



UPLOOK

NOVEMBER 1997

Church Growth
Go Fishing for Men!
The Value of a Soul

The Value of a Soul

J. B. NICHOLSON, JR.

The October 13 issue of *Forbes* magazine introduces us to the four hundred richest people in America (assuming you calculate worth by "treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal" Mt. 6:19).

Included was an article on "The Cost of Living Extremely Well" (assuming you define living well as "whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor... Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" Eccl. 2:10-11). And that from a man who easily would have qualified monetarily for the top 400.

So what does it cost to live extremely well these days, according to *Forbes*? A million doesn't buy what it used to! Here's a sampling:

- A kilo of Beluga caviar in L.A. \$1,584
- One dozen cotton hand-sewn shirts from Turnbull & Asser, London \$1,928
- A pair of men's black calf wing-tip, custom made shoes, John Lobb, London \$2,295
- A set of linen lace Pratesi queen-size bed sheets (not even fit for a king!) \$5,080
- A Patek Phillipe classic men's gold watch (with leather strap, no less) \$10,800
- A year's tuition, room, board, and insurance at Harvard University \$30,080
- A Steinway ebonized concert grand piano, model G (no sheet music included) \$74,800
- A Rolls Royce Silver Spur \$186,100
- A natural Russian Sable coat, Maximilian at Bloomingdale's (sans spray paint) \$195,000
- A thoroughbred yearling, average price at Keeneland summer select sale \$357,514

Add a yacht, a place in Palm Beach, two first-class tickets to Australia for the Olympics (\$12,000 each from New York), and pretty soon you're talking about real money.

With all respects to *Forbes*, they don't seem to have the foggiest idea how to live extremely well. Who would settle for Beluga caviar (white sturgeon eggs from the Black Sea) when you

could feast on royal dainties at the King's table? Why wear \$160 shirts (or \$195,000 dead animal skins for that matter) when you could be robed in the righteousness of God?

A year at Harvard is not to be despised (unless it undermines your faith), but it's nothing compared with time spent freely in "St. Mary's College"—at the feet of Jesus. And a Steinway Grand makes beautiful music, but nothing like the sound of souls redeemed from the pit who make melody in their hearts to the Lord.

Those wing-tips must be comfy footwear, but personally I'd rather have beautiful feet (Rom. 10:15) than beautiful shoes. And who would care for a Rolls if its occupants were being carried straight to hell? As an old acquaintance (who knew what he was talking about) put it: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold" (Prov. 22:1). The psalmist said: "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Ps. 84:10).

Living extremely well—at the expense of another—is the life of an ambassador. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:20-21). The Lord identified with us in death; He invites us to identify with Him in life. What an honor to speak for God, inviting others to join us in heaven as His sons (Jn. 1:12).

The truck and trade of Babylon is listed for us in Revelation 18. It begins with "gold, and silver, and precious stones..." But the list concludes: "...and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men" (vv. 12-13).

What is the going price for a soul? The Saviour knew, for He had come to pay: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mt. 16:26). The redemption value of a soul is astronomical, beyond calculation—nothing less than "the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:19).

The world is madly seeking wealth that will decay; Blind to all the worth of things that last for aye; Seeking not the hand once nail-pierced for its sin— Tenderly He speaks through us to let Him in.

—ADAPTED



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THE MYTH OF "GROWTH"

The Church Growth Movement

DAVID DUNLAP

The Church Growth Movement finds itself in a crisis. Its leaders are admitting that the movement has gone awry. Recent studies reveal that its techniques and principles are ineffective in producing church growth

Since its inception twenty-four years ago, the Church Growth Movement has promised rapid numerical growth to American churches. Through researching the sociological, demographic, and psychological needs of people groups, an approach to numerical church growth was proposed. Full length books, hot off the press, with flashy titles such as "Your Church Can Grow" and "Church Growth: State of the Art" have popularized these ideas.

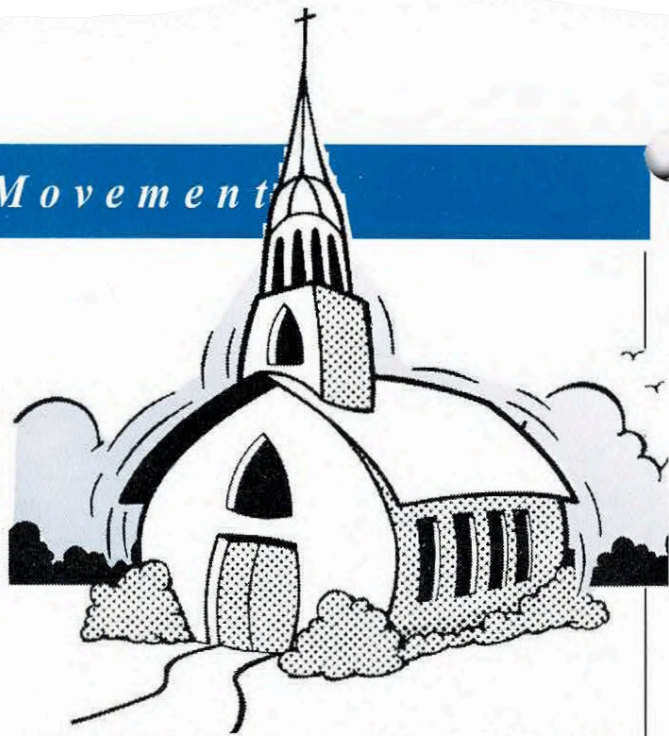
Detailed and documented studies verifying the effectiveness of this approach have found their way into popular Christian magazines and journals. In numerous Church Growth Conferences, Christian leaders and pastors have sung the praises of these techniques and testified with glowing reports about how these methods have led to remarkable growth in their churches.

Yet many sincere Christian leaders have remained cautious. Others with spiritual discernment have pointed to gaping holes in the Church Growth Movement's techniques and results. Nevertheless, many assemblies and individuals have been ensnared by these seemingly successful evangelistic methods.

A growing number of serious Christians have begun to question the promises and claims of the Church Growth Movement. They have asked themselves, "Do these methods promote true numerical church growth?" Another crucial question that many have asked is, "Do these techniques bring unsaved men and women to conversion in the Lord Jesus Christ?"

The most current research indicates that the Church Growth Movement is alarmingly ineffective at leading the unsaved to salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. Researchers point out that since the Church Growth Movement began in 1973, the churches in America do not show any increase in numerical growth.

Christian researcher George Barna, representative of those who recognize this situation, writes, "Since



1980, there has been 'no growth' in proportion to the adult population that can be classified as 'born again' Christians. The proportion of born again Christians has remained constant at 32% despite the fact that churches and para-church organizations have spent billions of dollars on evangelism. More than 10,000 hours of evangelistic television programming have been broadcast, in excess of 5,000 new Christian books have been published, and more than 1,000 radio stations carry Christian programming. And yet despite such widespread opportunities for exposure to the gospel, there has been no discernable growth in the size of the Christian body."¹ This growing evidence casts serious doubts on the effectiveness of the Church Growth Movement and its techniques in producing numerical growth in North America.

Considering the recent evidence that these principles are not contributing to church growth, to what then can we attribute the apparent growth in many churches? Again, the Church Growth methodologists have come under attack. Observers point out that church growth techniques do not produce conversion growth, but unfortunately draw away faithful churchgoers from smaller churches through slick marketing strategy. The most recent research seems to bear out this distressing situation.

Author Ken Sidey writes, "Perhaps church growth's greatest challenge in North America comes from research that shows that more than 80% of all the growth taking place in growing churches comes through transfer, not conversion. The statistic strikes at the heart. Whether by computer or spiritual power, the church growth movement must improve on those numbers."²

The Church Growth Movement

In a revealing study of 3,000 people who joined 20 evangelical churches in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, researchers determined that 70% were evangelicals who transferred from other evangelical churches.³ The growing trend of transfer growth and the powerlessness of the North American evangelical church to reach the unsaved has infected smaller church denominations as well as the largest.

In 1988, a denominational newspaper for the Southern Baptist Convention revealed the evangelistic results for all the churches of that denomination and the results were shocking. This denomination, which is the largest Protestant group in the United States, reported in 1987 that within its 37,000 churches, there were on average only 2 converts baptized for every church. The newspaper further reported that 50,000 were baptized who transferred from other churches.⁴ Again in the largest Protestant denomination in our land the transfer of believers from one church to another is one of the largest contributing factors to numerical growth.

The Church Growth Movement is now beginning to speak about failure. Since 1973, millions of dollars have been poured into this movement, and the offense of the cross has been all but eliminated. Church Growth theology has left many sincere believers disillusioned through its empty promises of spiritual growth. Now in frank honesty, the ineffectiveness of its principles is being admitted. Leaders within the Church Growth Movement itself are haltingly, yet with candor, admitting the failure of the movement to produce conversion.

C. Peter Wagner, a leading author and spokesman for the Church Growth Movement, remarks, "I don't think there is anything intrinsically wrong with the church-growth principles we've developed, or the evangelistic techniques we are using. Yet somehow they don't seem to work...maybe something else is needed."⁵

Many have pointed to an underlying assumption of the Church Growth Movement as the reason for its failure. The assumption is that people are disinterested in the traditional faithful preaching of the gospel and proclamation of the Word of God. The solution that Church Growth advocates propose is to draw the unsaved into churches through attractive entertainment and to soften the offense of the cross. Growth Church-

es have used jazzercise, drama, gospel magic, comedians, rock concerts, and sensitivity workshops to attract people to their churches.

To restate the words of C. Peter Wagner, these principles do not work; something else is sorely needed. May it also be humbly stated that what is needed is a clear and powerful preaching of the Word of God, combined with the deep conviction of sin produced by the Holy Spirit, undergirded by an assembly of believers on their knees in believing prayer.

The history of the Christian church has vividly taught us that all church growth and genuine spiritual transformation of the unsaved comes through the faithful and powerful preaching of God's Word. The fundamentals of consistent prayer, faithful preaching, earnest personal witness, fellowship with God, and holiness in our walk are essential to biblical evangelism. Where these are absent the church will be powerless.

In 1939, G. Campbell Morgan, the beloved author and preacher, gave the church of the 1990's a needed warning when he wrote, "When a technique is necessary to get people to listen to the gospel, there will be failure. That is not the method of Christ. To build an Institute in connection with the church, and provide all kinds of entertainment for the young people, in order that they may come to the Bible classes, is to be doomed to failure."⁶

Biblical church growth has always been grounded on the principle that all spiritual work can only be achieved by spiritual men and women who employ spiritual methods. May the church of the Lord Jesus Christ soon return to this biblical mandate.

ENDNOTES:

1. George Barna, *Marketing the Church* (Navpress, Colorado Springs, CO, 1990)
2. Ken Sidey, "Church Growth Fine Tunes its Formulas," *Christianity Today* (June 24, 1991), p. 46
3. Denyse O'Leary, "Study Deplores Supermarket Religion," *Moody Monthly* (April, 1988), p. 97
4. "Revived Again: Students Challenged to Cast Nets," *Southwestern News* (Nov. 1988), p. 8
5. Sidey, op cit., p. 46
6. G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Olipants, London, 1956), p. 177



FRONT LINES

▷ HOLIDAY GATHERING

The Tampa Bay area Thanksgiving conference will be held, DV, on November 21-22 at the Holiday Gospel Assembly, 1842 Grand Blvd., Holiday, FL. The speakers expected are Donald Norbie (CO) and Alan Parks (SC). Contact:

John Bromfield
(813) 960-1302

▷ FULLERTON, CALIFORNIA

Lord willing, a Missions Conference will be held at Grace Bible Chapel (1119 S. Lambert, Fullerton, CA) on Friday, November 21 through Sunday, November 23. The times of the meetings will be Friday 7:00 PM; Saturday 9:00 AM-4:00 PM; Sunday 8:30 AM-2:00 PM.

Lunch will be served on Saturday and there will be an International Potluck on Sunday.

The Lord's servants scheduled to speak are Bruce Collins (IA) and Doug Kazen (WA). A variety of seminars will be held on Saturday.

For information or overnight accommodations, contact:

G. V. Mathai
(562) 924-5169 or
Grace Bible Chapel
(714) 77-GRACE

▷ MARITIME MEETINGS

The Christians in several assemblies in Eastern Canada would like to extend an invitation to the meetings that are planned with J. B. Nicholson, Jr., this fall. Nov. 21-23 they will be in Fredericton, NB; Nov. 24-27 they will be in Saint John and Norton, NB; and Nov. 28-30 they will be in Dartmouth, NS. For information, contact

Ernie Adsett
(506) 363-3068

▷ ASSEMBLY LISTINGS

Worcester, MA

Bethany Gospel Chapel (242 Clark St, Worcester, MA) has appointed a new correspondent:

Miles Beers
105 Warren Ave.
Chelmsford, MA 01824
Phone: (978) 256-2630

Please note: there has been a change in the area code for Worcester, MA, from 508 to 978.

▷ CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Harold and Vena Preston

447 Ashley Dr.
Harrodsburg, KY 40330-2052
Phone: (606) 733-9305

▷ CONFERENCE REPORT

The annual National Workers and Elders Conference was held at the Blasdell Gospel Chapel in Blasdell, NY, October 7-9.

The theme of the conference was

"You Shall Receive Power." Colin Anderson (ON) led Bible studies each morning on the topic of the Holy Spirit of God. Mark Kolchin (NJ), Robert Brown (LA), Steve Hulshizer (PA), Joseph Pratt (CT), Don Norbie (CO), George Pirie (NJ), Jack Spender (CT), and Chuck Gianotti (ON) were guest speakers. In addition, there were five seminars offered. The ministry was excellent.

There were about 150 people in attendance, representing assemblies from four provinces in Canada and twenty states in the U.S.

It was encouraging to see the fellowship and co-operation from the saints at Seabrook Bible Chapel and Amherst Bible Chapel (NY) who helped to provide meals and serve the Lord's people.

The 1998 National Workers and Elders Conference is scheduled for October 6-8 to be held in Wichita, KS, in the will of the Lord.



A group photograph of the attendees of the 1997 National Workers and Elders Conference at the Blasdell Gospel Chapel, Blasdell, NY.

▷ PASSING INTO LIFE

Geraldine D. Robinson

On July 17, 1997, Geraldine Robinson, age 87, of Augusta, GA, went home to be with the Lord.

The funeral was held at Sunnybrook Gospel Chapel (Criglersville, VA) with Fred Gladstone and T. S. Morgan officiating.



Mrs. Robinson is survived by 1 sister, 2 daughters, 6 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

In July 1927, Geraldine Davis married Ermal Robinson—neither of them knowing the Lord as Saviour. Ermal's step-brother and wife prayed for their salvation for many years; the Lord answered some years after their marriage.

Living in Baltimore, MD, the couple could not find a place where they would be happy fellowshiping until three ladies came to their door, inviting their daughter to Sunday School. Thus the Robinsons were introduced to Maisonville Gospel Hall and around March 1941 they were received into the fellowship there.

The Lord called Ermal and Geraldine to full-time service for Him in the mountains of Virginia. They visited around the area of Madison and Orange, holding meetings in a tent.

In 1948, they were invited to have Saturday evening meetings in an old one-room school house and in early 1950 a small store building was renovated into a meeting place. By mid-1950, construction was begun of a meeting place that became known as Sunnybrook Gospel Chapel, in Criglersville, VA.

Eternity will tell the fruit born from the seeds sown by these two faithful servants. In October 1980, Mr. Robinson was called home but Mrs. Robinson carried on with their work as long as she was able.

Ermal and Geraldine served the Lord together for more than 40 years and they found Him faithful in blessing them for their years of labor.

W. Franklin Brown

The Oconomowoc Bible Fellowship, Wauwatosa Community Chapel, and Stewards Foundation were saddened by the unexpected death of Frank Brown, age 72, on October 3, 1997.

Mr. Brown and his wife, Dorothy, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary earlier this year. They have five grown children, all saved.

Frank accepted the Lord Jesus as his Saviour at the age of 10, and attended Bethel Chapel in Union City, NJ. During his years at that assembly, he served as youth leader, superintendent of Sunday School, teacher, preacher, and shepherded as an elder. He often drove the assembly bus to pick up children for the various scheduled meetings.

In 1971, the firm for which Frank worked as an engineer closed and he was hired by a company in Wisconsin. For six months prior to relocating his family, he drove from Wisconsin to New Jersey each weekend

to be with his family and assembly.

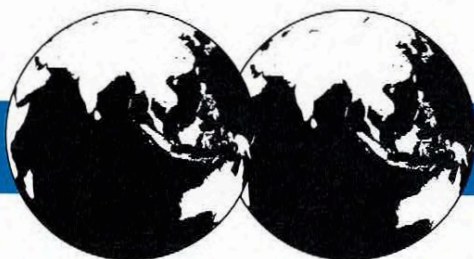
Frank served as an elder at the Wauwatosa assembly for 18 years, and held weekly Bible studies in his home for many years. He prepared an outline to be presented to the class each study, which numbered more than 500.

Frank's goal before he went to be with the Lord was to see an assembly planted in Oconomowoc. Three years ago several families, along with the Browns, began meeting as a new assembly. Today there are 19 families at the Oconomowoc Bible Fellowship.

Frank had recently agreed to serve the assemblies and commend workers as one of the volunteer trustees of Stewards Foundation, and was elected to the board on Sept. 27, just a week before he went home to be with the Lord.

Frank was a meticulous student of God's Word, a prayer warrior, and an active, humble elder who shepherded caringly. He was a gentle man who always answered in a measured, careful way. His love for the Lord Jesus and the local church were a tremendous example to all.





▷ RUSSIA FACES WINTER STARVATION

Fear of a winter starvation in Russia has relief ministries already working to help. The Associated Press reports freezing temperatures this winter in the former Soviet Union could kill more than one million people.

Many pensioners in Moscow, and generally in Russia, do not receive enough to cover expenses for the whole month. They can survive only for two weeks of groceries. The rest of the month, they basically don't have food. Soup kitchen ministries have provided food for these people, because their young adults cannot support these older parents. The extreme poverty also affects the former republics of Belarus, Moldavia, and Ukraine.

▷ BIBLES RELEASED

More than 24,000 Uzbek New Testaments have been released by authorities in Uzbekistan. The Bibles had been seized by customs officers in Tashkent in January. Uzbek authorities had previously demanded payment for storage of the Bibles, but those fees were subsequently waived.

▷ SECOND PLANE CRASH FOR MAF

Another missionary airplane has crashed, killing David Bacon, its pilot. The Mission Aviation Fellowship plane went down October 1 in the South African country of Lesotho. The pilot was flying alone at the time with only cargo on board.

He had just taken off from a strip that was about 7,000 feet elevation. This is the second fatal plane crash for MAF in as many weeks. Bacon

had served with MAF since 1993. He is survived by his wife Lisa and three daughters.

▷ REACHING THE WORLD THROUGH AIR WAVE

Located firmly in the 10/40 Window, Egypt and the Middle East hold multitudes of people still unreached for the Lord. However, Richard Greene of TransWorld Radio says their broadcasts are reeling in quite an audience. He tells of a recent gathering of listeners in Egypt that was much like a crusade. For three nights rallies were held and people had the opportunity to come face to face with the voices they listen to every night. They also had the chance to be encouraged in their faith and to be strengthened, to fellowship with other believers that they didn't even know existed.

TransWorld Radio is making concerted efforts to reach more of the unreached in this region. They have approximately 40 hours of programming going toward the Middle East and North Africa.

▷ PRISON MINISTRY

A recent study by Prison Fellowship suggests evangelical outreach in prisons in the United States is an important factor in the rate of repeat offenses. Just 14% of 201 convicts who took part in a Bible study during their imprisonment were subsequently convicted of another crime. However, of 201 inmates who did not participate, 41% went on to commit crimes after their release.

▷ INJUSTICE FOR CHINA'S CHRISTIAN LEADERS

On September 25, a court in Zhengzhou sentenced Peter Xu (Xu

Yongze) to reform through labor (at a logai camp) for disturbing the public peace. The length of the sentence is unclear at this point. No family members were advised about the sentencing (or the trial which presumably preceded it). It is not clear whether Peter was provided with a lawyer at any point in the process, since no one was able to see him. It is possible that Peter Xu will be permitted to appeal the sentence.

This case is pivotal because Peter Xu is a leader in one of the largest house church movements in China, commonly known as the Full Scope Church or the Born Again Movement. The government of China has attempted to label him a cult leader—the equivalent of arresting an evangelist of the stature of Billy Graham and attempting to make him out to be a David Koresh-type figure. If successful, this could set a precedent for the way the Chinese government will deal with the unofficial house church leadership.

▷ SWISS ENDORSE STATE DISTRIBUTION OF HEROIN

Swiss voters overwhelmingly endorsed their government's liberal drug policies, including the controversial—but seemingly successful—state distribution of heroin to hardened addicts.

On September 28, nearly 71 per cent of voters—1.3 million people—threw out the proposal *Youth Without Drugs*, which would have curtailed government programs for drug users.

The Health Ministry immediately said it would try to put state distribution of heroin to hardened addicts on a permanent legal footing. Until now, the state was supplying about

1,100 hardened addicts with heroin on an experimental basis.

Results of a three-year study released in July showed a big drop in crime among the junkies on the program; a huge improvement in their health; an increase in the number of those with steady housing and jobs; and promising signs that some would try to kick the habit.

There are an estimated 30,000 addicts in Switzerland—one of the highest rates in Europe. But unlike many countries, the death toll is falling. From a peak of 399 in 1994, drug-related deaths fell to 312 last year, and are expected to slump further this year. Supporters say this is largely because of the success of government policies. Free needle-exchange programs to prevent the spread of the AIDS virus among injecting junkies are routine.

Several other countries are expected to begin similar experiments.

▷ GOD'S WORK IN ZAMBIA

Paul and Eunice Poidevin have been serving the Lord in Zambia for almost twenty years. The following is an excerpt from a recent letter, praising God for continuing to pour out His blessing in that land:

We invited an elder and ten younger Zambian men to join us in gospel work on the Chifuwe river.

One interesting visit of the week was with an old man called Mandevu, who (unknown to us) was violently opposed to the gospel. The people of the village led us to where he was seated like a chief in a large chair. They wanted to see what he would do to us, since he had chased every other evangelist from his village for years! But to their surprise, he agreed to listen, and then began to



ask questions, and in the end we could see his heart and mind open up under the prodding of the Holy Spirit. "Did he see himself as a sinner?" we asked. "No," he said the first time. I asked him, what he would do if he was really sick, carried almost dead to the hospital, and the doctor asked him what was wrong. Would he say, nothing at all even though it was evident that he was almost dying? He thought about that and said, "No. That would be wrong, I would have to explain to the doctor all about my problem and give myself into his care!" I said, "That is what you must do with God."

He replied, "You are right! I've been a sinner, I've worshiped idols, I've drunk beer, I've done many wrong things, and said many bad things. I'm a sinner. I need to be saved." After we explained the gospel more, he looked up, and said, "God, you know all about my sin, and what I've done." He was speaking right to the Lord, and told Him all about his terrible life. He concluded, "I'm a sinner, and I know Christ died for my sins. Save me!"

We prayed with him, and then asked and answered more questions, until dark. It was pretty obvious that he was sincere, but when we were told afterwards how he had resisted the gospel for years, we stopped at the edge of the village, and thanked the Lord for saving such a sinner!

Next morning he was at our camp bright and early to learn more of the Saviour! He stayed for the morning,

with the subject being salvation, past, present, and future. We ask prayer for Mandevu, that he will make progress in the things of God, and know assurance of sins forgiven. We also ask prayer that the week of gospel outreach will be only the beginning for the believers who went, and that they will begin outreach in their own areas in earnest.

▷ CHRISTIANS JAILED IN MOROCCO

This summer, Timothy Lamb of the United States and Joohyun Ahn of South Korea spent several days in jail. Police picked them up on charges of proselytism, which Morocco says is a criminal offense. Lamb, according to Compass Direct, denies that he used any coercion when he handed a Christian tract to a person in a coastal city of Tetouan last year. During an interrogation, authorities attempted to persuade Lamb to convert to Islam in order to have charges dropped. Neither Lamb or Ahn, who were roommates in Fez, were physically mistreated. Four other people have been arrested in Morocco since 1994 because of their Christian beliefs or activities.

▷ MALARIA UPDATE

Three decades ago, malaria had been basically eradicated in 37 nations. Since then, it has made a comeback. Today it is the world's fourth biggest killer disease. Each year, 2.5 million people die of malaria, most of them African children. While malaria receives \$60 million annually, AIDS receives \$950 million. 500,000 African children could be saved annually by using bed nets soaked in insecticide.

U

THE GO IN GOSPEL



How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? How shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! Romans 10:14-15

THE VOICE OF JESUS

*I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon My breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad.*

*I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down and drink and live!"
I came to Jesus and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.*

*I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy days be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In Him my Star, my Sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk
Till travelling days are done.*

—HORATIUS BONAR

*The gospel is neither a discussion
nor a debate. It is a declaration.*

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Rom. 1:16

Once when Lord Tennyson was on vacation in a country village, he asked an old woman, "Is there any news?"

"Well," she said, "there is only one piece of news that I know, and that is: Christ died for my sins."

Tennyson replied, "That is old news, and good news, and new news."

**A. P. Gibbs advised a group of younger men to preach:
a full gospel—Christ and nothing less;
a plain gospel—Christ and nothing more;
a pure gospel—Christ and nothing else.**

*Suffer a sinner whose heart overflows,
God has called Loving his Saviour, to tell what he knows;
us to be witnesses, Once more to tell it would I embrace,
not do witnessing. I'm only a sinner saved by grace*

In all your preaching uplift Christ. Do not lose sight of Him; let all roads lead to Him. He Himself is living, authoritative, prevailing, powerful: "a Prince and a Saviour." Denney says with truth, "No man can bear witness to Christ and to himself at the same time. No man can give the impression that he himself is clever and that Christ is mighty to save."

Your preaching has no chance if Christ is not lifted up in it. "If Christ be not there, preaching is not worth the wag of one's finger," said John Kid, the Covenanter. Keep Christ in the foreground of all your gospel preaching, for He Himself said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Me."

A classic in the annals of the U. S. Coast Guard is the story of Captain Pat Etheridge of the Cape Batterne station. One night in a howling hurricane, the lookout saw a distress signal from a ship that had gone aground in the dangerous Diamond Shoals, ten miles at sea. The lifeboats were ordered out. One of the lifeguards protested, "Captain Pat, we can get out there, but we can never get back."

"Boys," came the reply, "we don't have to come back."

The Lord Jesus has given us our marching orders. He commanded that the gospel be preached in all the world. He has not promised His messengers an easy time. He has not given the assurance of a safe return to home base. But He did say, Go!

Hold Fast to the Gospel

J. BOYD NICHOLSON

The ceremonials of the Jew's religion could give no peace to Saul of Tarsus. The power politics of the Roman empire could offer no hope. The philosophies of the Greeks could present no deliverance from guilt, nor cleansing from defilement. He did not find the answer until that day when this rising star in Judaism was suddenly eclipsed by the glory of the risen Lord and the shattering revelation was given to him: "I am Jesus..." The sight of the risen Christ in glory blinded his eyes, but opened his heart to the wonder that this Jesus, whom he thought was disposed of, was indeed alive as His followers had taught.

Those were the balmy days of the Roman empire. The law and order imposed throughout the world had made travel relatively safe in preparation for the spread of the gospel message. The centers of administration that had been set up throughout the provinces, and where the populace gathered, provided suitable preaching points for the evangelists of the young Church. The network of famous highways—some of which exist to this very day—planned by Roman engineers and laid down in granite blocks by slave labor, made travel overland much easier than ever before.

Along these highways travelled merchants of every kind, including merchants of religion and philosophy. The old religions had failed to satisfy the longings of seeking souls, and the erudite philosophies of men were incoherent to the common folk, leaving them with their broken hearts and burdened souls. The welcome mat was out for any message that could effect morality and promise immortality.

Also spreading through the world came a people called "Christians" who claimed they had found a Saviour from their sins, a Satisfier for their longing hearts. This One had been crucified by His own people outside Jerusalem, but wondrously had risen from the dead three days later, and had then gone back alive into heaven. This was some kind of message! But wherever it went, lives were transformed; indeed the word came from Thessalonica that those plain followers of Jesus had "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6).

It is not surprising that those who opposed this gospel of the grace of God should endeavor to discredit both the message and the messengers. Who were these "Jesus" people—cannibals? Did they not speak of eating someone's body and drinking someone's blood?

There were three things of which Paul had been justifiably proud in his life before he was saved. He was a Jew by birth, a Roman by citizenship, and was educated in a famous center of Greek culture. But by none of these were the two great questions of his life answered. How can the guilty be forgiven? And how can the defiled be made holy?

Traitors? Did they not challenge "the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus"?

Well, it was time to set out once and for all the Christian message and the Christian life. Time to set out in a document in orderly fashion what the gospel *is*, and what the gospel *does*. So the Spirit of God took up this man, Saul of Tarsus, now transformed into a new being named Paul, to write a letter to the church at Rome to answer that need of the moment and to provide a glorious exposition for the whole Church Age, so that no one, believer or unbeliever, need be in any doubt as to the facts and the force of the gospel.

So what is the gospel message? First of all, let's consider what it is not. Before Nehemiah could build the walls of the city, he had to remove "much rubbish" which hindered the work (Neh. 4:10). I fear there is a great deal of rubbish in Christendom that is called "the gospel" and needs to be disposed of.

The gospel is not a tranquilizer for worried weaklings to help them sleep at night. It is not a mass of dead dogmas, deep frozen in some ancient cathedral to be carried as a burden through life and thawed out five minutes before death. The gospel is not a list of religious rules and regulations to be strung around the soul like a lucky charm in case of accidents. No, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is a message—and what a message! It is a living message from the living God for living people just like us, for people with sins just like us, for people with sorrows and heartaches just like us. It is the only message on the face of the earth with concrete promises and absolute assurances of an eternal inheritance that will withstand the impact of death and the collapse of the universe.

What then is the true gospel? As to its identity, it is called by some great titles right in this letter to the church at Rome. Notice three in chapter 1.

Hold Fast to the Gospel

THE GOSPEL OF GOD (ROM. 1:1)

This tells us at once the Source of the message. This glorious message was not devised by the disciples; it was not produced by the prophets nor patented by the patriarchs. It did not even have its advent with the angels, though it was spoken by an angel (Lk. 2:10). This message began in the heart of God.

*But in His heart there reigned a love,
Which went beyond the realms above,
And thus He did this world destine,
To be the scene where it should shine.
In all its rich and full display,
For which the curse just paved the way,
A world which nought but sin did yield,
Alone could be a fitting field,
On whose dark scene to demonstrate
That love so free, so vast, so great.*

—Wm. Blane

THE GOSPEL OF HIS SON (1:9)

This wonderful title tells us now not the Source of the message but its subject. This is what the message is about—the Person of God's beloved Son. That is why we are to "preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:23). So much of what claims to be gospel preaching today is ineffective because it is not the gospel at all. Learned dissertations there may be, eclectic sermons perhaps, carefully tiptoeing so as not to offend anyone. Theological presentations we hear, doctrinally accurate, as clear as the moonlight and just as cold. Someone facetiously remarked, "I fear there is more power in the parking lot than in the preaching!" Why? Because there is a diversion away from presenting the Person and work of the Lord Jesus as the only answer to mankind's dilemma, defilement, and destiny.

By the use of this title for the gospel, God is introducing to us infinite resources on which the preacher may draw to present the Son. He is Son of God, and that speaks of His deity. He is Son of Man, and that presents His humanity. What a subject to proclaim!

Doesn't the gospel preacher already feel his heart stirred to tell this forth: the Son of God became the Son of Man. But then He is also the Son of Mary. O how that tells of His humility. Leaving the courts of glory

and the adoration of the heavenly host, He took the form of a servant. Imagine the Son of God walking the dust of earth, eating a meal cooked in the back kitchen of a house in Bethany, washing His disciples' feet, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. What a subject! What a mystery! What a message!

He is also the Son of David. That carries us back into the Old Testament, to the promises and the prophecies that tell us of His royalty. He was born a king, He presented Himself to His people as a king, He was crucified as a king; and when mankind sees Him again He will still be a king—the King of all kings! Dear evangelist, could you not preach a message about that King—born, rejected, proclaimed, and coming?

Still more, He is the Son of Abraham. This carries us back further in the Old Testament and thrusts us forward to a glorious future, speaking of the Lord Jesus and His universal ministry, for God's covenant to Abraham was that in his seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

What expansive thoughts open up to the gospel preacher as he considers the blessed Son. In fact, He is called the Son of the Blessed. This presents more wondrous treasures for the evangelist to declare. Delighting in the joy of the Father's heart, He intends to bring His own into that joy, and that joy into our hearts.

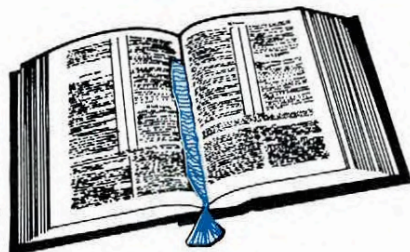
In a joyless, hopeless, helpless, godless world, the Christian has a message—the gospel of God who is its Source. It is the gospel of His Son, its glorious Subject. Why then have some departed from this Word from heaven to mumble over some pathetic religious alternative which is not only blasé but boring?

Yet we find another eloquent title glistening on the sacred page.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST (1:16)

This beautiful title presents another facet of the treasured message, telling of its sufficiency to meet the need of the whole man. When God saves a person, He saves the whole person—body, soul, and spirit. The redemption of the body is not yet, but for the believer it is assured and will take immediate effect at the moment of the resurrection.

To grasp the significance of this title, we must go back to the beginning. God made man in His own likeness. That is, God is one, yet He is three in one. Not



three Gods, but one God manifest in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So He made man like Himself in that man is one entity but threefold in his manifestation, being a body, a soul, and a spirit.

With the body we are conscious of the world around, by which we impinge on time and experience; with the soul we are conscious of self within and by which we feel emotion, and know ourselves. But it is with the spirit man has the capacity to know God above. This distinguishes him from the beasts. They have a body and are aware of their surroundings; they have a soul by which they fear their enemy and care for their offspring; but they have no spirit, neither speaking the word "God" nor thinking the thought "eternity."

Sometimes the being of man is described as feelings, intellect, and will. However man "fell" in Eden. But what "fell"? The whole man fell. Not that every person is as bad as they can be, but that the whole person is affected—body, soul, and spirit.

At the Fall, *the spirit fell* into the realm of the soul and became subject to its emotions, so that the natural man cannot distinguish between that which is spiritual and that which is soulish. That is why the great religions of man's devising always appeal to the soulish and emotional part of man. A man attending those forms of religion thinks he has had a spiritual experience when all the time it is only a soulish thing. The spirit is untouched. How then can this be remedied? By the Word of God for it is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit" (Heb. 4:12).

In Christendom today there is a great preoccupation with subjective feelings and the things that affect them—music, aesthetic buildings, and so on. Now it is not wrong for the soul to be affected—God made it—so long as we do not confuse soul and spirit.

The soul fell also. It fell into the realm of the body so that the natural man cannot distinguish between love and lust. To complete the Fall, *man's body fell* under the dominion of sin and became a captive to it. Paul understood this: "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:23).

The intellect, feelings, and will were all affected at

the Fall. The intellect became darkened because of sin; the feelings became unhappy because of guilt; and the will

became evil because of disobedience. To minister to the need of His creature, God in great mercy ordained the offices of prophet, priest, and king. Why a threefold office? To repair the damage caused by the Fall. The prophet brought the light of the knowledge of God to the darkened intellect. The priest offered the acceptable sacrifice to remove the unhappiness of guilt and the misery of sin. Then the king came to rule the will in righteousness.

Now in these three anointed offices our Lord excels all others by an infinite measure. He is the Christ, the Anointed One, to save the soul, enliven the spirit, redeem the body; to enlighten the mind, rejoice the feelings, and rule the will. This is the "the gospel of Christ."

No wonder this message is called "the everlasting gospel," for eternity will not be too long to declare the glorious praise of such a Saviour, and such a message, and such a love of such a God! How sad, with only a brief hour in a week assigned to the gospel that in many places this glorious subject is seldom heard, or what is often heard is the uncertain trumpet. "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" And there is a battle all sinners face, a battle at the grave edge with the last Enemy.

The Lord Jesus revealed that there is a literal hell where the blackness of darkness makes sight an eternal futility, and the undying worm of remorse will make thought and memory an eternal insanity. It was to save the eternal souls of men and women from a lost eternity, that the divine Lover of souls died in anguish on the cross, "bearing our sins in His own body on the tree" and then rose up from the dead, the Victor over sin, hell, and the grave.

What a Person! What a work! What a message! What a power! The message has not changed; the value of the blood has not changed; the need of the lost has not changed; the Holy Spirit has not changed; God's love for sinners has not changed. Need we ask: "What then has changed?"

U

What is a Christian?

RANDY AMOS

A recent Time magazine article suggested that because Buddhism is a philosophy more than a religion per se, it could be possible to be a Jewish or Christian Buddhist. Oh really? This author doesn't think so!

Christ-ian—the suffix *-ian* simply means “one of.” A Christian is one who is of Christ Jesus the Lord. Before we consider what constitutes a person being a true Christian, it will be helpful to understand what a Christian is not.

A Christian is not merely a follower of the teachings of Jesus. Though a true Christian certainly follows, being a Christian is not just adhering to the moral and ethical teachings of Jesus. For Jesus came not as a teacher for students but as a Saviour for sinners. For example, one isn't considered a medical student just because he follows the orders of a doctor.

A Christian is not merely one who practices Christian ordinances in worship or is a member of a Christian church. Though a true Christian should obey the symbolic ordinances of our Lord and should be in fellowship with a Bible-based church, performing these things no more makes one a Christian than being in a hospital and putting on a mask makes one a surgeon.

A Christian is not one who merely has emotional feelings or loving thoughts about God and Jesus because of some moving thing experience in his life. Though Christians have emotions, and worship God

with their soul as well as their mind, being a Christian involves more than that. Again, just because one is healed by the good skill of a doctor and now is extremely thankful does not make the person a medical society.

Remember, Felix trembled at the Word of God; Baalam prophesied about the Messiah; Judas was a disciple who had the power to heal; Agrippa listened and was almost persuaded; the five virgins had lamps and were waiting for the bridegroom; the rich young ruler was a commandment-keeper and a sincere seeker, and not very far from the kingdom of God; Gehazi served in the ministry; Lot's wife left sinful Sodom, holding the hand of an angel; Cain worshiped God; the Pharisees praised with eloquent prayers, and the social Sadducees gave money—yet all were lost.

What is a Christian? One who has repented and, believing the gospel of God, has put his trust alone in God's Son Jesus Christ and His finished work at Calvary (Rom. 1:1-16; Acts 13:38-39; 16:31; 20:31).

When one trusts the gospel of God from the heart, God's Word promises forgiveness of all sins, salvation from wrath, a place in the body of Christ which links one with all the inheritance and blessings of the Head, Jesus Christ, and being indwelt with the life of God through the Holy Spirit. This transforms one's mind, character, lifestyle, and eventually one's body. Such a person is truly one of Christ's. This transaction is called “not perish[ing]” but having “everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16), passing from death unto life (Jn. 5:24), and being saved (Acts 16:31).

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

1 Corinthians 15:3, 4

Being a Christian involves trusting the one and only gospel of God. Practical results should follow, starting with water baptism, because the believer wants to please this One who is our Saviour.

Now let us deal with what the true gospel is that saves. Secondly, we should ask: What are the sure evidences that follow?

FOUR ELEMENTS OF THE TRUE GOSPEL

In 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle declares the gospel which he received by revelation from Jesus Christ. It consists of four elements, no more and no less.

A PERSON

"I declare unto you the gospel...how that Christ..."

God's gospel concerns not a system of religious rules or ethics, but a Person—His only Son, Christ Jesus. The Bible points the sinner to a Person for salvation. "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 Jn. 4:14). "Then Philip opened his mouth... and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35).

"Jesus is the Christ" come in the flesh, is the truth of 1 John 4 and 5. Many call Jesus "Christ" (Messiah) and mean He *has* the Christ, not *is* the Christ. In other words the Christ is a great Spirit and Jesus as well as others can have the Christ. But the Bible insists Jesus *is* the Christ. He is the one God and He became flesh. As the only anointed of the Father, He is the only begotten Son, the Creator who became a child and yet is exalted as Lord. This is the One whom the sinner must acknowledge and trust.

A PERFORMANCE

"I declare unto you the gospel...how that Christ died for our sins...and that He was buried, and that...He rose again the third day."

While the gospel points to a Person, it embodies more than a person: "Christ crucified." It involves a performance or work that deals with sin against the holy God—not the sinner's works but the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

It is the Lord Jesus who fully bore the sinner's sin and paid the penalty of death in full by the shedding of His precious blood. His resurrection from the dead fully shows that His shameful death on the cross was

counterbalanced and accepted by God the Father Himself (Acts 13:26-39).

The Lord's *death* met the penalty of the sinner's sin, His *burial* broke the connection with sin, and His *resurrection* brings the believer into a living union with God (Rom. 6).

It is the historical performance of Christ to which the sinner is always pointed for full forgiveness and acceptance—never any work/performance the sinner must do.

PROPHETIC SEAL

"I declare unto you the gospel...how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures"

God's gospel in Jesus Christ is verified by a prophetic seal, the ancient writings of the prophets (Scriptures). The sinner's faith is not linked to emotional feelings or religious tradition but to the solid evidence of God's Word. To predict details hundreds of years in advance requires divinity. The Bible presents Messiah Jesus in this way. Only Jesus has fulfilled the prophets. "To Him [Jesus] give all the prophets witness" (Acts 10:43). Fulfilled prophecy is the unrivaled trademark of divine inspiration.

A PROMISE

"I declare unto you the gospel...which also ye have received...by which also ye are saved."

Based on the Person's (Christ) performance according to God's Scriptures, the gospel offers a promise of grace for the sinner to trust. The promise is that God will save the believing sinner from hell and give him eternal life consummating in heaven (Jn. 3:16, etc.).

For one to say he holds the first 3 elements but can't say for sure he has everlasting life is not to believe the promise of the gospel. The true gospel promises that one is "saved" by faith in the God of this gospel alone—plus nothing. The counterfeit gospels might even hold the first three but deny the promise and thus point the sinner to religious rules and works rather than God's Word. "For the promise is unto you" is the language of Peter in declaring the gospel (Acts 2:39).

U

THE CONSPIRACY OF LOVE: GO

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications...be made for all men: For...God our Saviour"

It is a good thing to think of the tactics *we* should use in reaching the lost with the gospel. But what the Lord does through *us* is not what *we* volitionally believe with the heart and confesses with the mouth (Rom. 10:8-9), receiving Him personally by choice (J example, only to Jews), nor is it man's idea or doing that saves a person, nor can we, though well intentioned, force someone

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Circumstances: Personal disabilities (we all have some—they teach us our frailty), family influences (in either showing us the truth of God and/or the evil effects of sin), culture (as at Athens where fragments of truth could be found even among pagan poets; or negatively in cultural bankruptcy as happened with Cornelius, the Ethiopian eunuch, and today with our culture's collapse), are used by God. He lifts up nations and puts down nations (Bosnia, N. Korea, US!) *that they might seek after Him.*

Crises: Really a sub-set of the above, crises show sinners that their resources are not sufficient to meet the rigorous demands of life. Often men are driven to God (Ps. 107:6, 13, 19, 28) because there is no place else to go. The storms of life dash us back on the promises of God. The famine makes the prodigal think of home. Wars, sickness, divorce, earthquakes, death of a loved one—any number of "bad" events may be the best thing that happens if it brings us to Christ (like the thief on the cross).

Providence: More than mere circumstance, this is God's active participation in a person's life. Sovereignty is God overruling our ways to bring us into contact with Him. It is seamen on the same ship with Jonah, the reluctant prophet whose disobedience even led to the conversion of the crew, Simon compelled to carry the cross, or a Philippian jailer with special prisoners.

Christians' Lives: Without a word some lives are reached (1 Pet. 3:1-2); the Romans' faith was broadcast worldwide (Rom. 1:8). It is a great tragedy when Christians' lives speak ill (1 Tim. 6:1; Titus 1:12-13) rather than well (1 Thess. 1:8) of Christ.

Gospel Witness: God's choice method, weak though it seems (see 1 Cor. 1:18-25) should be biblical (2 Tim. 4:2), Christ-centered (1 Cor. 1:23), prayerful, winsome (1 Pet. 3:15), and backed up by a life consistent with the message (Phil. 1:27).

INTERNAL INFLUENCES

Conscience: No longer entirely trustworthy because of the searing effects of sin, nevertheless the conscience is still able to bring discomfort to the sinner, showing him his state before God. Romans 2:15 gives the doctrinal explanation; John 8:9 shows a good example of the conscience at work. The Word of God and the Spirit both reach and stir this warning system within.

Memory: The ability to recall past sins, God's goodness, and the truth sown in our hearts is used by the Lord in this life to have an ongoing influence in the life of the unbeliever. The Word, of course, is incorruptible seed, and can come to fruition in a life long after it is placed there. An illustration of memory's influence in repentance is seen in Peter's life (Mt. 26:75).

Imagination: Although often abused by the temptations of sin and the corrupt flesh, imagination (the ability to experience in some measure circumstances that are not actually happening) can be used by the Lord to reach sinners. Imagining what it will be like to die, to be lost forever, to suffer the judgment of hell—all this was used effectively in the ministry of Christ.

Appetite: As we have physical desires for food and water, and soulish appetites for love and security, so there are spiritual appetites (often suppressed) for God. The Lord called the spiritually hungry and thirsty to come to Him and promised satisfaction to those longing to be right (Mt. 5:6). What is hunger and thirst but a built-in warning that I am not sufficient in myself and need something outside of me to fill my need. This is the last invitation in the Bible (still a *general* call, Rev. 22:17).

Reason: Although reason has been diminished by sin and is often used to rationalize *against* God, the Lord still calls man to reasonably think with Him about the situation (Isa. 1:18). We are to give a reasonable explanation for our hope too (1 Pet. 3:15).



GOD'S TACTICS IN EVANGELISM

...will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

His people to accomplish His will is stated in the above verse (not that all are saved, for it is also His will that each individual be saved (1:11-12). This offer of eternal life, and the consequent new life if received, is not an offer restricted by bloodline (as, for example, the Jews were to be saved. The new birth is God's work (v. 13). But how does He go about bringing people to this point of repentance?

ETERNAL INFLUENCES

The Word of God: As incorruptible seed, it may take decades to germinate after being planted; as the sword, it is able to divide between soul (self-consciousness) and spirit (God-consciousness). The soul is resistant to God (heart: I don't feel it; mind: I don't understand it; will: I don't want it). As light, it illuminates the mind, exposes sin, and shows the way to God. As water, it provides the life-giving supply to the thirsty soul. It is by this that faith is activated (Rom. 10:17).

The Holy Spirit: Sent to, among other wonderful ministries, convince (reprove) the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, the Spirit is indispensable in illuminating the mind, awakening the conscience, revealing Christ, and energizing us to witness.

The Demonstration of Love: God's generosity, revealed in creation, in the loving acts of Christians (like Dorcas), but especially in Christ (Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 4:9) should lead men to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

The Wrath of God: Many seek refuge in Him, fleeing from "the wrath to come" (like Rahab). This is how God uses "vessels of wrath" (like Pharaoh) who refuse His mercy, by demonstrating before the final judgment, how wise it is to seek His mercy.

Everything on This Page (and a whole lot more): God can use a snowstorm (Charles Spurgeon), a shipwreck (John Newton), a jail term, or anyone of an endless array of influences. In the end, God will be seen to have used every resource at His disposal to bring the human race into contact with His mercy. See Romans 11:30-36. His ways in *showing mercy* are past finding out! He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). It is God's intention that Heaven will be full! (Lk. 14:23). Not only every nation but every kindred (extended family) and tongue will be represented (Rev. 5:9).

INFERNAL INFLUENCES

Fear: It should not be forgotten that the devil is a creature, dependent like every other creature for his continued existence on God. He is not independent, but lives and moves under the sovereignty of the Almighty. Whatever tactics he uses are only allowed by God in order to further His ends. Not only the wrath of man but the work of the devil will yet praise Him. The Cross is the great example of that. So fear is used effectively by Satan to inhibit sinners from coming to Christ (the fearful lead the list of the damned in Rev. 21:8), but often the tactic backfires, when such fear is educated by God to fear Him (Mt. 10:28).

Temptation: The lure of sin baits the sinful soul which is "drawn away... and enticed." But sin can never deliver what it promises. Some who are honest with themselves eventually weary of this, and are increasingly ready to hear the invitation of the Saviour: "Come unto Me, all ye who are weary [of sin] and heavy laden [with guilt] and I will give you rest."

Guilt: Again the devil often outsmarts himself. While guilt has driven multitudes to despair, it often drives people to Christ! Guilt is generally a right reaction to the awareness of personal sin (although there is false guilt). But the enemy first minimizes sin when he tempts a sinner, then maximizes it after it is committed. He seeks to convince the sinner that he is too bad for God. Blessed is the soul who experientially finds that "He is able to save to the uttermost," that His blood cleanses from *all* sin.

Consequences: Sin does its damage. It enslaves; it blinds; it cripples; it defiles; it divorces; it disappoints; it brings death. Like those halt and lame and blind and palsied and leprous souls who came to Jesus, multitudes live in despair, longing for an answer they do not even know how to request. They need Jesus. The consequences of sin often drive them to Him.

Seven Mysteries of the Lord's Supper

BRIAN GUNNING

There are mysteries and there are mysteries. The New Testament mysteries are the revelation of truths previously hidden (Eph. 3:9-11; Col. 1:26; 1 Pet. 1:11-12). But it is another kind of mystery I am thinking about today. The kind nobody can explain. These are mysteries observed around the breaking of bread meeting. Maybe you have noticed them, too. Here are seven:

1. *That Christians should be absent from the meeting.* It is a time appointed by the Lord to meet to remember Him. And yet some believers feel justified in being absent for the most trivial reasons on a regular basis. It is a mystery that believers should determine not to be there.

2. *That the meeting should have long, fruitless silences.* At times it is evident there has been little thought given to the Lord in anticipation of the meeting. Is it possible we cannot find one single truth concerning the Lord Jesus and His work that the Holy Spirit could bring out in our worship? What a mystery are fruitless silences.

3. *That there is never a time of contemplative silence.* There have been wonderful times around the table when it seems the brethren cannot be contained in expressions of worship. So full are the hearts of all the Lord's people that worship, audibly expressed, flows like a river. But not all meetings are like this. While there can be fruitless, barren silence, there can be rich moments of quiet contemplation when every heart is drawn to Christ. This is not the time for impetuous blurting out of a hymn, but to be still in His presence. There have been times when you can hardly digest the thoughts of one hymn and you are on to another. The truth of some meditation is swept away with impatient demand for activity. Silence is not always golden, but sometimes it is.

4. *That some brethren feel this meeting is a time for exposition, exhortation, or experience sharing.* Well intentioned these things may be at other times, but this is neither the time nor the place for expository ministry on a passage of Scripture, nor is it the time to exhort the saints to Christian duty, or to ramble on with a story of personal experience. "This do in remembrance of

That Christ should love us so much is a great mystery, but here are some mysteries on our part.



Me," were His words, not remembrance of *thee*.

5. *That the Lord's Supper should be a sing song.* There are some beautiful hymnbooks around, containing rich expressions of worship that effectively capture the thoughts the Holy Spirit brings to us. And yet, sometimes the meeting seems to be one song after another. Brethren who should be rising to their feet with heartfelt expressions of worship (not eloquent expositions or prayers) are content to rely on the words of another on a continual basis. Don't throw out the hymnbook. But don't wear it out either.

6. *That we should be so dull as to the Holy Spirit's work in directing the worship.* Do you think when believers meet for the express purpose of remembering the Lord that the Holy Spirit is uninterested or incapable of working? It is His delight to draw out willing hearts in worship, if only we will let Him. Often a meeting begins with a hymn or reading of Scripture that expresses some thought about the Lord. Another brother rises in prayer, emphasizing a similar line of thinking that has been brought to his mind. A sister is thinking about a scripture that also lines up with the same thoughts and, surprisingly, a young brother rises to read the same passage. And then it comes. A hymn or prayer or reading blurted out with exuberance that has nothing to do with the cumulative thoughts that have been expressed. Are we so dull? Is the Holy Spirit's ministry so foreign to us?

7. *That the close of the meeting should so quickly jump into misplaced hilarity.* The meeting closes. We have been to the cross, the empty grave, the glory of heaven. Immediately there is an uproar of conversation and hilarity that is not the joy of the Lord but business as usual.

Yes, practical matters must be taken care of. But practical reverence demands a suitable conclusion to our worship. To rise in the presence of the Lord and audibly lead His people in worship is not something to be taken lightly. Nevertheless the solemnity of it all should not paralyze us either. We make mistakes, yet the Lord understands the heart. But neither let us be careless about the greatest privilege ever granted.

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Now That is Amazing Grace

WILLIAM MACDONALD

It was an act of indescribable grace when God decided to rescue fallen mankind. But once He made that decision, He had to devise a plan that would fully satisfy His love and His holiness.

Since He loves everyone, His salvation must be:

- Offered to all. He doesn't want any left out.
- Sufficient for all. It must meet the needs of every person without exception.
- Something for which everyone is eligible. No amount of evil should be able to bar anyone from participation.
- Simple enough for anyone to understand. There's no use making an incomprehensible offer.
- Something which anyone can receive. The true religion must not have any conditions that some couldn't meet.
- There must be no possibility for human boasting. Pride is the parent sin, and there will be no pride in heaven. In order to exclude boasting, everyone must have the same fitness for heaven.
- Yet the plan must be one which God does not force on a person against His will.

There is only one conceivable solution to the divine dilemma. It lies in the word *substitution*. A suitable substitute must somehow be found to pay the penalty of the sins of the people. Most of us are familiar with the idea of substitution. In some athletic events, the coach sends someone onto the field as a substitute for another player. The average Hebrew believer in Old Testament times understood substitution. When he brought an animal to the altar of sacrifice and laid his hand on the animal's head, he pictured the transfer of his sins to a substitute that would die in his place.

Yes, the solution to the divine dilemma is to have a substitute die in the place of sinful humanity. But even here there are conditions to be met by the substitute.

THE SUBSTITUTE MUST PASS FIVE TESTS

- The substitute must be human. Otherwise the exchange would not be fair or equal.
- He must be a sinless person. Otherwise he would have to die for his own sins.
- He must be God. Only an infinite person could atone for the numberless sins of the human race. The value of the substitute must be great enough to cover all the sins of humanity—past, present, and future.

In This article is excerpted from Now That is Amazing Grace, a very helpful little book that is chock full of helpful biblical thinking that arms the believer for evangelism.

- He must shed his blood, because divine law has decreed that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. Life is in the blood and there must be life for life.
- He must be willing. Otherwise Satan could charge God with unjustly forcing an involuntary victim to die in the place of ungodly sinners.

JESUS QUALIFIES ON ALL COUNTS

The only Person in the universe who meets these conditions is Jesus Christ.

- He became Man at Bethlehem. Born of the Virgin Mary, He is perfect Man.¹ As the great Christian hymnwriter, Charles Wesley, put it, "Our God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made Man."

- He is God.² He has the attributes of God, the titles of God, and is equal with God the Father.

- He is without sin. The record cannot be denied. He knew no sin, He did no sin, and there is no sin in Him.³

- He shed His blood as a substitute for sinners on the Cross of Calvary. Multitudes have availed themselves of the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, that cleanses from all sin.⁴

- He did it willingly so that sinners could be saved. There was no reluctance, no holding back. On the contrary, there was a joyful submission to the will of God.⁵

The truth of Christ as our Substitute is found throughout the Bible. Isaiah boldly proclaimed, "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows...He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed...and the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all."⁶ John the Baptist cried, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"⁷ Lost in wonder, the Apostle Paul said, "The Son of God...loved me and gave Himself for me."⁸ Peter added his testimony: "[He] Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree."⁹ And not to be left out,

Now That is Amazing Grace

John, the apostle of love, affirmed, "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."¹⁰

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION QUALIFIES ON ALL COUNTS

Since the Lord Jesus perfectly meets all the requirements for a substitutionary sacrifice, God can now proclaim His marvelous way of salvation, the good news of His grace. He can offer salvation as a gift to all who repent of their sins and receive His Son as Lord and Saviour by a definite act of faith.

- Notice that this salvation is available to all. The gospel says, "Whoever believes on Him should not perish but have eternal life."¹¹ If it depended on money, the poor would be left out.

- It is sufficient for all.¹² The death of this infinite Saviour has power to atone for all the sins of all the world. It is supremely adequate.

- Everyone is eligible for it because everyone is a sinner.¹³ It's his very unfitness that qualifies anyone for God's salvation. It's a good thing that the gift of eternal life is not just for the intellectual, the wealthy, the good-looking, or the famous. Some of us would never qualify. Even if it were only for those who could read, walk, talk, or see, some would be excluded. Only the gospel suits the whole world.

- It is simple enough for anyone to understand. No one is too primitive or illiterate. In the gospel, the Lord Jesus says "Come."¹⁴ Nothing complicated about that. As William Cowper put it, "O! how unlike the complex works of man, heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan!"

- Anyone can receive it.¹⁵ Salvation is by repentance; anyone can do that. It is by faith; anyone can believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. No one is more credible than He, and nothing is more reasonable than for the creature to trust His Creator.

- Grace excludes boasting. It says, "I did all the sinning. Christ did all the saving. I claim His merits, and not my own. I have no right to enter heaven because of what I am or what I have done. Christ alone is my passport." If we could somehow earn heaven by our performance or by our supposedly fine character, then we could indulge in boasting. And there would be degrees of boasting, each one trying to outdo the other. Heaven would be a scene of constant one-upmanship,

bickering, envy, jealousy, and rivalry. It wouldn't be heaven at all.

- Man is not coerced into accepting God's salvation.¹⁶ The Creator made him a free moral agent. Strange as it may seem, not everyone *wants* to be saved. God doesn't force heaven on anyone. He will not take anyone to heaven against his or her will. You can be certain that any religion that grows by coercion, violence, and cruelty is not the true one.

So we see that God's way of salvation is perfect. It meets all the terms necessary to satisfy God's requirements and at the same time is available to all humanity. Christ's work on the Cross enabled God to fully exercise His love without compromising His justice. The Psalmist says it poetically:

*Mercy and truth have met together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*¹⁷

Given the character of God and given the sinfulness of man, it is clear that it is the only possible way of salvation. People could never be saved in any other way.

Spurgeon asks: "Who would have thought of *the just Ruler dying for the unjust rebel*? This is no teaching of human mythology, or dream of poetic imagination. This method of expiation is only known among men because it is a fact. Fiction could not have devised it. God Himself ordained it. It is not a matter which could have been imagined."¹⁸

FOOTNOTES

1. 1 Timothy 2:5
2. John 1:1
3. 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5
4. 1 John 1:7
5. Psalm 40:8; Hebrews 12:2
6. Isaiah 53:4-6
7. John 1:29
8. Galatians 2:20
9. 1 Peter 2:24
10. 1 John 2:2
11. John 3:16
12. 1 John 2:2
13. Romans 3:23
14. Matthew 11:28
15. Revelation 22:17
16. John 3:36
17. Psalm 85:10
18. Quoted in *Baptist Biblical Heritage*, Apr. 94, p. 1

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Daniel Smith

JOHN BJORLIE

Dan Smith (1907-1988) lived a life remarkable for its variety. Born in England of Scottish stock, he carried the gospel to remote mountains in China, India, and Sri Lanka. He preached extensively in England, Australia, New Zealand, and North America. His acquaintances and co-workers had their own notoriety—a who's who in the Kingdom: Gypsy Smith, Samuel Chadwick, Leonard Ravenhill, G. C. Willis, J. O. Fraser, Watchman Nee, D. E. Hoste, and Bakht Singh. Smith lived boldly and presented God's Word boldly.

As a child, shy Daniel was told that the name Smith was *Gow* in Gaelic and that his clan of Smiths descended from the infamous Scottish pirate John Gow who commanded "The Revenge." Gow was hanged in London in 1725. Daniel's grandfather was also a seagoing man, and boasted of his own foreign adventures, thus keeping piracy alive among the Smiths.

Dan's mother came from godly Scottish Covenanter stock which eschewed all swash-buckling. Deep impressions were formed by the Presbyterian ministers which made Dan look seriously at heart issues. Their local preachers were "scholarly and evangelical." And the missionary stories spoke loudly: "It seemed so wonderful that the Lord had chosen such people, led them to the right countries, endowed them with gifts and courage, and that they accomplished so much good. I marvelled that their sympathies could reach out so far, and that love could so motivate them...to spend their lives teaching ignorant savages, and oftentimes to lay down their lives." John Paton of the New Hebrides, Mary Slessor of Calabar, and William Carey of India were favorites.

One Sunday, Dr. Elmslie spoke from Revelation 3:20. Midway in his message he sang:

*Behold Me standing at the door,
And hear Me pleading evermore,
Say, weary heart, oppressed with sin,
May I come in? May I come in?*

"I was overwhelmed and melted, but how to open my heart's door I did not know. It seemed

Dan was a great believer in the particular guidance of God in the details of life. "In Christian experience there are times when the Spirit of God makes a verse or promise of Scripture alive and applicable. It has your name on it, so to speak. It is directed to you in a personal way."



stuck." Thankfully John Smith's godly apprentice, Joe Wilkin, invited Dan to a Methodist class meeting. The leader "examined" each class member in interview fashion. Dan had never heard such testimonies: "These all knew the Lord and I felt like a speckled bird among them. But Wilfrid made God's way...very clear. As we knelt in prayer, without being asked for any decision, there was a revelation of the Lord Jesus in me. I suddenly knew Him to be the Lamb of God who had purchased my redemption...and I was heartily willing at that moment to be His."

Later that year, Dan had an experience of dedication. As if with an audible voice, the eighteen-year-old heard God saying, "Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance..." (Ps. 2:8). The timid boy was soon preaching wherever opportunity came.

It was as a student at Cliff College that Miss Mildred Cable, author of *Ambassadors for Christ*, came to relate her exploits pioneering the Gobi Desert. Dan was spellbound at the daring of this brave woman of God. "I asked a question from the floor and after the meeting closed, Mildred Cable came down the aisle, stood, looked me in the eye, and said, 'Young man, I believe the Lord would have you consider China.'"

Reading Marshall Broomhall's biography of Hudson Taylor, *The Man Who Believed God*, the principles and practices of the the China Inland Mission appealed to Dan, and he applied.

In the eventful year of 1934, Dan arrived in China. Mao Zedong and his Communist Party had arisen to oppose the Nationalist Party. That year he began the long march—capturing three China Inland missionaries on the way. The last one was released outside Kunming in Yunnan Province. This Mr. Bosshardt was half dead when missionaries found him. His book, *The Restraining Hand*, tells his harrowing tale. Also in December, John and Betty Stam were beheaded by Communists in the eastern city of Miaosheo.

The General Director of the Mission was Dixon Edward Hoste of the legendary "Cambridge Seven"—university graduates who startled much of Britain when they went as mission-

aries to China in 1885. Hoste was a solitary, dignified man. He followed Hudson Taylor in 1900 as General Director, a position he held for 35 years.

"My first contact with Mr. Hoste brought blushes to my face. Racing upstairs in the Shanghai headquarters, I had charged into him. He smiled as though nothing had happened and asked my name.

"Smith, sir, Daniel Smith, sir."

"Praise the Lord,' said he, 'It was a bad day for Israel when there were no smiths in it,' a reference to 1 Samuel 13:19, 'There was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords and spears.'"

"Another day he invited me to pray with him. Naturally enough, I thought we would pray in turn, so I went with a storehouse of matters...One of the first things which affected me was the atmosphere of his presence. I understood what James meant when he spoke of the prayers of a righteous man availing much.

"Mr. Hoste prayed—and prayed for four-and-a-half hours! Remember, these were his *private* prayers, and I was being allowed into his closet. Sometimes he would kneel, then stand, then walk, while he prayed. There were eight hundred missionaries in the Mission. He knew them all by name without looking at a book—and all their needs, and their three hundred children! As for me, my knees were riveted to the floor. I couldn't move. I was filled with awe and reverential fear. In this secret place of prayer, Mr. Hoste was at home with God. It was his chief pleasure.

"Finally he touched me on the shoulder. 'Dear brother,' he said as I rose, 'I thought you might be hungry.' Then rather wistfully: 'You know, we've only prayed for China.'"

A verse that Dan used in guidance for a life partner was: "Prepare thy work without, make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterward build thine house" (Prov. 24:27). His application of that verse was to first concentrate on his vocation as a worker in God's field, and once established, to then look into his domestic future.

There in the remoteness of southern China, the challenges made married life problematic. The cultural adjustments, language problems, and absence of medical help (Dan once underwent an operation without local anesthesia) added to the personal dangers.

Two years before Dan met Catherine McGlashan,

he had an "inner registration from the Spirit of God" that the Canadian missionary in distant west Yunnan was to be his wife. He only knew her name.

Catherine was born just inside North Dakota, on the Canadian border. As a young Christian, she and another sister covenanted to spend protracted periods in prayer. In these joint intercessory sessions she received her burden for China. Among the Lisu tribal people in the Salween valley, she labored with John and Isobel Kuhn and J. O. Fraser. It was Fraser who said, "There is only one man in the province for you, Cathie, but he's in the east of the province. We shall have to pray him out west." Fraser was devoted to God, praying, preaching and translating Scripture, and in 1916 a flood tide of blessing broke through. In a two-year period, some 60,000 Lisu turned from Animism and believed the gospel.

In 1937, Dan received six messengers from the Nosu tribe inviting him up into their mountain communities to speak. The sturdy Nosu were reputed as an arrogant folk. There had been blessing twice among the Lisu, and other tribes were eager for the Word, but the Nosu had always been resistant. A missionary friend said, "Don't go Dan, the Nosu are not worth it."

Within hours, Dan had packed and was enroute. There were about two hundred at the first meeting. Dan didn't know Nosu, and the people knew only a little Chinese. "My message was a plain clear call to salvation through faith in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ." After explaining all he could, Dan gave an appeal to commit themselves to Christ. "Then there was a scene I shall never forget...The people were melted down at the preaching of the Word. It was a real visitation of God with life-transforming import. And that was only the beginning. The grip of God took hold of the whole tribe. Proud hearts were broken...Some fell by the roadside on the way to meetings, crying for mercy."

Due to exhaustion, Dan was ordered to take a rest by the General Director. Enroute to the retreat, he was waylaid in Kunning. There a telegram arrived, suggesting he go to Tali. "I went, and in going, greatly suspected the gentle hand of the Lord leading me to Cathie...It so happened in the Lord's providential arrangements that Mr. J. O. Fraser, the superintendent of West Yunnan, had scheduled a workers' conference in



Tali the very day I was to arrive. Had it been any other time, or had there been no conference at all, I would not have met my Catherine. But the Lord's

ways are perfect...On the third day, she was walking alone in the garden. I joined her and told her all the story of two years of inward conviction. I had her attention."

They were engaged three days after meeting, and married October 15, 1938. During their work among the Nosu tribal people, their first child, Roxie, arrived in 1940. Stuart, Martyn, and Marion followed.

At the conclusion of the Japanese War, Mao moved a well-trained million-man army against the Nationalists. The country was swallowed up and renamed "The Republic of China" in 1949. The China Inland Mission assumed it could work under this government, too. But they quickly found Mao's Communism to be extreme and virulent. In the upheaval, Dan and Cathie, with Martyn and two-year-old Marion escaped by Red China's backdoor through the thick jungle of Burma. Roxie and Stuart were in the mission boarding school in distant Kuling at the time (Only after many months did they reunite in Australia). They all suffered the loss of possessions, libraries, but worse still was the separation from their children in the faith. By 1950 there were 7,000 Nosu believers in fifty-two churches on those wild and rugged mountains.

Out from under the auspices of the China Inland Mission, after difficulty and distances, they reunited as a family, and began a new and fruitful ministry in Sri Lanka, India, and Pakistan. In this period, Dan joined with Bakht Singh, who was greatly used in evangelism, and assembled quite a corps of workers who between 1942 and 1959 saw as many as 200 congregations established. Dan worked with Bakht Singh and spoke at their huge annual "Holy Convocations."

In his last decades, he and Cathie relocated to British Columbia, from which Dan pursued itinerant Bible teaching. He marvelled at the hospitality he received among the assemblies: "As a guest in hundreds of homes, I must set on record that our married sisters are, to my mind, some of the most consecrated portions of the Lord's people, whose roots are deep in godli-

ness, and whose branches are laden with kindness, love, and care for all the Lord's people."

To Dan, those in foreign missionary work needed to be "as strong as a horse" and as a young man he was. A short man, he had a strong frame, and was vigorous into his eighties. He rose early, read his Bible and prayed briefly, then wrote letters before he came to the breakfast table. After breakfast, he returned to his room to pray and prepare for his evening message. Hosts and hostesses told me how they overheard his lengthy prayers in those mid-morning hours. After the noon meal, he would walk to the post office with his correspondence. The rest of the afternoon was spent in Bible study, writing, or visiting with the saints.

In Bible teaching, he ardently supported New Testament church principles, but not in a sectarian way. Dan was brought up in the Presbyterian church, saved among Methodists, ordained by Baptists, spent years with the interdenominational China Inland Mission, and also labored three years with a Bible Institute in Canada. Looking back he said, "Spiritual history for me has been a spiritual journey. It was nothing in the primary sense—neither technical nor doctrinal—which passed me on from one to another, out of this into that, but just a kind of spiritual ongoing led by the Spirit of God. Eventually I was led into association with New Testament assemblies where I have found that which most closely resembles what I see to be God's design in His Word." To Dan, the assembly was important because that is the house of God where He manifests Himself in a special way to His people.

MATERIAL FOR THIS ARTICLE WAS TAKEN FROM:

Fredk. Tatford, *That the World May Know*, Vol. 7, EOS
 Daniel Smith, *Bakht Singh of India, A Prophet of God*
 Daniel Smith, *Pilgrim of the Heavenly Way*
 Phyllis Thompson, *D. E. Hoste, A Prince with God*, CIM

BOOKS WRITTEN BY DANIEL SMITH:

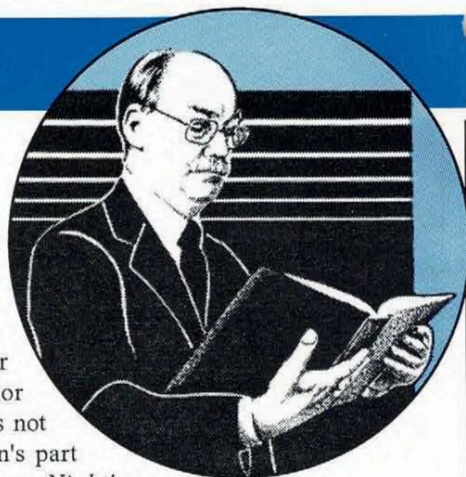
Bakht Singh of India, A Prophet of God
Pilgrim of the Heavenly Way
Seers of Israel (on the Minor Prophets)
The Exercise of Prayer
The Royal Life
The Greatest Song in the World (on the Song of Solomon)
Worship and Remembrance, Volumes 1-4



Presenting the Gospel

J. B. WATSON

When the good news from heaven is to be communicated, both the man and his message come under scrutiny.



mistake
vehe-
mence for
earnest-
ness, nor
loudness, nor
ranting. It is not
like the lion's part
in *Midsummer Night's
Dream* of which Quince says, "You may do it *extem-
pore*, for it is nothing but roaring."

The constituents of earnestness are as follows:

1. *Conviction of the truth:* If a man is not sure of a truth, he cannot be enthusiastic about it, but if like Jeremiah he can say, "His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay," then his words will make an impact. So it was with the apostles: "We cannot but speak the things which we have heard and seen." Paul, too, stated: "Necessity is laid upon me; for woe unto me, if I preach not the gospel."

If you have no burning conviction, keep away from preaching till you get it. Dr. Johnson, speaking of the discourse of a certain Dr. Priestley, said, "He unsettled everything and settles nothing." The secret of influential and persuasive speech is the intensity born of the conviction of truth.

2. *Realizing the peril of the unsaved:* Have you noticed the passionate energy of Galatians? This comes from Paul's realization of his readers' peril and his eagerness to rescue them. He who rushes from a burning building cries, Fire! Fire! Startling, urgent, intense, arousing words are needed. There is a fire!

The story is told of a mountaineer who, hearing a cry, found a fellow-climber in a position of extreme peril on the side of a precipice. Making a supreme effort, he effected a rescue. The next day, showing a friend at the scene what had happened, he found himself unable to get near the place where the climber had clung the previous day. Why? Because there was not a life to be saved as there had been then.

Earnestness cannot be counterfeited; no art can successfully simulate it. Realization of the peril of the unsaved, laid in the soul of the preacher by the Holy Spirit, alone can give it. Without it the message will lack winning power. The absence of conversions in many

We are not going to discuss technique or even doctrine but the inward qualities of effective gospel witnessing. Notice five of these: knowledge, earnestness, faithfulness, dignity and tenderness. These are the indispensables of true evangelism.

KNOWLEDGE

We remember hearing a listener say to his neighbor at an open-air meeting, "This man knows what he is talking about." He said it of the preacher and at once settled down to listen. The preacher had the sure touch which gave his speech attractiveness and commanding interest. He held his hearers. No one moved away while he spoke; they wanted to hear him through.

It will take time to reach this proficiency, so be patient. It may demand much reading; then be diligent. It may require careful observation of how others do it; so be observant. It will need much prayer in preparation for such service; therefore, be an intercessor.

Read Scripture first, then other ministry. In listening to oral ministry, be as diligent to learn as if it were part of your reading. Be sure to think of what you read and hear. If writing aids your thoughts, write; if meditating aloud clarifies your thought, then do it. Find your own medium but be soaked in it as a submerged sponge is filled with water. Always be gathering new material; a notebook will catch the thought that will fly from you.

Get your preaching aim right, so that your objective is clear; get a true grasp of your subject so that you can command clarity. Strive for a simple sequence in your message so that it is easy for your hearers to follow, and get a right emphasis, a true focus of the vital points of your message. Knowledge is power.

EARNESTNESS

This is an indispensable ingredient of true gospel witness. "It is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." Do not

places where clear and able preaching are the rule is due to some lack here. Cry to God for a holy earnestness to clothe your preaching.

FAITHFULNESS

God's charge to Jeremiah was, "Speak all the words that I command thee unto them; diminish not a word" (Jer. 26:2). Not a word! Again invective, impudence, and abuse must not be mistaken for faithfulness, but "the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:2).

God has recorded some solemn charges to His servants, warning them against failure in this grace of faithfulness, as to Ezekiel, "If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand." Paul could look this word in the face and say, "I am pure from the blood of all men."

It was said of a certain preacher, "He speaks as though the Lord was standing at his shoulder." So should the Lord's servant always speak. Seek a sense of being answerable to Him, remembering His word, "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works?" Be sure of God and of the gospel; be ready to preach it anywhere and at any time. Seek men's good, not merely their good opinion. And because you have an account to give, seek earnestly to deliver your own soul from the charge of hiding God's counsel with your words.

DIGNITY

Keep in mind the glory of the message and use no method unworthy of it. In your desire to adapt it, do not cheapen it: in your endeavor to make it plain, do not make it vulgar. Avoid the flippant. Do not be misled into thinking you have achieved anything when you provoke laughter. You are a herald, not an entertainer. Of all gifts, use humor most sparingly in the work of the gospel. If I were asked, "What is the true demeanor of the evangelist?" I should reply, "Happy gravity." Here is William Cowper's picture of him:

*There stands the messenger of truth; there stands
The legate of the skies! His theme divine
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated Law speaks out
Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.*

And this he writes of his speech:

*He that negotiates between God and man
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of goodness and of mercy should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you should woo a soul,
To break a jest, when pity would inspire.*

Let your preaching as well as your demeanor "be as becometh the gospel of Christ" and seek grace never to lower the dignity of a message which deals with themes so noble and raises issues so tremendous. And never forget that there is a world of difference between dignity and pomposity.

TENDERNESS

Tenderness is not incompatible with faithfulness. John Newton had a text on his study wall, "Remember that thou wert a bondman in Egypt and the Lord thy God redeemed thee." Paul, speaking of enemies of the cross, speaks in faithfulness of their end being destruction, but he tells it with tears, "even weeping."

How tender was the Lord Jesus. He touched the leper. He received sinners and ate with them. Again and again we read of Him being moved with compassion toward the multitude. There is nothing more revolting than to hear solemn warnings uttered without feeling and even with evident relish. Remember the words of Bonar to McCheyne about his sermon on "The wicked shall be turned into hell": "Were you able to preach it with tenderness?"

Compassion is strengthened as we keep a sense of how completely we ourselves are debtors to mercy and hold in mind how the compassions of God dealt with us as we preach in living touch with the Redeemer God who gave His well-beloved Son, because He loved us and longed to save us.

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A Little More on Little Rock

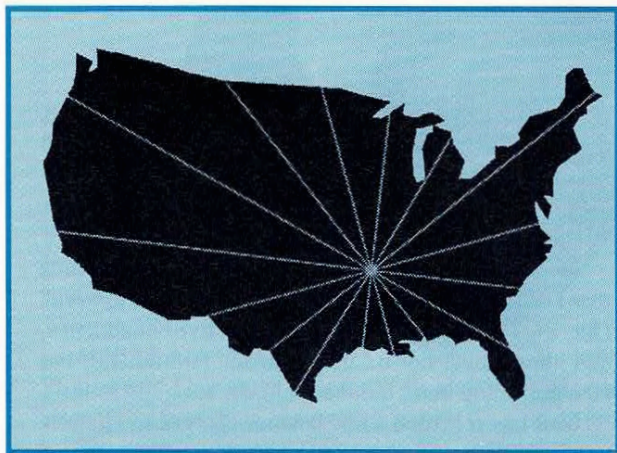
J. B. NICHOLSON, JR.

A little clarification may be called for, regarding what we mean by a New Testament assembly.

The phone rang in the office, and the caller asked to speak with me. He was very polite, but wondered if, in my previous article regarding a possible outreach in Little Rock, AK, I had meant to say there were no *Brethren* assemblies in that area, rather than speaking simply about *assemblies*, or *New Testament assemblies*. I attempted to clarify what I had written.

The word "assembly" merely describes a group of people gathered together, usually for a common purpose. For example, the mob at Ephesus is called an assembly. But often we use this as a kind of short form for a *New Testament assembly*.

There are, I believe, some local churches who would associate with those commonly called Brethren who have moved away from a simple New Testament form of gathering. They no longer take the model of the church in the New Testament as authoritative in all matters of faith and practice. If you showed them certain passages in the Word of God that apply to the meetings of the church, they would not be willing to



submit to them. Of course, no gathering submits perfectly to the Scriptures, but it should be our whole-hearted desire to do so, as far as the light shines for us.

Similarly, there are gatherings of believers who have never heard of "Brethren," but who meet as the Word declares. They have discovered the New Testament to be a practical and beautiful design that they believe brings glory to the Lord.

We do not doubt that there are many dear believers in Little Rock. But to our knowledge, there are no *New Testament assemblies* in that city, that is, no gatherings of believers who simply meet around the Lord Jesus in obedience to His Word. If there are, we would be glad to work with them.

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DECEMBER 30/97-JANUARY 2/98 DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

At the time of printing, registration for the *Rise Up and Build* conference has passed 1200. Since the Hyatt Regency can only accommodate a 1250 for the general sessions and meals, we have almost reached maximum capacity.

We would like to see something work out that would allow a higher number to attend, but at this point, anyone who registers after the 1250 mark will have their name placed on a waiting list. As we receive cancellations, the people on the waiting list will be offered the opening on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Also, there is a correction from the conference page that appeared in the October issue of *Uplook*. Anyone who wishes to take advantage of group travel from the Toronto area should contact Brian Gunning (905) 685-5090



The Gospel is Much More

REX TROGDON

*When God's Word describes the gospel
as being "much more"
you know it is much more than
we can ever fully understand.*

Camping made many memories for us as we raised our children. Some of those memories were around a campfire singing hymns together, visiting with new friends, oh, yes! and enjoying tasty treats.

We'd wait till everybody went back to their tents and it was just our little family. Sidney would bring out the sticks he'd cut that afternoon, and Angie headed to the camper for the marshmallows. Nancy opened the box of graham crackers and package of Hershey's chocolate bars. What a great combination these made with the help of those glowing embers.

You might know this recipe. First the graham cracker, then the chocolate bar, then a hot roasted marshmallow on top so that it melts down into the chocolate. They call them S'mores. Easy name to remember since after you've had your first taste you can hardly wait for s'more!

Few things are like that in life. Most things get old, wear out, break, or become routine. In a sweet way, the gospel is like those S'mores. In fact, there is s'more to the gospel than I ever imagined. So much more than I ever dreamed possible. That's what I love about the apostle Paul's reminders in Romans 5. Five times over he mentions that we have a "much more" salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ! Scan Romans 5 and rejoice to know that:

- Much more...we're saved from wrath (Rom. 5:9)
- Much more...we're saved by His life (Rom. 5:10)
- Much more...we're saved to proclaim (Rom. 5:15)
- Much more...we're saved to reign (Rom. 5:17)

How is it possible that sinners could receive such good news of this wonderful salvation? Well, Romans 5:20 tells us how. Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more!

When I was first saved I was so thrilled to know the joy of sins forgiven and a home in heaven. Just as we're reminded in Romans 5:6-8, "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." That's the gospel, and that's salvation.

A little way down the road I found out about the judgment coming on this world, and after judgment the lake of fire. I was so glad to be saved by the Lord Jesus through the gospel. It was more than I had realized, much more than I could have ever imagined. I was saved from wrath!

I know that God's wrath is sure by the Old Testa-

ment examples, like the flood of Noah's day and the fire that fell in the days of Lot. Then the New Testament opens with John the Baptist warning Pharisees and Sadducees, saying, "Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Mt. 3:7). And the Lord Jesus taught from the Mount of Olives that "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not been since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Mt. 24:21). Even the epistles warn, mentioning the reason that "the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6). Finally, the last book of our Bible explains the threefold complete judgment of seven seals broken, seven trumpets blown, and seven bowls poured out. The wrath of God is sure, and I'm sure glad that I'm saved from His wrath!

The wrath of God is also stored up. Think of the things that people collect. From sea shells to china, love letters to baseball cards, bottle caps to Hummells. But who would ever think of collecting God's wrath? Yet Romans 2:5 states that those who don't know the Lord are treasuring up—storing up for themselves—wrath for the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Even the heavens and earth are kept in store for judgment (2 Pet. 3:7).

I also believe the wrath of God is soon! Though not profound, it's still true, His coming is closer today than yesterday. Peter warns us that the Lord is not slack concerning His promise. He is coming quickly and will not tarry! (Heb. 10:37). But, thanks be to God, through the good news of the gospel we have a salvation that is *much more* and saves us from the wrath to come.

Can we be sure of this? Well, we have two-sided protection. "Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10) and "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:9). That's a *much more* salvation that saves us from the sure wrath of God which is being stored up, and coming soon!

The Gospel is Much More

The strength of the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God to salvation, is seen in Romans 5:10. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Saved by His life? Which life? His life here when He went about doing good? Healing the sick? Preaching around Galilee's shores? No, that could not save us. He had to go to Calvary. There He laid down His life and that He might take it back again. Now He ever lives, to save us from the gutter-most to the uttermost!

Here's the way it is: we have been saved from sin's penalties because Christ died for us. It is a complete work. *Done!* Now we're being saved from sin's power because Christ lives for us. It is His continuing work. *Going on!* One day we will be saved from sin's presence forever because Christ is coming for us. *Gone!* It's a wonderfully full salvation we have! It's more than we could have imagined, much more than we ever dreamed possible. We're *much more* saved by His life.

You know, such a gospel as this ought to be shared with others. Just look at the comparisons in Romans 5:15, that death came from one man and life came from one Man. Those men are the first Adam and the Last Adam, Jesus Christ.

Both the offense of one and grace of One have effected many. Important comparisons, but note the contrasts. A free gift and an offense. Death and life. Adam and Christ. Judgment and justification (Rom. 5:16).

Then there is the fact that this good news of the grace of God abounded to many. That's the commission to you and me. How? Just as those faithful believers of Paul's day went everywhere preaching Christ, we should too.

Here was Paul's perspective according to Romans 1:14-16, I am a debtor to pay, I am ready to preach, I am not ashamed to proclaim. We're *much more* saved

to proclaim. Normal, ordinary folk who are saved by God's grace have the honor of telling the gospel! As one has said, "God has chosen a nobody to tell everybody about Somebody who cares for anybody."

This much more salvation just gets better and better. Look at Romans 5:17. It tells us that, "much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." Can you imagine that?

We're *much more* saved to reign! Now in life; then in light (Rom. 8:19).

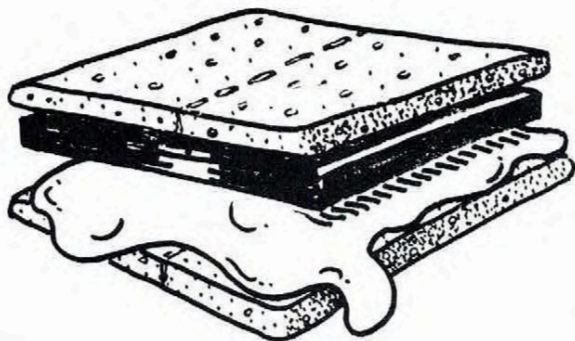
Given the name, Rex, has had its difficulties. Like the neighbor child who spoke with me out in the driveway one day. After a bit of conversation, he asked, "Man, what's your name?" "Rex," I replied. He contemplated that as much as a little boy could, and then responded, "I knew a dog one time named Rex." I told him I heard his mother calling him to come home!

After I came to know the Lord, someone explained that my name means king! That's right. Oh, I know I won't be a king, but I do belong to a kingdom of priests, and one day I'll reign with the King of kings! Why? Because of the *much more* salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ. We're *much more* saved to reign.

It really is a *much more* salvation that saves us from wrath, saves us by His life, saves us to proclaim, and saves us to reign with Him. It's more than anyone could have ever imagined, much more than anybody could have dreamed possible. But how could sinners like us, so undeserving, ever have such a salvation?

That's the beauty of the gospel. Romans 5:20 makes it clear, "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more."

So, wouldn't you like to have S'more? Oh, yes, tell me s'more! Tell me much more of Christ, my Saviour, and of His glorious gospel.



U

Paul's Call to Elders

TACTICS FOR TODAY

Paul knew it was goodbye! He would see the Ephesian elders no more this side of heaven. So in an impassioned appeal he left for elders everywhere a trumpet call to arms. In a series of couplets, he laid out a strategy for spiritual warfare which he had proved in the trenches.

1. TWO FORMS OF COMMUNICATION: *showed* and *taught*. Following the example of our Lord (Acts 1:1), Paul lived the truth before he taught it. So every elder should be an *example* in lifestyle as well as an *expositor* of the Word, whether publicly or privately.

2. TWO SPHERES OF MINISTRY: *publicly* and *from house to house*. Paul knew the benefits of private conversations about the truth, but he also knew that mass evangelism was necessary. We will never fulfill the Great Commission, one person at a time.

3. TWO AUDIENCES: *the Jews* and *the Greeks*. No two groups could be more different. Yet Paul fought vigorously for churches composed of both, not Jewish churches and Gentile ones. The assembly at Philippi had a jailor and his family, a former fortune-teller slave, and a Jewish (proselyte?) business woman. The gospel was just what each one needed.

4. TWO EMPHASES IN HIS MESSAGE: *repentance* and *faith*. Really two sides to the same coin, repentance is turning from sin, and faith is turning to God. In 1 Thessalonians 1:9, they are treated almost as one act: "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." Repentance is agreeing with God about the problem—my sin; faith is agreeing with God about the answer—His Son.

5. TWO OBJECTIVES IN LIFE: *finish my course* and *the ministry*. Here is the balance between personal life and

"Ye know...how I...have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem...But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus....Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock...to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you...Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things...Therefore watch, and remember, that...I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified...I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive"

ACTS 20:18-35

church life. Paul wished to complete his ministry, but he also wanted to finish his personal life well which he had started at conversion. He did not think it was impossible to do this, nor that by giving himself to the ministry he would lose out in his personal life, a view not always held today. You need not lose your family in order to be faithful in your ministry, or vice versa.

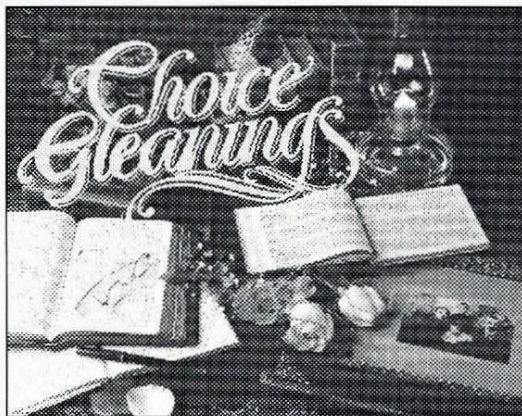
6. TWO WATCHWORDS FOR ELDERS: *take heed* and *feed*. The first is a couplet in itself. Elders should take heed to their own lives and then to the flock. But they should also feed the sheep, both negative and positive influences to keep the flock healthy.

7. TWO DANGERS FOR THE SHEEP: *wolves* from without and *men* from within. Wolves love sheep, too! But of course to feed *on* them. Shepherds should be able to spot a wolf fairly easily, if on the watch. But those men from within speaking perverse things (lit. truth with a twist) are more dangerous because more insidious.

8. TWO ESSENTIALS FOR SHEPHERDS: *watch* and *remember*. Looking over the flock (overseers) will be encouraged by looking back, remembering faithful shepherds of the past, like Paul, who were on duty 24 hours—night and day. No part-time job this!

9. TWO IDEAL RESOURCES: *God* and *the word of His grace*. Nothing will fortify elders like the consciousness of the presence of God and the promises of God. He will embrace you; you should embrace them. What will these truths do for you? Another couplet—build you up enough that others can lean on you, and enrich you enough that you can afford to be generous. This is the final twin: "support the weak" and remember the blessedness of giving. Our Lord Himself told us. **U**

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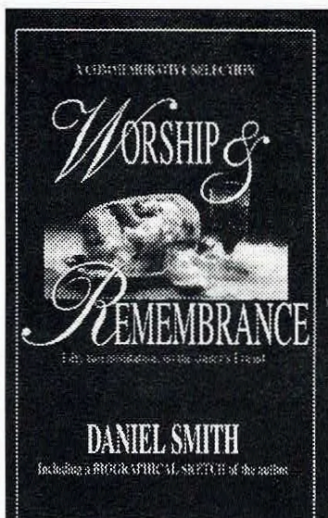
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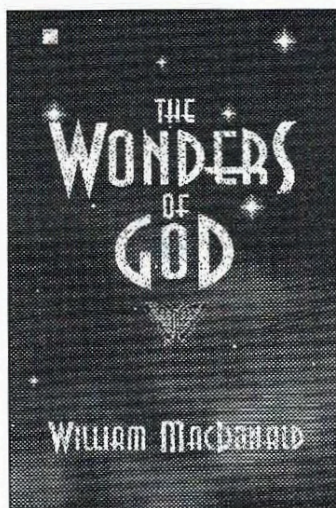
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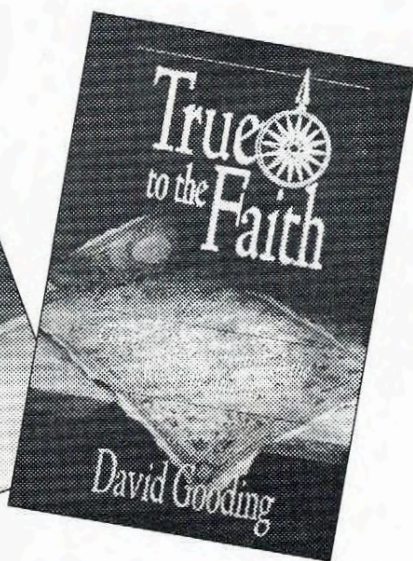
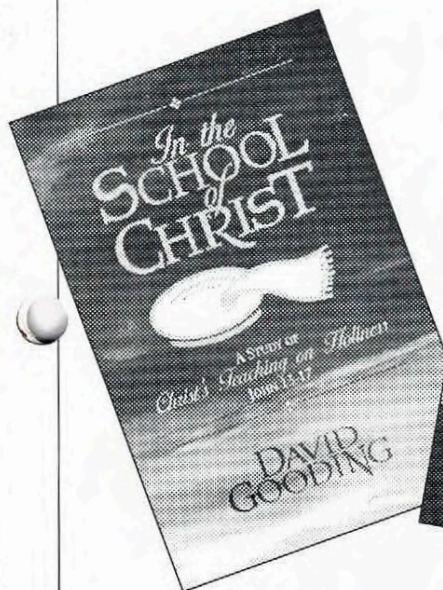
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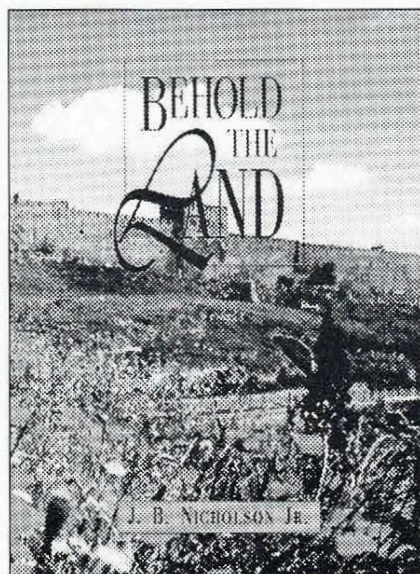
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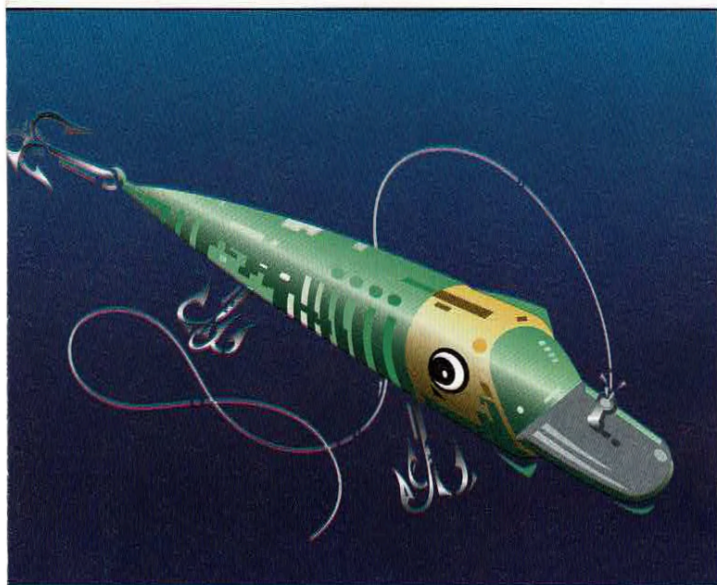
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On the Hook

Evangelist Murdy Getty was heading north by plane into the interior of British Columbia. It was the dead of winter. Everything was frozen solid. Sitting beside him, unsuspecting, was a fellow traveler who engaged brother Getty in friendly conversation. It went something like this:

“What are you headed north for?”

“Going fishing.”

“Fishing?! At this time of year?”

“Oh, yes. Good fishing this time of year.”

“What do you fish for?”

“Dead ones.”

“Did you say...dead ones?”

“Well, of course they’re alive when I catch them,” explained the evangelist. The traveler was hooked. He asked what on earth Mr. Getty was talking about. And Mister Getty was happy to oblige. Another sinner received the good news of God.

What a variety of lures to use in fishing for souls! Of course, some work better than others. “He that winneth souls (and catches fish) is wise” (Prov. 11:30).