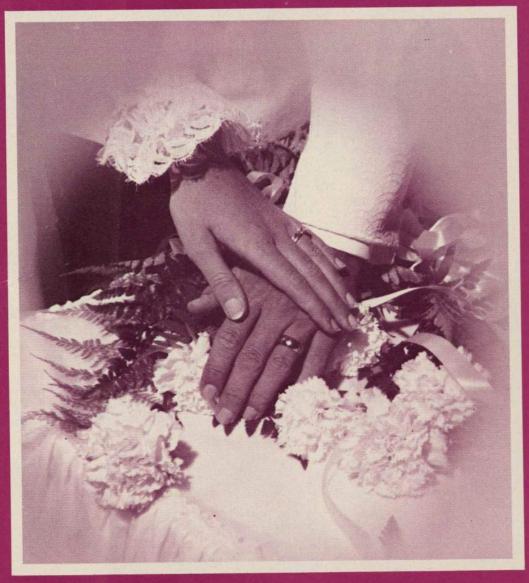
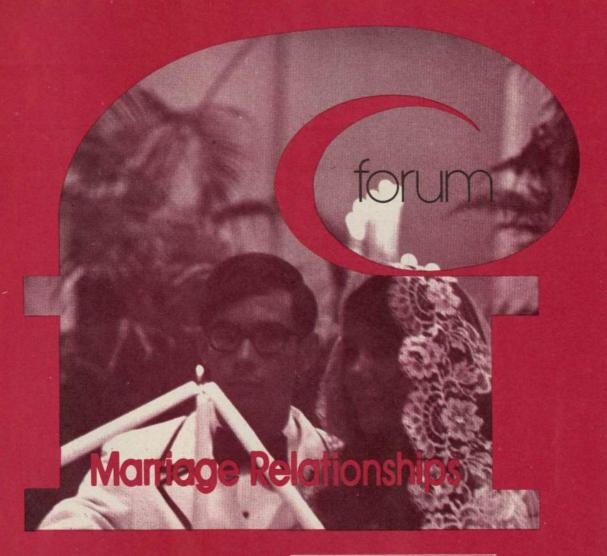
MARCH 1973 THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH



This month's Forum Christenson (Warriage Relationships)



SPECIAL GUEST PANELIST

Reverend Larry Christenson has been pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, San Pedro, California since 1960. However, his influence extends far beyond his local pastorate because of his associate ministry — that of conference speaker both in the United States and Europe, as well as author of the popular new book, "The Christian Family".

Our readers continue to send questions on the subject under discussion this month. In 1972 we published two question and answer coverages: "Husband and Wife" — August Issue; "Believers and Their Children" — November Issue.

Forum topic next month is: "Church Life", with guest panelist, Reverend John Poole. "In God's eyes, what constitutes a marriage? What about a common law marriage, or just living together outside of social marriage? Does God view this as wrong? What is the place of a public ceremony?"

Mumford — In our day there has been an increase of discussion on "what constitutes a marriage." This comes from empty, civil (Justice of the Peace) marriages — or even a church wedding that proves to be a farce. Alternately, there is the popular reasoning which says, "We' are in love, have known each other sexually. Why should we bother with civil approval, or some other empty ceremony?"

Marriage is a type of Christ and His Bride. It should never be done "in a PANELISTS: Bob Mumford Derek Prince Charles Simpson Larry Christenson



Larry Christenson

corner". Water Baptism is the open and public ceremony which testifies to the fact that one belongs to Christ. Marriage ceremony is much the same. It can be an empty form, but it is designed to be both spiritually significant and personally meaningful.

Obedience to the civil ordinance, of course, is the Christian position, However, the marriage ceremony has an important function which is often overlooked. Presupposing personal integrity, the exchange of vows, provides both the man and the woman the "mentality of marriage". Vows made to each other with the intention of keeping them, gives the permanence and security necessary for a lasting and fruitful marriage. Entering matrimony with a "we'll try it and see" mentality pre-determines failure. Only when one is held by his (her) vows to the other, can one make it through the temptations, sickness, poverty, and personality conflicts which can place unbearable strain on our capacity to love and be loval when it is not to our personal advantage.

Christenson — As I see it, this question focuses upon marriage as a religious and civil institution. Two factors are involved in establishing or constituting a marriage: (1) a public announcement and (2) sexual union.

No particular public ceremony is required to make a marriage valid, though a Christian would certainly want to make this announcement in the setting of a ceremony which centers upon God's Word and promise concerning marriage. Marriage, in

Scripture, is always a public affair; i.e., the couple in some way lets it be known publicly that (a) they are now going to live together as man and wife; and therefore (b) they are sexually off limits to everyone else. Clandestine sexual affairs are recorded in the Bible, but this is never called marriage. Marriage always involves some kind of public announcement that these two people now have legitimate sexual access to each other — and to no other, nor any other to them.

The public announcement of marriage is consummated in the private sexual union, in which the two become literally and symbolically "one flesh". That marriage, which has been publicly announced and sexually consummated, is a binding contract before men, and a sealed union before God.

God is not a legalist. There may be situations where two people enter into a marriage without any particular public ceremony; by common law they are regarded as man and wife. The important thing is that the marriage be fully "public", that is that they are recognized as man and wife in the community; and that this union is binding. Where such is the case, God can certainly honor and bless that marriage. Two people who simply live together, secretly, and are not bound 'till death to one another, are in no sense married. They are fornicators.

The majority of Christians, however, will want to pattern their marriage ceremony after the type of the Marriage Supper of The Lamb (Rev. 19:7-10), where there is *festive* celebration among the people of God. Prince — The Bible does not give a precise definition of marriage, nor does it prescribe a specific form of religious service. Interestingly enough, the Pilgrim Fathers refused to perform a religious service for marriage, but required that it be entered into by a civil contract.

However, it does require some form of contract or ceremony to initiate a marriage. Whatever is legal by the laws and customs of any society, is acknowledged by God. In this sense the Bible acknowledges, although it does not necessarily approve — polygamy. However, as Larry has said, where a man and woman merely live together without any contract or ceremony, this does not constitute a marriage. This is classified as "fornication".

"The Bible teaches that wives are to submit to their husbands as to the Lord. Does this mean that he is to rule over his home with an iron hand and the wife totally lose her identity and come completely under his control? If this is the biblical concept, where does love come into the picture?"

Prince — That wives are to submit to their husbands is *only one part* of the Bible's total teaching on marriage. This particular part cannot be taken in complete isolation from the rest of the Bible's teaching. (Continued on page 6)

BEST OF NEW WINE '72

Dear Sirs:

The Best of New Wine '72 certainly is a blessing and gives the Lord the Glory.

The article, "Children - Fun or Frenzy?" brought out what was really missing in our home - God's order in training His children! Praise the Lord! The day after I read the article, we began the rightful way of discipline and the joy in our home now is beautiful! Our eldest child, a five-year-old boy, had many seemingly small problems until I read that article. Then I saw how large we had let little problems become. Temper tantrums included! They didn't lack for discipline. but it was given without God's wisdom. Praise the Lord - what He has done in 11/2 weeks! Our boy has had a great change in attitude - is more outgoing and seemingly has a greater respect for God and a greater love.

Our three-year-old girl is behaving much better, too. There's a greater willingness to help as a family and a greater love for each other, too!

May God continue to be with you and each duty done be to His glory and with the Holy Spirit's leading. Love in Christ,

Mrs. P.Mc - Canada

Dear Sirs:

Please send me five more copies of the December issue. A friend of mine to whom I gave the December issue says the Power fell in her living room while she was reading "The Evidence of His Power" to such a degree that her children asked, "Mommy, what is it?" Praise God for New Wine!

Yours in Christ.

Mrs. S.R. - Florida

Dear Sirs:

New Wine is the best magazine I have ever read. Many times an article or a paragraph acts as a mirror of my life and after reading it my major problem seems so nothing. Praise the Lord for all the people who put this wonderful magazine together.

A friend



SORRY TO SAY GOOD-BYE

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ:

"We also, since the day we heard (the news about a change in your tape ministry), do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will and in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God . . ." (Colossians 1:9-10).

I, as well as those with whom I shared the tapes, send thanks for your love and faithfulness through Jesus, our Lord. It is to His praise that His Word will not return to Him void. Will miss receiving the tapes, but I believe Jesus is faithful to supplyy the need.

Again thank you and am agreeing with you that you may walk in His ways and pleasing Him. Yours through Christ.

J.M. - (No address given)

Dear Brother Raitt:

How hard it is sometimes to make decisions, but Jesus never fails. He always knows what is best for us.

Your tape ministry has been "Lifesaving" in this area. "You must go forth this day to serve My God in even a mightier way. Becuase you have examined yourself, you have no need for anyone to judge you. Build up thy faith by praying in the Spirit and thy God will direct thy paths. 'A man plans his ways, but God ordains his steps'."

B.H. - (No address given)

Co-workers in Christ:

It is with a bit of sadness that I return this final tape I have received from you. But as I send it back I also look forward with anticipation to the great and wonderful work the Lord will be doing in 1973.

As various ministries close down, either temporarily or permanently, others open up to take their place. This is the case in Spokane. We have found that there are many people in the body of Christ who have been seeking a deeper walk. Over the last six months many Bible studies, fellowship groups and other ministries have ceased. The glimpses we receive of what is ahead are glorious.

D.W.W. - Sopkane, Washington

Ed—As many of you know, the Fresh Bread Tape Library has ceased operation as of December 29, 1972. This was a difficult step for us to take, but it has come as a result of God dealing with us about our call to support and strengthen existing local leadership. There are already tape ministries and libraries in most cities around the country, and we feel that it is God's calling for us to place teaching tapes in the local ministries, who in turn will make them available to individuals.

We are continuing our tape ministry in a two-fold manner:

TAPE MASTER PROGRAM: We have instituted a program which makes master tapes available to local ministries for duplication and distribution to individuals.

SALES: A tape catalog listing all the tapes that are currently for sale by mail is available from us upon request. These tapes contain the most up-to-date teaching by many anointed teachers.

Though the closing of the Fresh Bread Tape Library has been a disappointment to some, we feel that in God's love and wisdom, He will open other channels of supply to those who need this vital ministry. The majority of our subscribers have felt God's hand in our decision and have joined with us in rejoicing in all that God is doing.

We ask your continued prayers for God's ruidance.



"Turn or burn!" belted a raspy voice on the Sunday morning radio. It was a backwoods Bible-beating evangelist. I could smell the fire and brimstone.

"Repent!" he roared. Though such preaching is not my usual fare on a warm Sunday morning, I was captured by the feeling that I was listening to John the Baptist. I decided to listen on; he was a little livelier than most preachers and would offer some variety. To my surprise, this downhome preacher delivered one of the most anointed and profound messages on repentance that I had ever heard.

REPENTANCE ACCORDING TO LAW – repentance because we know we must. Our motivation for repentance is to avoid judgment, the consequences of sin, or a guilt feeling. Our turning is based on fear of what will happen if we do not repent. It is a valid repentance – but what are its fruits? Often there follows no real hatred for sin, but merely a distaste for sin's consequences.

REPENTANCE OF LOVE - there is a repentance, however, impelled by the love of God. It is born, first, from a true understanding of our own state - totally lost, corrupt, and unable to help ourselves. Contrast this with the total holiness, purity, love and grace of God. There is nothing in the whole of creation worth the beauty and sweetness of knowing such a God and having a living relationship with Him. Repentance now comes because of the surpassing value of knowing Him. Sin loses much of its attraction; and soon we begin to hate it with a Godly hatred - because it has separated us from the eternal God and His love. We will shun sin - not because of its consequences - but because we refuse to be shaken from His fellowship.

-R.S.



CONTENTS

NEW WINE FORUM	.2
Marriage Relationships	
GOD'S MEN ON THE MOVE	.10
Derek Prince	
THE BLESSING	.16
Lenoir Wells	
PSALM 19	18
Eugene W. Etheridge	
BIBLE STUDY	19
Howard Coffey	
THE SPIRIT OF OBEDIENCE	22
Bob Mumford	
HEALTH AND HEALING-IT'S UP TO YOU! (Part 2)	28
Derek Prince	

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FORUM (From page 3)

If we turn to Ephesians 5:21, the first act of submission required is "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God". Mutual submission to each other comes first. This involves both husband submitting to wife, and wife to husband. The marriage relationship will not work properly unless each party is willing to submit to the other, humbling himself or herself, confessing his or her faults, and accepting his or her responsibilities.

The responsibility of the husband is just as necessary as that of the wife. He is to love his wife as himself, even as Christ loved the church (verses 25–33). The relationship of husband and wife is a pattern of the relationship of Christ to the church. In this latter relationship, the love of Christ is primary, the response of the church is secondary. So it should be in the relationship between husband and wife.

Let me point out something that has a bearing on this whole question. The majority of preachers are men. The majority of church-goers are women. Normally we have men preaching mainly to women. The result has been a very one-sided presentation. Men have continually emphasized the woman's responsibilities, and said very little about those of the man.

A preacher who emphasizes the part of the woman in marriage should balance this with a ministry that com-

mands the respect of men, winning men to Christ, and making those men into the kind of husbands that the Bible requires. A preacher who does not have a ministry that reaches men, but continually emphasizes the duties of women, is like a man rowing a boat with only one oar. He continually goes around in a circle.

Christenson – There is a distinct difference between *submission* and *slavishness*. Robert Burns expresses the thought this way:

"Husband, husband, cease your strife
No longer idly rave, sir;
Though I am your wedded wife
I am not your slave, sir."

The wife is the helpmate of her husband, not his slave. The husband who rules over his wife and children with an "iron hand" is following the wrong model — the rulers of this world rather than Christ.

To be submissive in the Spirit does not at all mean to lose one's identity. True submission is this: To put at the disposal of one who is over you everything that you are and everything that vou have. The wife who has brains, insight, and good judgment is being something other than submissive if she fails to put these gifts at the disposal of her husband. She should share fully her thoughts, ideas, and opinions which the husband, under Christ, should receive with gratitude. The husband is charged with the responsibility of rule and decision, but he needs in many things the counsel of his wife.

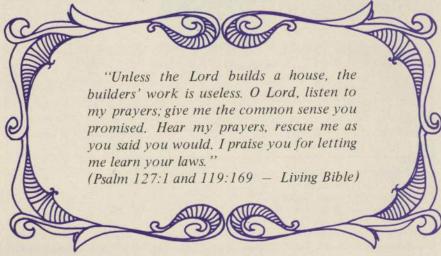
In most Christian homes, where this divine order is adhered to, the majority of decisions will be arrived at by mutual consent. Both husband and wife, in acting toward one another with love and respect, open themselves up to God's will in the matter, and so come to clear agreement in the Spirit.

Where the love of God prevails, authority is not a right, but a sacred trust; and submission is not a duty, but a privilege. So it is within the Godhead, and so it can be in our homes.

Simpson – Just one added thought on submission. True submission will be voluntary and done in faith as unto the Lord. "Forced submission" doesn't bring spiritual blessing. Neither can one "submit" in order to force God to manipulate another's will. The only acceptable submission is as unto the Lord – it pleases Him. When one truly submits, he makes himself vulnerable.

Jesus submitted to the world and we killed Him. Submission usually results in the "death" of the one who submits. Jesus didn't "have to". Neither do we. That is where love comes into the picture.

'When I became a Christian, I totally submitted myself to my husband, believing that this was God's will and that he would be won to Christ. Instead, he used it as a weapon. He has told me that I cannot attend church, or give money to God's work. He scoffs at me reading the Bible. I have seen many who continue to attend meetings and church against the wishes of their husbands and God seems to bless them. I am torn between what I have felt I should do in submission and what I feel I need as a Christian. Can you give me some guidelines?"



Christenson - One of the Scriptural commands to obey your husband is given without qualification (I Peter 3:1). Of course, one cannot take a single text and build an entire case on it. It must be compared with other texts which touch on somewhat the same material: i.e., "Wives be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22); "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Nevertheless, the unqualified command to obey your husband is not without point - it discourages the setting aside of God's ordinances in the name of a frivolous or shallow piety.

Where a husband hinders his wife's participation in religious activities, it is often best to accept this as long as one is able to. All the while, of course, one must plead this before God, in order that He will move in the situation, so that wife and husband can become one in the Lord.

There may come a point where a husband asks of his wife that which would cause her positively to sin against the Lord, where she would have to plead with him that she could not do such a thing, and even go against his wishes in this particular thing, yet remaining submissive to his rule in all else. Yet, in our experience, we find that such a point is usually further down the road than most of us realize. God is willing to honor and work within His own appointed ordinances to a far greater extent than human reason would allow. The wife who suffers restrictions upon her religious activities, at her husband's insistence, has chosen a pathway of humiliation, sorrow and suffering. But if. along with the suffering, she exercises faith - faith that God will act in this situation, as she submits to it - she may well be choosing the shortest pathway to the blessing-place of God, both for herself and her husband.

Prince — Enlarging upon the question of where a woman should draw the line in submitting to her husband, may I say that obviously the line must be drawn somewhere. A husband might demand of his wife that she should

practice prostitution, or drunkenness, or dope peddling, or murder. I would not advise a woman to submit to any of these demands. It is important to put God's commandments in their proper order. The first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . .". Any other commandment that runs contrary to this is no longer valid.

Also, the Christian's life is not based on a set of rules, but on faith. A woman who has great faith will endure things which another woman, without that faith, could not endure. In the last resort, each woman must decide for herself — in the light of scripture and the best counsel available — just where she will draw the line.

Again, if children are involved, their interests must be guarded as far as possible. In the U.S.A., if a man's behavior is violent or criminal, I frequently advise the wife to hire the best lawyer that she can find, and to use every legal provision available to her to protect her own interests and those of her children.

Mumford — May I summate this discussion on submission by using an excerpt from my new book, "Living Happily Ever After".

- (1) God's law stands firm. He is never wrong, neither has He changed His mind for you or in your particular situation.
- (2) Re-examine your submission for areas of manipulation, self-sacrifice, or even a false martyrdom.
- (3) Your submission must be toward God, in pure faith, that He will intervene in your situation. Submission is to your husband, but it is unto God, expecting Him to do what otherwise cannot be done.
- (4) When authority is released by the wife, and has not been taken up by the husband, great care must be exercised to trust God for the children and stand firmly upon your convictions.
- (5) Remember your goal is to *sub-mit* and *enjoy* your husband, not try to change him. Submission without re-

sults is evidence that you have missed the *spirit of submission* and need to repeat the lessons.

"What should be done in a home where there is an absence of the father's authority — either because of death, separation, or because he refuses to take a hand in raising the children? Would the same advice hold true in the absence of a mother?"

Mumford - In the Old Testament there was careful provision made for the widow and orphan. It is equally apparent in the New Testament. For quite awhile I thought this to be primarily a physical and social provision. Now, however, I see it to be more spiritual covering and provision for male authority and counsel for the home situation. In the absence of the father's authority, either personally or by failure to function, the home is exposed to demonic attack and confusion. The biblical system of functioning elders compensates for this lack.

As I understand it, the absence of a mother creates a different problem. It is not one of authority, but security and practical complications. God rules over every situation and one parent's genuine faith can often supply that which is lacking in an ideal home and marriage.

Prince — If a father has been removed by death or separation, there are various different ways to make up for his absence. It may be that the wife has some male relative who can offer help — e.g. her father, brother, brother-in-law. Perhaps two or more of these together may share the burden with her. If she is under pastoral care, her pastor will assume an additional responsibility to present a "father image" to that family. Also, this is an opportunity for other members of the

body of Christ to share some of the burden. Parents of other families can make a point to include these fatherless children in activities that they plan for their own children.

Again, a wife in such a situation can expect to receive needed grace from God, which will in some measure help her to fill the place of the absent father. God promises specifically to be a husband to the widow and a father to the fatherless, and to hear the widow's prayers.

If a father is present, but refuses to accept his responsibilities, the case is in some ways harder. I suggest to wives in this situation that they endeavor to create a "spiritual vacuum", and by prayers and other means induce the father to fill this vacuum.

Christenson — Where either a father or a mother is present in the home, but "refuses to take a hand in raising the children", there is no pat answer which can be given. The one who sees the need, and feels the partner's neglect in the matter, must begin to ask God not merely to do something (to change the partner), but to show the way in which this situation can be dealt with.

A husband who was constantly unhappy with the wife's lack of consistent discipline of the children when he was away from home, one day came up with this suggestion: "You know, Honey, Harry and Ella (wife's brother and sister-in-law) seem to have a knack when it comes to disciplining their children. Let's have them over to dinner sometime and get some of their ideas . . ."

The point is, "work within the system". Disagreements and disappointments should not lead us to write off the partner in any area of the marriage. That tenacious faith which says, "Lord we are one and by Your grace we will be one..." — that is the faith which God is looking for in Christian homes today.

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him." Hebrews 11:6.

"My wife and I are both Christians, but she is older in the Lord than I am, and 'more spiritual'. It is difficult for me to be the spiritual leader in the family because she always seems to know all the answers if we disagree. She undercuts my authority with the children. They know how to get what they want by playing one of us against the other. I know it is not my place to 'make' her submit, but, in reality, she controls the home. What advice can vou offer?"

Simpson — Since you and your wife are both Christians you should be able to agree in private as to what your mutual roles are. Pray together until God builds a mutual conviction within you. In public and with the children, agree to speak the same things.

If you cannot agree, seek the Lord until He gives you direction. Submit to Him in every area of your life and trust Him to help your wife.

Learn to stand *quietly* and *firmly* in God's grace and trust Him to honor your leadership, if you believe He wants you to lead.

Mumford – The situation described in this question most often is precipitated by the failure or neglect of the father to give leadership.

Once mother is "forced" (by circumstances and father's failure) to take leadership — especially in spiritual realms — it is not easy to relinquish. Functionally, your wife must receive you and your ministry as spiritual priest in your home for it to be effective. See Matthew 13:57, 58, Amplified Version.

The wife (or husband) who has devised ways and means to *manipulate* her (or his) mate — i.e. tears, anger,

pouting, quiet withdrawals, threats, sex, etc. — should recognize what is happening. Confess such to the mate, watch for recurrence, and forsake this as a method of getting your own way. Without question it will be difficult, but the alternative of deception and its bitter fruit is more difficult yet!

Prince – The wife who continues to dominate her husband and family, undercutting her husband's authority, is not in a good sense "spiritual". In fact, she may well be a "witch". The spiritual power that she exercises may not be from God. A truly "spiritual" woman will do everything in her power to take her right place in the home, and to help her husband take his.

If the husband in such a home has a continual struggle to assert his authority, he is probably at grips with some kind of evil, dominating spirit that works through his wife. He will have to overcome this by spiritual means: first, totally submitting himself to the Lordship of Christ; then, using his God-given spiritual authority, to overcome the rebellious spirit working through his wife. This may lead to an open confrontation, in which he will have to play the part of a man and show that he intends to take his rightful place in the home. Normally, children like to know that the father is in charge. This gives them a sense of security. If they see that their father is willing to take his rightful place, they will side with him, rather than with their mother.

Christenson — When the children of Israel rebelled against Moses' authority, he prostrated himself before the Lord, and said, "What shall I do . . .?" He recognized that even though he had a position of authority, he could not exercise that in his own strength. It had to be given to him.

Where a wife usurps, undercuts, or rebels against her husband's authority, the husband's first recourse is to the Lord. He must inquire of the Lord why this has come to be, why the

Lord is not able to establish his authority in the home. This kind of inquiry may bring to light faults in the husband which need to be corrected. Or, it may stir up the Lord to establish divine order in this home, because there is one who is willing to pray for it. It is not enough to have a position of authority. We must pray that God will give the authority that goes with the position. This is the difference between law and gospel. I exercise the law in my own strength; I minister the gospel by the strength which He provides. It is more primary and important that God honors my headship in the family, than that my wife does. In fact, where the former is true, the latter has about it a certain divine inevitability.

"How do children fit into a marriage relationship? In other words, should our attention as parents be totally focused on the children or should we try to continue to put each other first as we did before we had children?"

Simpson - Jesus is the center of the home. The husband should acknowledge that before the family. The wife should teach the children to honor their father as the undershepherd. The father should teach and expect the children to honor their mother according to the scriptures. She is his helpmeet, the one who travailed to bring forth the children. Children must be taught to find their place in submission, respect and gratitude. Otherwise they will grow up in a deceptive self-centeredness that cannot accommodate to an unsympathetic world. Self-centered children will also have trouble getting along with the Lord later.

In a Christ-centered home everyone will have a proper place. They will learn to be fulfilled in serving others.

Mumford - Yes, proper relationship to your children is extremely im-

portant — for your sakes and theirs! It is well to remember that either mate can *escape* into the children's love and attention. Thus one mate has his/her needs met, while the other exists in frustration — open to temptation, attack and loneliness.

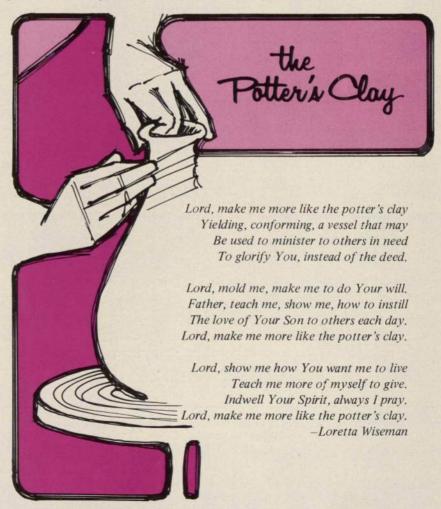
Wrong relationship to children is often the cause of friction, jealousy and consequent divorce. Especially is this true when the children are gone and the couple is left with each other. That day will come, plan for it today!

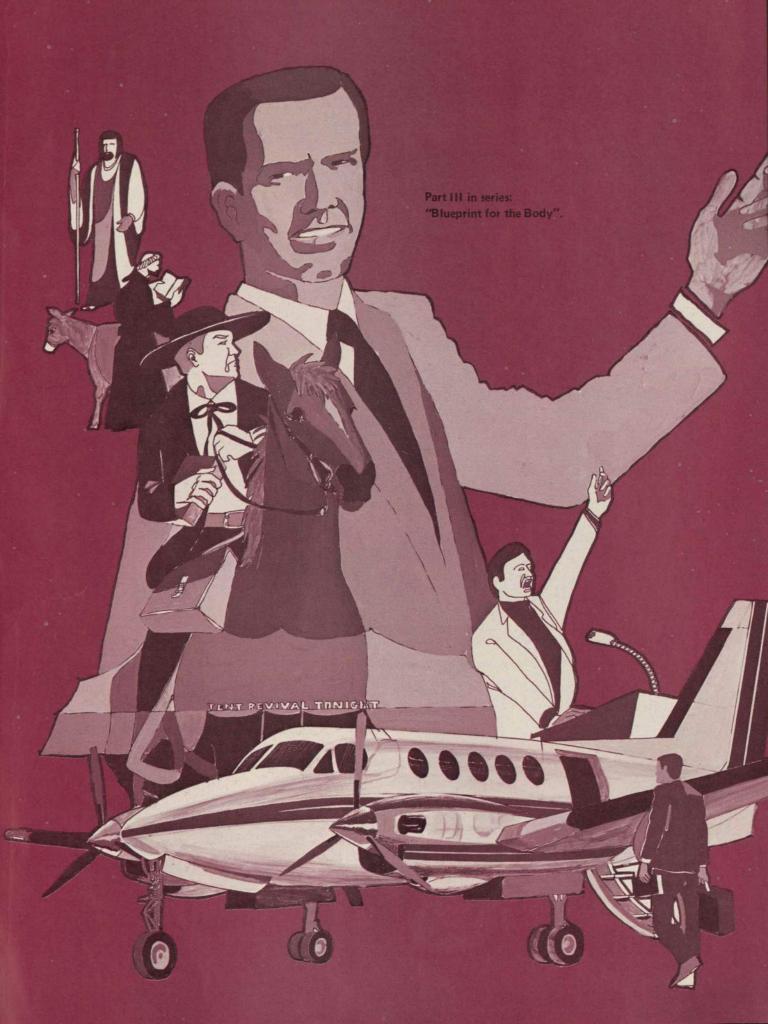
Christenson — Children are an 18—20 year trust from God. We bear them and raise them in our home on His behalf, for His purposes. While we arrange much of our lives as husband and wife, around this responsibility, it dare never become a wedge between us. The husband-wife relationship is primary and permanent. The re-

lationship with the children is secondary and for a limited time; though, of course, the love and concern continue even after the children have left home.

One of the great tragedies we see is a husband and wife who so neglect their own relationship, while immersing themselves in the lives of their children, that on their 30th wedding anniversary they sit down at a nowempty table and find themselves virtual strangers to one another.

Children should recognize that Mom and Dad come first with each other — the children second. I remember hearing my own parents talking one night, and my father said just that to my mother. It gave me a good feeling — a feeling of security. I knew that the love which I was receiving from my parents was built upon the solid foundation of their own love and unity with one another.





God's Men on the Move

PROPHETS EVANGELISTS TEACHERS

by Derek Prince

God's plan for completing the Church is unveiled in Ephesians 4:1–16. After laying a basis for unity in the Body of Christ, Paul introduces the five diverse ministry gifts – apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher – needed to equip the believers for their individual ministries, so that the whole Body of Christ may build itself up into maturity.

A distinction is made between the universal church, which is all true believers around the world, and the local church, which is the Body of Christ in a given locality.

The master builders in God's plan are the apostles, who are commissioned and sent out by a local church and who normally operate in teams. The "seal" of an apostle is a completed local church, which he has set up; and the "signs" of an apostle are (1) endurance and, (2) miracles that attest his ministry.

G od has set certain ministries in the Body of Christ which I call universal or mobile ministries. Universal in the sense that they function to the whole Body of Christ, and mobile in the sense that they are not tied down to one locality.

In Ephesians 4:11 we read, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; . ." Within these ministries there are four which are considered as mobile ministries: apostle, prophet, evangelist and teacher. The ministry of a pastor, or shepherd, is normally confined to a church in a given area.

We shall now consider three of these ministries: The prophet, the evangelist and the teacher.

MAN WITH A MESSAGE – THE PROPHET

Prophet is derived from the Greek

word *prophetes*, which means "one who speaks forth". A prophet speaks a special message received direct from God for a special time and a special place. He is set apart by the nature of his message.

Jonah was a prophet. Had he gone to Nineveh merely as a preacher, and not as a prophet, he could have said, "If you don't repent, God will judge you!" That is a general message. But Jonah declared, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." His message contained a special revelation for a specific time and place. That set him apart as a prophet.

John the Baptist preached repentance, as all preachers should. But John was more than a preacher. He said, "One cometh after me who is mightier than I..." There was a special time factor in his message which he could have received only by direct revelation from God. This set him apart as a prophet.

There is a remarkable statement

found in Amos 3:7, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing but he revealeth his secret (a modern translation is "counsel") unto his servants the prophets." I believe this is the scriptural picture of a prophet. He is one who stands in the inner counsel of the Lord. Here he receives God's message, as it relates to a particular time, situation, generation or group.

Elijah was such an individual. In I Kings 17:1 we read: "And Elijah the Tishbite . . . said unto Ahab (Ahab was king of Israel at that particular time), As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." Elijah, the prophet, stood in the counsel of the Lord and received a message from Him. He delivered that message to Ahab as the Lord had directed him; and having delivered the message, he withdrew.

We have already seen that there are false apostles, as well as true apostles. The same applies to prophets. A false prophet does precisely the opposite of a true prophet. Jeremiah 23:16, speaking of false prophets, warns: "... Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you; they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord." They are prophesying something which is of their own heart and not from God.

Continuing in verse 18, "For who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his word?..." This is the true prophet; he stands in the counsel of the Lord and hears what *God* would say. Moving on to verse 21, "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." False prophets have a message, but it does not come from God.

Now, listen to verse 22, "But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way..." God asks a prophet to stand in His counsel and deliver the message as He directs it. This is the task of a prophet.

PROPHET OR PROPHESIER?

Many people believe that a prophet is an individual who prophesies a great deal. This is not necessarily so. The Scripture makes a distinction between the *ministry* of a prophet and the *gift* of prophesying.

Ephesians 4:11 states that Christ gives the *ministry* of a prophet. This ministry is essentially an extension of the ministry which Christ Himself had as a prophet while He was on earth. Christ, the *prophet* in a man, gives that man a prophetic ministry.

Prophesying, however, is a gift of the Holy Spirit. From I Corinthians 12, we see that the Holy Spirit manifests Himself through a believer by a particular gift. A prophet is a manifestation of the person of *Christ*; while, on the other hand, prophesying is a manifestation of the person of the *Holy Spirit*.

A man of God may have a valid ministry gift, such as an evangelist or teacher, without being baptized in the Holy Spirit. There are many men who have God-given ministries as evangelists who are not baptized in the Holy Spirit. I had considerable problems with this until I saw the clear difference between the ministry gifts, which are extensions of the ministry of Christ, and the Spiritual gifts, which are manifestations of the Person of the Holy Spirit.

This, of course, very directly applies in the difference between a prophet and one who prophesies; the prophet is an operation of the ministry of Christ, and the gift of prophecy is an operation of the Holy Spirit.

This distinction is brought into focus by comparing two statements of Paul. In Ephesians 4:11 he says, "He gave some... prophets," — not all, just some. Yet in I Corinthians 14:31, Paul says, "... ye may all prophesy one by one." All may exercise the gift of prophesying, but this does not mean that they are operating in the ministry of a prophet. This ministry is given only to some within the Body of Christ.

In distinguishing between the ministry of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, we are not setting up one Person of the Godhead in opposition to another, but simply observing a distinction which is basic to the whole revelation of Scripture.

SAFETY IN NUMBERS

As with the ministry of the apostle, those persons who have the ministry of the prophet normally operate together as a team.

In I Corinthians 14:29, Paul says, "Let the prophets (plural) speak two or three, and let the others (by implication this is other prophets) judge." Paul indicates that prophets should operate as a team. No man is to operate as a dictator and demand acceptance of his message merely because he says, "Thus saith the Lord . . .", then the other prophets have the right to say, "That is of God," or "We cannot accept that as a word of the Lord." The ministry of the prophet, as well as all prophesying in the Body of Christ, is subject to judgment - this is the scriptural pattern.

There are at least ten prophets mentioned in the New Testament. Let us look at them and see how they operated. First – Acts 11:27–30.

(27) "And in these days came prophets (plural) from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

(28) "And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit (this was a direct revelation from God) that there should be a great famine throughout all the civilized world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

(29) "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea:

(30) "Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

Observe the details of this incident. A group of prophets, Agabus and at least two more, I would say, came from Jerusalem. Agabus received a revelation from God which he gave to the church. It is clear from New Testament church order that the other prophets endorsed the revelation as being of God, or the church would not have acted upon it. This is the safeguard of plurality. Here, then, are at least three New Testament prophets.

Later, in Acts 13:1, Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul are called "prophets and teachers." (The two ministries are very closely related.) Thus far we have eight New Testament prophets.

Two more prophets are mentioned in Acts 15:32: "And Judas and Silas, being prophets themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words and confirmed them." Exhortation, you will note, is part of the prophetic ministry. Judas and Silas make a total of at least ten prophets mentioned in the New Testament, as we have seen.

THE SPIRIT OF GRACE

Contrary to much of the popular thinking of our time, a prophet is not all fire and judgment. To illustrate, consider an incident in Paul's life recorded in Acts 21:8–11:

(8) "And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came to Caesarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

(9) "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. (They exercised the gift of prophecy but they were not necessarily prophetesses.)

(10) "And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus,

(11) "And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."

Most people would have tied *Paul* up and said, "Paul, this is going to happen!" Agabus tied *himself* up and said, "Paul, if you care to accept it, this is what is going to happen to you." How

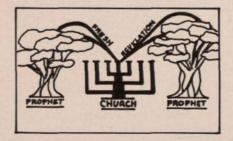
gracious is the Holy Spirit! He is never a dictator.

On this occasion Agabus was operating apart from other prophets. At first glance this seems to run contrary to our principle of plurality. However in Acts 20:22-23, we read that Paul said to the Ephesian elders, "I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." In every place Paul had visited, the Holy Spirit had borne witness through believers that bonds were waiting for him in Jerusalem. Therefore, when Agabus came forth with his revelation, it was not an entirely new word, but rather a confirmation of what had been spoken numerous times already.

Here let me express this in the form of a solemn warning: Never let someone dictate to you by way of their personal revelation. I have seen lives, families and churches wrecked by directive revelations which were not adequately tested and confirmed by the people who acted on them. To me, this is one of the most serious matters in the Church today.

THE PROPHET IN THE CHURCH

A beautiful picture of the place which the prophet holds in the church has been given to us by way of a vision unfolded to Zechariah, an Old Testament prophet (Zechariah chapter 4). The vision of Zechariah is illustrated in the drawing below. The prophet saw two olive trees standing on either side of a golden, seven-lamp candlestick. From the olive trees were two pipes through which flowed a continual supply of golden oil for the lamps of the candlestick.



Zechariah inquires of an angelic messenger in the vision what these two olive trees represent, and the angel answers: "These are the two anointed ones (literally, sons of oil), that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." That is the prophetic position, to stand by the Lord on the earth.

Further light on the two olive trees is found in Revelation 11:4. The Revelator is speaking of two prophets who come forth at the close of the age, and says, "These are the two olive trees and two candlesticks standing before God." A direct reference to the vision of Zechariah.

The olive trees then are pictures of the prophetic ministry. In Scripture, the candlestick, always with seven branches, is a picture of the church. The olive trees stand on either side of the candlestick and discharge a constant supply of fresh olive oil into it. Oil, as you know, is a picture of the Holy Spirit. It is the position of the prophetic ministries to continually supply fresh revelation to the Church in order to keep its lights brightly burning. A prophet stands in the counsel of God, and interprets to the Church the present immediate purposes of God, which apply specifically to that age, that group, or that situation.

Proverbs 29:18 proclaims, "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." People cannot live in spiritual blessing without direct revelation out of Scripture that is relevant to their age and situation.

We are not able to live without fresh revelation, neither are we able to survive on past revelation. Wesley was relevant to what was happening in his time; Luther was relevant to what was happening in his time; but that does not mean that what they had to say in their day will necessarily be relevant to what is happening in our time. Therefore a fresh flow of revelation from God must continue.

This is the essential function of the prophetic ministry.

(Continued on page 14)

GOD'S MEN (From page 13)

BRINGER OF GOOD NEWS – THE EVANGELIST

Also listed among the mobile ministries is the evangelist. Evangelist comes from the Greek word euaggelion, which means "good news". The gospel is good news, and if what you hear is not good news, then it is not the gospel.

I am often reminded of a wonderful lady, whom my wife and I met in a large northern city. Her husband was a deacon in a well-known Bible Church there when she became ill with an incurable malady. She went to a bookstore associated with her church to find some teaching on healing. After a diligent search she came forth with fourteen books on how to suffer - but not one on how to be healed! This is definitely not good news. Eventually the lady met an Episcopal priest who was baptized in the Holy Spirit. Through his ministry she too was baptized in the Spirit, then anointed with oil, and miraculously healed. That was good news!!

It is the commission of the evangelist to tell everyone the good news — the good news that God wants to forgive you, He wants to heal you, He wants to prosper you! This is the consuming passion of the evangelist. He is a man on the move and he cannot rest until everyone has heard his message. His commission is to introduce the *sinner* to the *Savior*.

Our pattern for an evangelist is Philip. He is the only man in the New Testament specifically called an evangelist. (See Acts 21:8).

After the stoning of Stephen, the Church came under persecution and in Acts 8 we find recorded the results of that persecution:

(4) "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." This last phrase would be better translated "evangelizing". This is what the Greek literally says. This verb is used approximately fifty times in the New Testament, but the KJV usually translates it, "preaching the gospel". The noun form of the word,

"evangelist", is used only three times: Acts 21:8, Ephesians 4:11 and II Timothy 4:5.)

(5) "Then Philip went down to Samaria, and preached Christ unto them."

Notice, Philip went down on his own. This fascinates me. There was no welcoming committee... no advanced publicity. (An evangelist does not necessarily have to operate in plurality because of the nature of his ministry. He is not involved with church order, and this area is where the need for plurality is most important.) Philip went alone to an alien city that hated the Jewish people and started to preach. His message was about as simple as one could imagine. It is summed up in one word: "Christ".

Why do people listen to such a direct and simple message? It is the divine attestation which accompanies the message: Miracles. Acts 8:6 supplies this information: "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." Simple, but effective!

While in Africa as a missionary, I met a young national evangelist who followed Philip's pattern. He had been in a T.L. Osborn crusade and had seen miracles of healing and deliverance. He said, "If Brother Osborn can do it, I can do it." And he did!

Upon entering an African village, he would enquire if there were any sick people there. There is never a scarcity of sick in the villages of Africa. He would pray for the sick and God would heal them. In this way he immediately had a congregation assembled. This is the simple pattern of the New Testament.

Miracles, however, by themselves do not produce faith. They do not convert people. They bring people to hear the Word of God. Then the Word of God produces faith and people come to Jesus. Miracles get their attention.

What was the result of Philip's ministry? Hear Acts 8:12: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were

baptized, both men and women." Philip brought them to conversion and to water baptism. He never left his converts without water baptism. It is the New Testament pattern. Jesus said, ". . . he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Also, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . ."

Philip did leave the Samaritans without seeing them baptized in the Holy Spirit; but Peter and John came down later, and through their ministry the new converts received the Holy Spirit. But Philip *never* left any convert without water baptism. There is no authority in the New Testament to do so.

Later, when Philip met the eunuch, his message was equally simple (Acts 8:26-39). He preached "Jesus". After the eunuch had heard Philip's message, he said, "Here is water, I want to be baptized." This shows that water baptism was included in Philip's presentation of "Jesus".

The chariot halted, and Philip and the eunuch went down together into the water. As soon as the eunuch had been baptized, the Holy Spirit snatched Philip away. His job there was done, and he was translated to the next place where he was needed.

The evangelist is God's "paratrooper". He drops on people out of heaven; and just as suddenly, when the job is done, God moves him on. There have been instances in the last few years where people have been supernaturally transported, just as Philip was. This, of course, is not the norm; but the point is, the evangelist does his job and moves on to preach the good news elsewhere.

MAN OF THE WORD — THE TEACHER

Fourth in the list of the great mobile ministries is the *teacher*. His ministry is the systematic interpretation of Scripture.

There are two levels of teaching found in the Body of Christ, and we need to understand the difference. First, there is the *public expositor* of the Word; this is the universal teaching

ministry to the entire Body of Christ, as mentioned in Ephesians 4:11.

There is, however, a local teaching ministry that is carried on by the local elder or pastor. Paul writes to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor (this includes the financial portion), especially they who labor in the Word and teaching." The duties of the elder or pastor are two-fold: to rule or shepherd, and to teach the Word. This passage indicates that the more time the elder or pastor spends ministering the Word, the more support he is to receive. It is one of the basic principles of God's provision.

The nature of the local teaching ministry is unfolded by Paul in Titus 1:9, speaking of the local elder: "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." The elder must first of all be taught by those more mature in the Word; then he must be qualified to teach what was entrusted to him, to the rest of the flock. He is first taught; then he teaches.

The teaching process is further presented in II Timothy 2:2. Paul is writing to Timothy, who is responsible for ordering a local church: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Paul had taught Timothy; Timothy was to teach the local elders; and the elders were, in turn, to train others elders. This verse contains four generations of teaching.

Notice that it is "faithful men" (plural), and not a faithful man. Again, the safeguard of plurality in the group of men who are responsible for the local congregation. It is the responsibility of this group of faithful men to transmit the Word in a pure form to another group who will follow after them. Only as the Word is transmitted from group to group of faithful men can it be kept pure.

TO THE BODY

As an example of an expositor to

the entire Body of Christ I have chosen Apollos. We meet him in Acts 18:24. "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus." Apollos was what you might call a pulpit personality, a man who could appeal to a large audience with his expository skills. The local elder does not need this in his teaching — his teaching ministry operates mostly to small groups or in personal counseling. But in the universal ministry, a "pulpit personality" is needed.

At this time Apollos was not acquainted with all that God was doing. He was familiar with the ministry of John the Baptist, but had not been introduced to the ministry of Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Priscilla and Aquila, a godly couple who lived in Ephesus, took him to their home and brought him up to date on what had happened since John the Baptist.

After he had spent some time in Ephesus, the Scripture says in verse 27: "And when he (Apollos) was disposed to pass into Achaia (a province of Greece) the brethren (in Ephesus) wrote, exhorting the disciples (in Corinth) to receive him: (A minister had to be recommended by one group to be received by another.) who when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace; (verse 28) for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah."

The phrase, ". . . helped them much which had believed through grace..." is extremely significant. The believers in Corinth had come to Christ out of ignorance and superstition. It was a supernatural revelation of Jesus that had allowed them to believe the gospel - an act of God's grace. But they had no background in the Scriptures, and would not continue to grow unless they were grounded in the Word. Apollos was the man to help; he knew the Scriptures, and he could teach them the great basic principles of the gospel. He nourished the Corinthian believers in the Word by systematic public exposition of the Scriptures. This was the nature of the ministry of Apollos.

In Corinth Paul's ministry had been primarily evangelistic. In I Corinthians 3:6 he contrasts this with the subsequent ministry of Apollos, saying, "I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase." This is the relationship between the evangelist and the teacher. The evangelist plants the Word of God, the teacher waters that which is sown, and God causes the growth. Normally the ministry of a teacher is linked to one or the other mobile ministries, as it was in this instance.

In like manner, the teaching ministry is often exercised by someone who also occupies one of the other four ministries. Paul says of himself in II Timothy 1:11, that he was both an apostle and a teacher. He could fulfill whichever role the occasion called for.

We have already referred to Acts 13:1 where it speaks of the men in Antioch who were both prophets and teachers. The prophetic ministry often needs to be supplemented by expository teaching, and the prophet should be qualified to fill this role.

Jesus, Himself, as the pattern for the ministries, filled more than a single position at once. Luke 20:1 says He was "evangelizing and teaching." One ministry went with the other. These ministries often are combined; nevertheless, the ministry of the teacher is a separate and distinct ministry of its own.

Today God's master plan for the Body is being unfolded to the church. It is a time of maturing and growing in the Body of Christ. The truths which we are seeking to understand are of the utmost importance in the day in which we live. When the superstructure of much that we have for so many years called the church is falling apart, God's building is going to be revealed, and by His grace, we will be an active part of it.

The next article (April issue) in "Blueprint for the Body" will discuss the structure of the local church and its leadership.



This was my first Thanksgiving as an active, committed Christian, and our families from both sides had gathered as usual at our home for the annual feast. For weeks I had looked forward to the opportunity of witnessing to my loved ones by way of the blessing before dinner.

Religion had never been a part of our lives, and a blessing was not included in our family tradition. I deeply regretted not having been able to impart to my children some acquaintance with our Lord, but still I found it difficult to discuss my newfound faith with the family. I was eager to make up the lack — with the leading of the Holy Spirit, of course.

This was a choice opportunity, from my point of view. I was certain the Holy Spirit was in full agreement and would cooperate with me. I knew I shouldn't memorize a prayer, but couldn't help thinking of blessings that I wanted to be sure to mention. I would keep it fairly short, but I did want to be sure to thank God for at least five or six things. And would

probably even "thank God for God!" This little prayer, when it had come to me spontaneously a few months back, had brought such a blessing that I was sure it would do so again. I did pray sincerely that whatever the Holy Spirit wanted said would come forth.

As we gathered around the table, my husband asked in a quiet aside: "Are you going to ask the blessing this year?"

With great calm and perfect assurance, I replied, "Of course. I wouldn't miss it."

When we were all in place, my husband announced, "Let's bow our heads. Mother is going to ask the blessing".

"Yes, we are going to have a blessing this year," I seconded.

I took a deep breath and, with delicious anticipation of what the Holy Spirit would say, I began, "Our Heavenly Father..." and I waited... and waited... and w-a-i-t-e-d!!! Nothing...! Absolutely Nothing!!!

At least three long, long minutes went by — maybe more! I opened my

mouth. I hoped for anything to come out. "Bless this food" would have been welcome!

The others had to be in pain.

But not a single thought would form. I was speechless! The glib one. The never-at-a-loss-for-words one.

Strangely, there was no unpleasant emotion or nervousness; just momentary suspension. Helplessness. So why struggle?

Finally, from somewhere - not from my conscious mind, I know - came: "Thank You."

My young nephew looked up from across the table in complete be-wilderment. My brother was caught in a fit of coughing. My mother-in-law patted me on the back — not understanding but nevertheless with me. My husband, a little misty-eyed, almost knowing what had happened, was strangely (for him) silent. And Mike — praise God for Mike just like he is, with his knack of making a gentle joke when needed — said, "Mother, that was the shortest blessing I ever heard".

We all laughed.





The heavens proclaim God's glory everywhere
In universal language night and day.
Her sun, a youthful runner, speeds his way
Dressed as a bridegroom, canopied in air.
The Law a greater message can declare,
More pure, complete, enduring it than they,
By perfect wisdom drawing those astray,
Than honey is more sweet, than gold more rare.
These shame my many imperfections, Lord.
How can I know them? sum them? understand
Presumptuous sins? By steadfast grace impart
Obedience deserving of reward,
And may I heed your just and true command
By spoken word and thoughts within my heart.
—Eugene W. Etheridge

BIBLE

THE HISTORIC BOOKS

PRE-KINGDOM PERIOD

Joshua - Judges - Ruth

Period between the time of Moses and the anointing of Saul as first king of Israel.

KINGDOM PERIOD

I and II Samuel
I and II Kings
I and II Chronicles

Period from the reign of Saul to that of Zedekiah, 20th and last king of Judah, whose reign ends in the Babylonian Captivity.

POST-KINGDOM PERIOD

Ezra — Nehemiah — Esther Period after Babylonian Captivity.

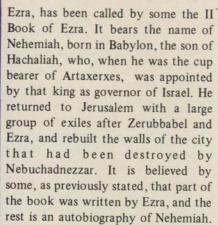
EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

NAMES – The name of the book of Ezra is from the author, Ezra, the priest, and leader of Jewish exiles who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon in 457 B.C. He was a reformer, the founder of the Jewish synagogues, and writer of I and II Chronicles, this book that bears his name, and most likely a part of Nehemiah. He also, is attributed with revising and compiling the books that actually form the canon of the Old Testament. Artaxerxes, the Persian king who commissioned him to return to Jerusalem, referred to him as "Ezra, the priest, the teacher of the laws of the God of heaven". Josephus, the Jewish historian, referred to him as a "righteous man, and one that enjoyed a great reputation among the multitude... the principal priest of the people."

The book of Nehemiah, presented here in a joint study together with

STUDY L

by Howard Coffey

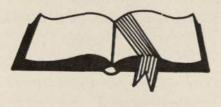


THEME - MAN RISES AND RE-BUILDS.

SYNOPSIS - Jeremiah had prophesied that the Babylonian exile would last seventy years (Jeremiah 25:8-11). At the end of the 70 year period the prophecies of Isaiah were shown to Cyrus, king of Persia, in which he was named by God as the benefactor of Israel, the rebuilder of Jerusalem and the temple (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-4), which was made 140 years before their destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, or 210 years before Cyrus. There are some who ascribe to Daniel, the prophet, the showing of this prophecy to the king, which is entirely possible.

Cyrus had come into power at the fall of the Babylonian Empire in fulfillment of prophecies (Isaiah 14:22; Jeremiah 27:7; Daniel 5:28). Referring to the response of Cyrus, the above mentioned prophecy concerning himself, Josephus wrote: "Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the Divine power, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was written; so he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem, and the temple of God."

The story of the return from exile and the rebuilding of the temple and the walls of Jerusalem is given in Ezra



and Nehemiah. It centers around three personalities, Zerubbabel, governor of the Jews, Ezra, the priest and scribe, and Nehemiah, the governor, as leaders. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were prophets of the period in Jerusalem, and Daniel and Ezekiel in exile. During the times of discouragement and attacks by the enemy, the Samaritans, to hinder reconstruction in Jerusalem, Haggai and Zechariah during the time of Zerubbabel, and Malachi during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah spoke with authority and lifted up the people. They spoke forth the word of the Lord and the work was brought to completion in each case.

There are many types and lessons in Ezra and Nehemiah, together with the books of prophecy of the period, for both the daily Christian walk, as well as an authoritative message for the Body of Christ as a whole for this last day time. God again is calling a people out of Babylon (organized carnal confusion, based on self effort) to reconstruct His temple (of "lively stones" - I Peter 2:5) and restore the walls (Isaiah 58:12). To the listening heart much is conveyed, also, in the types found in the battles of opposition of the enemy and the wisdom and understanding given supernaturally to the people of God, and His providential care which led to victory and the fulfillment of His purposes. The fact that so many prophetic utterances at that particular time were given concerning Christ points up the significance of these types for this end time. Examples found in Haggai and Zechariah alone are: Haggai 2:6-9; Zechariah 2:13; 3:8-10; 5:11-13; 9:9-13; 10:4; 12:8-14; 13:1-9; 14:3-11, 16-21.

OUTLINE

- I. Zerubbabel:
- (1) Decree and return. Ezra 1-2.

The decree of Cyrus and the first return after the captivity.

- (2) Reconstruction and Opposition. Ezra 3-5. Rebuilding of the temple begun and opposed by the Samaritans.
- Dedication of the Temple. Ezra
 Encouraged by the prophets, the temple is completed and dedicated.
 - II. Ezra:
- (1) Commission and return of Ezra. Ezra 7-8. He returns to Jerusalem, commissioned by Artaxerxes, together with other exiles.
- (2) Sin of the people confessed. Ezra 9.
- (3) Sin of the people put away. Ezra 10.
 - III. Nehemiah:
- Reconstruction. Nehemiah
 Nehemiah returns under
 Artaxerxes and rebuilds the walls of
 Jerusalem.
- (2) Restoration. Nehemiah 7–13:3. Spiritual restoration that led to the dedication of the new walls.
- (3) Reforms. Nehemiah 13:4-31. A general purification from all that would lead to disobedience and idolatry, and God's punishment again.

PROMINENT CHARACTERS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Zerubbabel, governor of the Jews, son of Saltiel, of the royal family of David, and lineage of Christ; Ezra, the priest and scribe; Nehemiah, governor; King Cyrus of Persia; King Darius of Persia; King Artaxerxes of Persia; Haggai, the Prophet; Zechariah, the Prophet; Malachi, the Prophet (not mentioned in the books); Daniel, the Prophet (not mentioned in the books); Ezekiel, the Prophet (not mentioned in the books); Hanani, brother of Nehemiah; Jeshua, the High Priest; and Sanballat and Tobiah, leaders of the enemy opposition.

Famous quote of Nehemiah to his enemies:

"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" (Nehemiah 6:3).

CONCLUSION

After studying these two books, and the book of Esther, make a fairly detailed, chronological list of the events of the three books.

ESTHER

NAME — The book bears the Persian name of its heroine, Esther (Star), whose Hebrew name was Hadassah. She was the cousin and adopted daughter of Mordecai, a Benjamanite, who was captured when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem, and exiled to Babylon along with King Jeconiah of Judah and others. She was most likely born in Babylon; she was left an orphan. The authorship has been attributed to Ezra, to a High Priest named Joachim, and, also, to Mordecai.

SYNOPSIS – The book of Esther is an epilogue to the Post-Kingdom Period Historic Books. While God's Name is not specifically mentioned in this book, His presence and His works are everywhere evident. Matthew Henry said: "If God's name is not here, His finger certainly is." Someone has called it "The Romance of Providence."

Ahasuerus, or Xerxes I, the son of Darius I, and grandson of Cyrus, was king of Persia. The Exile had not extinguished the people of God, nor had the enemies of God hindered His purposes in reestablishing Jerusalem in fulfillment of the prophetic promises.

Satan had to devise another way. He took advantage then of the hatred of Haman for the Jews to develop a plan of destruction of the chosen people. God foresaw the satanic plan and providentially prepared the stage for the downfall of Haman and the preservation of the Jews through Mordecai and Esther, for their destiny in preserving the Word of God and bringing in the Messiah.

The king divorced his wife Vashti, and providential circumstances brought Esther into the king's favor as his wife. In this key position she discovered the plot of Haman and acted to save the entire nation of Israel.

The Jews still commemorate the event with the Feast of Purim that was instituted to celebrate their victory over their enemies under God's providential help and care.

When God requires us to deal with any phase of the carnal nature, and we fail to do so, or put it off, or leave it incomplete, we will sooner or later come face to face with it again. There is a word of encouragement for the many of us who have this problem: There is still hope if we will act with the right determination and decision when a new opportunity comes around. Saul had been commanded to destroy the Amalekites; he disobeved. Mordecai, a descendent of the family of Saul came face to face with Haman, the Agagite, decendent of Agag the Amalekite. Mordecai stood his ground in God, and Haman was overcome.

OUTLINE

Introduction: Story of Vashti. Chapter 1.

- I. Esther made Queen by Ahasuerus. Chapter 2.
- II. Esther brings deliverance from Haman. Chapters 3–9:19.
- III. Esther establishes Purim a feast of joy. Chapter 9:20–32.

Conclusion: Mordecai exalted. Chapter 10.

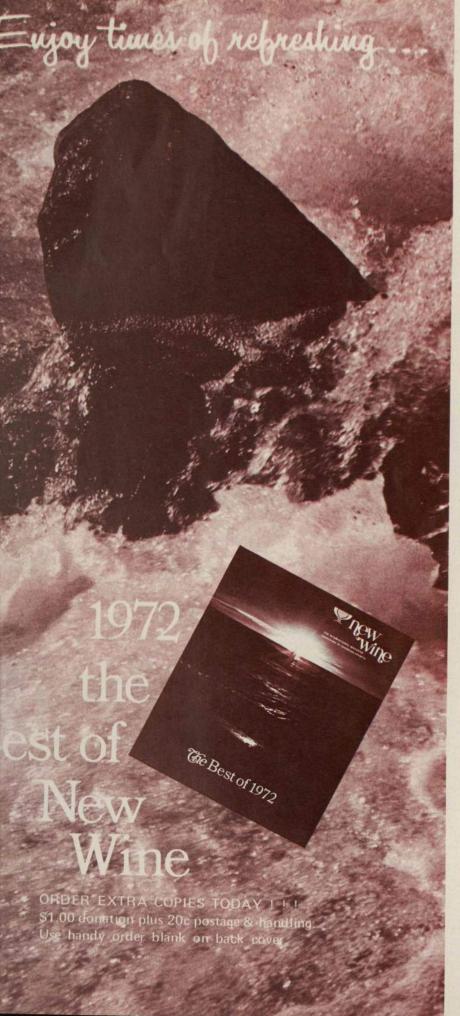
PROMINENT CHARACTERS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Esther; Mordecai; Ahasuerus; Haman; Vashti.

Mordecai's famous quote:
"... who knoweth whether thou art
come to the kingdom for such a time
as this." Esther's famous answer: "I
will go unto the king which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I
perish."

CONCLUSION

Outline the details of Haman's plot and Mordecai's and Esther's defense and final victory; make a list of the divine providences seen in the story.



Summer Christian Growth Conference JULY 25-29, 1973 DEAUVILLE HOTEL MIAMI BEACH, FLA.



Give your spirit as well as your body and soul a vacation this year by making it a time of relaxation and growth in what God is doing. Those who have attended Christian Growth Conferences in past years have found that the warm fellowship, the teaching of the Word of God, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, have made this a time of significant growth in their Christian walk. The speakers will be sharing out of personal experience and what they feel God is saying to the Church today — come and be a part of it!

Watch for details in the next issue of New Wine!

The Spirit of Spirit of Obedience Obedience

by Bob Mumford

Final in Series on "The Nature And Spirit of Obedience"

The Spirit of Obedience is coming to God with no strings attached.

Once, while conducting a teaching seminar, I became concerned about how much the seminarians were "receiving". Presenting my problem to the Lord, I suggested, "God, I surely would like to give these students an exam." To which came the instant reply, "You do the teaching. I will give the examination!" You can be certain that He did just that; and you can be equally certain that He will be examining each of us who has shared in these teachings on OBEDIENCE.

In order to prepare ourselves for this eventuality, here are some observations for review. Remember — the Word of God is seed — and the teaching of it is expected to bring forth growth. Will it be ten-fold? sixty-fold? Or a hundred . . . straight A?

LAWLESSNESS is a spirit; it invades and infects Christians as well as those "of the world".

THE GREAT TRANSGRESSION is rebellion; it is an attitude which rises up within a person (1) under the circumstances of life (2) under the dealings of God.

COMMANDMENTS are specific instructions — given by someone in authority — and obedience is expected.

SUBMIT OR RESIST? Here is individual choice. The one who resists, judges himself "rebel".

A REBEL seeks to find fault with the authority over him so that he will have an excuse for not submitting.

THE SPIRIT in which a person accepts and obeys authority is extremely important.

GOD REVEALS our measure of rebellion by putting authority over us — be it piano teacher... parent... pastor...

OBEDIENCE is not automatic; it is a learned accomplishment. Also, the desire to obey is NOT obedience.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY, civil or spiritual, stands as a question mark in the test of rebellion.

GOD BLESSES OR AFFLICTS us with "delegated authority" according to our needs.

In this last of six articles on "The Nature and Spirit of Obedience", we move from the foundational facts we have been studying into the loftiest realm of obedience — the realm of the unenforceable. It is in this stratosphere that man finds the deepest joys of fellowship with God. Here is developed the beautiful relationship of which Jesus spoke to His disciples in John chapters 15, 16 and 17 — we are one with Him and with the Father.

Here, we also leave the discussion of rules and regulations and enter a new dimension in the matter of obedience. It is the great step of faith and operation for which God has been preparing us through our prior considerations together.

THE UNENFORCEABLES

Perhaps a family illustration may help us to grasp something of that which is involved in this word "unenforceable", as applied to obedience.

For weeks our family had been planning a vacation. We had looked forward to a long leisurely drive through new-to-us territory. Pleasure stops had been carefully marked on the roadmaps. Anticipation ran high. But as the time of departure drew near, the many details needing attention mounted almost to the point of erasing expectations. As we prepared for our early morning take-off, carefully checking for last minute slip-ups, we found ourselves shorttempered and almost too exhausted to realize that we were at last on our way. Hoping to arouse interest, I got behind the wheel of the car and exclaimed in a somewhat angry tone of voice, "All right everybody! Now we are going on vacation. Start having a good time!!!" Talk about a ton of bricks!

Or take the matter of love. Try saying, "You love me, or else..." We all know that one cannot threaten or coerce love. You cannot buy it. You can't do anything — love will not be

forced. Remember, God Himself cannot make enforceable laws in certain realms. He can reveal principles but He cannot force obedience. The spirit of obedience is when men obey in realms that are unenforceable.

Most of us are familiar with the story of the child who was asked . . . then ordered . . . to sit down in his high chair before he fell out. Finally reluctantly complying, he retorted, "But I'm still standing up on the inside." We have all experienced at some time, in some situation, this outward compliance . . . coupled with inward resistance. We are aware of the necessity of having a desire . . . a will . . . an attitude that makes obedience really obedience in the highest sense of the word. This is what God is seeking in His children.

There is the legalistic approach to obedience, too. Recall the statement of the "certain ruler" who came to Jesus asking what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. He made it clear to Jesus that he had kept all the commandments from his youth up. And Jesus made it equally clear that there was one thing yet lacking (Luke 18:18-24). This one "thing" was in the



JUST OFF THE PRESS! A compilation of the six articles on "The Nature and Spirit of Obedience", which have appeared in NEW WINE Magazine, are now available in book form. Under the title, "The Problem of Doing Your Own Thing", this paperback edition can now be ordered from Christian Growth Ministries for 95c. Use order blank on back cover of this issue and send TODAY for your copies.

If you missed an issue of this timely series, or if you desire to share the message with friends, order at once to insure receipt of a copy in this initial printing. realm of the unenforceable — giving and living as Jesus gave and lived — "sell what you have . . . give to the poor . . . and come and follow Me."

While I was in the pastorate, a legalistic spirit was visible in giving patterns. When the giving of a tithe was recorded "to the penny" - \$10.02 when the income was \$100.20 - the tendency to please God by keeping laws was evident. Anybody who walks only by laws is in trouble. Nobody can keep a person from lusting - even though he does not commit adultery. Nobody can keep one from being angry - even though "thou shalt not kill" is maintained. And putting priority on exact obedience to the letter of the law can never be a substitute for the spirit God desires from us. We cannot please God by keeping laws. We may please ourselves and present a good front to society, but this produces death to the spirit which God is trying to cultivate within us.

There was something within the heart of Jesus that can be ours, too. He wanted to do the will of the Father . . . He desired to do it in every circumstance of life. I wish I could say this was always true with me. There are times when it has been a joy - especially in a meeting when the Spirit of God is moving. But get me out alone when nobody is around . . . the pressures are on . . . then it is a little more difficult! The achievement of this spirit of obedience is a work of the Holy Spirit. God said, "The day will come when I will write my laws on your heart" (Hebrews 8:10). This is a spiritual experience.

REALMS WITHOUT RULES

Are you willing to join me as we plunge down into the realm of the internal — this realm which bears the placard, "By Invitation Only"? No one — not even God can gain entrance here. Man is made a free moral agent. He has been given the privilege of opening the door to the workings of the Spirit — or he can keep it closed. With privilege always comes responsibility.

Let me share two verses of Scripture which envelop the invitation necessary to permit God to enter this inner realm and begin to do His work. Careful now...do not pray these petitions unless you are willing for Him not only to enter but to take up residence! For He must not only be present but be given free rein in order to accomplish His desired purpose.

"As man's obedience increases, his actions decrease. When we first begin to follow the Lord we are full of activity but quite short on obedience. But as we advance in spirituality our actions gradually diminish until we are filled with obedience. Many, however, do what they like and refuse to do what they dislike. They never ponder whether or not they are acting out of obedience. Hence many works are done out of self and not in obedience to God."

-Watchman Nee "Spiritual Authority"

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14)

"Search me, O God, and know the inward condition of my heart: try me (put someone over me, Lord, and I will show you how submitted I am) and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23,24).

Are you beginning to catch the implications involved in accepting the fact that obedience is an attitude... that it is not primarily a matter of conduct? Do you see that God is not satisfied with merely the external keeping of commandments?

Direct acts of obedience are not intuitive. When we are born again, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, we are given a desire to obey. Yet there is

quite a difference between the desire to do God's will and the ability to do it. But once that desire is resident, it is God's purpose to bring to us the ability to do His will.

Would you agree with me that there have been times in your life when you wanted to do something but did not know how to go about it? There have been times when I have wanted to be a good father and I didn't know how. There have been times when I have wanted to be a good husband and didn't know how. There have also been times when I wanted to be a carpenter and I cut the board off three times and it was still too short! I wanted to do things but I just did not know how to do them.

Taking one phrase from Psalm 19:14, let's look at one realm where the inner spirit of man is revealed: "the words of my mouth." Jesus once said, "... of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:45b). How much damage has been done by "the words of my mouth"!! Three areas where we fall into trouble through this medium of expression are:

- (1) Murmuring: This is usually against God. The children of Israel where much given to this . . . "I don't know why God brought us out here in the wilderness . . . we are all going to die . . . we were better off back in Egypt, anyhow." Perhaps this response is more familiar to present-day ears: "I don't know why God treats me like this . . . I pay my tithe . . . I go to church every Sunday . . ."
- (2) Criticizing: This is directed against our fellow believers... "they sing too long.. they sing too loud... why did they turn up the air-conditioning... purple shirts aren't for church..."
- (3) Complaining: Here we have the second cousin of the critical spirit. It is not hard to develop a complaining spirit once we entertain the critical. Have you ever gone out one day feeling that all was well with the world and then met up with a chronic complainer? It only took a short while for you to begin to wonder how you

could possibly have imagined anything was right.

Notice, there are no rules that govern the spirit that projects itself in murmuring . . . criticizing . . . complaining.

A second phrase from Psalm 19:14 reads: ". . . the meditations of my heart." This is where the "words of my mouth" are born and nurtured. Meditation is a beautiful word. It literally means to "cast up again". It is the same word used in speaking of a cow chewing her cud. It pictures having swallowed something, bringing it back up, and enjoying it all over again. We hear some new truth in a meeting. Driving home we bring it to mind again. It is there when we awaken the next morning. But there is a reverse cycle to the advantage of reliving a new truth. There is that pretty girl in front of me . . . I push her image down into the recess of my inner thoughts . . . and before I know it, up it comes again. Those things I push down have a way of bubbling up and running around in my head. This is the area of no rules. This is where God wants to come in and do a thorough cleaning job. Mark 7:21-23 tells us: "Out of the heart proceedeth . . . evil thoughts . . . covetousness . . . deceit . . . pride."

WARFARE AND WEAPONS

Do you realize that we are all actively engaged in actual spiritual warfare? Are you aware of the enemies... of the provisions made for us as we wage this battle? Two portions of Scripture will help us here:

II Corinthians 10:3-6 puts it this way: "For though we walk in the flesh (that is, the earthly, physical body) we do not war after the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds: (casting down of the thoughts and the intents of the heart . . . all of these imaginations can be brought under control). Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing in

captivity every thought to the obedience (or, so that you will hear under Christ . . . that Christ will rule in your mental faculties) of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience."

When will God be able to deal with those persons and circumstances which you feel are causing your troubles? When God has been able to deal with the meditations of your heart... when the words of your mouth are the expressions of that cleansed heart... that is when God can begin to deal with that pastor... that parent... that husband or wife who seems to be your roadblock. It has blessed me to learn that as soon as I can get God to take care of ME, then He can change circumstances and persons where necessary.

II Timothy 2:24-26 sheds light on this warfare, too: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive: (with the woman who works next to me, even if she drains the coffee pot and doesn't put on any more; and takes my parking place when she comes to work in the morning) but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth: And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (this is what may be called a spiritual prisoner of war).

Can you see that there are spiritual prisoners of war... captives, casualties and fatalities? A spiritual prisoner of war is one whose condition of heart keeps him in bondage. He may talk joy . . . shout louder and study more than anyone else . . . and yet be in captivity to an inward spirit which prevents true joy and freedom. The person who refuses to permit God to deal with him in the realm where there are no rules, never knows release from the covetous thing that makes him want to steal . . . never experiences freedom from the lustful eye that makes "thou shalt not commit adultery" a barrier to true fulfillment

of our God-given natures.

I have found as I have experienced a measure of freedom in this spirit of obedience that I do not speak as loosely as before. The more I come under this spirit, the less I have to say. There is no longer any need to keep up with the "sea lawyers"... no need to spin tales..."I caught a fish fourteen pounds..." All need for boasting and pretense disappears!

How do we secure freedom as a spiritual prisoner of war? Certainly not by human will power. Life was never designed for us to live it by that method. If we try it, God will take us through the School of Failure. As we look to Him from our position of defeat, we can hear Him say, "If you will come My way, you will find the answer. My way has built into it the ability you need — that ability of the Spirit of God." Did you realize that Christianity is the only way of life that tells you what to do and then gives you the ability to do it?

ENCOUNTER AND ENABLEMENT

In order to more closely examine the source of power which God has provided, we read Romans 8:9-15.

(9) "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. (Next Paul makes a parenthetical statement which could have been put in a bracket); Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,

(10) "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

(ll) "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in you.

(12) "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

(13) "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

(14) "For as many as are led by the

Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

(15) "For as ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

While reading a book, The Spirit of Christ, by Andrew Murray, a beautiful distinction in the ministry of the Holy Spirit was made alive to me. A careful study of the portion of Scripture above reveals a difference in the office work of the Spirit — it is the same Spirit, but the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God differ in administration. We know that God does not waste words or use the wrong word in the wrong place, so we can proceed on that certainty.

When we meet Jesus Christ in our initial encounter, we meet Him (l) as the Lamb of God. "Behold the Lamb of God which comes to take away the sin of the world" (John 2:29). (2) as Baptizer in the Holy Spirit. ". . . the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:33).

As we meet Jesus as the Lamb of God and are regenerated, the Holy Spirit comes to do a work *in* my life. I take on the nature of Christ — He imparts to me a new nature. In that nature comes a tremendous cry in my spirit that says, "Oh God, I want to do your will." Now I find I have the desire to do the will of God, but how to secure the ability to do it, eludes me.

Consider Jesus at the age of twelve. He is in the temple talking to the wise men of His day. When His mother chides Him for lingering in the temple instead of returning to Nazareth with the family, He says, "Mother, don't you understand? There is something working in Me that says I must be about My Father's business."

After many years of silence Jesus comes to the River Jordan to be baptized by John the Baptist. Jesus is about to be launched out into the work of obedience, into the fulfillment of His ministry. As Jesus stands in the Jordan, God spoke to John and said, "The one on whom you see the Spirit of God descending..."

Do you understand that the Spirit of Christ stood in the water — that is the nature of Christ. The Spirit of God comes down upon Him. As Jesus steps out of the water, He says: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . to release the captive . . . to open blind eyes . . . to heal the sick . . ."

The Spirit of Christ is that which gives you life. It brings with it the desire that God has provided for us to do His will (Philippians 1:19). Then the Spirit of God comes upon the believer and there is an *enabling* to do that will of God which has been birthed within.

As I looked at the life of the Apostle Paul, I asked, "God, what did that man have that enabled him to be stoned, thrown out of the city, and then he could get up — bruised and beaten — and go right back into the same situation? He had not only a desire to do Your will, but he also had the ability to do it!" Later I discovered that not only had God given Paul the power to do this, but God has made it available to all of us. Acts 1:8 tells us, "And you shall be witnesses unto me, after that the power of the Holy Spirit comes upon you."

Our entrance into the Kingdom and our enabling to make progress in the life of the Kingdom are both the work of the Spirit. The Spirit of Christ brings us our new nature and then the Spirit of God comes upon us in order to energize that desire which is crying out to do God's will. It lifts the desire into the realm of actuating. . . performing . . . accomplishing. The emphasis is no longer only on wanting to do His will, but it is on doing it. Many people honestly want to do God's will but lack the power.

In Paul's words of instruction to one of the early churches regarding this power God has provided (I Corinthians 14:2 and 4), we find confirmation of this enabling principle. Please try to understand that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was not then—and is not now—primarily a "power tool". This priceless gift is not to be considered only as giving the ability to "perform signs and wonders". It does include such ability—but there is

more — much more! The baptism in the Holy Spirit is that anointing which grants us the ability to do the will of God. It is given to enable us to meet the demands of the Father!

My Heavenly Father says to me, "Go to New Zealand and speak."

My reply to that command is, "God, I can't go to New Zealand and speak, I don't know what to say to them."

His assurance comes, "I will be with you. My Spirit shall be upon you and I will anoint you to do what I have asked you to do."

Anything less than this is pure fleshly effort.

Listen again to Paul as he tells of God's provision for securing this power (verse 2): "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him: howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries." Here is prayer going up from within the child of God in "other tongues". It is reaching the very throne of God. It is prayer that I would never dare pray if I were praying in my own tongue. I may be saying, "God, see this rebel mouth that will not come under submission? Lord, do something about it!" Chances are I would never be bold enough to ask this of my own volition.

Again (verse 4): "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself..." Is it selfish to be "built up"? Of course not. It is necessary. Is it possible to be called upon to help others and have so many problems vourself that you cannot respond? Learning to pray in the Spirit enables me to rise up and do that which God has spoken to me. Why was Jesus baptized in the Spirit of God? His answer was: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to release the captives . . . open blind eyes . . ." What is involved is the anointing - that ability to do what God commands.

TWELVE STEPS ALONG THE WAY

Before we bring into focus the enablements God has provided, notice that He never asks anything of us for which He has not first given us an anointing. Read carefully the one phrase that accompanies the miraculous exploits of these giants of the faith. "But the Spirit of God came on Gideon... the Spirit of God came on Abraham... the Spirit of God came on Samson... the Spirit of God came on Paul... the Spirit of God came on Peter..." That same Spirit is poured out in every generation to meet the Father's demands.



1. Our initial experience we shall call regeneration.. salvation.. being born again. We meet the Lamb of God, get our house

cleaned . . . receive a new nature, which is called the Spirit of Christ — the nature of Jesus. (John 1:29)

2. According to the New Testament, baptism in water should follow — for the release of the old man and the bringing up of the new man. (Acts 2:38)



Ican

3. We receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit — that is the Spirit of God, which affords, if properly used and understood, the ability to

do the will of God. We move from the realm of "I wish I could" to find God has granted us the "I can". (Acts 2:38)

4. Understand and appropriate your ability to worship and praise in other tongues. Keep your well open and flowing. The Spirit of God is given to



of God is given to build us up. (I Corinthians 14:2,4)



5. Recognize that obedience, like submission, is a discipline. It is something we learn. It does not come naturally. (Hebrews 5:8)

6. Take it one day at a time. Never come to the place where you feel you can say, "Glory to God. Look at this obedient servant!"



This is asking for trouble! (Luke 9:23)



7. Listen carefully to all instructions. Check them out with your three guides: The Word of God, the Spirit, and the au-

thority over you. Ask for a "repeat" if you feel it is necessary. God will always honor that request. (Isaiah 50:4)

8. Once you have received your instructions, obey them to the best of your ability. Remember, failure is part of the lesson.



At times we may be given an assignment that staggers us and as we move out to obey, we find it to be more than we can handle. This is God's chance to instruct us with some "on the job training". Never hesitate to call upon Him when you hit a snag. That is what He is waiting for — your plea for His help. (Acts 26:19)



9. If you sense even the slightest inward resistance, take careful pains to make certain that you deal with it and that it breaks. Once

you meet that inward resistance that rises against the will of God, it is your responsibility to recognize it and deal with it until you experience peace. (Romans 6:17)

10. Be careful of hasty, urgent, demanding voices. Anything that is of this nature, is suspect. I have found that God always be-



gins soon enough to get me to the right place at the right time. Every time I have been on a crash program for Jesus, it crashed! Guard against over-eagerness to obey and cultivate the spirit of obedience. (Col 3:15)



11. Remember that it is not past experience that counts — it is present attitude. God never permits assumption of past performance

to be a platform for continuing anointing. When He checks for "grapes", He will not be satisfied with "leaves". (Romans 7:4)

12. Examine your own life pattern to find out whether your progress is registered as a series of continual "breakings", or whether



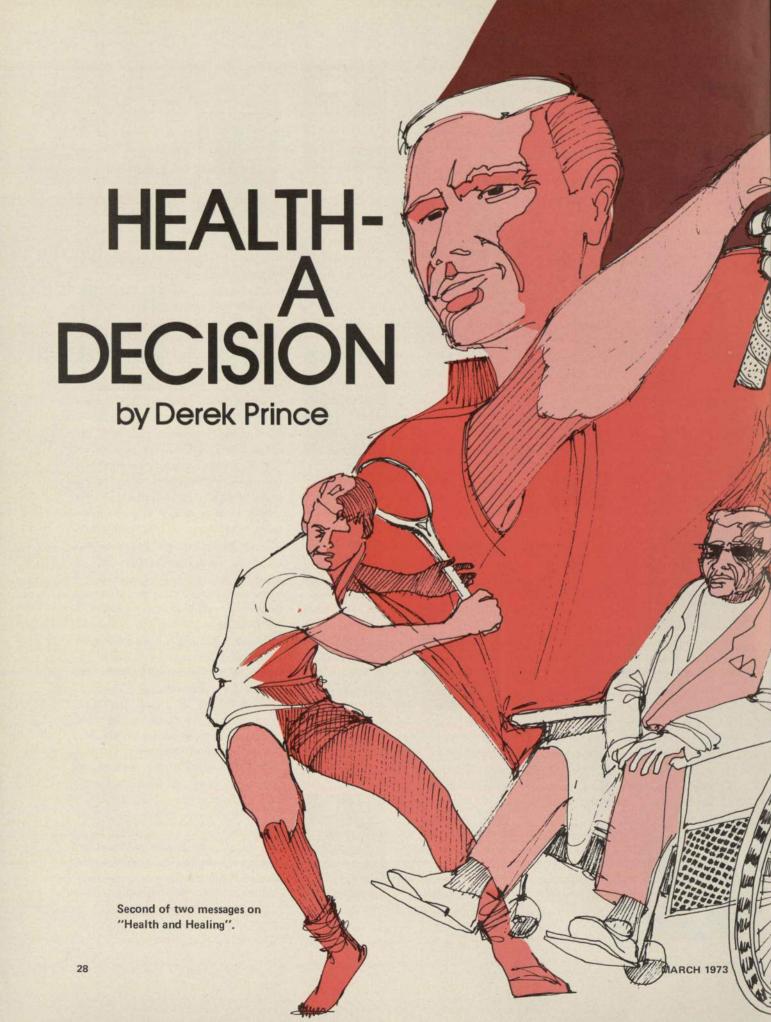
you have been broken by God and are walking in humility and obedience developing a hearing ear and responsive spirit. (Psalm 40:6)

God never ordained or intended that the Christian life be one constant series of breakings and crises. He has arranged these twelve steps that we might walk forward with confidence into the normal growth pattern He has ordained. As we walk with Him in humbleness and openness — as we become increasingly sensitive, not only to sin but to any tinge of rebellion — we stabilize our lives and enjoy the even keel of sailing out into the open waters of fellowship. And fellowship with God and with each other is that for which we were created!

When we are freed from the Great Transgression, we find ourselves enabled to enjoy and exemplify the Nature and Spirit of Obedience. This enablement working within the deep of our human spirit, produces increasing joy and fruitfulness in daily Christian living. This is the freedom of which Jesus spoke:

". . . If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

Passport to freedom! This is the end result of appropriating the Nature and Spirit of Obedience.





ing in the truth and faithfully fulfilling vealed will of God to heal?" We all of his Christian duties. Inspired by answered in the affirmative, takthe Holy Spirit, John states the will of ing both Scripture and personal experience as a basis for replying with a resounding, "Yes!" We al-

God for this man: that he may prosper, financially and materially; and be in health physically, even as his soul prospers. The source of prosperity for the physical and material realm is in the soul. The measure of outward wellbeing is determined by the wellbeing

of the soul. It is "as thy soul prospereth".

Remember that God is "no re-

sperter of persons". In modern terms, "God has no favorites". If you live the way Gaius lived, God's will for you is the same as it was for Gaius.

The will of God for every believer is not to keep getting sick and getting healed. It is to "be in health". If you are sick, get healed and stay well. And if you are not sick, don't get sick! There is no need for it. Some years ago I made a discovery, which at first surprised me, but which changed my way of living. I discovered that it is much easier to be in health than it is to keep getting healed.

This was followed by a second discovery: Health is a decision. In order to be in health, you have to make a decision. God's Word reveals how to make this decision.

In the Book of Deuteronomy Moses speaks at length to the children of Israel before they enter the promised land. He sets before them God's ways, explaining both the blessings that will result from obedience, and the curses that will result from disobedience. In chapter 30 Moses brings his message to a climax, demanding that God's people make a choice.

In verse 14 he shows them that the choice must be made in terms of God's Word which he has preached to them: "But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

In verse 15 he sets before them the two alternatives, between which they have to choose: "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil . . ." The choice is clear. The results of obedience are "life and good". The results of disobedience are "death and evil".

In verse 16 he explains what it means to make the right choice: "to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments

children.

so established the fact that the

Holy Spirit is the divine ad-

ministrator, and that God's

Word is the instrument, in heal-

ing. The three ways of receiving

healing were presented: (1) Lay-

ing on of hands; (2) Anointing

Here we see that HEALTH is

also the will of God for His

with oil; (3) Spiritual gifts.

and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it." The right choice leads to life, abundance, blessing.

In verses 17-18 he explains what it means to make the wrong choice: "But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it." Notice the first result that follows when "your heart turns away". You are no longer able "to hear". We have seen already that the ability "to hear" is the primary requirement for blessing and healing. The initial "turning away" of the heart, followed by spiritual deafness, leads to ultimate disaster: "ye shall surely perish."

In verse 19 Moses requires Israel to make their choice between the alternatives that he has set before them. The choice is so solemn that he calls heaven and earth to witness it: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live . . ."

God's Word to you is just the same today. God sets before you the alternatives: on the one hand, "life" and "blessing"; and on the other hand, "death" and "cursing". God earnestly exhorts you to make the right decision. But He cannot make the decision for you. You — and you alone — can do that.

Almost all Christians understand that salvation from the guilt and power of sin results from a personal decision. God desires to save the sinner, but in order to receive salvation the sinner must make a personal decision. However, God's offer does not stop there. The "life" and "blessing" that God sets before us includes also healing and health. These, too, are the results of the right decision.

Let me illustrate this from the min-

istry of Billy Graham. In his evangelistic services Billy Graham clearly sets forth God's offer of salvation from the guilt and power of sin. He concludes his message by calling forward those who wish to accept God's offer. Afterwards it is reported that there were so many "decisions". In order to accept God's offer, each one who came forward had to make a personal decision.

What was the decision that these persons made? They decided to accept God's offer of salvation from sin. This included pardon from the guilt of past sins, freedom from the dominion of sin, and power to lead a life of righteousness. These people could not achieve any of these results for themselves. But God did not ask them to do that. God only asked them to accept His offer to do these things for them. When they made the vital decision to accept, God's grace accomplished for them the results which they could not accomplish for themselves.

God's offer of healing and health works in exactly the same way. God knows that you cannot heal yourself, or keep yourself healthy. He does not ask you to do that. He only asks that you make the right decision. He says, "Choose life — abundant life — life in all its fulness — spiritual, physical, material." Once you make the choice, God proceeds to accomplish for you those results which you cannot accomplish for yourself. It requires your decision to set God's power at work on your behalf.

HOW TO MAKE THE DECISION

To this you may respond: "I certainly wish to make the right decision. If God offers me health, I wish to choose it. But how am I to do that?"

Paul answers this question in Romans 10:8-10. He begins by quoting the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 30:14, using these as a basis for explaining the way into salvation:

"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach:

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

This last word, "salvation", is the Bible's grand, all-inclusive word for all the benefits purchased for us by the death of Christ. It includes all that Moses set before Israel in the words "life" and "blessing". It includes: forgiveness, peace, righteousness, healing, health, prosperity, abundant life in every area of our being.

All this is offered to us through God's Word. To appropriate it we have to do two things: we have to "believe it in our heart", and to "confess it with our mouth". To "confess" means literally to "say the same as". We must say with our mouth the same thing that God says in His Word.

God's Word says that Jesus bore my sins (I Peter 2:24). I must say the same.

God's Word says that I am made righteous by faith in Christ (Romans 5:1). I must say the same.

God's Word says that Jesus took my infirmities and bore my sicknesses (Matthew 8:17). I must say the same.

God's Word says that by the stripes of Jesus I was healed (I Peter 2:24). I must say the same.

God's Word says that His words are life to me and health to all my flesh (Proverbs 4:20-22). I must say the same

If you wish to accept God's offer of healing and health, make your decision now You may use these words to express it:

"Lord Jesus, I believe that on the cross you bore my sins and my sicknesses, and that by your stripes I am healed.

"According to your word, I accept your offer of pardon and peace, also of healing and health.

"I believe that your power will accomplish for me the promise of your Word that I have accepted. Amen!"

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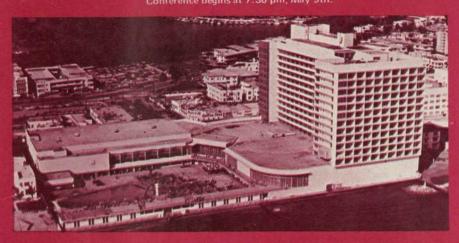
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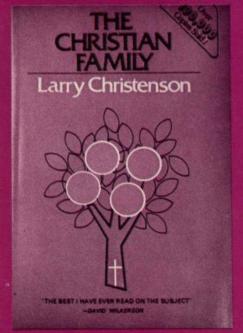
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