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... is Consecrated, Not Constrained

The Heartbeat of
The Remnant

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C O N T E N T S



- 3 BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST & NEW TESTAMENT REALITY (PART 1)**
• by Denny Kenaston •



- 7 CASTAWAY**
• by F. B. Myer •



- 8 ALONE? NOT ALONE!**
• by T. Austin Sparks •

- 10 CONSECRATED, NOT CONSTRAINED**
• by Dean Taylor •



- 19 IS THERE BLOOD ON THE DOORPOST**
• by D. L. Moody •

- 20 PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY**
• by Charles Wesley •



- 22 WORKING THE FIELDS**
• testimony by Jeff & Susan Chapman •

- 25 CLING CLOSE TO THE ROCK**



- 26 HEALTH CARE--MEDICAL, NATURAL, OR SUPERNATURAL**
• by Roger Hertzler •



- 30 2006 CHARITY YOUTH BIBLE SCHOOL REPORT**
• by Mollie Jo Cassidy •

- 35 PRECIOUS LETTERS FROM OUR READERS**

Baptism of the Holy Ghost & New Testament Reality

by Denny Kenaston

[Part 1]

Sermon transcription from Leadership Seminar 2002

I don't know, maybe this week is like what Ezekiel was talking about there back in the Old Testament. Remember when he talked about this river flowing out from under the throne of heaven? And he went so far and he was in to his ankles, and then he went so far and he was in up to knees, and then he went so far and he was in up to his waist, and then he was swimming! Do it, Lord, do it.

Let's stand for a word of prayer. Can we do that?

Lord we love you this morning. We come to you in Jesus' name. We thank you for loving us. We don't really understand it, but we thank you that you do, you love us. Father, we come to you this morning because we have no where else to go. We come to you this morning because we don't have anything to say. If you don't give us something to say, Lord, we know. We come to you this morning because without you we can do nothing, and so we pray that you will again this morning, and throughout the day, anoint this day with your presence. Anoint this preacher with your anointing, Lord, with your message for the day. Anoint the ears of our heart,

Lord, the eyes of our understanding this day. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

This morning I want to speak on the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and New Testament reality. What is the effect of the anointing of the Holy Ghost in a

believer's life? The prophet Samuel was speaking prophetically to Saul during the time he was to be anointed king. He said these words to Saul. He said, "The Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shall prophesy and shall be turned into another man." That's powerful. The Spirit of the Lord is going to come upon you, Saul, and you will prophesy, and you shall be turned into another man. That puts the whole thing in a nutshell, doesn't it? The one hundred and twenty in the upper room, and the apostles, I'm sure that they could say those very words. 'When the day of Pentecost was fully come, the Spirit of the Lord came upon us, and we prophesied and we were turned into another man'.

Before that, they had dull apprehensions of the truth that

"The Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shall prophesy and shall be turned into another man."

That's powerful.



Jesus was speaking to them. Before that, they had a weak vision, seeing very dimly the things that Christ was trying to describe to them that would happen in the future. Before that, they were a feeble bunch, with a feeble faith. Before that, they were weak in their brotherly love one for another, and their resolutions were short lived. They were fearful, they were doubters, they were running scared, and I think we could probably say just to describe just an overall description of them... I mean, they were very sincere. These were the men that had enough insight to see way beyond those Pharisees who knew their Bibles inside and out. They had enough insight to say, 'We have found the Messiah'. They were full of religious zeal. They were seeking the highest that they knew.

They were not evil, wicked men, but they were moving in the natural rather than in the spiritual. I think that's a good description. They had open hearts, they had found the Messiah, they had forsaken all, they treasured His word, but yet they moved in the realm of the natural so much of the time. That's a good description of them.

Maybe it's a good description of us also. We are here, we love to be here, we love the Word, we're excited about what's happening here, but if we give an overall evaluation of our day-to-day life, we move in the natural, rather than the spiritual, most of the time. I mean, Peter was so bold when Christ began to prophesy to them, and tell them that He was going to go to the cross, and shed His blood, which would be the redemption of all mankind. Peter was so much in the natural and so out of tune in the spiritual that Christ had to say to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but savorest the things that be of men."

They moved in the realm of the natural so much of the time, but after Pentecost, they were changed into another man. Peter was changed into another man after Pentecost. They began to move in the realm of the spirit. Their character was transformed. They were different men. Their words became quick and powerful, life changing words. Their words cut to the heart.

Imagine, just a little bit with me this morning, the day after

Pentecost. Yesterday was a busy day, Peter was busy all day long. There was a lot going on during the day of the Pentecost. I'm not sure how many people he baptized himself, but I'm sure when he laid his head down to go to sleep, at the end of that day, the day of Pentecost, he was very weary in body. He woke up the next morning, he heard the Lord speaking in him, "Good morning, Peter." With the ears of his heart he heard the voice of His Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ who told him, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, Peter. I will come to you." That was the day after Pentecost. Imagine when they all got together, and began to share,

"I'm just so different, I'm just so different!"

"I am, too! I mean the Lord is just speaking inside of my heart!"

"It's that same way with me!"

"Oh, praise God, this is wonderful!"

"Yes, it is! I wonder what it all means?"

"I do too!"

You know those conversations went on the day after Pentecost. Maybe they dropped down on their knees together and started praying, "Oh, Lord, now we understand what you were talking about, Lord! We don't know what we're doing. Lead us, oh God. Oh, please help us to know that to do. Give us your guidance Lord. Thank you that you didn't leave us comfortless; you didn't leave us as an orphan, but you did come to us".

You know Him, he is with you, but He shall be in you. Now do you think that the Lord Jesus was giving those apostles a doctrinal teaching when He said those words to them, or do you think he was trying to help them to understand that they would have a totally different experience after that day? How many of you think he was giving him a doctrinal statement? [no one] Good.

Now it is a doctrinal statement, don't misunderstand me. It is a doctrinal statement, but that is not all it is. "He dwelleth with you and He shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." Just picture that. He's been with them for three and a half years. Every problem they had, they just

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went and said, "Lord what should we do?" It was all cared for. Every question they had, they just went to Him and said, "Well Lord, we don't understand this, could you explain it?", and He gave them the answer. Every situation that they faced: "We have all of these people who need to eat, we don't know what to do with them," He took care of it. But now they were standing on the Mount of Olives and he just disappeared out of their sight. But now it's the day after Pentecost and they understand. He didn't leave us comfortless.

What is the effect of the anointing of the Holy Ghost in the life of the believers? That He, God, would raise up, by that anointing, holy people, with holy hearts, living holy lives, filled with holy character, who walk with a Holy God, and speak holy words, that are anointed by the Holy Spirit.

Brethren, that is what the anointing of the Holy Ghost is all about. That is what it's all about. That is what is in the longing heart of God for his people. God is an awesome, Holy God. One half-a-second glimpse of this Holy God that we've been talking about all week long... one half of a second glimpse of Him would bring every one of us down on our face in utter abandonment, and it's the longing of the heart of God that His great name would be sanctified among the heathen by the way that His people move and live and act and speak in this world around us.

That's the longing of his heart, and it was the joy that was set before the Lord Jesus as He despised the shame and endured the cross. Don't you think for a minute, brethren, that Jesus went through all of that so that He could buy a one-way ticket to heaven for you and me. He didn't go through all of that so that we could live our own selfish lives all of our days, and end up in glory for all of eternity after that. Brethren, that's not what Jesus went to the cross for. He went to the cross that he might raise up, through the anointing that was poured out because of that cross, a holy people anointed with the holy ghost, speaking holy words!

What is the effect of the anointing of the Holy Ghost in the life of the believers? That He, God, would raise up, by that anointing, holy people, with holy hearts, living holy lives, filled with holy character, who walk with a Holy God, and speak holy words, that are anointed by the Holy Spirit.



We all know that, that's nothing new to us. That's not a new revelation, but it's good for us to consider again and again. To explain the whole plan of God in a very simple nutshell: **that Anointing was given to make us like Jesus**, and you can spend the rest of your life figuring out what all of that means—Amen!?! To make us a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people that show forth the praises or the virtues of him who hat called us out of darkens and into His marvelous light. That is what the anointing of the Holy Spirit is all about, brethren, to cause us to glorify God; to cause us to love God with all of our heart and mind and soul and strength; to turn our hearts away from selfishness, to love your neighbors as yourself. This is what the anointing of the Holy Spirit is all about; that we henceforth no longer live unto ourselves but unto Him.

As I see the baptism of the Holy Spirit I see a twofold purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Number one, to empower us to be New Testament Christians, emphasizing the "be", and number two, to empower us to do exploits in building God's kingdom while we are here upon this earth. That combination, brothers, is pretty powerful when you put the two together. To be New Testament

Christians, doing exploits of kingdom building while we are here upon this earth, that is what the anointing is all about.

Brethren, new covenant reality comes through, and by, the overwhelming presence of the living God coming upon us and abiding. Think about that. New covenant reality comes through, and by, our being overwhelmed by the presence of the living God and abiding in that Presence. That's the only way it comes.

Consider this morning Christ the Anointed One. I told you earlier this week that we would come back to that word. I want to consider Christ the Anointed One this morning. He is the mediator of the New Testament. He is the mediator of the new covenant. He through the anointing, mediates, dispenses, and

gives forth the reality of the new covenant in our hearts and our lives. That's where it comes from. He is the mediator. Just like this natural world we live in, there is a mediator of the will. When someone dies, there is an executor that has been appointed, that executor is the one who mediates the will to those who are written in the will. He dispenses to those the things that are written in the will, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the anointed one, he as mediator, gives that which was written in the will. He mediates the reality of the new covenant. Consider these words.

The Bible speaks of *spiritual warfare*. In Ephesians chapter 6 it speaks of *spiritual mindedness*. In Romans chapter 8 it speaks of a *spiritual walk*. The Bible speaks about *spiritual weapons* in Second Corinthians chapter 10, and *spiritual gifts* in first Corinthians chapter 12. The Bible speaks of *spiritual fruit* in Galatians chapter 5, and *spiritual armor* in Ephesians chapter 6, and it speaks of a *glorious spiritual ministry* in Second Corinthians chapter 3.

Now all of these things are only reality in a believer's life if they are overwhelmed with the presence of the Living God. Those spiritual realities, they don't mean very much at all if we are not going to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. None of these can happen without the anointing, brethren, it makes no sense at all. They're far away somewhere—these are only far away concepts if we are not filled with the Spirit of God. □

[to be continued in the next issue]

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One Stick at a Time

*by John Newton
Author of Amazing Grace*

The evil of yesterday is gone, that which is appointed for tomorrow is not yet arrived. Would it not be well if we could live with the Lord by the day? This reminds me of a fable. A father asked a young child to carry a large wood pile. The child tried, but it was beyond his strength; he could not lift it. Then the father took off the bands and said, "carry one stick at a time." This the child did easily, till he had removed the whole pile.

Thus the troubles of a month or year, which would be too heavy for us if they came all together, are parceled out by our wise and gracious Lord into daily portions. We have, as it were, to carry one stick every day. But often, when we have carried the stick all day, we *can not* or *will not* lay it down at night. And we pick up the sticks allotted for future days or weeks, long before the appointed time. It is no wonder that we say "Oh, what a heavy burden!" "Oh, how weary am I." Well, the day is coming when we hope to drop every load, and to bid farewell to sin, sorrow, and care forever.





CASTAWAY

by F. B. Myer

I invite your attention to a few words found in 1 Cor 9:27: “Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

Paul was too eager and too practical a man to dally with a bogy dread. Since then he intimates that it was his daily fear lest, after having preached to others, he might himself be a castaway, I suppose that there were but few hours in his life when this dread did not haunt him. After he had founded so many churches, written so many epistles, and exercised so wide, spread an influence, in his quiet moments he was perpetually face to face with this awful nightmare, that the day might come when he would be a castaway; and the thought drove him almost to madness.

When he was traveling over the blue Aegean, when he was sitting making his tents, when he was engaged in dictating his epistles, the thought would come back and back upon his heart: “I may yet be a castaway.”

Have you ever feared this? I am not sure that a man ever reaches his highest development without something of the element of fear, and I ask you now if in your life you know something of this haunting dread? May I confess to you that it has become a great dread of my own? and if many days pass, and no one writes to tell me of help derived from my ministry, and no one comes to join our church, and no one seems to be influenced by my life or word, I sit myself down and say: “Good God, has the time come at last to me when for some reason I, too, am to be a castaway?”

And reverently, humbly, but most searchingly, I ask you, my hearer, whether it may not be possible that this very moment you are already a castaway.



Alone?

Not Alone!

by T. Austin-Sparks

"I, even I only, am left a prophet of the Lord." 1 Kings 18:22

"I, even I only, am left." 1 Kings 19:10,14

"Yet will I leave me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal." 1 Kings 19:18

*"Then he mustered...seven thousand."
1 Kings 20:15*

"Elijah...a man of like passions (nature) with us." James 5:17

It is a gracious thing that, in recording the lives of His most used and representative servants, the Lord has never hidden their weaknesses. Most biographers seem to feel that it would harm their subjects, weaken the testimony, or do injury to the work to which they were called if they dwelt upon their human nature on its weakest side and pointed out when and where they broke down. There is also a mistaken kindness in this omission; the idea that, all of us being so faulty, we should never refer to the weaknesses of others. If the life was truly glorifying to God as a whole, and the work was really a work of God, it only enhances the grace of God to show how He was with, and blessed, such VERY human and imperfect vessels, and no one who really loves the Lord will take that fact as a cover and condoning of repeated failures. At the same time it is true that God is the only One Who has the right to speak of human weaknesses, and everyone who does so under His direction must do it with deep humility and fear: the reason for this is recognized in such representative cases as Moses, Elijah, David, Peter, etc. Even in the case of Christ Himself, although He did NOT succumb, yet this factor held good, and in His case the fact is definitely shown. That factor is this:

Satan Knows Our Weakest Moment, and Uses It

It was when the Master had fasted for forty days and nights and hungered that Satan came with his testing. Whatever other factors were present in the cases of Elijah and others, there is no doubt that the physical and nervous drain of recent experiences gave the cowardly enemy very promising ground for his assault. When Moses made his great mistake at the rock it is evident that he was an overwrought man, and although the weakness is given full uncovering and the result shown to be very grievous in a temporal way, he was never afterward repudiated in history as a failure; rather was he with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration. David still held his place of high honor and value in Divine purposes, and his name runs to the end of Scripture with Divine recognition despite the grievous fallings in the way. He suffered, it is true, but God knows that in the lives of those who count for Him there are forces at work which are extra to the ordinary human weaknesses. This is made so clear in the case of Peter, whose terrible failure was said by the Lord to be the work of Satan; and there is no doubt but that Satan knew Peter's weak point and weak moment.

We must, however, bear in mind that, while the Scriptures on these matters are given us for our com-

fort, and to magnify the grace of God, they are not meant to weaken us or excuse our weakness, but to make us aware of how Satan can get an advantage, and to indicate the danger points along the way of spiritual usefulness.

In the case of Elijah before us, there is one thing that we want to note, and the noting of which we feel will be a help to some. It is this: in the moment of his weakness Satan sowed a lie in Elijah's mind, and Elijah accepted it. Our Lord said of Satan that "he is a liar, and the father thereof" (John 8:44). In this case he begot the lie that Elijah was the only faithful prophet of God left in Israel. There was ground for that seed. The man was fighting a lonely battle; plowing a lonely furrow; walking a lonely path. There is no doubt about that. **Loneliness is a Part of the Price of Leadership.**

If we are seeking to go on with God to any degree beyond that which is commonly accepted as a true Christian life; if we are called to pioneer the way for any further advance in spiritual life or Divine service; if we are given a vision of God's will and purpose not seen by the general mass of God's people—or even the larger number of the servants of God—ours will be a lonely way.

There are many other ways in which we may feel aloneness. It may be for geographical reasons; or it may be because of an inward experience through which we are passing; an experience or phase which cannot be shared by another, even the one closest to us. All these and other reasons may respectively become our "wilderness" in which Satan comes, and, while there is a basic occasion, his business is to push things into the extra realm of untruth and tell us that we ARE actually and utterly alone. It is not a rare thing for him to tell a child of God that God has left him or her.

Elijah verily believed that he was the only one left in faithfulness to God, and he repeated his plaint several times, "I only am left." He had lost sight of the possibility that the prophets reported by Obadiah to have been hidden might still be in that underground faithfulness, or some of them at least. But the Lord knew better and told him of seven thousand unsundering saints who would not capitulate to

Jezebel or Baal. The fact is, what Elijah believed was positively not true. If we look at things horizontally we shall only see so far, but if we look from heaven we shall see much more.

Well, what is the answer? Firstly, the Lord's love has taken the FULL measure of human frailty before ever He called us to Himself, and therefore that love, being all-knowing, does not give up because it comes upon something unforeseen and not already accounted for.

Secondly, the Lord asks for nothing more than a heart toward Himself. That is the ground upon which He will go right on. ONLY positive, definite, and persisted-in unbelief and disobedience will make the Lord say, "Look here, My child, I love you and want to go on with you, and I WILL go on if only you will trust me and respond to me. But we cannot

go on until you have adjusted; we must just stand here and wait for that."

Thirdly, if it is true that the Lord neither leaves nor forsakes His own, it is equally true that they are not alone as to others of the Lord's own. There is the FACT, altogether apart from the teaching, that the body is one, and hath many members (1 Cor. 12:12). That FACT does not depend upon the doctrine, it is just a fact. Moreover it is constituted by the Holy Spirit Himself. He is the Spirit of unity; there is "the communion of the Holy Spirit"; i.e. the communion of believers in and by the

Holy Spirit. There are always believers praying for "all saints," the vast majority of whom are utterly unknown to them in this world. If we would take our stand on God's fact in this matter, and, by faith, take the value of "all prayer for all saints" we should find a wonderful relief and reinforcement in our aloneness.

But let us face the fact that a certain measure and kind of loneliness WILL connect with any particular value which the Lord already has, or is seeking to have, in us, and we must accept this with courage, reminding ourselves that were it otherwise that particular value might not be possible. Jesus was able to meet many a difficult situation because He had learnt the secret in aloneness. □



Consecrated

NOT CONSTRAINED

by Dean Taylor

Wearied by the continual battles with the Philistine armies, exasperated by the heat of the harvest-time sun, David's army waited in the caves outside Bethlehem, observing the Philistine army down below them. David, surveying his occupied homeland, let out a cry, "Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem." Hearing this cry, three of David's favorite and strongest men broke through the Philistine army, fought their way to the well, drew the precious chalice of water, and made their way back to their arid king. David, astounded by this extravagant display of loyalty, devotion and honor, took the precious gift and poured it out as an offering to the Lord saying, "Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" (2 Sam 23:17)

Nothing constrained David to perform this curious oblation. To David, it was a sanctified drink offering to the Lord. Even though the reason for this act of devotion was apparently motivated by his concern for the safety and well-being of his dearest men, he did not feel coerced to offer the cup. He was consecrated, not constrained.



David...astounded...took the precious gift and poured it out as an offering to the Lord.

Today, in our self-gratifying culture, the act of denying oneself for the sake of someone else is seldom seen. More than just out of fashion, self-denial is in some ways seen as suspect, being looked at as weak, indecisive or compromising. I can remember hearing snappy commercial slogans very early in my life such as "grab the gusto," "you deserve a break today," or even "because you're worth it." These slogans, buried in my subconscious, compete with the teachings of Jesus in determining my direction and behavior. Without the grace of God, I would have long since been turned over to these ideas.

Our nation's venerated desire for "the inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" has paradoxically brought in just the opposite. This pursuit of life has produced the unprecedented killing of millions of unborn babies; this liberty has brought the nation to crisis levels of prison overcapacity; and this pursuit of happiness has led to more money expended per year on anti-depressant medications than probably half of the world's average yearly income.

DEATH TO SELF

Christianity teaches that self-denial and death brings life. Biblical teachings such as, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Rom. 8:36), and "Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves" (Luke 10:3), do not promise a worldly advantage. Certainly, they do not echo the agonizing grasp for life attempted by



The testing ground for true self-denial is usually best manifested in our interaction with others. The perfect example of this life of sacrifice was demonstrated by Jesus. God ordained that the ultimate living witness of this love and selfless life be demonstrated in His church here on earth.

the world. Paul proclaimed this truth in I Cor. 1:18, *“The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”*

The testing ground for true self-denial is usually best manifested in our interaction with others. The perfect example of this life of sacrifice was demonstrated by Jesus. *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another”*(1 John 4:10-11). God ordained that the ultimate living witness of this love and selfless life be demonstrated in His church here on earth. Jesus commanded the Church, *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”* (John 13:34-35).

The early church joined themselves in self-sacrificing love, to unanimously commit to seek God for His promised blessing. Acts tells us that they *“all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication”*(Acts 1:15). God was faithful and poured out his Spirit on His expecting bride. Strengthened by the Pentecostal outpouring, the Church was mighty. Led by the Spirit, they were *“continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart”*(Acts 2:46). This church was powerful, directed, unified and confident. It is written that this church effectually *“turned the world upside down”* (Acts 17:6).

By and large, the Church today has lost this unified voice. Jesus prayed that we would *“all be one.”* It would appear by this prayer that one of the main reasons Jesus wanted us to be united is so that we

would demonstrate a clear testimony to the world. Jesus went on to pray *“that the world may know that thou hast sent me”* (John 17:23). Tainted by Catholic ecumenism, modern evangelical relativism, and secular humanism, Christian unity within a Bible-believing church today must navigate a tenuous and unpopular path.

SCRIPTURAL VISION

Many Old Testament saints prophesied of this powerful, unified, world-changing gathering called *the Church*. In Jeremiah 32:38-39, God says the following concerning those who would some day become partakers of the New Covenant, *“They shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them.”* Many New Testament verses echo Christ’s command of unity and brotherly self-sacrifice:

“Let your conduct be as it becometh the gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).

Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind (Philippians 2:2).

“There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body” (Colossians 3:11, 14-15).

“Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but on the contrary, blessing, knowing that ye are called to this, that ye should inherit a blessing” (1 Peter 3:8-9).

All that said, just how does the Bible prescribe unity among the Church today, particularly within a local body? How does a church, while both protecting liberty of conscience and guarding against secular assimilation, move together decidedly with a clear voice to a very ambiguous world? I believe the answer is the same today as it was in apostolic times; the Church needs to once again come together unanimously, seeking the promises of God with just as much simplicity and tenacity of heart as they did in the Book of Acts. Then, strengthened by the grace



A dysfunctional church is much like this, often typified by a gathering of strong individualists, all stubbornly waiting for the rest of the church to agree with their particular perspective or agenda, and of course, this also never happens.

and blessing of God, allow God to motivate and quicken the Church into brotherly self-denial and action. It was just such a spirit that motivated David to pour out that precious cup of Bethlehem water. The church needs what David had, and that is a spirit that is consecrated, but not constrained.

YOU'RE NOT HEAVY— YOU'RE MY BROTHER

Perhaps we should all take a time of some serious self-examination. All too often, the Church more likely resembles a dysfunctional marriage than a unified one. This is a marriage where the husband and wife both stubbornly wait for the other spouse to bend to them before there will be any peace in the home—and of course, there is no peace in such a home. A dysfunctional church is much like this, often typified by a gathering of strong individualists, all stubbornly waiting for the rest of the church to agree with their

particular perspective or agenda, and of course, this also never happens. Unfortunately, the focus of carnal churches tends to be on the satisfaction of the *individual*. In contrast, Paul said to the Church at Rome, “We then that are strong *ought* to bear the infirmities of the weak, and *not to please ourselves*. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself...” (Roman 15:1-3).

The word translated here as “ought” (bastazo) is a precious word in the Greek. It means “to be a debtor”. Paul uses the same word in Romans 1:14, “I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians.” So in other words, here in Romans 15, it is saying that our debt is “to bear the infirmities of the weak.” This word is used more than twenty-five times in the New Testament. Interestingly, it does not communicate the idea of tolerating someone’s inadequacy, rather, it refers to carrying someone’s load—of shouldering his burden.

There is an old battlefield story that very poignantly illustrates this picture. Two brothers were

The wounded man yelled at his brother that he was too heavy. To this, the other brother simply replied, “You’re not heavy...you’re my brother!”



in the Army together in a foreign war. They were on maneuvers, traveling through a field, when they suddenly came under enemy attack. One of the men was severely shot and wounded, and he falls to the ground, most likely to die. The other brother, who was almost out of range of the gunfire by now, saw his fallen brother and turns back, risking his own life to try to rescue him. The wounded man yelled at his brother that he was too heavy. To this, the other brother simply replied, "You're not heavy...you're my brother!"

AN UNHEALTHY FEAR OF DIRECTION

Unfortunately, the idea of a decided agreement among a church body, particularly an agreement about real, practical issues that pertain to our everyday lives, can often conjure up all kinds of bad experiences from the past. Memories of unrealistic solutions and damaging, arbitrary judgments, can lead a person to abandon any kind of church direction and "throw out the baby with the bathwater", so to speak. Some feel that the only kind of unity requested in the prayer of Jesus, found in John 17, was concerning theological issues. However, while theological unity is important, if the main reason for unity is, "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me," then it is obvious that our Lord had something more in mind than mere mental agreement.

The world doesn't really care if we can tell the difference between "predestination" and "free will" — or whether we are "pre-trib" or "post-trib." However, they can see if we are united, if we demonstrate love for our enemies, if we stand against materialism, if we are unmoved by the styles and fashions of the

day, and if we boldly proclaim these truths on their street corners and in their work places. As Leonard Ravenhill put it, "the world is not looking for a new **definition** of Christianity, they're looking for a new **demonstration** of Christianity." Without question, the Church of Jesus Christ today must speak decisively, unambiguously and authoritatively to the world around us.

How a church goes about attempting to accomplish this great task usually serves as the touchstone which distinguishes between different methods of church government: i.e. century old, unalterable standards on the one side—liberty, license and purposed ambiguity on the other. Adherents to each position usually hold their to view with ardent tenacity.

A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

A good look at how the early apostolic church lived out their decisions on practical issues affecting church life is essential. In the apostolic church, there were deliberate efforts to allow for insignificant differences. On the other hand, they were not afraid to make clear applications when they heard from the Holy Spirit. In both cases, whether it was purposed

liberty or a discerned direction, the Church was encouraged to walk through all decisions in unity. Paul gave clear warnings against both extremes of church government. When responding to the intolerant Judaizers who were coming from outside of the congregation and stirring up the brethren to obey the Jewish law to be saved, Paul said, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: ... Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not;



Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men" (Col 2:16-22)? On the other hand, when rebuking the Corinthian church for having a decisive spirit among themselves and falling into different cliques and parties he said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same *mind* and in the same *judgment*" (I Cor 1:10). What's most notable about this verse is the way Paul includes both *mind* and *judgment*. What he's saying here, is that he wants this indecisive and factious church not only to agree in their theology (mind), but also in how this theology was to be carried out (judgment). The rest of the epistle further illustrates this directive.

BAD TESTIMONIES

In my life, I have seen abuses on both sides of church administration. From ridged legalism to licensed licentiousness, both extremes have worked to dishonor the name of Christ. Without a doubt, I have never seen a more conspicuous display of both these abuses than right here in Lancaster County. On any given drive home from church, both extremes are painfully demonstrated. As I look to my left, I must be careful to dodge the scores of bicycling, conservative young men and women, zooming past my van, after their lighting fast uniform change in their church basement. Fleeing the church house with hockey sticks, baseball bats and fishing poles, or just congregating at some obviously inappropriate and unsanctioned youth gathering, it doesn't appear that they received much from the Sunday service.

I'll never forget one particularly sad Sunday that stands out in my mind. While driving home from church, a group of about 15 "conservative" boys had congregated right in front of the covered bridged and began shouting obscenities into my van as I passed. I took it as an opportunity, parked the van, grabbed my Bible, and got out to preach to them, as my wife and children watched and prayed. As I did, they were all heckling me in Pennsylvania Dutch. But every now and then they would say something in English like, "Why are you preaching to us? We went to church today!" Others

would say something like, "Why preach? We are obviously Christians—just look at us!"

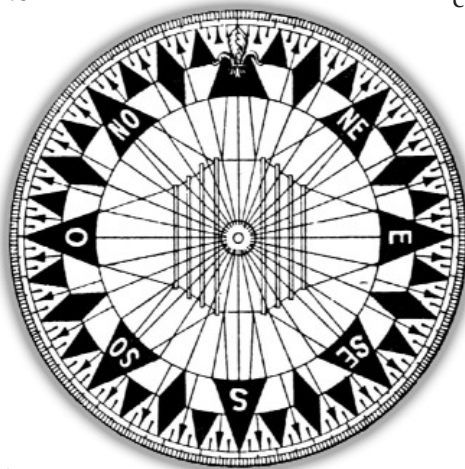
Then at other heartbreaking times, behind the closed doors of the counseling rooms, I hear the horrible confessions from boys just like these—their stories break my heart. Boys from seemingly good homes, often confessing sins to me that I never even knew the world would commit. Most of the testimonies are all painfully similar. They nearly all say that they looked good on the outside, but inside they were as lost as the Devil. Hearing it all, I cry, I question, I groan, and then I ask the Lord—I beg the Lord for the answer...*why?*

However, just when I am tempted to completely throw out this "plain" or conservative approach to Church life, I begin look to my right, as I pass an Evangelical church with an advertisement on their church sign for a "Youth Pajama Party" night service. Next, I am told of the foot washing service our friends attended in Texas where, instead of washing feet, they decided to manicure one another's toe nails, posting the theme verse on the wall, "How Beautiful Are the Feet of Them..." I am reminded of the divorce, law suits, licentiousness and war-loving attitude that permeate this approach to Christianity. I think of the recent failures of the big preachers in

Colorado, and countless others, and it makes my heart sink. These recent failures cause me to recall the litany of fallen evangelists and preachers that have scandalized the Church throughout my lifetime.

Thinking back, I remember being there with them. Remorsefully, I recall how all too often, from the pastor to the pews we all, by and large, "drank in iniquity like water."

Talking to the Christians in these circles today is very depressing. As I talk to them, their testimonies are also very similar. They usually all see their salvation as sure, only on the basis that they once said a "sinner's prayer", and as far as they are concerned, that should just about do it. Not surprisingly, they are all usually well versed in the doctrines of Christian liberty, and the dangers of judging your brother. But sadly, they are feeble and given over to all manner of lusts and worldly pursuits, and to their shame, often in excesses which commonly even surpass the world around them. It has become a common known fact, for example, that the divorce rate among professing Christians now exceeds that of the world.



The 15th Chapter of Acts provides an interesting glimpse at the manner in which the early Church dealt with a very sticky situation that was threatening the unity of the Church at that time. They had to decide which Jewish laws were going to be held on the Gentile believers. They felt that that some of the gray areas like circumcision needed to be addressed.



VISION

Needless to say, something, somewhere has gone terribly wrong. On the one hand, well-meaning, conservative Christians have missed something in the propagation of the faith and, as a result, have lost their first love. On the other hand, the opposite extreme of Christian independence has reduced the vast majority of the Church today to a voiceless, directionless, social club, all in the name of Christian liberty.

I find myself between two extremes. As a conservative Christian brotherhood, I feel we have got to find our place in the midst of it all. There is no doubt that the *enemy has come in like a flood*. And we, as a church, must count on God's promise to *raise up a standard against it*. Jesus promised, "*I will build my Church...*" Do we believe Him? Can the Church once again return to the spirit of the apostolic times, speaking decisively to the world without losing its first love?

A BLUEPRINT

The 15th Chapter of Acts provides an interesting glimpse at the manner in which the early Church dealt with a very sticky situation that was threatening the unity of the Church at that time. They had to decide which Jewish laws were going to be held on

the Gentile believers. Obvious laws like murder and theft were not even mentioned. However, they felt that that some of the gray areas like circumcision needed to be addressed.

Several things can be discerned from their dialogue. First of all, we can see that they had real discrepancies, differing opinions and even debates. This does not mean that they were not a Spirit-filled church, it only means that they were real men, just like we are today. Another thing we can glean from this council is that it was not some mystical voice from heaven that spoke to them there. They each shared their heart freely. The impressive part is that finally, once all views were fairly represented—once all the disputing, debating, and dialoguing was done—the Holy Spirit placed it on the heart of the brotherhood to agree on a clear direction for the church. I would recommend that everyone read through this chapter and just study it a bit. This really is a very insightful account.

Nevertheless, the end result of their council was that the Gentiles were only going to maintain the four sojourner/holiness laws from Lev. 17 and 18, "*Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood*" (Acts 15:19).

Advocates of Christian license often quote Acts Chapter 15 as a justification that all outward restrictions and practices were abolished by the Jerusalem

council through this pronouncement. As impressive as this pronouncement is, if we are not careful, we could miss one of the most important parts of the council. Verses 8 and 9 go on to say, “*And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.*”

If the four things listed by the council (i.e. pollutions of idols, fornication, things strangled, and blood) were the only things that they felt that God would speak to the Church about, then there would have been absolutely no justification for Paul to have spoken so dogmatically on subjects such as marriage, divorce, modesty, head coverings, gossip, war and nonresistance, submission to authority, idolatry, covetousness, etc., etc.

The key to this passage is not so much that the Jerusalem church was taking away things that the Gentile churches should be concerned about, but rather, that they were proclaiming their confidence that a Spirit-led brotherhood has the power to discern these things. Be it Jewish or Gentile, a *real* New Testament church *has the Holy Spirit to speak to them, teach them and practically guide them through all parts of life*. The Jerusalem church said here that the whole reason that they were able to take away the Jewish law from the Gentiles was because *they were given the Holy Ghost*. They knew that Jesus had promised that He would send the Comforter, and that *He would lead them into all truth*. They proclaimed that this was as true for the Gentiles as it was for the Jews. Apparently, they trusted that all the issues that would come up in the Gentile brotherhood could be handled by the Holy Spirit speaking to their brotherhood and guiding them.

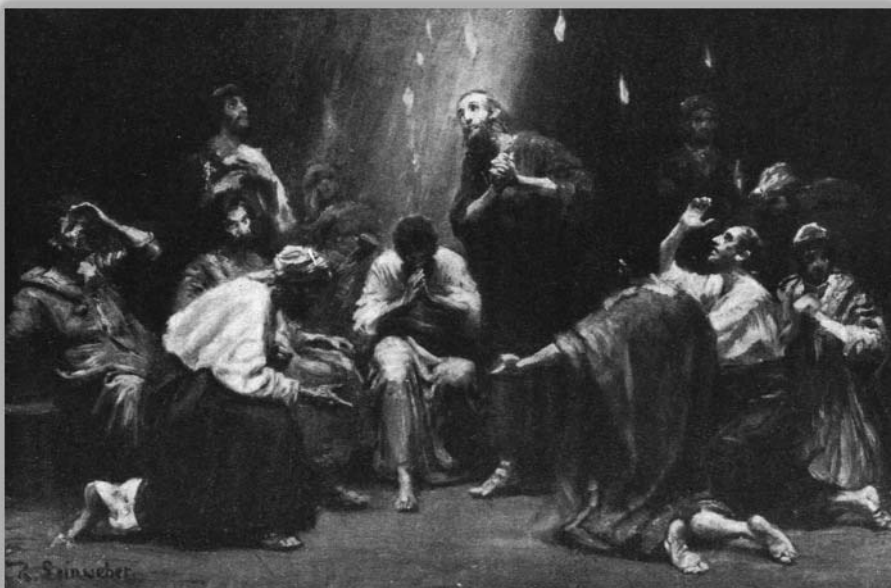
CAN WE HEAR FROM GOD LIKE THAT TODAY?

In Revelation Chapter 2 Jesus is mentioned, walking amidst the churches—*amidst the candle stands*: “*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.*”

This account is given by John as if Jesus were giving an inventory of a few of the early Churches. As He does this, he blesses them for their faithfulness, but He also rebukes them for their lack of discernment and lack of action. Some of the things mentioned are timeless: materialism, lukewarmness and loosing our first love. Some things, however, were more specific issues which related particularly to the church of that day. For instance, they were rebuked for not addressing and dealing with problems such as eating meat sacrificed to idols, the Nicolaitan heresy and the adulteress teacher called Jezebel. Sounding throughout the judgment, Jesus repeatedly cries out, “*He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church!*” “*He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church!*”

CAN WE HEAR?

Does Jesus still want a church today that can hear His voice, and act practically and decisively without



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and go decisively
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Are we, in our fellowships,
seeking to hear from God like this?
Do we hear? Not, do we have
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losing its first love? I believe He does. Yet, we all know the dangers. John warns that if a church continues to turn a deaf ear to Christ, He will eventually remove their lamp stand. *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent”* (Rev. 2:5).

Are we, in our fellowships, seeking to hear from God like this? Do we hear? Not, do we have a doctrine that we hear, but do we hear? Are we acting on what He is saying to us? There is such a need for churches today that still have a *lampstand*. There is such a need for real Christian brotherhood today, for a living Christian brotherhood that can hear from God, get a clear direction from the Holy Spirit, and go decisively in a direction—without apology.

WHAT IF I DON'T AGREE?

Any Godly man who has ever walked with any true brotherhood for any length of time has surely faced this dilemma, *“What if I don't agree?”* Did

everyone in Acts Chapter 15 just suddenly come to complete agreement? It certainly does not appear that they did. What does seem clear is that these men had a true faith in God, one which seems to have enabled them to be Spirit-led, and lay down their own agendas. Remember, in the Christian faith to lose is to win and to die is gain. Herein lies the real test; brotherhood is easy when everyone agrees with me! *Brothers, death to self is the key to a successful doctrine of Brotherhood!* Of course, this does not mean compromising God's Word. There are times when a brother simply must separate himself. But, too often, the things that separate us are not so fundamental. Sometimes, walking with a brotherhood requires giving up something that is very dear to us. This is where the spirit of David comes in—consecrated, and not constrained. Something that could only be described as heavenly, otherworldly and absolutely spiritual happens when a man *truly* consecrates an action to God. This solemn act can mysteriously transform the most common act into a *Holy oblation*.

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Let us hear from
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and go forward in a
spirit that is like that
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THE CIRCUMCISION OF TIMOTHY

There has probably never been anyone on the earth who has understood the doctrine of circumcision better than Paul. Receiving a direct revelation from Jesus, Himself, he said to the Galatians, *“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love”* (Gal 5:6). But even though he knew this, and knew it to be true by divine revelation, look what he did:

Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. (Acts 16:1-3)

Knowing full well that circumcision meant nothing, but being keenly aware of the sensitivity of some of his Jewish brethren back home, he took Timothy and he circumcised him! I can't imagine being in Paul's shoes, and explaining to his younger brother, Timothy, that the only reason he was doing this was for the sake of peace, because of where the local Jewish brethren stood on this issue—but that's what he did! Timothy was able to experience *real* Christian brotherhood on a level that we may never have the opportunity to do. Now, *that* is consecrated, not constrained! —And we think *we* have to give up so much!

THE BEAUTIFUL SOUND OF SWEET FELLOWSHIP

I would like to leave you with this thought to ponder. There is a curious law of musical physics that beautifully illustrates this concept of self-denial in a fellowship. In the early days of musical composition and orchestration, musicians were faced with a very frustrating and precarious phenomenon. When tuning a musical instrument, such as a piano, precisely to each individual note's perfect pitch, they were puzzled to find that this would render playing in some keys painfully out of tune. In an attempt to remedy this dilemma, some instrument makers even invented harpsichords with two cumbersome sets of keys. However, in the 1700's, J.S. Bach realized this problem and ingeniously devised a way to allow the organs and harpsichords to play beautifully in tune in every key. He made the fascinating discovery that if every note were *bent just slightly off of its own perfect pitch*, then the instruments could be played successfully in every key, with beautiful intonation and harmony!

Brethren, let's remember, Jesus is walking among our churches crying, *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”* Oh, Church, let's listen! Let us hear from God, bow our hearts to one another, and go forward in a spirit that is like that of David and Timothy, a spirit that is consecrated, not constrained!

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments. Like the dew of Hermon, and like the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore” (Psalm 133).



I s T h e r e B L O O D On The Doorpost?

by D.L. Moody

There is a beautiful legend told about a little boy who was the first-born of a family in Egypt, when the destroying angel swept through that land, and consequently who would have been a victim on that night if the protecting blood were not sprinkled on the doorposts of her father's house. The order was that the first-born should be struck by death all through Egypt. This little boy was sick, and he knew that death would take him, and he might be a victim of the order. He asked his father if the blood was sprinkled on the doorposts. He said it was, that he had ordered it to be done. He asked him if he had seen it there. He said no, but he had no doubt that it was done. He had seen the lamb killed, and had told the servant to attend to it. But he was not satisfied, and asked his father to go and see, and urged him to take him in his arms and carry him to the door to see. They found that the servant had actually neglected to put the blood upon the posts! There the child was exposed to death until they found the blood and sprinkled it on the posts, and then it was safe. See to it that you are safe in Christ!

"And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt (Exodus 12:13)."



Primitive Christianity

by Charles Wesley

HAPPY the souls who first believed,
To Jesus and each other cleaved,
Join'd by the unction from above,
In mystic fellowship of love!

Meek, simple followers of the Lamb,
They lived and spake and thought the same;
Broke the commemorative bread,
And drank the Spirit of their Head.

On God they cast their every care:
Wrestling with God in mighty prayer.
They claim'd the grace, through Jesus given;
By prayer they shut and open'd heaven.

To Jesus they perform'd their vows:
A little Church in every house,
They joyfully conspired to raise
Their ceaseless sacrifice of praise.

Propriety was there unknown,
None call'd what he possess'd his own;
Where all the common blessings share,
No selfish happiness was there.

With grace abundantly endued,
A pure, believing multitude!
They all were of one heart and soul,
And only love inspired the whole.

O what an age of golden days!
O what a choice, peculiar race!
Wash'd in the Lamb's all-cleansing blood,
Anointed kings and priests to God.

Where shall I wander now to find
The successors they left behind?
The faithful whom I seek in vain,
Are 'minished from the sons of men.

Ye different sects, who all declare,
"Lo, here is Christ!" or, "Christ is there!"
Your stronger proofs divinely give,
And show me where the Christians live.

Your claim, alas! ye cannot prove,
Ye want the genuine mark of love:
Thou only, Lord, thine own canst show;
For sure thou hast a Church below.

The gates of hell cannot prevail,
The Church on earth can never fail:
Ah! join me to thy secret ones!
Ah! gather all thy living stones!

Scatter'd o'er all the earth they lie,
Till thou collect them with thine eye,
Draw by the music of thy name,
And charm into a beauteous frame.

For this the pleading Spirit groans,
And cries in all thy banish'd ones:
Greatest of gifts, thy love, impart,
And make us of one mind and heart!

Join every soul that looks to thee
In bonds of perfect charity:
Now, Lord, the glorious fullness give,
And all in all for ever live!

Jesus, from whom all blessings flow,
Great Builder of thy Church below,
If now thy Spirit moves my breast,
Hear, and fulfill thy own request!

The few that truly call thee Lord,
And wait thy sanctifying word,
And thee their utmost Savior own,
Unite, and perfect them in one.

Gather them in on every side,
And in thy tabernacle hide;
Give them a resting-place to find,
A covert from the storm and wind.

O find them out some calm recess,
Some unfrequented wilderness!
Thou, Lord, the secret place prepare,
And hide and feed "the woman" there.

Thither collect thy little flock,
Under the shadow of their Rock:
The holy seed, the royal race,
The standing monuments of thy grace.

O let them all thy mind express,
Stand forth thy chosen witnesses!
Thy power unto salvation show,
And perfect holiness below:

The fulness of thy grace receive,
And simply to thy glory live;
Strongly reflect the light divine,
And in a land of darkness shine.

In them let all mankind behold
How Christians lived in days of old;
Mighty their envious woes to move,
A proverb of reproach - and love.

O make them of one soul and heart,
The all-conforming mind impart;
Spirit of peace and unity,
The sinless mind that was in thee.

Call them into thy wondrous light,
Worthy to walk with thee in white;
Make up thy jewels, Lord, and show
The glorious, spotless Church below.

From every sinful wrinkle free,
Redeem'd from all iniquity;
The fellowship of saints make known;
And O, my God, might I be one!

O might my lot be cast with these,
The least of Jesu's witnesses!
O that my Lord would count me meet
To wash his dear disciples' feet!

This only thing do I require,
Thou know'st 'tis all my heart's desire,
Freely what I receive to give,
The servant of thy Church to live:

After my lowly Lord to go,
And wait upon the saints below;
Enjoy the grace to angels given,
And serve the royal heirs of heaven.

Lord, if I now thy drawings feel,
And ask according to thy will,
Confirm the prayer, the seal impart,
And speak the answer to my heart!

Tell me, or thou shalt never go,
"Thy prayer is heard, it shall be so:" -
The word hath passed thy lips, - and I
Shall with thy people live and die.

Taken from
www.primitivechristianity.org

Working the Fields

ONE FAMILY'S TESTIMONY

by Jeff & Susan Chapman
Pikeville, TN

Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines *providence* as "the care and superintendence which God exercises over His creatures". This is just what we felt when we met Brother David Janzen in Manitoba, back in the summer of 2004. Somehow, we felt that this meeting held an integral part of our future.

David shared with us about a revival beginning in a group of believers in Northern Alberta, Canada. The people were coming from a religious system into the freedom of Jesus Christ. "Your family could be a real blessing in the work up there," he stated. Wow! Could our family be a blessing to new believers? "Tell us more, Brother." This was our heart's desire—to be used of God as a family.

As a result of this meeting, our family did, indeed, travel to Cleardale, Alberta, in the summer of 2005. There, we met many people who would become very dear friends. We also got to experience, first hand, a bit of the revival that was taking place there. It was also there that we learned of a real need for a work to be started in a Northern Canadian hamlet, called LaCrete.

Throughout the remainder of 2005, and into the spring of 2006, we took LaCrete into our hearts and prayers. Could this possibly be a place where



From Russia to Chile, from the Falkland Islands to the wild street parties of the American inner cities, we had attempted to share the everlasting Gospel of our Lord Jesus. But none of that prepared us for what we were about to face in the neat and orderly Mennonite town of LaCrete.

God could use us? Then we got a call from Brother David Janzen, asking us to pray and consider an extended summer trip to LaCrete. "There's a group of believers meeting together that could really use some encouragement," he shared. We knew what it was like to be part of a small group, so we longed to go up and encourage these saints. But what would the Lord say? We began praying

for specific direction regarding this decision and God answered with an abounding “Yes—you are to go!”

We were so excited as we packed up our big family and headed north. We had such high aspirations for evangelism, in this town of approximately 3,000 people—95% of them from the Old Colony Mennonite background. We had always enjoyed evangelizing as a family. We had been on a few foreign missions trips, and done street ministry together for many, many years. From Russia to Chile, from the Falkland Islands to the wild street parties of the American inner cities, we had attempted to share the everlasting Gospel of our Lord Jesus. But none of that prepared us for what we were about to face in the neat and orderly Mennonite town of LaCrete.

Our first meeting with the believers there felt like a reunion with old friends. We felt our hearts blending so beautifully with each brother and sister. We eagerly listened as they shared with us bits and pieces of the beliefs, practices and traditions of the Russian Mennonite heritage. We were shocked to hear that baptism is mostly a prerequisite for marriage, and most of the time the candidate is not even born again. Then, if there is ever a conversion and a real believer’s baptism later on, the person is accused of blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, and told they can NEVER be forgiven. It is this act—this believer’s baptism, as taught by our own Lord in the Gospels, practiced by the early church in Acts, preached by the apostles in the letters to the churches, and still carried on by believers all over the world—this act—would cost you everything in LaCrete. Family disowns you, employers can fire you, and friends forsake you for obeying this simple teaching of Mark 16:16. It is also a common teaching that you cannot have assurance of your salvation—“Doubt is faith in disguise,” they are taught.



How our burden grew as we learned these things and more. “You dare not carry a Bible to church or engage in spiritual conversation away from the church house,” we were told. This is thought to be an act of pride or arrogance. How many, many times would we hear the words, “THIS IS NOT A CHURCH!” as we attempted to share the Gospel throughout the summer.

The men wanted to start evangelizing right away, so our first weekend in LaCrete they headed for the nearest liquor store, where we had heard that many Mennonite young people buy strong drink. The night was uneventful as they handed out tracts and engaged in a few meaningful conversations. However, after arriving home that night, our magnetic Gospel signs were stolen off of our van. The signs are large (6’ x 2’) and simply read, “Jesus came into the world to save sinners” and “Whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” How grieved we were to think of the boldness of this thief, to steal a Gospel message (it was still daylight outside and we lived right on a very busy corner) and later to hear that our signs were taken to a party where they were burned by the rowdy crowd. “They absolutely hate the Gospel,” we marveled.

And it was true! As the summer unfolded, we saw more and more, the hatred this religious group had for the Word of God. We were forbidden to witness at public gatherings, prohibited from handing out Gospel tracts at public events, and put under house arrest for preaching in the public square. “We know all of this,” they shouted, “Go back to Tennessee!” “We go to church!” “We’re Gods’ people!” “God is German!” “Don’t read to us from that no-good English Bible!” “LaCrete is a Christian community—go to Africa!”

How longsuffering our God must be. He has patiently continued to strive with these people since they left Germany due to persecution in the 1780’s. They fled to Russia in an agreement with Katherine the Great—an ungodly deal that traded rich farmland and freedom from army enlistment for the Mennonite’s commitment not to evangelize! And we see where this act of Gospel treason has landed them—right in the midst of dead religion some two hundred plus years later. Their churches are only shells of their former glory, places where the sermons are preached in a language (High German) that a majority of the people don’t even speak or understand clearly. Places where the people fear the preachers and don’t fear God.

These churches turn out young people whose wild partying and fornication is overlooked and excused as “sowing wild oats.” Yet, in their pride and rebellion, they will not allow them to seek after God (Psalm 10:4). So, it was to these lost young people that we decided to focus our message.

The brothers showed up at their parties to witness to those who would hear, and went to their weekend hang-outs to share with those who questioned them. Out of these efforts came brothers with bruises, scratches, scrapes, and cuts. One brother even required stitches to sew up a head wound from a beer bottle. These angry and violent young people were acting out the hatred of their parents! Our house was vandalized, our property stolen, and our Gospel tracts returned to our yard as litter, with profane messages and curses scrawled all over them. “Read Ephesians 4:5,” they wrote amidst many vulgar phrases. This was the response we encountered again and again, as we attempted to evangelize.” We know who you are—you RE-BAPTIZERS!” “Don’t step foot on our property!” we were warned as we tried door-to-door evangelism.

But as always—God is faithful to preserve for Himself a people. And out of this angry crowd came some serious seekers, young people with real questions, seeking real answers—others coming by to apologize for the behavior of their relatives and friends. A couple of vile drunks at a Sunday night party became our supper guests (and henceforth our friends) on Monday evening! They just *had* to hear what in the world we were doing there. Didn’t we know they were Mennonites?

Other young people saw the lines being clearly drawn and decided they wanted to be on the Lord’s side. We were privileged to witness a sincere young man’s baptism, and see others take a stand with the Gospel, when a crowd nearly turned into a riotous mob during a night of street preaching.

It was through these experiences—some persecutions and some joyful victories—that we learned some very valuable lessons. In Philippians 3:10 the apostle cries out, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” This verse seems to be an acknowledgement by Paul, that there is a level of intimacy attained in a relationship through shared suffering, which is not achieved any other way. Companionship in sorrow establishes the most intimate and lasting of ties, as afflicted



Our desire is that hearing a bit of our experiences in LaCrete will encourage you to allow God to use you and your family in the field of His choice.

There are needs all around us.

hearts cling to each other. We experienced this beautiful truth firsthand. There was such a bonding of hearts among the brothers and sisters there in LaCrete, as each one bore the sufferings of the other.

As fathers disowned their sons because of their stand for Jesus, and rumors ran rampant in attempts to destroy one’s integrity and reputation, the others in the fellowship would rally around the hurting member with prayers and encouragement. What a living example of I Corinthians 12:26! Seeing this beautiful truth in “shoe leather” made our entire trip worthwhile. We had to remind ourselves that God wanted us there in Canada for our own growth among other reasons. He wanted to put His finger on issues in our own life and mold us into His image more and more.

So, although our stay in LaCrete was shadowed by daily harassment and confrontation, it also yielded fruit in our lives that is priceless. God can use us. And He will use you, too, if you make yourself available. There is nothing special about our family. We are just a big (sometimes noisy and even rowdy) family with a desire to see souls saved. We have struggles and we have needs, but we also have a God who is looking for more than ability—He’s looking for availability! Our desire is that hearing a bit of our experiences in LaCrete will encourage you to allow God to use you and your family in the field of His choice. There are needs all around us, if we will only...*lift up our eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.* (John 4:35) God bless you as you work in His fields! □

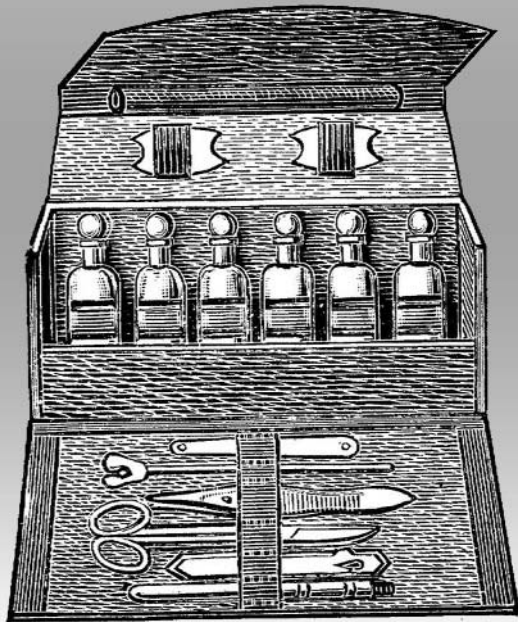
Cling Close to the Rock

Little Johnny and his sister were one day going through a long, narrow tunnel. The railroad company had built small clefts here and there through the tunnel, so that if anyone got caught in the tunnel when the train was passing, they could save themselves.

After this little boy and girl had gone some distance in the tunnel, they heard a train coming. They were frightened at first, but the sister just put her little brother in one cleft, and she hurried and hid in another. The train came thundering along, and as it passed, the sister cried out, "Johnny, cling close to the rock!" and they were safe.

The "Rock of Ages" may be beaten by the storms and waves of adversity, but "cling close to the rock," Christians, and all will be well. The waves don't touch the Christian; he is sheltered by the Rock "that is higher than I," by the One who is the strong arm, and the Savior who is mighty and willing to save.





HEALTH CARE

*Medical, Natural,
or Supernatural*

by Rodger Hertzler

We live in a world which offers us an almost endless list of choices when it comes to taking care of our health. We are bombarded every day by advertisements promoting a huge variety of products, procedures, and practitioners, all of them promising to either make us healthy or else keep us healthy.

For the Bible-believing Christian, does it matter how we choose among the various health-care options? Is this a choice that is basically amoral, without any definite “right and wrong”? Or, is it a decision that will significantly impact both our spiritual lives and our eternal destiny?

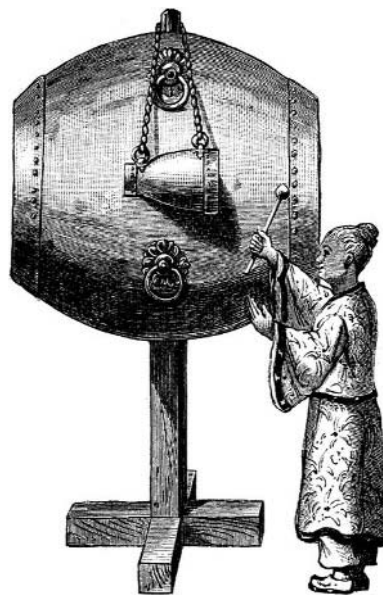
In the minds of many people, the various health care options can be neatly divided into two categories: *medical* and *natural*. The *medical* category (or “conventional medicine”) includes most of the drugs, surgeries, and other therapies that are approved by the government and used by licensed physicians. The *natural* category supposedly includes everything that falls outside of the *medical* category.

Although this simple classification system seems so sensible and right, it is, in fact, dead wrong. Not only is it wrong, but it is also dangerous: so dangerous that Satan has been able to use this lie, I fear, to bring multitudes into the bondage of sin.

Why is this classification system so wrong? What makes it so dangerous? The answer lies in the fact that there are actually three categories, not two.

It is simply not true that whenever we step out of the medical field that we have automatically entered the natural. Because there is also a third category of health care, the *supernatural*.

There have been many well-meaning people who chose not to use conventional medicine (often for very good reasons) and opted instead to go with



There have been many well-meaning people who chose not to use conventional medicine and opted instead to go with what they thought to be a natural therapy. In doing so, however, they inadvertently stepped not into the natural, but into the supernatural.

what they thought to be a natural therapy. In doing so, however, they inadvertently stepped not into the natural, but into the supernatural.

Natural health care remedies are good, right, and a blessing from God. Supernatural remedies, except for prayer and anointing with oil, are strictly forbidden by God.

Supernatural health care practices (sometimes called *occult* or *New Age* health practices) are included in the sin that God calls *witchcraft* or *sorcery*. It is nothing less than tapping into the power of Satan and his demonic forces. God says in His Word that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God, but shall have their part in the lake of fire. (Galatians 5:20-21, Revelation 21:8) The sin of witchcraft was one of the reasons God drove out the Canaanites before Israel. It was this sin, in part, that cost Saul his kingship. And it was because of this sin, among others, that wicked King Manasseh was carried captive to Babylon.

If this is true, then it becomes extremely important that we be able to discern whether or not a particular therapy fits into this *supernatural* category. Once we recognize what really is at stake with this issue, it simply won't be satisfactory to say, "Well, people have different opinions about these issues. Since we probably won't be able to change anyone's mind anyway, there's not much point in spending a lot of time investigating them." (If this is our response, it reveals that we do not view this sin of witchcraft with the hatred God has for it.)

The truth is, if we, our family members, or our fellow church members have been involved in occult activities (even if it has been in ignorance), then it is imperative that we discover the truth and discover it very soon. All sin, especially a sin as serious as witchcraft, will bring us into a bondage to Satan that can only be broken by confession, repentance, and the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus. Our personal victory, the purity of our churches, and the destiny of our eternal souls are all depending on our willingness to find this truth and respond to it.

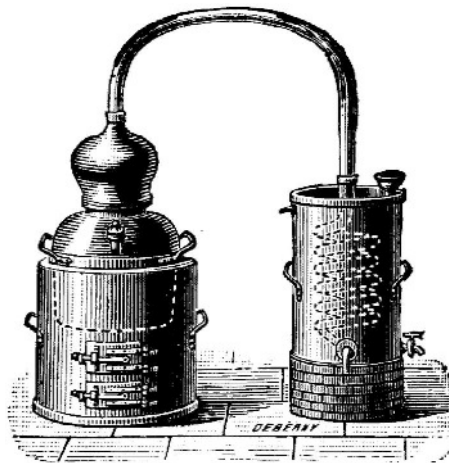
So how can we know whether or not a particular remedy fits into the supernatural category? Is there a reliable way to test a therapy and determine, with a reasonable level of certainty, whether or not it is sin?

Yes, thankfully, there is. Although the details vary, here are three simple points that generally characterize any therapy which derives its power from the realm of darkness.

- There is no explanation about its effectiveness that makes sense scientifically.
- The healing power is not dependent on Christ or on His Word.
- Those who promote the therapy tie its effectiveness to some sort of power which, when analyzed, proves to be a *non-physical* (and therefore spiritual) power.

To determine whether or not this third point applies to a particular therapy, we may have to dig a little deeper into the materials promoting the therapy, or into the history of the therapy's origin. The names used to describe this non-physical power are

as varied as the therapies themselves. Some of them even use scientific-sounding names, such as *magnetism* or *electricity*, to identify this power; however, the characteristics of this power are vastly different from those of the magnetism or electricity that can be observed and tested in the scientific world. Here are some examples of the names that have been given to this power:



Some of them even use scientific-sounding names, such as magnetism or electricity, to identify this power; however, the characteristics of this power are vastly different from those of the magnetism or electricity that can be observed and tested in the scientific world.

- Vital Energy
- Vital Force
- Universal Energy
- Innate Intelligence
- Healing Force
- Life Force
- Electromagnetic Energy
- Electricity
- Meridians
- Chi

When a particular therapy fits all three of the characteristics listed above, we can be nearly certain that it fits into what the Bible calls the sin of witchcraft. We ought therefore to avoid it, pray against it, and

if we've ever gotten personally involved, repent and renounce it thoroughly.

Based, then, on the three-point test described above, which of the popular therapies in use today match the characteristics of a *supernatural* therapy? Although there are doubtless many more than what we could possibly list in this article, here is a list of just a few therapies that seem to qualify as witchcraft when subjected to this test.

Reflexology
Applied Kinesiology
Acupuncture
Acupressure

Homeopathy (with *potentization*)
Radiesthesia (pendulums, etc.)
Yoga
Meditation
Hypnotherapy

Does this mean that the case is totally closed on all these procedures? No. Our conclusions should always be open to re-examination if new evidence comes to light. But as long as all the existing evidence points to the conclusion that these things truly are witchcraft, we ought to deal with them just as we would any other practice that is an abomination in the sight of God.

As you attempt to discern between right and wrong regarding health care therapies, please beware of certain false ideas that Satan has set as pitfalls to hinder you in your search for truth. Following are a number of myths regarding health therapies which will tend to generate clouds of confusion around an area where God wants there to be light and understanding.

Myth 1

Any phenomenon that is not understood by scientists must be witchcraft.

Science is constantly making new discoveries about the natural world we live in, and some perfectly natural occurrences are therefore still in the realm of the unknown. This by itself does not prove anything to be witchcraft, and we should not judge something to be witchcraft based on this criterion alone. We should rather put it to the three-point test described above to see if it meets all the characteristics of the occult. Also ask whether or not the phenomenon acts like true science. Does it yield the same results under identical circumstances? Or do the results vary widely with no reasonable explanation for the variation? Does it make claims that are clearly outside the realm of science, such as the ability to treat the soul and the spirit?

Myth 2

If it works, it must be scientific.

In a largely secular country like the United States, many of us have bought into the idea that wherever we see real results, there must be a natural

or rational explanation for those results. The idea that anything is the result of supernatural forces is written off as mere superstition. The truth is, supernatural forces really do exist and those forces really can produce results that defy any natural or rational explanation.

Myth 3

If it is witchcraft, it won't work for Christians.

Occult health practices have been known to yield amazing results for Christians as well as for non-Christians. God has warned His people not to dabble in the occult, and God doesn't warn us about things that are not possible for us to do. If we consciously choose to ignore His warnings and use witchcraft anyway, it seems as though we open ourselves up to Satan's power and forego the protection that God has otherwise provided for us.

Myth 4

If it is witchcraft, the guilt lies with the practitioner, not with the patient.

The logic used here is that as long as I am not practicing witchcraft myself, but rather *hiring someone else to do it*, then I personally am not guilty. This does not seem to be consistent with Scripture, however. God poured out his judgment on Saul because of the sin of witchcraft. Yet the truth is that Saul did not actually practice the witchcraft himself, but rather *hired someone else to practice it for him*. It was this wicked deed that incurred the wrath of the Almighty.

Myth 5

It's not possible to really know the truth about these therapies.

Some say that the widely varying opinions about health care remedies make it nearly impossible to really know the truth about them. However, 1 John 1:5 tells us that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." We can be sure that the same God Who has warned us so thoroughly about the sin of witchcraft sincerely wants us to know what does and what doesn't qualify as witchcraft. If we find ourselves throwing up our hands and saying, "I just don't know the answer," it's probably either because we have not been willing to do an honest investigation or else we've already decided for personal reasons what our position (or lack of position) will be. God is always faithful to reveal truth to a seeking heart, especially about an issue with such far-reaching consequences as this one. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

Myth 6

If a trusted person (a medical doctor, a family member, a fellow Christian, or a church leader) recommends a therapy, it must be OK.

Satan has mixed his practices throughout so much of the health care industry that we ought to carefully examine health therapies from any source, including medical doctors and fellow church members. Many of the people who use supernatural therapies are doing it in ignorance. Let's show mercy to these precious souls by first of all refusing the treatment, and then by warning them about the consequences of what they are doing.

Myth 7

Even if a procedure does appear to be supernatural, it could just as well be God's power rather than Satan's power that makes it work.

Most of these remedies will work even without prayer in the name of Jesus, even if the patient is living in known sin, and even for those who give no acknowledgement whatsoever to the God of the Bible. Where this is true, we can be sure that the power comes from Satan and not from God.

In James 5:13-16, God gives us His method for dealing with health issues supernaturally. It is anointing with oil and prayer in Jesus' name, along

with confession of sin and repentance where necessary. Whenever we are presented with a supernatural therapy that falls outside of Biblical guidelines, we ought to reject it without apology.

Myth 8

As long as I avoid practicing these "questionable" things myself, I don't need to worry about others in my church practicing them.

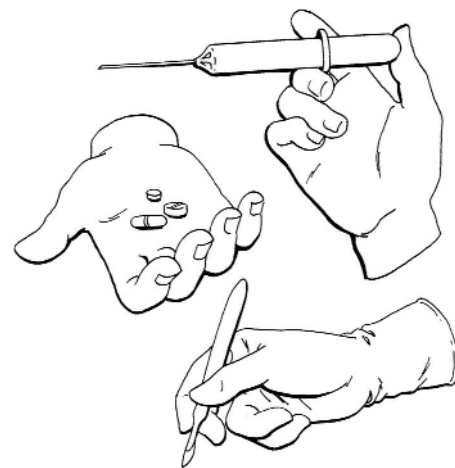
Keeping in mind that we're not dealing with a private sin like bitterness or lust, but rather the sin of witchcraft (which is likened to rebellion in 1 Samuel 15:23), listen to what God says about this:

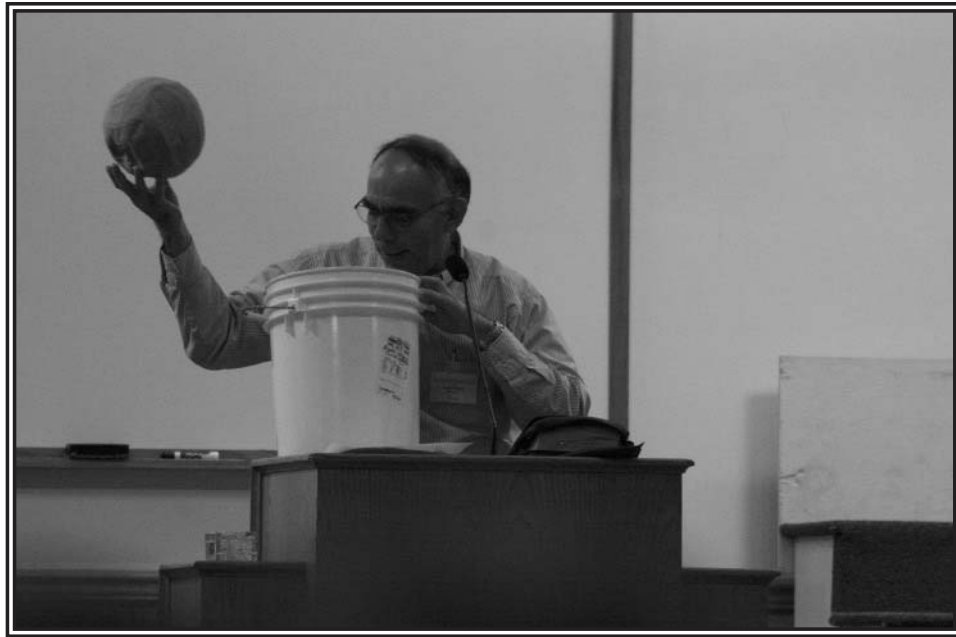
"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." (Ephesians 5:11-12)

"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump . . ." (1 Corinthians 5:6-7)

"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" (1 Corinthians 10:20-22)

□





2006 Charity Youth Bible School Report

by Mollie Jo Cassidy

Over 600 youth gathered at Ephrata Christian Fellowship for the annual Charity Youth Bible School. This was a week of intense Bible study, spiritual exhortation, prayer, worship, and fellowship. This report is given in hopes of glorifying God for the great things He has done and to encourage the readership as we see God's work in the lives of many young people from across our nation and other countries.

Monday morning commenced with an exhortation to the student body by Brother Mark Brubaker, Bible School coordinator. *"We want to see God changing you into a different, more spiritual person,"* he said. *"Our purpose here is not a social event—but to seek the Lord without distraction. Your focus is to seek God this week. 'I am here to hear from God.' Let that settle in. We're not here to make new friends, but to meet with God. In all of this, there is an opportunity for you to hear from God."* It was what we needed as a student body to start the week off right.

Tests of True Faith

by Ross Ulrich

In these five sessions, Brother Ross gave us a detailed and inspirational overview of the Book of James, focusing on the tests of faith given therein. Brother Ross' genuine love for the Word opened up the book of James in a precious way, and I doubt most of us will read this book the same way ever again. Some major topics included: Victory Amid Temptations, Love in Action, Impartiality, Working Faith, The Tongue, Living for Self or Living for Christ, and A Few Practical Tests of Faith.

On Wednesday morning Brother Ross taught James 3, *"The Tongue Chapter."* This was a convicting session. He began with: *"The tongue, perhaps more than anything else, is a super 'heartometer.' The study of this chapter may very well help you answer the question of where you are in your Christian walk."* In our study of

James the focus was practical tests of true faith. So this session was key. "Whoever controls your tongue, controls your body. Whichever direction your tongue is turned, your whole life follows." We learned the impact that the tongue has for good or evil. Is your tongue a well of life or of death? It's a heart issue; a corrupt spring cannot give sweet water.

Nonconformity to the World

by Dean Taylor and Patrick Waldner

These sessions focused on practical areas of life in which God calls us to follow His Word, and not the fashion of this present world. "These issues are controversial for a reason—because they're completely counter to the world," said brother Dean at the start of the week. "Ask yourself: 'Why do I do what I do? From where do I get my cues? The Word of God competes with everything else you're exposed to in the world.'" The Nonconformity topics were: Nonresistance, The Biblical Principles of Godly Dress, and The Principles of Godly Music.

Speaking about the Kingdom of the World and the Kingdom of God brother Dean said, "The clearer that line is of where the two kingdoms are, the clearer becomes these doctrines." We were challenged with the fact that although the Kingdom of God is a Spiritual Kingdom, it has got to be visible in our spirits, in our lives. "Your life and devotion is not to be mixed up with earthly politics, etc. . . . Let it go, be devoted soldiers!" brother Dean exhorted.

This teaching was a help to many young students in answering questions and making the doctrine clear in our hearts.

Patrick Waldner shared on The Destructive Influence of Visual Entertainment and The Transforming Power of The Living Word. In these two sessions, Brother Patrick warned us of the destructive dangers of visual entertainment and exhorted us to give ourselves more fully to the Word of God. He said "In visual entertainment, control switches from the left to the

right hemisphere of the brain. The left part of your brain is the seat of logical and critical thinking. The right part of your brain does not think critically, but responds emotionally. It is possible to become addicted to visual entertainment, and many have." Visual entertainment is escapism, putting your head in the sand. You use the right side of your brain in receiving visual entertainment, it's amusement. "Amuse" means "not to think." The TV is the plug-in drug. It can stimulate in a similar way to heroin and cocaine.

Brother Patrick stressed the need to get God's heart on the matter, not just set rigid restrictions for ourselves. "The law excites the flesh to transgress. We need a principle within! We need the Holy Spirit of God to write His Laws on our hearts!"

Chorus

by Earl Fox

Every afternoon the student body spent an hour of chorus rehearsal with director Earl Fox. It was a blessing to fill our hearts with wholesome songs of praise and testimony in preparation to share them with others on Sunday. Our program included the following selections: "Come, Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove," "All Hail, Immanuel," "Oh, Praise the Lord," "Hosanna," "I'd Rather Have Jesus," "Saviour, While My Heart is Tender," "Do You Love the World," "Where Will You Spend Eternity?", "Strength to Watch and Pray," and "An Easter Hallelujah." The message of these songs reinforced the truths we were hearing during the sessions and





Brother Dale said, "God can't use your talents until you're broken. The anointing is not going to be on your life until you're broken."

helped solidify them in our hearts. It was such a blessing to sing and praise the Lord with over 600 other youth!

Lordship Teaching by Dale Gish

In the afternoon session, Monday through Thursday, Brother Dale Gish spoke to us on the topics of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, Brokenness, Separation from the World, and the Obedience of Faith. Brother Dale's emphasis was getting our hearts in a place of submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ so that the out-workings of our life would be that of faith and obedience.

Dale said "Jesus Christ is not Lord if He doesn't have complete liberty in every detail of who you are," Brother Dale explained. "If Jesus is not Lord of all, then He is not Lord at all." All week long we were challenged to crown Jesus King of our lives. We are fighting a battle, and the battle is always at the line, wherever your line is. We must let God have His way with us. And when faith is worked out in everyday living, that's when God looks beautiful to those around us.

"You cannot be of service to anyone but yourself until you're broken," Brother Dale said. "Your brokenness is a big part of your beauty. God can't use your talents until you're broken. The anointing is not going to be on your life until you're broken . . . **you** might look good, but not **God**."

Brokenness is a mindset. It doesn't take long for a broken person to obey." Brother Dale's message on brokenness stirred conviction in our hearts, and many sought God on their knees for brokenness in response to this message.

On Thursday, in his final session, Brother Dale shared on the temptation of Christ. He explained how Jesus' example relates to our obedience of faith in the temptation to drift from truth, specifically in the matter of dress. "Christ's communion was unbroken, even in the wilderness. Jesus heard Satan's voice saying to make stones into bread. What's wrong with that? But Jesus sensed a

foreign authority. And He rejected that influence with Scripture. 'I listen to my Father only.' What Satan had in mind, where he was headed with this was to get Jesus to fall down and worship him. Satan wanted to accomplish it by drift, step by step. Satan's first step was to get Jesus to hear Satan's voice and to do what He could never prove wrong by Scripture. There's nothing wrong with _____, but whose voice are you hearing? If it's the voice of the enemy, then reject it with scripture. God has some laws that are in full effect, even in this age of grace, and one of those laws is the law of sowing and reaping: you reap what you sow, you reap more than you sow, you reap later than you sow. Drift takes time before it takes toll. Is it the heart of Scripture to say 'What's wrong with it'? How about: 'Does it bring revival? Does it perfect holiness in the fear of God?'"

Prayer and Sharing Time as prayer groups

Students were assigned to prayer groups of about 8-10 students each. Every afternoon we had an hour or so together to seek God. We shared our hearts—our struggles, our questions, our testimonies. We shared in times of sweet fellowship and discussion. And we prayed. This was a vital element in Bible School week since it encouraged students to be honest about needs and then to get down on your knees and seek God together for answers.

Every afternoon before prayer and sharing one of the Principals would share a short exhortation with us. But on Wednesday and Thursday there was a special private session for young ladies and for young men, respectively. These sessions were a highlight for many—a special time to be like family and hear the heart of a mother (Cindy Rubio) on modesty (for the young ladies) and the heart of a father (Denny Kenaston) on moral purity (for the young men).

Revival Services

by Jerry Mawhorr

Brother Jerry shared with us in the revival services Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday night on repentance, the course of sin, hating sin and loving righteousness—and on Friday night, he preached on fulfilling the ministry of reconciliation: *“Preaching the Gospel is God’s instrument for saving souls. The devil knows this and he tries to shut that mouth. You can’t be right with God and not open your mouth. One day you will give account of how you fulfilled the ministry of reconciliation.”*

Charles Spurgeon once said: *“Soul-winning is the chief business of every Christian. Indeed, it should be the main pursuit of every believer.”* The heart of God yearns that we youth would give our lives for His sake and the Gospel’s.

On Saturday afternoon the student body assembled for chorus rehearsal and a testimony service. Families and friends joined us for the testimony meeting, which lasted a couple hours. It was an encouragement to hear what God had been doing in the lives of fellow students.

Sunday was a beautiful climax to a wonderful week of blessing. In the morning service brother Mose Stoltzfus gave the main message, *“The Way of Cain or the Way of Abel.”* This was a powerful challenge to each student to take heed, lest sin should lie at the door of our lives. *“There is in all of us a possibility, a propensity, and even an urge to do wrong . . . to take the way of Cain, as Jude says . . . God wants to give us a witness that we’re righteous. You don’t want to live with-*

out that. If you go your own way, take the way of Cain—sin lieth at the door. The possibility of sin should grow dimmer and dimmer as time goes on, and the possibility of falling slimmer and slimmer.”

Following the lunch fellowship meal was a Singing and Testimony Service. This was also a blessed time of listening to testimonies and various singing groups comprised of Bible school students.

Sunday evening, families and friends from far and near gathered for the Chorus sharing and evening service with Jerry Mawhorr. The students gave their music program, interspersed with student testimonies, and the evening concluded with a final message with Brother Jerry.

It is evident that Bible School 2006 was blessed of God—many were saying that there was something special about this Bible School week. And there was. Hearts were open to God’s moving. The preaching



was anointed and spoke to our needs. People were praying and seeking God. Students were respectful and submissive to authorities. There was an atmosphere there conducive to revival. And the revival God stirred there will continue and grow in the hearts of those that diligently seek Him. Let us who have tasted of His workings fan the flame in our hearts and not lose that which we gained at Bible School. Let’s not lose our first love. Go on with God. □

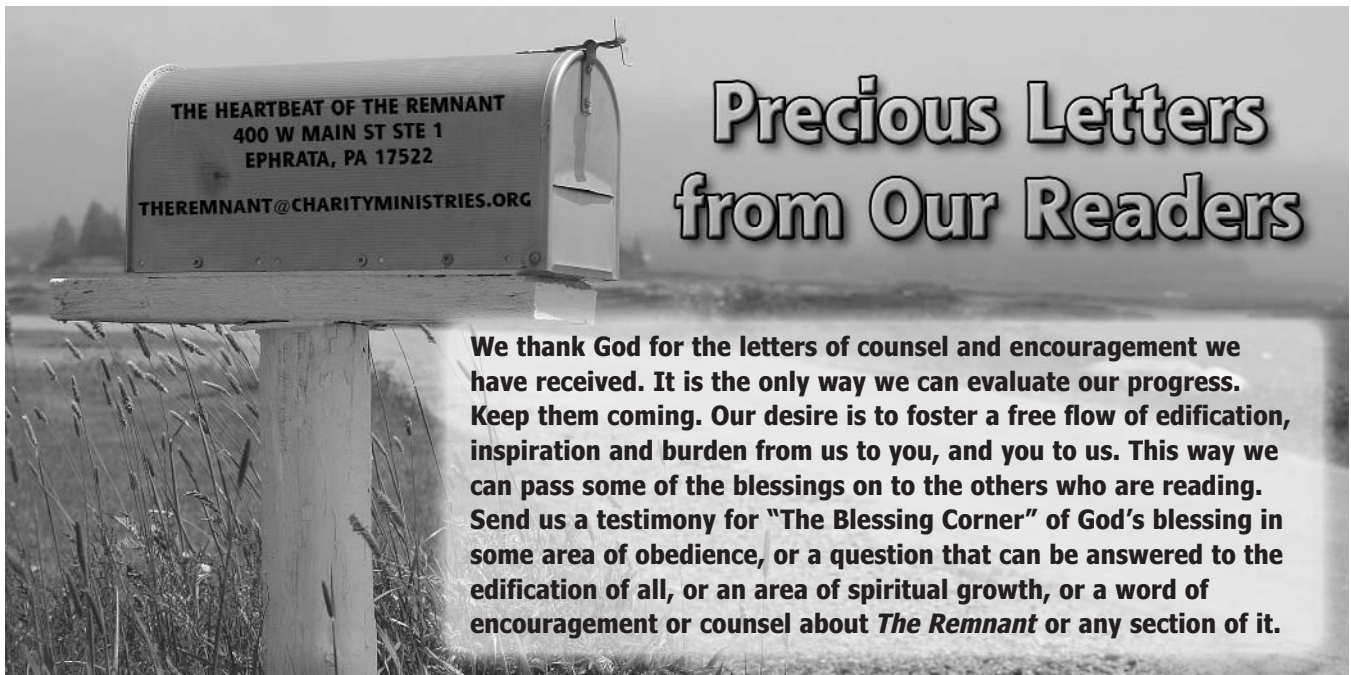
Recordings of these Bible School sessions, as well as other years and much more, are available by calling Charity Ministries at 1-800-227-7902 or online at www.charityministries.org.



October-December 2006 Financial Report and 2006 Year-end Financial Report

10/01/06 Beginning Balance	\$5,062.86
Receipts	
Tape Ministry Donations	\$67,064.06
Remnant Subscription Donations	\$10,153.36
Total Receipts	\$77,217.42
Disbursements	
UPS & Postage	\$4,295.86
Tapes, Albums, CD's & Labels	\$17,106.14
Equipment & Software Purchases	\$2,472.00
Equipment Maint & Repairs	\$21.94
Mailing & Office Supplies	\$1,803.37
Rent	\$2,250.00
Telephone	\$1,062.74
Website Development & Maintenance	\$491.83
Building Improvements	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	\$517.34
Payroll Expense	\$20,000.01
Books & Catalogs	\$0.00
Remnant Publishing & Mailing	\$5,692.83
Total Disbursements	\$55,714.06
12/31/06 Ending Balance	\$26,566.22
Difference	\$21,503.36

01/01/06 Beginning Balance	\$28,638.09
Receipts	
Tape Ministry Donations	\$211,524.19
Remnant Subscription Donations	\$38,482.34
Total Receipts	\$250,006.53
Disbursements	
UPS & Postage	\$20,251.41
Tapes, Albums, CD's & Labels	\$85,080.41
Equipment & Software Purchases	\$15,642.67
Equipment Maint & Repairs	\$5,486.72
Mailing & Office Supplies	\$9,764.63
Rent	\$9,000.00
Telephone	\$4,149.58
Website Development & Maintenance	\$2,212.12
Building Improvements	\$636.33
Miscellaneous	\$2,146.60
Payroll Expense	\$71,600.04
Books & Catalogs	\$3,598.23
Remnant Publishing & Mailing	\$22,509.66
Total Disbursements	\$252,078.40
12/31/06 Ending Balance	\$26,566.22
Difference	-\$2,071.87



Thank you for your publication. With each issue I learn more about you folks. I especially love to read the articles by Rachel Weaver. I feel like she knows me, and it causes conviction with tears. Just to let you know...I don't think that your title "The Heartbeat of the Remnant" sounds haughty. Thanks again.

Sincerely,
L. Walker
South Carolina

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Dear brothers in Christ,

May God bless you as you seek to nourish, edify, warn, and comfort fellow believers in these last days. We appreciate your endeavor to achieve a balance in your magazine between reminding us of the security and protection we have in Christ on the one hand, and challenging us to take our responsibility in being alert to the dangers around us. "How to trust God without being a Calvinist"

and "Tribulation Worketh" were both a real encouragement to us. Editing a magazine, with a diverse audience, requires much spiritual wisdom and Holy Spirit anointing. We pray that this anointing would continue in your magazine, and that our Lord would spare you from discouragement or pride. How about an article regarding "The Age of Internet in an Age of Grace"?

God keep you close to Himself!
Belgium

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I have been getting the Remnant magazine for over a year. I have found it to be spiritually challenging and edifying. Your selection of articles have been a blessing and frequently unusually timely—especially those by old time saints. Given the shallowness of Christian experience in Christendom today, they are a breath of fresh (Holy Spirit anointed) air. Thank you for your stress on faith and holiness.

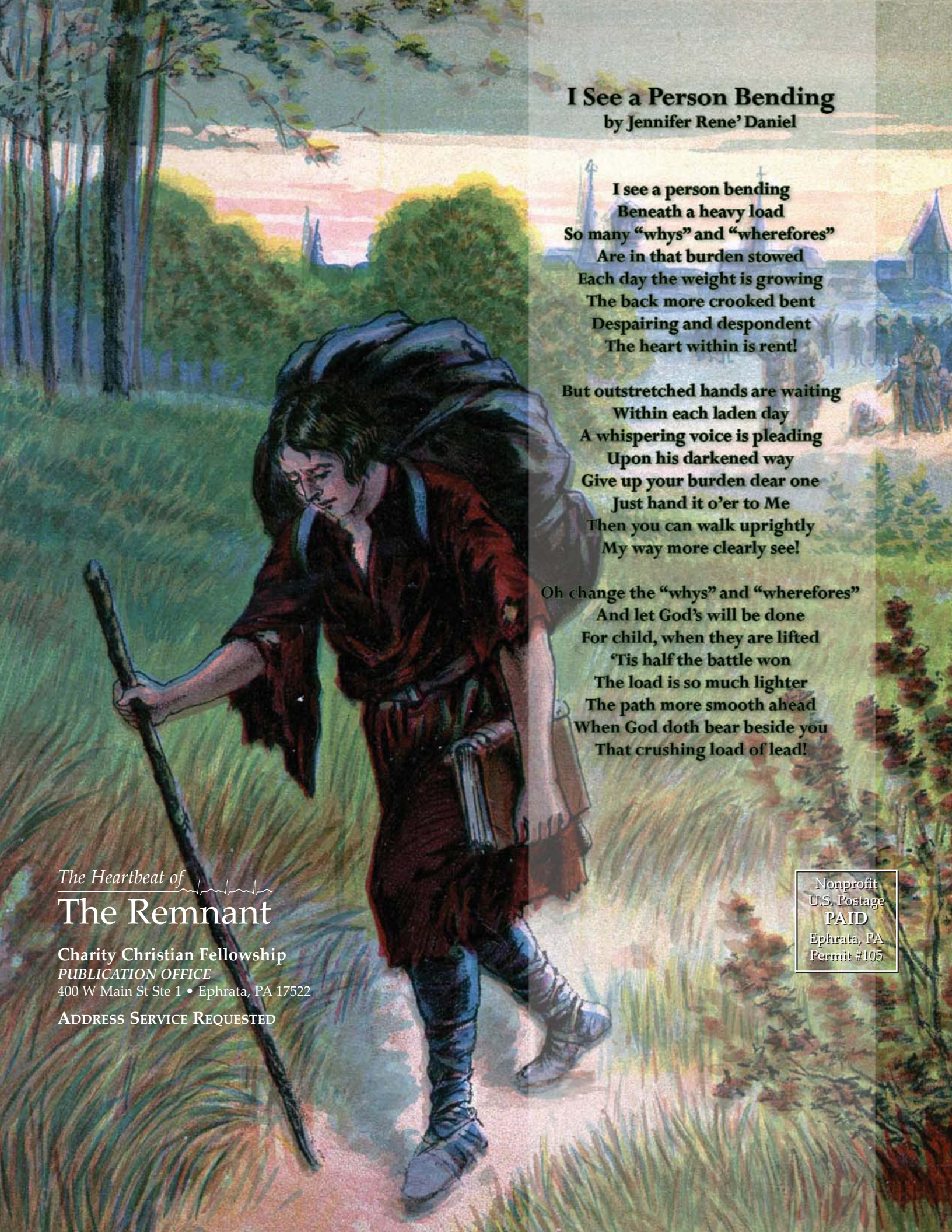
Thank you for tackling some of the more controversial issues confronting the church today. Thank you for doing it in a straightforward, yet modest way. I am persuaded that you must spend much time investigating and praying over what you put in the magazine.

Your servant in Christ
Indiana

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Thank you for your most recent issue of The Remnant. I especially appreciated Mary Yoder's testimony and the piece by brother Dean on Calvinism. Mary's experience again helped me to realize how important it is for church members to recognize and get rid of childhood baggage. Jesus stands ready to take our burdens and cleanse us.

A Sister from Georgia



I See a Person Bending

by Jennifer Rene' Daniel

I see a person bending
Beneath a heavy load
So many "whys" and "wherefores"
Are in that burden stowed
Each day the weight is growing
The back more crooked bent
Despairing and despondent
The heart within is rent!

But outstretched hands are waiting
Within each laden day
A whispering voice is pleading
Upon his darkened way
Give up your burden dear one
Just hand it o'er to Me
Then you can walk uprightly
My way more clearly see!

Oh change the "whys" and "wherefores"
And let God's will be done
For child, when they are lifted
'Tis half the battle won
The load is so much lighter
The path more smooth ahead
When God doth bear beside you
That crushing load of lead!

The Heartbeat of
The Remnant

Charity Christian Fellowship

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