

new wine

APRIL 1973

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE
DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH

IS THERE
LIFE AFTER
BIRTH?

IS EASTER
THE
ANSWER?



SPECIAL EASTER MESSAGES
Three Conquests of Christ • Follert
The New Birth • Simpson
Reborn • Testimonies

"DRY BONES" LIVES FOR READERS

Dear Editor:

I do not know how I could get along without NEW WINE. I read it every month. We especially enjoy the deep ministry of the Word.

I so much appreciated the article, CAN THESE BONES LIVE, by Derek Prince. I read nearly all the articles in the *Best of 1972*. I especially appreciated the one, *The Crucifixion of Jesus*, by Truman Davis, M.D., since I am a registered nurse. This was another view I had never had explained.

A.T.M. — Kansas

Dear Friends:

The latest issue of NEW WINE — fantastic! All the material presented is *heartly food* and very much appreciated — especially DRY BONES, THE CHURCH IN YOUR HOME, and SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY.

In this area of the country the Holy Spirit is doing a wonderfully quick work (or so it seems). Daily, new people are baptized in the Spirit on *hearing* the Word concerning the life in the Spirit.

May we have more such issues. God's continued guidance be with you all.

D.G.S. — Pennsylvania

Saints:

I have neglected, procrastinated about an offering to reinstate me on your NEW WINE mailing list.

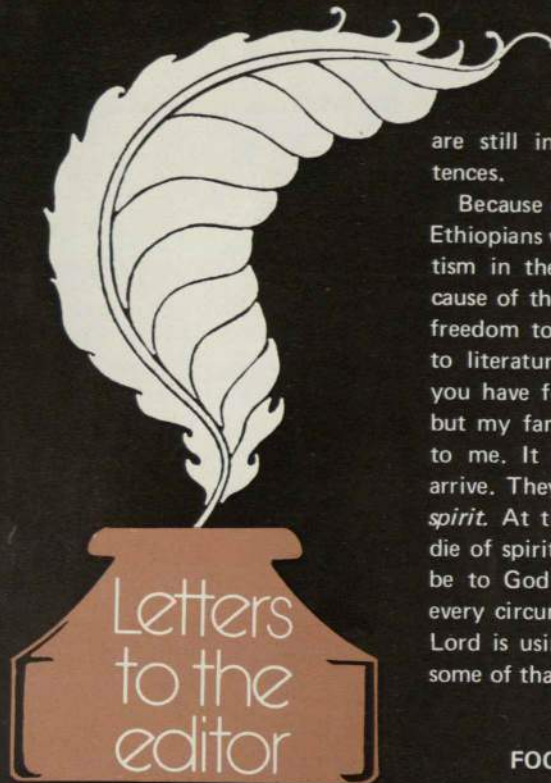
Just now I finished reading the first article in the latest edition which I received from a friend. DRY BONES. Praise God! I *feel* what you are saying. We're *experiencing*, I believe!! God is so good to show us the upward, *onward* way. I'll be looking for more of the same caliber articles. Thank you.

Mrs. C.J. — Indiana

APPRECIATION FROM ETHIOPIA

Dear Sirs:

Greetings in the precious Name of our Savior. Lord and soon-coming



King. I wish I could tell you how much NEW WINE means to me. I am presently in Ethiopia. I am working at a mission hospital. About 1½ years ago the Lord baptized me in the Spirit and through that also revealed it was His will for me to come here. I am with a mission board that does not believe in the baptism of the Spirit and, in fact, definitely teaches against it. But praise the Lord, there are still many Ethiopians who have discovered the truth and received the baptism in the Spirit.

As you probably know the Pentecostal church is illegal in Ethiopia, and many believers were meeting in homes and worshipping God. As a result, over 400 of them were put in prison and suffered a lot of abuse and physical persecution. Mainly due to the pressure of the World Bible Society, most of them were released temporarily; although it appeared to be a permanent release. They were watched very carefully and restricted from meeting together (although they did this by attending other churches) and witnessing. Any who were even thought to be violators had severe repercussions for those still in prison. Now, praise the Lord, most are permanently released, although about 20 brothers

are still in prison with 2 year sentences.

Because of the mission policy, those Ethiopians who had received the baptism in the Spirit have left; and because of the government, they have no freedom to worship God. So we cling to literature and letters. The address you have for me is still in the States but my family forwards the magazine to me. It is a great day when they arrive. They are in reality food for my *spirit*. At times I feel as though I will die of spiritual starvation — but praise be to God whose grace is always in every circumstance sufficient. And the Lord is using your magazine to show some of that sufficiency.

A Brother — Ethiopia

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God's Blessings on You All:

Just couldn't let this letter go without also saying a big Thank You. You'll never know how much *food* you have given me — each issue I look forward to so much and read every article — underlining as I go — because I keep going back to re-read the articles.

Have especially reaped from Bob Mumford's series on THE NATURE AND SPIRIT OF OBEDIENCE and the Forum is another favorite of mine.

Praise the Lord for Mumford, Prince, Simpson and Basham — true prophets . . . teaching to our day.

C.L. — Pennsylvania

Dear Sirs:

I would like to commend you on this really wonderful magazine. As a pastor I am constantly reading a great variety of Christian literature. As far as magazines go I count your magazine as one of the best. I believe it is carrying out your objective of encouraging Christian growth. I disagree with some who have said there is a "hobbyhorse" in the magazine as I find a wonderful balance of articles. In my personal ministry it is the greatest resource material I have for my messages. May God continue to bless your efforts to edify the Body of Christ.

H.L.J. — Alberta

Editorial

RELATIONSHIPS

We are living in the waves of *Future Shock*. Our highly mobile and changing society is breaking down its institutions. Religion, family, hometown and friends; all those solid institutions which have given a feeling of security to Western Civilization are shaking — and with them, the security of many.

In the middle of what sociologists have called the "identity crisis", God is establishing a work of relationships in His people. Relationship to each other. It is out of relationships founded on love and trust that the body of Christ will grow. As God builds solid relationships and we find that we "belong" to each other — we will find the security of love when the institutions have fallen.

God wants relationships that are solid. He wants us to identify with *each other*. Sometime back, in a large southern city, a girl who had been attending a prayer meeting for two years stood up one night and said, "If someone here can't help me, I'm going to commit suicide." Was she related to her individual brothers and sisters — or to a nebulous thing called a "group"?

God has a great reward for those who are willing to be real with one another and "submit to one another in the fear of Christ." Being real means telling the truth — even when it hurts. But the truth spoken in love brings about growth in God.

A man or woman who stands alone, behind walls of fear and pride, will never reach God's full potential for them. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12:24)

—R.S.

new wine

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APRIL 1973

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New Wine is published monthly, except combined July/August issue, by Christian Growth Ministries, P.O. Box 22888, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33315.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: New Wine is a non-subscription magazine supported by the contributions of its readers. Single copies and back issues (except December issues): 50 cents each. Bulk prices for regular issues (minimum order of 6) 6—24, 40 cents each; 25—49, 35 cents each; 50—99, 30 cents each; 100 or more, 25 cents each. Foreign contributions, except Canada, should be made by International Money Order.

Material submitted for publication should be typewritten double spaced on one side of the paper and addressed to New Wine at the above address. If return of manuscript is desired, a stamped addressed envelope should be included. All material becomes the property of New Wine when published.

The views expressed in New Wine are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the Editors or Directors.

CREDITS: Designer, Larry Rice.

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THE THREE CONQUESTS OF CHRIST

by
John Wright Follette

APRIL 1973

We are going to consider a portion of Scripture, which at first reading may not seem relevant to Easter. But, I believe it relates absolutely to the victorious Christ. We are going to think of this victory in *three different fields* in which He is a triumphant King coming forth now from His realms of conquest. Listen to this portion of Peter's first sermon as recorded in Acts 2:22-28:

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

"Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

"Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

"For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

"Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

"Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

"Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance."

Peter is quoting, of course, from the Psalms. I am glad he does, because he gives recognition to the fact that the inspiration of the Old Testament is authentic. Psalm 16 is a Messianic prophecy concerning the Christ. This could not have been fulfilled literally in the heart and life of David; but he prefigures; that is, speaks more than that which is perfectly local in his own experience and life. He speaks more than that, for he often speaks relative to mysteries, movings of God and of the Christ in His manifestations.

Both of these references speak of a triumphant King who has found a way of life back again to God. And Christ is triumphant because in three fields

At the Easter Season our emphasis is usually upon the fact that Christ arose. It is centered on the forth-coming of this great Conqueror from the realms of death and the territory of sin and devastation. He has gone through and won this great victory and Easter Morning is the celebration of His coming out of the tomb. It is not merely the tomb hewn in the rock, but — figuratively speaking — the whole creation and mankind have all been buried in death in the tomb. The coming forth of the Christ out of that hewn rock is the symbol picture of a Conqueror having won the victory in the *many* fields over which He had to move in order to win it. And he actually came forth — it is a historic fact! He came out from this territory — the realms of death, devastation, ruin — out from the land where death, disease and sickness reign. Out from *all* of that He came triumphant and victorious!

Affiliated with the Assemblies of God until his death in 1966, John Wright Follette taught the Word of God with a simple profoundness that left a lasting impression in the Body of Christ.

He has made manifest His conquests. In this one small portion of Scripture we have presented the avenues Christ followed in finding this way back to God. Notice — “I foresaw the Lord always before my face . . . for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved . . . therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope.”

FIRST CONQUEST — REGAINING LUCIFER'S FALL

The very first phrase, “I foresaw the Lord always before my face . . .” tells us why Christ makes conquest in the first realm — *because of His position*.

When we deal with the redemption of Christ as wrought on Calvary, too many times we think of it in its relation to us personally and we say, “Jesus died for me,” which is true — and “Jesus set me free,” that is true. Jesus has won a victory for us in humanity. But if you leave it there you have limited it because there is a *breadth* in the redemption. Yes, there is a breadth in the redemptive scheme of Christ and an overall in the manifestation as to His identity. We must see that if there is to be a redemption which God can recognize by bringing His Son forth from the dead, then that redemption must cover a vast territory. It must meet *all* the demands. It must meet every deficit which has been made through sin. Not just *man* sinning, but you see *there was sin before man was created!* The very throne of God had been insulted by the devil! So there has to be some reconciliation; there has to be something paid as a forfeit to correct *that thing* which has already been made before man was created.

Now if you are going to make even the simplest analysis of the ground that is covered by this redemptive scheme, you have to go way back to its very beginning. There, before God in the heavenlies, everything was pure and perfect, harmonious and moving as God designed that it should. The angels and all the hosts of heaven were created by God — and here we find the

angel Lucifer, the covering cherub.

Lucifer's duty was to lead the heavenly worship. The worship before God was given to him as his precinct or territory. What happened there? We must remember that there is no devil to tempt the devil. Did you ever stop to think how Lucifer *did* get tempted?

In the creation, even of the angelic beings, and in the creation of mankind, there is a will — a possibility of choosing — a possibility of allowing the desire that may be in their hearts to move in another field from that for which it has been ordained. Now there was no *external* that is, there was no outside influence to direct Lucifer. Then what was it? We find in James 1:14–15 an analysis of sin:

“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”

“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Notice, he does not say a word about the devil, does he? Why? Because it is very possible, and all of us know it, that it is within the human heart to sin and the devil can be in China! Don't think that every time there is sin it is because of the devil. Not at all. It wasn't with the enemy himself. There was *within* him, in his created structural law, in his make-up, a quality that he could give vent to his desire in other patterns or designs than that for which it was made.

Lucifer was *made to lead in the worship of God!* Now there is no one from the external to move him, but there was that subtle thing *within* him that he could and did choose to divert the worship which belonged to God to himself. This is the origin of sin. That is why in the last of the three temptations of Jesus the devil sought to divert Jesus Christ from following a designed pattern in God to win the thing that God wanted Him to have. And in the last temptation, when the devil found he was defeated in the first two — at last he comes fiercely at Jesus and says, “Fall down and worship me and I will give you these things!” Why? *Because that is the*

thing he has always wanted from the beginning! He wanted that worship and attention which belonged to God and which he sought to divert from God and swing into his own realm. He still carries that. He wants people to worship him, not getting down on their knees, but by diverting the devotion of all that is in their heart and life which should be focused in God, to something *less* than God. And he doesn't care what form it takes as long as he gets that worship and attention. For whom you serve, he is the one you worship; and whom you worship, you serve! You cannot separate them. They belong together and Jesus knew it! That is why He *defeated* him. He says, “It is *God* whom we should worship and serve!” The devil never told him that part. And he doesn't tell people that today, either.

As long as there can be a deflection and diversion from the rendering unto God that which belongs to Him — that for which we were made — no matter what form it may take, if it is *less* than the thing that God wants, that is what the enemy is after. He diverted that attention in the worship and instantly the whole thing crashes and he drags a third of the heavenly hosts with him and he falls.

It is the devil who *fell* but man *died*. We talk about the “fall of man”. No, there is nothing in Scriptures that talks about “the fall of man”. That is a theological term used as a short-cut to say that man died in his separation from God. But God doesn't say man fell; God says, *he died!* Modern man likes to think that man just fell over and became limp and helpless, and if we can get hold of him and give him a few injections of education, refinement and culture, we might resuscitate him. But there is no resuscitation possible — *he is dead* in trespasses and sins.

But when it comes to Lucifer — he fell . . . from his upper places before the throne of God into another region. This is above us yet — one of the heavenly places, and that is his stronghold. This is his seat where he reigns and moves. He is not in hell.

There is nobody in hell yet. That is a prepared place waiting; but he isn't there, don't worry! No, he is *entrenched* in the heavenlies — in places of power and authority with his hosts of demons and they have access to the earth. And they do come — and he comes — but he has not yet been cast down from his place of authority. *But some day he will be!* So the situation has to be taken care of so that God can be cleared in the whole arrangement.

CHRIST INCARNATE — A SERVANT

In the second chapter of Philippians we read of Jesus Christ coming down in His humiliation — the humiliation of what we call the incarnation in flesh. What is the first thing that is mentioned? "*He was in the form of God*" (vs. 6). The word used is "morpha", and this means "every essential of that form" — not *like*, but the *essential*. He was God! He has all the place, power and dignity, honor and glory that belongs to God because He is *God the Son!*

In the next verse, we read that "he took upon him the *form* of a servant." He takes the *morpha* of a servant — not acted like a servant — but became a servant. He, who had the place of all sovereignty and all power, takes the place that is less — called that of a servant. Now can you see why Jesus was dependent upon God continually? He says, "the *Father* can send more than twelve legions of angels if He wants to." He doesn't say, "I can say . . . angels." No! He is dependent continually upon the authority and power of God His Father over Him. He is dependent because He has taken that lesser place.

When you think of Jesus taking the place of a servant, this brings you back again to that place the enemy had. Satan was a *servant* of God. God *made him* and *brought him forth* for his glorious work of worship and of bringing the whole universe to its place before God in praise and worship and glory that belonged to Him. Although

there was nothing about Lucifer like the devil, there was latent in him the possibility that he could overthrow this.

So when Jesus becomes the servant, *it is also in His power as a servant to disobey!* Why does the devil tempt Him if there is no temptation to it? Why is it Jesus has to become the Victor in *all* these fields if there isn't a power there over which He has to gain His victory and have the authority and position? So the very first victory that Jesus gains — before He gets to the cross — is the fact that He has *authority, power, conquest* over the possibility of that creature provoking sin *in itself*. Do you understand this? Jesus got the victory over *the possibility* — before there is any *external* approach at all with the enemy. And Lucifer is brought down!

Here is One who can take that place and *do it perfectly!* Do what? Walk with that power within Him and not indulge in the releasing of it for His own advancement or His own pleasure in anything concerning Himself. *He never did!* Before He ever comes to Calvary, before He touches humanity, there is a perfect victory in the realm of His nature. That is His first victory — in the control, in the absolute dominion and authority concerning His will, which was eternally centered in God, until the will of God was His meat and drink. That was His first field of victory.

SECOND CONQUEST — RETAKE ADAM'S LOSS

We now move from the realm of the *internal* to the *external*. When Jesus takes the form of this servant and is in the "schema" — the fashion of a *man* — the fashion in which a man lives — there is the possibility of an attack from the *outside* because the enemy has been dethroned and thrown down. He has reached his habitat — the principality in the heavenlies — and now he has access to the earth. He can approach and attack any one of us.

The enemy attacked Adam. Adam didn't sin from something *inside*.

Adam sinned because there is sin already in the world — in the *devil*. And he sins because of an attack from the outside. Do you see that? It is the *external* approach to Adam — not the *internal* thing over which he has to get his victory. Adam did not originate sin. There was sin before Adam was created and that is the thing God sees which has to be dealt with. So to those people who have a little Christ who just died for them on Calvary, I say, "Mercy!" Move Him out until you can see Him in conquest over *every department of evil* — over *all* things that are in rebellion to God — over the devil and his field — all of that!

Now Jesus has to gain a victory in the form of humanity. So He takes upon Himself the form of *humanity*. That is the *incarnation*. In the temptation of Jesus what was assaulted? It was His humanity. You cannot tempt Divinity. You cannot tempt God — and God does not tempt you or me! God can *prove* us, but He *never tempts us*. Get that straight! A temptation is always unto distress, destruction, death. A proving is always unto a releasing and a growing. He proves us as Christians in order that we may *grow* under the proving. The devil uses the same thing as a temptation to *destroy* us. The devil doesn't want us to grow. He wants to destroy us.

So when Jesus moves forth incarnate in flesh, He assumes the role of the *Second Adam* and limits Himself to the Second Adam. Why? So that the enemy can have access at Him, that Christ can gain the victory that *Adam lost!* Christ in the form of the Last Adam gains the victory! He now has a victory, not only the victory in His own heart and life continually moving in God, but He has the victory over the powers of the enemy from the external. How many see your two regions? It is a double conquest — really a triple, as we shall see later.

IN FOCUS — "I BEHELD HIS FACE"

How is it that Jesus Christ could in that first field gain His victory? It is

given in Psalm 16. Remember the phrase, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face." Now the victory of Christ in that first field was made possible because of the focusing of His being under the typical picture of a "face" — "I beheld always before me . . ." Now that is spiritual adjustment. This is the correct focusing of all this interior in which we live. Jesus Christ in that first moving and through the whole period of His life was in conquest eternally victorious. Why? Because He kept ever before Him the face of God. He walked with the Eternal *present*. He was never localized. He walked through things but He never settled an issue, He never made a decision, He never did a thing, only in the light of the Eternal.

If we could do that how much trouble it would save us! But *we lose sight of the Eternal*. We become absorbed with the *local* and the *present* — the thing that touches our flesh. Don't live like that! The things that are seen are perishing, but the things not seen are eternal. They are forever — they abide. If your vision is filled there, you will become a conqueror in that field. You really will. Jesus was a Conqueror there because He kept His face eternally Godward.

Now Satan had his position with his face Godward for the worship. That was his position. In Jude, verse 6, it says that the angels lost their principality and were cast down. The word in the Greek is a "habitation". Satan had a principality — a place in which he could move and function. How could he maintain it? He could maintain it as long as his face beheld God the Eternal. But when Satan had something else to occupy his attention and his back is turned on the Eternal, *then there is no security for him!* He has *left* the place of security. So Jude says the angels lost their habitation. The loss of this was not their punishment. That was the sin that brings them to the punishment — namely, bondage with chains in the realms of darkness. *That* is their punishment.

ABIDING PRESENCE — "HE IS ON MY RIGHT HAND"

We have seen how Jesus gained the victory in the first field of conquest. How did He gain the victory in the second? In the *external* realm we read, "For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved." In the realm of the flesh — the natural — the Lord God was at His side *always*. He was *safe* in that *will* of God. He was safe in the consciousness that God was with Him. He says, "Now I have found something else . . . He is at my right side . . . He is my strength. He is all that I need." And He makes a conquest. Just so, you will have a conquest in your second field.

THIRD CONQUEST — BEARING THE SIN

We move on to the third field and what is that? "Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad." Why? Because of the two great victories already gained. He has gained the victory in the internal realm and the external realm — the first Lucifer should have . . . the second Adam should have had. We hear Him say, "Moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope." Why? Because of the *authority of the twofold victory He has gained*. Now He says . . . "Since the penalty of sin is death and hell, I will have to meet that. How can I meet it? In the power and authority of what I have gained in my conquest." His heart is filled with joy, faith, victory, knowing that even though they take Him to Calvary and they slay Him and He goes down into the depths of hell . . . "GOD WILL NOT FORSAKE ME!" How can He have this assurance? Because He gained the eternal victory and God is just; and when He reviews His pattern of life, He goes down into this grave in victory.

At the Passover Supper when He and His disciples went out into the garden and Jesus knew that the garden was there, and He knew that hell was waiting, He went out with a song in His heart! We are told, ". . . they stood and sang a hymn." How can He do that? Because He has the victory already in His heart. He depended on

the Eternal to carry Him through. The Eternal has given Him the witness all the way along — from Bethlehem when the star was placed in the heavens, to the two times when God opened the heavens and said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

VICTOR IN LIFE AND DEATH

With all this as a sense of security, Jesus Christ can stand and break bread and say, "This is my body"! Only the power of God could make a man do that! You think He had faith when He raised the dead and grew arms on people? Yes, that was wonderful. But do see the spiritual side of the thing! See the necessity of faith in the realm of the spirit, not in flesh. In this realm of *spirit* He has to have faith to dare to say, "This is my body . . .", when He knew the grave was waiting for Him! How can He go into a grave? He goes in majestic faith *knowing* that God cannot leave Him there! Why does His heart rejoice and why can He sing at that Passover Feast? Because He knows God is just and when God looks at the design and pattern of that Man, Christ Jesus, God will see that in His life and in His death, He is victorious.

It is His victorious life which leads up to the death that presents Him as the *Lamb without spot or blemish*. When you see Him on the Transfiguration Mount, He is a Lamb without spot and blemish, but is as a Lamb that has to be *slain!* *We are not saved by His life, we are saved by His death!* The life is exemplary . . . beautiful . . . but He did not come to display a great character. He came to die! We see Him on that Mount waiting to be slain in order to spell redemption for the universe. Look at the victory which "beholding his face eternally" obtained! Look at the second victory which "I was conscious of His arm by me . . ." obtained! Now, He can say, "My heart rejoices." "My glory sings" is another translation. He says, "I have no fear to become responsible for the sins of those for whom I die."

What is His third victory? He has

the victory in assuming the sins of the world and He allows them to be placed upon Him and *he becomes* that damnable thing called *sin*, which is cursed! He does it! He dares to take the responsibility of *all* of that — the burdens of sin wherever it moved . . . whatever sin has done . . . whatever hell has been made through the power of the devil — He says, “I’ll take it. That is why I have come!”

Of course, He took our sins — they are all dreadful. But can’t you see Him taking something *more* than just that? Let’s have a Christ who is broad and deep in His reaching . . . Whose arms of the cross reach around the world and through the universe! There is the third conquest!

THE ALL-ENCOMPASSING CHRIST

The first conquest is the fact that He has victory over that which is inside — the victory the devil lost. In the second conquest He bears that form of a man and with God at His right side, He moves through that period of manifestation and carries it victoriously until God accepts it. Third, He says, “Now I will take the burden, the sin of the world and all of its consequences, *from the throne of God that has been insulted*.” Who is going to take care of that? Could you and I? Could any moral man down here who says, “I have never done anything bad.” Oh! I want to say, “Dear man, aren’t you conscious of the *fact of sin and hell in the world? Who will answer that? Will your little piety answer that? No!*” It has to be something strong and mighty. That is the thing that will have to move to the throne of God that has been insulted — the will of God that has been ignored and broken and abased. Somebody has to take that and mend it to its fullness. That is why we need such a tremendous Christ.

I wish I could make you see how wonderful He is! I wish God would give you an inner vision of this marvelous Man whom we honor today because He comes through in victory. He goes down into that grave in perfect victory, joyous in this fact: “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,

neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life.”

How? The way of life is through a region of death. And Jesus enters that region of death, and out of this region of death is the way of life. He says, “Thou hast shown it to Me; Thou hast shown the way of life to Me.” Where did it lead Him? It led Him to Calvary and into a tomb and into Hades. It was the way of life and He followed it.

“I HAVE FOUND A WAY”

Where else will it take Him? It will take Him back again to the throne of God — to the place that He left years before. How does He obtain that? He obtains it because life has to come through a process of death. That is hard teaching but that is the philosophy of our Christian faith. There is no Easter Morning unless you have the tragedy of a Calvary and a Tomb into which He entered in sublime faith. Then, when God looks at the work which that Son accomplished — the satisfying ministry of the Son in His holy life . . . His victorious death, in His conquest — when God sees that — God being just — says, “It is sufficient; it has answered every question concerning death, hell, sickness, disease.” All have been answered.

What will God do? He put a seal upon that great threefold victory. How? When Jesus went down into that grave He was dead. Now don’t think that there was some power in Him that He could get up and tear the bars apart. No, He went down as a dead man, in faith believing that He would come forth by the express power of God, who will give it as a testimony. He gives a testimony to *heaven*, to the *earth*, and to *hell* — all of the powers of darkness, of the devil. God gives a testimony by raising the Son by the power of the Eternal Spirit! Jesus responds to the touch of that Spirit and He comes forth!

This was such a sublime event that God veiled even the universe from seeing it. I am glad God the Father in heaven could see it — that dead body lying there. You see His spirit is sep-

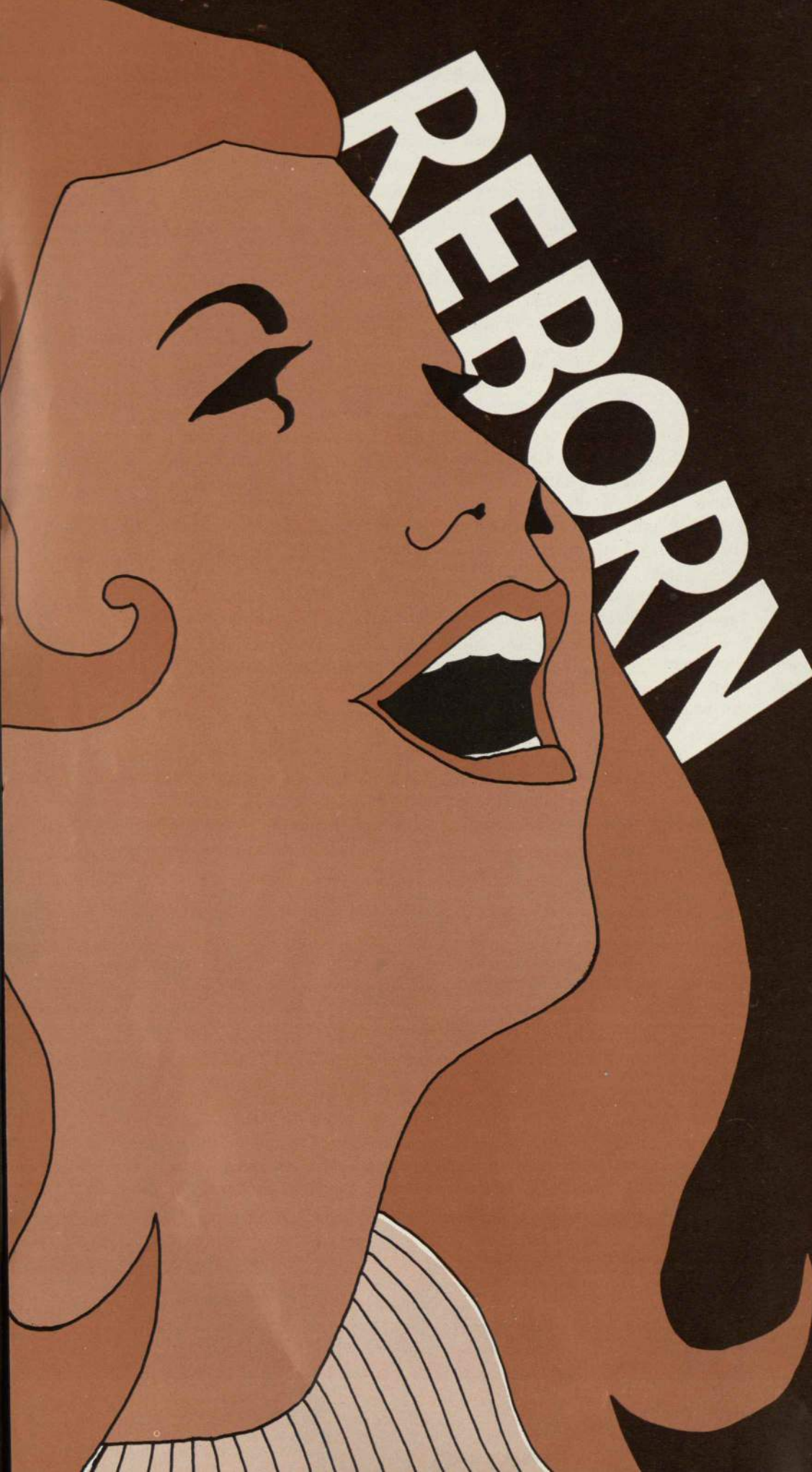
arated from His body and His spirit is separated from God because it has to go down into the darkness — *a double separation*. Yet, God by the Eternal Spirit, breathes upon that body and there is Life! It is good to believe in the resurrection. Paul never explained it. He says, “Behold, I show you a mystery!” That was good of Paul . . . “a mystery”.

HOMECOMING OF THE CONQUEROR

There is something else I have always liked to think of in relation with this. You know, I think maybe the angels escorted Him back to Heaven. I hope so. Angels ministered at His birth, when this holy Son of God deigned to be wrapped about by a human concept of living and be born of the Virgin Mary. And I think they ministered when He went Home. I like to think that they were waiting His return. He has been here, now He goes home as a mighty Conqueror. He has conquered in every field, over sin, the devil, and death.

I always like to read Psalm 24:9–10 when I come to this idea of His Homegoing — this sweeping up . . . “Lift up your heads, O ye gates: even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory.” And our triumphant Christ moves from the tomb back into the heavens. The Victorious One took with Him into the presence of God a victory *for you and for me*.

Yes, we were in His heart. We were *buried* in His heart, and as He goes back and God accepts Him, we are accepted in the Beloved. Can you see Him in His power and glory? Can you see Him as He moved over the three great fields? He has won the eternal victory, and as He comes out of the grave, it is not merely a grave for the body — it is a grave indeed — a *tomb* out of which He comes as Victor — a *tomb* that has held in its bondage all creation since Satan’s time. But that is answered — and we have before the throne of God today a victorious **RISEN LORD!** ☞



A College student shares her encounter with the RISEN CHRIST!

In the tenth grade I started to drink heavily and do drugs.

The seeds sown by an emotionally disturbed father, undisciplined rebellion, and my parent's divorce, had begun to sprout and grow. My relationship with Mom began to fall apart. More than once it came to physical brawling. I started doing "speed" with my friends. It is a powerful drug called Mescaline, which can eventually destroy your mind — and it began to eat away at mine.

After several months, the tension at home, with my continued use of drugs, came to a head — I had a breakdown. We called it "freaking out". I walked into an eleventh grade class and realized I could no longer function. I couldn't find my chair . . . I couldn't orient myself. It sounds harmless, but it is a terrifying experience! I called my Mom and she took me to a doctor and then to a psychiatrist.

The psychiatrist started me on more drugs. Only I took the drugs which he prescribed, as well as mine — which He didn't know. I continued to slide through the "drug-confusion — more drugs" cycle, until I ended up leaving home, family, psychiatrist, and all — to live with my boy friend. Somehow, I had made it into the twelfth grade.

We stayed high on acid (LSD) and other drugs most of the time, and I lost touch with reality more and more.

About Christmas of that year Mom decided that I had gone far enough; she and my grandmother practically carried me home. Though I resisted outwardly, I really wanted to go home. Suicide was becoming a regular part of my thinking and I was existing in a

never-never land of unreality that scared me.

Not too long after returning home, I shut myself in the bathroom and began to make slashes in my arms with a razor blade. I cut myself several times and stood there watching the blood flow out of my arms. I began screaming and crying all at one time. My mother and brother wrapped my arms in tea towels and took me to the hospital.

My psychiatrist wanted to put me in a mental hospital where I could have better supervision. More pills . . . more dope! I was sick of dope! I used to run to the bathroom and throw it up after they had given it to me. Being around the other patients who lived in the same confusion and darkness that I did, seemed to bring the curtain of darkness further down in my life.

Finally, I pleaded with my doctor, "I want to go home!"

"Well, Where's home?" was his reply.

"I'll live with my Mom!"

"O.K., if you are willing to do that, you can go home."

Two or three times after that I went to the bathroom and cut my wrists — never badly enough to really hurt — just enough to bleed. I was getting desperate for something to intervene and break me out of the trap my life had become.

I first called on God, not really knowing what I was doing. In one of my moments of hopelessness, I went into the bathroom and began cutting my arm. As I stood there looking at the cut, something inside began to cry out. "God . . . God . . . God!" The name kept plummeting through my mind. Then it came out, "God! God, help me . . . help me . . . help me!" I wept in frustrated desperation to the silent walls and then cleaned up my arm as I had done before and thought little more about it.

A few days later my brother, Paul, who was also doing drugs (but not nearly as heavily as I), was approached by two girls. One of them asked him if they could pray for him. A little

stunned at the notion of being prayed for by anyone, he said, "Pray? Pray for what? Sure. Prayer can't hurt anybody."

They prayed that Jesus would reveal Himself to him. They talked for awhile and then invited him to come to dinner at their home.

When Paul got home he told me that they said Jesus could forgive sins and give people new life. He related the things happening in our day which pointed to the second coming of Jesus Christ — the wars . . . the economic crisis . . . the move toward world government . . . and many others.

To him, it didn't mean a lot — but it was like the sounding of a beautiful chime to me! I was overwhelmed. That was it. It was real! Somehow I knew that this was what I had been looking for.

A few days later he had dinner at the communal home where the girls lived. They shared scripture, told what God was doing in their lives, and shared the way of salvation with Paul.

As he recounted their words to me, it was like someone turning on a light in a dark basement. God made His plan for me so plain — "This is Jesus. He is My help for you."

"Paul", I asked, "how do I know I'm saved? What do they say about that?"

He thought for a moment. "They say if you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart, you will be saved." He remembered they had used the scripture, "If you confess me before men, I will confess you before my Father." Could it really be that simple? In my heart I believed all that he had been telling me, but I still didn't have what I was looking for.

I was on my way to a movie with some friends a short time later. Sitting in the back seat of the car, all that I had heard and seen kept playing over in my mind. Then quietly, to myself — almost in a whisper — I breathed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

I didn't expect anything to happen — but it sure did! If ever there were doors swung open and light come into

anyone — it was to me. I was alive all over. Where there had been darkness, now there was light. Instead of depression, there was a glorious joy!

There I was standing in line at a movie theater and wanting to shout it again and again, "Jesus Christ is the Son of God!!!" I knew nothing of God's laws or commandments. I couldn't see the sin I was living in. But I told God that whatever He wanted me to give up, I would . . . sex . . . drugs . . . alcohol . . . anything! The desire and appeal for all these things that had been my life had suddenly vanished. I had been *reborn* into a different world. I was experiencing Life for the first time!

Next time I visited my psychiatrist he got quite a surprise! "I don't think I'll have to come back anymore, Doctor!" I told him. "Jesus healed me!" At the end of the session he scratched his head and puzzled, "I can't deny that you are changed, because you are!" I guess watching me go down hill for over a year and then seeing me healed in a few weeks was a little puzzling.

God was far from finished with me! I was to find greater joy in knowing Him through the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He was to bring a greater and deeper release from the years of sin by glorious deliverance from the power of Satan. A short while later my brother was saved and is now living for God. My father, who was in almost the same darkness as I, found Christ through what happened to me, and is a changed man. Mom and I have a new relationship.

For the first time in my life I am learning obedience and discipline. One of God's words for me was, "Children, obey your parents . . ." My mother wanted me to go to college, even though I had failed out of my senior year in high school. I went in obedience to her and the Lord. My last grades were three A's and a B. Truly a work of God for me!

I recently told somebody that I felt like I had been in jail for years and I just got out — just like a captive that had been set free! 🍷

Local Leaders


ELDERS AND DEACONS

by Derek Prince

"For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." (EZEKIEL 34:11-12)



Part
Four
in a series...
*Blueprint
for the
Body*



In a prophecy that looks forward to the close of the present age Ezekiel describes God's people as sheep without a shepherd:

"They were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them" (Ezekiel 34:5-6).

This picture of a people lost, scattered and preyed upon is tragically true of much of the church as it exists today. The people of God have for centuries been scattered by schisms, errors and factions, and have thus been a prey to every kind of satanic deception and oppression.

However, in the following verses of this prophecy God declares that He Himself will sovereignly intervene and come with deliverance and restoration to His people:

"For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day" (Ezekiel 34:11-12).

It is in "the cloudy and dark day" — the hour of most desperate need, when all human resources have failed — that God will intervene. It is my firm conviction that this promise will be ful-

filled in the days that lie immediately ahead, as God raises up shepherds for His flock and restores unity and security to His people.

THE LOCAL CHURCH

We have come to one of the most crucial points in our study of the body of Christ: the local church. Without a properly working local church, the body of Christ can never operate in the manner in which it was envisioned. The restoration of the church of Jesus Christ must be worked out in the context of the local church and its leadership. Only in this way can we arrive at a proper understanding of what God is doing in our day.

In our earlier studies we made the distinction between the universal church, which is all true believers in Jesus Christ all over the world; and the local church, which is the body of Christ in a given locality. Before we proceed further, it is essential to agree on a definition of the local church and what constitutes its membership.

By the grace of God and years of patient study and prayer, I believe I have arrived at a clear understanding of what the local church is. It is amazingly simple. *The local church is that part of the universal church which is resident in any given locality.* It could not be more simple.

Logically, there are only two requirements for membership in a local church. The first is a correct personal relationship to Jesus Christ. This is, as we have seen, the only requirement for

membership of the universal church. Since each local church is part of the universal church, it is reasonable that you must first belong to the universal church in order to belong to a local church.

The second requirement is that you live in the locality of a local church. Thus membership in a local church does not depend upon any particular acknowledgment, or decision, or ceremony. You are a member of the local church merely by virtue of the fact that you live in that locality. In other words, every member of the universal church who resides in a given locality is automatically a member of the local church in that locality.

A local church unfolds in its growth and development somewhat like the development of a human body out of a single biological cell. There are four stages in this development of a local church which we need to examine: (1) the cell group; (2) the appointment of elders; (3) the completed leadership; (4) the full range of ministries.

I — THE CELL GROUP

In the discourses of Jesus there are only two places where he mentions the church by name. The first is Matthew 16:18, and there is no question that he is here speaking of the universal church. Then in Matthew 18:17 he again refers twice to the church: "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto *the church*: but if he neglect to hear *the church*, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

Since it would be physically impossible to apply the procedure here described to the universal church, it is obvious that Jesus has in mind the local church.

Still in the context of the local church, Jesus continues in verses 19 and 20: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

I prefer to translate verse 20 more literally, "Where two or three have been led together into my name, there am I in the midst of them". The use of the verb to "lead" implies that there must be someone to do the leading. This brings out a direct connection with Romans 8:14, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God". Christians are those who are led by the Holy Spirit. Thus it is the Holy Spirit who brings believers together to form a local church.

The literal translation "into my name" indicates that the focal point of meeting is the name of Jesus. Wherever the Holy Spirit is allowed to lead, the basis on which believers come together is never a denomination or a doctrine or a human personality. We have no authority to gather around Luther or Wesley or the doctrine or practice of some particular group. The *only* point of meeting for New Testament believers, authorized by Scripture and acknowledged by the Holy Spirit, is "into the name of Jesus". The re-establishment of this scriptural truth in our days will open the way for the fulfillment of Jacob's prophecy concerning the last days: "Unto him — Shiloh, the Messiah — shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49:10).

Where believers are thus brought together by the Holy Spirit around the Person of Christ, the entire authority of Christ is available through His Body: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew

18:16). The initial group need not be large. In fact, "two or three" brought together in "agreement" by the Holy Spirit are sufficient for a beginning. Such is the "cell" out of which the "body" — the local church — can develop.

Normally a basic cell of this kind will meet in the home of a believer. This is what Jesus envisaged when he sent forth his first apostles to plant the truth of the gospel among their own people.

"And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you" (Matthew 10:11-13).

The words of Jesus indicate that he expected his apostles to plant the gospel initially in the homes of those who would receive them. Jesus cautioned them to find a home that was "worthy". In any community the gospel is evaluated by the standard of the home which first receives and propagates it. Often the gospel has met with a negative reaction from a community because it has been initially associated with a home that is not generally respected.

Throughout church history most of the great moves of God have begun in homes. When the gospel is planted in a home, it has its starting place in the center of all human relationships. If the home in which the initial planting takes place is respected in the community, the gospel will naturally radiate out from it to the homes round about.

II — ELDERS APPOINTED

Acts 14:21-23 presents the second stage of church development:

(21) "And when they had preached the gospel to that city (Derbe) and had taught many (better translated "made many disciples") they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

(22) "Confirming the souls of the

disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

(23) "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."

Notice the transition that takes place: In verse 22, the believers in each city are referred to merely as "disciples". But in verse 23, "they ordained elders in every church." Groups of disciples become churches when scriptural leadership is appointed. This marks the transition from "disciples" to a "church".

III — COMPLETED LEADERSHIP

The local church grows further with the completion of the leadership structure. An example is provided by the salutation with which Paul opens his letter to the believers in Philippi: "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons . . ." (Philippians 1:1). We shall see later that the titles "bishops" and "elders" are used interchangeably. Thus the total congregation at Philippi is made up of three categories, listed in order of authority: elders, deacons, and all the believers or saints.

We shall deal shortly with the specific functions of elders and deacons. For the present it is sufficient to point out that the leadership structure of a local church is extremely simple. It is on two levels: elders and deacons. Elders are charged with the spiritual oversight of the church, while deacons are responsible for the material needs of the congregation.

IV — THE FULL RANGE OF MINISTRIES

In addition to the administrative leadership, consisting of elders and deacons, there are also various spiritual ministries that are needed to complete the structure of a local church. Paul deals with these in I Corinthians 12. In verse 18 he says, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in

the body, as it hath pleased him." In verse 28 he says, "And God hath set some in the church . . .," and he goes on to list eight specific ministries. We need to read these two verses side by side. "Setting the members in the body" corresponds exactly to "setting the ministries in the church". In each case, it is God himself who does the "setting", according to his own sovereign will.

The eight ministries which Paul lists in verse 28 are as follows: "first *apostles*, secondarily *prophets*, thirdly *teachers*, after that *miracles*, then *gifts of healings, helps, governments* (literally, steerings), *diversities* (kind) of *tongues*." Here is one of the few places where Paul places the ministries in a specific order of authority. This is indicated by the phrases "first", "secondarily", "thirdly", "after that", and so on. When all the eight ministries here listed are functioning correctly within a local church, under the authority of scriptural leadership, then that church has attained to maturity.

Elders and deacons may be described as "governmental offices". The functions listed by Paul in I Corinthians 12:28 may be described as "spiritual ministries". An "office" and a "ministry" may be combined in the same person. In our study of apostles we have already noted that when an apostle takes up residence in a local church, his governmental "office" is that of a "co-elder" (see I Peter 5:1-2). To take another example, a man may combine the "office" of a local "elder" with the mobile "ministry" of a "teacher" to the Body at large. Or again, a man may hold the "office" of a "deacon" and exercise the "ministry" of the "working of miracles". Apparently this was true of Stephen, who was appointed to the office of a deacon, but also had a ministry of the miraculous (see Acts 6:5-8). Various other combinations of offices and ministries are possible.

Such, then, is the development of a local church in four stages: first, the cell group; second, the appointment of elders; third, the completed leadership; fourth, the full range of ministries.

ONE CHURCH PER AREA

We come to a basic principle of the New Testament church, the recognition of which will have a most profound and far reaching effect upon the church of our day: *In any given locality there is only one local church.* It is therefore unscriptural to have two or more churches overlapping one another in any locality.

In the New Testament a local "church" is always co-extensive with a "city". No matter whether the city be Jerusalem or Antioch or Corinth or Rome, it is always "the church in the city". The geographical boundaries of a local church are always set by those of the city which it occupies. There is no instance in the New Testament where we find more than one church in any city.

On the other hand, when we come to a larger geographical area, such as a province, we find that it contains a number of churches. For example, Galatia was a "province". Therefore Paul addresses his Galatian epistle "*unto the churches of Galatia*" (Galatians 1:2). In each *city* of Galatia there was *one church*. But in the whole *province* of Galatia there were *many churches* — one to each city.

This principle is uniformly applied throughout the New Testament. I calculate that in Jerusalem there were at one period at least 50,000 believers — but only *one church*. Historians estimate that in Antioch in Syria there were at least 40,000 believers — but still only *one church*. In Corinth, not less than 20,000 or 30,000 believers — but still only *one church*. The local churches never overlapped in a given locality.

Today, with vast metropolitan areas such as New York or Los Angeles, this poses an apparent problem. Is it practical to recognize only one church in the whole of metropolitan New York? Scripture does not necessarily demand this. If necessary, we may consider an area such as New York as being a "province", containing twenty adjacent "cities". The exact numbers and boundaries can be settled by practical

requirements under the leading of the Holy Spirit. If, for example, we recognize ten adjacent "cities" within the New York area, then we make room there for ten adjacent local churches.

But there is one basic principle which we may never violate. *There can never be two local churches overlapping each other in any recognized "city" area.* Once we violate this principle we have automatically created division within the "Body of Christ".

LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Many Christians today find it hard to see how a church with 20,000 or 30,000 members could effectively be administered as one body. However, there is a simple, scriptural answer to this problem. It comes through understanding the New Testament pattern of local church leadership.

We have already pointed out that there are two levels of administration in the church — spiritual and material. As we now turn to study the spiritual leadership of a local church, it is essential to understand that there is only *one* office of spiritual government. In the original language of the New Testament, three different Greek words are used to refer to this one office. Unfortunately, in the King James Version, these three Greek words are translated at various times by *five* English words. This has created unnecessary confusion.

The Greek uses the following three words for the one government office: (1) *poimen* — a shepherd; (2) *episkopos* — an overseer; (3) *presbuteros* — an elder. In the KJV *poimen* is always translated "shepherd", except in Ephesians 4:11 where it is translated "pastor". *Episkopos* (from which we get the English word "bishop") is translated as "bishop" or "overseer" — the latter being the correct literal translation, but the two are used interchangeably. *Presbuteros* (from which we get such English words as "presbyter", "presbyterian", etc.) literally means an "elder".

That these three words are used interchangeably can be established from

the following passages of the New Testament: (1) In Acts 20:17 Paul was at Miletus and sent to Ephesus "... and called to him the elders of the church." Notice that the spiritual leadership of the church is *plural* — "the elders" — not "the pastor". On the other hand, "the church" at Ephesus is *singular* — not "the churches". Addressing these elders in verse 28, Paul says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you *overseers*, to *feed* the church of God . . ." The same men who are "elders" are also "overseers" (or "bishops"). Their task is to "*feed*" the church — which is also called "*the flock*". The Greek verb here translated to "feed" is *poimaino*, formed directly from the noun "*poimen*" — a "shepherd". Thus these "*elders*" are "*overseers*" whose task is to "*shepherd*" God's flock — the local church. All three words are applied to the one governmental office.

(2) In I Peter 5:1–2 Peter writes; "The *elders* which are among you I exhort . . ." He is addressing elders. He continues, "*Feed* the flock of God which is among you, taking the *oversight* thereof . . ." As in Acts 20:28, the verb translated to "feed" is *poimaino*, better translated to "shepherd". Peter exhorts these men to take the "oversight". The Greek word is *episkope* — formed directly from *episkopos* — "overseer" or "bishop". The same men are elders, overseers, and shepherds.

Although all three words are used for the same office, each presents a specific aspect of the office. The *task* is that of an overseer; the *qualification* is that of an elder; the *ministry* is that of a shepherd.

It requires a mental revolution for English speaking Christians to understand that there is only *one* office of spiritual government in a local church. The government is not made up of "a pastor and elders". The pastor and the elder are one and the same office. Correctly, it is the elders who are the pastors (shepherds) and the overseers (bishops).

PLURALITY

We have already seen that the leadership of the church at Ephesus was *plural*. There was a group of "elders", not one man who was "the pastor". The same principle applies throughout the New Testament. There is not a single case in which we find leadership of a local church exercised by one man on his own. For example, in Acts 14:23 "they ordained them elders in every church". It was not a pastor, or an elder, but elders — plural. Again in Titus 1:5 Paul writes, "For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city". Geographically, the church and the city are coextensive. In Acts 14 it is "elders in every church", and in Titus 1 it is "elders in every city". Always in the plural. Notice that something is "wanting", or incomplete, until elders have been ordained. They are an essential part of every local church.

In James 5:14 James says, "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church". Again, plural. James takes it for granted that every believer is so related to a local church that he knows who his elders are, and likewise his elders know him. People sometimes ask me, "Who are my elders? I don't feel that I have any". I answer, "If you were sick, whom would you call to come and pray for you?" Those whom you would want to pray for you when you are sick, may well be the closest that you have to real elders.

Even where "elders" are not specifically mentioned, the leadership of a local church in the New Testament is always referred to in the plural. See, for example, Philippians 1:1; I Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:7,17,24. The leadership is always vested in a *group* of men, never in one man alone.

This explains how we can have, say, 50,000 members, but only one local church. The leadership is multiplied in proportion to the membership. The responsibility does not rest on one man. I would suggest that one elder cannot effectively shepherd more than

ten families, at the most. If there are twenty families, they need two shepherds. One hundred families, ten shepherds. One thousand families, a hundred shepherds. Ten thousand families, a thousand shepherds. And so on. The leadership simply grows in proportion to the membership. There is never any need to divide a congregation when it passes a few thousand. God merely adds more shepherds.

Our existing system demands that when the numbers of believers increases beyond a certain point, we split up the Body of Christ. This is contrary to the letter and the spirit of Scripture. There is *one* Body and *one* Spirit. Not fifteen bodies in the same locality, functioning in competition with each other.

ELDERS AND DEACONS

The main responsibility of an elder is stated in I Timothy 5:17; "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and teaching." We might render this last phrase, "they who labour in the teaching of the word." Thus the two functions of an elder are to *rule* and to *teach* God's word.

We have seen already that it is the appointment of elders which transforms mere "disciples" into "a church". Thus the administrative and teaching ministry of elders is needed in a local church from its formation onwards. On the other hand, the need for deacons may only arise later. In the church at Jerusalem, the need for deacons only arose "when the number of the disciples multiplied" (Acts 6:1). It was brought about by the discontent of the Grecian widows concerning the daily ministration to their needs.

At this point the apostles — who were also the original elders of the church in Jerusalem — saw that they could not devote their time to this form of ministration. They said, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the

Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:2-4). The "seven men" who were thus appointed became the first "deacons".

In these verses the different responsibilities of elders and of deacons are explained and contrasted. The task of the elders is on the spiritual plane — to "give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word". The task of the deacons is on the material plane — to "serve tables" — to minister to the material needs of the congregation.

LEADERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for elders are mainly set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and in Titus 1:5-9. These passages require careful examination, but this goes beyond the scope of our present study. By way of summary, we may say that the requirements for an elder cover four main areas: (1) personal holiness of life and character; (2) proper order and discipline in his home; (3) a sound knowledge of God's word; (4) a good reputation in his community.

It should be pointed out that "elder" is a relative term. A man may be regarded as an elder in terms of the relative maturity of the congregation. In Acts 14 it could appear that after some groups of disciples had been in existence for less than a year, Paul and Barnabas returned and found amongst them men who in spiritual maturity were already above the level of their fellow disciples and were thus fit to be recognized as "elders", even though they were not yet a year old in the Lord.

In Acts 6:3 we have already glanced at the primary requirements for deacons — "honest men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom". In 1 Timothy 3:8-13 the requirements are specified in greater detail. In verse 13 of this chapter Paul indicates that, by faithful service as a deacon, a man "graduates" and becomes eligible for a higher form of ministry.

THE SHEPHERD MINISTRY

It is my personal opinion that there is no greater, more vital or more exacting ministry than that of the shepherd. There are three passages of scripture that mainly unfold the shepherd ministry to us: John 10:1-28; Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34:1-6.

In this last passage in Ezekiel, God is rebuking the shepherds of Israel for what they have *not* done. By studying what these delinquent shepherds had failed to do, we can discover what they should have been doing.

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them" (Ezekiel 34:1-4).

The primary task of the shepherds is to "feed the flock". As in the New Testament, so here also in the Old Testament, the word translated to "feed" could more accurately be rendered to "shepherd". There are five specific forms of need to which shepherds are required to minister. They are to "strengthen the diseased", to "heal the sick", to "bind up the broken", to "bring again those that are driven away", to "seek the lost". Those who do not do these things will be held accountable to Almighty God. There is no doubt in my mind that, at the close of this age, God will have an account to settle with men who have accepted the title of shepherds and not fulfilled their ministry.

In John 10 Jesus states three further requirements of the shepherd ministry.

First, it is a life laid down. "I am the good shepherd, I lay down my life" (John 10:11). This is the shepherd making himself available to the people. Without this commitment there is no shepherd ministry.

Second, the shepherd must know and be known personally. "I know my sheep, they know me" (John 10:14). That is one reason why one man cannot effectively shepherd a large group of people. There must be close personal contact between the shepherd and the sheep.

Third, the shepherd speaks and leads. "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me" (John 10:27). In Bible lands, the shepherd does not drive the sheep. He is out in front, calling to them. They follow him, because they know his voice. A shepherd must be a leader, one whose voice is clear, easily recognizable by the sheep.

In Psalm 23 David stresses the responsibility of the shepherd to find the right nourishment for the sheep — to lead them to the clear water and the green pasture. He must also protect them from their enemies, both wild beasts and robbers. Altogether, it is no light or easy calling.

One truth is stressed throughout the Bible: *Sheep without a shepherd are scattered*. In Ezekiel 34:5-6 — the passage with which we opened our present study — the picture of sheep without a shepherd is one of a people wandering, lost, faint, a prey to wild animals, scattered abroad over the face of the earth. In Matthew 9:36 the same picture is given to us through the eyes of Jesus himself: "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd."

Each of us needs to apply this truth practically to his own life. The New Testament leaves open only two possibilities. You must either be a shepherd, or have one. Outside of these two relationships, there is no scriptural position. If you are not exercising the ministry of a shepherd, you need to be under the ministry of another who is your shepherd. ♣

THE

NEW BIRTH

Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

by
Charles
Simpson

And thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). With these words the Angel of the Lord told Joseph what Jesus' name should be. Jesus' name signifies His purpose for coming into the world. "For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:56). "Jesus" is the Greek form of the Hebrew name, "Jehoshua", which means, "He will save".

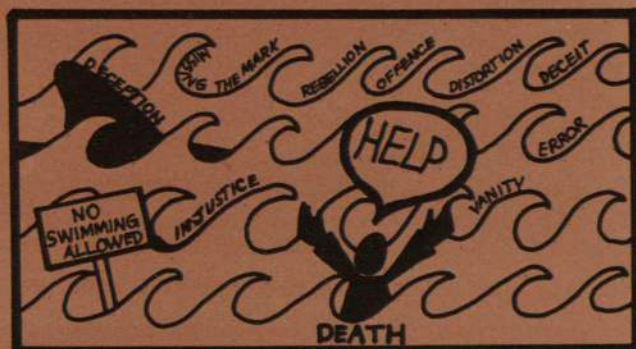
The fact that Jesus came to save men, presupposes that men *need saving*. Mankind was then, and is now, in trouble. The Angel said, "He will save His people from their sins." People were being, and are being, destroyed by their sins. Sin causes fatal consequences. The Bible says the result of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

What is sin? There is a variety of maladies that are included in the general term "sin": to miss the mark that you aimed at, to come short of your goal, to err or go astray from the path, to offend, to pervert or distort the truth, to get out of breath doing a useless thing (vanity), to violate the law, to do injustice, to revolt or rebel, to be deceitful. But, basically, we can say that sin is a self-willed independent attitude toward God. It is these things: deceit, rebellion, injustice, etc., that are destroying us individually and socially.

The Apostle Paul observed, "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23). Isaiah said, "We have gone astray . . ." (Isaiah 53:6). We are also told, "There is a way that seems right unto man, but the end result is death" (Proverbs 14:12). Man insists on breaking God's laws . . . doing it his own way . . . and the inevitable result is failure and destruction.

When man breaks God's laws and rebels against

His Creator, the waves of his own error overwhelm and destroy him.



Despite biblical warning, despite insurmountable evidence, and despite their own better judgment, men continue to sin. Sin is universal. Americans, Europeans, Africans, Asians and Islanders all do it. Democrats, Socialists and Republicans all do it. Sin is the undermining element in every ideal. The perversity of man is the undoing of every system he devises to better himself.

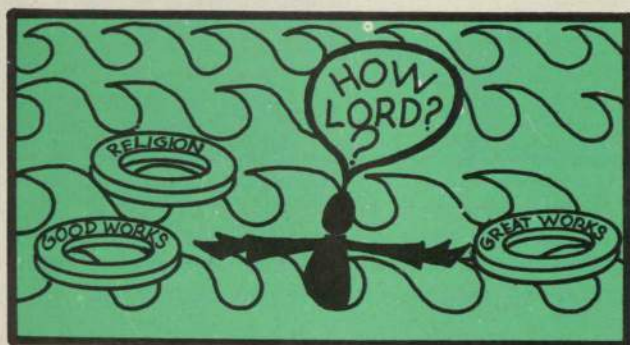
Why do men continue sinning? Why does mankind insist upon being adrift on the sea of rebellion against God?

It is true that every man has a free will regarding obedience to God. Each person stands or falls with his own decision. He must bear the consequences of his own actions. But the fact that *all* have chosen to sin, at one time or another, in one way or another, indicates that something is wrong in the basic nature of all men. Ephesians 2:3 puts it this way: "All men are by nature children of wrath." In other words, it has been man's nature to be rebellious, deceitful, self-willed, etc.

In Romans 5:12 and following, the scriptures tell us that Adam, the father of mankind, sinned. With his sin came death — spiritual separation from God. Since Adam, men have inherited Adam's sin like a genetic flaw and have been sinning and dying. Judgment came upon all of his descendents — they were under a sentence of living in death and sin apart from God (Note Romans 5:18). Jesus, in explaining to Nicodemus that even religious men had to be born again of the Spirit of God, said that human nature can only reproduce human nature (John 3:6). By our natural birth we inherit a nature that has already proven itself sinful and has been sentenced to death. Our human nature is perverse and will destroy itself.

On more than one occasion I have heard people say what one young rebel said to me: "I don't know why I did it!" While we cannot escape responsibility by blaming Adam, God or the devil, all men have a common problem — they are sin prone and sins are the acts that emerge from his sinful nature. These acts destroy him.

It should be evident that man is in a trap. He needs saving. He cannot save himself. Remember, the Angel declared, "He (Jesus) will save!" The overriding concern is not only *why* do I sin, but *how* can I be changed. Man needs more than a new code of ethics, a new philosophy, or a new self-awareness — he needs a new nature. He is dead by virtue of his separation from God; then he can only be made alive by being united with God. When Jesus confronted Nicodemus, who was both religious and sincere, He said, "Truly you must be born from above." In other words, "You need a spiritual birth — you need a new nature."



Once you acknowledge that you need help from God, you are on the way to receiving help.

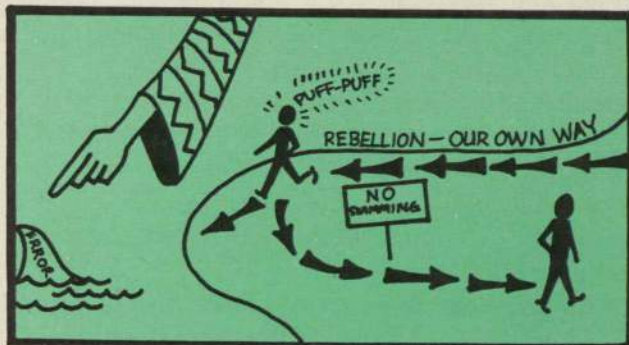
NEW WINE

The tax collector mentioned by Jesus (Luke 18:13) felt that he could not even lift up his eyes to pray. He beat his breast when he prayed, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Jesus said that he went home justified. The height of an independent self-willed attitude is to believe that we can be united with God because we are good, kind, go to church, read the Bible, pray, or even keep many of God's laws. These may "keep your head above water", but they cannot help us out of the dilemma we are in.

GOING ANOTHER DIRECTION

When you genuinely see your need for God's help, you will be ready to do what God requires. You are ready to have your nature changed, and go another way. This is what the Bible calls repenting. Repentance means to be sorry enough to turn around. It is not just turning over a new leaf. Repentance involves seeing that your trouble is the result of your own willfulness being exerted against the will of God. Repentance is more than quitting particular habits. It is the acknowledgment that *you* are the problem. It is letting go of the life-preservers and taking hold of God.

I can almost hear you saying, "Repentance is humiliating." I agree — it is. "Humble yourself in the sight of God and He will lift you up" (James 4:10). When God shows us ourselves, it produces a brokenness and this is what the Bible refers to as godly sorrow (II Corinthians 7:10). When one sees himself and his condition, his own goodness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) and his wisdom is foolishness (I Corinthians 3:19). He is then ready to turn around. Repentance is being sorry and turning around. In repentance God reveals the end of our way — the sea of destruction. Then we voluntarily turn around.



FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

Hebrews 6:1 tells us what follows repentance — faith toward God. Paul said the same thing to the Philippian jailer when he acknowledged his need, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). Once you turn loose of your own “life preservers”, you must trust someone else to save you.

“I need help,” you have said, “I cannot do it.” If you cannot save yourself, can any man save you? Remember, “All men have sinned” (Romans 3:23).

The Angel said of Jesus, “He will save.” You may question, “Why Jesus?” And you have a right to ask, since your whole life is involved.

There is much testimony of Jesus’ ability to save. You should consider this in trusting yourself to Him. John the Baptist said, “Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). All of Israel considered John the Baptist a prophet. The Old Testament scriptures testified to Jesus’ life. Prophets, like Isaiah, described, hundreds of years in advance, Jesus’ birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. Every time you write the date, you testify that Jesus was born that many years ago, and that His life changed the world, even to its calendar. Throughout history notable men have witnessed that Jesus changed their lives. Saul of Tarsus is one of the most dramatic examples of this change. He was a blasphemer and a murderer, by his own testimony. Immediately after an encounter with Christ, his life did a complete about face (Acts 22). He became committed, even unto death, to help others find salvation from their sins. This can only happen when a man receives a new nature.

Jesus Himself claimed to be the Son of God, the Messiah (John 4:25–26). He openly declared, “I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6). To believe that Jesus is legitimate and honest, demands that we trust Him to be our Saviour.

Who else can really forgive us but God? (Mark 2:7). Only the Creator and Judge can set man free from guilt. Jesus comes to reveal the mercy and love of God to those who are drowning in their own guilt (Ephesians 2:15).

Nowhere does Jesus reveal more fully His complete love for us than upon the cross. He did not

have to die (John 10:18). He was born in a human body and lived a completely sinless life, even though He faced the same temptations you and I do. But, as John said, Jesus was the Lamb of God — the One Who was to die to pay for our sins. He was the voluntary sacrifice for man’s sin. He took our nature and our curse upon Himself. He stood trial as though guilty . . . was mocked and beaten . . . then taken out of the city and crucified. And the Lord God laid on Him the iniquity of us all; God allowed Him to be guilty for our sin. “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: The penalty required to bring peace for us was laid upon Him, and with His stripes we are made whole” (Isaiah 53:5).

While He was being crucified, Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). What love! The overwhelming concern of Jesus for His murderers caused one of them to cry out, “Truly this man was the Son of God!!” (Mark 16:39).

The fact that Jesus rose again in victory over sin and death, and was seen by hundreds of witnesses, declares that He *has the power* to save you from sin and death.

Jesus is God made flesh. He came to save men from their sin and its consequence. He loves you. His death was for you and in your place. He arose from the dead and is now in Heaven interceding for you (Hebrews 7:25). You can trust Jesus. The Holy Spirit is saying that to you now,

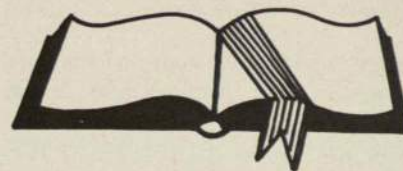


It is a beautiful experience to see someone born anew by the Holy Spirit. Several years ago I had the happy privilege of leading a man nearly seventy years old to put his trust in Jesus personally. Ironically, this man had been a preacher over forty years. But he had never seen himself in need of repentance, nor had he ever seen Jesus as

(Continued on page 23)

BIBLE STUDY

by Howard Coffey



POETIC BOOKS

We now come to the study of the Poetic Books, the third section of the Old Testament, which consists of five books, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Some Bible students have also included Lamentations in this section. Though Lamentations is poetic in style, in my opinion it should be studied together with the prophetic writings of Jeremiah, for it is a companion book to the book that bears his name.

The use of the terminology poetic is not to be construed as meaning writings that are whimsical or imaginary, for these books are inspired and are an integral part of the Holy Scriptures. They present reality. Merely the form of presentation is poetic.

Poetry combined with music had a prominent place in Hebrew life. It was used to celebrate victories, such as in the case of Moses and Deborah. It was used, also, in the form of sacred hymns in the Temple worship. It was included in many other parts of Sacred Writ in addition to the contributions made in the Poetic Books. Josephus, the Jewish historian, said of David that

he "composed songs and hymns to God of several sorts; some of those which he made were trimeters, and some were pentameters. He also made instruments of music, and taught the Levites to sing hymns to God, both on that called the sabbath day, and on other festivals." (Antiquities of the Jews, Book VII, Chapter XII).

Hebrew poetry is principally lyric in style, appropriate for song, composed in stanzas; and as such is subjective or expressive of the writer's feelings rather than objective or expressive of outward, tangible events or incidents. There are exceptions, including both epic and dramatic poetry.

Hebrew poetry does not achieve rhythm by sound as in rhymed verse, nor by accent as in blank verse. The form used is distinctive, and is achieved by the repetition of ideas; this is called parallelism. This occurs in three principal forms:

1) *Synonymous form*: When the idea in the parallel is the same yet the words are different, but closely associated:

"What is man, that thou art mindful of Him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Psalm 8:4 (KJV)

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" Psalm 2:1. (KJV)

"Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? Or loweth the ox over his fodder?" Job 6:5. (KJV)

2) *Antithetic form*: When a contrasting idea is presented in the parallel:

"The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish." Proverbs 14:11. (KJV)

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." Proverbs 15:1. (KJV)

3) *Synthetic form*: When the idea or thought is further developed or enriched by the parallel:

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." Psalm 19:7,8,9 (KJV).

There are other less perfect parallelisms, both in the Poetic Books and other parts of Scripture, among which the irregular form is found. It is irregular when the parallel or secondary part is shorter than the primary part, or vice versa, such as: "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Hosea 4:17 (KJV). "Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it." Job 3:4 (KJV).

Another form is when a verse has four parts, that may consist of two simple parallels, or the first and third lines may be related as also the second and fourth; or all four may be parallel: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Isaiah 1:3 (KJV). "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his

Genesis, Exodus,
Leviticus, Numbers,
Deuteronomy

OLD TESTAMENT

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I &
II Samuel, I & II Kings, I &
II Chronicles, Ezra,
Nehemiah, Esther

Job, Psalms,
Proverbs, Eccle-
siastes,
Song of
Solomon

Isaiah, Jeremiah,
Lamentations, Eze-
kiel, Daniel

Hosea, Joel, Amos,
Obadiah, Jonah, Micah,
Nahum, Habakkuk,
Zephaniah, Haggai,
Zechariah, Malachi

PENTATEUCH: 5
Law of Moses

HISTORIC BOOKS: 12

POETIC BOOKS: 5

MAJOR PROPHETS: 5

MINOR PROPHETS: 12

mercy toward them that fear him: As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:11, 12 (KJV). "They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths." Psalm 135:16, 17 (KJV).

The principal theme of Hebrew poetry is generally patriotic, and consequently, being a covenant people of Jehovah God, related always to things spiritual. This sacred poetry is distinguished by a certain warm melodious flow, which under divine inspiration was carried to the highest level, and is to this day unmatched by any poetry of secular origin.

It is regrettable that in most translations the poetic characteristics have

been obscured in most instances, and lost altogether in others, so that with little exception one cannot tell if poetry or prose is being read without being informed. Nevertheless, in the cases of the Psalms of praise particularly, there is an inbred, indwelling sense of melody that has been inspirational to the Church through the centuries, and in a particular way is being revived with the fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our day, so that the Psalms are being sung by the Body of Christ with new joy and blessing.

Now prepare yourself for further lessons, which will give a synopsis and outline of each of the five books, by reading each book through. Read to enjoy them, without any thought of study. Revel in them. Poetry is to be

enjoyed, and the Holy Spirit will entertain you with precious jewels, and delightful bread of feasting, wine of joy, and songs of victory from the highest and best of poetic grandeur! Have a red pencil handy to underline passages that are outstanding or that bless you, while you read for utter pleasure. Then when we go back over them with a brief study outline of each, you will find it more easily digested and will be able to quickly assimilate additional depths of truth.

To help retain a sense of the poetic, the King James Version is good. To combine the poetic and greater clarification of meaning, use the Revised Standard Version. For fuller enjoyment, use the Living Bible.

Let the poetry of the Holy Spirit enrich your life! 🍷

ISRAEL

(Northern Kingdom – the 10 tribes)

KING	REFERENCE	REIGN
1. Jeroboam I	I Kings 11–13; II Chron. 11	22 yrs.
2. Nadab (Son of Jeroboam I)	I Kings 14–15	2 yrs.
3. Baasha (Assassin of Nadab)	I Kings 15–16	4 yrs.
4. Elah (Son of Baasha)	I Kings 16	2 yrs.
5. Zimri (Assassin of Elah)	I Kings 16	7 dys.
6. Omri (Committed treason against Aimer)	I Kings 15–16	12 yrs.
7. Ahab (Son of Omri)	I Kings 16–22	22 yrs.
8. Ahaziah (Son of Ahab)	I Kings 22– II Kings 1	2 yrs.
9. Joram (Brother of Ahaziah, son of Ahab – also called Jehoram of Israel)	II Kings 1, 3, 6 (the 'King of Israel' most likely refers to Jehoram of Israel)	12 yrs.
10. Jehu (Assassin of Jehoram of Israel)	II Kings 9–10	28 yrs.
11. Jehoahaz (Son of Jehu)	II Kings 10–13	17 yrs.
12. Joash (Son of Jehoahaz)	II Kings 13–14	16 yrs.
13. Jeroboam II (Son of Jehoahaz)	II Kings 13–14	41 yrs.
14. Zechariah (Son of Jeroboam II)	II Kings 15	6 mo.
15. Shallum (Assassin of Zechariah)	II Kings 15	1 mo.
16. Menahem (Assassin of Shallum)	II Kings 15	10 yrs.
17. Pekahiah (Son of Menahem)	II Kings 15	3 yrs.
18. Pekah (Assassin of Pekahiah)	II Kings 15	20 yrs.
19. Hoshea (Assassin of Pekah)	II Kings 15–17	

ASSYRIAN EXILE: II Kings 17. Fulfillment of prophecy of Ahijah – I Kings 6–16. All of the Kings of Israel followed after the apostasy of Jeroboam I, son of Nebat; everyone was evil; not one did right in the eyes of God, though He had mercy on them many times due to His Covenant with the patriarchs. Now there was no other remedy but to remove them from the land, which He did through King Shalmaneser of Assyria. II Kings 17:1–4.

KINGDOM OF JUDAH

(Judah and Benjamin, Southern Kingdom)

KING	REFERENCE	REIGN
1. Rehoboam	I Kings 11–14; II Chron. 9–12	17 yrs.
2. Abijah (Also Abijam)	I Kings 15; II Chron. 13	3 yrs.
3. Asa	I Kings 15; II Chron. 14	41 yrs.
4. Jehoshaphat	I Kings 15 and 22; II Chron 17–21	25 yrs.
5. Jehoram (Also Joram son of Jehoshaphat)	I Kings 22; II Kings 8; II Chron. 21	8 yrs.
6. Ahaziah	II Kings 8–9; II Chron. 22	1 yr.
7. Athaliah (Mother of Ahaziah, usurped the throne)	II Kings 11; II Chron. 22	6 yrs.
8. Joash	II Kings 11–12; II Chron. 22–24	40 yrs.
9. Amaziah	II Kings 14; II Chron. 25	29 yrs.
10. Uzziah (Also Azariah)	II Kings 14–15; II Chron. 26	52 yrs.
11. Jotham	II Kings 15; II Chron. 27	16 yrs.
12. Ahaz	II Kings 16; II Chron. 28	16 yrs.
13. Hezekiah	II Kings 18–20; II Chron 29–32	29 yrs.
14. Manasseh	II Kings 21; II Chron. 33	52 yrs.
15. Amon	II Kings 21; II Chron. 33	2 yrs.
16. Josiah	II Kings 22–23; II Chron. 34–35	31 yrs.
17. Jehoahaz	II Kings 23; II Chron. 36	3 mos.
18. Jehoiakim	II Kings 23–24; II Chron. 36	11 yrs.
19. Jehoiakin	II Kings 24; II Chron. 36	3 mos.
20. Zedekiah	II Kings 24; II Chron. 36	11 yrs.
Babylonian Exile	II Kings 24–25; II Chron. 36.	

THE NEW BIRTH (Continued from page 20)

his personal Saviour. After reading some scripture, he concluded that he had never experienced a second birth — a spiritual birth.

It was the middle of the morning and the sun shone through the drapes on his silver hair. "Oh Lord, I'm a sinner," he confessed. "I'm a religious sinner. Please forgive me." He confessed to a long list of sins that the Holy Spirit had shown him. Soon I heard him say, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart." He sounded like a little child. What joy and peace we shared together. At seventy years of age, he had just begun to live!

If you have not experienced this new birth, you can do so right now, by doing just as my friend did. Realize your own need. Repent of your own ways. Trust Jesus. When you do, God writes your name in His book of those who have received new life (Revelation 20:15). He remembers your sins against you no more (Hebrews 8:12). And He covers you with Christ's own righteousness (Romans 4:6-7).

In addition to all of these wonderful changes, He gives you a new nature. This new nature is joined to God. You and God are one in spirit. You can pray right now for this experience to be yours (I Corinthians 6:17). Your new nature will want to *obey* God. Any faith which does not result in obedience is a dead faith (James 1:21-27). A living faith will also lead you to confess Jesus before men (Romans 10:8-11). It will lead you to be baptized and follow Jesus' purpose for your life.

GROWING IN GRACE

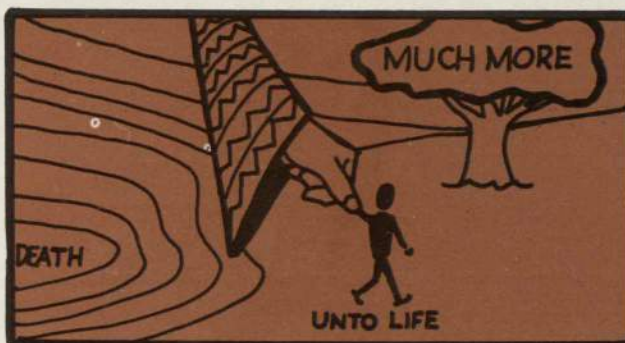
Because the new birth is such a wonderful experience, it is tempting to be self-satisfied. It is easy to get the feeling, "Well, I've arrived!" — when in reality you have just begun the journey. Never be caught looking back like our friend, shown below.



While even a new-born Christian is a joint heir with Jesus Christ, he must grow up in order to know how to handle his inheritance. God's promises are reserved for those who walk in obedience. As you obey, you will be led through maturing experiences and situations. When one ceases to progress, needs and problems can be a gentle reminder to continue to obey the Lord, as our friend is quickly discovering.



While God requires repentance, faith and obedience — it is the grace of God that enables us to experience His salvation. Grace is undeserved favor. It is important to remember through every victory, "For by grace are you saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8-10). We are not saved by good works; we are saved by grace through faith. But real salvation produces good works. We were saved to walk in them.



"Call his name Jesus, He will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). ▼



by James T. Hamann

A great man of God of a former era by the name of Henry Suso one day answered his door to hear a woman say, "Here is the product of your sins"; and the little babe was thrust into his arms, and the woman was gone as quickly as she had appeared. This vicious rumor was spread throughout the community where he lived by this unscrupulous woman on an innocent man living to please God. This situation grieved him so that he wept bitter tears and had great sorrow of heart. He felt, though, that God would not try to have him vindicate himself, but raise this little child to the glory and honor of God.

Then one day he looked out the window and saw a dog playing on the lawn. The dog had a mat, and kept picking the mat up, tossing it over his shoulders, running and getting it, tossing it some more, picking it up and tossing it again. God said to Henry Suso, "That mat is your reputation, and I am letting the dogs of sin tear your reputation to shreds and toss it all over the lawn for your own good. One of these days things will change."

And things did change. It was not very long before the people who were tearing his reputation were confounded, and Suso rose into a place that made him a power in his day and a great blessing still to those who sing

his hymns and read his works.

What a tremendous story of a man who had been changed not only in the area of actions, but reactions as well. He could have been embittered, vindictive and defensive by what had happened, but instead he manifested the love and meekness of Jesus Christ, and, oh, what powerful results!

Jesus Christ came into this world to demonstrate a totally new life and then to make possible a personal participation in this new life. In the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew, chapter 5, verses 38—48, He shares with us a vital aspect of conversion which is so often neglected today. We are talking about God sharing Himself with us in such a manner that the total ways of man are changed not only in the area of actions, but reactions. So often we emphasize just the one facet of truth — that is, when Christ indwells a man his actions indeed are changed. Yes, this is very true. The lying, immoral acts, drunkenness, etc., are no longer part of the true Christian's life. But what about the vast area of reactions to happenings that take place daily in the course of living, such as: (1) the boss at work reprimands us for an oversight; (2) someone at the last moment breaks a vital engagement; (3) we are personally criticized for something of which we are completely innocent; (4) someone makes fun of our ideas, ways,

and principles; (5) we react to the thoughtlessness of a partner in marriage; (6) we face the disobedience of children; (7) we feel that recognition is given to others and we are not commended. When such happenings as we have listed, and others of like kind, are thrown into our lap, do we manifest resentment, anger, self-defense and self-pity? Jesus Christ has come to change us in this area of reactions.

In the Scriptural passage, He talks about being hit on one side of the face and the necessity of being willing to even turn the other to the attacker. Christ taught that we are to love our enemies, we are to bless those who curse us and hate us and pray for those that spitefully use us and persecute us. This teaching was so different and unique to that which was the way of fallen man with self enthroned within. He was teaching about a "WHOLE NEW LIFE," but to be sure, He was not theorizing, but subjectively during His earthly pilgrimage demonstrating the same. Though a hundred and one different accusations were vehemently expressed to Him — such as, being an illegitimate child, in league with satanic power, or mentally deranged — the amazing and thrilling part of Christ's life was His non-retaliation, forgiveness and love which so disarmed and dumbfounded His accusers.

The Apostle Paul's heart became

REACTION

opened to God by the demonstration of a new life and a new way by the martyr, Stephen. As Paul (then called Saul) was leading the angry mob of religious bigots in the stoning of this godly man, he saw such a visible demonstration of spiritual reality that he was shaken to the very core of his life. The thing that actually shook Paul up was the reaction of Stephen as he was being stoned and lay dying. He didn't hear just empty words, but the Scripture says in Acts, that his face looked like the face of an angel; and he heard him say, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." This demonstration of forgiveness and love was that which brought Paul to Christ and will do the same today.


We can call to your attention a modern-day situation, which, though well publicized, bears repeating; and that is the story of a young widow by the name of Betty Elliott, who was used of God to turn a savage tribe to Christ. Though her husband, with four other missionary fellows, was viciously attacked and murdered in Ecuador by the Auca Indians, she did not become reactionary. There was no rushing home with her little family, feeling that God had dealt her a dirty blow; she did not shut herself in with her sorrow and become filled with hatred toward this stone-age tribe. Instead, in a matter of months, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, she

found herself, along^o with her little daughter, living in the midst of these same people, which even the government of Ecuador had labeled uncontrollable and uncivilized. Though she was totally defenseless physically, yet by the love of Christ these people were conquered by the living Lord expressing Himself through this^o young American woman.

This kind of life has been provided for us wherein we are no longer ruled by happenings that bring tragic reactions. To be reactionary means that self is still in control of our life. The cross of Jesus Christ has provided for a deliverance in this area. When Christ died, we died with Him. Romans 6:6 states, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." To appropriate this fact that when Christ died we died by simple faith can bring a real release from the former tyranny. You see, you can kick a dead man, you can curse him, you can spit on him, and there is still no reaction, because he is dead. This is certainly applicable to the spiritual realm.

Then there is the positive side that as we abide in Christ as the branch in the vine, we can express to the personalities that cross our path, whether friend or foe, whether for us or against us, love and understanding. After we have died to the old reactionary life of

Adam, there can flow through us the new life of Jesus Christ. Galatians 5:22-25 tells us, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Our self-centered reactions will make us a victim of happenings, but His life demonstrated through us will make us a victor in happenings. Not long^o ago a Hindu woman was converted chiefly by hearing the Word of God read. She suffered very much persecution from her husband. One day a missionary asked her, "When your husband is angry and persecutes you, what do you do?" She replied, "Well, sir, I cook his food better; when he complains, I sweep the floor cleaner; and when he speaks unkindly, I answer him mildly. I try, sir, to show him that when I became a Christian I became a better wife and a better mother." The consequences of this was that, while the husband could withstand all the preaching of the missionary, he could not stand the practical preaching of his wife, and gave his heart to God. 

James T. Hamann is pastor of Faith Temple Community Church, Seattle, Washington. From his church periodical, "The Christ Life."

forum

Church Life

These questions represent problems facing our readers. They come to us by mail, telephone, or in person. If they felt these questions important enough to bring to our attention, others may be facing similar situations, also.

GUEST PANELIST

Reverend John M. Poole is pastor of a church in the Philadelphia area. The emphasis of his ministry is to see the Church come to a place of maturity and unity.

John was born in South Wales, spent part of his childhood in Canada, later moving to Philadelphia where his father was a pastor. He received his education at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois and at St. Joseph's College in Philadelphia.

Forum topic next month is "Water Baptism", with guest panelist, Rev. Richard McAfee of Oklahoma City.

"We recently moved into an area where there are no charismatic groups meeting. We have joined a denominational church where the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not accepted. How do we relate to (1) the pastor who is against anything charismatic; (2) the other members of the church? We would like to share our experience, yet we have no desire to create unnecessary trouble."

T.B. — Illinois

PANELISTS:
Don Basham
John Poole
Charles Simpson

Simpson — Before answering your questions, I would like to point out that any church can be sectarian — so can "prayer groups". Some independent groups are more sectarian than some so-called "denominational"

churches. I think it is commendable when our fellowship is based not on our various points of view, but on Jesus' Lordship.

In your case, first consider — do you believe the pastor is a God-called shepherd? Second, do you believe the Lord led you to recognize him as your pastor? If not, you should not be there. If so, you should recognize him as the leader and consider his responsibility to God in all of your church related activities.

As you relate to the other members, bear in mind that the shepherd is the door to the flock (John 10). He has to watch for their souls and give an account to God for them, not to you. You certainly can fast and pray. You must be an example of what you believe. If you are an example, and fast and pray, God will bless sovereignly. I could share many illustrations of how God uses these methods when we submit to leadership for His sake. The pastor will open much more quickly if you support him where he is right, love and pray for him where you think he is wrong.

Also remember when you fast and pray, do not pray for God to enforce your will upon the church. Be open for God to work in your own life and trust Him to do in the church what He desires. It may be different than you or the pastor expected.

Basham — If God led you to join a particular church, it is obvious He intends you to render faithful service there. You must recognize your pastor — anti-charismatic or not — as your spiritual shepherd in every way you can. In addition, pray for the opportunity to give your personal witness concerning your experience of Jesus as Saviour and Baptizer in the Holy Spirit. But don't beat your pastor — or the members of the congregation — over the head with your charismatic experience.

Remember, your fellowship in the church is based *not* on the baptism in the Holy Spirit but on the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Love and pray for the pastor and congregation. Serve

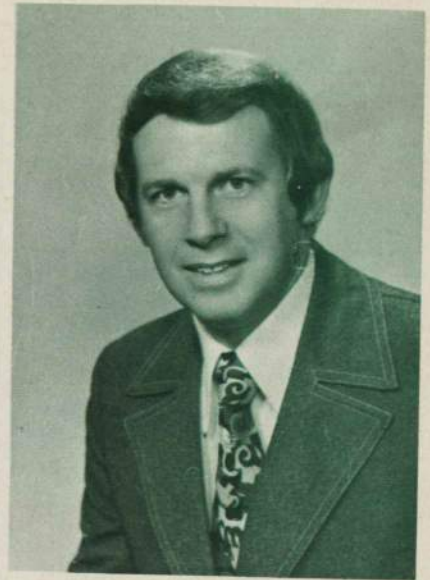
humbly, avoiding all evidence of spiritual pride. And when it is appropriate, give your witness with gentleness and love.

Since your church is not charismatic, you will want to maintain contact and fellowship with other Christian groups which are moving in the fulness of the Spirit; but this need not interfere with your participation in the life of your church.

Of course, if the time comes when your charismatic experience becomes a point of real controversy in your church, it may be an indication from God that you are to leave that church and find fellowship elsewhere.

Poole — If we truly believe that the main purpose of the present activity of the Holy Spirit is to answer the prayer of Jesus "that they all may be one," and to fulfill His prophecy that "there shall be one flock and one shepherd," then this question takes on great significance. Every moving of the Spirit brings about division, but it is our sacred responsibility to make sure that it is coming as a result of resistance to the truth, and not our lack of wisdom or adherence to Scriptural principles.

First of all we need to be positive of Divine direction in the area of our commitment to a local body. Has His will been sought diligently in the matter? If so, and this is His leading, then there is no question about how you should relate yourself to the pastor. You are to submit to him as your shepherd. The fact that he is not charismatic does not alter the principle. It would be helpful to promptly arrange an interview with him and be honest concerning your experience. Let him know what God has done in your life, and make him aware of the way in which God has led you to that particular fellowship. This can save many problems. He may not desire your presence in the church at all; and rather than an unpleasant situation arising later, the matter can be handled in a Christian manner. However, there is a strong possibility that he will appreciate your honesty and humility and will then begin to take note of



John Poole

"We will do more ultimately to promote the Kingdom by adhering to Christian ethics than by ignoring them."

your lives to "see" what God is doing.

The same thing applies to your relationship with the members of the church. They are no less part of Christ's body, and it is your task to maintain the unity of the Spirit and flow with them in love. Get to know them, and let them know you and let the Spirit knit you together in Christ.

Regarding the matter of sharing your experience, this is the heart of the thing. I personally am opposed to taking people aside and in some underground way ministering to them. Keep things above board. As long as you are submitted to the pastor, seek his guidance on this matter. We will do more ultimately to promote the Kingdom by adhering to Christian ethics than by ignoring them. God will honor the individual who walks in integrity. If you are placed in a position where sharing is absolutely forbidden, then it will be time to seek the Lord regarding His will. He may desire your continued presence there (something may break at a later time or He may be teaching you something); or there may be a leading to another place of fellowship. But the vital thing to me is integrity — honesty in our dealings with our fellow believers.

"One of the controversies of our day seems to be over 'women preachers'. What does the Word of God have to say? Is there a difference between a woman ministering as a member of the Body of Christ (sharing what God has taught her, helping pray for the sick, etc.) and a woman who is a minister or teacher? The Old and New Testaments mention women as prophetesses. What does Paul mean in II Timothy 2:12?"

P.S. — Missouri

Basham — While the scriptures make it plain that there is no male and female in Christ as regards our inheritance in the Kingdom, (Galatians 3:28-29, I Peter 3:7), we are not to assume that equal worth implies equal function. It does not. As members of the Body of Christ, women can minister spiritual gifts (Acts 21:8-9, I Corinthians 11:5-10); can be co-minister with their husbands (Acts 18:26); older women can teach younger women and children (Titus 2:3-5) — provided all these things are done under proper spiritual covering and authority.

But, according to I Timothy 2:12, women are not "to teach or usurp authority over men". To do so brings them out from under authority.

Scripturally, women are given a subordinate, rather than dominant role in life and the church. Therefore, all roles of authority and government in the church are reserved for men. God has placed women in a highly favored, blessed and secure place in His redemptive plan, but it is a *protected* place, and her role is that of the protected, not the protector.

Therefore, women are forbidden to teach or govern since it pushes them out of their scripturally authorized position.

Simpson — The whole realm of government, submission and spiritual

authority is controversial. We must approach these areas with grace and truth. Jesus is the Lord of the Church. I can declare my convictions and at the same time trust Him to set the church in order, as He sees fit.

Don has mentioned the reference from I Timothy. This is part of a chapter on authority. It begins by exhorting Christians to pray for those in authority. It seems obvious to me that Paul does not believe women should govern the church. He bases his convictions on the very nature of men and women dating back to Adam and Eve. The passage seems too clear to "spiritualize".

In other passages the question of government in the church is answered with equal clarity (I Corinthians 11; I Timothy 3). The real question not only concerns the church, but the home. You'll notice that when church government is discussed, proper home government is the qualification for proper church government.

Never has the home been under greater attack than at present. It is the miniature church — the cell of church and society. In order to restore the church and society, the home must be restored — that means men must assume their God-given responsibilities. We cannot advocate disorder in the church and expect to reap order in the home.

Now, in all fairness, most women who have to carry government responsibility at home or in the church do so reluctantly. I place the blame not so much on aggressive women as passive, irresponsible men.

Leaving the area of government — any believer can minister or proclaim what they have received from God — if their lives are straight and they are rightly related to other believers. There are many precedents for women prophesying, as well as youth (Joel 2:28-29; I Corinthians 11:5; Acts 21:9). Any ministry of the Holy Spirit can flow through any rightly related member of the Body of Christ.

There are instances where women have authority by example (Titus 2:3-5) to teach the younger women.

A man could not perform this ministry, and it is a needed one.

It is important that we distinguish between *government* (oversight . . . eldership) of the church and *ministry* in the church. As I see it, authority is the responsibility of God-appointed men who have proven themselves worthy of it at home. Ministry is every believer's business. Whatever our convictions, we are commanded to love one another and not "lord it over" one another.

Poole — Let me share some personal experiences along this line. The background of the fellowship that I serve is full gospel. For many years, in spite of strong male leadership in the area of teaching and preaching, most of the spiritual strength of the church came from women. I am speaking of areas such as prayer, fasting, the operation of spiritual gifts, and the spiritual leadership in the home. A few years ago when the Lord began to speak to us about the importance of family life and order, and we started to emphasize the responsibility of the husband to be the priest in his home, we noticed a definite change taking place. As our men became more aware of their position in their families, they moved more easily into ministry in the assembly. As the men began to function in a greater way, we found them taking the predominant part in our public services. The spiritual leadership of the church began to settle quite normally into the hands of the men, once they functioned properly in their own homes.

I found, too, that as I became more conscious of my responsibility to "make disciples", that this was having a profound effect upon the men of the church. The more I took them into my confidence, and opened my heart to them, encouraging them to move out in ministry, the more male leadership was evident. It is our conviction that God has given to men responsibility in areas of church government, administration and in the teaching of doctrine that He has not given to women.

However, in our case, we soon dis-

covered that the pendulum had swung too far. We came to the place where we were receiving almost no ministry from the women, and we had many of them with years of experience and training in the school of the Spirit who had much to contribute. We then began to teach on the areas where a woman can and should function, with a particular emphasis on Paul's instruction to Titus that the older women instruct the younger women. We are currently turning over to women the ministry of prayer with and the counseling of other women. It is beneficial in many ways. It safeguards the place of the husband in the home of the woman who is being ministered to — this is very important; it protects the man, who would have ministered to the woman, from temptation; and it opens an area for women who have definite ministries in the body of Christ to function and be fruitful.

"How do women who are single, i.e., not married, divorced, widows, etc., find a place in the body of Christ? There is the unique problem of not having an 'immediate' covering. How can this be overcome?"

L.K. — Brazil

Poole — Anyone who has ministered in the local situation for any length of time, especially if he is putting an emphasis on the restoration of the family as the basic unit in church life, has encountered this problem. Time and time again I have had single people tell me that so much of the teaching does not relate to them because of their unmarried status.

First of all, I believe that it is time that we took a fresh look at Paul's teaching on the single life. There has been a much needed emphasis in recent years on the family, and I am sure that there is still much to be learned and taught in this area. But we cannot dodge the fact Paul took time to give instructions to the unmarried

as well. We must come back to the Biblical emphasis that if a person can live in an unmarried state, there are definite advantages as 1 Corinthians 7 illustrates. There is need for great care here, as we do not want to fall into the trap of forcing the single life upon individuals who cannot find the grace to live that way; but neither can we escape the fact that as of today, there is a total lack in most of our teaching on the challenge that Paul gives — "an unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord's work and thinking how to please him . . . a girl who is not married is anxious to please the Lord in all she is and does."

In the matter of covering, as it relates to the single woman, I believe that the local elders (emphasis on plurality) serve as her covering and that she should submit to them as she would to her husband. But, personally, I see developing in the context of body life the need for single people to be incorporated into family life. I believe the Lord is beginning to speak about this issue. Single individuals, especially women, need to be brought into a Christian family, and submit to the head of the house so that true protection and covering can be given. This will not work in all situations, but the Lord has families that He is preparing for this type of ministry, and this will undoubtedly answer many of the questions that relate to this area.

Simpson — As John has brought out, this is a most relevant question and the problem represented in it is increasing.

In Bible days a single woman relied on her family (brothers, father or children — 1 Timothy 5:8). I encourage such women to relate as closely as possible to their natural families — even if their families are unsaved. Even an unsaved family affords some opportunity for protection and fellowship. Through a closer relationship, they may be reached.

My conviction has been that many single women, as well as married women, want more than protection. They want love and understanding; they want to belong; they want a

family relationship. The church can never substitute for the family. Church and family fulfill different needs and both are necessary. Much more could be said here. When anyone, man or woman, seeks to substitute church for his family, trouble usually results.

I pray, that where possible, single people can be joined to a family (Psalm 68:6). Where possible they should relate more closely to their relatives, as in former times when families were closer. If none of this is possible, pray for God to lead to a small group, or large church with small groups, that is under a spiritual shepherd. We who have Christian families ought to be alert to include those who do not have families in our prayers and activities.

"We are a small group of believers who recently came together to form a church. How far can we, as laymen, go in handling such things as prayer for the sick, baptism in water, communion and the duties normally associated with an ordained minister? As a small non-denominational group, how could we go about obtaining a pastor?"

O.T. — Louisiana

Poole — Assuming that it has been the Lord who has led you together, the first thing that should be done is to relate to some more experienced body for oversight and counsel. It is dangerous for any group to stand alone. Although Paul would leave the churches that he commenced, he was in contact with them through his personal visits, correspondence, and the sending of messengers. He was kept up to date on the current happenings. Too many new groups are unrelated and are open to wolves, and false teaching that often means the ruination of the work.

It will not be too long before some of the brethren among you begin to

manifest signs of leadership. The qualifications for eldership are clearly outlined in Scripture. As brethren meet them, they should be recognized and the duties you have mentioned be given to them. Until such a time, let men who are of good report and devout, minister in these areas. There is no Scriptural warrant for preserving the "clergy". However, let me emphasize the fact that when men, not set aside to a particular place of ministry in the body of Christ, functioned in the early church, there was always mention made of their character as being "godly". Stay with that.

Basham — I, too, believe "laymen" can perform every duty of the ministry. The modern distinction between clergy and laity is, to a great degree, an artificial one. However, in most states a duly "licensed" or ordained minister may be required to perform a marriage ceremony in order to fulfill legal requirements.

I would assume if you continue to meet regularly as a "church", the Holy Spirit will soon indicate two or more men in your fellowship who are being drawn into the position of elders or shepherds. The basic ministerial duties, then, would become their shared responsibility.

Should you feel led to call a "pastor", there are many fine Spirit-baptized ministers of various denominations who would be willing to consider such a call. I, personally, could provide several names for consideration.

Simpson — Concluding these thoughts, may I mention a few "specifics".

First, a church is a group of disciples under authority (Acts 14:21–23). One assumes that a flock is not complete without a shepherd or shepherds (Acts 11:22–46). The ministry of Christ belongs to His Body. The body is more than a group of people; it is members rightly related under headship. I have questions about starting churches, then asking someone to "father" it. As I see the New Testament, the shepherd gathered the flock, not vice versa. I

realize God blesses us in spite of our methods sometimes.

Here are some suggestions: (1) Fast and pray as a group of believers to know the will of God — as God leads. (2) Look for a work, church or ministry, that is doing what you believe God wants you to do. (3) If you find such a church, examine the fruit of it. (4) Then ask them to pray with you about establishing your group into such a body. (5) As they pray with you, God will bring forth a leader or leaders who can shepherd the local flock. (6) The shepherds can be from among your own group or brought to you from theirs. But all the group should bear witness to the authority and follow it.

In the meantime, ministry can come from spiritual men that have a good testimony in your group — as John and Don have said.

"In our group some women feel they should follow Paul's teaching in I Corinthians 11 to the letter and wear a head covering when they attend our prayer meetings. Others feel this teaching means that women are to be under an authority — and that is all that is necessary. Does a woman have to wear a head covering to have the right to pray or prophesy in public?"

J.M. — Ohio

Basham — If women want to take literally the scripture in I Corinthians chapter 11, to worship, pray and prophesy with a "head covering", such as a scarf or hat, and they do it as an outward sign or demonstration that they are in submission to those who are their spiritual covering, it is quite correct for them to do so.

Personally, I believe the basic lesson Paul is giving in this passage is that

women are to be *spiritually*, not literally, covered; and that for a woman to have her head uncovered refers *primarily* to being out from under her spiritual covering. I certainly do not believe the point of women wearing hats or scarves in church should ever be a test of fellowship.

Simpson — I wouldn't criticize anyone who seeks to follow the scripture to the letter if they are also doing so in principle and spirit. I do believe all Jewish and first-century Christian women wore head coverings or prayer shawls. The covering was a symbol of recognizing the husband's leadership. The essential truth is to be under authority.

Some people point out that the cloth was a custom of the East — and is to this day — and not a commandment of the Lord. Read I Corinthians 11:16 in a modern translation or Amplified Version. This would exempt modern women from the necessity of wearing the covering — as long as they honored their husbands. I could accept that line of reasoning — though I do believe a literal covering is spoken of in the scripture you mentioned.

I also believe signs are important. I suspect that if one is really submitted and pride has been abased, the literal head covering will not be offensive. I have discussed this with godly women who out of obedience to God wore the cloth. They said it was very hard to do. They said that they received more opposition from women than men.

These head coverings do confront us and sometimes embarrass us. They are "signs". They point to a neglected truth. Tongues also are a "sign" — they point to a neglect of the Holy Spirit. Head coverings point out the pride, disrespect and rebellion in modern home life. However, if we wear the sign, we'd better "have the goods" and be examples.

If a woman is going to prophesy in the assembly or pray publicly, she should do so under the authority of her husband, father, elder, or whoever her covering may be. She should consult them about their desires. ♣

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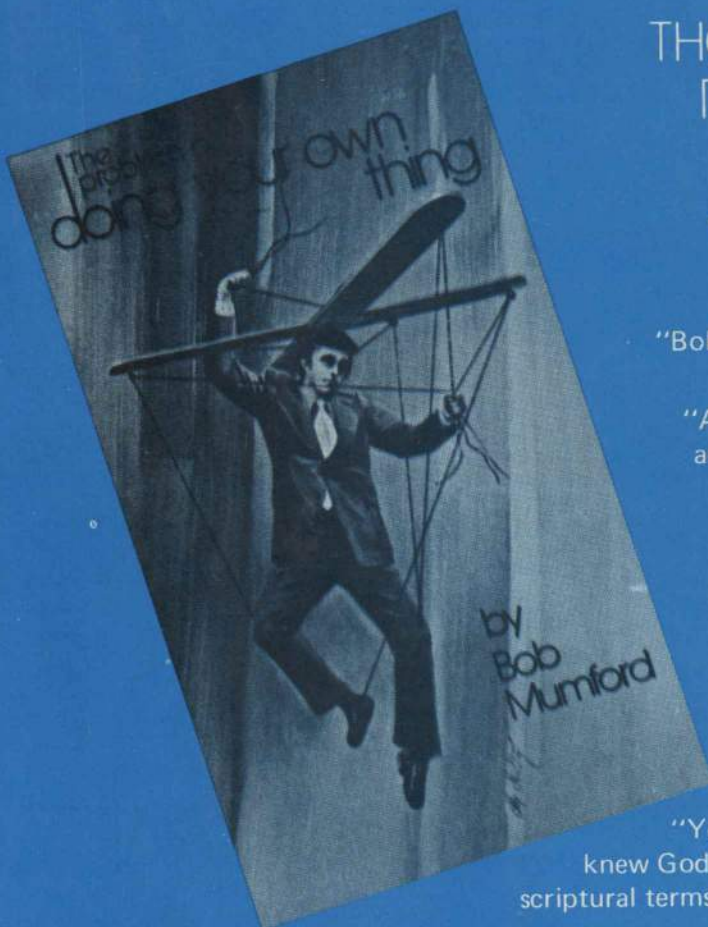
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