

UPLOOK

A vibrant, abstract collage of icons representing global communication and technology. The central focus is a computer monitor displaying a yellow line graph on a blue background, with a keyboard in front of it. To the left, a mobile phone is shown. Above the monitor, a white airplane is depicted flying across a red grid representing a globe. A blue wavy line, resembling a signal or data stream, flows across the scene. The background is a mix of purple, brown, and green geometric shapes, with a large green document icon on the left. The overall composition is dynamic and layered, symbolizing interconnectedness and digital progress.

APRIL 1996

The Language the Whole World Understands



The Language of Love

Some people think that money is the international language. But what can money say when people stand at the grave of a loved one with not a ray of light to cheer the gray horizon of their souls? What can it do for someone standing on the threshold of eternity? Only love will do then, and only the love from God. But sometimes material things can express the love of God too.

The old adage, "Charity begins at home," is not a trite sound bite. The home should be the school for life, and anyone who would love others must first love his brother. Sweet reasonableness, common (increasingly uncommon) kindness, and old-fashioned charity need to be practiced in everyday experiences of life before they can be shown to strangers.

Richard Sheridan quoted the phrase critically in *The School for Scandal*: "ROWLEY: I believe there is no sentiment he has such faith in as that 'charity begins at home.' SIR OLIVER SURFACE: And his, I presume, is of that domestic sort which never stirs abroad at all."

But charity isn't a homebody. The One whose secret name is Love left home to come to this forlorn planet that had cut itself loose from its Maker. Charity walked the rough roadway from Bethlehem to Nazareth, from Nazareth to Jerusalem, and on to Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha. Love starts at home but can't stay home when it knows there is need outside its door.

*"Love has a hem to its garment
That reaches the very dust;
It reaches the stains of the streets and lanes,
And because it can, it must."*

Charity has fallen on hard times. Somehow it has come to mean heartless big business disguised as a nonprofit corporation for its own benefit; or supercilious, well-publicized acts of self-promotion demeaning to the recipient; or merely a means of salving the consciences of overindulgent Westerners. But in Bible thinking, it is a code word for love, for sacrificial living which bears itself out in sacrificial giving. It is Godlike, a sampling of the ultimate, indescribable Gift who wrapped His giving in flesh and ribboned it in the scarlet of His own precious blood.

The Western church is surfeited with wealth. Even the poorest among us would be members of the upper class in many countries. Yet how seldom do we hear exhortations such as these: "Godliness with content-

ment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Tim. 6:6-11).

Do we plead that we are not guilty of the love of money, that we have been abundantly blessed without seeking for such bounty? Paul does not allow us to escape: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

We are not called to judge how others are handling their stewardship, but we are to assess our own. Is there need among the household of faith elsewhere in the world? Tremendous need. Are there dangers in sending provisions to Christians in Third World countries? Of course. We do not wish to foolishly do damage to believers' dependence on the Lord, to make them look West instead of looking up in time of need. We understand the dangers of making "rice Christians" who profess salvation only for handouts from gullible churches. We can unwittingly cause power struggles in foreign assemblies by placing resources in the hands of some. And we can cause those benefitting from our largesse to look like capitalists or even western spies in the eyes of oppressive regimes. Yes, there are problems, but...

Someday will the Master have to say, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me?"

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UPLOOK

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Contents

Volume 63 Number 3

FEATURES

SPIRITUAL FRAUD <i>Doug Kazen</i>	4
HERE I RAISE MY EBENEZER <i>Harold Preston</i>	9
YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN? <i>J. Adams</i>	13
HINDERED OR HELPED? <i>Harry Foster</i>	15
GOD'S GUIDE FOR GIVING <i>W. Ross Rainey</i>	21
OPERATION SEED SOWERS	24
AS WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY	27
NOW & THEN (Poem) <i>M. Waterman</i>	29
A LETTER FROM CHECHNYA	30

DEPARTMENTS

EDITORIAL	2
FRONT LINES	6
WHAT'S GOING ON?	11
HEROES	18
BOUQUET OF BLESSINGS	23
LIVING ASSEMBLIES	26

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Spiritual Fraud

We remember him as the man who lost an argument with his donkey, but in the end he lost his soul. We need to watch out for such smooth-tongued pseudo prophets today.

Obviously, God wants us to know about Balaam. Eight books of the Bible (5 OT, 3 NT) mention him. Until looked at closely and carefully, he appears to be a biblical conundrum. Actually, he is exactly what we would expect a counterfeit to be—looking good, but very wrong. This man exemplifies the characteristics that we should look for in modern spiritual frauds. Discernment is a quality in short supply among God's people today, yet counterfeits are everywhere. Learn the realities of Balaam and it will help you identify spiritual counterfeits.

He was a Mesopotamian, at great distance from Moab. Yet his fame had reached the ears of Balak, the king of Moab. Balak knew that whom Balaam blessed was blest and whom he cursed was cursed. The Bible identifies

Balaam as a soothsayer, obviously possessing certain powers that were not of God. This should teach us that just because an individual or a movement seems to have great powers or a large following is not reason to believe that such spiritual activity is of God.

Balaam, as quoted in Numbers 22, 23 and 24, seems to say the very best of things. He declares that he can only repeat what God tells him and that he will absolutely follow God's word. Yet in 2 Peter we find "the way of Balaam," where Balaam is described as having forsaken the right way, gone astray, and loved the wages of unrighteousness. Jude describes for us "the error of Balaam," where this man is mentioned in the same context as Cain and Korah, as brute beasts and corrupted persons, as clouds driven about by the winds and having no fruit—indeed twice



dead. Revelation 2 describes the "doctrine of Balaam." Because he cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, having seduced them to mix with Moab, to sacrifice to idols, and to commit fornication. He was, therefore, exclusively associated with the ungodly and identified thoroughly with carnal influences. Let us understand that a spiritual fraud is capable of quoting the Word of God, of sounding pious and true, yet can be totally wicked. We need to note what is done and practiced even more than what is said.

Balaam had a wrong motive in all that he did. His actual desire was for material reward, yet he loudly declared that "if Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold," he could not deviate from what God had directed him. Yet God says he was greedy for reward. Watch with great care those who operate in the spiritual arena for monetary reward. Playing the game of religion can be highly rewarding in the economic sense. All one needs to do is appear to be "good," while the motive may be filthy lucre—just beneath the surface. Avoid such frauds!

Balaam had no sense of the presence of God. He rode on his beast directly into the path of the angel of the Lord, who was carrying a sword, and was unaware of the Presence. In fact, he had less discernment than the animal on which he rode! God always presences Himself where His Word is honored, or where He has work to do. The spiritual fraud cannot discern the presence of God. We need to avoid those misguided persons and movements who do not know—do not solicit or desire—the genuine presence of God in their midst.

Balaam had no interest in separating to be with the people of God. He traveled all the way from his home in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley to where he could overlook the encampment of the children of Israel in the land of Moab. He could have easily, had his heart been right, joined himself with them. Ruth, a Moabite, did so in another context when her heart had been made right with God. But not Balaam. He heard and knew what God thought of His people, Is-

rael. But Balaam was not moved to join them. Look out for those who reject spiritual separation. In these days of ecumenism, there are scores of frauds about us who make no distinction between what is right and wrong, whose energies are devoted to man-made unity while they de-emphasize doctrine, whose purposes are directed at appeal to the hearts of many while neglecting the truth of God. The Spirit of God bids us avoid such temptations.

Balaam had no understanding of the worship of God. He built seven altars; God has but one altar. Balaam professed to worship God, but his co-worshiper was

Balak. He saw no reason why a heathen and idolatrous king could not worship God alongside him. He was comfortable in an atmosphere that he called worship, but which did not follow God's pattern of true worship. We need to look out for fraudulent worship. If it is not done in God's way, according to God's pattern, the true Christian will avoid it.

Balaam induced Israel to mix with Moab, much to the sorrow and loss of God's earthly people. Spiritual frauds today are engaged in the same doctrine and way and error as Balaam was engaged in. They would mix up that which is true with that which is evil. They would make such coming together appear desirable, with Satan knowing all the while that such mixing up will only be to the ultimate destruction of the testimonies

of God's true people. Let us avoid such blandishments of the devil.

Ultimately, Israel slew Balaam. So today the Sword of the Spirit, the Fire of the Word of God, will identify and judge the spiritual fraud. We need to use the Word. We need to have clear vision. We need to use the weapons of truth which God has given us, so that we identify and deal with every Balaamite fraud the spiritual arena in which we are privileged to live. Note his characteristics. You will see them everywhere around you on the landscape of Christendom. Mark such evil entities and avoid them. Learn the lesson Israel learned the hard way from her unfortunate exposure to Balaam and his unscrupulous methods.

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Front Lines

AFTER EASTER CONFERENCE

The Gospel Chapel (Third & Chapel Sts., Baldwin City, KS) are hosting an open platform conference April 13-14, DV. Ministry to be furnished by brethren with knowledge and experience in the things of the Lord. Meals and housing provided.

Ray Jones
PO Box 45,
819 Indiana Street
Baldwin City, KS 66006
(913) 594-3374

LADIES' MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

The Michigan Ladies' Missionary Conference is planned for April 20, 1996, 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM, at Northwest Gospel Hall (1350 Garfield NW, Grand Rapids, MI). Speakers: Anne Vander Laan (India), Nancy Trogdon (Zaire), and Angie Hartley (Spain). All ladies are invited to attend. Call Hazel Johnson at (616) 791-4179.

MINI-CONFERENCE

The believers at Wauwatosa Community Chapel (metro Milwaukee, WI) invite you to their annual Spring Mini-Conference on April 20. The theme is *Harvest Time* (Jn. 4:35). Speakers expected are Jamie Hull (CO) and J. Philip Morgan (FL). Meetings are from 10 AM to 4:00 PM, to be held at 2200 N. 67 St. in Wauwatosa, WI.

AT THE HEART OF IT ALL

The 4th Annual Barnabas Retreat for Outreach will be held at Kamloops Gospel Chapel (Kamloops, BC), April 26-28. Geared for both men and women with a heart for evangelism. Plenary

sessions, workshops, and some practicums in the community. Harold Summers (BC) will be the speaker. Cost: couples \$40.00 CDN and singles \$30.00 CDN.

Craig Funston
c/o Kamloops Gospel Chapel
1365 Tranquille Road
Kamloops, BC V2B 3K5
(604) 578-7707

CHICAGO AREA

The Chicago Area Spring Conference at Palos Hills Christian Assembly is to be held April 26-28. Speakers expected are Doug Kazen (WA), Larry Price (FL), and Alan Schetelich (NJ).

Robert Fiebig
7661 Sequoia Drive
Palos Heights, IL 60463-1932
(708) 448-2552

YOUTH CONFERENCE

The believers at High Point Bible Chapel (Davenport, IA) will be hosting their Youth Spring Conference, April 26-28. The chapel is located at 2600 West 63rd, in Davenport. All area youth are invited to attend:

Will Scott at (319) 264-2046

HUNGRY FOR MISSIONARY INFO?

Plan to attend the Second Annual Missionary Breakfast in St. Catharines, ON, on April 27, at 8:30 AM. The buffet breakfast will be held at the Parkway Inn, 327 Ontario St. Tickets are CDN \$12.00. For reservations, contact:

Bill Allison
3199 Sovereign Road
Burlington, ON L7M 2W1
(905) 336-8101
Fax: (905) 336-2881

IN THE ROCKIES

The Limon Bible Chapel (Limon, CO) will host their annual conference, April 27-28. Speakers include: William MacDonald (CA), Carroll Van Ryn (FL), and Ben Parmer (CO). Contact:

Limon Bible Chapel
P.O. Box 1208
Limon, CO 80828
(719) 775-9788 or 346-8547

OHIO BIBLE STUDY

The Ohio Bible Study Program is conducted one Saturday each month. It starts at 9:30 AM and continues to 3:00 PM. There are no fees for the program. The program is held at Believer's Bible Chapel (Leroy, OH). The next study is May 25 on the topic: *Overview of the Minor Prophets* by Ross Rainey (MI). Contact:

Mike Thomas (216) 992-7822
Doug Tryon (814) 899-0063
Guy Mehling (216) 835-2127

TWO KINDS OF FOOD

The saints at the Hamilton Bible Fellowship (Trenton, NJ) will hold a potluck dinner, Saturday, April 27, beginning at 6:00 PM. Special guest speaker will be Randy Amos (NY). Contact:

Tom Freeman (609) 585-1835
Harry Neil (609) 890-0450

UNDER THE PINES

Spring Shiloh Conference will be held May 3-5 at Verdugo Pines Bible Camp. Speakers expected: Jamie Hull (CO) and William MacDonald (CA).

Stephanie Stratton
9312 Rancho Street
Alta Loma, CA 91710
(909) 987-6421

THE ROYAL FAMILY AT WINDSOR

The 19th Annual Ladies' Missionary Conference will be held May 4 at the Oakwood Bible Chapel (2514 Cabana Road, W., Windsor, ON). Speakers expected are Ruth Schwertfeger (WI) and Carol Dolinsky (MI).

Joyce Armstrong
(519) 969-6435

WORKER'S & ELDER'S

The 4th Annual Ontario Worker's & Elder's Conference will be held May 7-9, 1996, at the West Fifth assembly in Hamilton, ON. The theme for this year's conference: *The Holy Spirit: His Person and Work*. Neil Dougal (MA) and Alan Parks (MD) will be keynote speakers. Contact:

W & E Conference
P.O. Box 26044,
RPO King St.
Oshawa, ON L1H 8R4

SPRING TIME AT FOREST

Forest Gospel Hall (Forest, ON) will host its Annual Spring Conference May 10-12. George Telfer (ON) and Alan Parks (MD) are the scheduled speakers. Friday evening will feature a concert by Alan Parks. There will be ministry from these brethren on Saturday and Sunday. Contact:

Alex McIntosh
PO Box 126
Forest, ON N0N 1J0
(519) 786-5038

PROPHECY CONFERENCE

The Annual Northwest Workers' Conference will be held at Lakeside Bible Camp, WA, May 14-17. Guest speaker, Doug Kazen (WA), will be speaking on prophetic truths. Cost \$54.00 US.

Dean Mills
2500 South 370 St., #89
Federal Way, WA 98003

CALIFORNIA HERE WE COME!

The 5th Annual Spring Conference will be held at Claremont Bible Chapel (Claremont, CA) May 17-19. Speakers expected: Jack Heseltine (OR) and J. B. Nicholson (MI).

Henry Kamena
1400 W. 13th Street, Sp. 91
Upland, CA 91786-2970
(909) 985-0437

ARE YOU WELL AWARE OF DELAWARE?

The saints at Brandywine Bible Chapel, Wilmington, DE, would appreciate prayer concerning a series of youth conferences to be held on the third Saturday of each month from the fall through the spring. Young people from PA, DE, NJ, NY, MD, and elsewhere are expected to attend. Beginning at 10 AM with three Bible study sessions, the afternoon will include tract distribution and other planned activities. The day will end with an evening meeting and fellowship time. Accommodations will be provided by local families for those traveling from a distance. The first conference is planned for May 18 with John Bjorlie (MI) speaking on the subject: "Fishers of Men; the Great Commission."

John/Tim Bhatt
(610) 882-0455
Internet: tcb3@lehigh.edu

BY THE SEA

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Annual Young Singles Conference held at

Seabrook Island, near Charleston, SC. Singles ages 21 to 40-something are encouraged to attend the weekend of May 24-27 for a fresh look at the foundation chapters of the book of Proverbs with George Cofresi (SC). Limited space; register early! Contact:

Skip or Cathy Elliott
(803) 873-7083

YOUTH CONFERENCE

The Ottawa Valley Assemblies will be holding their 2nd Annual Spring Youth Conference on May 24-25, 1996, at the Rideauview Bible Chapel (Ottawa, ON). Speaker will be James Martin (ON). Contact:

Shawn Abigail
(613) 820-9720 or E-Mail:
ad873@freenet.carleton.ca

A GREEN WOOD IN TORONTO?

"God's Word for Troubled Times" is the theme of a special weekend planned for May 24-26, Lord willing, at Greenwood Gospel Chapel, 949 Greenwood Avenue, Toronto, ON. Brother William MacDonald is the expected speaker. For more information, call:

Greg Edwards
(905)837-6672

NOT FAR TO GO

Meadow Ridge Bible Chapel (West Fargo, ND) has announced their 1996 Memorial Day Weekend Bible Conference to be held on May 24-27. Steve Hulshizer (PA) and Steve Price (KS) are the expected speakers. Contact:

Myron and Kathy Martinson
R.R. 2, Box 197
Moorhead, MN 56560
(218) 233-9790

SKYLAND CONFERENCE

The 40th Annual Skyland Bible Conference will be held June 29-July 5 at Covenant College (Lookout Mtn., TN). Speakers expected are Tom Taylor (PA) and James Cochrane (Dominican Republic). Nursery and children's meetings. Contact:

John or Tina Taylor, Registrars
P.O. Box 754
Jamestown, NC 27282
(910) 454-4927

ASSEMBLY NOTES

USA—South: A new assembly has started in Lewisville, TX, meeting at the Greater Lewisville Realtors Association each Lord's Day, but one. Lord willing, a site is soon to be purchased for a building. For more information:

John Ferris (214) 539-8702
George John (214) 492-7608

USA—Midwest: Five years ago the Lord helped a group of concerned believers establish an Arabic speaking assembly in the Detroit-Windsor areas. Several conversions and baptisms have taken place during the last quarter of 1995. Please pray for an open door, open utterance, and opened understanding in the Word of the Lord. More information on this work can be obtained by contacting:

Ata and Salwa Mikhael
PO Box 445
Hazel Park, MI 48030
(810) 545-8419

USA—West: During the present winter months, the assembly at Everett, WA, has convened a series of 10 intensive Monday night Bible studies on the subject "Egypt to Canaan." The sessions

are led by Doug Kazen. Saints from several assemblies have been attending and the series has been encouraging so far.

Canada—West: For several years it has been the exercise regarding the establishment of an assembly testimony in the town of Salmon Arm, BC. Harold and Mabel Wagler have resided in Salmon Arm for some years, prayerfully working in this direction. More recently, Dave and Kay Wilkerson have moved to the city from their former field of labor farther north. Others have recently moved to Salmon Arm and the Lord is blessing.

The Comox Valley Assembly meets in the Cedar Room, Collingwood Inn, 1675 Cliff Avenue, Courtenay, BC. This assembly is a small group of believers seeking to obey the Lord and follow the guidelines set out in Acts 2:42. For further details, call:

Mel Peever (604) 923-6719
Rowland Mills (604) 752-8260
Fax (604) 752-8370

COMMENDATIONS

The Christians gathering at Believers Bible Chapel in Painesville, OH, are delighted to commend *Michael and Laura Thomas* to the work and care of the Lord. They have been in happy fellowship and active in much of the work of the gospel in the assembly. The saints commend them to an itinerant ministry among assemblies of God's people. Please join in asking the Lord's direction and help in their lives as they work in the gospel.

The saints meeting at the

Greenwood Hills Assembly (Fayetteville, PA) lovingly commend *Mrs. Michelle (Shelly) Johnson* to the work of the Lord in the Philippines where she will labor with her husband, Dr. David Johnson. During the past few years Shelly has been on the staff of Greenwood Hills Bible Conference where she has demonstrated her love for the Lord and her desire to serve Him.

PRESENT WITH THE LORD

Mrs. Genevieve A. Rodgers, widow of Willard Rodgers, went to be with the Lord on February 15, 1996. Genevieve was born January 15, 1906 in Bismarck, ND. The Lord took Willard home to be with Himself in 1994. A faithful help-meet to her preacher husband, she is survived by four of her six children, 13 grandchildren, and 21 great grandchildren. She died in her sleep at the home of her daughter, Beth, in Waco, TX. Funeral services were held at Keystone Bible Chapel in Omaha, NE. Tom Baird of Des Moines, IA gave the message.

Garland Fesche, beloved wife of Edwin Fesche for 60 years, passed from this life February 16. She had spent the last two years in the Longport Home (NJ). With her husband, she shared many years of vigor in pioneer work. Along with her two sons, she is survived by four grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Now relieved from the pains of this mortal body—she is with Christ which is far better.

ARE YOU MOVING?

Please inform us of address changes well in advance!



Here I Raise My Ebenezer!

What links the mountains of Kentucky, the plains of Texas, and the islands of the Philippines? For the Prestons, it is the will of God.

The believers at South Lexington Bible Fellowship (Lexington, KY) have joined with the saints at Manvel Bible Chapel (Manvel, TX) in commending Harold and Vena Preston to the work of the Lord in the Philippines where they previously served from 1958-66. Pray for them as they desire to help equip local brethren for ministry, assist the missionaries, and preach the Word in a number of assemblies.

I grew up in a little community in Kentucky called Ebenezer, a name taken for the Hebrew for "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (1 Sam. 7:12). The name was quite appropriate considering how the Lord has led in my life. I can truly say, "Hitherto by Thy help I've come." Truly, our God is gracious and merciful, and I never cease to thank and praise Him for the way in which He has led.

My parents were God-fearing people. We had regular Bible reading and prayer in our home and attended church meetings regularly. My father died when I was seven years old and my mother was left with five boys to rear in the Depression years. Those were difficult times, but my mother's faith never wavered. She was a woman of prayer and faith in God who never failed us. Yet although I had for years heard the gospel and was often under conviction, I never made a profession of faith until I was fourteen years old.

In my boyhood days I dreamed of being a pilot and read everything I could find on flying. When I turned seventeen, I begged my mother to sign for me to enter the Air Force, but she refused. As with so many young men in those days, I was drafted into the Army. After three weeks in basic training, I took pneumonia and was in the hospital for three weeks. Thus I had to join another unit to start training all over again. As a result of various delays, obviously of the Lord's making, I arrived in the Philippines just as the war ended.

After serving two years, I was discharged and entered flight training to fulfill a life-long dream and to make a career of flying. However, just before finishing my commercial li-

cense, the Lord began to really deal with me because I was ignoring His will in my life. It was then that my godly mother said, "Son, why don't you quit running from the Lord.

Before you were born, I committed you to the Lord to preach the gospel."

What wisdom and faith! I was twenty-two years old and she had never told me that before. In spite of my waywardness, she never ceased to pray and never gave up. How could I resist any longer? Under deep conviction I surrendered, and made a public confession of my sin to the local church. I decided to give up flying and enrolled in Bible college to prepare for the ministry.

While in college I met and married Vena Sheperson, a godly young lady who loved the Lord and had a heart for the mission field. As someone has well said, "He gives the very best to those who leave the choice with Him," for indeed "her price is far above rubies" (Prov. 31:10). What a help-meet to me and a mother to our six children!

Upon graduation from Bible college, I was accepted as minister of a small church in central Kentucky. During those years I saw many inconsistencies in our teaching and practices. I had a difficult time justifying my position as "the minister." After five years in that position, my wife and I were burdened to become missionaries in the Philippines and in 1958 arrived in Manila. Soon our fellowship realized the need for an airplane in our work and I was approached to be the pilot and to head up the flight program. Here the Lord had given back something I loved so much and had given over to Him.

In the flight program I made contact with many other missionaries as I was often called



Here I Raise My Ebenezer!

upon to make flights for other groups. Once I was asked to fly to the island of Palawan and bring Maisie Sutherland back to Manila. That was our first time to meet Sandy and Maisie. Len Brooks and I made a couple of flights to the U.S. Naval Base at Subic Bay on behalf of Faith Academy. We became acquainted with the Brooks, Engles, Haacks, and other missionaries at various functions.

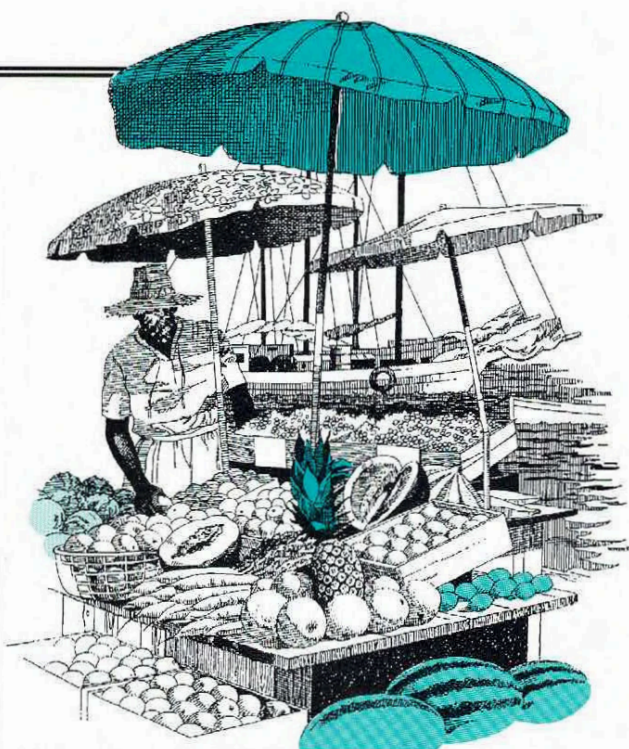
In 1960, my coworker and I made a flight to North Borneo, now Sabah, to survey the field for possible expansion of our work. A dear old brother, G. C. Willis, in Sandakan, extended us much kindness and hospitality. From there we went to Jesselton and our contact was a member of the Tanjung Arul assembly who invited us to the meeting on the Lord's Day. Geoffrey Bull and his wife were laboring there at the time and invited us to lunch after the meeting. After a time of fellowship, he said, "We meet this evening to remember the Lord and you brethren are welcome to meet with us." I shall never forget that meeting. A few people were already there when we arrived, quietly seated in prayer, meditation, and reading. As the meeting got under way, I was soon aware that this is what I had seen in the Scriptures, but never in practice. It was obvious that the Holy Spirit was directing, as one brother after another led with a hymn, a prayer of praise, or shared a portion from the Word concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

I suddenly felt at home. What a time and place for the Lord to reveal to me the precious truth concerning New Testament Church gathering. Had it not been for the flight program I would have had no reason for that trip to Borneo.

This assembly was made up of several nationalities: Burmese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Chinese, Scottish, and perhaps others. I've often referred to this meeting as a bit of heaven on earth as it was a miniature of Revelation 5, "For Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation."

We learned a great deal from that trip to Borneo, but to me it was God's gracious way of showing me a true New Testament gathering. I came back to the Philippines with a new vision and purpose and began to put some of these truths into practice in our work on Mindoro Island.

Upon our return to the US in 1966, we could no longer continue in the same church fellowship, so we moved to Houston, Texas, where we found happy



fellowship with the assemblies there. For fourteen years I worked for the J. C. Penney Co. to support my family, all the while ministering to assemblies in Houston, Manvel, Beaumont, Golden, and occasionally at San Antonio and Austin.

Some efforts had been made to establish an assembly testimony in eastern Kentucky, but nothing ever took root. There was only one assembly in the whole state, meeting in the home of Dick and Phyllis Reetzke in Louisville, so Vena and I prayed almost daily for fourteen years that the Lord would raise up a testimony right in the center of the state. In 1981 we heard of three families in Lexington who were interested in establishing an assembly. In 1982 we were commended by the assembly in Manvel, Texas, to the work in Lexington. Today there is a small, but lively assembly there that is going on well for the Lord. He has also raised up another assembly at Owensboro, KY. Pray for these assemblies.

In January of this year my wife and I returned to the Philippines to labor as the Lord directs. We can truly say again, "Hitherto by Thy help we've come." Brethren, pray for us that we may have the health, strength, and wisdom to see some fruitful years for the Lord in this country.

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What's Going On?

REACHING OUT

Mike and Anne-Marie Attwood serve the Lord in Kilkenny, Ireland and have recently informed UPLOOK of some exciting events coming up in the will of the Lord. Mike writes, "We are planning what will be a new venture for the assembly this year. As you may know, we have had several evangelistic evenings and have been encouraged by the number of unbelievers that have come to such events. However, we are conscious of the long gaps between events, perhaps 4-6 weeks. We have decided this year to try our first week-long gospel mission. Joe Reese (ON) will be coming over in May for our Annual Bible Conference May 4-6, and he has been asked to speak at the mission May 13-19. The theme is *Hope in a World of Despair*. We would ask you to pray regularly for this event. We hope to do much by way of advertising and door to door work prior to the event, but we are very conscious of our need of God to work in a mighty way."

CLOSER TO GOD

The capital city of Senegal—Dakar—has a peculiar distinction these days. Approximately 90,000 young people can be found "pan-handling" on many of the city's streets. When questioned, they respond that they do not beg because they are poor, but rather because they are doing the bidding of their *marabout*, or Muslim

religious leaders. On an average day a beggar might take in \$200-\$300 to finance the marabouts' projects. "If you do what your marabout tells you, you draw closer to God," was the comment one 25-year-old man told a reporter for the *New York Times*. "My master taught me that when you stop chasing after the world, heaven comes to you." Senegal is 92% Muslim. —Pulse

GOD GIVETH THE INCREASE

America is headed for anarchy or revival in 5-10 years, researcher George Barna predicted during a February 19 seminar in Nashville, TN. The church has not prevented a massive moral and ethical decline in America, he said. Despite the growth of some churches, there has been no increase overall in people becoming Christians. Rather, 70-80% of church growth in America is "transfer" growth, or movement of Christians from one church to another. It is reported of the first century church that they "continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers...praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:42-47). Have we stopped following the pattern for church growth in this century? —NIRR

NOT MY LANGUAGE

In a recent article in *Newsweek*, feminist Naomi Wolf sharply criticized some in the pro-choice camp for refusing to acknowledge that abortion involves a real

death or that some women have lasting moral nightmares. Wolf met with strong, pro-choice women who privately confessed that they light a candle every year on the birthday of the baby they didn't have. She also finds it increasingly difficult, in these days of "Mozart for the belly, framed sonogram photos and home fetal-heartbeat stethoscopes" to accept the pro-choice language that calls unwanted babies mere "uterine material."

MISSIONARY TELEPHONE NEWS—IT'S FOR YOU!

Please pray for the request that those serving on the front lines in other countries have made available to MSC Canada:

David and Grace Croudace (Zambia)—Schools have started again and our brother and sister have begun teaching the Word in some new Grade 11 classes. They write, "Looking back over the years...working among High School pupils has been one of the most fruitful outreaches we have been involved in."

Neal and Alice Thomson (Venezuela)—Recently a special meeting occurred to commemorate the formation of the first assembly in Puerto Cabello, 80 years ago. Some of the 10 area assemblies attended making about 300-400 in attendance. Our brother and sister would appreciate your prayers as they labor to see new assemblies formed.

Mike and Rachel Maletich (Other Areas)—"Please pray! the State Department is trying to decide whether or not to allow children to reside in our country of

service. Please pray that the Lord would direct this decision as it affects the future of our ability to work here." —Source: MSC

NOTHING SACRED

In a February 12 [*Newsweek*] article, Kenneth Woodward writes of a growing trend of rewriting some of the old hymns by the liberal United Church of Christ. Like recent translations of the Bible, the new hymnal avoids using male pronouns for God. But all the changes are not cosmetic. Many of the lyric changes smack in the face of what the Scriptures teach and give rise to heresy in new lyrics. For example: "Be Thou My Vision" no longer exclaims, "Thou my great Father, I thy true son/Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one." Instead the new lyrics read like a Valentine verse to an androgynous parent, "Mother and Father, you are both to me/now and forever, your child I will be." As we venture further into a world culture that is advancing its efforts to influence the Church, even a simple task like choosing a hymnbook for assembly use is by no means trivial. We should be characterized by our willingness to "prove all things" by the Word of God. If it doesn't fit, then it should be left alone.

THE HIGHEST POSITION

In the February issue of the *National & International Religion Report* it is stated that Pope John Paul II warned Catholics not to take their allegiance to the Virgin Mary to "unhealthy extremes." Devotees should make the distinction between the human nature of Mary and the divine na-

ture of Jesus, he said. "Within the church, the Virgin holds the highest position after Christ" but Catholics should "abstain from all false exaggeration" of devotion to her. —NIRR

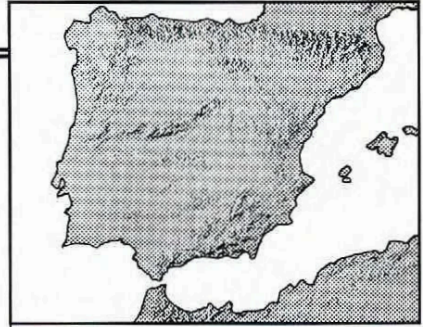
A CHANCE MEETING?

Mark and Angie Hartley were commended by the assembly in Greenville, SC, in 1992 to serve the Lord in Palencia, Spain. In January they wrote UPLOOK to report of the work that continues in the gospel in that part of the world. Here is an excerpt:

"The last two weeks of December we have been busy hand delivering calendars to friends and people we have met since coming to Palencia two years ago. Although most of the conversations haven't been very noteworthy, several have been a true blessing with what seems to be some very good contacts that we can follow-up over the next few weeks.

"I had quite a shock when I went to deliver one calendar to a friend. Pedro Pablo was a man I met going door-to-door. I was able to share the gospel with him on more than one occasion. Although he agreed that the things I said to him seemed true, he wasn't willing to pay the price and so rejected the gospel. He had numerous health problems ranging from kidney problems to cancer. When I went to his door this time, his wife said he wasn't there. I asked her if I could leave the calendar with her.

"When she opened the door to let me in she told me he had died a few weeks before. My mind immediately thought of my dear friend standing before the Great



White Throne, naked, ashamed, without Christ, and on his way to the lake of fire. I could barely hold back the sorrow I felt at that moment. His wife influenced him in the past to not listen to me since I wasn't a Roman Catholic. I expressed my sympathy for her grief and said I would pray for her and her family. Her sorrow is unquenchable.

"Daily people are dying all around us, bound for an eternity without God. How long will we wait before we do all we can to bring them the message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ?"

ALARMING BABIES

At the Kirya Maternity Hospital in Tel-Aviv, Israel, a new security system is being introduced that is sure to alarm everyone if parents are not careful. Each newborn receives two stickers upon birth, one on the stomach and another on the back. If any baby leaves the hospital still wearing the bar-coded tags a loud alarm will ring out much like in any department store. The idea came from the hospital's chief of security, Ram Barlai, formerly head of security at the Shekem department store chain. "At Shekem, such security systems have been working successfully," he said, "I guess it was because of this that I thought we should treat each baby like a product." —*Jerusalem Post*

U

You Can't Keep a Good Man Down?

John Adams has served the Lord in North America and overseas since 1945. He presently resides at Salem Acres in Alberta but travels extensively to bring aid to Third World believers in association with the ministry of Beth-Haven Beyond.

A Christian's home in Fllak, Albania, Feb. 1995.

Photo by John Adams

You can't keep a good man down." I don't know who first coined that expression, but it is simply not true. You *can* keep a good man down by failing to give him the resources that will lift him up.

Millions of people are kept down, and just as many die unnecessarily every year because favored Christians like you and me ignore the Bible's plain teaching that God measures our faith by how we respond to the poor—despite what we do on Sunday morning.

Every believer in Christ thrills when the subject of the Resurrection of the Lord is mentioned. We rejoice as we ponder the five blessings, listed in 1 Corinthians 15 (vv. 54-58), that are ours because of His resurrection. But did you know that the Bible speaks much more about our attitude to the poor than it does about the Resurrection?

One-quarter of the people of the world wallow in the mire of deep poverty. They are held in a grip that just won't let go. Thirty-six thousand children die every day because of malnutrition and starvation. Read that number again—36,000 every day! Do we stand idly by? As caring people, who have been blessed with so much, we cannot and must not allow this tragedy to continue.

The Apostle James asks a question: "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of

daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things that are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

Since God cares so much for the needy, does it surprise us that He wants His people to do the same? Believers in the One who came to preach the gospel to the poor (Lk. 4:18) are morally obligated to respond to the cry of their poorer brethren and sisters.

Our attitude to the poor is so serious that the Saviour said there is a time coming when neglect of the poor will not be forgiven. Have you noticed who the Lord said will "go away into everlasting punishment"? It includes those who willingly blind their minds and hearts to the less fortunate who need food and clothing (Mt. 25:46). Jesus warned men that there is a solemn day of reckoning for those who do not feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the prisoners. It is an evidence of an unregenerate heart.

Now, clever theologians will give seven reasons why the words of the Lord Jesus should not be taken literally, or that He really didn't mean what He said, but the simple believer in the veracity of the Bible will admit that the Saviour meant exactly what He said. He will revise his lifestyle accordingly.

I have heard many messages on the sexual perversity of Sodom but that tells only half the story. According to Ezekiel 16:49, one important reason why God destroyed Sodom was because it stubbornly refused to share with the poor.

Affluent Christians remember Sodom's misconduct and forget its unconcern for the needy. Is it because the former is less upsetting?

Some, who inwardly feel convicted but who are not anxious to allow it to affect their



Beth-Haven Beyond

Beth-Haven Beyond has been established to provide small loans (most for less than \$100) to Third World believers to help them start businesses such as dressmaking, vegetable gardening, baking, or backyard animal raising. These loans, when repaid, are made available to others. For more information, contact:

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checkbook, will maintain that God has said that His own will never beg for bread and quote Psalm 37:25. "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor His seed begging bread." We, incorrectly, add that the Lord has promised that His seed will never beg for bread. But is that what David wrote? No! David did not say that God has promised that His seed will not beg for bread.

Let me remind you that Psalm 37:25 is not a promise; it's what David said was his experience (although even he asked for the showbread). David may never have seen it, but I have. I remember, in 1929, seeing Christians lining up at a food bank and coming away with a loaf of bread and a can of pork and beans. And many believers today in Third World countries are begging for bread.

Does it not bother us at all that some of our brethren and sisters in Pakistan and Nigeria and Rwanda are starving while we callously say, "Be ye warmed and filled," yet do nothing about it? Are we not concerned that many dear Christians in Cuba, (Havana is just 90 miles from the US), whom I visited, have to sit on the ground under the stars because they have no money to erect a shelter for their meetings? I believe the God of the poor wants us all to feel deep pain over the agony and anguish that torment the less fortunate.

Will you agree that the majority of affluent Christians of all theological labels have bowed the knee to Mammon? If forced to choose between defending

You Can't Keep a Good Man Down?

their luxuries and following Jesus among the oppressed, I am afraid they will imitate the rich young ruler. If we are determined to follow the Master's steps, then the rich must live more simply than the poor may simply live. Does The Book not say "that there may be equality"? (2 Cor. 8:14).

As followers of Christ, we have a responsibility to assist the poor in a manner which promotes equality and respect. The Lord commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves. This not only means that we should treat each other as equals, but that we are to actively provide each other with opportunities to live as equals. In the comfort of our North American lifestyle, this is a challenge that few accept, but to which all of us are obligated.

I have taken humanitarian aid to a number of Third World countries and it is almost heartbreaking to see the appalling conditions under which some dear Christians are forced to live. In Albania, I watched elderly ladies chasing rats away from piles of rotting garbage, then eating the refuse.

Recently, one writer jerked me into painful attention with this statement, "The dollar value of the food North Americans throw in the garbage each year equals about one-fifth of the total annual income of all the Christians in Africa. It is a sinful abomination for one part of the world's Christians living in the Northern Hemisphere to grow richer year by year while our brothers and sisters in the Third World ache and suffer for lack of minimal health care, minimal education, and even—in some cases—just enough food to escape starvation." I cannot read that without feeling convicted.

And are there rewards when we choose to obey the simple commands of the Lord and do more than just say, "Be ye warmed and filled"? Listen to Proverbs 19:17, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord." Imagine the Creator of all things reckoning that what we do for the poor is a loan to Himself!

Also Proverbs 28:27, "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse."

God can have our money and not have our hearts, but He cannot have our hearts without having our money. Remember, the greatest use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it.

Yes, by failing to give a hand up, we *can* keep a good man down.

U

Hindered or Helped?



“We would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us” (1 Thess. 2:18).

This may sound like defeatism. Is it possible that this great man of faith should pen such a confession as this? “I wanted to go. I planned to go. But Satan stopped me!” What can we make of that?

There are professing Christians who doubt the existence of a personal devil, and some true Christians sincerely believe that during this present age Satan is shut away as in Revelation 20:3. I have to disagree. I note that both James (4:7) and Peter (1 Pet. 5:9) instruct me to resist the devil, and that John, while stating that the Son of God was manifested to destroy his works, yet closes his first epistle with: “We know that...the whole world is in the power of the evil one” (1 Jn. 5:19).

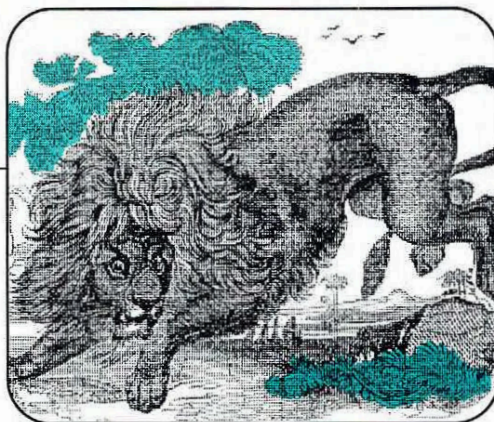
From time to time Paul makes references to this evil entity called Satan. This confession, however, is a startling one: “Satan stopped me!” We know Satan as the tempter (1 Thess. 3:5) and the accuser (Rev. 12:10) and are not surprised to have him described as the hinderer. But we do not expect him to be successful with God’s people, least of all in the case of Christ’s chosen apostle. But Paul’s statement is clear. Paul most earnestly wished to revisit Thessalonica and felt sincerely that such a visit was a spiritual necessity for the church there. Nevertheless he failed to go.

It is possible that on his third missionary journey Paul was able to call in on the Thessalonians, but as this is not recorded, we are left with the stark proposition that this satanic obstacle was never overcome. We are just left with the scripture stating that Satan was able to stop Paul from making that journey.

It would be easy to opine that since God overrules all Satan’s activities, this hindrance was similar to the time when the Spirit of Jesus prevented Paul from journeying into Asia (Acts 16:7), but there is no such indication here. What can we say? Instead of embarking on some speculative explanation, I find it more inspiring to offset this problem by discovering what Satan could *not* do.

HE COULD NOT STOP PRAYER

In almost the same breath with which the



apostle reported this setback, he went on to describe his own reactions: “For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly...” (1 Thess. 3:9-10). It is the devil’s aim to stop prayer, but we thank God that he cannot. If we will, we can go on praying, as Paul certainly did. In the Old Testament we read how Satan did his utmost to hinder Daniel’s intercessions, but he completely failed (Dan. 6). In the New Testament we read how he used Herod’s cruelty to dishearten the Jerusalem church, but he only succeeded in driving them to increased prayer (Acts 12:5).

Satan can and does stifle prayer, but when that happens the fault is not with him but with us. We are the ones who stop. We may do so because there seems to be no sign of an answer from God and we succumb to our own feeling that we are lacking in faith. Actually faith has nothing to do with feelings but everything to do with the character of our God. I imagine that Paul felt deeply disappointed at the repeated satanic hindrances. He tells us that he could no longer bear it (3:1, 5), so he took some action, but most of all he kept on praying. Satan could keep him from journeying to Thessalonica, but he could not keep him from the Throne of Grace.

He cannot stop us either. Sometimes we may feel quite dead about a matter, with no optimism, like the psalmist who had to confess that his soul was cast down and disquieted within him. But that is the very time to pray. I have found it so, and seen gracious answers to prayers which I would hardly dare

to claim as prayers of faith. The psalmist clearly realized that before he could talk to God he must speak quite firmly to himself, insisting that his feelings had nothing to do with sheer faith and that the time for praising would come if he hoped in his God (Ps. 42:5, 11; 43:5). "Pray without ceasing" Paul urged these Thessalonian friends (5:17), not meaning that we should do nothing else—far from it, but that we should never give up. In that realm we can be unstoppable.

HE COULD NOT STOP SPIRITUAL GROWTH

This is a heartening epistle. Many of Paul's letters had to do with urging the saints to change their ways, but in this case he simply pressed them to keep going on, using the phrase, "more and more." Clearly they were growing spiritually all the time. With regard to pleasing God, he told them to proceed "just as you are doing" (4:1). When it comes to love of the brethren he says: "Indeed you do, but do so more and more" (4:10), and later he writes: "encourage and build one another up, just as in fact you are doing" (5:11). Satan could stop Paul from visiting them, but he could not stop their spiritual growth.

i) *A substitute*: They were growing spiritually in spite of the fact that they did not have the rich ministry they wished for. Paul perhaps may be forgiven if he imagined that their growth depended on his teaching of them, but he was spiritual enough to recognize that this was not so. 2 Thessalonians opens with the words: "We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, because your faith is growing abundantly and your love increasing," though he himself had not been there to instruct them. They grew although they only had a substitute, the young Timothy, to preach to them. One can imagine one saint asking another if Paul was going to preach, and getting the answer: "Oh no! It's just Timothy again!"

Well, praise God, Satan evidently could not stop Timothy from going, and in any case he could not stop the saints from growing, even if their favorite preacher was not there. He was powerless to hinder their growth in Christ, provided they fed on the Word. If we cease to grow spiritually, we must not blame others and we cannot attribute our failure alone to Satan, for in this matter he can only operate if he finds some basis in us on which to work. Growth is not automatic. Paul evidently had some concern about them, and that is why he sent Timo-

thy (1 Thess. 3:5). Happily Timothy brought back a good report which quieted the apostle's fears. Their faith and love were strong and always growing. In that matter they were unstoppable.

ii) *Internal problems*: Of course they had their problems. Every church does. And Satan does his utmost to exaggerate them. To their perplexity and sorrow, some of their number had failed to experience healing from their sickness and had died—perhaps it might have seemed prematurely (4:13). Witnessing, a matter of prime importance, can bring its problems. The apostle had to curb exaggerated behavior by reminding them of his instructions "to aspire to live quietly, to mind your own business and to work with your hands" (4:11). And they were in danger of being shaken in mind and excited by plausible teaching not authorized by scriptural truth (2 Thess. 2:1-2). Happily Satan's attempts to weaken and divide them by means of these problems failed; faith and love triumphed and enabled them to make progress together in the will of God.

iii) *External pressures*: Satan is the god of this world. He is the fierce antagonist of Christ and His Church. The Lord Jesus foresaw and warned of this, and from the first the Thessalonians found that they were involved in the bitter conflict which comes to those who receive and obey the gospel (1 Thess. 2:14-15). Yet they grew in grace.

It is surely a fact that of all the seven churches to which Paul wrote, the Thessalonians are singled out by him as being victims of aggressive satanic attacks. Both of their two letters stress this element of wicked persecution. It is most significant that, at the same time, this is the church most commended for its steadfastness and growth. Paul boasted of them to other churches (2 Thess. 1:4). In some strange way, Satan not only could not hinder their growth, but rather contributed to it. It seems like a New Testament paralleled to the Old Testament record of Israel in Egypt: "The more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied" (Ex. 1:12).

In his closing words of the first letter, Paul urged the saints in Thessalonica always to rejoice and to give thanks in everything (5:16, 18). We notice that he wrote "in everything," and not "for everything." He lived up to his own teaching. In one brief sentence he voiced his personal disappointment at being stopped by Satan, but again and again he kept on expressing his delight in their turning Satan's trials

into faith's triumphs. His own spirit was quickened. "We live, if you stand fast in the Lord" he affirmed. "How can we thank God enough...?" (3:8-9).

HE COULD NOT STOP THE WRITTEN WORD

We have surprisingly little of Paul's spoken messages, but we have a rich collection of what he wrote. No doubt at that time it may have seemed to him a matter of great importance that he should journey to Thessalonica. In the outcome, however, it was infinitely more important that he should write these two epistles to them—and us. It is not difficult for us to perceive that behind the activities of the hinderer we have the master-stroke of God.

Perhaps the Thessalonians felt that it was a pity that they should be deprived of Paul's presence and have to be content to have only a letter! But what a letter! It has traveled all over the world. It has endured through the centuries. It has been translated into hundreds of languages. God just laughed in derision at Satan's futile hindrance of His apostle and made it the occasion of a vital communication to His whole Church about His Day of glory.

God provided something much better. He gave them and us His written Word. They had no recording booth or shorthand reporter at Thessalonica so instead of a message of hope to a limited circle, the Lord inspired His servant to write it all down in a letter. Thank God, then, that Satan prevented Paul from going to Thessalonica if as a result he had to sit down and write these thrilling words. "So comfort one another with these words," he wrote. No doubt they did, reading them over and over. Through long and lonely years I too have been greatly comforted by the same words, and so have multitudes of others. The sermon that Paul did not himself preach has become the theme of countless other sermons. In various lands and on numerous occasions I have read them at a graveside. And the message is as true—and as needed—as ever it was.

Satan stopped Paul from going to Thessalonica, but he could not stop him from conveying God's Word to the world, and indeed it may have been the very hindrance which encouraged Paul to write it. The Lord Jesus is coming again. The New Testament is full of that message. This passage, however, has its

own special emphasis, firstly, that if we die before that day we will not miss any of its glory. Secondly, there is the stress on the comforting truth that when it happens, we will once again be all together, never again to taste the pain of separation, comfort coming to us because Satan hindered Paul.

HE CANNOT STOP THE RAPTURE

Like Paul, we all have private experiences of hindrance and frustration. In our limited understanding, death itself may seem to spoil our plans and expectations. Men say that the one great certainty of life is the fact that it must end.

But they are wrong. We have eternal life, and one day death is going to be swallowed up by life, for God in Christ has made us for this very purpose. For us there is only one certainty, and that is that our Lord will come from heaven to meet us as we are caught up to Him. Satan could stop Paul, and sometimes he may stop us, but when God's moment comes he will not be able to stop Christ from fulfilling His promise, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself."

No one, not even Satan, can delay that glorious moment. He could stop Paul then, but he will not be able to hinder him or any of the rest of us when the trumpet sounds. Christ will come down and we will go up, and there will be nothing between. God is always precisely on time and nothing can stop Him.

Paul wrote to the Philippians in sad condemnation of some who show their enmity to the cross of Christ by persistently focusing on earthly things. In contrast to such people, he reminded us that our true home is in heaven and that we show our love for Him who died to be our Saviour by looking eagerly for His return. When He comes to meet us on the resurrection morning, transforming us from our lowly condition into those who have bodies "like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3:21), we will enjoy a rapturous Homecoming.

The letter closes with a prayerful wish that we may be wholly sanctified in spirit, soul and body, in order that we may be blameless at that Coming. The final statement is expressed in the enheartening words: "Faithful is He who calls you, who will also do it" (5:24).

In other words, our God is unstoppable!

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OUR GOD IS UNSTOPPABLE!



James G. Deck

This eloquent representative of Nineteenth Century hymnody reminds us of a day when hymns and hymnwriters were not big business. Hymns were the outflow of devoted hearts, not inspired by concert tours and royalties. James G. Deck calls us back to the simplicity and sincerity of first love to Christ.

James George Deck (1807-1884) was born at Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, England, where his father, John Deck, was postmaster. Their godly Huguenot heritage was carried forward in Mrs. Deck's piety. She "never punished her children without first praying with them." Every evening she set aside one hour alone with God to pray for her eight children, and her children's children, and she had the joy of seeing every one come to Christ.

When only a teenager, James went through officer's training in Paris under one of Napoleon's generals, and was then commissioned to India in 1824 as an officer in the East India Company, in the 14th Madras Native Infantry. Of this time he would write:

*Alas! in mad rebellion,
I hoped there were no God:
I cared not for His favor,
Though trembling at His rod;
I wished His word a fable
That warned of wrath to come;
"No God," my heart would mutter,
"No future weal, or doom!"*

*And yet my mother taught me,
In tones so sweet and mild,
To know its holy pages
E'en when I was a child;
She read to me of Jesus,
Of all His grace and love;
And sought with tears my blessing—
His blessing from above.*

*Oh, why did I so madly
My mother's law forsake?
Oh, why did I so basely
God's righteous precepts break?
Oh, why did I so blindly
His warnings all despise,
And from the Friend of sinners
Avert my heart and eyes?*

Under such conviction he tried to shed his burden by self-improvement. He took his moralism seriously enough, once even sign-

ing a page of resolutions with his blood. But Mount Sinai did not engender liberty. Stricken by cholera, he returned to England in 1826 as a sick and humbled young man. His ambition was to become a heroic soldier and to eventually represent his hometown in parliament. But the sickly nineteen-year-old on the stretcher did not look too gallant, or dynamic.

His sister Clara had recently been converted listening to an evangelical Anglican, and she brought James to hear him. There "he was brought under the power of the gospel" and was converted. Old things passed away, and all things became new, his life's ambition then being to follow Jesus and win souls for the kingdom. Three years later, he married a godly young lady named Alicia Field.

Returning to India, he made a bold stand, witnessing alongside other Christian officers, and several soldiers became believers through his work. There in 1833 he met Anthony Norris Groves who may have influenced him in a major life decision. Distressed by a conflict of interests he saw in the goals of the military and the goal of the Christian, James took a stand for non-resistance and resigned his commission in the army. He returned to England in 1835 with his wife and two children, intending to become a clergyman like his father-in-law, Samuel Field.

While staying with his father-in-law at the vicarage of Hatherleigh in Devon, his second son, J. Field Deck was "christened." In conversation, Field complained to his son-in-law about those troublesome Baptists. This stirred James' curiosity to go to the Word of God to find what it said about baptismal regeneration and the sprinkling of infants. What he found, or should we say did not find, turned him against the errors in the Prayer Book. How could he ever be ordained as an Anglican priest? He could never consent "to all and everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer." He told Alicia, "I have left the army to become a clergyman, but now see that the Church of England is contrary to the Word of

God; what shall we do?"

She replied, "Whatever you believe to be the will of God, do it at any cost."

Leaving the Anglican Church and a future in a salaried pastorate, James and Alicia were baptized by immersion as believers. Once outside the auspices of the state church, he began to preach Christ wherever possible, all the while trusting the Lord to supply the young family's material needs. His son would later testify that his parents enjoyed "a trust never disappointed." James preached in the villages of Colaton, Raleigh, and Kingston. It was in Devon county that he contacted simple gatherings of Christians, and acquired both lifelong friendships and settled convictions about what the church is. Moving to Somerset county, he labored in the gospel in the little villages around Taunton. This was a happy time of ingathering and upbuilding.

The rediscovery of the blessed hope so rejoiced the believers that in that part of England singing was a trademark of the awakening. During this period (1838-1844), brother Deck penned his hymns, *Abba! Father! We Approach Thee; A Little While! Our Lord Shall Come; Lamb of God! Our Souls Adore Thee; and Jesus, We Remember Thee*. The themes of worship, consecration, and our Lord's return are prominent. *Hymns for the Use of the Church of Christ* was published by Robert C. Chapman in 1837. In 1839, *A Selection of Hymns* by Sir Edward Denny appeared. Deck's hymns were published as *Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs* in 1842. In 1838, George V. Wigram published a collection of hymns called *Hymns for the Poor of the Flock*. This hymnbook was the basis for *A Few Hymns and some Spiritual Songs Selected for the Little Flock* of 1856. The most common edition in use was edited by J. N. Darby in 1881. *The Little Flock* hymnbook has forty-four hymns by J. G. Deck and one by Deck's sister, Mary Jane Walker. Mary's husband, Edward Walker, was responsible for introducing Deck's hymns to the church at large by publishing *The Psalms and Hymns for Public and Private Worship* in 1855. This excellent hymnbook went into several editions. It contains the best of

Darby, Denny, and Chapman's poetry.

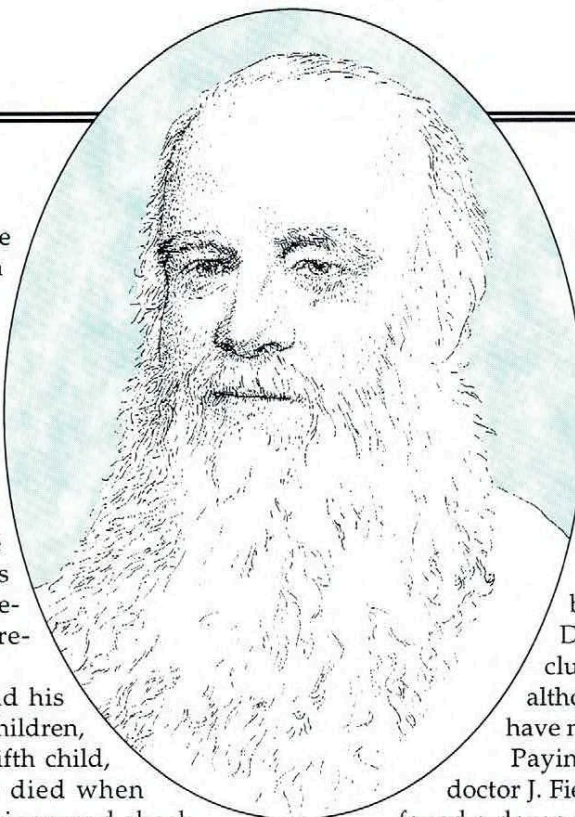
The Decks moved on to Weymouth in Dorset county. Some time after 1846, he began to work closely with Henry Dyer, who had come over from Plymouth. For a time, young Henry lived with the Deck family, and helped run a school. Henry had a remarkable gift in personal evangelism, as he and James preached from street corners to audiences smothered beneath the pretensions of high church traditionalism. Souls were won for God and assemblies of saints spontaneously formed. This was strenuous, but more taxing still was the rift among assemblies that occurred at that time called "the Bethesda Question." A poem he had written in 1838 had been cited by B. W. Newton as teaching the same doctrine that had caused the rift. Deck immediately issued a public retraction of the questionable lines. Beside this embarrassment, many of Deck's close associates, such as William Dyer, Henry's

older brother, had been too closely involved with the controversy. It was deeply upsetting to see assemblies Deck had worked with, such as in Taunton, alienated from neighboring congregations.

Deck's physical health wore so thin he backed off entirely from public ministry and shut down his schoolwork. Medical advisers thought a sea voyage might be the needed catalyst for his recovery. Whether Deck's problem was physical or emotional, we are not told. What we do know is that Deck's solution was to emigrate with Alicia and their eight children to New Zealand in 1852. Years later, J. N. Darby suggested in a letter that the reason that Deck left for New Zealand was that he "had fallen under the influence of Bethesda." Darby freely acknowledged that Deck was blessed by God in his evangelistic efforts, and was "of gentle spirit and godly," but he immediately added, "he had not the courage to investigate the matter, and fled." Was it that Deck had less courage than Darby, or did he possess more discretion? That will all be manifest at the judgment seat of Christ. What does seem apparent is that Deck did not enjoy the smell of the arena.

Deck purchased land and settled with the family

As Luther taught
the theme of the
Reformation in hymns,
and Wesley taught the
doctrines of primitive
Methodism by song,
so Deck gave popular
expression to the hope
of the Church and the
heavenly citizenship
of the Christian.



at Waiwerro, near the village of Motueka, in the Nelson province of the South Island. The climate seemed good, and it appeared that James might rebound when the family took another severe blow. Only three months into their new home, Alicia fell sick, and after a brief illness was ushered into the Lord's presence. Despite this shock, Deck's health was restored enough for him to resume his gospel labors.

In 1855, he remarried and his second wife bore him five children, but after the birth of their fifth child, both the baby and mother died when they contracted measles. This second shock occurred in the midst of fruitful gospel efforts. In the 1860s, he had begun to reach out to the Maoris near his home. Many of these Polynesians responded to the gospel and were baptized. Deck was a great impetus to the believers of European extraction to cross over cultural boundaries in order to preach the Lord of Heaven and Earth. Deck also promoted the distribution of literature and arranged for the translation of some of Charles Stanley's tracts into Maori.

In 1865, he moved his family to Wellington, and saw a happy, vigorous assembly raised up. The work spread out and several other meetings sprang up in the district. The hymn writer in Deck reappeared, too. He penned the baptismal hymn, *Around Thy Grave, Lord Jesus*, and the classic:

*The veil is rent, lo! Jesus stands
Before the throne of grace;
And clouds of incense from His hands
Fill all the Holy Place.*

This poem appeared in Deck's *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, published in 1876. It has one-hundred-and-one hymns and sixty-five poems. Deck's contribution to the hymns of the church is not in any poetic innovation. His style is not so different from Isaac Watts or Charles Wesley. It is the subject matter that has earned Deck a lasting place in our hymnbooks. His hymns are written as worshipful expressions directed to God. Deck would not approve of the way

popular evangelistic lyrics put words into the lost sinner's mouth. He felt that the song of the redeemed should be sung by the redeemed, directed to God.

G. V. Wigram visited New Zealand in the 1870s and John Darby also made the voyage in 1875, spending at least seven months ministering to the assemblies. According to Darby, Deck returned to the fold of exclusivism at the end of his life, although many of his descendants have not done so.

Paying a visit to his son, medical doctor J. Field Deck, in Invercargill, Deck found a dozen saints meeting in his home to break bread. The aged patriarch stayed on to help the fledgling assembly. Needing a rest from his exertions, he returned with his family to Motueka. But this time he was not going to recover. For the next two years he was a complete invalid. It was in August of 1884 that he entered by practical experience into what he had taught so many to sing:

*Soon the bright glorious day,
The rest of God, shall come,
Sorrow and sin shall pass away,
And we shall reach our home.
Then of the promised joy possessed,
Our souls shall know eternal rest.*

As Martin Luther taught the theme of the Reformation in hymns, and Charles Wesley taught the doctrines of primitive Methodism by song, so Deck gave popular expression to the hope of the Church and the heavenly citizenship of the Christian. David said, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." God's children not only believe the doctrines of God's Word, we sing them!

MATERIAL FOR THIS ARTICLE TAKEN FROM:

- Louis F. Benson, *The English Hymn, Its Development and Use in Worship*, Hodder & Stoughton (1915)
Jack Strahan, *Hymns and Their Writers*, Gospel Tract Publ.
C. Knapp, *Who Wrote Our Hymns*, Loizeaux Bros.
J. N. Darby, *Letters of J.N.D. (1868-1879)*, vol. 2



God's Guide for Giving

Is it true
that when
the heart
gets
converted,
the purse
gets
inverted?

There are two lines in John Bunyan's immortal allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which you

may readily recall:
*A man there was, though some did count him mad,
The more he cast away, the more he had.*

We are naturally so self-centered that even as Christians we can be deluded into thinking that the greatest happiness in life is *getting* rather than *giving*. Such an erroneous idea, however, is immediately dashed to pieces by the words of the Lord Jesus in Acts 20:35. In Acts 20, Luke recorded Paul's parting words to the Ephesian elders (one of the most touching scenes of Scripture) exhorting them "to remember

the words of the Lord Jesus...It is more blessed to give than to receive." The verb for "said" is in the present tense, indicating that this was something continually, or customarily, spoken by Christ. What a revelation to us of His blessed character!

The happiest people in the world are those Christians

who give joyously and generously to the Lord. If you do not believe this, then the challenge is set before you in God's Word to try it and see for yourself.

Let's proceed to a careful and practical study of this sometimes touchy yet important subject as unfolded in 2 Corinthians 9.

THE PRUDENCE OF PAUL'S APPROACH (9:1-4)

When the saints were in need, the Apostle Paul was prepared to make the strongest of appeals, and the tactful, courteous, prudent manner of his approach serves as a classic pattern for us all. He had already appealed to

the example of Christ (8:9); now he presses on them other points of persuasion. He begins by telling the Corinthians that they did not need to be reminded of their responsibility to give of their material means, but just the same he did remind them (9:1). In this instance, of course, the various offerings, including the one from the Corinthian believers, were to be used to help the poverty-stricken saints of Jerusalem and Judea. As A. C. Gaebelien has said: "Gentile believers were to show their appreciation for the blessing which they had received through the Jews, for salvation is of the Jews. We also see in this an illustration of the oneness of the body of Christ, how the members are to minister to each other" (*The Annotated Bible*, III, p. 181). Surely Scripture passages like this should prick the social conscience of Christians in wealthy, luxury-laden America, for it appears evident in many ways that we as members of the evangelical community have not ministered as generously as we might to the needs of other believers whose standard of living would appall us if we really entered into their circumstances. Granted, much has been done, but probably very few would argue the point that much more could and should be done (cf. Gal. 6:10). It's like the old saying, which may be applied to virtually every area of life, "When all is said and done, more is said than done."

At any rate, Paul had praised the Macedonians to the Corinthians (8:1-5), and this, in regard to the former's generous giving, for the Macedonians had given out of their own deep poverty and affliction. Now he tells the Corinthian saints that he had boasted of them to the Macedonians regarding their generous giving, and that those of Achaia had been ready with their collection a year before. In turn, the zeal of the Corinthian believers had inspired many others to give generously (9:2). Having, then, pledged themselves to help, Paul was afraid lest, after boasting of them, he should find them unprepared, and thus be ashamed of having spoken so confi-



dently of them (9:3-4).

It was necessary, therefore, that the Corinthians be stirred to their responsibility in this matter, so the apostle pressed upon them the following principles.

SOME PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN GIVING (9:5-14)

A. *It must be "a matter of bounty" and not of extortion* (9:5, RV). Paul wanted to avoid any appearance of acting like a tax collector to obtain what they had pledged. "...I should like it to be a spontaneous gift, and not money squeezed out of you by what I have said" (9:5, JBP).

B. *He that sows sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he that sows bountifully shall reap bountifully* (9:6). This is a well-established principle which speaks for itself (see Prov. 3:9, 10; 11:24-25).

C. *God loves a "cheerful" (Gk. "hilarious") giver* (9:7). Once upon a time a chicken and a pig were walking down a road. Coming to a church building, they saw a sign on it which read: "Ham and Egg Breakfast Here—8:00 to 10:00 AM—Proceeds to Missions." Said the chicken to the pig, "Look! You and I are now in missions." The pig complained, "Yes, we are both in missions, but with this difference—you only have to give a *contribution*, but I have to make a *sacrifice!*"

The Christian should give:

1. *Cheerfully* (2 Cor. 9:7).
2. *Secretly* (Mt. 6:24).
3. *Sacrificially* (2 Sam. 24:24).
4. *Freely* (Mt. 10: 8).

A church bulletin had an interesting article entitled, "Cirrhosis of the Giver," which declared: "This disease was discovered in 34 AD by a husband and wife team, Ananias and Sapphira (see Acts 5). It is an acute nervous condition which renders the patient's hands immobile when he is called on to move them in the direction of the billfold or purse, and thence to the offering plate. Remedy: The patient may be removed from the environs of the house of God on Sunday since it is clinically observable that the condition does not occur in such surroundings as the golf club, supermarket, or restaurant. A superficial remedy is to point out to the patient how many income tax deductions may be claimed by overcoming the malady. Of course, the best therapy and that which leads to a sure and lasting cure, is to get right with God, as this affliction is a symptom of a heart need."

What a wonderful promise is found in verse 8 (note the occurrences of "all"). God is the One who multiplies the seed and gives the blessing (9:9-10).

D. *Giving is an evidence of righteousness* (9:9). This verse is a quotation from Psalm 112:9. It must not be taken to mean that we are justified by our giving, nor by any other good work. It is here simply a reiteration from the Old Testament that one who truly "feareth the Lord" (Ps. 112:1) manifests the genuineness of his faith in God by such good works as his giving generously to the poor.

E. *Their liberality caused thanksgiving to God* (9:13). The generosity of the Lord's people caused the recipients of their gifts to truly thank and praise God, and as a result God was glorified and the needs of fellow believers met. Also, such giving is a proof of genuine Christian profession (9:13).

F. *It led the recipients to pray for the donors* (9:14). J. B. Phillips translates this verse as follows: "And yet further, men will pray for you and feel drawn to you because you have obviously received a generous measure of the grace of God." In other words, believers who are helped by the gifts of other believers are caused to pray for their benefactors. It is the one recompense—and generally the only one—that the beneficiaries can make on behalf of the donors, being a very precious and meaningful recompense at that. All who live of the gospel can attest to the truth of the principle set forth here.

THE PRAISE FOR GOD'S UNSPEAKABLE GIFT (9:15)

Paul concludes his exhortation on giving by thanking God for "His unspeakable Gift" (the word for "unspeakable" is similar to the Greek words used in Rom. 11:33 and Eph. 3:8). In the King James translation the word "unspeakable" occurs three times in the New Testament (2 Cor. 9:15; 12:4; 1 Pet. 1:8), but the Greek word is different in each instance.

H. C. G. Moule has said that the words of this glorious text are both a challenge and a charge. They are a challenge to never forget God's love (Jn. 3:16), and a charge to give as He gave.

A Methodist laborer in John Wesley's time, by the name of Captain Webb, when informed of the salvation of someone, would ask, "Was his purse converted, too?" By the sacrifice of his *person* (Rom. 12:1), *praise* (Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:5), and *purse* (Heb. 13:16), the believer in Christ genuinely and acceptably worships God.

U

Christians Can Afford to be Generous!



When we were watching the distribution of clothing in Jordan, I found myself wondering what it would be like to be wearing the clothes of someone else; how it would be like always in someone else's shoes. Then it occurred to me that this is precisely what Christianity means—eternally being in Someone else's shoes.

—R. Paul Freed

*We give Thee but Thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.*

—William W. How

It was not by accident that seventeen of the 36 parables of our Lord had to do with property and stewardship. —William James

Nothing costs as much as caring—except not caring. —Anon

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

James 1:27

*'Mid pleasure, plenty, and success,
Freely we take from Him who lends;
We boast the blessings we possess,
Yet scarcely thank the One who sends.*

*But let affliction pour its smart,
How soon we quail beneath the rod!
With shattered pride and prostrate heart,
We seek the long-forgotten God.*

—Eliza Cook

Kindness is the language that the dumb can speak and the deaf can hear.

Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 1 Jn. 3:17-18

Christian kindness is the most practical of graces. A boy heard his father praying for missions, especially that the financial needs of the missionaries would be met.

"Father," the boy said, "I wish I had your check book."

"Why, son? What would you do with it?"

"I would answer your prayers," was the reply.

*Do a deed of simple kindness,
Though its end you may not see;
It may reach, like widening ripples,
Down a long eternity.* —J. Morris

In a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 2 Corinthians 8:2

The story is told of a man who gave generously to the Lord's work. Later he had serious financial reverses. "If you had some of that money you gave away," said a friend, "you could start over." "The money I gave away is the only wealth I have saved," the businessman replied. "If I had not given it to the Lord, it would have gone with the rest." What we retain we may lose, but what we give up to Christ we are sure to keep. —T. L. Cuyler

The human family is touched very deeply with suffering. The ancient proverb has it: "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7). We are more apt to think of suffering in terms of mystery than in terms of ministry, choosing to emphasize our lack of knowledge rather than what God has been pleased to reveal. The practical method of seeking the light of God on the subject is very satisfying.

—E. F. Harrison

Operation Seed Sowing & STEAM

A total of 45 men and women from assemblies in Alberta and Ontario offered to serve in January-March of 1994 as volunteers, laboring in constructing, building maintenance, and spe-



One of two tractors sent by container to Nevis in 1993

cial gospel and ministry meetings. These two service projects for assemblies in the Caribbean were called STEAM—Short-Term Experience Assisting Missionaries—and Operation Seed Sowing. The projects took place on three West Indies islands—St. Kitts, Nevis, and St. Croix.

St. Kitts: Two work teams went to St. Kitts to do building and roof repairs along with complete painting of both the inside and outside of eight assembly buildings and two missionary homes. Six members made up the first team and seven were on the second team. An evangelist on the first team held six meetings for young people and children, and the other brethren on both teams spoke in various assemblies on several occasions.

Nevis: Fourteen men and women made up three teams, each staying for two weeks in Nevis. Inside work and painting were required on the new Zion Chapel

which was started as the 1993 STEAM project. Roof repairs, painting, and maintenance to Emmaus Chapel in Charlestown and Brown Hill Gospel Chapel rounded out the duties of the Canadian workers. There were also four weeks of special meetings.

St. Croix: Three teams totalling 18 people spent six weeks in Cristiansted, St. Croix, assisting in the construction of a two-story annex to Emmanuel Gospel Chapel. This building, when completed, is to provide a Sunday School auditorium and classroom space as well as a two-bedroom apartment for visiting preachers or missionaries. Due to a number of local factors, this project moved at a slower pace than the workers expected. Building materials not being delivered when promised, equipment shortage, and the overall "laid back" work ethic tended to frustrate some first-time team members. The experienced team members, who have worked on other projects in the West Indies, took it in stride and encouraged the others.

Operation Seed Sowing: In Nevis, Ken Wagler of Operation Seed Sowing made arrangements for some special speakers to come specifically to hold meetings. Don Welborn

Some of this material was taken from an article written by Kirk Dupre in the July-August 1994 MISSIONS magazine.



A Nevisian brother who worked with Ken Wagler on the project

(TX) came for two weeks of ministry and later Ken's brother, Harold (BC), an evangelist, came for two weeks of gospel meetings.

As well as working long hours clearing land, burning brush, and picking stones, Ken organized the work teams that did repairs and maintenance to Brown Hill and Emmaus Chapels. Brenda, assisted by other team members, provided meals and accommodations for 35 people over a three-month period.

Ken introduced drip irrigation, with a special type of hose brought over from Puerto Rico. This hose saves 70% of the water used in broadcast irrigation and appears to be the answer to the need for water. Until a dam is built to capture water running off the

mountain, they have had to tap into a municipal water supply which costs \$5.00 per 1000 gallons.

The people of Nevis are watching carefully what is happening. They want to learn, and daily people stopped to ask questions about the methods used. A good rapport has been built with the Nevisian people, which is perhaps why the home Bible studies were so successful. Most attendees were unbelievers but anxious to study the Bible. Some are illiterate, but they come to listen. Pray for such works, as these saints "by all means" win some. **U**

The 1996 Trinidad Project

On Feb. 20 of this year I had the pleasure of joining seven other believers from Ontario for a trip to Port of Spain, Trinidad, where we spent two weeks helping to build Sharon Gospel Hall. The trip was organized by MSC Canada and led by David and Eleanor Day. Ella Johnston, retired missionary from Zambia, joined Eleanor to help in the cooking. Four experienced builders contributed their expertise. They were Roger and Dennis Eastman (father-son team), Gary Robin of Bancroft, and Ross Crapp from Peterborough.



A previous group of eight had already completed the foundation including a three-inch slab. We continued from there and managed to reach the wall plate level with the exception of the sixteen inch concrete ring beam on which the roof sits. The work was complicated by the stringent local rules for public buildings which meant extra expense in the purchase of heavy reinforcing bars, etc. The other problem was the heavy work in forming up and pouring the concrete pillars and beams. All the concrete was mixed by hand. There is a team going down April 20 to May 4 (DV) to form up the ring beam ready for pouring and to put the roof studs in place. This will be more difficult than you may think as the quality of the available materials is poor and the wall is about ten feet high. **MSC Canada is looking for a further team of eight who would go from May 11-25. Anyone with building skills interested in helping with this or other projects should contact MSC Canada at (416) 920-4391.**

Some of us had the privilege of visiting some of the government schools with a local full-time worker, Barry Findlay. He has a tremendous opportunity to teach young people God's Word on a regular basis. Because of the building project which he is supervising, he has not been able to do much teaching of late. We had complete freedom that day to enter classes after school with no prior arrangement and talk for about ten to fifteen minutes with each group of students. There are many schools with such opportunities but the laborers are few. It made me homesick for Zambia (Don and Elva Brooks have been engaged for a number of years in Bible teaching in Zambian schools. —ed.). We also visited a Christian school started by the Spencer sisters who attend the assembly there.

We were able to visit several of the local assemblies and attend an open-air meeting in the area of Port-of-Spain and the believers seemed to appreciate our visit. Lastly, we had a couple of afternoons sightseeing around the island and swimming in the ocean. It was lovely but hot (+40°C in the sun) which for me was a big change from the -20°C I had left in North Bay.

Because of the cost of building and the expertise needed, MSC Canada is organizing these teams to help our brethren who are unable to complete it on their own. **For anyone interested, MSC Canada has set up a channel for forwarding funds to help in this project. Please pray for the completion of this project and the furtherance of the Lord's work on that island.**

—DON BROOKS **U**

10 Reasons to Be There

A missionary report once contained the following, "Despite the wintry weather the attendance is excellent. Most live a long distance from the halls, no one has a car...so they walk or travel by bus, often arriving soaking wet." Many in the world do not have the opportunity or freedom to meet with fellow believers. But what about us?

1. *We are commanded to assemble together more frequently as the return of the Lord draws closer (Heb. 10:25).* Even in the days of the early church, believers began to abandon meeting together. That is the idea in the word *forsake*, to leave behind. To assume that meeting with other believers is something we can "leave behind" in the Christian life is fatal. This reason alone should be sufficient to encourage us to be there. But there are more.

2. *God speaks to His people when they assemble (Neh. 8:1-8; Acts 2:41-47).* It is true that the Lord speaks to us in private meditation. But it is also true that some of His messages come only to an assembled group. This is why our meeting together should always give the Word of God the prominent place.

3. *Hearing the Word of God cleanses our lives (corrective) and keeps us from sin (preventative) (Ps. 119:9-11, 33-40, 133; Eph. 5:26-27).* There is nothing like the Word to flush out worldliness and sin, so prevalent around us. The Bible has this ability. When we absent ourselves, we miss that much-needed cleansing. It is one of the ways the Lord looks after us.

4. *It is an opportunity to find comfort in trial (Ps. 119:41, 49-50, 52, 76; Rom. 15:4).* Many believers report how they went to a meeting reluctantly but found a message given by one who had no knowledge about their particular problem. The right message at the right time in the right way provided comfort and help in trouble or discouragement. These wonderful opportunities are missed if we are not there.

5. *It is an opportunity to encourage others (Ps. 119:74; 1 Thess. 5:11).* Come to meetings with a positive attitude and look for opportunities to be an encouragement. Think about the speaker. We are readily there when a gifted, favorite speaker is scheduled. But what about the inexperienced and unknown? The brother with a large ministry was once young and inexperienced. But he was encouraged by a faithful fellowship who endured his learning time. Undoubtedly they will be rewarded along with him as they had a part in his de-

velopment. The Lord knows what great men He may be preparing among your fellowship.

And we can encourage others who attend. Private conversations after a meeting are opportunities to speak just the right word that may lift another's burden. Don't miss it!

6. *Hearing the Word of God strengthens us against the enemy (Ps. 119:98; Eph. 6:17).* No one can afford to be out of training against the enemy; the Word equips us against his wiles. Our spiritual intelligence is broadened the more we hear the Scriptures. The enemy's tactic is to confuse God's truth in our minds. Hearing it weakens the devil's strategies.

7. *Our knowledge and wisdom will increase (Ps. 119:99-100).* Not knowledge for knowledge sake: "Knowledge puffs up." But to know Him (Phil. 3:10) and receive "the wisdom that is from above" (Jas. 3:17) will produce Christlikeness. Only when we feel we can learn no more, should we stay home.

8. *It is a satisfying experience (Ps. 119:103).* Many things can occupy our time, often good and necessary. But hearing the Word can satisfy the soul. There is something about it that leaves us with a sense of wellbeing. It is the food of God. It satisfies like no other.

9. *We can receive guidance in perplexing situations (Ps. 119:105, 130).* It is not always easy to know God's will. But one of the ways He guides us is through His Word. Hearing that Word spoken and explained equips us to understand more of His ways and consequently to know His guidance. He is able to deliver His message to me in my time of confusion. How unwise to miss an opportunity like this.

10. *And finally, the Lord Jesus has promised to be there (Mt. 18:20).* I wonder, does this sink in? Do I take seriously the Lord's presence among His people? It is possible to be so occupied with the faults and failings of the saints, or the familiarity of the routine, or the trials of life, that we miss the vital truth that "...where two or three are gathered together in My Name," He promises, "there am I in the midst of them." Remember Thomas! **U**

As We Have Opportunity

As the population of India approaches the billion mark, the need in this sub-continent has never been greater.

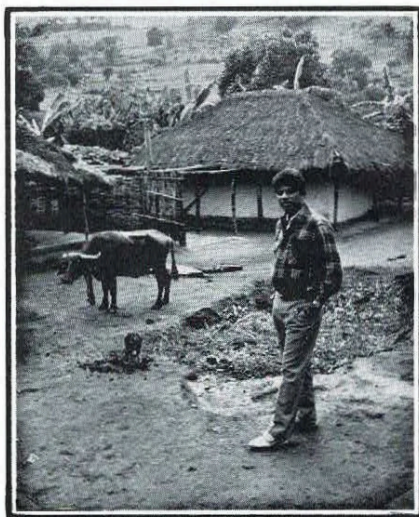
Coturnix International is a program Dr. Sam Varghese of the East Lansing, MI, assembly developed at Michigan State University where he is on faculty in the Department of Animal Science. In his specialty of Poultry Science and Nutrition, he has worked with a small quail, called the coturnix, which fares well in hot climates. This is the unusual story of how Coturnix International (CIM) set about winning people to Christ while assisting poor believers in becoming more self-sufficient in food production.

Varghese, who is originally from India, experienced hunger many times while growing up. His parents were devout Christians but Varghese had no interest in religion as a young person. As a matter of fact, he resented it. He ran away from home after his teacher expelled him from Sunday school. But God showed His grace to this prodigal. Discovering

his sins, he believed in the Lord, and experienced a dramatic inward change. Thereafter Sam became as zealous for the gospel as he had been for his sinful life.

Having received a Ph.D. in Animal Husbandry through the university, Sam entered into work in the Dominican Republic with youth groups, small scale farmers, and poor

village women, assisting them technically in food production and in generating income. He has also assisted groups in Belize, Haiti, and Mexico. Since Sam knew hunger firsthand, he found he could relate to poor people and knew how to train them in small animal production.

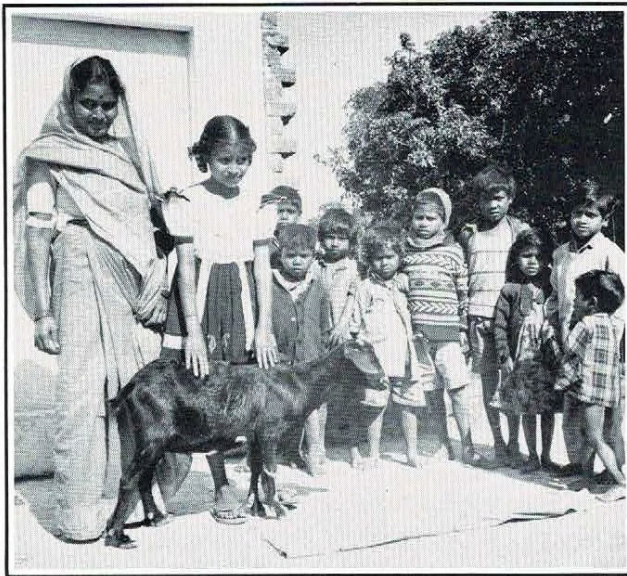


During the last 30 years while Varghese lived in East Lansing, he has been involved in local gospel efforts. His work at Michigan State University, and his overseas trips have provided plentiful opportunity to witness for the Lord Jesus. "I used to be so ashamed of the gospel. I was ashamed to walk with my own father while I was growing up since he used to embarrass me by giving out tracts to strangers or speaking about Jesus Christ. But since being saved I have found great joy in witnessing."

Varghese worked to help the poor through the university at first, but budget constraints terminated the international program in 1985. With the support of local believers and friends, however, Varghese managed to redirect this program by forming a non-profit organization (CIM) in the state of Michigan. Now gifts to this work are tax exempt through Coturnix International, Inc. And more importantly, there is now more freedom to proclaim the gospel along with the animal production training. The goal is to provide food for the family and at the same time food for their souls. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).

CHRISTIAN YOUTH CLUB (CYC)

The Christian Youth Club, as an arm of CIM, came into being in 1990 as a result of Sam and his older brother, John, preaching the gospel in a village in India. The two started a Christian youth program at the residence of a local evangelist. Seventy-one young people (mostly Hindu) attended the club regularly and heard the gospel. Every Saturday the youth met at the evangelist's home where he shares gospel stories with them. In general the parents will not permit their children to attend the Sunday school since they are Hindus but they do allow them to attend the CYC.



Each year at the anniversary of the club, the youth are awarded small animals ranging from chickens to goats, determined by the points earned during the year.

The local evangelists also visit their homes on a regular basis and give the gospel to other family members, including the parents. Parents are also invited to the anniversary function of the CYC where the gospel is preached by several evangelists.

The first CYC was a very encouraging time. Varghese made a trip to India in 1993, meeting with all coordinators of CYC in the sub-continent, preaching the gospel, and baptizing some who had trusted in the Lord Jesus. A couple of college graduates who were baptized had a Hindu background. Varghese travelled to six other states to promote CYC during this trip and as a result there are now 26 clubs across these states. These clubs reach approximately 13,000 people. It is important to remember that the current population of India is 950 million! The cost for operating a club for one year is \$500. The goal for 1996 is to increase the number of clubs by ten.

India's multitudes are very religious but worship idols. Many could not recognize the name Jesus. It is the desire of CIM to extend the gospel efforts through CYC to other states in India. Many evangelists are interested in cooperating with the CYC program. Please pray about this need.

BELIEVERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The second arm of CIM is the Believers Assistance Program. Foreign missionaries are no longer allowed in India. However, many evangelists from assemblies in the south, especially from Kerala, have gone

into the Lord's work in many parts in India. It is like a drop in a bucket, however, when you consider the great population of India.

In recent times the Spirit of God has been working in a powerful way, even among the Hindu population; many have been converted. Brother Varghese has observed, "When I was growing up in India, we used to hear once in a while that a Hindu had been converted. But now, in many local churches 25% or more of the believers are recent converts. During my trip to India in 1993, I visited several homes in which some members of the family are Hindus while others are Christians. In the past, the family would have thrown out those who believed in any other religion. Let's take advantage of this trend and preach the gospel with all earnestness."

The converts are, however, from the poorer class and need assistance to take care of their own families. It was for this reason that Sam started this project to assist these poor believers. In India, a goat is the poor man's cow. A goat is easy to feed and will provide milk and meat to a family and also provide some income. But a poor family cannot afford to buy one. A quality goat may be purchased for breeding purpose for Rs. 1,500 (approximately U.S. \$50).



During 1990, CIM provided 30 families of a tribal group in Andhra Pradesh with goats. Each family agrees to return, in time, one female kid in order to supply yet another needy family. In this way the blessing continues to spread to others in need. Mr.

Jacob George, who works among these people, oversees this project.

CIM also funded goats for 60 families through local assemblies in India in 1993. The condition agreed upon by these parties with the local assembly elders is that 5 female kids in approximately 5 years will be returned to the local assembly. These goats will then assist more believers. This program is also progressing well. In the same fashion a few more assemblies have been supported in 1995 in India. India currently has over 600 assemblies, many of them populated by such needy saints.

THE SEWING MACHINE PROJECT

The third arm of CIM is the Sewing Machine Project. Recently, some assemblies have requested a few sewing machines instead of goats for poor believers

who are located in a city or a town where raising goats is difficult. CIM has considered this request and has begun assisting in this regard. A sewing machine will cost about Rs. 3,000 (U.S. \$100). The believers will get some training locally and then can use the sewing machine to develop a small tailoring business to generate income for their families.

Obviously no ministry like this can proceed without prayerful support. Remember the Christian Youth Clubs and the accompanying sewing machine and livestock projects before the Throne of Grace. For more information, contact:

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Sam K. Varghese, President
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East Lansing, MI 48823
(517) 353-2906

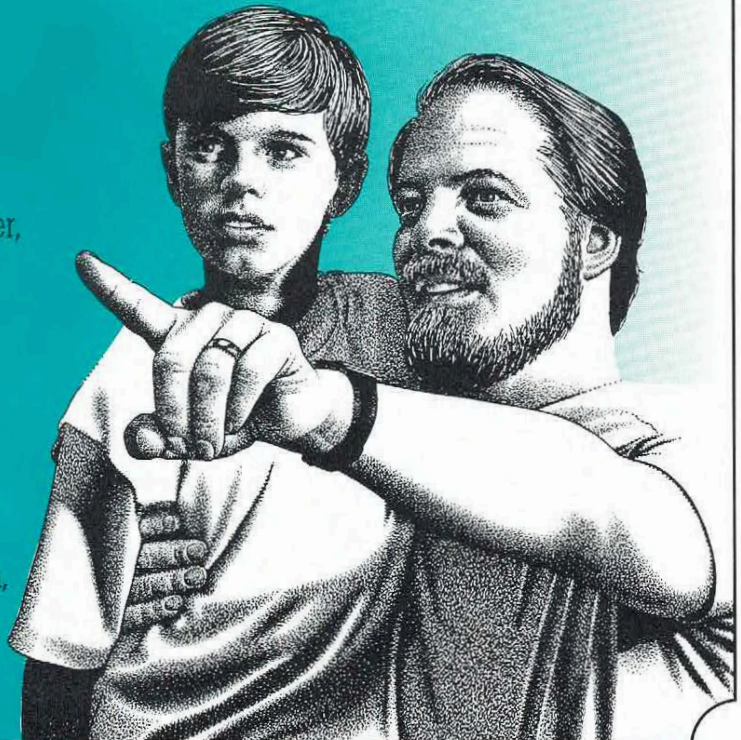


NOW & THEN

.....
We shall do so much in the years to come,
But what have we done today?
We shall give of our gold a princely sum,
But what did you give today?
We shall lift the heart and dry the tear,
We shall plant a hope in place of fear,
We shall speak the words of love and cheer,
But what have we done today?

We shall be so kind in the after while,
But what have we been today?
We shall bring to each lonely life a smile,
But what have we brought today?
We shall give to truth a grander birth,
And to steadfast faith a deeper worth,
We shall feed the hungering souls of earth,
But whom have we fed today?

—M. Waterman



A Letter From Chechnya

Chechnya is one of eight autonomous republics lying between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Its population of 800,000 is mainly Sunnite Muslim. Following an attempt to assert its independence of Moscow, the Russian Army and Air force devastated

the Chechnyan capital, Grozny, during 1994 and 1995. The pitiless slaughter of thousands of innocent civilians was widely condemned throughout Russia.

The following is a letter received by the Myrtlefield Trust:

The Myrtlefield Trust is a ministry communicating the truth worldwide. This includes the distribution of Dr. David Gooding's books in Russian, Romanian, Spanish, Czech, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Ukranian, and other languages. Contact: The Myrtlefield Trust 180 Mountsandel Rd. Coleraine BT52 1TB Northern Ireland

Dear good people,

I am writing to you from the faraway land of Chechnya, seized by a terrible war. The city is destroyed, innocent civilian people are dying, thousands have become homeless. There are ruins of buildings and burned trees in the streets. All this is because of politicians fighting for power. But for us it is just a terrible war which we did not want. All around has been enveloped in flames and vibrations of explosions. Even in World War II we did not experience such terror.

It is only by the mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that we are still alive—for a while. Such misery and suffering cannot be described. For 4 months we have had no bread, no electricity, no running water, no gas. For 2 years we have had no heating in our houses. We make our food outdoors on bonfires. We are black with soot, dirty, dressed in rags. We sleep in the same clothes which we wear in the daytime. We sleep in cellars because it is dangerous to sleep in the houses.

Nobody knows when it will be over. Nothing is functioning, including the Post. Nobody needs us, except God. It seems that we shall never live in decent conditions. We worked all our lives. We were veterans with privileges, but now we are just old people whom nobody needs. Pensioners without pensions.

Sorry for this sad letter. My heart is bleeding, and I have nobody to speak to. We live as on a desert island. I am sending this letter with Military mail, through the Commanding Officer. I would like to give all the dear workers my hearty greetings. I know if this letter will ever reach you. I may have no other opportunity to mail it.

I wish you health, prosperity, and peace. Thank you for the spiritual support through Christian literature, which helps me to survive. Greetings to you, with faith and love in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Vera Petrovna, Grozny



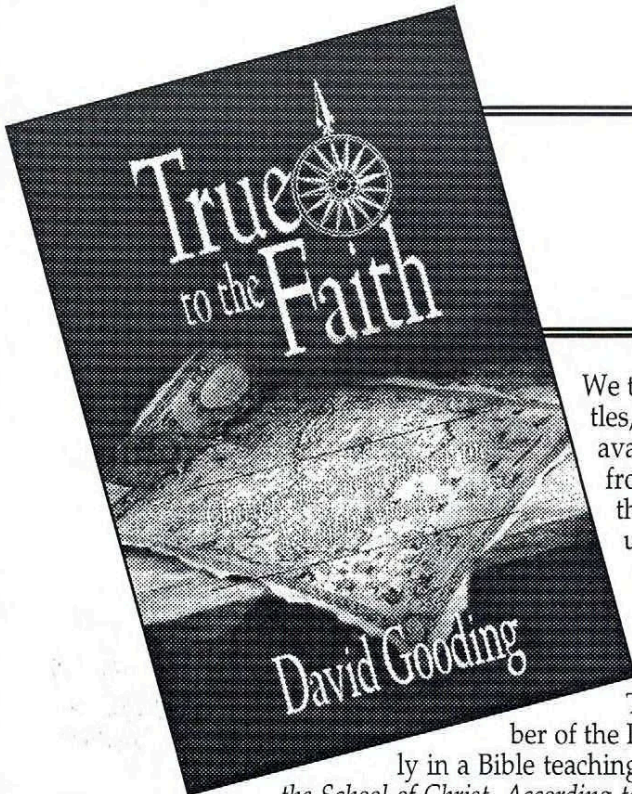
TRUE TO THE FAITH

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We think this is the finest commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, bar none! GFP is very pleased to make this excellent work available to the Lord's people. You will read Luke's treatise from a completely fresh perspective as a result of studying this book. The reader will come away from it with a clearer understanding of what the gospel really is.

Recently this volume has been published in Russian, Romanian, and soon in Spanish, but not until now has it been released in North America.

David Gooding, MA, PhD, professor emeritus of Old Testament Greek at Queen's University, Belfast, is a Member of the Royal Irish Academy. Professor Gooding travels extensively in a Bible teaching ministry and, besides academic works, is the author of *In the School of Christ*, *According to Luke*, and *An Unshakeable Kingdom*, all of which are available from Gospel Folio Press. 416 pages, price \$13.95; CDN \$19.95

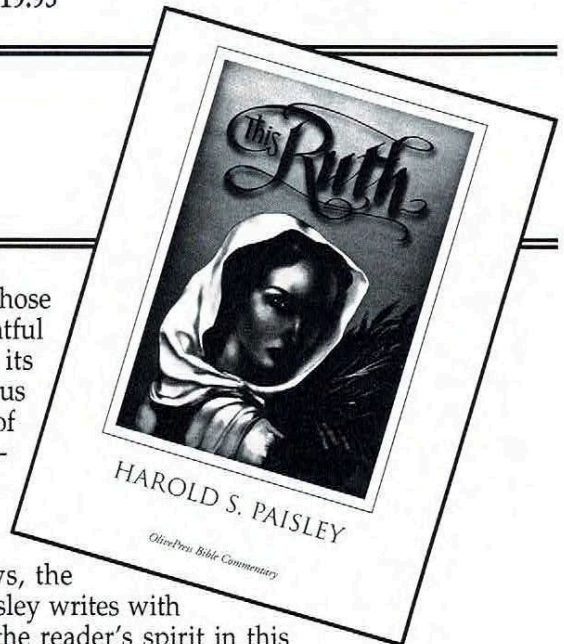


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MATTHEW 10:8

Freely Received Freely Given WILLIAM MACDONALD

*F*ritz Kreisler, one of the world's greatest violinists, said, "I was born with music in my system. I knew musical scores instinctively before I knew my ABC's. It was a gift of Providence. I did not acquire it. So I do not even deserve thanks for the music...Music is too sacred to be sold. And the outrageous prices the musical celebrities charge today are truly a crime against society."

These are the words that everyone in Christian work might take to heart. The Christian ministry is a ministry of giving, not of getting. The question is not, "What is there in it for me?" but rather "How can I best share the message with the greatest number?" In the service of Christ, it is far better that things should cost rather than that they should pay.

It is true that "The laborer is worthy of his hire" (Lk. 10:7) and that "They which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). But this does not justify a man's setting a price on his gift. It does not justify charging exorbitant royalties for the use of hymns. It does not justify unconscionable fees for speaking or singing engagements.

Simon the Sorcerer wanted to buy the power of conferring the Holy Spirit on others (Acts 8:18). No doubt he saw this as a way of making money. By his action, he gave his name to our language (simony) to describe the buying or selling of religious privileges. It is no overstatement to say that the religious world today is shot through with simony. If the dollar could somehow be removed from so-called Christian work, a great deal of it would stop immediately. But there would still be faithful servants of the Lord who would press on till their last ounce of strength was expended.

We have received freely; we ought to give freely. The more we give, the wider the blessing, and the greater the reward—good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over.

