [jeannormanc@yahoo.ca](mailto:jeannormanc@yahoo.ca)

### BALDWIN KANSAS CONFERENCE

An open platform conference is planned Apr 22-23 at the Baldwin Gospel Chapel, Third and Chapel Streets (PO Box 45), Baldwin, KS 66006 **Contact:** Ray M. Jones 785-594-3374 email: [rmjones@idir.net](mailto:rmjones@idir.net) Ken Keane 785-594-3520 email: [kenkeane@myvine.com](mailto:kenkeane@myvine.com)

### CHICAGO AREA CONFERENCE

The Chicago Area Spring Conference will be held, Lord willing, Apr 28-30 at the Palos Hills Christian Assembly, 10600 S. 88th Ave., Palos Hills, IL. Speakers expected are Harold Summers (BC), Alan Parks (SC), and Mike Attwood (GA). Special sessions for children. For accommodations, contact: Rich Battaglin 708-599-9407 email: [paloschristians@hotmail.com](mailto:paloschristians@hotmail.com)

### LIMON, CO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Limon Bible Chapel, 385 J Av., will have its annual conference Apr 29-30. Speakers: Keith Trevolt (KS) and George Farber (IA). Accommodations and meals. **Contact:** 719-775-9788 or 719-346-8547 PO Box 1208, Limon CO 80828

### LADIES MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

The 29th Annual Ladies Missionary Conference, Windsor, ON, co-sponsored by ladies from Oakwood & Turner Road Bible Chapels, is planned for Sat May 6 at 9:30 AM. Nursery &

lunch provided. Speakers are Rosy Cavanaugh (Mexico), Marj Robbins (QC) and a team of ladies reporting on their visit to Ireland. **Contact:** Jan Gillis at 519-967-7015 email: [neilgillis@sympatico.ca](mailto:neilgillis@sympatico.ca)

### CONFERENCE IN INDIANA

The annual Spring Conference at the Gospel Chapel, 321 Cliff Dr., Logansport, IN, is to be held May 6, Lord willing. Expected speaker: Ross Ragland (MO). Refreshments at 9:30 AM with sessions at 10 and 11 AM. Lunch provided. Brother Ragland will also speak Sunday morning. **Contact:** Ralph Garver 574-722-1012 email: [Leegar@Lneti.com](mailto:Leegar@Lneti.com)

### CHICAGO AREA LADIES' CONFERENCE

The 61st Annual Chicago Area Ladies' Missionary Conference will be held May 6 from 9:00 AM-1:30 PM at Palos Hills Christian Assembly in Palos Hills, IL. In the will of the Lord, the expected speakers are Alexandra Grendahl, Sharon Fleming, and Rachel Yost. Lunch tickets are \$7.00. Contact Joni Kennelly 708-974-4324 for information, tickets, directions, or accommodations.

### VESSELS OF HONOR 2006

A Young Adults' Conference convened by East Tulsa Bible Chapel will be held on the campus of Park University, Parkville, MO, May 26-29. The theme: "Reaching Out to a Lost World." General session speakers: Jonathan Peck (NC), Steve Price (KS), and Mike Attwood (GA). Seminar speakers, along with general speakers, are Craig Rolinger, Nancy Rolinger and Warren Henderson. **Contact:** Jim Lindamood 918-663-1121 email: [jimlindamood@vesselsofhonor.org](mailto:jimlindamood@vesselsofhonor.org)

Dan Moffitt 918-744-6484 email: [danmoffitt@sbcglobal.net](mailto:danmoffitt@sbcglobal.net) [www.vesselsofhonor.org](http://www.vesselsofhonor.org)

### IOWA BIBLE CAMP 50TH

The 50th anniversary of the founding of Iowa Bible Camp will be celebrated at the Twin Lakes Christian Center, Manson, IA, Jun 23. All who have had some part in the camp are urged to join with us. For particulars, visit [www.iowabiblecamp.org](http://www.iowabiblecamp.org). **Contact:** Tom Baird 515-276-1309 email [tomyrna57@aol.com](mailto:tomyrna57@aol.com).

### RAMSEUR BIBLE STUDY

Brethren in the Ramseur/Randleman area of NC are planning a school year of classes through May 2006. These classes are to be held at Ramseur Gospel Chapel one Saturday a month. **Contact:** Mike Moody 336-824-5525 email: [mcjmoody@yahoo.com](mailto:mcjmoody@yahoo.com)

### YORK BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM

The York Bible Study Program, which is completing its 18th year, meets on the second Saturday of each month until May in York, PA. There are four teaching sessions and lunch is provided. **For information:** Spread the Word at 717-767-2900

### UPWARD BOUND

Upward Bound will be holding its summer conference at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, ON. The first week will be a series of in-depth seminars on various biblical subjects. The schedule is heavy but there are also many opportunities for Christian growth through fellowship and times of fun with other believers. Speakers will include: Dr. David Gooding (Belfast, UK), Brian Russell (East-

bourne, UK), Dennis Leblanc (NB), and Sandy McEachern (NS). For those who are able, a second week of canoeing and camping in Algonquin Park will also be a part of the program. The dates are August 13 to 20 for Week One and August 20 to 25 for Week Two. **Contact:** Sandy McEachern 902-830-1305 email: [sandymceachern@hotmail.com](mailto:sandymceachern@hotmail.com)

### UNITING IN LONDON

Through much prayer, the saints of Edward Street Gospel Chapel and Bethel Chapel in London, ON have united as one assembly effective Feb 1. Edward Street Gospel Chapel was built approximately 1920 and Bethel Chapel in 1934. Bethel Chapel is located in the same area of London just a few blocks east of Edward Street and is a larger facility with plenty of parking. We have renamed this new work "Faith Bible Chapel." **Contact:** Les Doey 519-768-2356 email: [lesdoey9@sympatico.ca](mailto:lesdoey9@sympatico.ca)

### MARPLE CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY, PA

The Marple Christian Assembly plans to close down after Apr 23. Those remaining will be seeking fellowship in other nearby assemblies. A one day conference is planned, in the will of the Lord, for Apr 9 to acknowledge God's faithfulness in sustaining the testimony for some 85 years. Clark McClelland, Wade LeBlanc and William Oconor are expected to help in the ministry.

### CAMP JUBILEE, NC

Camp Jubilee, a five day resident camp for young people with special needs, is preparing for the second year of ministry. This Christ-centered program

includes chapel time, crafts, recreation and other activities. Camper age begins at 10 years, with disabilities in the mild to moderate range. Experienced Christian Bible teachers and counselors provide an exciting week for campers. Camp will be held at Camp Good News in Fairview, NC, Jun 26-30. The maximum number of campers is 25. Camper-counselor ratio is no more than 2 to 1. Campers and support staff are needed. Our greatest need is prayer for this challenging opportunity. Camp Jubilee is an outreach ministry of Parkway Chapel in Winston-Salem, NC. **Contact:** Janice Bishop 336-764-9169 email: [parkway-chapel@juno.com](mailto:parkway-chapel@juno.com); [www.parkway-chapel.us](http://www.parkway-chapel.us) – link Camp Jubilee

### GEORGETOWN, TX FELLOWSHIP

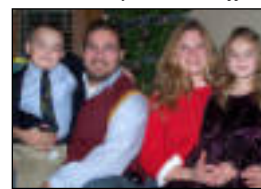
Visitors traveling near Austin, TX are welcome to a small home fellowship at 312 Ashwood Lane, Georgetown, TX. Georgetown is 26 mi north (not south) of Austin. **Contact:** Edwin & Mary Meschkat at 512-68-6909 [emeschkat@aol.com](mailto:emeschkat@aol.com) or Orville Pierce at 512-863-8335

### COMMENDATION

*Julio and Leticia López*

It is with joy and confidence that the elders at Spanish Assembly at Westminster Bible Chapel commend Julio and Leticia López to God and His grace, for the work of the Lord in the metropolitan area of Los Angeles. At present Julio coordinates some 30 radio programs in Spanish that are broadcast over radio stations in Los Angeles, Mexico, Honduras and Peru, and by short wave radio into the 39 Spanish speaking countries of Latin America.

*Scott and Lynn DeGroff*



The elders with the saints of Topeka Gospel Chapel,

Topeka KS, commend Scott and Lynn DeGroff to full-time service. Please pray for Scott, Lynn and family as they seek to serve the Lord. **Contact:** 2006 SW Meadow Lane, Topeka, KS 66604 Tel: 785-271-5617

### SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

**Victory Christian School** in St. Louis, MO is seeking an Administrator/Principal beginning with the 2006/2007 school year. This challenging position as principal will lead the K-8 program of 150 students as it enters its 32nd year. If you are a motivated individual with the qualifications and desire to serve the Lord in this capacity, please e-mail your request for an application to [Application@VCSMO.org](mailto:Application@VCSMO.org)

**Horton Haven Christian Camp** is looking for someone to take responsibility for the supervision of the health care aspect of their camp ministry. **Contact:** Matt Phelan, Executive Director, Horton Haven Christian Camp, Box 276, Chapel Hill, TN 37014 email: [mjphelan@united.net](mailto:mjphelan@united.net)

### OUTREACH IN DENMARK, SWEDEN

A Rotary convention will be held in Copenhagen in June and volunteers are needed to give tracts out to delegates from 130 countries. Help is also needed in Germany at the World Cup outreach. **Contact:** Stan Engle 405-236-LIFE email: [sgengle@aol.com](mailto:sgengle@aol.com) [www.Lifehouse.org](http://www.Lifehouse.org)



## NEW LIFE IN HIM *From seed planting to fruit growing*



### The Breaking of Bread

"And they continued stedfastly in... the breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42)

A visitor had been observing the meetings in our assembly for about six months. He had attended a number of different local churches in the area but found our gathering distinctly different. One Sunday morning, with a perplexed look on his face, he stated, "I don't understand why the attendance is so good at the first meeting." He went on to say, "There is no speaker, no program, no choir, and yet the meeting is consistently well-attended." I had to smile. The meeting he referred to was the remembrance meeting which is sometimes referred to as the worship meeting, communion (1 Cor. 10:16), the breaking of bread (Ac. 20:7), or the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:20).

Scripture does not detail the specific format of the breaking of bread, but since Acts 2:42 includes it with teaching, fellowship, and prayer as activities that the early Christians continued steadfastly in, it is clear that it is vitally important in the structured life of the local church. From 1 Corinthians 14 it is evident that the men are to participate in the leadership role (1 Cor. 14:26) while the women participate silently (1 Cor. 14:34-36). Partaking of the emblems (the bread symbolic of Christ's body and the cup symbolic of the new covenant in His blood) is the focal point of the meeting (1 Cor. 11:20-26). Because it is the Lord's Supper, all sincere believers who do not hold doctrines contrary to Christ (2 Jn. 9-11) and who are not immoral in life and conduct (1 Cor. 5:9-13) are welcomed to participate. We are to do this "until He comes" (1 Cor. 11:26).

Central in the Lord's Supper is the remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 11:20-31). He is the attraction to the meeting. In remembering the Lord, we focus our attention upon Him in our meditation, our songs, and the substance of our worship. Hymns are chosen and Scripture passages are read to turn

our thoughts to Christ in His worth and His work. Old and New Testament Scriptures relating to the Lord Jesus are fertile ground in which worshipful thoughts can grow. Participation ought to be thoughtful and reverent with each prayer expressing our thanks to, and adoration of, God on behalf of all. Before saying a word, each brother ought to consider whether or not his contribution is focused on the Lord Jesus. Teaching on other matters or exhortation to godly living are profitable in other settings, but are inappropriate at a meeting whose purpose is to remember Him.

Unseen to the casual observer is that, prior to the meeting, each believer should have prepared his heart for the remembrance of their Saviour through prayer, reading the Word, and confession of sin. 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 states that self-examination is required before participating in such a meeting. Proper self-examination results in right relationships and attitudes toward God and toward one another. No unconfessed sins, overdue apologies, or unrighted wrongs are to remain (Mt. 5:23, 24). Failure to examine or judge oneself prior to participating in the Lord's Supper will result in a lack of worship and, perhaps, the Lord's chastening (1 Cor. 11:30-34). The remembrance meeting thus becomes another incentive to living a life that is well-pleasing to God.

Another Christian friend of mine, who was the "worship leader" in a large Christian congregation, attended the remembrance meeting in our small assembly. After the meeting, and with tears in his eyes, he stated, "That was the first time I've ever really worshipped." May this meeting always find its place and prominence in the local church in order that believers might regularly render to the Lord the worship due His name. —RANDY HORN

## From Babes to Faithful Men

The Church is being carefully constructed, one disciple at a time.

*"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:1-2).*

Paul sets before Timothy the same pattern for building up the assembly that Christ both exhibited and commended to His disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, ...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...even to the end of the age" (Mt. 28:19-20, NKJV). We understand that this commissioning is propagated from disciple to disciple, as it would be impossible for eleven men to accomplish this worldwide task even if they labored until the Lord's return.

Christ is building His Church one living stone at a time—disciple by disciple. Timothy was to continue the work of discipleship; in fact, Paul identifies four generations of disciples in his exhortation: himself, Timothy, faithful men, and those that they would teach. Making disciples is the key to church growth and vitality.

### The Challenge

Paul told the believers at Thessalonica: "We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children" (1 Thes. 2:7). In the previous verse, he told them that the apostles did not seek their money or their honor. A true disciple of Christ never gains disciples for himself. Amos Alcott put it this way, "The true teacher defends his pupils against his own personal influence." George MacDonald warns, "No teacher should strive to make men think as he thinks, but to lead them to the living Truth, to the Master Himself, of whom alone they can learn anything."

One of the difficult tasks of discipleship is practically implementing both Paul's nurturing example to the Thessalonian believers and his exhortation to Timothy to "commit thou to faithful men." Those professing Christ as Saviour will require tender care and regular feedings of the sincere milk of the Word to encourage growth, yet maturity must be realized. The discipler does not want to be guilty of entertaining goats while neglecting the feeding of true sheep. False professors or the despondent can absorb our time and distract us from fulfilling the Great Commission. If, after a few months, the professing believer is not exhibiting spiritual growth, we must commit them to the Lord, leave an open invitation for further study, and discontinue meeting with them.

Maturity is evidenced by a deepening in devotion to Christ, being a witness for



Christ, spending time in Bible study and prayer, repenting and forsaking sin, and attending meetings of the church faithfully. Paul tells Timothy to commit to those who will pass on what they know of the Saviour. So, dear discipler, be a nurse who cherishes her children, but also be discerning—commit to faithful men who will teach others.

The first year of growth is most important for a new convert. It has been my experience that those who receive good spiritual care in the early months tend to go on for Christ, while those who are neglected seem to develop lethargic behavior patterns that can cripple their spiritual vigor for the rest of their life.

A good spiritual nursery includes a discipler who lives sound doctrine as an example to follow (2 Thes. 3:7-9) and is available to spend time with the one being discipled (Ac. 11:25-26). The Lord Jesus exhibited such qualities in training Peter.

The Lord called Peter on three separate occasions to follow Him and, after each time, Peter dedicated more of himself to Christ. In Mark 1:18, Peter forsook his fishing nets to follow Christ. Later, Peter forsook all to pursue the Saviour (Lk. 5:11). After Christ's resurrection, the Lord again called Peter to follow Him with the understanding it would cost Peter his life (Jn. 21:15-19).

It is at this junction that Peter settled the death question once and for all. He had learned that it was harder to live for the Lord than to die for Him. Acts 2 does not portray a denying Peter, but a fully-restored, Spirit-filled disciple, preaching Christ to the salvation of 3,000 souls.

The Lord's patience with Peter is an encouragement to all those who are training others. So be patient and tender, but also discerning. We want to spend our time with those who will disciple others.



### **Discipleship at Home**

One of the most neglected Christian training grounds is the home. A Christian family is not a household of Christians, but a Christian household. If the Bible is not the center of the home, it cannot be called a true Christian home, even though all the individuals comprising the home have been born again. A Christian home might include the following training methods:

1. *Regular family devotions.* Involve the entire family in prayer, reading the Scripture, answering questions, and sharing gleanings from the Word. Dads should take the lead in teaching and applying Scripture (1 Cor. 14:35). The family setting is a non-threatening environment for sons to learn to minister the Word to others and pray aloud. This training prepares them for assembly responsibility. Why not give each son one night a week to bring a family devotion?

2. *Encouraging daily quiet times.* As soon as children can read and write, give them quiet time notebooks in which to journal. Fathers should meet regularly with the children to review these notebooks and to answer questions. This time of review builds parental intimacy and instills a lifetime pattern of commit-

ting our first-fruits to the Lord and seeking His help for the day.

3. *Bible study.* May I recommend that dads take each of their children through Jean Gibson's *Survey of Christianity* and *Basic Christian Training*, then William MacDonald's book *Here's The Difference*. These three books cover the gamut from basic truths to the finer distinctions of doctrine.

4. *Character development.* Develop a list of godly and ungodly character traits from Proverbs and systematically teach these to your children. Teach biblical gender roles in the family and in the assembly. Read missionary stories and biographies of faithful men and women of God.

### Discipleship Outside the Home

Titus 2:1-7 identifies a host of discipleship opportunities for both genders and all ages. Although the local church will gather for weekly teaching, this meeting should not be the main means of training children, new converts, and young believers. Those first believers in Jerusalem continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine (Ac. 2:46); they gathered daily (Ac. 2:46). Paul, speaking to believers from Ephesus, said, *"I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house"* (Ac. 20:20, NKJV). True discipleship commits whatever time is necessary to train up others for Christ—newborns especially cannot be neglected.

**Key activities in spiritual development are:**

1. Learning Christ. "Disciple" (*mathetes*) means "a learner." The pursuit of the disciple is to learn Christ (Mt. 11:29) and to be like Him (Mt. 10:25). Guilt trips and accountability may work for a short time, but only love for Christ will propel the new believer onward in growth and service.

2. *Attending Bible studies.* Young believers need to be in as many weekly Bible studies as possible without neglecting the meetings of the Church and family responsibilities. I have found periodic weekend Bible studies (by gender) to also be profitable. Ensure that new converts keep a notebook with them to jot down questions as they arise, then be available to answer these.

3. *Church involvement.* Involvement builds commitment to the local body. Challenge those you are discipling to serve to the capacity that they are able, which will assist you in both recognizing gift (1 Tim. 4:14-15) and stirring it up (2 Tim. 1:6). Elders should be ensuring that all those in fellowship, including responsible children, have functional roles. When children feel that they are a part of the local body, they will not tend to drift away as young adults.

4. *Disciple others.* Witnessing for Christ strengthens one's profession (Rom. 10:10), and a disciple learns the most while teaching others. Just as every local church should have vision for evangelical outreach and seeing new church testimonies raised up, every discipler should implant the same vision into those they are training: *"commit thou to faithful men [and women], who shall be able to teach others also."* This is Christ's plan for building His Church; may we all do it for His glory! 🕊

Quotes from: Edythe Draper, *Draper's Quotations from the Christian World*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers Inc., electronic copy)



**A disciple learns the most while teaching others.**



## ELDER HELPS *To feed, to take heed, and to lead*

### Responsibility for Ministry

Good grass is still needed, and still waters, too.

Shepherds determine the food that their sheep will consume. When succulent grass is at hand, not too many sheep will stray. However, we should not expect hungry sheep to remain committed to their shepherds if those shepherds are not committed to the needs of the sheep. The interests of the flock are best served when it is well-fed (Ezek. 34; Jn. 21:15-17; Ac. 20:25-31).

Ideally, elders or other able men in the local fellowship will do much of the feeding. These must be “*apt to teach*” (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24). Other teachers may be invited to assist from time to time, but only under the watchful eyes of godly overseers who are students of Scripture and able to discern the difference between good food and bad. This can present a problem. Struggling assemblies sometimes attempt to compensate for a lack of local gift by regularly importing speakers from outside, but it is unlikely that an assembly will continue over a length of time if there is not profitable resident ministry from men able to address foreseen dangers and regularly provide nourishing teaching. This promotes satisfaction and inspires confidence.


It is unscriptural for a congregation to be under the teaching of only one gifted individual, but many people obviously consider it better than an absence of good food (witness the exodus to other evangelical fellowships going on in many areas these days). This points up the folly of thinking an assembly can be considered “established” if it is largely dependent on imported ministry. If a local church is not self-sustaining in the way we have described, there is not much hope for its continuance.

Even assemblies we may consider established (because of their size, age, or location) are writing their obituary if they do not subscribe to the consistent use of local gift. By “gift”, we mean the genuine and

proven ability to communicate spiritual truth to a congregation. Once in a while, elders may take the risk of asking a beginner to minister the Word, but generally the pulpit is not a place to experiment. Too much ministry by

novices or ungifted men will produce discontent. The test that shepherds must apply to all teaching is “Does it feed the flock?” Only a well-nourished flock will satisfy the Chief Shepherd.

When it comes to seeking out and cultivating local teachers, we ought not to be swayed by the desire of some to speak publicly if their ministry proves to be mediocre. It is not a godly thing to deceive a person into thinking he has ability by patting him on the back and saying, “That was a good word, brother”, if the opposite is really the case. We ought to speak the truth in love, for anything less is flattery and therefore harmful (Prov. 29:5). We must also guard against giving opportunity to brethren to share a word for political reasons—because they are related to someone of influence or because they may be offended if we leave them out. The needs of the flock must always guide the elders, nothing less. It is better if at least two men decide who will be given time to preach. The choosing of speakers is too heavy a burden for one to bear alone, for they are bound to face criticism.

Admittedly this calls for strength of character. But what else would you think is to be expected of us as overseers? 



# Discipleship and the Church

A new way for a new day.

*"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. 4:15-16)*

**W**hen studying the time our Lord walked on earth, we read of "His disciples," for a disciple is one who follows, and learns from, his master's ways. As such, the Master was here to teach personally.

In the book of Acts, believers in the risen and ascended Lord Jesus are initially called disciples (chs. 6, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, and 21). They were learning the words of the risen Lord from His chosen apostles who had direct revelation, "the apostles' doctrine." In this sense, the apostles were obeying the risen Lord's instruction to them to "teach [disciple] all nations." They were to do this not by becoming masters themselves, but by teaching all things that the risen Lord Jesus had commanded them (Mt. 28:16-20).

However, Acts 21:16 is the last mention of "disciple" in the Word of God. The epistles (written instruction) to the Christian church never mention this word. Why? Terms such as "brethren" (family relationship) and "saints" (holy ones with the Holy Spirit) and "body" (a living organism) are terms for Christians in the epistles.

The twelve disciples had one Teacher to disciple them, for Jesus was the Master and should be followed. The early Christians, with Christ in heaven, did not have one teacher to teach them. Rather they had the apostles, a plurality of men who received revelation from the Lord

and transmitted it orally and in written form (2 Thes. 2:15).

The apostles were chosen to receive the mysteries of God: things that were kept secret until then. It is in these mysteries, revealed in their epistles, that we learn of a higher way of learning than a mere disciple. Now it is not Christ with us at times as a teacher, but Christ in us continually revealing to us "the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10). Now it is not just following Christ's example, but internally being transformed into His image and likeness (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18).

We have a picture of change in John the Baptist in John 3. In preaching the coming of the Messiah and His kingdom, John preached the baptism of repentance. Thus John had disciples who learned from him and followed him. However, the Lord Jesus had come and was also baptizing believers via His disciples. John was informed that "all men come to Him [Jesus]." John's response was to realize the change was from heaven. He stated: "He must increase, but I must decrease." John would no longer be discipling as before but would yield to a new way.

## The New Way: The Church

The Church is made up of believers who alone possess the living Spirit of Christ. This unique group is called "the body of Christ" for it is His living extension on earth, spiritually joined to Him (the Head in heaven) and to each other. All life, wisdom, and ability emit spiritually from the Head into His body. However, each member of this body has different manifestations of the Spirit, called gifts. No one individual possesses all the gifts but the body as a whole does. It is not just one individual but the body that is multi-gifted and complete—like



## DISCIPLESHIP AND THE CHURCH *continued*

Christ Jesus when He was on earth.

Thus the epistles put the emphasis on believers learning by assembling together “*in the church.*” Here different gifts from the one Head are “*come together into one place*” (1 Cor. 14). Here the plurality of gifts being used results in “*that all may learn.*” This word “*learn*” is what a disciple does.

Neither Christ nor His apostles are on earth today, but His Spirit is—and He is in the Church (1 Cor. 3:16). And His Word, through the apostles’ doctrine, is with us in complete form: the Scriptures.

### **The Shortcomings of the Old Way**

A horse, of course, was once a great way to travel. Now to ride a horse on a superhighway can present many dangers. To view discipleship as mainly one person teaching or mentoring another is pre-Body. While there is certainly room for individuals outside a church meeting to teach others (Acts 18:26; 20:20; Titus 2, etc.), to not view the Church as the new ordained way of learning can present certain dangers.

*Danger 1: One is perceived as a master.* Discipling implies that the one teaching is the master. There is only one Master (Teacher) and He is in heaven; “*all ye are brethren,*” says the Lord (Mt. 23:8-10). We read in Acts 20:30 of those who are even elders but who will speak perverse things to “*draw away disciples after them.*” We must be careful to avoid seeking a following after ourselves, rather than guiding believers to the Head and His body. In that sense we must be team players, for that is exactly what a member of a body is.

*Danger 2: Bypassing God’s checks and balances.* Discipling can unwittingly bypass the accountability God has ordained in His assembly. We read of elders or overseers (with qualifications to be met) who by the Holy Spirit are to shepherd each local church (Ac. 20:28). We read of correcting an erring brother by the whole assembly (Mt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:4-7). One is not to be accountable to just one person where serious failings and sins are kept secret, bypassing the authority given to the assembly. In a body one member can’t be hurt without the others knowing it and assisting.

The NT church meeting shows a plurality of gift being used with accountability. “*Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another*

*er that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn [what a disciple does], and all may be comforted*” (1 Cor. 14:29-31). Thus there is accountability in the church where all are present: old and young, wise and gifted.

*Danger 3: Bypassing the dynamic of the variety of gifts and elderly wisdom.* Discipling can lock a person in to only one person’s style and abilities. Intentionally, no one person has all the gifts. Romans 12:4-6 teaches: “*For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing....*” Also Titus 2 teaches that the aged men and women, with their wisdom, experience, and godly example, have a great role to play toward the younger ones. To not be involved in the body is to receive a partial diet, thus stunting one’s growth.

It is interesting to note that when Paul returned from his missionary journey to the church in Antioch, even he was only one of the teachers in a plurality: “*Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord, with many others also*” (Ac. 15:35). Even the things he taught to Timothy he did “*among many witnesses.*” Body dynamics!

*Danger 4: Bypassing the Lordship of Christ uniquely displayed in a church meeting.* Discipling is not the highest level of learning. When one is “*in the church*” of God, one not only receives words but also learns the ways of God: reverence, order, protocol, respect, and submission. This puts one under the authority of the risen Lord that is uniquely demonstrated when in assembly (1 Cor. 14:23-37). Here the Lord says a woman is to “*learn [the word for what a disciple does] in silence*” and “*if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home*” (1 Tim. 2:11; 1 Cor. 14:35). As Psalm 77:13 says: “*Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary.*” A body needs authority and wisdom from the head to function properly, and a body has only one head.

*Danger 5: Not providing an outlet for interactive growth.* Discipling is learning. However, to be healthy, a body must not only take in (eat) but exercise (give out). The NT church meeting is not only a place of receiving but also a place of many giving edification according to one’s heart, gifts, and roles (1 Cor. 14).

If you are involved in the New Testament assembly, you are involved in discipling.

# Preaching through the Book of Revelation

The value and effectiveness of explaining the text of Scripture.

**T**here was a time when consistent forthright preaching on prophecy was a common experience for those in fellowship in New Testament assemblies. However today it seems that it has become more of a rarity. There is no doubt that preaching through the book of Revelation is not an easy task, but it is surely worthwhile. A promise of blessing is given to the one who “...readeth, and they that heareth the words of this prophecy” (Rev. 1:3). We certainly do not want to deprive the saints of such a blessing.

## Suggestions for Breaking Down the Series

Here is a book where the outline is clearly in the text. We find it in chapter 1, verse 19:

1. “*The things which thou hast seen*” (ch. 1). Here is John’s vision of the glorified Christ. A beautiful series would be to consider Christ as seen in the Revelation.
2. “*The things which are*” (chs. 2–3). The seven churches have been viewed in three ways by Christians: as actual churches at the time of writing, which of course is true; as

representative of churches in every age. In our world today we can find churches that reflect each of the seven churches; as a prophetic overview of the church age—God giving His church history curriculum in advance and prophetically. Revelation is clearly prophetic in nature and it does indeed fit beautifully. (Should this surprise us coming from the all-knowing God?) It is fair to say that some object to this third viewpoint as in their minds it seems to undermine the doctrine of imminency.

3. “*The things which shall be hereafter*” (chs. 4–22). The tribulation period (chs. 4–18), and the triumph of the crucified One (chs. 19–22).

## Visual Aids

*Charts:* In former times, prophetic series were frequently illustrated by charts. Some are still available today and can help in visualizing the details given in the text.

*Diagrams:* This can be done quite easily with PowerPoint and overhead projectors.

## SOME HELPFUL COMMENTARIES ON THE BOOK OF THE UNVEILING

- *What the Bible Teaches: Revelation* by Jim Allen, published by John Ritchie. This series of commentaries is of a consistently high standard, but Jim Allen’s is, in my view, the jewel in the crown. It is the most satisfying commentary on Revelation I have ever seen.
- *Notes on Revelation* by Jim Flanigan, published by Gospel Tract Publications. Jim takes the concurrent view of the judgments during the Tribulation period. Nevertheless it is a very helpful, if brief, treatment of the book and well worth using.
- *The Revelation* by John Walvoord, published by Moody Press. A fairly standard dispensational premillennial work. It is thorough but somewhat dry as is much of the material that comes from the faculty of Dallas Seminary; orthodox but lacking in evangelical warmth.
- *Exegetical Commentary on Revelation* in two volumes by Robert L. Thomas, published by Moody Press. This commentary set is very expensive and also quite technical. It is not for everyone, although it is thoroughly researched and helpful.

## PREACHING THROUGH THE BOOK OF REVELATION *continued*

### Difficulties of Interpretation

*The timing of the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments:*

There are as many views on where these judgments fall in the seven-year tribulation period as there are commentators. Often commentators will assert their understanding without any explanation whatsoever.

*The order of the judgments:* Are they consecutive or concurrent? Due to the similarity between the trumpet and bowl judgments, some have seen them as concurrent, describing the same scene twice. The language, I suggest, would support the consecutive view due to the increase of intensity of each series of judgments.

*Parenthetical portions:* It will need to be borne in mind that some passages in chapters 4-18 are parenthetical.

*Symbolism:* How do we identify and interpret symbolic passages without abandoning a literal, plain-sense approach and succumbing to the extremes of allegory?


### Applications: The Value to the Church Today

*The worthiness and worship of the Lamb:* We are given beautiful heavenly scenes of our future occupation, and preoccupation, with “*the Lamb as it had been [freshly] slain*”

(Rev. 5:6). Surely preaching on such a theme should produce hearts full of worship among the saints.

*The throne and sovereignty of God:* When our world seems to be spinning out of control and current news items could fill the heart of the child of God with anxiety, getting a view of the throne of God and His sovereign control over the affairs of men (without controlling their choices or making them robots) can bring calmness to the heart and make a troubled soul as still as the sea of glass.

*The world and the folly of living for it:* As we move through the details of the Tribulation and the horrors of it, it is clear that trying to live to beautify this world is utter foolishness. Surely our urgent business should be to rescue the perishing before the rapture of the saints.

*The urgency of the gospel:* The book lends itself to gospel preaching. Throughout this book we read of two groups: those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life and the earth-dwellers. We learn of the blessings of belonging to the former group, and the terrible consequences of belonging to the latter. It is hard to preach through Revelation without every message ending up as a warning to the unconverted to repent and believe the gospel. 

## DISCIPLESHIP TESTIMONIALS

**Phil Guikema, Orlando, FL:** *I was discipled by Svend Christensen after graduating from Emmaus Bible School. I moved to Florida to live with his family and work with him in the gospel. Svend and Rhoda took me in like a son and trained me in visitation and gospel work. During this time I drove a school bus and did substitute teaching, besides working with Svend. He encouraged me to develop a new Sunday School work in another part of town and to seek the Lord’s leading in my own life. So, not only did he teach me the basics but he also pushed me “out of the nest” to develop a work on my own.*

**Scott Leach, Alabama:** *Although I was saved at an early age, and raised in assembly fellowship, I didn’t have any sort of “discipling” influence until I was married and had a newborn son. My wife Kathy and I moved to Marietta, GA in 1982, and came into fellowship at Marietta Bible Chapel. It was here that Bob & Frances Haddon took us under their wings and taught us by word and example. Bob, one of the elders there, was always in the Book and always had something to offer. Their influence and encouragement to us was immeasurable.*

**Dick Andrews, Greensboro, NC:** *Dick was saved under the ministry of Lester Wilson. Shortly after he was saved, he was put into service. Lester Wilson and Harold Mackay would take him along with them on their gospel campaigns in North Carolina. They also would have him over to their house for Bible study and mentoring. It wasn’t long before they got him involved in gospel meetings. Later, as Forest Avenue Tabernacle in Greensboro was formed, Dick was discipled by some of the elders as well, including his father and Paul Tuttle. Once again, they wasted no time in getting him involved in service at the assembly. They soon had him leading the singing and opening the meetings, a job he still does occasionally, even today, at age 82.*

## The Need to Kneel

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened....”

The author reminds us of a resource for discipleship training—often overlooked but absolutely essential.

In considering discipleship one could ask: What is my personal responsibility? Isn't it someone else's responsibility to disciple me? I just need to be willing to be disciplined, right? Is there a personal responsibility beyond being willing?

Many responsibilities could be listed, but one we have is to allow the Holy Spirit to disciple us. This may be with or without having another person involved. The work of the Holy Spirit is not to the exclusion of other factors, but is certainly of primary importance. We would be foolish not to allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives to produce spiritual growth. But even agreeing with this, do we neglect the Spirit's work? H.A. Ironsides relates a relevant experience:

I remember years ago, while my dear mother was still living, I went to visit the family, and found there a man of God from the north of Ireland. I was a young Christian at the time, engaged in gospel work. He was a much older man, an invalid, dying of what we then called “quick consumption.” He had come out to southern California, hoping climatic conditions

would be of some help to him. But it was evident that he was too far gone to be recovered to health again. He lived, by his own desire, in a small tent out under the olive trees a short distance from our home. I went out to see him there. I can remember how my heart was touched as I looked down on his thin worn face upon which I could see

the peace of heaven clearly manifested. His name was Andrew Fraser. He could barely speak above a whisper, for his lungs were almost gone, but I can recall yet how, after a few words of introduction, he said to me, “Young man, you are trying to preach Christ, are you not?” I replied, “Yes, I am.” “Well,” he whispered, “sit down a little, and let us talk together about the Word of God.” He opened his well-worn Bible, and, until his strength was gone, simply, sweetly, and earnestly he opened up truth after truth as he turned from one passage to another, in a way that my own spirit had never entered into them. Before I realized it, tears were running down my face, I asked, “Where did you get these things? Could you tell me where I could find a book that would open them up to me?...” I shall never forget his answer. “My dear young man, I learned these things on my knees on the mud floor of a little sod cottage in the north of Ireland. There with my open Bible before me, I used to kneel for hours at a time, and ask [God] to reveal Christ to my soul. He taught me more on my knees on that mud floor than I ever could have learned in all the seminaries or colleges in the world.” Is it not true that most of us do not stay long enough in the presence of God? (H.A. Ironside, *In The Heavens*, Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux 1975).

A discipleship secret is to invest time asking God to reveal Christ to us personally. This man knelt for hours. Christ said it this way: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened



## THE NEED TO KNEEL *continued*

*unto you: for everyone that asketh receiveth; and everyone that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Mt. 7:7f). But are we willing to invest the time, the hours?*

### Investing Time for Eternity

Do we ever regret time spent kneeling alone before God? Recently, my wife and I were discussing the challenges we allow to be placed on the time allotted each day. We all have 24 hours. It seems that when I seek to start my day with prayer, all the things needing to be done jump into my mind. There is a tendency to feel as if we do not have time to pray because there are so many other things—good things—that require our time. But if we will allow the Spirit to do His work, we will realize the same benefit as the psalmist. For in Psalm 18:28 we read, *“For Thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.”* Whether we need help with spiritual truths or practical matters of the day, there is a benefit to time spent kneeling before God in the Word and prayer, being taught by the Spirit.

Just consider Christ’s example. He certainly had many demands on His time, yet He still drew Himself away and took the time to pray.

Paul knew the work of the Spirit. He prayed for the believers at Ephesus that the Spirit would perform His work in the *“eyes of their understanding being enlightened”* (Eph. 1:18).

We do well to be disciplined by the Spirit of God. After all, this is one of the Spirit’s primary duties, as noted by Christ when He said of the Spirit, *“He will teach you all things”* (Jn. 14:26). Imagine that! Our own tutor permanently residing in our hearts, and infinitely better than any commentary or seasoned saint. One who can teach, reveal, enlighten!

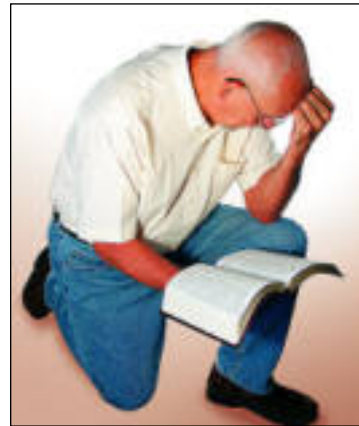
Perhaps you remember a time in your own Christian experience where the Spirit

unlocked a passage to you as you meditated on the Word. It’s wonderful! Yet there seems to be a tendency to cut the process short. We reach for a book, or call an older brother, or watch a video—we turn to man rather than the Spirit! *“But the anointing which ye have received of Him [that is the Spirit of God] abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him”* (1 Jn. 2:27). The Holy Spirit is a resource so readily available, yet so neglected.

The Lord really has a great plan for us doesn’t He? He will disciple us. *“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”* (Ps. 16:11). Let’s be careful not to neglect kneeling before God to make room for the Spirit’s work of revealing Christ to us.

Did you notice Ironside’s first reaction? He was ready to buy a book! We certainly can relate. Wisely, the seasoned Andrew Fraser gave him something better. He pointed the young man to *the Book* and the key to unlocking its precious truths: time spent in the presence of God. How this must have affected the young Ironside! This is a tremendous example of an older brother pointing a younger brother to the best Discipler. That’s discipleship!

In summary, one of our essential responsibilities in discipleship is to recognize the vital role of the Holy Spirit. *“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual”* (1 Cor. 2:13). I trust this article will do for us what Mr. Fraser’s advice did for Ironside: point us to our need for the Lord to disciple us. May we all be reminded of the need to kneel. 🕊



**One of our essential responsibilities in discipleship is to recognize the vital role of the Holy Spirit.**

## Follow Me

A disciple needs someone to lead the way.

*"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19)*

**"S**ince becoming a Christian, I have heard many sermons on discipleship but I have never been discipled. Nor do I know anyone in our assembly that has been discipled, is being discipled, or is discipling anyone!"

I was sitting across from a young man that I had recently begun to encourage in the Lord, when he made this statement. I was saddened, but had to admit that, unfortunately, this does seem to be the case among us. It ought not to be! My purpose then, in writing this article, is not to come up with innovative and catchy new definitions nor models for discipleship, but rather to prod readers to personally, simply, and seriously re-read and consider our Lord's command to "make disciples."

### The Great Commission

Most believers would agree with the concept of discipling and accept it as biblical, and yet we have, in practice, largely failed to obey the

Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20)! Have we perhaps misunderstood the Lord's command and thought that He said, "Go into all the world and make converts?" Take a second look at Matthew 28:19 and you will see His command is to make disciples! The word disciple (*mathetes*) simply means a learner, or pupil. It was a common word in biblical times.

Apparently it was not unusual to see a rabbi walking along the road fol-

lowed by a number of disciples who were eager to learn by hearing, seeing, and absorbing all they could from one whom they respected and desired to emulate. They wanted to assimilate his teachings into their thinking and behavior, becoming ever more like their teacher. Thus,

those who followed Jesus were called His disciples. They were His pupils. They learned from Him. They followed Him.

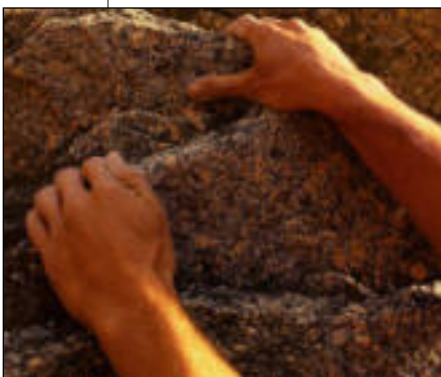
### Following Christ

To help us understand the concept of discipleship it is beneficial to include a discussion of the word "follow", as this was the wording Jesus used to call His first disciples (Mt. 4:19; 8:22; 9:9; 19:21; Jn. 1:43). In Matthew 16:34 Jesus said that if anyone wanted to be His disciple, they had to "follow" Him.

Some definitions of "follow" provide insight into the meaning of being a disciple: to go after, to move in the same direction; to pursue as an object of desire, to endeavor to obtain; to pursue with the eye, to keep the eyes fixed on; to accompany; to imitate; or copy so as to follow a pattern or model; to embrace; to think or believe like another; to obey; to observe; to practice; to act in conformity to.

How did those first disciples follow Jesus? The Lord called His disciples to be with Him, to travel with Him, to watch Him, to listen to Him, and to witness first-hand all that He taught and did. Small wonder that years later one of those disciples testified, *"that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of Life, for the Life was revealed, and we have seen it and bear witness,...that which we have seen and heard we declare unto you...this is the message which we have heard from Him..."* (1 Jn. 1:1-5).

John expressed the desire to pass on all that he had received from the Lord so that others could also know, love, and follow Christ, that their *"joy may be full."* In other words, as he had been discipled, so he wanted to make disciples



of others. 2 Timothy 2:2 is a clear model for this ongoing process of one being disciplined and then discipling others who can in turn disciple others, and so on. Remember that the ones who were first disciples were later sent out to make disciples.

Someone may ask, “But how may we follow the Lord today? We can’t actually see or hear Him as the first disciples did.”

Our primary, perfect source is the written Word of God. It is from the pages of Scripture that we learn of the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour—who He is, what He has done, what He is like, His character, His commands, and His teaching. A secondary, though imperfect, source is believers who are sincerely endeavoring to follow the Lord, and are showing good evidence of growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (Php. 2:19-22,29; 3:17; Heb. 13:7). One has said, “*Follow me as I follow Christ.*”

Of course, every human discipler will fail and disappoint, but the Lord will never do so. Therefore we should follow Him and point others to Him as revealed through His Word. It is crucial to remember the difference between the way Jesus disciplined and the way we are to disciple. He could say “*Follow Me.*” We must say “*Follow Him.*” We are not to seek our own disciples. We are to assist others to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### What’s the Point?

The goal of discipling is that the one disciplined will be able to depend on the Lord. For a time, the Lord may use us as instruments to disciple a believer, but we are to work ourselves out of a job, equipping others to stand on their own feet. In discipling, our goal is not to make someone dependent on us! Rather, we disciple babes in Christ—feeding, nurturing, training, and encouraging—helping them to grow until they become dependent on the Lord. We train them to be able to study the Word for themselves, rightly dividing it (2 Tim. 2:15). We encourage them to mature spiritually to the point of seeking the Lord in prayer in all things. We instruct them so that they joyfully learn to know and do His good, perfect,

and acceptable will.

One spring, I transplanted a number of cedar trees to form a hedge along the roadside. As spring gave way to summer, it turned out to be unusually hot and dry. A neighbor informed me the trees would never survive since the location was not favorable for cedar trees, the type of soil not conducive to their growth, and the particular summer too hot and severe for the survival of young transplanted cedar trees. Undeterred, I set about diligently watering and tending those trees day after day. How many gallons of water I put on them I don’t know! It was hard work, and a few of the trees looked a little droopy and yellow at times. I began to wonder if it was all worth it. As the heat subsided at the end of summer and fall came on, I decreased watering. The following summer as the heat rose, most of the trees appeared to fare well, but a few struggled. I commenced watering again, and nursed them until fall. The next summer I did not water at all. Their roots were strong enough and deep enough to find their own water. I’m happy to report that every one of those cedars survived! We had disciplined them and now they were a joy and reward to us (Php. 4:1; 1 Thes. 2:19-20).

Some come to Christ out of troubled and difficult backgrounds with emotional and moral baggage which hinders them. It may seem they will never flourish because of the unfavorable conditions in their lives. But the process of discipleship can carry them for a time as we nurture and tend them through the “heat,” helping them learn to abide in Christ, with His Word abiding in them (Jn. 15), becoming “*rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith*” (Col. 2:7), and ultimately teaching them how to take their burdens to the Lord themselves (Mt. 11:28-30; 1 Pet. 5:7).

Discipleship is not complicated. It is not going through a discipleship program, nor doing a course to get a certificate in discipleship. Discipleship, simply put, is a believer, by God’s grace, learning to follow Jesus and become more like Him, and then assisting others to do the same.

Let’s get to it! 🗨️



**The goal of discipling is that the one disciplined will be able to depend on the Lord.**

# The Cost of Discipleship

He gave all. What are we prepared to give?

*"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Lk. 9:24)*

*"If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple....So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple" (Lk. 14:26f, 33).*

**T**he Lord Jesus had a great multitude of people following Him that day. He sifted the crowd by explaining the high cost of being His disciple.

## Love for Christ (v. 26)

He began by saying that if anyone would come to Him to be His disciple and did not hate his

father, mother, wife, children, and brethren, and even his own self, he could not be His disciple. Some would object and say that the Lord is teaching that a disciple must hate his family in order to be a true disciple. However, the best commentary on Scripture is Scripture. The meaning of this passage is made very clear as we look at other instances where the Lord made similar statements. In Matthew 10, where the Lord is again explaining the high cost of discipleship, He makes this statement: *"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more*

*than Me is not worthy of Me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me."*

When considering these verses in the full light of the New Testament, Jesus was not demanding literal hatred. He would not command, *"Honor your father and mother"* (Mk. 7:9-13), and simultaneously demand that we hate them. The Scripture would not command, *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her"* (Eph. 5:25), and then advise husbands to hate their spouses. What Jesus was saying was simply that our love for Him must be so great and so all-encompassing that our natural love of self and family should pale in comparison. He is to be our first loyalty. All other relationships must take second place. No one can take precedence over the Lord Jesus. And we must not only be willing to place our relationship with Christ above everyone else, but we must also be willing to renounce "even our own life" and put the interests of Christ above our own. He who is not willing to follow the Lord Jesus in such a radical way cannot be His disciple.

## Death to Self (v. 27)

The Lord then expanded upon the thought of discipleship by saying that a man who does not bear his cross cannot be His disciple. In Luke 9:23 He said, *"if any man will come after Me let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me."* The cross is an instrument of execution. The Lord is saying, "He who does not take up the instrument that speaks of death to self cannot be My disciple."

Taking up the cross is, in reality, a series of deaths. It is a perpetual, daily dying to self and putting the interests of Christ above our



own. The apostle Paul described the taking up of the cross as the crucified life when he said, *"I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me"* (Gal. 2:20). Paul would also say, *"But God forbid that I should glory, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world"* (Gal. 6:14). In Luke 9:23 it says that this is a daily self denial, a daily bearing of the cross. We often wonder if we can have a one-time surrender of our lives, but the Lord said it is a daily surrender. Jim Elliott said, "one cannot surrender a life in a moment of time; it takes a lifetime to surrender a life."

At a conference last summer, I met two young men who had just visited William MacDonald and had a chance to discuss the real issues of life with him. They had asked Mr. MacDonald if he had set out to accomplish the writing of a one-volume commentary on the entire Bible, along with all his other books and accomplishments. His response was profound. His answer was no! He said all he did was get up every morning and tell the Lord, "Here is my life. You can do anything with it that You desire." He continued, "All that has been accomplished was the Lord's doing, one day at a time. Full surrender as a disciple of Christ is a daily denial of self and the taking up of the cross and following Him."

In verses 28-32 the Lord uses the illustration of a builder building a tower and a king preparing for war. These verses can be viewed from the perspective of the workers and soldiers or from the perspective of the builder and the king. From the workers' and soldiers' point of view, they must count the cost to see if they are ready to be a part of such a building project or to go into battle with this king. From the builder's and king's point of view, they must count the cost and decide whether they have the right workers and soldiers to accomplish their task. But what is the point of these two illustrations from the Lord's perspective? Are we the type of disciples that He would choose for a building project? Are we the type of disciples that He would enlist to fight His battles? Do we have a commitment level that will work to see the project finished and fight until the battle is won?

### **Forsaking All (v. 33)**

There is a progression in the level of commitment in these verses. First, we are to put Him above all family relations. Second we are to deny even our own selves. Finally, in verse 33 the Lord says that whosoever does not forsake all cannot be His disciple. This speaks of something far more than just abandonment of one's material possessions; it is absolute, unconditional sur-

**"one cannot surrender a life in a moment of time; it takes a lifetime to surrender a life."  
—Jim Elliott**

render. Christ's disciples are permitted to retain no privileges and make no demands. Their commitment to Him must be without reservation. In verses 26, 27, and 33 the Lord concludes His comments in each of these verses by saying that a person who does not meet each requirement cannot be His disciple.

Calvin wrote, "I have given up everything for Christ and what have I found? I have found everything." Paul describes his experience in Philippians 3:7 where he says *"But what things that were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."* Paul says in Philippians 1:21, *"For me to live is Christ."* And the Lord said, *"For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same will save it. For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose himself or be a cast-away?"* (Lk. 9:24f). These two verses are not talking about salvation from hell, but the saving of a life so that it will count for all eternity. It is the difference between a saved soul and a saved life. In God's estimation, a life lived for Christ is worth the whole world.

The only logical conclusion to the Lord's teaching in these verses is found in Romans 12:1: *"present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."*

## Four Would-be Disciples

"I will follow You, but..." is the funeral dirge to many a hopeful life for God.

**"Choose your this day whom ye will serve" (Josh. 24:15)**

The Lord Jesus called everyone to come to Him. He said, *"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me"* (Mt. 11:28-29). While this general call went forth to come to Him, He also called individuals to come after Him as His disciples.

We know the names of the twelve disciples that He called. There are some, however, that were called but remain nameless, nameless

because they did not follow Him. He called them and they knew what they could be, what they should be. They came close, but fell short. They started in, but gave out. The Gospel of Luke tells us about these would-be disciples (9:57-62; 18:18-30) and their stories will help us know what we should be as we follow Him.

### **Count the Cost (Lk. 9:57-58)**

The first would-be disciple met the Lord as He journeyed and said to Him, *"Lord, I will follow You wherever You go."* He was a volunteer! It warms the heart to hear someone stand up and be counted a follower

of Jesus Christ. "Where He leads me I will follow" might well have been his theme song on the way to meet the Lord. But when he heard about the accommodations, he suddenly lost the tune. (Matthew tells us that he was a certain scribe, but certainty is something we cannot ascribe to him!) Ruth, a Moabitess, was more committed than this Jewish scribe.

The Lord always paints a true picture on the canvas of a disciple's life. *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."* Perhaps he was hoping to hear, *"Follow Me...and...we'll leave a light on for you."*

The Lord's description is a clear portrait of the Son of Man, too. There was nowhere on earth, where the foxes have their holes, and nowhere in heaven, where the birds have their nests, for the Saviour to lay His head. Only on the cross, between heaven and earth, would He bow His head to rest in death. How good to rest where He rests, in His finished work.

What would you call a man like this? William MacDonald, in his convicting book, *True Discipleship*, called him Mr. Too Quick. He hadn't stopped to count the cost. It's one thing to sing the songs of commitment but another to collect the hymnbooks and stack them on the book table after the meeting is over. This would-be disciple chose the way of comfort instead of the way of the cross.

### **Don't Delay (Lk. 9:59-60)**

Our next would-be disciple was actually invited personally by the Lord saying, *"Follow Me."* His response is very instructive: *"Lord, let me first go and bury my father."* How considerate he was of his dearly departed dad! The problem was that his father was probably very much alive and in good health. It was a proverbial saying of the day, "After I bury my father." He wasn't about to let his dad down—not even into a grave!

We don't use that proverb today, but we surely know how to procrastinate! We say, "One day I'm going to serve the Lord with all my heart." If it's one day, that day will never come. Don't be fooled by the devil into thinking that



## FOUR WOULD-BE DISCIPLES *continued*



tomorrow is a better day to know and serve the Lord. The Bible declares, *“Now is the day of salvation”* (2 Cor. 6:2) and that we should *“Choose... this day whom [we] will serve”* (Josh. 24:15).

This second would-be disciple didn’t refuse to follow. He just put it off. The Lord Jesus responded truthfully saying, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach...” Dr. R. E. Harlow used to say, “Don’t do anything an unbeliever can do.” In other words, follow our Lord’s example who was about His Father’s business. Don’t be taken up with things that just anybody can do. Redeem the time for the days are evil. We don’t know this man’s name but we know he was a “pro” – at procrastination!

### Christ First (Lk. 9:61-62)

The third would-be disciple has something in common with the first two. He promises like the first disciple and procrastinates like the second. He uses the same contradictory combination of words: *“Lord, let me first...”* Someone has explained, “You can say, ‘Lord’ or you can say, ‘Me first’, but you cannot say, “Lord, me first.” If He is Lord, He is first. It’s a matter of priority.

This man’s request was to bid his family farewell. Elijah permitted Elisha to kiss his father and mother goodbye. He did so with a feast. He had been plowing the field. Now he was leaving his family to follow the prophet. Do you remember what he offered? The oxen for sacrifice and the yoke for burning! (1 Ki. 19:19-21). There was no turning back for him. He had come to the end of the row, as it were.

This would-be disciple, however, was just at the beginning of the row and had just put his hand to the plow. The Lord warns that, *“No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”*

Family relationships are good, but not when they turn you around from following the Lord Jesus Christ! He said, *“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”*

### True Riches (Lk. 18:18-30)

There is one more would-be disciple who may be more convicting that we’d like to admit. Luke tells us that he was a ruler and very rich. Matthew adds that he was

young. He had it all: power, wealth, and youth. Or did it have him?


He came to the Lord in a humble way, running to Him and kneeling, calling Him *“Good Master.”* Having pointed out the obvious, that Jesus was indeed good because He is God, He then dealt with his question. *“What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”*

Using a legal term such as “inherit” certainly prompted discussion of the Law. The Lord named a few of the commandments, and the young man still justified himself. But one thing was lacking: when the Lord Jesus touched his pocketbook, he discovered where his heartstrings were attached. He became very sorrowful and went away grieved.

Mark’s Gospel tells us that Jesus looked at him and loved him. He could leave unsaved, but not unloved. He chose the temporal wealth of this world over eternal treasure in heaven! What would you call a man who takes the world at the expense of his soul? God calls him a fool.

As Jim Elliott put it, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”

Leave it to Peter to put two and two together and voice the concern that the other disciples were still calculating. He said, *“See, we have left all and followed You.”* The Lord assured them that they would *“receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.”* Bottom line: it will be worth it all.

These four men teach us not to jump too fast, wait too long, get turned around, or live for this world. Don’t be a would-be disciple. 

We are not told his name—this “rich young ruler”  
Who sought the Lord that day;  
We only know that he had great possessions  
And that—he went away.

He went away; he kept his earthly treasure  
But oh, at what a cost!  
Afraid to take the cross and lose his riches—  
And God and heaven were lost.

We should have read his name, the rich young ruler,  
If he had stayed that day;  
Nameless—though Jesus loved him—ever nameless  
Because he went away. —AUTHOR UNKNOWN

## Late Spring Gospel Finale

Please pray. And plan. And look to the Lord for a great work to be done.

**W**e have been thrilled to see the growing interest in effective and widespread gospel work among assemblies in North America. And the Good News on the Move (GNOM) team wishes to express hearty appreciation to both individuals and local assemblies who have shown, verbally and in practical fellowship, their enthusiastic support for this evangelistic ministry.

### A MAJOR GOSPEL OUTREACH—WHEN?

As many of our readers know, it is our desire and prayer that the Lord will show us a suitable city where other serious believers will join with the GNOM team for a fitting gospel finale to their year of evangelism on the road. Although we are not yet convinced of the location, we want to inform the saints of this purpose, and ask for your united prayers. For those who hope to join us, here are the dates (in the will of the Lord) for your advance planning: May 27 – Jun 2, 2006. The team and any other interested believers will also be working there the previous week (May 20-26) in preparation.

### WHERE WILL IT BE?

We are open to the Lord's leading as to location, but at this point we are considering the following:

1. We would need a location that has a beachhead established. There should be preferably three couples already there, or ready to move there, who are united on essential doctrines and practices regarding the establishment and functioning of a New Testament assembly. A beachhead (like Paul taking Aquila and Priscilla to Ephesus for this purpose) is essential for doing follow-up on the contacts made during the outreach, and for the spiritual well-being of the work. Such exercised servants should be eager to immerse themselves in this community and give themselves to



The happy group that gathered in Little Rock, Arkansas for a similar outreach in the summer of 1998.

Christian hospitality and effectively sharing the Word of God with others.

2. We would tend to look at cities rather than rural areas or small towns. We are grateful for every gathering in small communities, but we cannot help but notice the apostle Paul's strategic work by going first to key population centers and then, as he would write, "*From you sounded out the gospel into...*" the various areas round about. We should also consider areas that have fewer already functioning assemblies, as those areas should be able to mount their own gospel offensive in surrounding regions.

3. That being said, it would be good to have some vigorous assembly or assemblies willing to help the new work that are within a reasonable distance. When new assemblies are starting, the supply line to the front should not be so long that other believers can't reasonably stop by to help occasionally.

4. It must also be said that there are some areas of the country where small groups of believers meet which would not be suitable for a number of reasons. Sometimes the people are content as they are, and do not want new people joining with them because they might change their present situation, or because they might have struggles which would require attention.

## LATE SPRING GOSPEL FINALE *continued*

Other small groups remain small because individuals there are contentious or habitually scare away any newcomers. This obviously does not make for a solid foundation for a future work of God.

In the end, we want what the Lord wants. We would appreciate the concerted prayers of the saints in this regard.

At time of writing, there are just eight weeks left in the year of Christian Field Training. The Lord has been very gracious with us and we thank Him for:

- safety in travel for the three vehicles over more than 4,000 miles.
- relatively good health (with one or two notable exceptions which need the concerted prayers of the Lord's people)
- open doors for the gospel—in the media, in public and private schools, in front of Wal-Mart stores, at fairs, in FEMA trailer parks, on college campuses, on the street, and door-to-door, among others.
- thousands of pieces of Testaments, gospel literature and CDs distributed—and mostly graciously received.
- unity among the team members, who, when confronted with the expected challenges of living for 10 months in close quarters with ten energetic young men, have always been ready to seek forgiveness and reconciliation.
- warm reception, cooperation, and hospitality shown by the Lord's people wherever the team has travelled.
- the generous time and effort invested in the team by various evangelists and Bible teachers who have both taught the team in formal sessions, on the job, and by their personal examples.
- intense and regular prayer by hundreds of Christians both here and overseas.
- the generous gifts of the saints which



have provided for all the needs of the team.

Of course this has been a learning experience, not only for the young men on the team, but for all of us—the brethren who

have taken responsibility for overseeing the work, the assemblies who have hosted the team, the home assemblies of these young men, and interested observers of the work.

Our desire is to see other such evangelistic teams (the biblical design) springing up across the land. The great need of this land suggests that there ought to be at least one team of evangelists in every state and province across the continent.

Those who have been involved in this work would be eager to share what we have learned in this process for any exercised brothers who would like to see such a team working in their own area. Of course no one would suggest that every team would function in the same way, but there may be help in hearing what we would do, and not do, again.

Some have asked about the future. Well, we did order a five-year vinyl for the bus! And, yes, the responsible brethren feel the Lord would want them to continue next year. Any young men exercised to be involved should pray, talk to their elders, and if seeing the way open, contact Mr. Jerry Denny for an application: [jerrydenny@bellsouth.net](mailto:jerrydenny@bellsouth.net)



**Our desire is to see other such evangelistic teams springing up across the land.**

## Saved at the Brink

A life rescued when all was lost.

It has been more than thirty years since I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus in the summer of 1975. It all seems so long ago, and feels like another life. It was another life! I'm a different person now.

When I was sixteen, I had an older cousin who was a Christian. She attended an assembly meeting in Texas. She shared the gospel with me, but I was young and foolish and told her that there were many ways to God, much like sewing a dress. I told her that some start with the hem, some with the neck, but we all end up with a dress. Well, as you can tell, I didn't sew or I would have known that you have to start with a pattern. But she continued to pray for me.

I found this out later from her daughter. As I told her daughter of her mother's sharing Christ with me, I could see tears in her eyes. She told me that her mother had continued to pray for my salvation throughout the years. Praise God for her faithful prayers! I hope this will encourage you to continue to pray for your lost relatives and friends, even when you don't see visible signs of God answering them.

I graduated from high school and went to college for a few semesters, but was unsure what I wanted to do. So I decided to join the Air Force and see the world. After my basic training in San Antonio and my medic training in Witcha Falls, I was stationed at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, DC. My first tour of duty was at Malcolm Grow Medical Center.

Everything seemed to go well during my time there. I had worked in different departments in the hospital. One day I was placed on a general medical ward and was responsible for the care of a 26-year-old woman who was dying of cancer. That night I had gone in to take her vital signs. We were expecting her to die very soon so her husband and children were with her. As I took her blood pressure, I noticed that it went down very quickly so I took it again and

(Right): Vickie joins the Air Force to see the world.



realized that she was gone. She was living one moment and dead the next. I was young and had never experience someone literally dying in my presence. It scared me. I turned to see the children who were looking to me to find out what was going on with their mother. I didn't know what to say.

I didn't have to say anything; the expression on my face told it all. They knew their mother was gone. As they began to cry, I just walked out of the room. I wanted to be out of there as quickly as possible. That day I began to run from the Lord. But you might say that the "Hound of heaven" chased after me.

You see, someone was praying for me! She didn't know how God was interacting in my life; she just faithfully prayed on. I tend to be a stubborn person so the Lord had to bring me to my knees. He had to bring me down to the lowest point in my life. And He would do just that over the next few years.

As a form of escape from thinking about death, I became involved in the use of drugs and alcohol. It helped to forget that I was mortal and that death would come some day. But forgetting only lasts as long as you are taking the drugs. I ended up with a drug overdose and found myself in the hospital. They worked with me as best they could.

They gave me a choice at this point—to take a medical discharge or be shipped over to England. I chose the discharge. After I got out of the service, I took various jobs till I ended up at the Dallas Dialysis Center. There one of the doctors was an elder at a Dallas assembly. But I continued to run.

Somehow I was able to hold down a job and continue my weekend drug use. The Lord was faithful to me even in those days in protecting me. I was tired of running at this point and sought to “end it all” by taking a drug overdose, my second. I spent a few days in the hospital and then was released. I continued under the care of a psychiatrist whom I was seeing on a weekly basis and soon I went back to work.

There I discovered that I had a Christian patient, a Dallas policeman named Charlie. Our dialysis patients at that time were on artificial kidney machines for about 6 hours at a stretch. So as I took care of him, we had a lot of time to just talk. He would share the gospel with me and I would listen. But I did, after all, go to a High Episcopal church. I would tell him that I didn’t think I had anything to worry about. But in the back of my mind I knew better. The doubt was there, and I couldn’t shake it. Another seed was planted, this time by Charlie. So now my cousin and Charlie were praying for me.

As the weeks went by, I grew more anxious and was feeling more hopeless. I began to plan. On one of my visits to the doctor, I had mentioned to him that I had not been able to sleep. He gave me a month’s supply of sleeping pills. I now look back and see that he was giving me permission to commit suicide. Over the next few days I took the whole bottle.

I’m not sure if I was crying out for help or just wanted to face this fear of dying and get it over with. I woke up in Dallas Parkland Memorial Hospital with my stomach being pumped out. I was then sent to their locked ward. Now, I will tell you that Parkland psychiatric ward is a place where people committing crimes such as murder are sent for evaluation. This is a place where you sleep with one eye open.

I had a lot of time on that ward to think. I began

to think about what Charlie had shared with me about being a sinner in need of forgiveness and about Jesus who loved me and came to earth to die for my sins. Charlie said that I needed saving from God’s wrath. I had come to the lowest place in my life and had nowhere else to go. I had hit rock bottom.

There on that ward I bowed my knee to the Lord Jesus. I had realized I was a sinner and all I could do was call out to Him. It was that day that I cast my case on Jesus. “Our hearts are not safe in our own keeping and are only kept fully...when we have committed them into His keeping.”

The Lord began to change me that day in the mental ward. I was released from the prison of my sins, to be made a prisoner of Jesus Christ, who is alive! How sweet to be held a prisoner by the bonds of our Father’s love and I will never, ever be released from that love. It is His promise to me and He is the great promise keeper. “*He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay; and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God...*” (Ps. 40:2,3a).

I met my husband, Mike, a month later and he was saved within the year. We have been married for 27 years and it has been a sweet gift from my Father to have a husband that loves Him and has loved me as Christ has loved the church. We have had many blessings of sharing in the joys and trials of our Christian walk as we continue to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

A word to those reading this, who have not given your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. You may not consider yourself to be as bad as I was. May I remind you of Romans 3:23, “*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*” Please don’t compare yourself to me; compare yourself to God and see your own heart as He shows it to you. Then don’t walk, but run to the Saviour and give Him your heart. “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved...*” (Ac. 16:31).

You may contact Vickie Gaynier at:

1559 Fairground Rd., Beavercreek, OH 45385

Phone: 937-427-1559 e-mail: victoria44@aol.com

# Assembly Leadership: What Next?

Principles of leadership from the ministry of Elijah the prophet.

*“Remember those who have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ...” (Heb. 13:7-8).*

The relationship between the prophet Elijah and his protégé, Elisha, affords one of the finest examples in Scripture of the biblical model of discipleship, and the prerequisites for preparing this generation for the challenges of the next. Effectively grooming a new generation of leaders is imperative if we are to check the rising tide of secularism and compromise in the church, and proceed with the work of maturing the saints. It is a task that requires both time and patience. Carefully passing the baton of spiritual responsibility is beautifully displayed in the ministry of Elijah the prophet.

Elijah was raised up by God during a time in Israel’s history when there was wholesale departure from the Word of God. In many ways, the conditions existing during his day

parallel those of ours. Though not a writing prophet, the power and extent of Elijah’s ministry have earned him an undeniable place of respect in our hearts.

As Elijah’s ministry drew to a close, he was instructed to anoint Elisha the son of Shaphat in his place. But before the transition could be complete, there had to be a time of preparation for Elisha, as there is for anyone assum-

ing a place of spiritual responsibility among the Lord’s people. The accounts of Elijah’s casting his mantle on Elisha (1 Ki. 19:19-21) and his conferral of responsibility upon him (2 Ki. 2) carry many valuable lessons for those who serve in leadership and desire to entrust their sacred duties to the hands of those who would faithfully carry on the work.

## Not Always Obvious at First

Upcoming leaders among God’s people are not always readily apparent. True, Elijah had been divinely instructed to cast his mantle on Elisha, but from outward observation Elisha would probably not have won any votes in a popularity contest, at least not initially (2 Ki. 2:23). The fact that he was plowing “with the twelfth” (1 Ki. 19:19), the last in line, further underscored that Elisha would not have commanded any attention. But in the work of the Lord, and especially in leadership, this is exactly what is needed: a humble, self-effacing, and hard-working attitude—all crucial characteristics in a work which involves long hours, high expectations, excessive scrutiny, and, at times, harsh personal criticism. As with many of God’s honored servants such as Moses, Gideon, David, and the disciples, Elisha was not idle when he was called, but busily engaged in his work. The axiom holds true: “God does not steer parked cars” but thrusts into service those who have learned personal diligence.

Elisha’s response to Elijah’s actions also deserves notice. After having the mantle cast on him, Elisha immediately left the oxen and ran after Elijah. Requesting to say farewell to his parents, he then slew the oxen, burned them and the instruments, and gave the oxen to the people to eat before leaving with Elijah.

Here are some of the subtle evidences of a promising candidate for use in the service of the Lord. First, his actions demonstrated a willingness to detach himself from material things for a higher cause. He was willing to “burn his bridges” behind him so that he would not be tempted to revert to his past livelihood should some difficulty arise. It also showed that, unlike the man that the Lord spoke about who wanted



## ASSEMBLY LEADERSHIP: WHAT NEXT? *continued*

to wait until his father died before becoming a disciple (Lk. 9:60), Elisha simply requested to go home briefly to say goodbye to those he loved before launching into ministry as Elijah's servant.

Giving the boiled oxen clearly exhibited his concern for the practical needs of people around him—a further indication of the core values needed for leadership and responsibility among the Lord's people. Indeed, that same servant attitude would later be cited when the king of Israel commented that Elisha was the one who poured water on Elijah's hands, verifying the low position that Elisha was willing to occupy (2 Ki. 3:11).

### Development in Stages

Elisha's development as a leader came in three phases: his calling; his service as an apprentice to Elijah; and the third phase in which the reins of leadership were turned over to him (2 Ki. 2). Having had it revealed to him that he was going to be taken up to heaven, Elijah made plans to visit the schools of the prophets. As a test perhaps to his student, Elijah makes the request for Elisha to stay behind while he travels on to Bethel. Elisha's reluctance to do so indicates his heartfelt attachment to the work and to following in the steps of his mentor. When this occurs two more times, Elisha's response is the same. The verdict is clear: here is a man who is thoroughly committed to the Lord and who cherishes time with his mentor.

Like many leaders, they are keenly aware that time is of the essence, and that our time with those who have been instrumental in our spiritual development is limited, as painful as that might be. This episode reflects a two-sided perspective: one on the part of the mentor to ascertain the level of commitment of the student, and the other for the learner to make full use of the time to capitalize on every discipleship opportunity.


### Personal Time a Must

When Elijah came to the Jordan, he took his mantle and struck the waters with it so he and Elisha could pass over to the other side. It was a special time alone for teacher and learner. At this time

Elisha requested a double portion of the spirit of Elijah, a definite petition to follow in the steps of his teacher. Stating that it was not for him but for God to grant, Elijah nevertheless gave encouragement to Elisha that it could possibly happen. What occurs next in the narrative is telling: "*as they still went on, and talked*" (2 Ki. 2:11). Here is a poignant scene if there ever was one: mentor and learner, sharing final moments, talking about the things that they held dear. And then the dramatic and sudden conclusion, as this venerable servant of the Lord is ushered into heaven in a chariot of fire—his departure as abrupt as his introduction in the pages of Scripture.

So it is with many of God's precious servants: here for a time and gone in a flash, leaving behind a simple legacy of their memory, their mantle, and the model of faithful service for those remaining to follow. That pattern of ministry, and the power behind it, was exactly what Elisha entered into when he picked up the mantle that Elijah left behind and retraced his steps over the Jordan to resume the ministry of his teacher and guide.

The account of Elisha's call, his training and transition into leadership is extremely relevant to the church today. This is a stark reminder to the older generation that they need to be on the lookout for those from the younger generation who are exhibiting the qualities that befit a faithful servant of the Lord. They need to realize that there is always a venue for their ministry, right up to the time of their departure, including help in preparing the next generation of leaders, aware that the mantle will eventually come down upon someone, preferably one exhibiting the qualities of true leadership who will maintain biblical convictions, even under a time of testing.

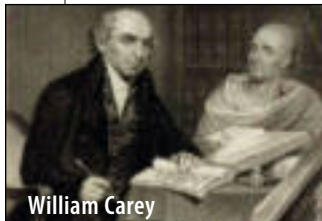
Finally, it should serve notice to young and old alike to spend quality personal time with each other in preparation for the transfer of spiritual responsibilities in the local assembly in God's good time. May each of us, whether teacher or learner, be diligent in heeding the lessons on biblical leadership and discipleship from these revered servants of the Lord. 



**This is a stark reminder to the older generation that they need to be on the lookout for those from the younger generation who are exhibiting the qualities that befit a faithful servant of God.**

## Where Are the Great Men?

And what is the secret of greatness by God's reckoning?



William Carey



John Bunyan

John Newton

Jesus told His own that we were to do greater works than He had done while on earth. Is that true?

Of course it is. And it's also true that the great works we do are done only when we are in vital union with the Lord Himself. As He put it, "Without Me... nothing." That should be clear enough.

What isn't clear is this—where are these "greater works" in our day? We might well ask with Gideon (Jud. 6:13), "Where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of?"

On a recent trip to Northampton, England, I had opportunity with my host for some short jaunts to nearby towns to revisit some great men. Our first stop was just outside the Northampton town limits at Moulton. Although William Carey was born to a weaver's family in the Northamptonshire village of Paulerspury in 1761, it was in Moulton that he heard the missionary call. While living there, he read *The Last Voyage of Captain Cook* and the Lord used this account to lay on his soul the burden of the lost. Though an unlettered cobbler, Carey gave himself to study every subject that had any bearing on missionary enterprise. By the age of 21, he had mastered Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Italian. Yet when Carey asked "whether the command given to the apostles to teach all nations was not obligatory...to the end of the world, seeing that the accompanying promise was of equal extent," Dr. Ryland retorted, "Young man, sit down! When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine."

Whatever Carey's seeming deficiencies, as he would say of his later ministry, "I can plod!" Plod he did, eventually publishing *Enquiry Into the Obligations of the Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*. It was a masterpiece on missions, answering objections, surveying the history of missions, and detailing the world by country, population, size, and religion. He called believers to rise up to reach the world for Christ. Emblazoned on the side of the church building he attended are his stirring words: "Attempt great things for God. Expect great things from God." Almost single-handedly Carey inspired the modern missionary movement.

A few miles southeast of Northampton is the quaint village of Olney, remembered as the locale of the ministry of John Newton. By his own description once a libertine and slave trader, Newton began his seafaring life at the age of 12, and, after becoming a slave himself in Africa, escaped to become captain of his own ship. On May 10, 1748, he was caught in a fierce storm and, fearing for his life, called to God for mercy. Later, as he contemplated this in his cabin, he discovered what it was to receive the gift of God by grace through faith. Newton's prolific hymnody includes "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds" and "Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken." But of course the most memorable is "Amazing Grace," the best-known hymn in the English-speaking world. Thus his work still ministers to sin-sick hearts around the globe today.

Further southeast at Bedford, we see the statue of its famed tinker, John Bunyan. Bunyan was imprisoned in Bedford jail for his unregistered preaching—from 1660 until 1672, with only a few weeks of freedom in 1666. He was again imprisoned in 1675 for six months, during which time he wrote the beloved *Pilgrim's Progress*. Along with his well-known *Grace Abounding* and *The Holy War*, he wrote scores of other books and pamphlets, including *A Few Sighs from Hell* and *Vindication of Some Gospel Truths*. Next to the Bible, *Pilgrim's Progress* was the second book on most shelves in early America, influencing generations with the gospel.

A cobbler, a sailor, and a tinker from three small towns in England. Great men because they knew they served a great God, because they rejoiced in being recipients of His great grace, and because they fearlessly proclaimed the great message of the gospel. God give us more like that!

## GOOD INFLUENCES

As I think back on the most valuable discipling influence in my Christian life, I must say it was older Christians who knew the value of good books. Early on, these believers put into my hands doctrinally sound Christian literature. One of the first books I read was *The Church of the Living God* by R. K. Campbell, given to me by an elder from an assembly in northern NJ. Later I was given *The Moral Glory of Lord Jesus Christ* by J. G. Bellet, and other helpful books. On one occasion, an older Christian mentioned that Loizeaux Publishers in nearby Neptune, NJ, sold slightly damaged books at a 50% discount. Masie Trimble, who worked in the shipping department, made it a point to put aside on a shelf the best of the commentaries and study books that were slightly damaged. Upon my first visit, I was able to buy the *Mackintosh Treasury* for \$6.45. These books instilled a love for Scripture and good doctrine that remains today.

Another important discipling influence was that of the elders at Bethel Bible Chapel, in Middletown, NJ, who very soon after my conversion began to give me opportunities to teach the Scriptures. At first it was to small groups on a Wednesday or Sunday evening. In all of my early attempts at Bible teaching, they always found something in which to encourage me. In the summer of that year, they asked if I would preach each of the five Sundays in the month of August, 1979. I remember speaking on John chapters 13-17, the Upper Room Discourse.

The same elders would never miss an opportunity to encourage me to attend area Bible conferences. They would offer to give me a ride to the CMML conference in Wall Township in the fall, and other conferences throughout the year. At that time I am sure they never realized how important those early encouragements were to me as a young Christian. The Lord used these elders and the opportunities in that small assembly in a wonderful way in my life.

—DAVID DUNLAP, LAND O' LAKES, FL