

new wine

T.M.

APRIL 1977

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE
DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH



RESPECTED OR NEGLECTED?

How are we treating the elderly among us?

Victorious Retirement • Simpson • 4
 Inner Youthfulness • Grubb • 10
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SHARING THE GOSPEL

Please send us *New Wine*. We heard about it on KIXL in Austin, a Christian Broadcasting. We always thrill to have something of the Lord come with our bills, etc. It makes the mail joyful!

Chuck & Susan Thompson
San Antonio, TX

We saw the magazine *New Wine* on a plane enroute to Israel. We were greatly blessed by it. Please send it to us.

Bobby Randolph
Decatur, TX

I have appreciated your sending the *New Wine* Magazine to me while we have been in Ghana. I consider it the most valuable piece of literature to be received in the mail.

Lawrence L. Lee, Jr.
Ghana, West Africa

I just want to cover your expenses for my subscription. I wished it was more, but I am still going to Europe in March to preach in several countries in German. I say this for your understanding. I am 71 years old. The *New Wine* gives me much help and I enjoy it thoroughly; keep up the good work.

Rev. Rudolph Schmitt
Owego, NY

FEBRUARY REVISITED

I loved the *New Wine* issue on "singles"—especially Derek Prince's article—it put many of my thoughts of marriage into a better perspective.

Danny Harris
Orlando, FL

The autobiographical article by Derek Prince in the February issue was a very real type of article. These personal accounts of the experiences of elders in the Body are quite helpful



to me, a young single. The entire February issue spoke a helpful word to us singles, especially about our position in the Body of Christ. Also the photographs used throughout the magazine are attractive. The artwork has improved!

Margaret Baker
Nashville, TN

I was disappointed in the February issue of *New Wine* because I did not feel you touched on the subject of being female and single. I was excited when I saw the topic for the month because the fellowship with which I am involved is interested in the single Christian woman. I felt the subject was inadequately covered.

Paula Christensen
Sioux Falls, SD

We received a number of letters like the one above, expressing disappointment that February's New Wine hadn't adequately covered the topic of singles, especially the problems of single women in the Body. We're grateful for this type of comments and we acknowledge that to a considerable degree they are correct. From the moment we began working on the

February issue, we had the distinct impression that in tackling the theme of "The Single Christian" we were touching just the tip of the iceberg in regard to the unique challenges and problems facing single people in the Body of Christ. The magnitude of the need for direction among singles became even more evident to us from the lack of definitive teaching that we discovered in our search for material for this theme.

Let us simply say that we regard our issue on singles as just a "door-opener" and our hope is that from that introductory look there will spring additional revelation and practical instruction on the subject. And as this comes forth, New Wine will have a part in providing this much-needed teaching to the Body of Christ.

Ed.

LETTERS ABOUT LETTERS

Yes, we really enjoy our *New Wine* subscription and keep every magazine. Every month it helps us in our Christian growth. Keep it coming! We not only want it, we need it. In the January issue I like how 19-year-old Sandy Lathem put it to you (Letters to Editor). Keep the articles fairly short and easy to understand. I think what she said is very important to your success with your magazine.

Allen & Diana Rinner
Mt. Pleasant, IA

I was reading the latest "Letters to the Editor" and thought I ought to respond to the criticism of lengthy articles in *New Wine*. I feel you have good balance; some articles are shorter (testimony type) and others are in depth. There are plenty of Christian publications that emphasize the shorter variety of articles. Christians should resist the temptation of continuous spoon feeding.

Glenn A. Gilbert
Johnstown, PA

Editorial

Some years ago when I was pastoring a church in Toronto, Canada, one of our retired elders received a personal telegram from the Queen of England. This elder was not a high government official, neither had he rendered some heroic service to the nation or the crown. Yet he had achieved one mark of distinction which qualified him for the queen's recognition; he had reached his 100th birthday.

Most other civilized nations show great respect for age and the wisdom it holds. Unfortunately, our nation can lay little claim to such civility. We barely tolerate—much less venerate—our senior citizens. Our country has been victimized by a ridiculous youth-culture syndrome which implies that "after you're thirty, it's downhill all the way."

Yet the Bible is clear in its teaching that we are to regard our elders with honor and respect.

You shall rise up before the gray-headed, and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God . . . (Lev. 19:32, NAS).

Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father and . . . the elder women as mothers . . . (1 Tim. 5:1-2).

Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth (Eph. 6:2-3).

Those verses from Ephesians 6 seem to indicate that, in God's sight, a proper attitude toward our elders is so important that it actually determines not merely the quality of our own lives but the length of them as well.

This is a matter which vitally affects us all since—barring the Lord's early return or some unexpected or untimely demise—all of us are destined to become old ourselves.

Therefore, we hope this issue of *New Wine* will increase your appreciation for our senior citizens and their efforts to realize the benefits and rich rewards with which God desires to bless all His people in their later years.

Don Basham

Don Basham,
Editor

new wine MAGAZINE

APRIL 1977

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VICTORIOUS RETIREMENT



An interview with Rev. Vernon Simpson, conducted by his son Charles, on the challenges and opportunities facing the retired.

CHARLES: Dad, I appreciate you agreeing to this interview to talk about a subject that both you and I, as well as *New Wine* Magazine and its readers, are deeply interested in—and that is the subject of retirement. First of all, though, I would like you to introduce yourself to those reading this article by giving a little biographical background.

VERNON: I was born in Lafayette, Alabama in 1911. My parents were Roy G. Simpson and Cora Allen Simpson. My father was the owner of a mercantile store in Lafayette and also served as sheriff of Chambers County, Alabama for four years. The Lord called me to the ministry, and after college preparation, I went to the Baptist seminary in New Orleans. While in seminary, I began ministering on the bayous south of New Orleans through one of the local churches. I started in faith, trusting God for support. For the next thirteen years I

was involved in ministry among the French-speaking people of south Louisiana. I organized eight churches with the help of a New Orleans church. We held meetings in tents and wherever else we could, and people travelled by boat and on foot to attend those meetings. Some of those who came had never seen a Bible and many could not read or write. Of course, that was over forty years ago.

After leaving southern Louisiana, I became pastor of First Baptist Church of Theodore, Alabama near Mobile, where I remained as pastor for thirty-five years. It's been a great experience to give my life in the Lord's service.

CHARLES: Dad, in our discussion we want to examine some of the problems of retirement and the answers to those problems as they are emerging in your life. We also want to encourage other people who are either about to enter, or have already entered retirement. Then we want

to explore some of the various ways that the abilities of elderly people can be utilized. One of my concerns has been that so many elderly people have accumulated years of wisdom and experience, yet they are seldom heard by the Church or society because of our present attitude toward the aged. We need to recognize that because people are living longer nowadays, retired people represent an ever-increasing percentage of our population.

We also want to promote an awareness of the unique problems facing retirees among those of us who are younger, even though we won't be retiring for some time. This awareness will encourage us to be more concerned and involved with older people.

Dad, as you have approached the whole issue of retirement, what are some of the problems that you see?

VERNON: One of the practical problems I face is the radical adjustment in finances after retirement. Social security benefits plus retirement income total much less than the income to which I have been accustomed. Another problem is readjusting your life and time to escape boredom. Boredom can be a disaster in an older person's life—especially an active person.

It is a real challenge to establish new goals in your life during this readjustment, but successfully doing so helps to avoid the real dangers of loneliness and depression. I have seen many retired people who are very lonely, self-centered and depressed. No one wants that to happen to them, but it takes a real effort to stay interested and involved in the life about you. You cannot withdraw from the world and people. You are living among people, and God commands that we love one another. This applies to us who are retired also.

Another concern is to strengthen old relationships and then to make new friends. Still another test comes with adjusting to a new house and environment. Such adjustments are harder for older people, especially those who have stayed in the same locality a long time. Many "retirees," after living in the same house for thirty years, move to some entirely new location, and all the old familiar scenes are gone; all the day-by-day sights and sounds are different. This can affect you and bring on insecurity.

Still another problem is keeping physically fit. You want your body to be strong, healthy and well, but as we grow older, this becomes more difficult. These are just some of the concerns that come to my mind.

CHARLES: I would like for us to take a closer look at them and examine what you are doing in your own situation to solve them. I am sure that there are many people who need some practical answers to these problems. First of all, how are you going to approach the problem of reduced finances?

VERNON: Well, since my income is cut approximately

two-thirds, I face the immediate practical problem of how our basic needs will be met. Of course, we can economize somewhat on almost everything. The experience we had as faith missionaries for some thirteen years is very valuable to us here. We learned to trust God. One of the scriptures we used in our praying and in our living was Philippians 4:19: "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." We looked to the Lord for our daily supply of needs and He created ways, surprising ways, to take care of us. Also in Psalms 23:1 He tells us, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

CHARLES: Dad, it's true that the Lord is our Shepherd and that He takes care of us, but do you think the Lord wants to use people?

VERNON: God *does* use people. He often uses friends and loved ones to help see that our needs are met. I believe God wants Christians to get interested in the older people. While Social Security is a great help and it represents the interest of society in general, I believe that *churches* need to become more interested in their senior citizens. Many of these older people are going through strenuous times, and some of them don't have enough to get by. Acts chapter 6 is a New Testament example of the Church's care of widows. Acts 4 tells us that no one in the Church lacked anything, and in Luke 7:11–13 Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for neglecting their parents while using religion as an excuse.

CHARLES: You mean you believe the Church ought to be involved *financially* in helping old people where there are needs?

VERNON: Definitely. I think a church ought to have a ministry where older people who are a part of its life can be cared for in every respect. The Church is doing the Lord's work, and He is totally concerned about all of His people.

CHARLES: You mentioned Acts 6 as a good example of the Church caring for its own.

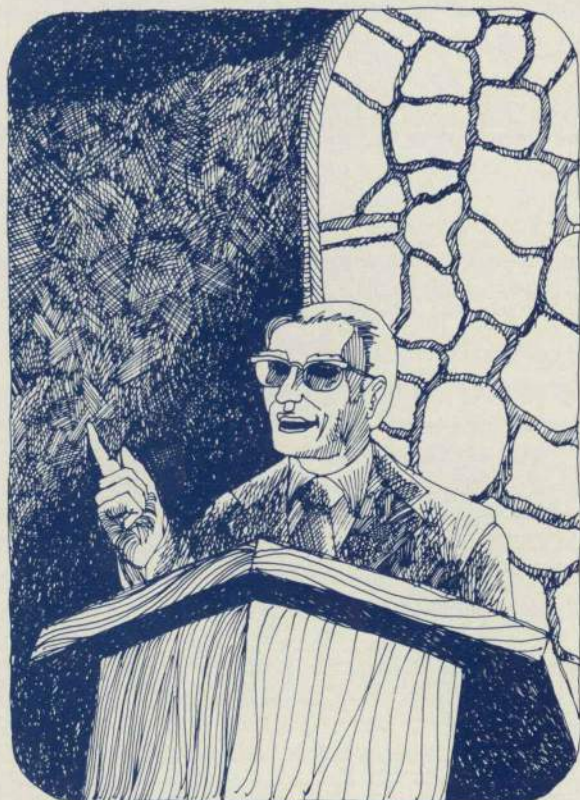
VERNON: Yes, but even beyond the role of the Church, I believe the family should be more involved in caring for their own. I don't believe that just because a person is on Social Security his family can say, "Well, he has everything he needs; he's got it made." Really, anyone who retires on a small income will need more care and more interest from his family and immediate loved ones than he did before retiring. Children should not forget the parental care given them in their early years.

When I was pastoring, we had some elderly people living alone. Some of them were injured or sick, and no one was there to help. Sometimes they spent a day or night in need, in pain, alone—because their loved ones

failed to check on them at least once a day and see that they were getting along all right. God wants us to look after each other and to love each other. This is a major part of the Lord's work.

CHARLES: Then you believe society, the Church, and the family all have a responsibility in helping to meet the needs, financial and otherwise, of retired people.

Another problem you mentioned is the one of surplus time. How are you coming to grips with that?



VERNON: I think it is a good idea, before you retire, to establish new goals in life. I don't think the life of a retired person should be like a ship without a rudder. Before a couple retires, they should write down some goals and make some definite plans of what they want to do.

One primary adjustment could be to increase one's devotional life. An older Christian can really become a powerful intercessor. This is a crucial yet neglected ministry. It also serves to take your mind off yourself and put it on others. Even an invalid can accomplish great things through prayer. Although every Christian should have devotional time, Christians who are retired can give more time to prayer than others.

Serving other people in practical ways should be another of our primary goals, whether we are retired or not. The happiest people I have known have been people who are busy serving others; the unhappiest people are those who are self-centered and spend their time feeling sorry for themselves. To use our time in serving other

people, trying to make them happy and trying to help them with their problems brings great satisfaction, no matter what age we are.

CHARLES: What are some of the ways you suggest serving them?

VERNON: Well, visiting—either by telephone or in person. By spending time with them you get to know them. Just listening helps. Above all things, love them. We all want people to love us, but we gain most when we love others. And this is Christ's greatest commandment: to love one another. Also, if you love people, you're less inclined to criticize them and more inclined to seek ways in which you can make their lives easier. So many older people are going through harrowing experiences with loved ones who either refuse to help or who don't know how to help. They need our support and interest. And as you get interested in them, your own load becomes lighter.

Every person ought to have an avocation. On retiring it becomes a new vocation that takes up their time and fills their interest. For example, my brother has a small nursery which occupies much of his time. Although I'm officially retired, I plan to continue preaching and teaching. A person ought not be catalogued as a "retiree" and forgotten.

CHARLES: Could you say more about vocational involvement after retirement?

VERNON: I think that one of the most outstanding examples is Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame. Here is a Christian man who was retiring, and everybody assumed he would seclude himself somewhere. All of a sudden he came up with an idea: he franchised his chicken business and became very wealthy. Through his wealth he became a blessing to many other people. I think he is one of the best examples, although there are many others all over the country who would not let themselves grow useless simply because they retired.

CHARLES: I am glad that you mentioned Colonel Sanders. It has been my privilege to meet him; he is indeed a dedicated Christian. He participated in some services where I was preaching and, though he is well up in age, he is a very alert and active man. Obviously, he has made a real contribution to the business and social community and to many churches since he retired.

One of the things that you mentioned as a problem is staying interested in life about you. How do you stay interested and involved?

VERNON: Well, I take a magazine called *AARP*, *American Association of Retired Persons*. This magazine is interested in what kind of laws are being passed to

help retirees and is a good source of general information for older people. It draws people together in worthwhile concerns that keep them interested. There is a growing number of senior citizen's organizations in which the retired person can become involved. We ought to be involved with people all around us, not only other senior citizens, but with young people and children as well. Sometimes older people get nervous or impatient with youth. The more egocentric we become, the more nervous we become. When our minds are outgoing and our activities are outgoing, we enjoy young people; then we find that we are not nearly as nervous and irritable. The most important thing is to keep a positive, selfless attitude toward all people.

CHARLES: How do you expose yourself to young people as a retiree since they wouldn't tend to seek you out primarily?

VERNON: Well, we can take an interest in their activities—baseball and basketball games and the like. And when we are around them we don't have to act like old people. I've discovered when we go to young people's activities, they soon forget we are old people when we get to laughing and joking and become really interested in what they are doing. That is involvement.

CHARLES: You advocate getting out of your house and becoming involved with the public. I notice you mentioned sports. I suppose church activity is also a good opportunity. For example, I remember several retired folks like Mrs. Hamilton who used to tell us character stories in vacation Bible school.

VERNON: By all means. Some of the best and most effective church leaders I know of are elderly people. Some of them are working in the nursery. Some teach youth. Many of them are having the "time of their lives."

CHARLES: And that helps to keep you young?

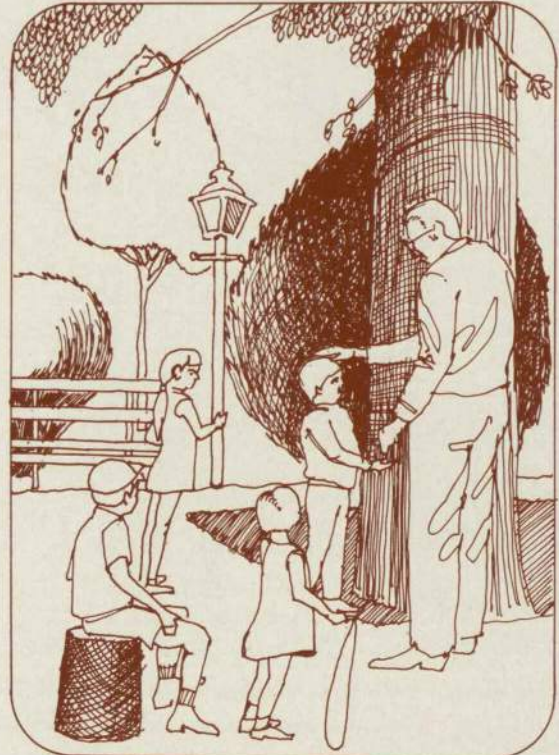
VERNON: I believe it does.

CHARLES: Another problem you mentioned was adjusting to a new house, a new environment. Sometimes the house is not as luxurious and the environment is different and possibly not as pleasant as the previous location. How do you cope with this?

VERNON: In our case, one of the church members gave us a lot several years ago, and I bought the lot next to it. Working on the lot and cleaning it up helped relieve some nervous tension; it helped me physically. Then I built a little house there for my retirement. Doing it myself was a good experience. So it is as much home to me as our former house. But sometimes a retired person

goes into an entirely new environment, often into a different city altogether, and this is a problem. Advance planning can help. Keeping many of our cherished possessions can also help. People who retire shouldn't dispose of too much too soon merely because they are moving to a new or smaller place.

Paul said that in all conditions he was content, and I believe we can be too, by the help of the Lord. Even though we may not be living in as fine a place or face the best living conditions, we can still make ourselves happy in the Lord.

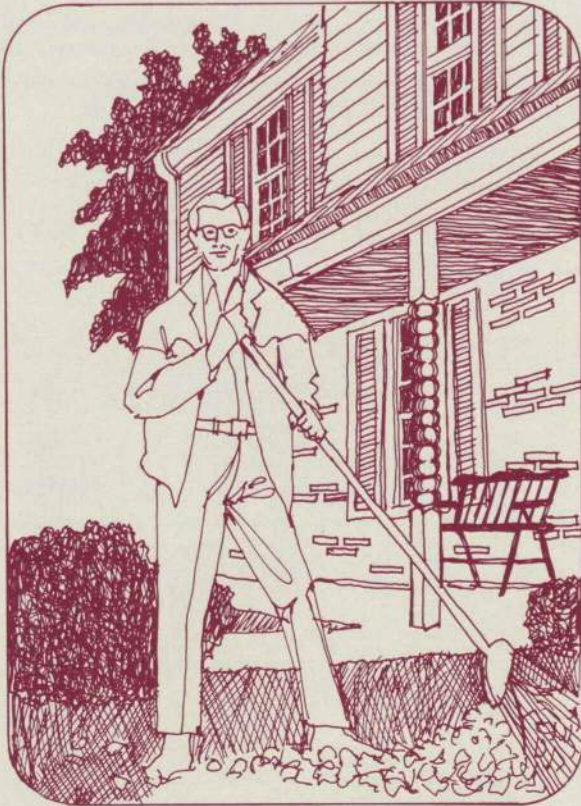


CHARLES: You have already pointed out that joy really springs out of our relationship to God and serving others and doesn't depend upon outward circumstances. Even so, it's obvious that preparing several years in advance for this transition has greatly helped you in making it a more pleasant experience.

VERNON: Definitely. I think that a person can size up many of the problems of retirement—financial and all—ahead of time, making whatever arrangements he can to make it a happy experience. And it is a happy experience when you are walking with the Lord and have friends and family around you.

CHARLES: Being a pastor, and the son of a pastor, for a long time it seemed to me that pastors never had a home of their own or any real estate of their own. They lived in a parsonage or parsonage, and many times were totally unprepared for retirement. Do you advocate for a younger pastor or a pastor who is well into his ministry to own his own home?

VERNON: Yes, indeed. Most of the churches now see this need and whereas they did not do this in the church I was pastoring, they helped me in whatever ways they could to plan for the future. Most churches now give a house allowance, advocating that the pastor actually buy a home, which seems by far the best arrangement for ministers.



CHARLES: I really agree with that, and I feel that it has been a blessing in my own life to be able to buy my own home. While we can spiritualize everything, I think that God's wisdom does lead us to do practical things.

Another thing you mentioned was the need for strengthening old relationships and building new ones. We touched on this a little but maybe you might say a little more on how you are maintaining your relationships.

VERNON: We ought to cherish our friends. Just because we retire does not mean that we draw a line and forget those we love and who love us. God gives us friends, and when we retire, we ought to remember them, continuing our contact with them to show our love for them.

But also once we retire, we are free to create new friendships. There are many ways that we can do this: new contacts through business, social contacts, church contacts, and civic clubs. As a Christian, my first obligation is to love my friends, pray for them, and try to show them Christ if they are not Christians. If they are Christians, I want to try to help them develop into stronger Christians. But all of us can make new friends through the church, through civic activities, and other

ways if we want to and if we try. The Scripture implies in Proverbs 18:24 that if a man would have friends, he must be friendly himself.

CHARLES: When I was younger I had the idea that sixty-five was real old, but my attitude toward age is changing now, and sixty-five doesn't really seem that old. (Maybe that's because I'm almost forty.) But most people sixty-five are still very active, and you mentioned that keeping physically fit is one of the challenges. How do you keep fit?

VERNON: I work on my house and property. There is a lot of work to do on the house, in the yard, and odd jobs there that keep me very busy. In fact, I now have more than I can do, and will have for some months to come.

Walking is a good exercise. *Readers Digest* has a recent article on the benefits of regular walking. A person should have some kind of constructive physical activity. This will help to keep them well and strong.

CHARLES: There is a strong relationship between your body and your mind and your spirit. Keeping our bodies healthy will also help keep our spiritual life healthy as well.

To change the subject from the problems and solutions of retirement, how do you feel about being a retiree?

VERNON: Well, I can't quite get used to this label. I'm still first a person with the usual emotions and needs.

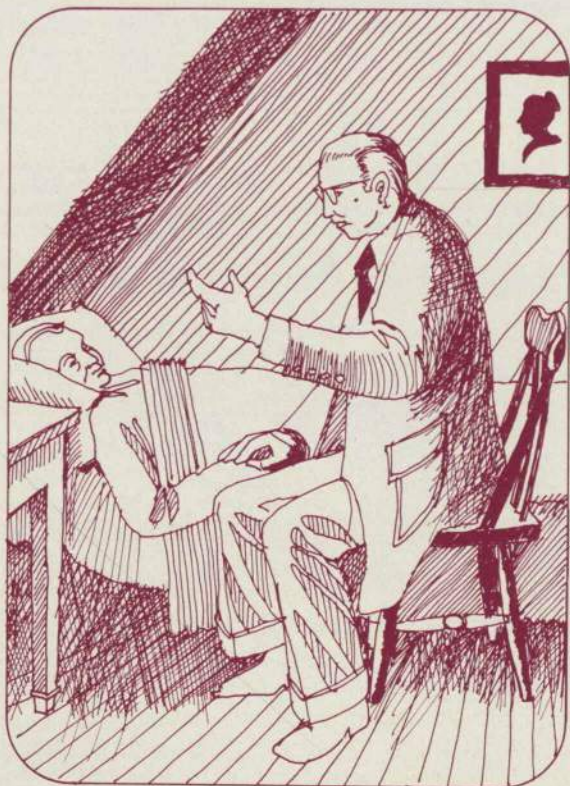
CHARLES: You feel like a retiree should be treated just like anyone else?

VERNON: Just like anyone else . . . with at least as much love and dignity. The Scriptures tell us to honor elders.

CHARLES: As you look back, although I hesitate to advocate looking back, what are some of the things you are most grateful for that have happened in your life?

VERNON: Knowing the Lord, His guidance, and sharing life with your mother are the big things. Then, it has been my privilege to travel in a number of countries, about twenty-seven in all, I believe, and from this I have a lot of memories. I am glad that I did travel.

Also, seeking to serve the Lord in preaching and pastoral work, in visiting, in trying to win people to the Lord . . . all of these things are wonderful to me now. Being involved in the work of building the Church, especially in the faith ministry on the mission field in Louisiana. This taught me that God answers prayer, God takes care of you, God keeps His Word, and God's promises are true.



CHARLES: I know from our personal relationship that your experiences in Louisiana among French-speaking people were a rich part of your life. Were there any special aspects about that besides trusting the Lord financially that are a blessing to you now? Is there any way that you can apply those experiences now?

VERNON: When you work with people, they inevitably become a part of your life. Those people on the bayous—some of them very, very poor, and some of them well-to-do—these people became a part of my life. I still have friends there. I was the first one to share the Lord with many of them. Many of them had never seen a Bible. Some of them could not read or write. Right here in the United States are many mission fields, and a lot of them are still untouched. For me to be able to go to people and tell them about Christ and then see the change in their lives is an eternal joy.

CHARLES: Since you have retired this past November, have there been any surprises?

VERNON: Retirement was a bigger step than I really thought it was going to be. You have to get disengaged from a long-established routine. You have so many changes and new things to think about; new purposes, new goals. It has been quite a big thing. It's a new life. And I think that most people who retire find it bigger than they thought and sometimes they become afraid because it is a big change.

CHARLES: Dad, do you have any advice or suggestions for people who are retiring or who have retired?

VERNON: Yes. *Let Jesus be Lord of your retirement.* This would be the first decision, and I think the most important. Then face the problems of retirement, trusting Him and preparing for them. You should plan useful involvement and set definite goals for this important part of your life. Retirement ought to be a victorious experience in your life because it gives you an opportunity to prove God's faithfulness. Remember, Abraham was over a hundred years old when he proved God on Mount Moriah. Remember also that Moses was still leading Israel at one hundred and twenty years of age. Also John the apostle wrote books of the New Testament when he was ninety years old. Retirement and old age do not mean that we cannot be used of God if we are surrendered to His will and truly want Him to use us.

CHARLES: Do you have any suggestions for those of us who are not retired and would like to help those who are?

VERNON: Yes. A person who wants to help elderly people can pray for them and find practical ways to meet their needs. If you have older relatives, start with them. Listen to them. Let them express themselves to you.

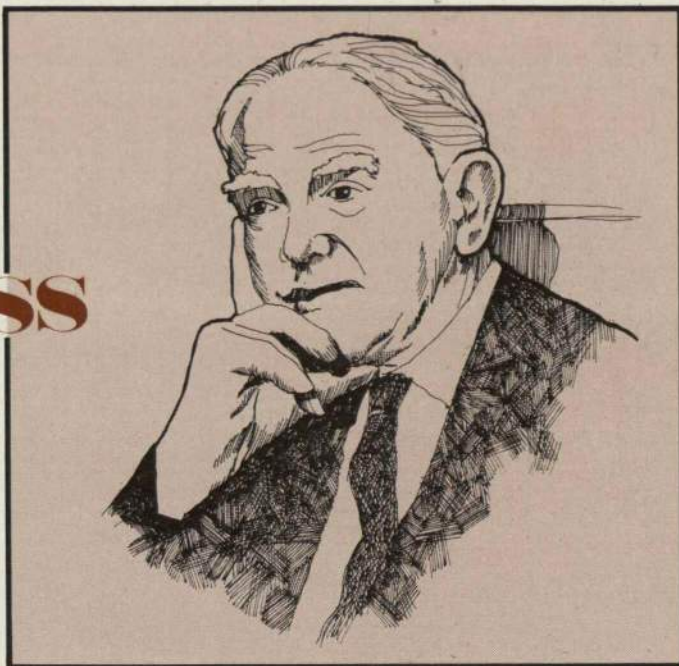
Those of us who have come into retirement age don't feel old. Sixty-five is not considered as old as it used to be. The younger people who want to help the older people can give them understanding and compassion. Give them opportunities for usefulness; call on them for help.

CHARLES: Dad, I would like to express my appreciation to you, not only on my own behalf, but also on behalf of the staff of *New Wine*, for the opportunity to interview you, and for your sharing of yourself and your thoughts with us. I would also like to express my gratitude to you and Mother for the example and teaching you have given me, my brother, Reilly, and my sister, Carolyn, as a family. It has meant more to us than we can say, and I trust that this discussion will be a real encouragement to others to let the Lord use them in later life. We personally feel that the older you and Mom grow and the more experience you have, the more valuable you are to us as a family. We have thoroughly enjoyed these past several months of your retirement because it has given us more access to you personally. And I would like to encourage those who have parents in retirement to reap the great rewards of spending time with them and allowing them to become more involved in your lives. It is a wonderful opportunity to express our gratitude to the Lord for His gift of parents to us. 🍷

Inner Youthfulness

by Norman Grubb

"Why should I say I'm eighty-one when I'm an 'eternal-lifer'?"



I have been asked for thoughts on the role of the elderly in the Body of Christ. Well, I suppose that is a reasonable request, since I, by human arithmetic, am eighty-one. But my trouble is that as a new creature in Christ, old things are passed away, and I am told to know no man after the flesh; and I take that to include human standards of calculation. Why, then, should I say I'm eighty-one when I'm an "eternal-lifer?" Why should I say I am elderly when I am a member of the Body of Him who always has the "dew of His youth?" Why should I talk of a generation gap when we are all one "chosen generation?"

I'm learning a new language and a new arithmetic of that new dimension of which it is said, "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit." That flesh dimension was a product of the Fall, of the first Adam, whom Paul said was only a figure, a shadow, a type (Rom. 5:14). But we are of the Last Adam, and in His death, resurrection and ascension we have been transformed from our flesh-selves to our spirit-selves and have been seated with Him in the heavenlies, which means the realm of the Spirit.

THE INNER PERSON

My spirit is the essence of who I really am, and my soul and physical body are only the more visible expressions of my spirit, which is the real me. Therefore, "what" I know in my spirit that I am; for "knowing" in its biblical sense, means not mental knowledge but being inwardly "mixed with a thing." In other words, the more my spirit grows and develops, the more the "real me" emerges. Thus, on the human level we call a professional man competent because he inwardly knows his profession. Actually his professional capacity has

taken on flesh and blood and become the man himself. For instance, a carpenter does not do his job by his outer tools but by his inner fixed awareness of how to use them. Someone recently said to me of a carpenter who had just panelled his home, "You don't ever need to tell him how to do a thing. You just tell him what to do!" It's the same way with us: all we really are is our inner selves, not the outer shell. The real us is our spirits, which express themselves in outer forms. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." The man that I am is the man I am internally—the man that I am in Christ.

So when my redeemed spirit "knows Him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent," then I have moved over from the illusory realm which we used to call life. Paul said that when we live in pleasure, we are dead while we live (1 Tim. 5:6), but to live in the new awareness of God is our exceeding joy, and at His right hand are our pleasures forevermore.

When I walk in this truth, I begin to live on the Jesus level of "Take no thought, take no thought" of human needs or conditions—of adding cubits to my stature, of food, of drink, of clothing—and that surely includes age! After all, I am a form of eternal life when Christ is my life. I live, not in the apparent real, but in the real real!

How do I do this? Of course, the beginning was my new birth in the Spirit. I then began to be a "see-through-er" rather than a "see-at-er," for I began to see and be in the Kingdom of Him who is Spirit, of whom this outer world is only a manifested form. For the first time I began to see myself not in the outer flesh-form of a lost sinner, but in the spirit-form of a redeemed son in the Son. Then I made the great leap onward to the discovery that I was not merely in a spirit-relationship with Him—Father, Son, and Spirit—but I am actually in spirit-unity with Him, joined to Him in one Spirit, a branch of the true Vine. There-

fore I see myself as the Vine in His branch-form. I am Christ in His Norman Grubb branch-form. As Paul said, "I live? No, not I, but Christ—it is Christ living in me" (Gal. 2:20). Therefore, Paul was Christ in His Paul branch-form. In the same way, Christ in me is actually the real me!

This is much the same as the way we speak when we meet someone. We don't say, "I met a body called John;" we say, "I met John." For the external form is not itself the person, but rather a limited outer expression of the real spiritual person inside.

APPEARANCE AND REALITY

So here was my changing outlook—judging not by appearances but by right judgment (Jn. 7:24). Do I see water that one sinks in when He and Peter walked on it? Do I see a sunken axehead when His servant sees it swimming? Do I see a Jordan in flood when His servant sees dry ground?

So then, why should I see my sick or weak body when with His eyes I see myself eternally perfect in Him? Why should I talk about old age when I have His inner youthfulness in my spirit? Must I have the word "retirement" in my vocabulary when life is only the "works before ordained that I should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10)? I am even now appealing to the grand missionary crusade to which I have belonged all my life to cut out that word "retirement" and merely talk of "change of commission."

That does not mean that I am not outwardly in the weaknesses and infirmities of the flesh, but I am still controlled by what I see. What I am believing in is present reality to me. That is why I see only one sin in the Bible—unbelief (Jn. 16:9; 6:29; Rom. 14:23). But to make that word "unbelief" more intelligible to myself, I call it "negative believing." No person exists without believing, for all life is faith. But which way do we believe: outwardly in illusory appearance or inwardly in spirit-fact? What happens if I accept my physical

weakness or material condition as fact? The answer is that what I take *takes me*; for if a negative faith becomes substance to me (Heb. 11:1), then I become bound and sink. But what if I see outward infirmities as Paul did, glorying in his infirmities because "when I am weak, then I am strong; for His strength is made perfect in my weakness" (2 Cor. 12:10)? Then I am controlled by my spirit-believings, and that which is spirit will be manifested in substance.

CHRIST OUR STRENGTH

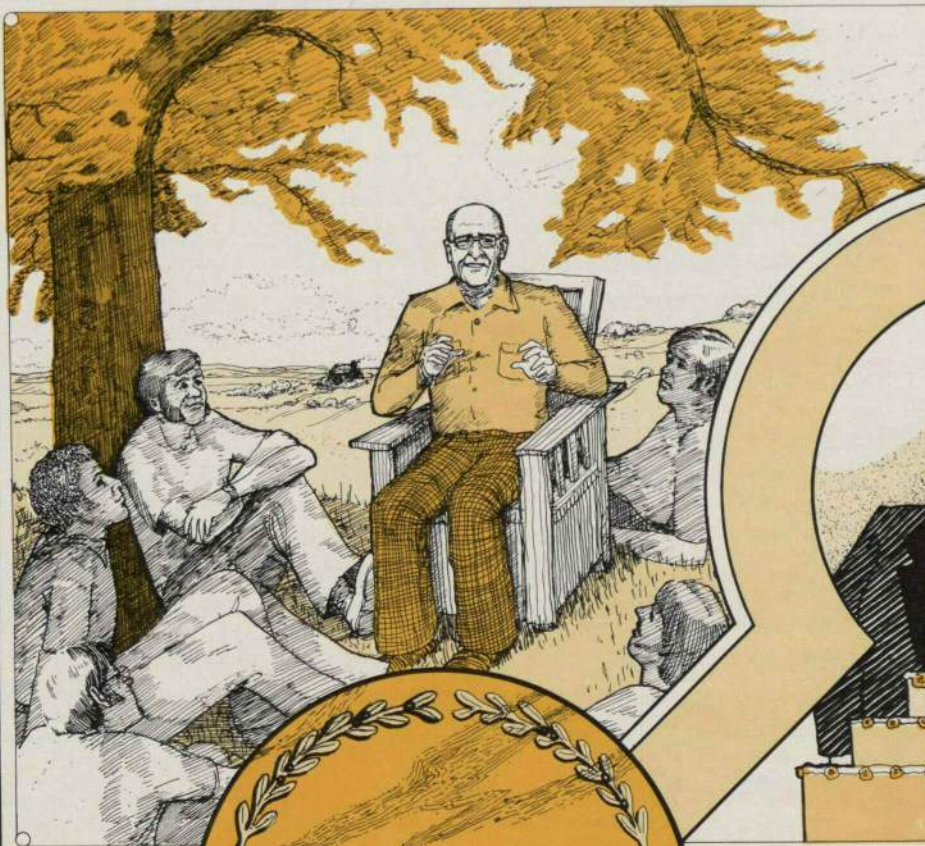
I believe we will do far better in the healing of sicknesses if we point not to the sickness of the body needing healing, but to the present fact that here and now this sick one is a healed one, and that he praises God for his healing because he is in the eternal life of Christ. When a person transfers his concern from his body's illness to his spirit's health in Christ, and praises God that, though weak, he is strong, and when he accepts that God has temporarily meant him to be sick that Christ may be magnified in his body, whether by life or death, then the Spirit is liberated to be doing His silent work of healing in the body—not always, but often.

So when I take no notice of age calculations, or refuse to regard myself by human standards as an old man, but rather see myself just as a God-manifester, the Treasure in an earthen vessel, then I go right on with all vigor in whatever He makes plain to me to be my immediate commission. For each of us, according to Ephesians 2:10, always finds he is a commissioned person, looking to God to show him what his commission is.

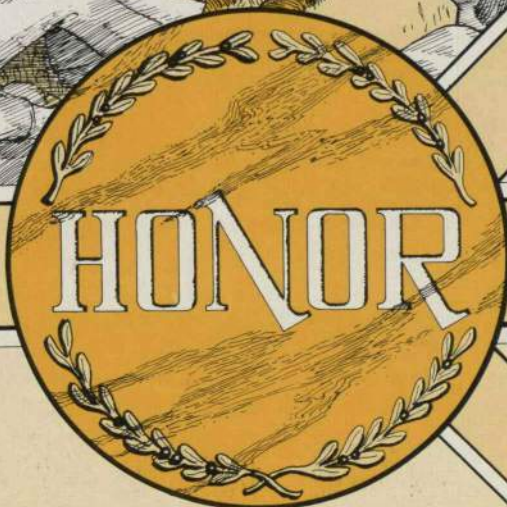
Then—back to the original question I was asked—what is the role of the elderly? The answer is: There are no elderly; we are all young and our role is precisely what it has been ever since we first knew we were God's commissioned servants. We simply move on to the next form of commission! So life is thrill, gaiety, fun—which are all outer wrappings of an intense seriousness; we always walk in some form of "the zeal of His house eating us up"! Life is *great*, right up to the moment we start across the river for that welcome in which we have a total confidence. For John said we have boldness since "as He is, so are we in the world."

What an adventure faith is! And faith is the inner realization of the eternal facts of who we are as sons in the Son, catching ever-fresh glimpses of why we are where we now are. Faith is the assurance of the Lord Jesus Himself living in us and through us, just where we are. And with this revelation of Himself in us comes the faith to continue laboring in the harvest, for He is the Lord not only of the sowing, but also of the harvest. And in these later years of adventure, we lift up our eyes to see our lives and the lives of those around us, not as bare brown earth with no blade showing, but rather as a field white unto harvest. ♡

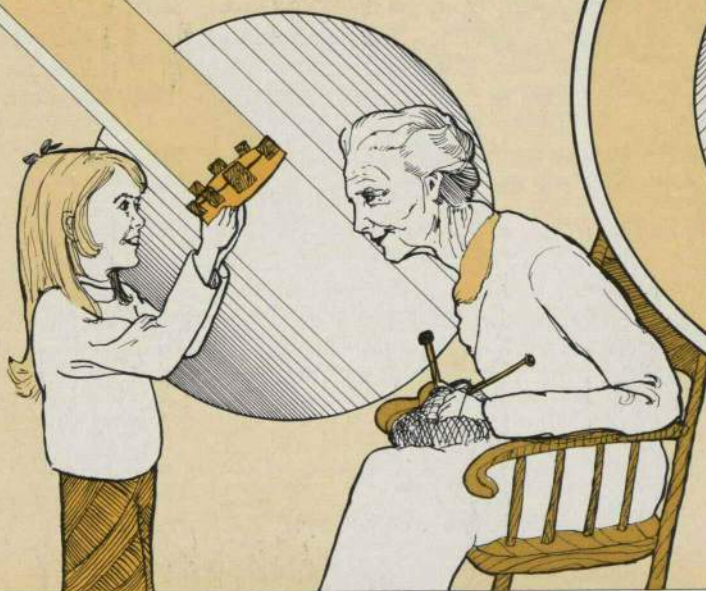
NORMAN GRUBB, internationally recognized for his long-time ministry to the Body of Christ, was born, reared and educated in England. After serving with the British army in World War I, he was a missionary in the Congo with his wife, Pauline, and her father, C. T. Studd. From the 1920's until 1965 he was instrumental in the direction and administration of the World Evangelization Crusade. In recent years he has ministered through "Faith At Work" conferences and the Camps Farthest Out; since leaving his official position with WEC, he has continued to minister the gospel wherever doors are opened around the world. Mr. Grubb is also the author of numerous books, including C. T. Studd; Rees Howells, Intercessor; Once Caught, No Escape and Who Am I?



by
Charles
Simpson



A neglected element of the Christian life



On my honor, I will do my best . . . " "Yes, your honor." "We request the honor of your presence . . . " "She received top honors at graduation." "Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you the honorable Congressman from . . . "

Honor. What is it, who should have it, and why? When I was a boy scout, pledging "on my honor" to do my duty, I never thought much about these questions. *Honor* was a word I used often, but understood only vaguely. Only lately have I begun to see what a relevant and important part honor plays in the Christian life.

To honor is to show respect or esteem. It is an attitude and act of recognition; it means acknowledging the worth or value of a person, institution or object. Honor is given to excellence in character or ability, and is often expressed by the conferring of privileges or titles.

All social structures revere certain people and positions. Although people sometimes destroy social structures and their particular systems of conferring honor, the same people will of necessity erect new systems. If a new social structure is to exist at all, it must be respected by those within it.

GOD GIVES HONOR

Since God is the Lord, every purpose, character, and standard proceeds from Him; all honor derives from Him. He is the source of honor, and He bestows it where He will. By honoring His Son, and by creating the angels and giving them a special role, God conferred honor even before the world was formed. And throughout history, God has given honor to persons, institutions, and offices of His choosing.

CHARLES SIMPSON, known internationally as a Bible teacher and seminar speaker, presently serves as pastor of the Gulf Coast Fellowship in Mobile, Alabama, where he and his wife, Carolyn, and their three children reside.

A Southern Baptist minister, he served a church in Mobile for fourteen years. Midway through his pastorate there, the church experienced a sovereign revival that included the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Since that time he has been involved in a teaching and discipling ministry to the Body of Christ.

All honor belongs to Him: He can bestow it, and He can remove it. Our God is worthy of respect. Because God calls His people to be like Him, He would have us be worthy of respect. And because God bestows honor, He wants us to learn how to bestow it too. We must become faithful stewards of the honor God has entrusted to us.

Many of us are ignorant or mistaken on the subject. In some circles, showing disrespect for people and authorities is considered a mark of spirituality. Taking their cue from certain translations of Acts 10:34—"God is no respecter of persons," some Christians contend that no one person should be esteemed above another. But this interpretation is false to the message of Scripture. Indeed, God shows partiality to no one; men and women, slaves and freemen, Jews and gentiles—all will receive grace. At the same time, however, God does establish rank, order, authority, and honor by degree.

Just as God Himself manifests His esteem, so He calls us to show our respect for other people. Give "honor to whom honor is due," we are clearly commanded, and "outdo one another in showing honor" (Rom. 13:7; 12:10). To honor others is not to degrade ourselves. Only the honorable can give honor. And as it is with giving love, we lose nothing by our giving; rather, our honor is multiplied by the Lord who gives all.

WHO SHOULD RECEIVE HONOR?

God

We must revere God as the creator and Lord of life. "Those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed," God warned the old priest Eli (1 Sam. 2:30). Eli's inability to honor God by teaching his sons obedience brought him and his sons to destruction. David, on the other hand, honored God. He established orchestras and encouraged singers and craftsmen to praise God; he wrote psalms and hymns of adoration that are still used. And David received an everlasting covenant with God.

Honoring God is the cornerstone of honor. People who cease to respect God will soon dishonor the family, and then all other social relationships. The Law, therefore, begins by commanding that God be honored, and then proceeds to require reverence for parents and neighbors (Ex. 20).

When Jesus was on earth, He taught His followers to honor the Father, and He was honored by Him as well. "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased," the Father confirmed when Jesus was baptized (Lk. 3:22). Jesus knew that the Father had honored Him, and He desired everyone else to do the same. In fact, Jesus went on to say, "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him" (Jn. 5:23).

God, the source of respect, determines who should receive it. We know who and what to respect because God has revealed this through His servants and confirmed it by His Spirit.

Honoring our parents is the first evidence that we are really honoring God.

Parents

If we want to honor and obey God, we will show respect for the persons and roles of our fathers and mothers. Such an attitude is important to our happiness and well-being, for until we can properly esteem our parents, it is unlikely that we will truly learn to esteem others. Parents thus have a serious responsibility to teach their children to honor God, and then parents. "Honor your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land," is a promise that applies today (Ex. 20:12). Honoring our

parents is the first evidence that we are really honoring God.

Often, Christians who have severe problems in relating to God and the Church can trace the difficulty back to their childhood relationships with their fathers and mothers. Likewise, well-adjusted Christians can usually thank their parents for the ability to experience God as their Father and the Church as their family.

Husbands and Wives

In much the same way, a woman's attitude toward her husband, the head of the family, reflects her relationship toward Christ, the Head of the Church. Scripture therefore enjoins wives to honor their husbands, to be subject to them "as to the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). This is no longer an unquestioned custom or tradition in secular society. Today, women will maintain this attitude of honor only out of personal conviction. The woman who truly manifests her esteem for her husband may face some ridicule, but her family will bless her. The woman who dishonors her husband makes it easier for others to do the same, and eventually his dishonor will become her own.

It works both ways, though. Husbands are commanded to honor their wives. Perhaps out of ignorance or insecurity in their own role, some husbands are reluctant to do this. But the Scriptures are clear. Peter reminds us that wives are fellow-heirs of God's grace, and therefore worthy of honor (1 Pet. 3:7). Proverbs points out that the husband of a good woman praises her (Pr. 31:28-29).

The problem in many marriages is that husbands and wives are waiting for the other to begin giving honor. But since no one can give what he doesn't have, respect should be shown first by whichever spouse knows the honor of being God's child. This attitude will eventually elicit a like response, not only from the other partner, but also from their children, who tend to imitate what they see.

Older People

Once a person has learned to honor

his parents, he should extend that honor to all who are older than he. "Do not rebuke an older man but exhort him as you would a father," Paul counsels Timothy; and treat "older women like mothers" (1 Tim. 5:1-2). In God's plan, showing respect for age is honoring endurance, experience, and wisdom.

One sad commentary on America is its worship of youthfulness and its abandonment of the aged. Our Social Security payments, retirement benefits, and nursing homes simply do not fulfill the requirements of honor. Because God commands it, we must learn anew how to honor the aged. We should do so out of gratitude, but we can also be motivated by the knowledge that we ourselves will someday grow old. We might consider the law of sowing and reaping, and sow to the

**In God's plan,
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aged what we ourselves desire to reap in our old age.

Rulers

Often, when I read Paul's letter to the Romans, I have to remind myself that the people he was writing to were not living in a democratic society governed by Christian leaders; they were in an environment that was hostile to Christianity. Nonetheless, Paul instructs these Christians to submit to those in authority by paying "taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due" (Rom. 13:7).

The reason we are taught to honor government and authority is that God established them. God Himself has ordained secular authority to keep

peace among the unregenerate and lawless. Godly people can relate to authority without fearing it, but even if they should occasionally suffer at the hands of the government—as Peter and Paul did—Christians are still to honor it.

Of course it is important to distinguish between honoring the government and obeying it. David's relationship to King Saul, for example, is a study in honor without obedience. Peter's reply to the Jewish council is another (Acts 4:19). The book of Daniel recounts several stories of godly men who honored secular authority but were forced to disobey it. The king of Babylon gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego a choice. They could fall down and worship the image he had made, or be thrown into a furnace (Dan 3:15). But since their king's command violated a higher law, the three men chose to disobey, willingly submitting to the punishment and trusting God. They knew that whether they lived or died, their first allegiance was to God's law. In the end, God spared His servants and the king changed the law. The same point emerges from the episode of Daniel in the lion's den: honor the government even when it's wrong, but obey God's law believing that He will help you endure the consequences.

Christians must avoid equating Church and country while at the same time remembering that both spiritual and secular authority have been ordained by God. His people will honor both.

God's Servants

God's people will also honor the messengers of God, who come bearing His Word. We must be sure to honor God's delegates as we do the Lord, since the love and honor shown messengers should be directly proportional to the honor in which their master is held.

Like other nations, Israel had a problem recognizing God's servants and honoring them as His spokesmen. One generation would mistreat or murder a prophet, and the next would honor him. Elijah, Elisha, and other

Honor the government even when it's wrong, but obey God's law believing that He will help you endure the consequences.

prophets spent much of their time avoiding death at the hands of their own people.

In his message at the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus pointed out Israel's rejection of God's messengers. It was a sensitive subject, always sure to anger His listeners. These Jews considered themselves lovers of God, yet they abused His servants.

Jesus made it clear that a person must receive Him and His disciples in order to receive the Father. "He who receives you receives me," Jesus told the disciples, "and he who receives me receives him who sent me" (Matt. 10:40). Jesus even made this welcoming of Himself a condition of His return to Israel; "You will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'" (Matt. 23:39). When God's servants are received in honor, then He Himself will come forth in glory.

In addition, Scripture makes it clear that anyone who assists God's disciples or messengers will not go unrewarded. Rahab, for instance, escaped death during the fall of Jericho because she had protected two of Israel's spies. Although Rahab was a prostitute, she and her family were spared because of her kindness to God's servants (Josh. 2:1-21; 6:22-25). Likewise, Jesus assures us that the same blessing applies to anyone who gives so much as a cup of cold water to a disciple. "Truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward" (Matt. 10:42).

Others

Space does not here permit a detailed discussion of everyone who should receive honor, but a quick

mention of some might be helpful. Scripture tells us to honor wise men, and masters or employers. We are to honor all of God's people as our brother and sisters, and the Church as Christ's bride and as the Body of Christ of which we are a part. Because mankind is created in the image of God, we are to accord all men and women some measure of honor.

According to Scripture, offices and institutions may also be respected. This is true of marriage, for instance, and of certain secular and religious offices, even though the people holding such offices may themselves be unworthy of respect. When Paul stood before the Jewish council and was illegally struck on the mouth at the high priest's command, Paul ceased protesting once he discovered he was rebuking the high priest; in obedience to the law, Paul respected the office, though it was held by a dishonorable hireling (Acts 23:1-5).

Lest our "kingdom mentality" be eroded by contemporary disdain for the royalty of God and His people, we must search out God's will about who and what to honor. Since showing reverence is a means of selecting what we wish to encourage, it is vital that we learn to revere the qualities and institutions that should be preserved. Besides, honoring what God honors will produce in us the very qualities that will sustain and deliver us and bring God's honor upon us.

We must resist the temptation in society today to give great honor to qualities and institutions which do not deserve it and to give only slight honor to the things of God. An example of this is the acclaim given a sports hero—fame, ovations, million-dollar salaries—as opposed to the yawning accorded to God and His servants. No wonder youngsters are more zealous at baseball than at godliness! Unfortunately, such abuses often result in major league players and minor league prophets.

QUALITIES WORTHY OF HONOR

On the one hand, Scripture commands us to honor people who hold

certain stations in life—parents, rulers, older people—even if they are not personally examples of righteousness. On the other hand, Scripture makes it clear that Christian qualities of character are cause for honor. God promised to honor those who mature in godliness; we also should respect them.

The basis characteristic is fear of the Lord, or honoring God. "The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life" (Pr. 22:4). It is one of Scripture's favorite themes that a holy fear and reverence for God will produce in us the kind of humble attitude that God wants to honor before mankind. Arrogance is sure to bring dishonor.

Righteousness—that obedience unto God which brings us into right relationships with Him, with Jesus, and with our family and our neighbor—is another quality that God will honor. "Righteousness exalts a nation," Scripture tells us (Pr. 14:34). Not only do right relationships enable a people to be more successful, but they also make it possible for God to demonstrate His esteem for them before other nations; God could not long elevate the unforgiving and unholy without promoting unrighteousness among mankind.

We must resist the temptation in society today to give great favor to qualities and institutions which do not deserve it and to give only slight honor to the things of God.

Wisdom is another quality praised in Scripture. It brings people into honor, as it did Solomon. The loyal, too, will be honored, as will those who serve the Lord and persevere in doing good. God promises that those who learn to accept correction will be honored.

It is good to remember in all this that we need not strive for honor, but rather for these good qualities. Nor do we need to honor ourselves. If we are

pleasing to God, then He will cause us to be honored as He sees fit.

HONOR BY DEGREES

God honors all who honor Him, but not to the same degree. We too must learn not only to honor, but to do so in an appropriate measure. Honor should be commensurate with the value or office of the one being honored. For instance, a middle-grade government official would not rank a limousine and a twenty-one-gun salute. Nor would a visiting prime minister deserve to be met with a Volkswagen. If the same measure of respect were extended to everyone, regardless of behavior, character, or station, it would lose its meaning and become mere politeness.

Scripture makes it clear that people are to receive varying degrees of honor, according to their qualities and positions. All elders are worthy of honor, but Paul instructs Timothy to give double honor to elders who rule well. Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah were

two kings of Judah who received great esteem. David, however, was esteemed above all the kings of Israel, since the Messiah was of his seed. A warning against taking the seat of honor, Jesus' parable of the marriage feast shows that some of the wedding guests were to be shown more honor than others (Lk. 14:7-11).

HOW TO SHOW HONOR

Honor is an attitude that must become an act. Once we decide that it is good to honor, we will want to make that honor effective by making it obvious.

"Honor the Lord from your wealth, and from the first of all your produce," says Proverbs 3:9. Gifts of money or material benefits are effective and appropriate ways of showing respect, not only to the Lord but also to other people. Since money is earned by time and energy, it is actually a gift of life to the one being honored.

Another important way to honor people is by everyday practical ser-

vices. One might tactfully but deliberately try to discover and fulfill others' personal desires. Letting others have the first word, or giving them privileges in everyday situations, are other possibilities. Husbands might honor their wives by paying attention to outward forms of politeness such as opening doors and refraining from criticizing them in front of children or guests. Creativity, determination, and the Lord's leading will unearth many such ways of showing honor.

Honor can be lost. It can be forfeited through pride, unfaithfulness, foolishness, and sin. Honor is a trust; once someone is honored, his life is no longer private; he must answer to God and man. Honor brings enemies. The jealous and ambitious who have sought in vain to be honored themselves will despise those who are. But, like a precious jewel which might be envied by others, honor is well worth having. ♡

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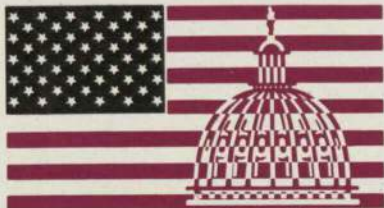


Rendering Honor to Whom It Is Due

We want to take this opportunity to recognize and honor two of our senior staff members at Christian Growth Ministries: Gus and Dot Bouldry. Since the earliest days of *New Wine*, back in 1969, Gus and Dot have helped share the burden for distributing the magazine.

When CGM moved to its present location in 1972, Dot began working specifically with the Data Department, and she's still there today. Meanwhile, Gus continues to be the mainstay of our volunteer labor force, often working five days a week.

These two have been a daily inspiration and encouragement to all of us here at CGM, and we honor them now for their faithfulness, expressing our gratitude and thanks for their loving service.



INTERCESSORS REPORT

by John Beckett

God has a special place of ministry and service for those who have reached their golden years. In Luke 2, we get a glimpse into the life of an eighty-four year old widow named Anna, who "departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." Little did she realize that she, like the devout and elderly Simeon, would see her long-awaited Lord as the infant Jesus was brought to the temple to be dedicated. God's blessing to Anna rewarded a heart that had yearned after Him. Her old age didn't get in the way. Rather, her years of steadfastness made her the ideal choice to tell all Jerusalem: "the Savior has come."

Today, our older brothers and sisters in the Lord have become the victims of a secular world that greatly discounts the worth of the elderly. For many, a sense of self-worth has also departed—and the days and years are whiled away in loneliness and lack of purpose.

Scripture does not support the idea that an elderly person ceases to be useful. Moses was eighty and Aaron eighty-three when God set them before Pharaoh. Both spent another forty years in one of history's greatest challenges of leadership. Abraham was seventy-five when he left Haran, clutching God's promise of strength to him: "... I will make of thee a great nation." His life was just beginning. And when Sarah, his wife, laughed at the prospect of having a child in her old age, the Lord challenged her faith, saying, "Is there anything too hard for the Lord?"

God does not place the limitations on age that we do. True, our increased age will alter the *nature* of our service, but not the *importance* of that service. Many, like Anna, have found that the

older person is in a unique time of life to engage in intercessory prayer. There are three basic reasons why this essential ministry to the Body befits life's later years.

First, there is a maturity in perspective that comes only with age. A person in his seventies today is over one-third the age of our republic, has lived through the administrations of fourteen presidents, seen two world wars, seen us plummet from the hedonism of the twenties to the Great Depression of the thirties, and has seen us progress technologically from the "horseless carriage" to interplanetary space travel. During this century, Christians have seen the fulfillment of the prayers of earlier generations who sought God for our current outpouring of the Holy Spirit, producing what many have called the most exciting period in the history of the Church. One cannot live this span of time without developing a wisdom and insight into God's working that eludes the younger person.

Secondly, our later years produce an instinctive desire to know God, and be at peace with Him. Approaching the climax of our service on earth produces a special quality in communion with God.

Thirdly, the older person is specially suited for intercessory prayer because he has more time available. Intercession requires adequate time to know the mind of God, to feel His burden, and to persist undistracted in this high calling until His answers come. Whereas the energy and physical stamina of those who are younger equips them for raising children, long hours of work, and crowded, demanding schedules, the older person is free to dwell in the Lord's presence.

In Zechariah's vision of the restored Jerusalem, he sees the city filled with

the people of God of all ages. "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing . . . they shall be my people, and I will be their God" (Zech. 8:4, 5, 8).

God in His wisdom equips us for varying aspects of ministry at different ages, and the Body of Christ is strengthened when we realize the unique contribution that our older brothers and sisters can make. Since none is more or less important, this places a responsibility on those of us who are younger to assist and encourage. No ministry has greater impact on the progress of the Kingdom than intercessory prayer. As those who are ripe in their years enter into intercession as Anna did, supported by those functioning in other aspects of God's work, the Body of Christ will be richer and greatly more effective in achieving its purposes in God. ☞

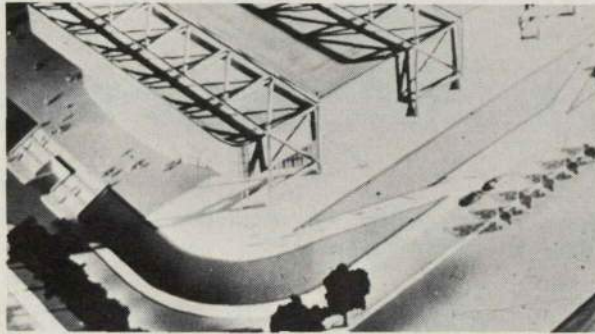
Just Around the Corner

Next month's *New Wine* will feature a personal interview by *New Wine* Managing Editor Dick Leggatt with Charles Colson, author of *Born Again* and former counsel to Richard Nixon. In addition we will have articles by former *New Wine* Managing Editor Bob Sutton on prison ministry and by John Poole on ministry in the inner city.

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A CRISIS Of TRUTH

by Bob Mumford



The need for God's absolute standard in our explosive world.

Our generation is facing a crisis—one that could well be illustrated by a man who is sent to defuse a ticking time bomb. As he reaches the fuse mechanism with only a few seconds remaining before the bomb explodes, he is horrified by the realization that he has forgotten which way to turn the fuse to disarm the bomb! Turning it in one direction will disarm it; turning it the other direction will detonate it and destroy everything! At such a moment, this man does not need opinions or educated guesses—he needs facts! He needs the truth!

The crisis in our society, as I understand it, is a *crisis of truth*. What direction do we turn this crazy world to keep it from blowing up? Webster says that truth is the “body of real things,” or things as they really are, and each of us bases our actions and our life-decisions on our view of truth—facts as we understand them. However, the question today is “What is real?” If our society has no way of determining what is true and what is not true, how can it be expected to make decisions that will defuse rather than detonate our volatile society?

I see four areas of crisis in truth today:

Epistemology: How we know what we know is true.

Men are saying today that our knowledge of the truth is obtained from varied sources. These sources range all the way from human institutions on one side, to forms of scientific measurement on the other. The basic assumption in secular society, however, is that there is no one reliable source for obtaining knowledge which can serve as a standard for all other sources.

Theology: The truth of religion and spiritual things.

Theories about the nature of God and the reality of a spiritual universe are being declared by drug users, gurus, occult practitioners and even scientists, doctors and parapsychologists. Some dismiss the concept of a spiritual world as just a product of one's superheated imagination, while others experience and enjoy the God of the Bible.

Psychology and the social sciences:

Why man acts the way he does.

Current views of man regard him on one hand as the pinnacle of evolution, or on the other as a mere accumulation of chemicals in the material universe. Arising out of this are behaviorism and determinism, theories which profess to have “answers,” but later prove incomplete and unsatisfactory.

Ethics: What is right and wrong.

The standard for modern ethics is proclaimed on bumper stickers—“If it feels good, do it!” (Translated, this means, “Let your sex drive tell you what is right and wrong.”) The strongest opinion seems to be, “Whatever society (the majority) says, I will follow.” Others insist that it doesn't make any difference what you do, just as long as no one gets hurt in the process.

Is it any wonder confusion reigns? Which of the voices should you listen to, and which direction do you turn, knowing that your decision could affect the rest of your life? The problem, of course, is that our society as a whole has forfeited the final authority of God and His Word, and

consequently the ability on its own to concretely determine what is truth, reality, proper human behavior or an equitable ethical standard. The resulting absence of a fixed standard of truth results in chaos; there is nothing secure or absolute upon which to act.

However, as Christians we believe that there is a Final Authority who has told us the way things really are—He has given us *revealed truth*. The objective propositional revelation of the Scripture gives the Christian a secure standard of truth upon which to act. For us, there is no crisis of truth.

In epistemology, we know what is true because God has revealed what is true. With the God of truth as our source, our knowledge of truth has meaning.

In theology, we understand something of the nature of God and the spiritual realm because God, who is Spirit, has told us and continues to tell us through His Word. Not only has He told us, but He has chosen to personify His very nature for us in Jesus, His Son.

We can understand the true nature of man and psychology because God's Word describes the nature of man in all his complexity, declaring that man's fulfillment comes only in reconciliation with His Creator through Jesus Christ.

Finally, we can know what is right and wrong in the realm of ethics because He has given us His Law-Word. For the Christian, the standard of truth is settled.

One would expect, then, that in Bible-believing churches there would be a peaceful, unified flow of belief and conduct. Unfortunately it has not worked out that way. It seems that the Body of Christ is undergoing its own crisis in truth. Sometimes I think, "Lord, your kids seem even more confused than the world's kids!" Our problem is *not* in our standard of truth, the Scriptures, but rather in the way we understand and apply that standard.

I would like to share some principles about the nature of God's Word and spiritual truth that have greatly helped me to understand what is

happening in the Body of Christ today. I believe that if these principles could be understood and embraced, they would greatly diminish our confusion and misunderstanding.

Before we present these principles let me just clearly state that I hold unwaveringly to the infallibility of the Scriptures; and if a man is having a hard time fitting some portion of Scripture into his pattern for living, I believe he should adjust himself rather than attempting to adjust God or His Word.

Also before we look at these principles, we need to examine the five categories into which all biblical truth can be placed:

Historical Truth:

"Jesus lived in Galilee." "Paul was from Tarsus." "John 3:16 says," This is direct, uncomplicated information which the Bible gives us about something or someone. Unfortunately though, many people get hung up in this area of truth, assuming Bible study to be only an unending collection of facts. Although simple Bible truth is necessary and foundational, by itself it may not produce in the life of a believer all that God is after, as the following incident will illustrate. Once a man came into our church, stood up, and quoted most of the Gospel of John. Everyone was really impressed. While I was thinking to myself, "I wish I could do that!" the Lord seemed to speak very quietly in my spirit, "Don't be overly impressed with that."

"Why not?" I asked, since I was as impressed as anyone else.

The Lord answered, "Even a tape recorder can do that."

Information *for its own sake* is of relative value. Scripture knowledge and memorization is excellent as long as we remember that it is primarily foundational.

Personal Truth:

This is the Scripture applied to our hearts by the Holy Spirit. How many of you heard or read 1 Corinthians 10:13 many times before it became *yours*—that is, real to you personally. 1 Corinthians 10:13 was always there, but *you* never saw it before. Every time God starts speaking to me about

something new, I find verses all over the Bible that I never realized were there. This is personal truth, or inspiration: the application of biblical truth to the life of the believer.

Church Truth:

This is the revealed truth upon which the Body of Christ rests and grows. It is applicable to all believers everywhere, and involves our comprehending God's eternal purpose, instructions for world evangelism, as well as the patterns of Church structure.

Present Truth:

This is truth God wants emphasized to the Church today. In 1517, the "present truth" was justification by faith. In recent years, God's emphasis was the truth of the Holy Spirit and His power; and today, the "present truth" is an unfolding of the biblical concepts of authority, relationship and community. God's emphasis is always changing, while His written revelation remains fixed. Confusion and contention result when we fail to recognize the *present* aspects of Bible truth.

Prophetic Truth:

The Scripture speaks to us about God's intentions for the future. Through His revelation we understand not only the meaning of history as it has unfolded, but we understand the consummation of history and see God's purpose and sovereignty in the ages. Prophetic truth means *insight* into the events of the day as much as *foresight* concerning what is to happen. Ideally, then, the Christian can know where he *has* been (historic truth), where he is (present truth) and where he is going (prophetic truth) (see Jn. 8:12 and 13:13).

Now let us look at the four principles we spoke of earlier for apprehending biblical truth and understanding how the Lord administers it to us today.

The Principle of EXPECTATION

We often use the expression "from A to Z" to mean "everything," or "all that there is." Let us assume that *all*

Bible truth could be included on a scale that goes from A to Z. This is what is meant by the saying "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" (Rev. 1:11). The principle of expectation says that God will only reveal to you, or make real to you, the *degree of truth which you expect Him to reveal*. If I believe that God will give me "A, B, C, D," then He will reveal to me truths "A" through "D." What is the principle? "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7:7). We only ask for what we believe we will receive, and we only receive what we ask for. It is a principle of God's dealings with His children. The Lord said to Israel, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee . . ." He will answer, but first we must call.

Denominations and churches, as well as individuals, expect and receive different things. The First Evangelical Church on the corner expects the Lord to give them "C"—salvation. Every Sunday the pastor preaches salvation, gives an altar call, and expects people to get saved. And they do. God blessed them according to their expectation.

The Pentecostal Church down the road expects the Lord to bless them with "F" and "G"—people to be filled with the Holy Spirit and be healed. In this church, God will not only save people, He will heal them and fill them with the Holy Spirit. Why doesn't the Lord heal anyone in the First Evangelical Church? Nobody there expects Him to do it. Although they believe it is in the Bible (historical truth), the level of expectation is not present for any number of reasons.

Over in the next town there is a group asking God to form them into a New Testament community—they are expecting all the way to "K." They have seen something in God's Word and they say, "Oh Lord, make us a community of New Testament believers!" They are expecting and God is giving.

A while back Oral Roberts originated a little saying, "EXPECT A MIRACLE!" Do you know what he was seeking to do? He was trying to raise the level of people's expectations

so that God could meet them. God reveals Himself in direct proportion to what we expect Him to reveal. He can and will go beyond what we expect, but this is the *exception* rather than the norm.

Down at the end of our scale is "Z." "Z" is the limit of what the Lord has revealed to us in His Word. Two things about "Z" are very important, as well as interrelated. *First*, the majority of Christians generally assume they are already at "Z" no matter how far in God they have really come. It is our tendency to believe we have gone as far in God as anyone can venture. The unspoken attitude is, "If God were going to do anything more, He would do it for us."

My answer is, "Not if you don't *expect* Him to, He won't!"

Second, beyond "Z" is that area known as extra-biblical revelation. We can call that area "Z-1," "Z-2," and so on. This is the area of spiritism, horoscopes, the cults, the occult, extreme doctrines and the like. It is beyond the legal bounds of revealed scriptural knowledge and experience, and the Lord forbids us to become involved in it (Is. 8:19–22).

The problem we encounter is that those who *think* they have already arrived at "Z" (while in reality are at "G") naturally assume that those who go farther are into something which the Scripture does not teach—"Z-2," "Z-3," and so on. So if I, as a member of the First Evangelical Church, see the Pentecostals getting filled with the Holy Spirit, I am forced to do one of two things. Either I must admit that I am not at "Z" and expand my expectations of what the Lord will do for me; or, I must hold that there is nothing more beyond my own experience and say, "It's all from the Devil! That's the flesh! Those Pentecostals are into 'Z-5'!" This is probably the major cause of Christians accusing one another of "cult" activity.

The result is that any group which begins to move into a new realm of present truth is usually accused of heresy, demonic possession or error. And usually the most violent opposition and accusation comes from the last

group to move in what God was saying, for they thought they were at "Z" and do not believe anyone could legitimately go further than they did.

How do you really know if you are at "Z" or if you are at "Z-3"? This is a weighty subject that needs a more thorough treatment than we can give in this article. We might suggest, however, that there are three basic safeguards in this area:

First, pure motives. My motives must always be to do the will of the Father and to bring glory to Him. Anything which tickles my ego or excites a desire to be "superspiritual" should be suspect (Pr. 11:3).

Second, a love of the truth. This is a heart attitude that causes me to be true to the revealed Word of God, at whatever expense to my own life. When my life and God's Word do not match up, I am the one that changes (2 Thess. 2:12).

Third, a child-like trust in the Lord. Any time I begin to think I am mature enough to handle myself, I am headed for trouble! God is the teacher and I must keep myself trustfully dependent upon Him (Matt. 11:25).

Remember, God reveals Himself to us in direct proportion to what we expect.

The Principle of SOWING AND REAPING

In Galatians 6:7 we read, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap" (NAS). We usually interpret this passage in a negative sense and tell people, "Don't sow to the flesh or you will reap the flesh." This is true and should be taught, but I would like to suggest that we often neglect the positive side to this principle which teaches us something important about the nature of spiritual truth.

Sowing and reaping is a law of nature. If you sow carrots, you will pull up carrots when the harvest comes. Plant wheat—reap wheat, etc. This law is set forth by the Lord in

Genesis 1:11 where He says, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit *after their kind*" (NAS). This is the way the Lord ordained life to be brought forth.

The Word of God has been pictured in the Scriptures as seed which is expected to bring forth a harvest as it is sown (see Matthew 13). I believe the truth of the Word that we sow by teaching and preaching will be reaped in the lives of God's people as the fruit of that teaching.

I was once in a church where there was a marked absence of eyeglasses. Everyone had healthy eyes. Do you know why? The Lord had healed the pastor's eyes and he taught his people that God would heal their eyes. He kept planting the Word of healthy eyes, and pretty soon the seeds started to grow and eyes started being healed!

Whenever I visit a church where there are free-flowing prophetic ministries, I know what the pastor has been planting—prophesy seeds. I have been in communities where there is a sense of deep love and commitment among the people. What has been planted there? God's Word about relationship, commitment, serving and love.

There was a time when God began to deal with me about teaching on obedience and spiritual authority. People said, "Aw, Mumford, that's bondage. We don't need that stuff!" How many of you have ever tried to pound seeds into concrete? As I, like many, began to teach the scriptural principles of authority and obedience, people began coming to me and saying, "Bob, I don't think I am living in obedience to the Lord's commands." They thought it was all their idea, but in reality it was one of God's little seeds that found some fertile soil and started to sprout.

There is power in God's Word to bring forth life. "You have the *words of life* . . ." (Jn. 6:68). "The gospel . . . is the *power of God* for salvation . . ." (Rom. 1:16). Never think it is the man who preaches that brings forth the harvest. It is God's Word. Where His Word is taught, *He* brings a harvest.

The Principle of TRUTH IN TENSION

Liberal theologians and men who study the Scriptures solely in the power of their own intellect often say that the Bible is full of contradictions. Do you know, in a certain sense, they are right! Have you ever thought about this one: "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children . . . he cannot be My disciple" (Lk. 14:26, NAS) and "But if any one does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith . . ." (1 Tim. 5:8, NAS). They appear to be exact opposites! Which do you do, "hate" or "provide"?

Have you ever tried to resolve this one: "Whoever believes in Him should not perish . . ." (Jn. 3:16, NAS) and, "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him . . ." (Jn. 6:44, NAS). Which is it—"whoever" or "no one"? This argument between proponents of the sovereignty of God and the free will of man has raged for centuries.

Those who do not understand the nature of biblical truth cite such passages and declare that Scripture is self-contradicting. In reality, however, it is *self-correcting*. I call this principle "truth in tension." God puts truth in tension because we have a nasty habit of taking certain verses and carrying them beyond what God meant when He put them there in the first place. For example, did the Lord really mean for us to "hate" our families? In a proper understanding, yes, He did. He was speaking to those who were called to follow Him, but wanted to use their families as an excuse for not seeking the Kingdom of God. They needed their priorities adjusted. There are some in our own generation, however, who have used this command to let their families fall apart, their marriages break up, and their children run off in rebellion—all in the name of the

Kingdom of God. Even though that kind of catastrophe in family life is the farthest thing from demonstrating the love and fatherhood of God, some religious people look at this type of living and say, "Isn't it spiritual to make such sacrifices for the Lord!" The world takes a look and says, "If that is Christianity, I don't want it."

Because the Lord knew that some would pervert and abuse His command to "hate" their families, He gave us another one to keep us in line: "*provide* for your family!" The Lord is not contradicting Himself; He is giving us a command that will keep us from getting out of balance. Getting out of balance in this manner is *error by emphasis*. It is getting so hung up on one verse or teaching that we do not see the balancing factor for that teaching in the Scriptures.

What happens to the group that says, "If anyone is going to come to Christ, the Lord must draw them"? The lost seldom if ever come to the Lord, because this group does not see their responsibility to preach the Gospel to a lost world. This is overemphasis on the sovereignty of God. On the other extreme, those who overemphasize the responsibility of the Lord's people to bring sinners to Christ usually live under constant condemnation about witnessing, tend to become pushy and dogmatic in their evangelism, and neglect a needed emphasis on maturity and growth within the Body. Where is the balance? God has entrusted *us* with the preaching of the Gospel to the lost, but *He* is the one who is faithful to open their hearts and saves them. One side of this truth is to motivate us to action, the other side provides us with security and confidence in God's drawing power as we preach.

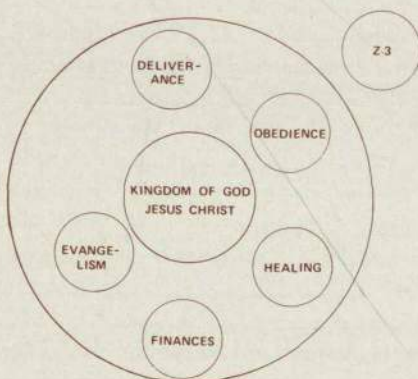
Throughout the Scriptures there are parallel truths that seem to contradict each other, but in reality they are there to keep us balanced. For example: liberty in the Spirit and order in the church; the priesthood of the believer and the authority vested in leadership; the love of God and the judgment of God; the submission of women and the equality of believ-

ers; prosperity and poverty; healing and suffering for Jesus; and celibacy and marriage. These are but a few of the truths God has placed "in tension" to keep us in a balanced walk.

Error and deception come when we begin to major on one teaching of Scripture at the exclusion of *any other part*.

The Principle of THE WHOLE BIBLICAL TRUTH

The principle of "The Whole Biblical Truth" is similar to our first principle, but it teaches an important truth which the first principle misses.



Within the large circle in this diagram, we will say, lies the whole of biblical truth. If you can find a truth in the Bible, it is within this circle. This includes historical truth, personal truth, church truth, present truth and prophetic truth. Each of the smaller circles within the large circle represents a different emphasis from the Word of God—salvation, healing, finances, deliverance and obedience are the ones I chose to picture here. Notice there is a small circle *outside* the scope of biblical truth. This is extra-biblical, or something that goes beyond what is revealed to us in God's Word. Earlier we called this a "Z-3." It represents error that needs to be exposed and corrected.

At the center of the circle is what I

understand to be the focal point of all Scripture—the Kingdom of God, or the centrality of the Lord Jesus.

Evangelism, you will notice, is closer to the center of the circle than the circle on finances. I have represented it in this way because I believe that evangelism is closer to the heart of God than teaching on finances. Does this mean all Bible truth is *not* of equal value? I believe it does. There are some things of greater importance and these should have greater consideration in our teaching than others. That does not mean that truths of lesser importance are not a part of the revealed Word of God, or that they are untrue or unnecessary. It simply means that there must be priorities in our teaching.

It should be obvious that all our teaching should be in proper perspective to the "bull's-eye," which is the Kingdom of God or the person of the Lord Jesus. Centering our life, teaching, or experience some place other than the bull's-eye throws everything off-center and out of perspective. It doesn't mean we are in error; it means we are concentrating our attention on something other than the central theme of the Scriptures. This, by the way, is the meaning of the term "eccentric"—out of center.

Have you ever been in a church that was centered in deliverance? It tends to become so demon-conscious that soon every problem must be corrected by deliverance. Is this error? Not necessarily, *just off-center*.

Do you think it is possible to be salvation-centered and miss God's purpose? I was once invited to minister in a church of about 500 members. I was sitting on the platform with the pastor and as we were worshipping and praising, he leaned over to me and said, "Bob, do you see that couple in the middle, about halfway back? She has on a black dress and he has on a blue suit."

"Yes, I see them."

"They're sinners!"

"They are?"

"Yes, we've been praying for them for a long time—you're going to preach on salvation, aren't you?"

"Pastor," I asked, "why did you invite me here?"

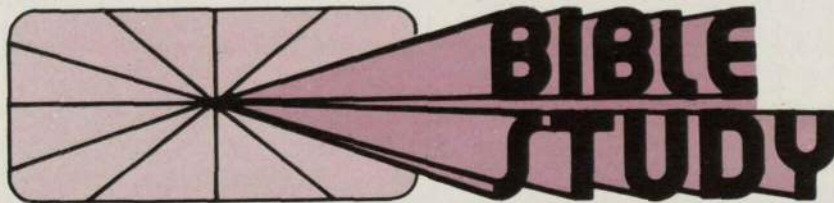
"To minister," he replied, looking a little puzzled.

"There are 498 hungry sheep sitting there, and you want me to let them starve while I direct all I have to say to two poor little sinners?" He stuttered and stammered a little and then I added, "Do you mind if I just feed the sheep and let God do something for those two?"

By the way, they did get saved—"by accident." If you hold to what is central in God's truth, He sees to it that everyone has their needs met. At least that is what is said in Matthew chapter 6 and verse 33. If you teach about Jesus and His Kingdom, people will be saved, healed, delivered and blessed with financial provision because He is the giver of all those things. He told His disciples to "Preach the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." When they did as He told them, all the other needs were taken care of.

Do I teach on healing? I sure do. I also teach on salvation, finances, deliverance, authority and submission, church structure and all kinds of different truths. As best I know how, I try to proclaim the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). Being properly centered in our life and teaching is not a matter of excluding any portion of truth. It is *rightly relating* and centering our life, teaching and emphasis in the Kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus.

So these are the four principles we have outlined for understanding biblical truth and how it works: expectation, sowing and reaping, truth in tension, and the whole biblical truth. I believe that if the Body of Christ could come to a proper understanding of these principles, then we could provide for one another the needed grace of forbearing and much of the confusion and hurt in the Body of Christ could begin to be healed. And then we could get on with the commission we have been given: to proclaim and demonstrate the life and power of our resurrected Christ to the nations. ☞



SENIOR CHRISTIANS

by Jim Croft

We are living in a day when there seems to be an inordinate premium placed upon youth. However, God often circumvents our preconceived ideas by using the aged to show Himself strong. It was the elders and not the youngsters who were commended in Hebrews 11:2 for obtaining a good report through their exemplary faith.

(Bible Study answers are found on page 31.)

1. Read Proverbs 10:27 and 1 Peter 3:10 and list three things that will prolong life.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
2. If we are diligent in setting our love upon the Lord, what will He satisfy us with? (*Ps. 91:14-16.*) _____
3. We Gentile believers are heirs through our faith in Jesus Christ to the blessings promised to Abraham in the Old Testament. We, like Abraham, should go to our heavenly reward in _____ and be buried in a good _____. (*Gen. 15:15.*)
4. It is said that experience is a good teacher. Read Job 12:12 and list two worthy attributes that come with old age. _____
5. Read Job 32:4-9 and answer the following questions.
 - a. Why did Elihu wait until Job and his friends had spoken before he spoke? _____
 - b. What could give a young man understanding beyond his years? _____
6. Moses fulfilled Psalm 92:14, the promise that the righteous shall bring forth fruit in their old age, in that when he died his _____ were not _____, nor his _____ force _____. (*Deut. 34:7.*)
7. Titus 2:2-5 gives some instructions for aged men and women. Read that text and answer the following.
 - a. Should an older man be known for his abundant jesting? _____
 - b. What three things should he be sound in? _____
- c. What should an older woman be a teacher of? _____
- d. Whom should they teach the young women to love? _____
- e. If they are faithful to teach these things, what will they protect from being blasphemed? _____
8. How old was Methuselah's father when he began to walk with God? _____
9. What was his testimony before he was translated and by what means was he translated? (*Heb. 11:5.*) _____
10. According to Joshua 14:6-13, what man was vigorous enough to take a new land, driving out all enemies at age 85? _____
11. How old was he when he first said, "We are able to overcome"? _____
12. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Therefore, as recorded in Isaiah 46:4, we can depend on the Lord to do what three things for us in our old age? _____
13. New Testament believers should honor the older men as _____ and the older women as _____. (*1 Tim. 5:1-2.*)
14. Hebrews 11 is called the "faith chapter." Read verses 1-22 and list the five names of the patriarchs whose most commendable acts of faith occurred very close to the time of their passing from this life.
 - a. _____ b. _____ c. _____
 - d. _____ e. _____
15. 2 Corinthians 12:14 teaches by implication that _____ should lay up for their _____.
16. However, 1 Timothy 5:4 teaches that it is also _____ and _____ before God for the _____ or nephews to requite or repay their _____ for this when they are old.
17. Mark 7:5-13 records that Jesus called the Pharisees _____ because they sought to deny their parents financial support, claiming the money was set aside as a _____ or gift to God.
18. When the Pharisees took this attitude, what were they laying aside and what were they holding to? _____

Turning You!

How to overcome boredom in later life.

In our younger years other people establish our goals. Sometimes it is not until we are fifty plus that we find we can activate a dream and turn it into a goal. I would like to suggest that you pause—stop right now—and thoughtfully ask yourself, “What have I always dreamed of doing?”

Then, if for reasons of retirement, health, change of location, or any other factor, recycling is in order for you, ask yourself another question: “What is keeping me from moving in the direction of what I would most like to do?” You may then want to consider some of the things we have discussed so far: polishing up your skills, taking new training, availing yourself of social or vocational opportunities, and so on.

Until we have a goal, life can be just going around in circles. Makes me think of a scene in *Alice in Wonderland*. Alice had met up with the Cheshire cat and asked him for directions. As I recall, the conversation went something like this:

Alice: Please tell me which way I should go from here.

Cat: Depends on where you want to go.

Alice: I really don't care where I go.

Cat: Then it doesn't matter which way you go.

Nothing can so contribute to a sense of futility as not having a place to go, for how do we know when we are halfway there or, for that matter, when we arrive? We don't know which landmarks to take for direction or which pitfalls to avoid.

Dreams

into

Goals

by Jeanette
Lockerbie

“It's the realistic goals you set for your life that can give it meaning and fulfillment,” says psychiatrist Dr. Roy W. Menninger. I like Dr. Menninger's modifying “realistic.” Goals we cannot reasonably attain are probably worse than none. Why? Because even in the setting of goals for ourselves there is a certain excitement and anticipation. Then, when we find we cannot make it (for whatever reason) our spirits droop lower than they were before we had any goal in view.

One of the problems, therefore, about goal setting stems from the individual's aiming for something unrealistic. I see this occasionally in a woman with an emphasis on housecleaning. She decides to do the whole

house. So she hauls things out of closets and drawers and cupboards and goes at it to meet her goal. But even before noon she is so tired that the project goes slower and slower. By mid-afternoon she is exhausted and surrounded by all the clutter and doesn't know which way to turn. “I should never have started this in the first place,” she groans. But *starting* it was not the problem. Having an unrealistic goal was what did her in. I know, for I've tried this and I know where it got me. The true satisfaction, I find, is in deciding to do a piece of work and finish it. The same is true of the amateur gardener who plows into the job and, because he goes at it too hard the first day, can barely move the

next day. So he gives up.

Some people set about to activate a dream of becoming an artist. They indulge in a spending spree for oils and brushes and canvases. But they may not be realistic about starting at the bottom, so they become easily discouraged. Not only have they not attained their dream but they have lost money in the process. There are, however, many who do set realistic goals, and their lives are enriched as they move toward fulfillment and realization of their dreams.

Achievement usually costs perseverance over the things that would discourage and daunt us. Therefore I like the words Booker T. Washington left us: "Success is to be measured not so much by the position one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed."

It should be said that *we don't always succeed*. Having a goal does not ensure the achieving of it. But how much better to set a goal and strive for it than, as is facetiously said, "to aim at nothing and succeed."

I remember blinking a time or two at what I was reading in the classified ads in a Bengali newspaper. It was in the *jobs wanted* category. More than one would-be employee described his qualifications for a position as "B.A. (Failed)." I had heard people joking about this, but I didn't know it was true. Actually there is nothing about it that should make us laugh. Here is a person, usually a young man, who has somehow managed to get through high school and to be accepted in a college.

Jeanette Lockerbie is editor of *Psychology for Living Magazine* and staff writer for the Narramore Christian Foundation of Rosemead, California. She has authored several books and in her later years has become a world traveler, seeing much of Europe, the Holy Land, and the Far East, as well as the United States and Canada. She has two grown children and resides in Pasadena, California.

He had even taken exams, but these he had failed. This did not, however, take away from him the years of study. He was advertising himself as being head and shoulders above his fellow job seekers who had never attended college or university. Failing the exams was just a part of his experience and not the most important part. (It could be that such a person didn't have access to the right textbooks because of a shortage in that country, or he may have had no way of getting to the place where the exams were given—and thus he "failed.")

Another thing about goals is to keep in mind that they should not be permitted to control us totally—that is, goals for their own sake. It is not the goal that is so all-important. There must be satisfaction along the way toward this goal. There are people who seemingly go through life only for a goal they have set off in the future. It is never today, but some far-off tomorrow when they expect to enjoy life—"When the house is paid for"—"when the kids are grown"—"When I retire"—"When I have enough money." My minister-brother says, "*Enough* money is always more that the person has." This would say to me that the one who makes money his goal in life will never arrive. He will never have enough. Even so, he will mortgage today's enjoyment to pay for that mirage of tomorrow.

As in every area of life, making goals has to have a balance. And we are all the more likely to stick with our goal over the long haul if we segment it into short-term aims which we can enjoy in the meantime. For example, I am frequently asked, "How do you ever get a book written?" Generally the question has little or nothing to do with technique and procedure. Rather, the person (often a writer or would-be writer) may be voicing a longing: "I wish I could stick with it and finish a book [or some other project] I start."

I am glad to share with such people that I, too, would likely have difficulty if I thought of a writing project as "doing a book." I start out knowing

what the book will be about—where it is going—and then I chop it into chapter topics. This is like getting through today, rather than assuming the burdens of a whole lifetime. God favors this kind of thinking. He promises us: "... as thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deut. 33:25).

It was with this comforting thought in mind that I wrote these lines from "The Gift of Today and Tomorrow."

But our God, He who made us
Knows just what we need,
That "Time" is too long
Without segments
And courage breaks—and so on;
So in love and in wisdom
He gave us the gift
Of time as "today" and "tomorrow."

Probably, if we could borrow tomorrow's strength in a kind of credit-card fashion—"Use today and pay tomorrow"—we would do just that. But in His wisdom God apporions us *by the day* what we need for the day.

Because I see the chapters as pieces that I can handle, these short-term goals can be achieved. First thing I know I have reached my long-term goal: the book is completed!

Again let me say that we do not always follow through to the completion of our goal. Sometimes this is dependent on other people or on circumstances beyond our own control which we could not foresee when we established the goal. I was caused to think of this one day this week when I heard someone say, "I've done everything I can on this project, but the people doing the next part just aren't cooperating." To my surprise, the other person, an efficient supervisor, suggested, "Check it off as incomplete." I grinned a bit over that; then the thought struck me that it was probably a good suggestion. When we have done all we can, then we have a right to check it off, not to feel that we have failed.

For the good feeling that success gives us, we all need to have short-term as well as long-term goals. Obvious

achievement also tends to motivate other people. It seems to me that I have lived most of my life with goal-oriented people. As a minister's wife I recall with deep satisfaction the things we planned and, with the help of the Lord, saw through to completion. An instance stands out in my mind. We had just finished a tremendous missionary conference. The missionary speakers had outdone themselves; the people had responded with great dedication; the financial goal was exceeded. A high spirit of jubilation made eyes shine. It was as though everybody present had established goals and each one of them had been reached. The crowd had thinned until just a few of the church officials were standing around enthusiastically, when one of them said, "Okay, pastor, what do you have cooking for us next?" They reveled in the success they had been a part of, and they were ready to go to the next undertaking. It is always easier to motivate helpers when they can see we have a defined goal, that we know where we are heading and have a plan for getting there.

Working with the Apostle Paul must have been like this. He knew where he was going. He speaks of "one thing I do" (not a buckshot approach) and "I press toward the mark for the prize" (see Philippians 3:13, 14). It was not the reward itself that kept Paul pressing on. It was what was involved in winning the prize—it was a contest which Jesus had initiated. He is the One who will judge and award the prizes for faithful proclaiming of the Gospel. We can all get in on it, for there is no closing date for entering—until Jesus comes. How exciting to realize that we will be there (if we have trusted Jesus as our Savior), and I imagine that in addition to rewards there will be some surprises. Some who have never made earth's headlines just may find themselves away up front.

Maybe we need to think about goals in our *service for Christ*. It is commendable to have a concern for the whole world for which Jesus died. But—let's face it—most of us cannot

"go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (see Mark 16:15). We would have to be on worldwide television with everybody tuned in, to accomplish that. But there are our neighbors and the milkman and the newsboy and the mailman. (Oh, don't neglect your *mailman*; he brings you good news lots of times!)

If it is success we are looking for—And who isn't?—recycling some of our time into working for God brings guaranteed results. I was recently impressed as a woman who has been a Christian just a very short time said with great conviction, "*I believe God*; I believe His promises, and He has promised to be with me and help me when I go out and tell my friends and neighbors about Christ and what He's doing for me every day." She is walking enthusiasm for God. She dashes into my office on her coffee break and asks, "Jeanette, did you get something today that will help me in my spiritual life?" (One of her duties is to deliver the mail around the offices, so she knows I get gobs of this

and that.) Sometimes she pops in and asks, "Have you a minute?" and shares some new blessing—or a problem she is having in witnessing. We talk it over, and then she gives me a quick hug and she is on her way back to her desk. *Such people must bring joy to the heart of Jesus*, I often think.

Since goal setting and following through obviously pay dividends in personal fulfillment, why would a person not be interested?

"I'm too tired!" is often the reason given. Doubtless most of us are in that category. We all get tired at times. But not tired *all* the time.

There are two kinds of "tired"—the healthy kind we feel when, after doing some physical task that called for more than usual effort, we stretch and say, "Well, *that's* done!" It's a good feeling even though a muscle or two may be protesting. This is a tiredness which normal rest will cure.

The other kind of "tired" is much more of a problem. Let me say that this tiredness may have a physical cause and the person would be

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well-advised not to just tolerate it, but to see a physician. We should be careful about lumping all tired people together and criticizing them, indicting them for using their fatigue as an excuse to evade responsibility. Usually we cannot know what causes another person to do what he does or doesn't do.

There is a healthy "tired" and a "tired" that cannot be explained in terms of health, the latter a chronic weariness. As we have seen, the healthy tiredness stems from meaningful activity. The chronic type? Although it incapacitates people, experts cannot pinpoint its cause. Sometimes it can be observed in people who, in addition to being tired—tired—tired, are busy—busy—busy. This is a driving kind of "busy" that yet never quite gets a thing accomplished. Therefore the person never attains the gratification of sitting down and viewing a job well done.

Women as well as men suffer from this kind of tiredness. The men bring work home from the office. They

almost never relax, yet their work never gets done and they complain of being tired all the time. The women have a stack of ironing or other household chores constantly undone. Yet they work at it, never having the satisfaction of knowing they can relax with the knowledge that their work is in good shape. These are people who can say, "I haven't a lazy bone in my body." Maybe they are trying to prove it. Who knows?

Another theory as to the cause of chronic tiredness is that the person is bored, just plain bored with living. It has been said that boredom is more subtle than sin; the conscience doesn't warn against it. Boredom is a disease that erodes initiative and shrivels personality. It robs the individual of the joy the Lord meant us to have and withers our capacity for serving Him. And while almost every major disease these days has a campaign going to help eradicate it, not so with the disease of boredom. Yet it is a killjoy that handicaps millions.

I am not thinking of the boredom many of us have known—a *temporary* feeling of monotony toward a job, person, conversation. Almost anything can bore us at times. It is the *permanent* lack of interest in anything that is the joy killer we need to guard ourselves against and help other people do likewise.

Authorities cite various reasons such as *selfishness* and *lack of motivation*. But whether these and other reasons we might speculate on are cause or effect, no one seems to know, because this disease of boredom is in the realm of those mysterious elements: personality and the subconscious.

Oddly, conditions that bore one person can stimulate another. Consider the case of two women I know (names are changed): Sarah Adams and Hannah Lane were both widowed in their late fifties. Sarah made no effort to adjust to her new circumstances. She stayed home, complained of being tired all the time, and seemingly wallowed in self-pity. Her subsequent boredom let to a persecution complex. She became demanding and made life miserable for everybody who tried to help her. She refused to be interested in or to enjoy anything—until she began to be thought of as a nuisance by some.

Contrast her response to her changed circumstance with Hannah's attitude in the same situation. Hannah was, in some people's opinion, also a bit of a nuisance. For Hannah was "nosy," they said. They were right. She was nosy enough to find out about an elderly couple, both blind and in need of someone to do a number of things for them that they could not do for themselves. Hannah became eyes for them. She became their link with the seeing world as she helped with correspondence with their loved ones, among many other thoughtful things she did for the couple. And that was just the beginning of what kept this widow from being bored.

Though the experts cannot agree as to what causes boredom, they do agree on the conditions that nurture it:

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leisure time and *nothing to do*. Perhaps in this recognition lies both the prevention and cure: keeping busy in mind and body. It is significant that generally it is the mind that gives up before the body. I've talked this over with an athletic coach who agreed, "Of course. It's the mind that signals the body to quit." No doubt this explains the term "psyching ourselves into [or out of] something"—as an athlete "psyching" himself into winning a race, his mind telling his body to keep on and win, although the body feels "I can't."

Selfishness and a lack of motivation—if these are the culprits in producing boredom, the solution ought to be simple: *unselfishness* and *motivation*. This brings us back to the matter of goals. All anyone has to do is to look around for opportunities to demonstrate unselfishness in both big and little ways every day. I know, for example, a woman who lives in a rather poor neighborhood. She has a front yard with no fence and a lot of flowers she tends herself. A friend visiting her remarked about the lovely flowers and added, "But they're so near the sidewalk. Don't the neighborhood children pick them?"

"That's why I planted them there," the woman answered. "These children have so little that is pretty. I want them to enjoy the flowers, so I'm happy when they pick them."

In this simple way one woman displayed both unselfishness and motivation. She also had a goal the day she planted the seeds. This formula: *unselfishness + motivation + goal* will almost invariably conquer boredom.

Not always must the goal be in the interest of other people, however. We also need goals that have our own interests at their core. Remember that Jesus said we should love other people *as we love ourselves*, so we need to show love to ourselves. In this connection, I have a very good friend from whom I keep learning some great lessons. Ruth works with Jewish people, for whom she has truly unconditional love. One of these women, named Gladys, has had tremendous

problems all her life, and after months of loving attention and a lot of prayer, she learned to trust Jesus as her Savior. She still had a way to go emotionally—and she needed a lot of buildup. Ruth is an expert in this department and when she leaves after spending some time with this woman, Ruth will say to her, "And remember, take care of Gladys!" That was a new thought to me and it has true merit. We need to do the things (and *not* do some other things) with a view to how they can contribute to our own well-being.

Personally I find that having something to look forward to chases any feelings of temporary boredom. Happy anticipation can sometimes be as satisfying as the treat itself. We do need to give ourselves pleasures to anticipate. So that should be one of our goals. If it sounds selfish to you, think again of how, by "loving" yourself, you are likely to be developing attitudes that will help you to be more loving to your neighbor.

These treats can be quite simple, but they must have meaning for *you*. For instance, a friend of mine who has a weight problem and has to constantly watch her diet, nevertheless permits herself an occasional piece of her favorite brand of chocolates. "I can stand all this," she says (indicating the lettuce and carrots and such), "because I have *this*" and she brings out her special candy. For me the big temptation is not to overeat, but to overread. My eyes are not the best, and I need them in my profession, apart from general use. So I promise myself that when I have accomplished a certain goal, I can—*without any guilt feelings*—sit down with a good book for an hour or two. The anticipation helps me to discipline myself to keep on target.

The treat can, of course, be something major such as a trip abroad. This kind offers weeks, perhaps months, of travel-folder enjoyment, an armchair tour before you set out. Whatever the thing anticipated, it is true in my own and other people's experiences that "things go better" when one can look forward to a special delight.

Any goal should include planned rest—the relaxation of change. Jesus exemplified the need for this when He established the very first Christian Retreat. His disciples were emotionally torn up due to the death of John the Baptist. Crowds pressed on them hour after hour, and meeting human needs robbed them of time even to eat. Some had been out preaching and teaching and doubtless were weary.

Then Jesus suggested, "Let's get away from the crowds for a while and rest." . . . So they left by boat for a quieter spot (Mark 6:31,32 LB).

It did not prove to be much of a rest, for the crowds had a way of finding the compassionate, miracle-working Jesus. Nevertheless, Christ forever put His seal on the value of rest following labor. There are Christians who emphasize that Christ told us to *work*. They stress the fact that He Himself worked tirelessly. And He did. But, as in everything else, Christ was perfectly balanced. He would not have us be "workaholics," and to offset this He provided a pattern for rest.

In summary—it is not God's will that we should *go aimlessly* through the rest of our lives. Neither is it His will that we should *be tired* day after day. It is certainly not His will that we should so demean the creativity He has given us as to *be bored* with life from now on.

Having some well-defined goal—activating a dream—can be the antidote to disenchantment with life when you are fifty plus.

Now what was that thing you decided you most wanted to do as you recycle? *You can achieve anything which God plants in your heart and mind as a goal.* 🍀

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

This month's answers by John Poole.



In what ways can the wisdom and experience of the elderly in the Body of Christ be used to best advantage?

What suggestions do you have that might help older Christians find their place in the Body?



Before speaking to the question that concerns the ways in which the wisdom and experience of the elderly in the Body may be used to best advantage, I think it's important to consider the fact that in many of the fellowships and prayer groups that are involved in the charismatic renewal, there is great lack of elderly people. For the most part, the outward things that have characterized the renewal have been much more appealing to younger and middle-age people than they have to the elderly. The emphasis on new forms of worship and teaching, the general informal approach to meetings, all have a definite appeal to younger people. But oftentimes older people find it difficult to feel comfortable in such a setting. I think, therefore, it's important to realize that we are at a point where a special outreach should be made to the elderly, and I think that this should be done by making sure that whatever elderly people are currently involved in our churches are taken care of, loved, respected, honored, and relieved. Too often I notice a mentality in younger people that kind of writes off older people as being bound by tradition, stuck in the mud, always talking about yesterday and generally viewing them as not "with it."

I think that the wisdom of experience of elderly people can be used to the best advantage when we remember that the Bible talks about the dreams of the elderly. In other words, it's right and proper that elderly people look back to the way things used to be, the way things were, and recount them. The responsibility of mature leadership is to sort out from the recounting of the past, the things the Holy Spirit is trying to say, and this takes real discernment. To simply listen to an older person go on and on about the "good old days" can be very boring, but to be alert to what the Spirit is saying through that person in terms of things that are important for the Body to hear now, can be very stimulating.

I don't think there is a general answer to the question of how do older Christians find their place in the Body. I think it depends on whether or not you're talking about

a home group, larger meeting or whatever situation is being faced. My main point in this whole matter is that we need to begin paying special attention to the older people and begin to look for ways in which we can hear the voice of the Lord coming through them, because the older I get, the more convinced I become that there is no substitute for simply having a life experience.



How can young people relate to old people in the Church? What provisions could the local church make that would help the elderly?



One of the things that's going to characterize the Kingdom of God in these days is an attitude toward the elderly that is entirely different than the one that is exhibited by the world. In an age when older people are being shunted aside and pushed off into homes, we need to train our young people to respect, honor, love and care for the elderly. Every local church should make sure that the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the elderly are being taken care of, and methods of doing so will vary depending upon the structure of the church. For instance, help should be given to them to insure their attendance at the stated times of meeting. Assistance should be offered to them with maintenance around their home, jobs that may be becoming too difficult for them to do. Financial assistance is often needed because of the pressure of inflation and the level of income that most elderly people have.

The question that every group has to ask themselves is: "Are the elderly being left out, ignored?" Young people can play a definite role in helping the elderly to feel loved and included in a fellowship if their attitude toward the elderly is one of respect and love, as opposed to toleration or neglect. I find that most elderly people want to spend time with some younger people, and enjoy it thoroughly if they sense a right attitude. This, I believe, is the key.



What is the meaning of Isaiah 65:17-20? Does the reference to a 100-year life span indicate we can claim a life that long as a promise from God?

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As in so many of the Old Testament scriptures, I believe that this passage has a double fulfillment. I believe that the final fulfillment of the promises that are given in the whole section of the chapter, particularly from verse 15 down through the end, awaits the return of the Lord and the establishment of His visible Kingdom upon the renewed earth. However, I do believe there is a present application, i.e., in the end of the chapter where the prophet refers to the wolf and the lamb feeding together; for this undoubtedly has to do with people of differing natures and personalities being able to live in peace through the power of redemption. I believe, therefore, that the implication in regard to the length of life is that people who reach old age don't have to be shelved or viewed as past their prime, useless, with nothing to contribute. Rather it holds out for us the promise of a full, fruitful and satisfying life right up until the very end. However, our society again rules this out as a possibility because of the increasing tendency to regard the older people in the overall function of our country as having no real usefulness. It's got to be different in the Kingdom of God. A full, satisfying, meaningful life should continue right through old age, and the idea of being put out to pasture is something that should have no place in the mind and heart of Christian people.



What specific guidelines does Scripture give for honoring the elderly?



I don't know personally of a lot of specific guidelines that the Scripture gives for honoring the elderly. I think that to follow through all the things that have been said previously would fulfill the scriptural injunction that we're talking about and dealing with. Again I think the root of the problem is to

come to a new respect for the lessons that are learned by being exposed to life, and an understanding that there is no substitute for experience. This doesn't mean that older people are always right in the judgments that they make and the decisions that they come to, but it certainly means that younger people need to have a definite awareness that neither education nor innate intellectual ability are substitutes for simply living and being bounced around, and kicked around by life itself. Young people must recognize that there's a wisdom that comes with age which nothing else can bring to you. To respect and regard this truth will enable us to serve and love and give place to the elderly in a way that will honor both them and God. 🙏

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BIBLE STUDY ANSWERS

(From page 24)

1. a. Fear of the Lord, b. Refrain tongue from evil, c. Speak no guile; 2. Long life; 3. Peace, old age; 4. Wisdom, understanding; 5. a. Because they were older than he; b. The inspiration of the Almighty; 6. Eyes, dim, natural, abated; 7. a. No, b. Faith, charity, patience, c. Good things, d. Husbands, children, e. Word of God; 8. 65 years old; 9. He pleased God, faith; 10. Caleb; 11. 40 years old; 12. Carry, bear, deliver; 13. Fathers, mothers; 14. a. Abel, b. Enoch, c. Isaac, d. Jacob, e. Joseph; 15. Parents, children; 16. Good, acceptable, children, parents; 17. Hypocrites, corban; 18. Commandment of God, tradition of men.

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