

NOVEMBER 1994

# UPLOOK



**MENNO SIMONS**

## **A Meeting or a Service?**





## A MEETING OR A SERVICE?

**I** WAS TRAVELING WEST for a gospel outreach with a group of young men. Enroute, I stopped by to see an old family friend who, for whatever reasons, had become jaded with his heritage in New Testament style assemblies.

Somewhere in the conversation, he asked me where I was heading. I told him I was going to have some meetings in North Dakota.

"Meetings!" he responded, with a slight edge to his voice. "There's a typical Brethrenism."

I was taken aback. What heresy had I imbibed as a child and now had blurted out in the presence of this renowned Bible teacher? A heresy so grievous that it had a name! A Brethrenism, of all things.

"Meetings?" I queried, half afraid now to speak the word aloud.

"Yes," he answered, "anyone else would say 'services.'"

"Ah!" I was beginning to understand the enormity of my heterodoxy. That's what it was. The crime was heterodoxy—a studied attempt to be different. I confess I found it half amusing that this brother would object to such a word usage. After all, he seemed to delight in heterodoxy. But I suppose you don't want to be different in something so unpopular as this!

It's like the head-covering issue. "No one else wears head-coverings," they say. As if our purpose is to fly in the face of convention, to irritate the church at large; as if we were *avant garde* trail blazers, attempting vainly to be trend setters. The issue would be seen more clearly if they added the word, "anymore" to their sentence: "No one else wears head-coverings *anymore*."

The fact is, a generation ago you could hardly find an uncovered woman in any church service anywhere. We didn't step forward with this; everyone else stepped back.

As far as the term "meeting" goes, the concept is hardly a new one to describe certain kinds of gatherings. Of course secular society feels quite comfortable with the term: board meetings (not 'services'), sales meetings (not 'services'), PTA meetings (not 'services'), etc. I'm not trying to be silly. The point is this: meetings and services are gatherings which are very

entirely different in their intent.

Board members, sales staffs, and PTA groups do not come together to be served; they are coming together to serve. To meet connotes bringing together available resources to help one another in the accomplishment of mutually desired ends.

The question then arises: When the church comes together, is it to be a service or a meeting?

The early church evidently thought it was for meeting. Is this not the principle of life in the body? Every member in the body is designed to give away. The heart does not pump blood for the heart, but for the whole body. The lungs do not breathe for the lungs, nor does the pancreas produce insulin for itself. Every part of the body is designed to give. As each member of His Body functions as healthy organs act, the whole body grows "up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, *according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love*" (Eph. 4:15-16). Does any part do without? No. The way to get is to give, just as surely as the way to live is to die (Jn. 12:24-25), and the way up is to go down (Mt. 20:26-28). The church is not a service center but a meeting place of redeemed and gifted believers who follow the example of their Lord in coming not to be served, but to serve (Mt. 20:28).

I was standing with another Christian near the entrance to an auditorium where a citywide Bible conference was soon to begin. Suddenly, through the doorway burst a young man, disheveled and out of breath. He looked like he had dressed on the way there.

"When does the service start?" he asked.

"Just as soon as the meeting is over," came the answer from my companion.

Yes, that *is* the answer. The answer to ho-hum, humdrum, halfhearted gatherings of the church. We come together, not to be served, but to serve. "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Let's not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as some are doing today. Let's get serious about our meetings.

And *then* let the service begin.

**U**



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## HEADCOVERING—A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

**I**N EVERY AGE of church history, questions have arisen which have grown into issues of great concern. The role of the woman is one such issue. Today, as in the past, there is scarcely a local church, or church leader, who has not discussed the place and service of women in the church. The sheer frequency with which the woman is mentioned in Scripture provides evidence for the significance of her role and importance. Moreover, the place of the headcovering has occupied an important place in this debate. Leaders in the church, both past and present, have argued for its continued use. Furthermore, in the New Testament the apostle Paul sought to win the obedience of women because of the high place they occupy in relation to angels (1 Cor. 11:10).

The principle of biblical headship and the teaching of the covering for a woman are closely intertwined. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, Paul teaches that headship is ordered: God-Christ-man-woman (see 1 Cor. 11:3). The most accepted meaning for the term "headship" is to have authority over. In context, Paul is speaking of relationships between the man and the woman and between Christ and the church. The Bible teaches that the headcovering is a symbol of a woman's obedience to God's purpose and design in creation and the church. To disregard this is an affront to the biblical order God has designed for His "Bride," the church. This point has not been missed by church leaders through the centuries.

One of the great leaders of the early church was Ter-

tullian. He was born in Carthage, North Africa, the son of a Roman army officer. Although trained as a lawyer,

he was a leading figure in the church between 195 and 220 AD, and his writings served as a rudder to steer the church through the theological tempests of that day. His writings in opposition to the Arian controversy (which denied the deity of Christ) and on the role of the woman in the church are considered his finest works. Tertullian believed that the covering for women was not bound by culture or time, but that it was a timeless biblical principle. Writing about 160 years after Paul's 1 Corinthians letter, he states, "For throughout Greece, and in certain of its barbaric provinces, the majority of churches keep their women covered. So let no one ascribe this custom merely to the Gentile customs of the Greeks and barbarians. The Corinthians themselves understood him (the Apostle Paul) to speak in this manner. For to this very day the Corinthians veil their virgins. So, on both sides of the matter, the apostle has written with sufficient clarity, in fact he says quite succinctly, 'every woman.' What does 'every' mean if it doesn't mean every class, every order, every condition, and every age."<sup>1</sup> It is notable that Paul never appeals to the customs of the day in his arguments for the use of headcoverings. The practice of headcoverings as described in 1 Corinthians 11 was

not a specific Greek, Asian, or Roman custom. The failure to wear a headcovering would not have caused a scandal among the local population. Paul's appeal to

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nature, creation, and angels indicates that the veiling was the most appropriate expression of headship in the church in every age.

A contemporary of Tertullian was Titus Flavius Clement, born in Athens of parents who were Roman citizens. Clement later settled in Alexandria, Egypt. Soon after his conversion he became an able teacher of the Scriptures, and in time succeeded Pantaenus as the principal of an early Bible school. In the prime of his life (189-231 AD) he was considered to be one of the early church's leading theologians. Clement's writings covered a broad range of biblical themes; one was the role of the woman in the church.

Clement saw a spiritual connection between devotion to Christ and a woman's wearing of a veil. In his book, "The Instructor," Clement writes, "Women and men are to go to the assembly decently attired, possessing unfeigned love, pure in body, pure in heart, fit to pray to God. Let the women observe further. Let her be entirely covered, unless she be at home. And she will never fall, who unites devotion and modesty with her veil. For this is the wish of the Word, since it is becoming for her to pray veiled."<sup>2</sup>

Nearly two hundred years later, one of the most important theologians in the history of the church appeared, Augustine (354-430), the great spiritual leader from the city of Hippo, North Africa. Augustine's doctrinal authority helped shepherd the church flock in Africa as never before. His impact on his generation and the generations to follow would be immeasurable. Martin Luther once remarked that his study of the writings of Augustine was a decisive factor in gaining his reformation insight. Augustine wrote extensively, penning over 97 books, not including his sermons and letters. His two most well-known

works were his *Confessions* and the *City of God*. In writing to his friend, Possidius, an elder in a local church, he details the relationship of spiritual headship in the home and spiritual headship in the church: "Those who belong to this world have also to consider

how they may please their wives if they be husbands, their husbands if they be wives, with this limitation, that it is not becoming for women to uncover their hair, since the apostle commands women to keep their heads covered."<sup>3</sup>

John Wesley (1703-1791) will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the greatest evangelists of all time. The prince of Bible expositors, Dr. Alexander Maclaren, once commented as he stood before a portrait of John Wesley, "Now, I have seen the man who moved England."<sup>4</sup> The founder of Methodism was also a writer, evangelist, and missionary. His tireless efforts had a profound and lasting effect on the church. His teaching on the role of the woman in the church was much different than many others who had come before him. One great area of difference was that John Wesley encouraged women not only to become involved in the ministry of the church, but also to become preachers of the gospel. He thought deeply and wrote extensively about the role of the woman in the church. Although women were allowed to preach in the Methodist ministry, the veil covering a woman's head was required as a sign of her headship to Christ. Concerning the theological significance of the veil, Wesley wrote, "For a man indeed ought not to veil his head because he is the image

and glory of God in the dominion he bears over the creation, representing the supreme dominion of God, which is his glory. But the woman is a matter of glory

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to the man, who has a becoming dominion over her. Therefore she ought not to appear except with her head veiled as a tacit acknowledgement of it."<sup>5</sup>

The practice of women covering themselves with a veil has been an accepted spiritual exercise throughout the history of the church. Scholars, teachers, and leaders from the very earliest day down to the present have explained with passion and precision its biblical relevance and spiritual significance. The scope of this article does not allow us to go into the writings of other great leaders and their views concerning the head covering. Church leaders and scholars, such as John Calvin, Martin Luther, Menno Simons, Ulrich Zwingli, John Knox and others, all have written persuasively on the biblical practice of the veiling of women.

The following comment by Matthew Henry (1662-1714), summarizes well the accepted practice of churches in almost every age. His words also express the weight and gravity that should be rightly attached to the headcovering, for its use demonstrates the Headship of Christ in the Church. He writes, "It was the common usage of the churches for women to appear in public assemblies, and join in public worship veiled; and it was manifestly decent that they should do so. Those must be very contentious indeed who would quarrel with this or lay it aside."<sup>6</sup>

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul exhorts the Corinthian church to adhere to a custom he had taught them: Women were to veil themselves in the public assembly of believers. This was a uniquely Christian custom observed out of respect for the principle of headship. The reasons Paul gives for this custom are

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cross-cultural and eternal. The headship principle is so fundamental, so central to the functioning of the New Testament church that it must be expressed symbolically in the church's public gatherings by the use of headcoverings. The biblical teaching of the New Testament regarding the woman's role is difficult to understand and accept amid the current cultural values and trends in our society. The God of the Bible is not interested in oppressing women. On the contrary, women are truly liberated, and thereby truly fulfilled, when they willingly place themselves into the pattern of God's unique design. "Ascribe ye greatness unto our God...His work is perfect; for all His ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He" (Deut. 32:3-4).

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### ENDNOTES:

1. Tertullian, *On the Veiling of Virgins*, translated by David W. Bercot, Scroll Publishing, Tyler, TX: 1991, p. 138.
2. Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, Book 3, T & T Clark, Edinburgh Scotland: 1989, p. 290.
3. Augustine, *To Possidius, the Elder*, Letters of Augustine, #238, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, Scotland: 1989, p. 588.
4. A. Skevington Wood, *The Burning Heart*, Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN: 1978, p. 25.
5. John Wesley, *Notes on the Bible*, Francis Asbury Press, Grand Rapids, MI: 1987, p. 517.
6. Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 6, Hendrikson Publishers, Peabody, Mass.: 1991, p. 453.

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## FRONT LINES

### SNOMASS 95

The young people in Grand Rapids, MI will be hosting a Young People's Conference January 20-22, 1995, at Little Pine Island Retreat Center. J. B. Nicholson (MI) is the invited speaker for the main meetings along with John Bjorlie (MI) and several others who will lead small group seminars. Accommodations and meals will be provided at a cost of \$35.00 per person. The theme for the conference, taken from Philippians 1:10, will be *The Pursuit of Excellence*. The retreat capacity is 120 persons. Deadline for registration is December 30. For registration information, contact:

Caroline Cairns or Scott Tucker  
c/o Gospel Folio Press  
(616) 456-9166

### PARKING UNDER THE PALMS

Park of the Palms (Keystone Heights, FL) has recently announced their 1994 Holiday schedule, and 1995 Winter Conference schedule. Some of the speakers who will be attending are Liddon Sheridan (AL), Alan Parks (MD), James Naismith (ON), David Adams (ON), and Dan Smith (IA). For reservations or a brochure, contact:

Park of the Palms  
706 Palms Circle  
Keystone Heights, FL 32656  
(904) 473-4926

### CONGRESS RETREAT

Bob Gessner and Keith Keyser will be speaking at the Congress Retreat at Greenwood Hills, Fayetteville, PA the weekend of January 6-8, 1995. Singles over the age of 16 are invited to attend the retreat. The cost of \$65.00 covers accommodations for two nights and five meals. To register, send your name, address, telephone number, date of birth, and a \$25.00 deposit to the following address:

Greenwood Hills  
Congress Retreat  
2721 Oberlin Dr  
York, PA 17404

### A PROPHETIC ENCOUNTER

The saints at the Quilchena Chapel (Vancouver, BC) will be hosting a Prophecy Conference with Rob Lindsted (KS) on January 20-22, 1995. For more information:

Norman Chandler  
(604) 271-1083

### FROM THE HEIGHTS

An Emmaus Seminar is scheduled for January 26-29, 1995 at Park of the Palms (Keystone Heights, FL). Speaker expected is David Glock. Special lodging rates are available. For more information:

Park of the Palms  
(904) 473-4926

### TIRED OF FROST?

Frostproof Bible Chapel (Frostproof, FL) will be hosting a Bible Conference February 18-20, 1995. The speaker expected is James Naismith (ON). The chapel is located on the grounds of Shepherd Retirement Community on Lake Reedy in Central Florida. For more information, contact:

Frostproof Bible Chapel  
185 Marion Place  
Frostproof, FL 33843  
(813) 635-5414

### LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Prospect Bible Chapel (Hartford, CT) will once again host the Northeast Leadership Conference on March 21, 1995. Elders, commend workers, and young men are encouraged to attend. To register:

Don Dunkerton  
112 Cranford Avenue  
Cranford, NJ 07016  
(908) 272-6131

### DALLAS AREA BIBLE CONFERENCE

Wheatland Bible Chapel (Duncanville, TX) will once again be the host for the Annual Spring Conference April 7-9, 1995. J. Boyd Nicholson (ON) and Larry Batts (NC) will be the speakers. Contact:

Bob Muldoon  
(214) 270-5646

### SPRING IN THE COUNTRY

*The Person of Christ* will be the topic for the Spring Bible Conference at Countryside Bible Chapel (Winnebago, IL). The conference will be held April 14-16, 1995, with Jim McKendrick (MI) the expected speaker. Limited accommodations are available. Contact:

Jerre Wright  
(815) 335-7353

### SPRINGING AGAIN

The Palos Hills Christian Assembly (Palos Hills, IL) announces



their Annual Spring Conference, April 28-30. Speakers expected are J. Boyd Nicholson (ON), Neil Dougal (MA), and Jim McKendrick (MI). For further information, contact:

Robert Fiebig  
7661 Sequoia Drive  
Palos Heights, IL 60463  
(708) 448-2552

### WHO IS SUFFICIENT?

The third annual Ontario Workers' and Elders' Conference is scheduled for May 9-11, 1995. Markham Bible Chapel (Markham, ON) will be hosting the conference. Registration will begin on the evening of May 8th. Boyd Nicholson (ON) and David Adams (ON) will be the speakers. This year's theme will be *Christ—All Sufficient*. Contact:

Ontario Workers' &  
Elders' Conference  
P.O. Box 26044, RPO King St.  
Oshawa, ON L1H 8R4

### CAMPING IN GHANA

In the February issue of *Uplink*, we informed the saints of the travel plans of John and Mary Lou Phelan who were travelling to Ghana, West Africa in August.

At the invitation of a missionary friend and the national director of the Child Evangelism Fellowship of Ghana, the Phelans worked with national workers and interested individuals in training sessions on Christian camping. Some 200 people attended the week-long sessions, and over 100 children attended daily meetings the week following the seminars. The teaching was well received and the response to the gospel was overwhelming. Not only did many of the children in camp

profess to receive Christ, but a nearby fishing village also responded to the "good news."

Keep praying for the work begun in Ghana, and pray for the Phelans. Mary Lou underwent major surgery on September 19, on her return to the States. Praise the Lord, the operation was successful and she is recuperating nicely. As a precautionary measure she began radiation treatment October 17.

### WITH THE LORD

Miss Irene Gallagher passed into the presence of her Lord on October 19, 1994, in Huntington Beach, CA. She was saved and baptized in her early teens. Commended by Avenue 54 Bible Chapel, she spent 55 years working among the Spanish speaking people of Arizona, East Los Angeles, and Highland Park, CA. Miss Gallagher held many women's and children's classes, did camp work, social work, and conducted telephone and personal visitation in the area. She was also instrumental in founding the Spanish Assembly at Avenue 54 Bible Chapel. Her work here being completed, God called her home at the age of 77 to receive His commendation for a life lived for Him who died and rose again. She will be missed.

John R. Block was called home to be with the Saviour he loved so well, on October 24, 1994 at the age of 85. John was born in Alexandria, Minnesota in 1909 and was raised in a Christian home. As a young man he continued to put Christ off, preferring the fun offered by the world rather than peace with God.

A young Christian woman, Luella Trefethren, along with John's family, continued to share the

gospel with him. Constantly running from the Lord, one day the Lord pinned John under a car he happened to be working on. Upon gaining consciousness John thanked the Lord for giving him one last opportunity to trust Him as Saviour—and John took it! He recovered from his injuries and in 1933 he and Luella were married. Besides his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, John has impacted many lives spiritually. John's life, more than anything, exemplifies what the Lord can do with a man who's willing to obey even when it's not easy or convenient. He will be missed.

On August 25, 1932, Miss Gussie Smith was saved in some tent meetings conducted by Owen Hoffman. Four years later, the two were married on March 12, 1936.

On November 5, 1994—just a few hours before her eighty-fourth



birthday—she went home to be with the Lord. It was a glorious and blessed release as she had suffered untold mental and physical anguish for more than fourteen years. Until her illness, she devoted her life to



others, and her memorial was a testimony to that fact.

Besides her husband, Owen, Mrs. Hoffman is survived by her son Paul Thomas and her daughter Sonia as well as a brother and a sister and four grandchildren.

Brother John Bramhall presented a clear gospel message at the service.

### ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Mark Kolchin is planning an eleven-day tour through the Atlantic Provinces of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia from June 21-July 1, 1995. The trip is designed as a Christian alternative to secular tour groups, and will take you to many of the picturesque sights in the region. Each day will include a time of singing and a devotional from God's Word. For a daily itinerary, and more information, contact:

Mark Kolchin  
P.O. Box 305  
Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734  
(609) 693-9252

### DON'T BE CONFUSED

Grace Bible Chapel (Niceville, FL), a group of believers meeting in the Name of the Lord Jesus. It has come to our attention that they have been confused with Forest Lake Bible Church (Niceville, FL). It is their desire that the Lord's people be informed that they are not affiliated with them. If you are traveling this winter to the Florida Panhandle, they would be happy to have fellowship with you. More information is available. Contact:

Dr. Paul A. Carmean  
1305 23rd Street  
Niceville, FL 32578  
(904) 678-8897

### HITTING THE STREETS

Last July 23, students from all over the North American continent completed the Third Annual Basic Training Seminar conducted by the Ezekiel Project. The seminar involved 32 hours of instruction and workshops along with two days of practical ministry in the open air on the streets of New York City. Fifty-one meetings were conducted with approximately 750 in attendance. Thirty-two people made professions of faith.

If you would like to attend a seminar, the dates for 1995 are:

Basic Training Seminar  
July 24-28, 1995

or

Reaching Children Seminar  
July 31-August 4, 1995

For more information, contact:

The Ezekiel Project, Inc.  
P.O. Box 463123  
Mt. Clemens, MI 48046-3123

### DON'T MISS THESE NEW BOOKS

Gospel Folio Press has recently published two new books by brother John Bramhall. Entitled *I Am My Beloved's* and *My Beloved Is Mine*, they are collections of the best of his writings since he began ministering the Word full-time in 1934. The books taste like heaven and will redirect your focus to the God who has invited us to share His Home with Him.

The books are 128 pages each and include scripture indexes. Volume One is subdivided into three parts: Faith at Work, The Blessed Hope, and Love's Sweet Secret. Volume Two includes short devotionals on: The Grandeur of God, The Son of God's Love, and The Lord the Spirit. The books are


available individually for \$7.95 or the set for \$13.95 (all US dollars). You can order them by calling 1-800-952-2382.

Gospel Folio has also reprinted H. A. Ironside's *Unless You Repent* (\$8.95) and reissued Frances Ridley Havergal's *Opened Treasures* (compiled by William J. Pell) for the special price of \$5.95 US (regular price is \$8.95).

### GET THE PICTURE?

From time to time, *Uplook* includes photographs of those who contribute articles and are speakers at many of the conferences throughout North America. As you can see by the accompanying photo, some



pictures in our files are somewhat outdated! If you are a commended worker or missionary, we would appreciate you sending us your photograph. Black and white photos are preferred, however, color will be accepted. You may send them to the address listed on page 3 in  care of the Managing Editor.



## ESTONIAN UPDATE

**Eesti Vabariik (the Republic of Estonia) has a population exceeding 1.5 million. Most are in darkness. But now that the country has been released from Soviet bondage, a few shafts of light are breaking through.**

It is now over a year since the first Emmaus Course, *The Gospel of John*, was printed in the Estonian language.

Many of the believers, who have read the course, have encouraged us to continue with the translation work. One of the sisters made a comment to me, saying, "My soul was uplifted as I read the course. It is a good Bible course!" Most of the 7,000 courses (first shipment) have been distributed. It is an indication that the Lord has been behind this work.

However, where the Lord is working the enemy is not sleeping. In the March 1994 *Missions* magazine, we reported that a translation center was

courses would be available. We are now looking to the Lord for direction as to what our next steps should be. We are also in the process of looking for a reliable translator or translators. Our dear friends, the Walstroms, who are commended to the work of the Lord in Estonia, have been a tremendous help to us. They have done much of the "leg-work." We thank God for them. Doyle is presently pursuing some other avenues to get the translation work going again. We have also communicated with the Myrtlefield Trust as they have translated Dr. Gooding's book, *How to Teach the Tabernacle*, into Estonian.

As our work in Estonia is part of our Emmaus Correspondence work in Central Africa, I should also mention that in sixteen countries of West Central Africa, the work is growing and its fruitfulness is revealed to us from the many letters that we receive. There are some 200,000 students enrolled in various courses throughout these countries. Presently we have twenty-one courses available in the French language. Time and again letters tell us how someone has found the Saviour. Or because of the Bible course, they were set on the right road.

Please pray with us that the Lord will allow us to continue with the work in Estonia. Remember also in your prayers the many students in Africa who are eager to learn the Word of God.

In the will of the Lord, I hope to make a trip to Estonia next spring. Please pray that the Lord will guide our footsteps, and that a proper translator will be found.

**U**



**An earlier article on Estonia by brother Promm (Richmond, BC) appeared in the September 1993 issue of UPLOOK**

established and we looked forward to many of the Emmaus courses being translated into the Estonian language. This was not to be, at least at that time. This summer we ran into some problems with the translators, and were forced to stop any further work with them. Since that time, I have received two letters from Estonia which indicated that it would be sad if no more



## WHAT'S GOING ON?

### A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

The former Chief Rabbi of Britain and the Commonwealth, Rabbi Jacobovits, has commented on Israel's peace moves as follows:

"The prospects of eventual peace should prompt new visions on fulfilling the Jewish destiny and restoring the Jewish national purpose. So long as Israel had to devote its resources to fighting for physical survival, the spiritual test of seeking to become a light unto the nations could not begin.

"Hopefully, this is the time to nurture at least the yearning for a realization of this prophetic goal. Our religious leadership ought to inspire a renewed quest for spiritual and moral pioneering, fulfilling the promise to Abraham—'through you shall be blessed all the families of the earth.'" —*Spotlight on Israel*

### CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

Perhaps five more Sudanese Christians were crucified since July. The Islamic government has forced 100,000 Christian refugees out of Khartoum and into makeshift camps since the start of the year.

### ON A RAMPAGE

In an effort to undercut the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, India's government has made what some are calling a potentially dangerous alliance with four august Hindu sages. The administration of Prime Minister Rao has talked the four into backing a plan to build a temple to the warrior god Ram on the site of a mosque demolished by



Hindu mobs nearly two years ago. The resulting sectarian violence killed hundreds of people.

With opposition to the gospel like this, we need to remember to pray for those engaged in the work of the Lord in India.

### TIGHTENING THE VISE

Half a year after China's government passed laws regulating all religious activities inside the country, house church leaders are reporting increasing restrictions. In many areas, house church Christians are required to register with the authorities, and are ordered to stop their evangelistic activities.

### UPDATE ON ZAMBIA

The following excerpt, written by David Croudace, is taken from the November issue of *Echoes Missionary Magazine*:

"Zambia is blessed with over 100 assembly missionaries from overseas. Approximately two-thirds of these are on rural mission stations. On many stations, the majori-

ty of workers form part of the medical teams needed to maintain the hospitals and clinics. Others are involved in the press; some teach at the school for missionaries' children; others run orphanages and so on.

"There has been a great resurgence of tribal culture and witchcraft. Not all tribal culture is evil, but some cultural practices, which were once rejected by those who were first saved out of this system, seem to be creeping back into the church in some places. Witchcraft is now practiced more openly. False accusations by diviners have resulted in believers being beaten and even stoned to death.

"Many smaller assemblies have no reliable teachers of the Word, with the result that doctrinal error has started appearing here and there. In others, some who are wanting power have tried to introduce a hierarchy. These, coupled with the many new testimonies being started which are crying out for help, mean that the lack of Bible



## WHAT'S GOING ON?

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teachers is a primary concern." Please pray as the Lord's servants deal with difficult situations in Africa—and Zambia specifically. Paul and Lois Logan, with their daughter, Martha, left for Zambia in August and would appreciate your prayers as well.

### NOTES FROM ZAIRE

In a recent letter from Mr. William Deans, he reported that the Annual Intra-assembly Conference in Zaire, convened September 2-4, was attended by over three hundred delegates from approximately 150 assemblies. It was a time of refreshing ministry of the Word, prayer, hearty singing, and a sense of direction from the Spirit.

Dena Speering has arrived in Zaire and is settling in along side the MacDowells and Pecks. Pearl Winterburn continues at Tchabi Station with plenty of difficulties but with much blessing from the Lord.

It is great cause for rejoicing that Mission Aviation Fellowship and Africa Inland Mission planes now have permission from the Zaire Government to fly back and forth across the Zaire border.

The big question that remains in the hearts of the workers in Zaire is where is the offset printer who will purchase modern equipment and teach Christian nationals at the Nyankunde printing plant to operate it? They request our prayer for this concern.

### PRAY FOR THE PRESIDENT

The new president of Columbia has been in office over one hundred days now. He said that he is ready to talk to the guerrillas about peace. New Tribes missionaries have had the opportunity to get their message

to nearly all his ministers and to the president through a mutual friend. They have promised that the fifty to sixty hostages (including NTM missionaries) will be mentioned as part of the negotiations.

### IT'S A RAT RACE OUT THERE

An epidemic of plague has broken out in Surat, India and produced a nationwide scare. Everywhere, that is, except in Deshnok, Rajasthan where a 14th century temple to Karni Mata stands. It has been estimated that over 100,000 rats call the temple home where the priests make sure they are well-fed and protected. People throughout India have reportedly been killing thousands of rats, but not here. The rats of the Temple Karni Mata lead a somewhat divine existence compared to their counterparts on the streets of India. Local legend has it that the rats are reincarnations of the descendants of the Karni Mata and that when the rodents die, they will be reborn as humans. One temple official was reported as saying, "When a family member dies, he becomes a rat. And when the rat dies, he again becomes a member of the family." The temple official and 500 families in the region believe that they are descendants of Karni Mata. If they really believed in this reincarnation, you would think they would help these rats die so that family members could return.

### ENCOURAGING TO REBEL

Already in 250 million homes, MTV (the cable music station) plans to start running in Hindi and English in India and in Mandarin, China. By year's end, MTV Asia will be broadcasting into 18 countries in Asia. This new expansion

will put MTV in more than 500 million homes. MTV's owner, Summer Redstone, says, "Kids on the streets of Tokyo have more in common with the kids on the streets in London than they do with their parents. We're catching these kids at a stage in life when all kids are essentially the same, when they virtually *have* to rebel from their parents."

### 1994? UPDATE

The Christian Research Institute published an article reporting on Harold Camping's date setting book, *1994?*. Here are excerpts:

"California based Family Radio is in danger of self-destructing. The problem centers on Harold Camping—Family Radio's president and the moderator of its popular "Open Forum" call-in radio program—and on his explosively controversial 562-page book, *1994?*. Camping feels that the saints still have time to 'get right with God' and that once September 6 arrives, no one will be able to be saved for the end has come (this was written in 1993).

"From an appearance on CNN's "Larry King Live" to interviews with secular journalists, Camping has continued to defend his position. 'I'm an engineer, I'm methodical. And when I began to study the Bible over 30 years ago, I started seeing things others had missed. I discovered that God had a timeline ...and with precise calculation the end of the world could accurately be determined.' Obviously, in 30 years of Bible study, he missed Mark 13:32-33. "But of that day and that hour knoweth *no man*, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." **U**



## FOUR GREAT PRINCIPLES OF FELLOWSHIP

**T**he Spirit's commentary on the early Church reads, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). These are the four great principles of fellowship in "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

Now in God's dwelling place, the sanctuary which He required to be made for Himself to dwell in, there were four vessels, the vessels in the tabernacle, and these four correspond with those four particulars mentioned in the Acts. I believe that the Spirit of God has given us in this passage in Acts as His divine explanation of these four vessels in the sanctuary.

### THE APOSTLES' DOCTRINE

The tabernacle stood facing east, west, north, and south. On the west stood the golden lampstand, which I believe is God's emblematic representation of ministry, having Christ for its center, source, and subject, in the power of the Holy Ghost. The apostles' doctrine is God's truth about His own Christ, revealed to us by the Spirit, through the apostles of our Lord and Saviour.

### FELLOWSHIP

"Truly," says the Apostle John, "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3), and, he said, we write these things unto you "that ye also may have fellowship with us." In the holiest of all, the Holy of holies, stood the "ark of the covenant;" and there in the cloud above the mercy seat and between the two cherubim God dwelt. From there He spoke; so that the Holy of holies became the oracle or speaking-place of God, from God and to God. The genuine

fellowship of saints must have its center "within the veil." It must begin with God in Christ, and there must be communion by the Holy Spirit with God inside the veil before there can be real fellowship with saints outside.

### BREAKING OF BREAD

Next comes "the breaking of bread." On the north side—the place of judgment—stood the table of showbread, with its golden crown and its border—that is, a golden crown to the border. Upon it stood the showbread. "Breaking of bread" is here typified, and it was on the north side, the place of judgment and discipline. For the table of God must be guarded, and there is beauty and glory in the guarding. Here we feed upon that which satisfies the heart of God Himself.

### PRAYERS

Lastly, in the center, over against the ark of the covenant, but outside the veil, stood the golden altar of incense. "Let my prayers," says David, "be set forth before Thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Ps. 141:2).

Thus we have the golden candlestick, the ark of the covenant, the table of showbread, and the golden altar of incense. These four vessels correspond, I believe, to the four particulars of fellowship mentioned in Acts 2:42, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Let none of these be forgotten by us, and may God grant that in every respect we may learn to stand steadfastly as those who are "in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." **U**





## TOGETHER

**B**ehold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. *Psalm 133:1-3*

*Come, share the road with me, my own,  
Through good and evil weather;  
Two better speed than one alone,  
So let us go together.*

*Come, share the road with me, my own,  
And where the black clouds gather  
I'll share the load with thee, my son,  
And we'll press on together.*

*So make we all one company,  
Love's golden cord our tether,  
And come what may, we'll climb the way  
Together—aye, together.*

—John Oxenham

*Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible  
comfort of feeling safe with a per-  
son; having neither to weigh  
thoughts nor measure words, but  
to pour them all out, just as they  
are, chaff and grain together,  
knowing that a faithful hand will  
take and sift them, keep what is  
worth keeping, and then, with the  
breath of kindness, blow the rest  
away.*

—George Eliot

*'Mid scenes of confusion and creature complaints,  
How sweet to the soul is communion with saints;  
To find at the banquet of mercy there's room,  
To feel in communion a foretaste of Home.* —D. Denham

It was a Sunday in occupied Kiangsu, China. The morning gathering proceeded smoothly until a stir in the rear caused a turning of heads. Women uttered suppressed cries of fear, clutching their children to them. Men half rose from their seats.

A Japanese soldier stalked up the aisle. He reached the front of the room, and in the silence which followed, every ear awaited the expected edict, declaration or warrant.

In the stillness, the enemy soldier pulled his hand from his pocket and laid an offering on the table. All could hear the clink of a coin on the collection plate. He picked up a hymn book, turned the pages and pointed out to the organist a number which he evidently desired to join with the Chinese congregation in singing.

It was the Chinese translation of "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love." —*Christian World Facts*

*Is your cruse of comfort failing?  
Rise and share it with another,  
And through all the years of famine  
It shall serve thee and thy brother.*

*Love divine will fill thy storehouse  
Or thy handful still renew;  
Scanty fare for one will often  
Make a royal feast for two.*

*For the heart grows rich in giving—  
All its wealth is living gain;  
Seeds which mildew in the garner  
Scattered fill with gold the plain.*

*Is thy burden hard and heavy?  
Do thy steps drag wearily?  
Help to bear thy brother's burden;  
God will bear both it and thee.*

*Numb and weary on the mountains,  
Wouldst thou sleep amidst the snow?  
Chafe that frozen form beside thee,  
And together both shall glow.*

*Art thou stricken in life's battle?  
Many wounded round thee moan:  
Lavish on their wounds thy balsam,  
And that balm shall heal thine own.*

*Is thy heart a well, left empty?  
None but God the void can fill.  
Nothing but the ceaseless Fountain  
Can its ceaseless longings fill.*

*Is the heart a living power?  
Self-entwined its strength sinks low?  
It can only live in loving,  
And by serving love will grow.*

But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.

1 John 1:7



## MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER

**W**HEN JOHN WRITES his first letter, five times over he mentions being "born of God." Immediately it would be understood, not only that anyone who has been born of God possesses new life, but also that there is a new relationship. We have a relationship with God.

This relationship is so wonderfully expressed by Paul in ten of his letters: "God our Father." Knowing this relationship, it is not strange to find that John twice in his first letter speaks of "my little children." This expression reveals to us a relationship that we have been brought into with one another, that of a family relationship. Because of this new relationship into which God has brought us, we not only have privileges, but responsibilities as well.

One of those responsibilities is our relationship with one another. That which binds believers together positionally should be manifested practically. We cannot read our Bible without noticing that there is a collective relationship between believers. This collective relationship is expressed by the word "fellowship."

We use the word "fellowship" often in our conversation, yet I believe, in most cases, we are not aware of what is involved, or what the biblical meaning of the word "fellowship" includes.

Look at what the Bible has to say about "fellowship." The Greek word *koinonia* is found 18 times in the New Testament. The first time the word occurs is in Acts 2:42. This is not the first occurrence of the English word "fellowship," in the KJV. We find the word in Leviticus 6:2 and Psalm 94:20, but under two different Hebrew words.

In Leviticus 6:2, it is the Hebrew word *tesuwmeth* meaning "pledge, security, deposit," and in Psalm 94:20, the Hebrew word is *chabar*, meaning, "to unite, join, bind together, be coupled, or be in league." This word is found 21 times in the Old Testament, whereas the former is only found once.

Let us now look at the Greek word *koinonia* and see if we find any relationship with the Hebrew word. The English meaning of the word *koinonia* carries this family of ideas: "fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation."

In the New Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon*, we find the following explanation of the word *koinonia*:

1) The share which one has in anything, participation; the thing in which he shares.

2) fellowship, intimacy; used of the intimate bond of fellowship which unites Christians.

3) a benefaction jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution, as exhibiting an embodiment and proof of fellowship.

From both the two Hebrew words and the Greek word, we learn that there is a relationship of meaning between these three words.

Let us now look at the occasion where the first occurrence of the word "fellowship" (*koinonia*) is found. It is interesting that the first occurrence is found in relationship with the first assembly in Jerusalem. Peter had preached on that memorable day, the day of Pentecost.

The words that fell from his lips came with piercing power and a cry rang out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Without hesitation, there came an answer, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

As we follow the description that the Spirit of God has left us from that day, we read, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added [unto them] about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). What a glorious scene! Has this ever been repeated? An assembly of 3,000 souls born in one day in one place? It is in this connection that we find the following words in Acts 2:42, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

**We learn from  
the first occurrence  
that fellowship  
is associated with "the  
apostles' doctrine."**



## MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER

We learn from the first occurrence that fellowship is associated with "apostles' doctrine" (teaching). We are reminded by the prophet Amos: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Thus, the first thing that the Spirit of God would like us to learn about "fellowship" is that it is founded on the teaching of the Scripture and those in that company are in agreement with the teaching. When we say: "I fellowship with the saints at..." It means not only that I attend there, but that I am in agreement with the teaching of that assembly which is exhibited by my joint participation.

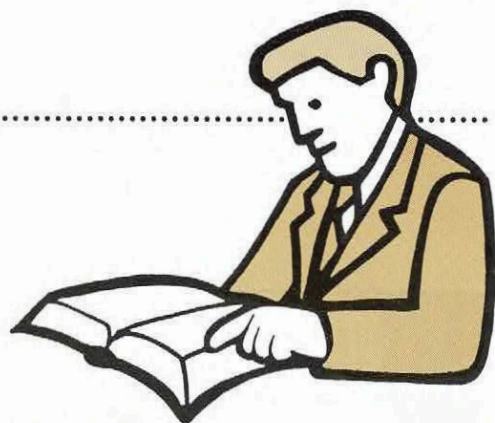
Did we note the word "and"? It is interesting that the word "fellowship" is found between "apostles' doctrine" and "breaking of bread." It seems that the Spirit of God would like us to know that the *basis* of our fellowship is "apostles' doctrine," the *purpose* and *highest expression* of our fellowship is "breaking of bread," and the *power* of our fellowship is "prayer." Upon this triangular foundation, fellowship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is founded. Is it any wonder that it is said of the early assembly, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also" (Acts 17:6)?

The next time we find the word "fellowship" is in 1 Corinthians 1:9. Now that we have some idea as to what "fellowship" is, this verse comes with its mighty power to the very heart of our being. "God [is] faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Again we are reminded of the words of Paul: "...But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20).

God has called us—we who "were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ"—to a living spiritual partnership with His Son. Here we have the call of our fellowship. Taking the words of the poet:

*That Thou couldst be a God to me,  
And be the God Thou art,  
Is darkness to my intellect,  
But sunshine to my heart.*

There are many other verses where the word "fellowship" is found, and we would urge the reader prayerfully to consider them all. We would only look at three more verses which are not translated "fellowship"



**I'm sure we have  
all heard of the  
Book of Life,  
but here is  
another book  
written by God.**

in our KJV, yet the Greek word is there.

In Romans 15:26, we read: "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain *contribution* for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." In this verse, the English word "contribution" is the Greek word *koinonia*. We believe that the translators have used a right word, for though the word is fellowship, yet in this case fellowship is expressed by contribution.

*Dig channels for the streams of love,  
Where they may broadly run,  
For love has overflowing streams  
To fill them every one.  
But if at any time you cease  
Such channels to provide,  
The very founts of love to you  
Will soon be parched and dried.  
For you must share if you would keep  
Those riches from above;  
Ceasing to share you cease to have;  
Such is the law of love.*

We may well ask at this point: Do we contribute to the place where we go to "fellowship?" In the case of the Macedonian believers, there was no question as to

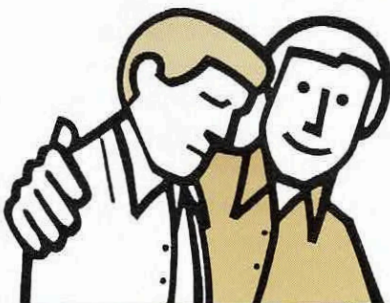


their fellowship, for they expressed it by contribution to the poor saints. Writing his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul said: "How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality" (8:2). This contribution (fellowship) came out of their deep poverty. Here again is another way that the Spirit of God describes fellowship.

In Philemon 1:6, we read: "That the *communication* of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus." Here the word is translated communication. Again, it is clear that fellowship is an active part of our relationship with other believers, not only in contribution but in communication. Paul states that the good things which were present in Philemon were communicated by him to others. How beautifully this is expressed in Malachi 3:16, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name."

I am sure all of us have heard of the Book of Life,

How it must delight  
the heart of God  
when He sees us  
enjoying that fellowship  
which cost Him  
so dearly.



but here we have another book written by God. It is the Book of Fellowship. Is there any doubt that Philemon's name is also in the Book of Fellowship.

The last passage we would like to note is in 2 Corinthians 9:13, "While by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for [your] liberal distribution unto them, and unto all." Here the word is translated "distribution," but it is the same Greek word *koinonia*. It is wonderful to see how the Spirit of God has brought these activities under the one heading of "fellowship."

Lets look at them now together and see the true meaning of the word "fellowship." In Acts 2:42, we have teaching, the *foundation* of fellowship; breaking of bread, the *purpose* of fellowship; and prayer, the *power* of our fellowship

In Romans 15:26, we have contribution, the *practical expression* of fellowship. In 1 Corinthians 1:9, we have our *calling* to fellowship. In 2 Corinthians 9:13, we have distribution, the *activity* in fellowship. In Philemon 1:6, we have communication, the *enjoyment* of our fellowship. These five areas make up our "fellowship." Now let us ask ourselves, when we speak of fellowship, are these five areas active in our lives in the local assembly with which we are associated?

*O matchless honor, all unsought,  
High privilege, surpassing thought  
That Thou shouldst call us, Lord, to be  
Linked in work-fellowship with Thee!  
To carry out Thy wondrous plan,  
To bear Thy messages to man. (H. B. Smith)*

Let us remember that when the Bible speaks of "fellowship," it does not mean a place that I attend once or twice a week. We go to the grocery store once or twice a week: does this mean that we fellowship there? Sad to say, but often that is all that it amounts to in assemblies today. In this "computer-age" world, is it possible that we have become nothing more than "numbers" to one another? Have we lost the notion that as people in a fallen world there is life to be lived and there are joys and sorrows to be shared.

Let us remember the heartfelt response of the Lord as recorded in Malachi 3:16. What a difference it will make to an assembly where this is true. And how it must delight the heart of God when He sees us enjoying that fellowship which cost Him so dearly.

**U**





# THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING

**A** FEW YEARS AGO I was introduced to an older gentleman whose demeanor and smile made me want to get to know him better. I had heard about this man, so when I was in his area for a few meetings, I made an appointment to meet with him in his home one afternoon. I came a little like the queen of Sheba—with some hard questions about how to see assemblies grow and how to overcome difficulties that crop up from time to time. And I left many hours later (almost late for the meeting I was to speak at) with the realization that I had been in the presence of not only a real man of God, but a passionate evangelist and patient shepherd.

His name was Mr. John Martin. Since that time we have shared a number of happy hours together in fellowship, a highlight of which was the two weeks I spent in their home. Prayer, Bible study, and the things of God are the atmosphere in which this home is bathed. Both Melissa (his wife) and John are quick with smiles, can see the humorous side of life, but never trivialize those events. They see in all the circumstances of life that God is in them, working out His great purposes. Both are dedicated to God first and to the work to which God has called them.

In a self-effacing way, John has penned his life story. He tells how God moved in saving souls in the Old Order Mennonite community where he lived. He recounts how he and Melissa were saved, how more than 1000 people attended when 15 believers were baptized by immersion in a nearby river.

He never turned back. But from those humble beginnings, assembly after assembly has sprung up and is going on today. How did he do it? That is the beauty of this book. There is no one method; no pre-planned marketing approach, no demographic charts and population assessments, no ethnic or cultural surveys. Let John himself tell you. "All of these assemblies referred to represent a great deal of hard work. Much visitation was done in all of these areas. The attendance at the

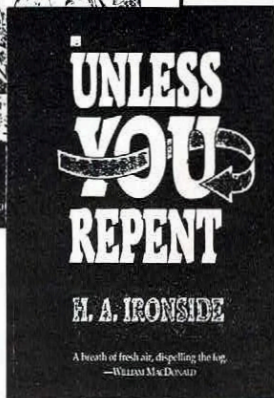
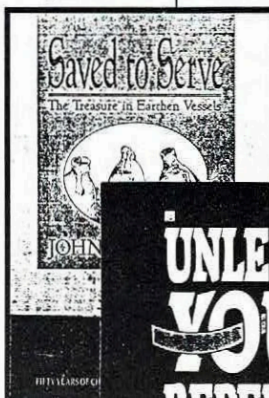
Bible studies was sometimes discouraging, but perseverance and patient, persistent plodding brought its reward." He just did it! In the open air, in rented halls, home Bible studies, door-to-door visitation, tents and camps—whatever seemed to open at the time—John went through the opened doors. And the 15 to 20 or more assemblies that he was used by God to see planted are the testimony of one who, as the title of the book says, was *Saved to Serve*. Gospel Folio Press is happy to be the publisher of this small, but significant book.

One of the things John mentions in his book is that he never watered down the gospel. He never sought to be "politically correct." In this day and age when not to offend seems to be the watchword, and entertainment the means of preaching what Paul would call "another gospel," we need to be reminded of the cardinal truths of the gospel.

One of those cardinal truths that is missing in too much of the evangel today is the doctrine of repentance. Gospel Folio Press has just released a reprint of H. A. Ironside's classic book on repentance: *Unless You Repent*, one of the most definitive statements I have seen on this subject. For anyone who would preach the gospel,

whether to a Sunday School class or to large congregations, this is must reading. The objections to the preaching of repentance are systematically taken up and refuted. This book is written with the passion of an evangelist and the clarity of an expositor. The tough passages are not dodged but carefully explained. The result is, as William MacDonald says in his foreword to the book, "a breath of fresh air, dispelling the fog."

This is the gospel that John Martin and many others have preached over the years and have seen real converts to Christ as a result. It is the only gospel that is true to the Word of God. May each of us be renewed in our dedication to both the passion and truth of the gospel. Our world needs men devoted to Christ and His Word, for God has promised to bless His Word, not our methods.



**U**



## BOWING IN WORSHIP

**J**OSEPH RELATED A DREAM he had to his brethren, "*Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf*" (Gen. 37:7). When they heard that, they immediately figured out the implication, that he would rule and they would bow to him. They responded, "Shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" or, "Shall we ever bow to you?" And they hated him yet the more!

One can note not only the disdain they had for Joseph, but that they were declaring that they would never bow down to him. And to make sure that they would never have to render homage to him, they decided to kill him (v. 18). Then they would say to one another, "And we shall see what will become of his dreams" [of us bowing to him] (v. 20).

Many years later, there is a similar scene when the Lord Jesus, of whom Joseph is a type, is rejected by His brethren, and hears them cry out in hatred for His crucifixion, "We will not have this Man to reign over us!" They, like Joseph's brethren, were determined that they would not bow to Him, and to make sure, the Jews sought to kill Jesus.

We need to review our own actions before we were saved. I know, in my own case, I ridiculed the idea of bowing to God's Word, and rejected the whole idea of salvation. I can still remember my dear old great-grandmother weeping as she tried to tell me of the new birth; I would scoff at her. The pride of man! "We will not have this Man to rule over us!"

Years later, Joseph became ruler in Egypt. As a result of the great famine, his brethren were about to perish with hunger in the land of Canaan. This forced them to come to Joseph for food. Though they did not know that it was Joseph their brother, to whom they had vowed that they would never make obeisance, they came to him in their need, and, "bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth" (Gen. 42:6).

When Joseph accused them of being spies, they answered him, "Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy ser-

vants come...We are true men" (vv. 10-11). One would be hard pressed to justify such a statement from these men who had lied to their father, telling him that animals had devoured Joseph, when actually they had soaked his coat of many colors in the blood of a goat to deceive him. True men?

The statements of these brethren are very typical of so many today. Sinners seek to justify themselves in the eyes of God by declaring their innocence, even lying about themselves. "We are true men." And, as is true of some today who are bent on perverting the truth, they include a little portion of truth with their deception, and they say, "We are one man's sons."

The brethren were locked up in jail for three days. This would give them some time to think about themselves, and indeed, their conscience did begin to work. They said one to another, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother...his blood is required of us." Sometimes, a little time alone with God will force us to acknowledge the truth about ourselves to ourselves.

In our lost condition, when the Lord put us in a position where we had to think about where we stood with Him, and how we had sinned against Him, we, like Joseph's brethren, had to admit to ourselves that we were truly guilty before Him. It was our sin that separated us from God. "Sin" and "guilty" are not words that are stressed in many places today.

The brethren were allowed to return home to Canaan, where they soon used up the food they had obtained in Egypt. They then found it necessary to make a second trip to Egypt to keep from perishing. And once again these men, who had assured themselves that they would never bow to Joseph, find themselves in his presence. What are these connivers doing? Bowing! "And bowed themselves to the earth" (Gen. 43:26). Again, in verse 28, "And they bowed down their heads and made obeisance." Again, they were coming to Joseph in their need. He alone could keep them from perishing.

In chapter 44, when the Egyptian police had caught up with them as they traveled back toward Canaan, and Joseph's cup was found among them, they really took their condition seriously, and tore their clothes. They



were brought back to the city and found themselves in the presence of Joseph again. Note verse 14, "And they fell before him (Joseph) on the ground." Now they realize their true condition; they are doomed. They can only plead for mercy.

The conclusion they came to about themselves is interesting, and is typical of a sinner coming to the end of himself, acknowledging his lost condition, and facing the consequence of his sin.

Judah spoke for the group, and said, "What shall we say unto my lord?...Or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants" (v. 16). In their plight, they realized there was nothing they could say, nothing they could do, and nothing they could pay for the forgiveness and the grace of Joseph. His grace must be freely given.

In chapter 45, Joseph demonstrates his grace, and makes himself known to his brethren; completely forgives them, acknowledges them as his brethren, and brings them into his personal fellowship. This is very typical of how the Lord deals in grace with a sinner who humbly comes to Him for mercy.

These men found out who Joseph was, the mighty ruler, and what he had done for them, to save their lives, "God did send me before you to preserve life" (45:5). Doesn't this sound just like John 3:16? Now, note their response in chapter 50:18: "And his brethren went and fell down (bowing) before his face; and they said, 'Behold, we are thy servants.'"

Now the brethren are willingly bowing to him, not in need, not in fear, but in appreciation and thankfulness, gladly submitting to him in the role of servants. What had made this difference in

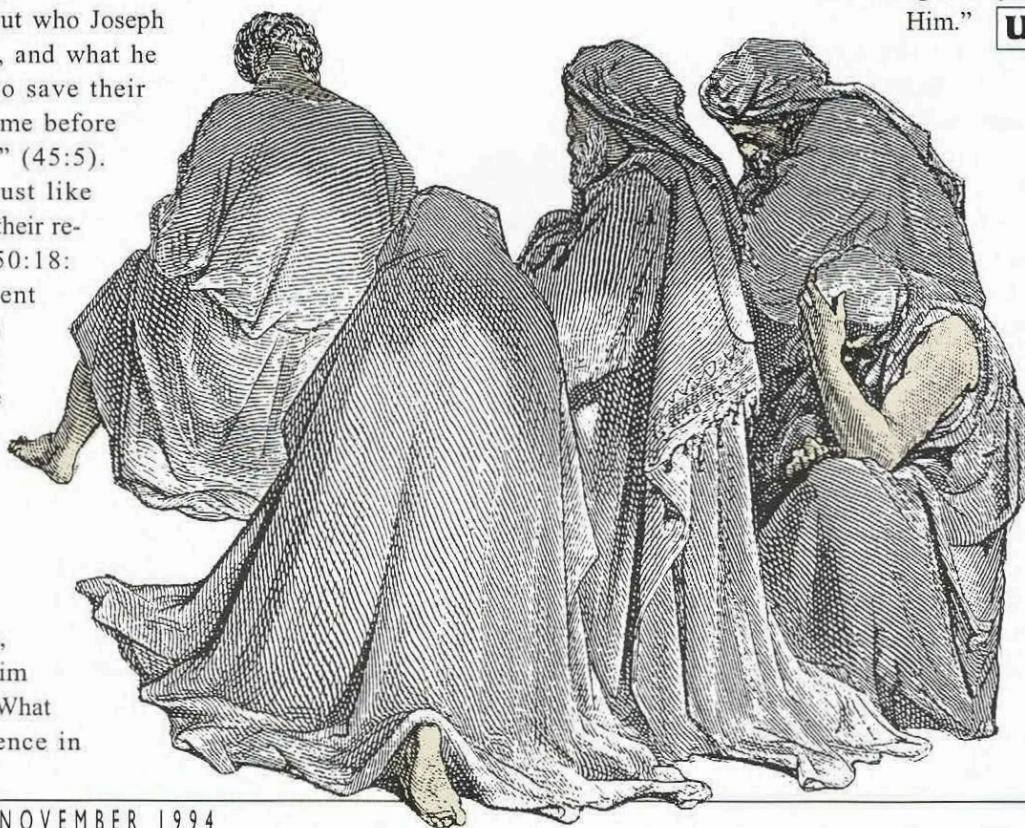
their attitude toward him? They now understood who he was and what he had done for them.

When we, as believers, come to really know who Jesus is, the mighty God of all the universe, and what He accomplished on the cross of Calvary, and that He did it all for us in order to save us from everlasting hell, we will gladly come and bow to Him with grateful hearts in thanksgiving and adoration—worship! And

we will willingly submit ourselves as His servants.

A seventy-year-old woman, whom we had the privilege of leading to the Lord out of Catholicism, expressed it right. She was so thrilled that she could talk to God, and not have to read a prayer written by another. She could sit in a worship meeting and silently express her love and thankfulness to Him, and know that He heard her. One day, she expressed the sentiments of a heart-filled thankfulness and worship when she said to us, as she was contemplating the coming Sunday breaking of bread, "I've been praying, asking the Lord this morning to give me some sweet things to say to Him." **U**

**I've been...  
asking the Lord  
this morning  
to give me  
some sweet thing  
to say to Him.**





## ESSENTIAL MEETINGS

**T**he Lord said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." These two words, "gathered together," are the English translation of one word, which, if traced to its use in connection with assembly meetings in the Acts of the Apostles, gives us a clue as to the least number of meetings that are necessary for the welfare of a healthy assembly.

### THE PRAYER MEETING (Acts 4:31)

"When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were *assembled together*." It is surely very significant that the first meeting of the church should be a prayer meeting. This should be remembered in these days, when the prayer meeting is usually the most poorly attended of all meetings. It is the *power* meeting; we cannot do without it.

They prayed then till the very place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. The question must be asked: Do we "go to the prayer meeting" or do we go to pray?

### THE TEACHING MEETING (Acts 11:26)

"They *assembled* themselves with the church, and taught much people." The command in Matthew 28:20 was to teach in order to do. Much teaching is only for the filling of the heads of the hearers. A servant is not taught in order to fill his head with knowledge, or so that he can write a book on the subject, but to do it.

They taught in the Acts of the Apostles "Jesus and the resurrection," and "the word of the Lord." They taught "doctrine." They "ceased not to teach and preach Jesus." Apollos was an ideal teacher, in that what he had not yet understood, he was quite willing for ordinary folk like Aquilla and Priscilla to teach him; the best teacher is a teachable man.

### THE MISSIONARY MEETING (Acts 14:27)

"When they were come, and had *gathered* the church *together*, they rehearsed all that God had done with them." Note the things the missionaries brought before them, a lesson to us missionaries today. (1) All that God had done. (2) How *He* opened the door of

faith unto the Gentiles. (3) See also 15:3-4. Declaring the conversion of the Gentiles. (4) Also 15:12. Declaring what miracles and wonders *God had wrought* among the Gentiles by them. No wonder they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

### THE ELDERS' MEETING (Acts 15:6)

"The apostles and elders *came together* for to consider of this matter." What an object lesson for elders' meetings! Here there was all the elements of a division, and yet see how wisely and graciously it was handled, so that at the conclusion there was happy agreement. See how Paul, on his way down to this meeting, spends his time (15:3), telling of the conversions, and bringing joy to the hearts of the saints. Many others would have been so filled with the subject of the differences of opinion, that they would have been talking of nothing else. It is a very damaging tendency. Beware!

### THE BIBLE READING MEETING (Acts 15:30)

"When they had gathered the multitude *together*, they delivered the epistle, which, when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation."

They gathered the multitude together to read the epistle, and I expect there was a general discussion, such as we know of in our Bible readings; at any rate, Judas and Silas helped with the subject.

What is the cause for the decay of the Bible reading in our midst? Is it not that the Bible reading has been left to take care of itself, and brethren attending have, in many instances, never even looked beforehand at the subject or passage under consideration? Consequently it becomes a most profitless meeting. On the other hand, where brethren have exercised their hearts and minds before the Lord as to the passage to be dealt with, have come to the Bible reading full with helpful thoughts, they have helped to make the Bible reading a time of rich feeding from the Word.

### THE BREAKING OF BREAD MEETING (Acts 20:7)

"When the disciples *came together* to break bread." This was on the first day of the week, and seeing the apostles had been there for seven days, and broke bread



on the first day of the week instead of the Sabbath (the day before), shows that the Sabbath was no longer kept by the disciples.

This meeting was an opportunity of having a word from the Apostle Paul, and preaching is not out of place at the Lord's Supper, although some would exclude it. Obviously the ministry should enhance the saints' appreciation of Christ and His sacrifice for us.

### THE DISCIPLINE MEETING (1 Cor. 5:4)

"When ye are *gathered together*, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

This is the saddest meeting of all, and it should always be remembered that the restoration of the offend-

ing one should always be kept in view. As J. N. Darby so beautifully reminds us, we should think of what our feelings would be like were a beloved daughter of ours to go astray: our chief desire and aim would be to see the erring one brought back again, and how tenderly we would think and act towards such a person. We should remember that the offending one is a member of the family, and as such we should think and act towards him or her.

Thus we have a complete set of meetings. I do not say that these are the only meetings an assembly should have, but I would go the length of saying they are the least number of meetings which go to make a healthy assembly. Remember that in all these meetings He has promised, "There am I."

Is that not enough reason to be there?

U

## Grace at Work

J. A. Fletcher

*Think gently of the erring;  
You know not of the power  
With which the dark temptation came  
In some unguarded hour;  
You may not know how earnestly  
They struggled, or how well,  
Until the hour of weakness came  
And sadly thus they fell.*

*Think gently of the erring;  
Oh, do not now forget  
However darkly stained by sin,  
He is your brother yet;  
Heir of the self-same heritage,  
Child of the self-same God,  
He has but stumbled in the path  
Which you in weakness trod.*

*Speak gently to the erring;  
For is it not enough  
That innocence and peace have gone,  
Without your censure rough?  
It sure must be a weary lot  
That sin-stained heart to bear,  
And those who share a happier fate  
Their chidings well may spare.*

*Speak gently to the erring;  
You yet may lead them back,  
With holy words and tones of love,  
From misery's thorny track;  
Forget not you have often sinned,  
And sinful yet will be;  
Deal gently with the erring, then,  
As God has dealt with thee.*





## MENNO SIMONS

**M**ENNO SIMONS (1496-1561) was the intrepid Bible teacher and evangelist among the besieged and harried brethren who lived without government protection during the times of the Reformation in northern Europe. His enemies in the state-churches thought he was immortal too. Immortal because after they had tortured, drowned, or burned almost every prominent Anabaptist preacher, for some reason they could never coax Menno to visit them in the public square where they piled kindling wood around the stake. This slippery Menno is distinguished as being one of the few luminaries among the brethren who actually died in bed of natural causes.

When young Menno was ordained into the Roman Catholic priesthood in Utrecht at the age of 28, Martin Luther had already nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the church door at Wittenberg. The havoc and political unrest of the Reformation created a window of opportunity to the long persecuted brethren. By taking advantage of the social upheaval of the time, the underground church of the Dark Ages was prepared to go public. Converted Catholic priests and monks began holding conferences, and performing mass public baptisms. They traveled as missionaries through central Europe, holding meetings among brethren who previously had been secretive.

But these brethren faced a problem. They were neither Lutheran nor Catholic, and were therefore unrecognized and unincorporated under the laws of the land. These illegal preachers who raised their illegal lanterns into that inky night, soon discovered the executioner's fury. One edict said, "Out of the ashes of Waldo many new shoots arise and it is necessary to impose a severe and heavy punishment as an example."

Conrad Grebel was arrested and imprisoned for three months in the tower at Zurich. He escaped in 1526, but he did not live out the year. Existing as a fugitive, he narrowly missed martyrdom by dying of the plague. Felix Manz was repeatedly arrested and finally drowned in the Limmat River by order of the Zurich Council in 1527. His execution was the first of a long line of Anabaptist martyrs. Michael Sattler was

burned at the stake in Rottenburg in 1527. His faithful wife followed him, being drowned in the Neckar River eight days later. In that same year of 1527, a conference of Anabaptists was held in Augsburg which became known as "The Martyrs' Synod" because so many of those in attendance lost their lives for the name of Christ. Hans Denck took a leading part in that conference. Before the year was out, the weary fugitive would die of the plague. George Blurock was captured at Tyrol and burned at Innsbruck in 1529. All of these gifted servants of Christ were in their mid-thirties, except Balthaser Hubmaier, who endured a lengthy interrogation before he was burned in Vienna in 1528; he was about 48 years old. Three days after his martyrdom, his wife was drowned in the Danube River.

Not only the preachers suffered. The brethren in general became targets of the ruthless Catholic or Reformation state-church persecutions. Twelve would be drowned in this town, and thirty burned in that village, until the death toll mounted from the hundreds to the thousands in Austria, Germany, and Holland.

The followers of this fledgling movement had barely poked their heads out of the caves and dens in which they were hiding when they were stripped of their most promising Bible teachers and evangelists. And these tremors reached across Europe until they touched a Friesian named Menno Simons.

Menno's awakening was not due to his Roman Catholic education for the priesthood. His formal training was limited as the Bible was virtually unknown to him. "I had not touched [the Scriptures] during my life, for I feared, if I should read them they would mislead me. Behold! such a stupid preacher I was."

Around 1528, he began to have severe doubts about the sacraments of the church. He obtained some of the Reformers' writings, which only highlighted to him the confusion of men's natural reasoning. Then around 1531, he shook the dust off his Bible to discover grave discrepancies in what he himself practiced and what the Bible actually said. He was shocked. Among other things, he saw what the Scriptures actually taught about infant baptism and the Lord's Supper. To renounce your infant baptism was not considered to be in your



best interests at that time. Emperor Charles V mandated all rulers and officers in his empire "...that all and every one baptized again or baptizing again, man or woman, of an age to understand, shall be judged and brought from natural life to death with fire and sword or the like according to individual circumstance, without previous inquisition of the spiritual judge."

Menno knew about these hapless victims of state persecution. They included his own brother, who died in 1535 while defending himself with a group of evangelicals at the Old Cloister at Bolsward. Such events would sober anyone who ventured to join the brethren, who were all notorious "re-baptizers." Menno had endured four anguishing years while counting this cost, until his conversion soon after his brother's death.

Menno strongly opposed any fanaticism such as use of force or revolt, and here calls it an "error." He said, "I saw that these zealous children, although in error, willingly gave their lives and their estates for their doctrine and faith...My heart trembled within me. I prayed to God with sighs and tears that He would give to me, a sorrowing sinner, the gift of His grace, create within me a clean heart, and graciously through the merits of the crimson blood of Christ forgive my unclean walk and frivolous easy life, and bestow upon me wisdom, Spirit, courage, and manly spirit so that I might preach His exalted and adorable name and Holy Word in purity."

Two years after his spiritual birth, he wrote, "I, a miserable sinner, did not know my faults and shortcomings as long as Thy Spirit had not pointed them out to me. I considered myself a Christian, but when I looked upon myself, I found myself to be very worldly, fleshly and outside Thy Word. My light was darkness, my truth falsehood, my justice sin, my religion public idolatry, and my life certain death."

Once he renounced Roman Catholicism, he became a marked man. He soon joined fellowship with the brethren. Already, by October 24, 1536, there is a

record that some were arrested for lodging Menno. That was the same year that Jacob Hutter, another Anabaptist preacher, was burned at the stake in Innsbruck in the Tyrol.

To fix the dates, details, and places of Menno's feverish pilgrimage have not been easy for the historian. Strangely, the spiritual revival among those brethren has, until the Twentieth Century, gone largely unnoticed. Whole histories of the Reformation give the Anabaptists the silent treatment, while others perpetuated the slanders that their persecutors had used

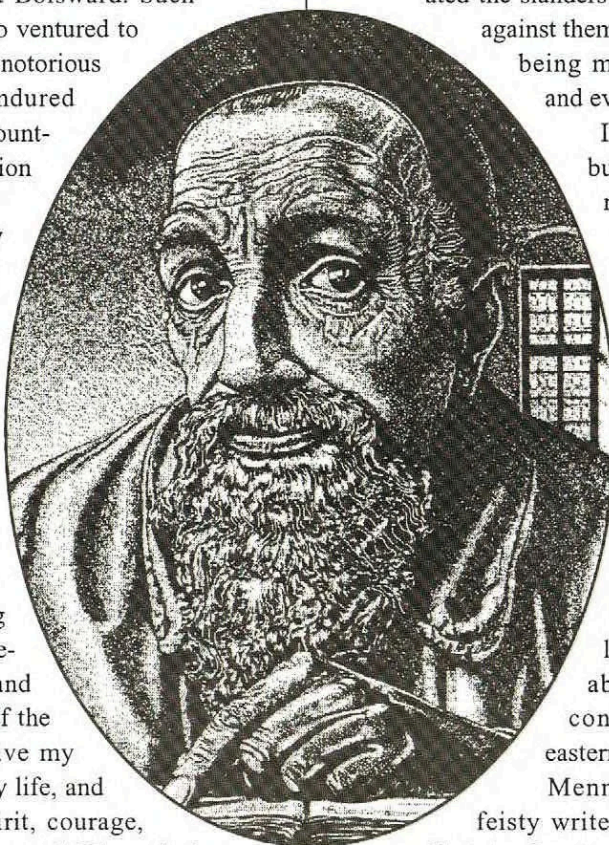
against them. They have endured the slur of being munsterites, heretics, radicals, and even communists.

If Menno's enemies could not burn him, they certainly burned many of his books and many of the brethren that owned them. Much of what we know of those times comes to us via court records and the slander of Menno's enemies.

We do know that his wife was named Gertrude, and that they had children. In the years 1536-39, he traveled about Groningen until he was forced to flee to the Dutch province of Friesland, after an edict told all Anabaptists to "get out." Menno continued his itinerant work in eastern Friesland until 1540.

Menno proved to be a energetic, feisty writer. Already he had written on *Christian Baptism* in 1539, and a book called the *Foundation of Christian Doctrine* in 1540. Throughout his writings he would repeatedly come back to the reference point, "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Menno saw where the creedal churches had stopped short, and he was determined, as much as possible, to move the church of God back to its primitive simplicity.

In 1541, he fired another canon blast called the *True Christian Faith*. Many that read Menno are disappointed that he did not teach the Reformation doctrines of justification by faith more clearly. Perhaps those brethren would have been more receptive to the re-





formers' Bible teaching on this subject if the Reformers had not aligned themselves with the civil authorities, and thereby become the brethren's own persecutors. The greatest scandal of the Reformation was the way men like Bucer, Calvin, and Zwingli treated these poor of the flock.

Perhaps a second reason why the brethren did not progress farther than they did doctrinally is due to the sparsity of well-taught, stable Bible teachers among them. Many of them were burned at the stake early on.

There was a third reason why the brethren were unimpressed by Reformation doctrine. They saw many who claimed to have become Lutherans living no better than they had when they had been in the darkness of popery. No doubt, the low moral state of many Reformation churches owes itself to the fact that they were populated by a mixed multitude of saved and lost, and in fact, the Reformers thought that the church had to be that way. They looked at "a believing membership" in the local church as youthful idealism, while their Anabaptist contemporaries insisted that a believing membership is a vital necessity to any biblical church.

For these and other reasons, those brethren called Anabaptists were, and are, largely Arminian in doctrine. And Menno Simons had as much to do with crystallizing their doctrinal stance as anyone. Regrettably, we have to conclude that Luther and Menno each had a great deal they could have learned from one another.

Menno's collected writings fill more than a thousand pages. He lived long enough to contribute a few poems to the brethren's hymn collection, to teach on the finer points of church discipline, and child rearing, and to engage in tractarian debates with Catholics and Reformers on the great issues of the faith. Menno's greatest contribution was his steady hand to hold back the fanatic tendencies of the brethren and to tend the festering wounds of afflicted saints.

For his efforts the authorities determined to seize Menno, but he so successfully evaded them that pardon was offered to any Anabaptist then in confinement who would deliver Menno. As William Estep says, "...No Judas was forthcoming."

From 1541 to 1543, he energetically labored in and around Amsterdam. The baptisms he performed were followed by executions, but Menno remained free. In late 1543, he moved his family to a more tolerant northern Germany, where he remained (except for two years in Cologne) until his death.

From 1546 to 1551, he conducted meetings in Holstein and along the Baltic seacoast region. In 1554, he was forced to move again, this time to Hamburg at Oldesloe.

Regarding these incessant persecutions, he wrote, "I hope also, through the Lord's help, that no one in the whole world may be able truthfully to accuse me of covetousness or of luxurious living. Gold and riches have I none, do not even desire them, although there are some who, out of an honest heart, say that I eat more roast than they do mince, and drink more wine than they do beer...He who...has bought me...and called me to His service, knows me and knows that I seek neither money nor goods, neither pleasure nor comfort on earth, but only my Lord's praise, my own salvation, and that of many. On which account I have had to suffer, with my poor, weak wife and little children. We have for eighteen years endured excessive anxiety, oppression, affliction, misery, and persecution, that I have to live in poverty and in constant fear and danger of our lives. Yes, when the preachers repose on easy beds and soft pillows, we generally have to creep secretly into out-of-the-way corners. When they openly enjoy themselves at weddings, etc., with pipes, drums, and flutes, we have to look around every time a dog barks for fear the arresting officer has arrived. Whereas they are greeted by everyone as Doctor or Master, we must let ourselves be called Anabaptists, Corner-preachers, Deceivers, and Heretics, and are greeted in the Devil's name. Finally, instead of being rewarded, as they are, for their service, with high salaries and good days, our recompense and portion from them is fire, sword, and death."

On January 31, 1561, an arthritic, tired man looked up from his sickbed and said that "nothing on earth was as precious" to him "as the church."

#### FURTHER READING:

*The Complete Writings of Menno Simons* translated by Leonard Verduin, Herald Press

*Menno Simons* by John Horsch, Mennonite Pub. House

*The Anatomy of a Hybrid* by Leonard Verduin, Eerdmans

*The Pilgrim Church* by E. H. Broadbent, Marshall Pickering

*The Anabaptist Story* by William Estep, Eerdmans

*The Anabaptist View of the Church* by Franklin H. Littell, Macmillan

*The 1948 portrait of Menno Simons is by Arend Hendriks*



# Among Lions

**"My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword."**

**(Psalm 57:4)**

*When I in Egypt still stuck fast,  
And traveled calm, broad paths of ease,  
Then was I famed, a much-sought guest,  
The world with me was quite at peace;  
Enmeshed was I in Satan's gauze,  
My life abomination was  
Right well I served the devil's cause.*

*But when I turned me to the Lord,  
And gave the world a farewell look,  
Sought help against the evil horde,  
The lore of Antichrist forsook;  
Then was I mocked and sore defamed,  
Since Babel's councils I now disdained;  
The righteous man is e'er disclaimed!*

*As one may read of Abel, famed,  
Zacharias, too—recall it well—  
And Daniel too, whom bad men framed  
So that he among fierce lions fell;  
So were the prophets treated all,  
Christ Jesus, too—it is good to recall—  
Nor were the prophets spared this call.*

*I'd rather choose the sorrow sore,  
And suffer as of God the child  
Than have from Pharaoh all his store,  
To revel in for one brief while;  
The realm of Pharaoh cannot last,  
Christ keeps His kingdom sure and fast;  
Around His child His arm He casts.*

*If you in fires are tested, tried,  
Begin to walk life's narrow way,  
Then let God's praise be magnified,  
Stand firm on all He has to say;  
If you stand strong and constant then,  
Confess His Word in the sight of men,  
With joy He extends the diadem!*

—Menno Simons





## NEW AGE ILLUSIONS

**W**OULD YOU THINK that a grandmother with an advanced degree in interior decorating would write a book about biblical textual criticism? The sensational book, *New Age Bible Versions*, written by Gayle A. Riplinger, is all of that. It promises "an exhaustive documentation exposing the message, men and manuscripts moving mankind to the Antichrist's one world religion."

Exhaustive? Yes, in a manner of speaking—all 690 pages of the book. This book was written with the intent of defending the King James Translation of 1611. We enjoy the King James Version, use it in all our publications, read it publicly, study and preach from it, and will continue to do so. But our recommendation to our readers who have questions about Bible translations and manuscripts is to pass up *New Age Bible Versions*.

These are our reasons:

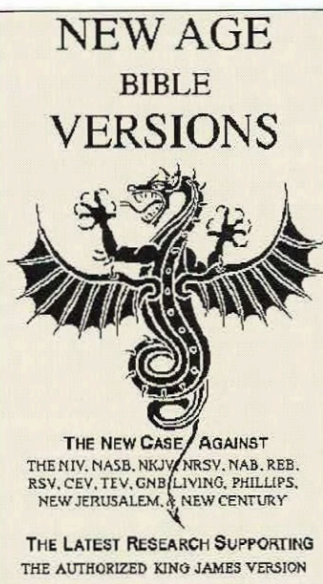
1. The book is sensationalist.
2. The book is irreverent, denigrating the written Word of God.
3. The book makes slanderous character attacks.
4. The author habitually misquotes her sources.

### THE BOOK IS SENSATIONAL

More than a year ago, advertisements were sent to assembly elders across North America promoting Riplinger's *New Age Bible Versions*. We received a gift copy of the black book with the red dragon on the cover, and with it, queries about the book.

In the newsletter, *The Berean Call*, brothers Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon have, in a gentlemanly way, warned their readers about the book. Other reviews of Riplinger's book, which come from a more "reformed" persuasion, had their own pointed remarks assessing Riplinger's conclusion that the five points of Calvinism "form a Satanic pentagram" (p. 231).

Most reviewers have focused on the more bizarre rhetoric, like Riplinger's warning to "Watch out for the



letter 's'—sin, Satan, Sodom, Saul (had to be changed to Paul). The added 's' here is the hiss of the serpent" (p. 232). If she believes this, then what does she do with the words scripture, sacrifice, salvation, and servant?

Mrs. Riplinger also predicts when Christ will return. "Is it a coincidence that God closed the Old Testament canon 389 years before Christ's first coming? And now, He gives us the 1611 KJV in these last days in the world's universal language, 389 years before His second coming in the 6000th year" (p. 596).

With many of the reviewers, we share the alarm over the sensationalism and tone of the book, but also feel that the underlying theories that the book is based on are more dangerous than Riplinger's writing style.

### THE BOOK DENIGRATES THE WORD OF GOD

Gayle Riplinger, and Peter Ruckman before her, teach that other English translations done after the 1611 King James Version cannot be called the Word of God. In fact, these other "versions" are labeled as a Satanic conspiracy. Interestingly, Riplinger and Ruckman also attack the Septuagint in a similar manner. They teach that there was no Greek translation of the Old Testament (called the Septuagint, or LXX) at the time of the writing of the New Testament. On pages 537-8, she basically says that the Septuagint was a latter invention of Origen around the year 200 AD.

It is crucial to their argument that they discredit the Septuagint. Why? Because if it is a translation which is quoted as the Word of God in the New Testament, then this admission destroys their argument. They know that the Septuagint is not a strictly literal translation and, by their standards, could not be the Word of God. They know that the Septuagint contains some serious omissions. Yet the stubborn fact remains that the Septuagint is quoted as the Word of God, even by the Lord Jesus. Ruckman and Riplinger are unable to face the historical fact of the Septuagint.



## THE BOOK IS SLANDEROUS

Among the many that have reviewed the book, Roger Krynock of South Bend, Indiana, has done the most thorough work. He is concerned enough about the character of the book that he is writing a lengthy response, which is to be available soon in book form. In the first chapter, entitled, *Wolves in Sheep's Clothing?* Krynock writes, "One of the ways that she [Mrs. Riplinger] has sought to ruin the trustworthiness of the new versions, particularly the NIV, the NASV, and Westcott's 1881 Greek Testament (since these new English versions have followed the Westcott-Hort tradition of textual criticism) is to discredit the translators and editors of those versions. Abundant quotations are given throughout *New Age Bible Versions* in order to try to establish that new version translators and editors are wicked men, approaching their translating work with evil motives, guided by heretical doctrines."

After rummaging through several seminary libraries, Krynock found many of the documents that Mrs. Riplinger quotes. Many of these volumes were printed before 1900, and are scarce. What he found was that the book, by and large, distorts the truth. In Riplinger's treatment of B. F. Westcott, R. Laird Harris, Ronald Youngblood, Calvin Linton, Richard N. Longnecker, Herbert M. Wolf, and Edwin F. Palmer, who are new version editors and translators, over and over, carefully crafted quotations use phrases put together from different pages, and sometimes from different books. In this way, she makes these men say the opposite of what they actually said.

## THE AUTHOR GROSSLY MISQUOTES HER SOURCES

In the introduction to her book, Riplinger claims "The Greek text used to translate the NIV, NASB, and others was an edition drastically altered by a Spiritualist (one who seeks contact with the dead through seances), who believed he was in the 'new age.'"<sup>1</sup>

This man is later identified: "New versions (and the 'new' church they are producing) owe their occult bend [sic] to their underlying Greek text, a novelty produced in the 1870's by B.F. Westcott, a London Spiritualist. Secular historians and numerous occult books see him as 'the Father' of the current channeling phenomenon, a major source of the 'doctrines of devils' driving the New Age movement'.<sup>2</sup>

Our purpose in the short space of this article is not to vindicate Westcott, or the many others who have

been victimized by this book. Krynock's book deals at length with Riplinger's accusation that Westcott was a Spiritualist. On that point, Krynock concludes, "Such is a false characterization of the men! They were never 'spiritualists' in the sense of being psychics, mediums, or soothsayers. They were interested in spiritual realities. And they did believe in supernatural phenomena. But so should any Christian."

Krynock concludes, "If Mrs. Riplinger actually read the context of the source that she has quoted to convince the reader that Westcott believed that he was part of the New Age conspiracy, then she is guilty of terrible misrepresentation. Her footnote (#64) refers the reader to Westcott's book, *Historic Faith* (pp. 146-7).<sup>3</sup> *Historic Faith* is subtitled *Short Lectures on the Apostles' Creed*...In the chapter from which Riplinger quotes, Westcott is dealing in a thoroughly orthodox way with the subject of eternal life.

"Mrs. Riplinger claims to be a defender of the truth, concerned that the pure Word of God be preserved. Then she must know that at the heart of God's ethical demand upon His people is this requirement: 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor' (Ex. 20:16)..." "We are to 'speak...the truth in love' (Eph. 4:15), remembering that God's 'children of light' are to walk bearing fruit in 'all goodness, righteousness, and truth' (Eph. 5:9), having their 'loins girt about with truth' (Eph. 6:14), keeping in mind that love 'rejoiceth in the truth.'

"Are the charges against the men considered in the pages above in accord with Exodus 20:16 and the New Testament directive to speak the truth? Have their words been reported accurately, honestly? Have their views been represented truthfully? If they have, then Mrs. Riplinger's case stands. But if not, then her work is discredited. As stated above, these few examples do not stand alone. They are representative of the the documentation all through the book. The errors that Mrs. Riplinger has made are not trivial mistakes. They are the most serious errors that a Christian can make against a fellow believer: to wrongly charge a fellow Christian with heresy and apostasy from the faith!"

—John A. Bjorlie

## ENDNOTES:

1. G.A. Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions*, p. 2

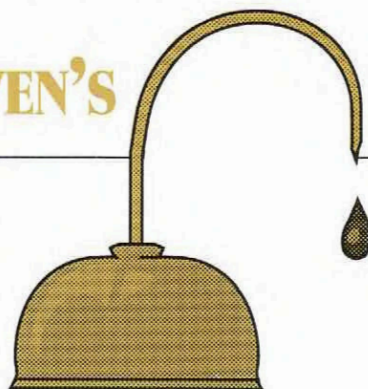
2. *Ibid.*, p. 25

3. B.F. Westcott, *Historic Faith: Short Lectures on the Apostles' Creed*, Macmillan, 1983



## HEAVEN'S

## LUBRICANT



**S**YNOVIA IS described as “a transparent viscid lubricating fluid secreted by a membrane of an articulation, bursa, or tendon sheath.” It is God’s provision to keep the body joints moving smoothly.

Do you wonder why your little assembly has a fair amount of friction buildup when the big superchurch down the street seems to get along with hardly a ripple? May I suggest some reasons?

First, it may not be that way at all. Personality clashes seem to occur everywhere because people are like—well, like people. If you don’t know about the problems at some other local church, that could be a good sign—that those in that fellowship are taking it to the Lord instead of putting it out on the news service.

It may be that your local assembly needs to pray together more, and fellowship together more, and bear one another’s burdens more—perhaps even weep together more. As we invest in one another, we have an increasing interest in the spiritual success of those saints because we have poured our lives into them.

Another reason for significant levels of friction in a local assembly is the fact that, generally speaking, those who seek to be obedient to the New Testament principles of assembly gathering tend to have strong convictions. These strongly-held beliefs are needed to carry us through the hard times. But the danger is that they can make us hard. Grace and truth must always travel together. Beware an implacable spirit. It is just as important that the truth has us as that we have the truth.

There may be one other reason why your fellowship has more friction than another type of local church. It is simply this: you don’t have any friction if you don’t have any moving parts! If the only time people in a church make contact with each other is during the second stanza of the third hymn, when the song leader asks everyone to shake hands with the person beside them, everyone will get along just fine. It’s when you have to work together that the friction builds.

Happily, the Spirit of God is there to provide the “synovial fluid” for the Body. There are four ingredients in this lubricant, mentioned in Ephesians 4:2, and

each is vital to the smooth operation of the church.

**LOWLINESS:** The word *tapenophrosune* is the compound of two Greek words meaning “humility of mind.” We might think of it as **keeping down**, not always seeking the place of prominence, even if

it is rightfully mine. Of course, in each of these characteristics, our Lord is the example. He, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, humbled Himself. Let this mind be in you as well, writes Paul.

**MEEKNESS:** If lowliness is keeping down, then meekness is **keeping back**. This is, as W. E. Vine writes, “the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest.” It is not weakness, but strength in control. It is Abraham offering Lot the first choice because “the Lord of heaven and earth” was caring for him. It is Moses, the meekest man (apart from his Master) saying to Pharaoh, “Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee...to destroy the frogs?” (Ex. 8:9). He could afford to speak like that because I AM was with him.

**LONGSUFFERING:** This word derives from *makros*, long, and *thumos*, temper. It means to patiently endure with others. This is **keeping on**, not giving up on people on whom God will never give up. “Love suffers long—and is [still] kind,” writes the apostle. Obviously this lubricant is supernatural. Most of us don’t find such a spirit to come naturally.

**FORBEARANCE:** Forbearance comes from two words meaning “to hold up.” The idea conveys a willingness to **keep under** a load. It is the opposite of letting down. Paul adds the words, “in love,” reminding us that love is the only fitting motive in any service for God. Sometimes it would be easier to give up on someone instead of holding them up—in prayer, in encouraging words, in helping them bear their burdens—but the love story of the ages reminds us that He will never give up on us.

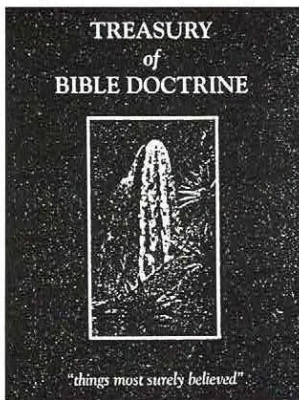
So we are to keep down, keep back, keep on, and keep under the load, all in the love that has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. That’s the secret, not only to keep the assembly from “seizing up,” but by being well-oiled, of being efficient and effective in our service for the Lord. —J. B. N., Jr.

**U**



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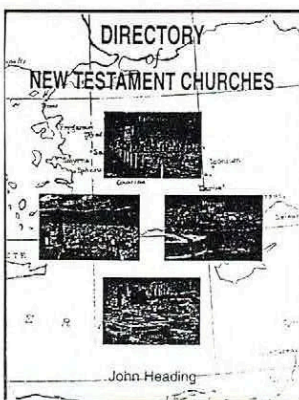
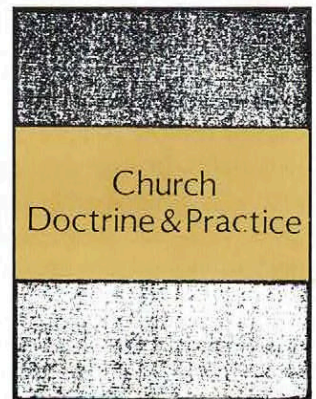
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Charles Wesley was born December 18, 1708. He was the third son of Samuel Wesley, Sr., the rector of the Episcopal Church at Epworth, England. Wesley wrote seven thousand hymns which were largely written amid a great religious upheaval, and during the refreshing showers of a gracious revival.

Wesley began to write hymns when he was twenty-nine and kept his pen going till in his eightieth year. When at last it dropped from his hand in the hour of death, he could still not keep silent, but dictated his last hymn, just as he was preparing to mount up, and join in the hallelujahs of the skies. How significant are his last words composed in verse:

*In age and feebleness extreme,  
Who shall a helpless worm redeem?  
Jesus, my only hope Thou art,  
Strength to my failing flesh and heart;  
Oh, could I catch a smile from Thee,  
Then drop into eternity.*

