

Magazine New Wine®

December 1981

Spiritual Sensitivity
Immanuel, God with us

Not very long ago, names meant something. Many of us still "look for the label." There was a time when personal names described the character of the bearer. People in some cultures didn't receive their permanent names until they had reached some degree of maturity, so that their names would be an accurate designation.

In Bible times the names of people were taken seriously.



EDITORIAL

God changed Abram ("exalted father") to Abraham, "father of a multitude"—and sure enough, Abraham became a father of nations. Moses was named because he was "drawn out" of the waters and he "drew out" a nation through the waters of the Red Sea. The name of Jesus our Lord signified that He would "save" or "deliver" His people.

Isaiah, the great Old Testament prophet, had two sons, Shear-Jashub and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (he had enough names for several sons.) They may sound like unusual names to us, but to those who understood Hebrew, these names sent a strong message. Shear-Jashub meant "a remnant shall return" and Maher Shalal-Hash-Baz meant "swift to plunder." In short, Isaiah's sons were signs to Israel that judgment was coming swiftly, but a faithful remnant would survive and return to the land. Can you imagine someone

saying to Isaiah, "Those are two fine looking young men. What are their names? Oh...uh, I'm sorry I asked." These children were signs to the nation of Israel.

It was this same Isaiah who spoke of another child to be born whose name would be Immanuel, who also would be a sign. He would be born of a virgin as a sign to all nations that "God is with us."

Just as the names of Isaiah's sons predicted, judgment *did* come; a remnant *did* return to Israel to serve God—but then, as promised, Immanuel was born of the Virgin Mary. The angels called Him Jesus.

Certainly Jesus was and is true to His name. He made a covenant with His disciples in His body and blood to be faithful to them, promising, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." And so He was, and so He is.

Upon ascending, Jesus told His disciples to go to the upper room and receive the Holy Spirit. As they obediently gathered there to pray in one accord, the Holy Spirit came mightily upon them. Then they remembered that Jesus had said, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." And indeed He *was* with them in the Spirit and in power to such an extent that the works He had done they now did!

We know that we have but one Lord, who has but one Spirit—and yet we are a very fragmented people. Do you suppose God is more willing to be "with us" than we are to be together? If Jesus were with us today in His incarnation I wonder whether His fellowship with some people would cause Him to be unacceptable to others. Just as His willingness to be with certain people during the days of His incarnation perplexed His followers and onlookers, it continues to perplex me when I see the Spirit of God bless someone with whom I have a problem. Condoning my personal objections on theological or moral

grounds still doesn't help to explain why my Lord would be gracious to those I might view as opponents, while at the same time He continues to be gracious to me.

It occurred to me on one occasion that I was judging all men and women by my own conscience. What I could not practice myself, I could not tolerate in others. But finally I realized that I had to distinguish between what I could practice in conscience before God, and what I could tolerate in others while trusting God to judge. Our willingness to *be* with others must exceed our ability to *agree* with them, for our Lord is a demonstration—a *sign*, if you please—that God's willingness to be with us extends beyond His approval of us. To be sure, He expects us to obey Him and to change our behavior, but even so, it is love and fellowship that makes this possible.

As we approach Christmas—the time when most of us agree to celebrate Immanuel, "God with us"—can we continue to erect our own private manger scenes, or is our willingness to be together the evidence that God is truly with us?

New Wine is grateful for the high honor of being allowed by God to share ministry with Evangelicals, Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox, charismatics, non-denominationalists, liberals and conservatives. We are debtors to all true believers in the one Lord and one Spirit. This is a time for renewed sensitivity to the one Lord and the one Spirit who is with us. We must be guided in crucial times such as these by more than our respective dogmas—we must be guided by Him.

Good ideas need examples, not just advocates. May we all be a sign that God is with us. May we all be the sign of Immanuel.

Charles V. Simpson

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Spiritual Sensitivity

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magazine staff

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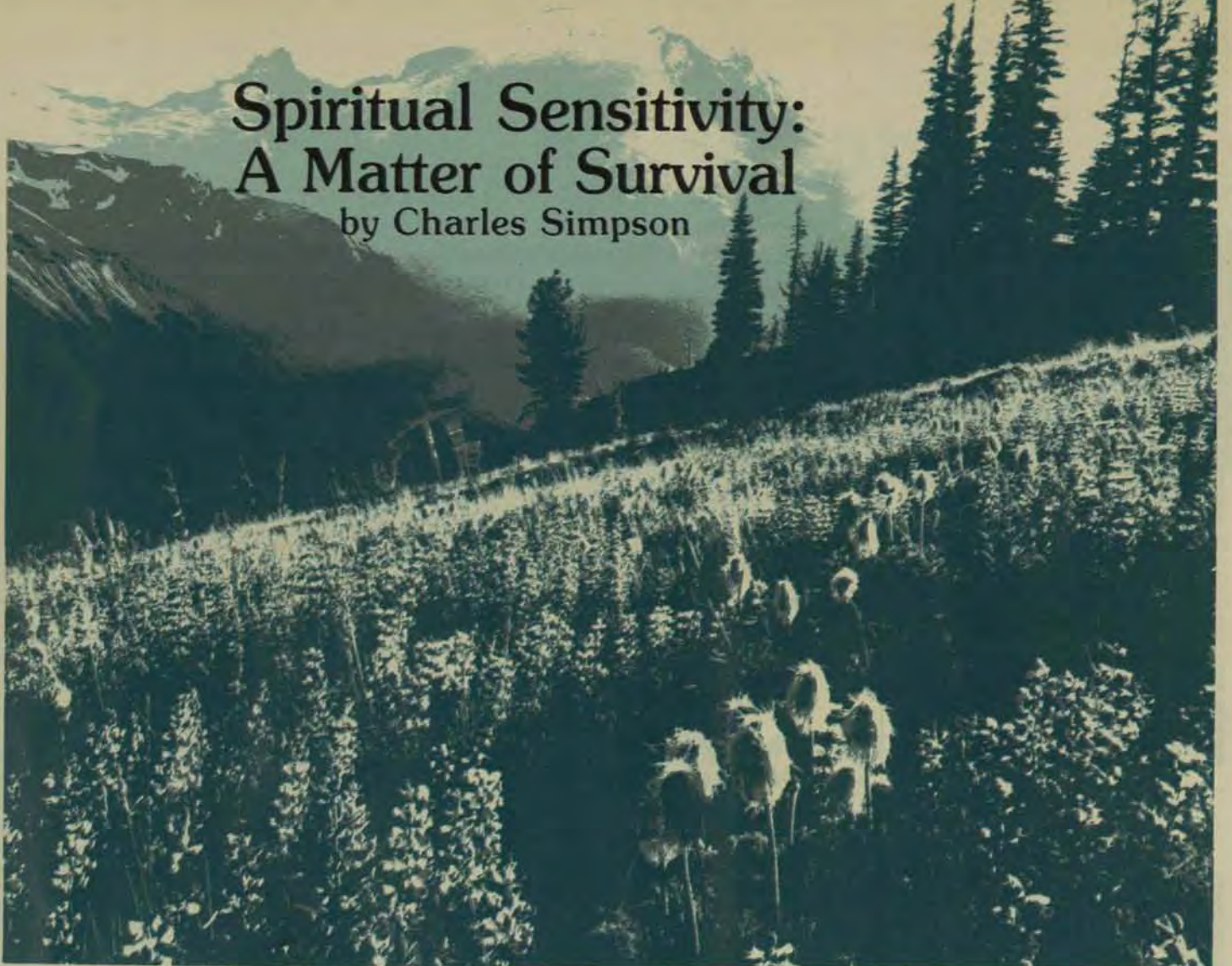
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Spiritual Sensitivity: A Matter of Survival

by Charles Simpson

Some of the last instructions Jesus gave His disciples were the teachings about the Holy Spirit—His office, His role and what He would do.

Some of the richest teaching on the Holy Spirit in the entire Bible is in John chapters 14, 15 and 16, where Jesus says, "The Spirit of truth is coming. He will take all that the Father has, and He will show it to you."

The essence of what Jesus says in these passages of Scripture is this: "I have become one of you. I have heard you on earth and I'm going to speak for you in heaven. But One is coming who will hear the Father's counsel in heaven and He will bring it to you. He

will speak on earth. The world has seen me and has heard me in the natural, but it will not be able to either see or hear the One who is coming. You must hear Him as I have heard Him, if you are to do My Father's will."

The evidence that Jesus' ministry was a success is the fact that when He left, His disciples did in fact hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. Had they not been brought to a place where they could hear the Spirit of God, Jesus' ministry would have been a failure as far as they were concerned. But He took men who knew nothing about spiritual things, nor about who He was, nor even about Scripture. Apparently they had just enough spiritual revelation to follow Him—yet within three and a half years they could worship, fellowship with, and hear a God they could not see. When very

few others could hear or see spiritually, they were able to know and do the will of God—and that was the crowning achievement of Jesus' ministry. His ministry hung on His ability to give the disciples a seeing eye and a hearing ear.

The transition period from childhood to adulthood is the most sensitive period of development. The children are moving into a place of increased responsibility where authority rests more clearly upon their shoulders. At such a time, the father's and the mother's heart cry is "Son, daughter, we've taught you in the best way we know how. But since we won't always be with you now, we hope that you have learned more than just obedience—we hope that you have picked up our spirit. We pray that as you move on now, our spirit and our teachings will

be with you."

Jesus came to this same place with His disciples—a time of transition when authority and responsibility for all they had heard would rest upon them. The Word had been made flesh and dwelt among them, but the time was coming when His living example would be gone. They had gone through a season when God's manifestation was so real they could see it and respond to it in the natural realm. But now God in the flesh would leave right before their eyes, taken up into the clouds. In His place would be the Holy Spirit that no one could see or hear with natural eyes or ears. Jesus knew what would happen, and in this delicate time of transition He was saying to them, "I'm leaving, but Another is coming, and He will take you into truth I have not yet shown you. He will open to you the deep things of God, the hidden things of God, and those things will assure your survival in a world that is changing."

Hindrances to Sensitivity

If learning to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit is so essential to us, why are we often so insensitive to God? Great revelations aside, most people fail to develop an everyday sensitivity to God's instructions and to what the Spirit of God is doing in the events that surround us. I believe there are several primary hindrances to spiritual sensitivity.

1. *Busyness.* In the parable of the sower recorded in Mark chapter 3, Jesus said that a man went forth to sow, and some seed fell on the path. To me, "the path" indicates a heart hardened by busyness or preoccupation. One of the things that keeps us from hearing God is busyness.

Busyness is probably the number one reason for insensitivity in Americans, because we are busier than most societies. Not only are we busy in what we do, we are busy as well in our spirits. We are a highly verbal society, and consequently our minds and spirits are packed and

hardened by verbiage. The air around us is literally full of words and pictures—all we need is a receiver to plug into millions of words surrounding us. We are so addicted to words that we cannot endure quietness. We must take radio and television with us everywhere we go to avoid even a moment of silence.

2. *Shallowness.* Again in the parable of the sower, Jesus said that some of the sower's seed fell on shallow ground. It sprung up quickly, but it withered in the heat. This speaks to me of a shallow spirit, a response to God that has little depth. My father used to privately comment to me when someone made a "gaudy" religious display, "He's shallow." I have come to understand that many people either muster up a response to God that is not born out of the depths of their spirit, or they respond without counting the cost. When the rich young ruler heard Jesus teach, he loved everything he heard and said, "Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus, who was spiritually discerning, heard the young man's question and might have said to Himself, "He's shallow. How can I touch him where he really lives? How can I get my words down deep into his spirit?" So Jesus told him to go sell everything he had. But the young man went away sorrowful instead, because he couldn't follow Jesus to that extent. Shallowness prevents us from being sensitive to God because we are afraid that if we truly listen to God, He will deal with an area in us that we would prefer He leave alone.

3. *Thorniness.* In the parable, some seed fell on thorny ground, and the thorns choked it. Thorniness, I believe, is having a crowded spirit—a spirit that perhaps has good potential, but is too full of distractions. Many of us battle the Martha syndrome: we want to serve God, but the pot is on the stove, the kids are coming home from school, the boss is on the phone and the car needs fixing. Although God is

talking, it is difficult to get our priorities right and make room in our spirits.

4. *Pride.* Pride keeps us from hearing God. To hear God one must be humble, and to hear God is humbling. When Jesus said to Peter, "I'm going to wash your feet," Peter objected, "Oh, no, Lord; you can't wash my feet." He couldn't hear that word from God because it dealt with his proud nature. It was a word of humility he could not receive. Jesus said, "If I don't wash your feet, you have no part with me." Then Peter said, "Wash me all over." Peter's response sounded humble, but it was simply rebellion turned another way. Often we cannot hear because we are too proud to listen—we think we have a better idea.

5. *Prejudice.* At times God speaks through instruments that are not to our liking. Philip said to Nathaniel, "We've found the Messiah; He's from Nazareth." But Philip answered, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Often it is difficult to hear God because God has chosen a vessel which we ourselves would never have chosen.

In His opening message Jesus reminded the people that God used a widow from Zarephath to care for Elijah. He could not find an Israelite widow for His purposes, so He used a widow in a foreign land. When Jesus reminded His critics of that, they tried to kill Him for saying it. Sometimes we cannot hear God because we don't like the vessel He chooses.

6. *Lack of discipline.* Sometimes we are undisciplined in our



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the lighter Side

by Mark Pie



For Christmas, Lord, Mom needs some new clothes, I need some new clothes and Dad needs to lose some weight so he can fit into the new clothes you gave him last year.

hearing. The Bible says in Proverbs 18:13 that for someone to answer a matter before he hears it all is a folly and a shame. That is to say, when we hear God say the first word and we finish the sentence for Him, it will lead to foolishness and embarrassment. An undisciplined spirit jumps to conclusions.

Antidotes to Insensitivity

Fortunately for us, there are cures for insensitivity. The Scriptures tell us of at least seven antidotes God has provided which will help us to hear.

In Proverbs 15:31-33, we read about the first four of them, which are closely related.

He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise.

He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding.

The fear of the Lord teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

If a person who is *God-fearing* becomes insensitive to His voice, then he will begin to

be resensitized when God manifests Himself. The reason for this is that the fear of God produces *humility*. If we fear God we will be humble, not because we are comparing ourselves to someone better, but simply because the holy fear of God puts us in the proper posture before Him. And once the fear of God produces humility in us, humility will produce *repentance*. If we humble ourselves before God, we will turn from our wicked ways.

The evidence that we have repented is our willingness to *accept correction*. The indicator that our fear of God, our humility, and our repentance are genuine is our acceptance of "life-giving rebuke" with gladness. We live today in a nation whose people despise correction—even the children. But we must not despise correction; we should not even merely tolerate correction; we should desire it. When God sends a situation or person to deal with us, we are dealing with God Himself. If we react haughtily or angrily, we are reacting against God—and whoever rejects reproof is ultimately rejected of God. We must embrace reproof and receive those

who reprove us as friends who are used by God to cut away the fleshly obstructions from our ears and eyes. Reproof can be God's knife of circumcision for our attitude.

By faith in Christ, of course, we have already had our hearts circumcised; but if we have faith in Christ, Christ will deal with us. He will reprove us—He will cut away the flesh that keeps us from being sensitive.

Another antidote for insensitivity is *discipline*. In Isaiah chapter 50 we read that Jesus had a disciplined ear and tongue:

The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue [NAS: the tongue of disciples], to know the word that sustains the weary.

He wakens me morning by morning,

wakens my ear to listen like one being taught [NAS: to listen as a disciple].

The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious;

I have not drawn back (vv. 4-5 NIV).

The disciplined tongue and the disciplined ear belong to a disciplined person. A disciplined ear produces a disciplined tongue. The ability to "speak a word to one who is weary and sustain him" is a product of the ability to learn how to listen to God.

We live in a communication-oriented society where people often learn to *speak* publicly, but rarely learn to *listen*. Jesus said again and again to His disciples, "Be careful how you listen," not "how you speak." And if listening is more important than speaking, then our society has its priorities confused. Almost every school has a course on speaking, but how many offer a course on listening? If we listen with care, ruling the tongue will come naturally to us.

One antidote for insensitivity that is often overlooked is *rest*. Nothing will take the place of

rest. In Isaiah 30:15 God says, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength, but you would have none of it." Yet He goes on to say later that He will be with us and our teachers will be with us, and we will hear a voice behind us saying, "This is the way; walk in it." In quietness and in confidence is strength—not in singing hymns, not in preaching, but in quietness. Though religious activity has its place, it cannot substitute for times of quietness.

God instituted the sabbath in creation, and I personally do not believe that Jesus Christ's coming abrogates man's need for a day of rest. One day out of seven is meant to be a quiet day. Why is that? We need that one day out of seven so that our spirits can become resensitized to the voice of God. The sabbath laws were not simply some religious rules; they were meant to provide rest so that we could resensitize our spirits to God's voice.

If all else fails, God has as His final resort one last antidote to insensitivity: *trouble*. Many texts in the Bible illustrate this antidote, but one of my favorites is in Psalm 40. David says there, "I waited patiently for the Lord . . . He heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit" (vv. 1-2 NIV). We don't have much else to do besides listen when we are in the pit. Trouble resensitizes us to the voice of God. It is better if we can utilize one of those other antidotes—the fear of God, humility, repentance, reproof, discipline or rest—before we get into trouble. But often when we are insensitive to God—perhaps when we have been too busy, or a little proud with our success, or undisciplined—God breaks through to us by using trouble, and we come to God with our ears and hearts open.

Seeing With God's Eyes

What happens when we finally listen? Isaiah gives us a good example. Uzziah, the good king of Israel, had died, and good kings were rare. The whole nation was in mourning and the

prophet Isaiah was in mourning as well—but he heard the voice of the Lord in the midst of that troubled time. God drew him to the temple, and because Isaiah was more spiritually minded than naturally minded about Uzziah's death and the events surrounding it, he had a vision of the Lord.

The prophet writes, "I saw the Lord, seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple" (6:1 NIV). He saw the glory of God and the spiritual world which the Bible says literally surrounds us. Like many of us, Isaiah could have become insensitive to the spiritual world in the course of being so busy. But Isaiah broke through the veil of sorrow and looked up to see the glory of God. Like the apostle John centuries later, he saw a door open in heaven. And then he saw himself, and said, "Lord, woe is me, for I am unclean and I dwell among a people of unclean lips." But an angel came, took a live coal from the altar, and touched the prophet's lips, saying, "This has touched your mouth; you've been made clean." So as a result of his sensitivity, Isaiah saw the glory of God and he saw himself in God's presence, a sinner who was cleansed.

Next Isaiah heard a voice asking, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" He answered, "Here am I. Send me!" Then the Lord told him his mission: "Go and tell this people: While seeing, you don't perceive; and while hearing, you don't understand." Isaiah asked, "How long, Lord?" The Lord answered, "Until the cities are wastes, without habitation—but they will be like an oak tree when it is cut down. The seed will be in the stump, and a remnant will come forth that will see and hear." So in responding to the Spirit of God, Isaiah saw God in His glory, he saw himself clearly, he saw his mission, and he saw the future. Listening to God's voice will enable us ultimately to see with God's eyes.

If we can see with God's eyes,

we will have the mind of Christ. John saw the risen Lord, and every time he describes Him he writes about Jesus' eyes. He said in the first chapter of Revelation, "His eyes were like a blazing fire." In the second chapter he said, "His eyes were like a flame." In the fifth chapter he said, "I saw the Lamb . . . He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth." The eyes of Jesus are the Spirit of God, and the Spirit was given to reveal the mind of God. If we are sensitive to the Lord, He will let us see with His eyes—with His Spirit—and His Spirit will make known to us the mind of Christ.

The Spirit of the Lord Will Rest on Him

Seven hundred years before Jesus was born, Isaiah saw Him through God's eyes. In Isaiah 11:2-5, he writes:

The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,

Listening to God's voice will enable us ultimately to see with God's eyes.

the Spirit of counsel and of power,
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;
but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.
Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

The most important thing Isaiah says here about Jesus is this: "The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him." He doesn't say, "He will be submitted to the Lord" or "He will be under the Lord"; he says that *He will have the Spirit of His Lord*. The difference is crucial between *being under* authority and *having the spirit* of that authority. Jesus was not merely under the lordship of the Father; the Spirit of the Father was upon Him so that the Father was ever before Him. He could see with the Father's eyes and He could see His Lord. The Spirit of wisdom was upon Him—not just wisdom. Jesus didn't just have wisdom; He had eyes to see wisdom whenever He needed it: spiritual eyes, the Spirit that searches the deep things of God. Jesus walked into problem situations and looked into the presence of God for answers to them. He reached up into the eternal with spiritual eyes and ears, bringing down

wisdom to apply it in those situations. He didn't give an answer out of what He already knew; He waited on the Lord, and the Lord gave Him the answer.

He had insight. A man like Simon could come to Him, and He would say, "You're going to be Peter from now on." He could say to Nathaniel, "I saw you when you were under the fig tree and you have no guile." Jesus could look at James and John and say, "You men are sons of thunder." He could look at Herod and say, "He's a fox." He had the Spirit of insight and understanding. He had the Spirit of counsel. His counsel was under the discipline of God.

He had the Spirit of power. He could be sitting in a room while conversation was going on, and stop and say, "The power is present to heal." He had the Spirit of knowledge. He could be talking with the woman at the well and say to her, "Go call your husband." She said, "I don't have a husband." He said, "No, you've had five and the one you're living with now is not your husband." And He had the Spirit of fear of the Lord. He walked in awe. The attitude that cut away the flesh from His ears was the fear of God, and the Scripture says He rejoiced in it.

What we see in Jesus are not just seven gifts of the Spirit in a separate sense. What we see is the sensitivity of the Son of God to the Spirit of God.

Elisha's Example

God moves with us in the natural realm until the day comes when He must launch us into the spiritual realm. Elisha is a good example for us. He walked with Elijah in the natural realm, but Elijah was walking in the Spirit. Elisha was looking for more than Elijah; he was seeking Elijah's God. He got beyond Elijah's "press clippings" and his reputation, and he saw God Himself in this servant.

One day Elijah said to Elisha, "You stay here, I've got

to go." But the servant knew his master well enough to realize what was going on, so he insisted on following Elijah. At that point, Elisha was no longer simply a natural servant; he was moving in the same Spirit as his master. When Elisha went across the river with Elijah, he said, "What do you want?" Elisha replied, "I want a double portion of your spirit." Elijah had succeeded as a teacher as Jesus had succeeded, because His servant understood what the master was about. And when the master departed, Elisha's spiritual eyes came open, and God let him see the fiery chariot coming down out of heaven. He received his master's mantle and a double portion of his spirit.

Now just across the river were the sons of the prophets who saw absolutely nothing when Elijah was carried away. Elisha picked up his master's mantle, struck the waters and they opened. He discovered the God that Elijah had known. When Elisha got on the other side of the river, the sons of the prophets said, "Where is Elijah?" They were worried about Elijah's body—but Elisha was concerned about Elijah's God. He said, "I don't know." I don't think he had given it any thought. They suggested, "Well, maybe a whirlwind dropped him," and they had a theological discussion and a seminar about Elijah's body. But Elisha was moving in the spirit and power of Elijah with his mantle in his hand. He wasn't looking for Elijah's body; he had found Elijah's God.

It was not a seat next to Elijah that made Elisha a true disciple, it was his ability to move in the same spirit as Elijah. He had received the spirit of his master. If we, too, would desire to be true disciples, we must ask God to cut away from us any hindrance to sensitivity. Learning to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit will bring us to a place where, like Elisha—like Jesus Himself—we will walk daily in the Spirit of our Lord.

Did You Know?

Often we receive requests from other magazines and organizations asking either to buy, borrow or trade our mailing list. We are dedicated to achieving the very highest standards here at New Wine, and one of those standards is maintaining an honest relationship based on mutual trust with our readers. We do not believe that we could retain your trust by selling your names to other organizations and thus opening your home up to an invasion of unsolicited mail.

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The New Wine readers are our most valuable asset—and you are not for sale. We thought you'd like to know.

Sensitivity and Survival

If God should be so gracious to say to me, "What would you like to produce in people?" I would say, "Lord, I would like for myself and for those with me to be sensitive to You." Miracles are needed. But the door to the miracle is hidden, a secret door in the wall that will not be found by our searching the wall for it. We must stand quietly in the room until God says, "There is the door." As we walk through it, it will open before us, and on the other side will be the glory of God.

Deuteronomy 29:29 says, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us." Unfortunately, the things that are *revealed* are the very things that get in the way of the secret things. What we already know keeps us from realizing that we don't yet know all we need to know. If we follow the Lord, He will always lead us to a place where the things we need are the

secret things. If we follow God, we will always be in a place where we don't know enough. And our survival is based on God's willingness to show us the secret path. Sensitivity for us is not just an important matter or a case of being more spiritual—in fact, it is a matter of survival.

How do we become sensitive again? We need to confess to the Lord that we have been dull at times. At times we have grieved the Holy Spirit, talking while He was trying to speak to us, interrupting Him in mid-sentence. As a result, the Holy Spirit became silent and we didn't even know it.

We must confess to having scales on our eyes. We need to make room for the Lord again through a sensitivity to His presence. We need to realize that there are things which God wanted to happen but didn't due to our insensitivity. There are blind alleys whose ends we have reached because somewhere we missed the turn.

We need to ask for the Lord to help us walk humbly before Him, to hear what He is saying to the Church, because obviously God has something for us up ahead that we wouldn't want to miss. We need to pray that individually we will hear God speaking to us, and that we will obey whatever He says. We must ask Him to cut away from us any hardness of heart, arrogance of spirit, stubbornness or insensitivity, so that the new skin of our renewed hearts would be sensitive to the voice, the presence and the ways of God.▼

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Wise Men Still Adore Him

by Rousas J. Rushdoony



Photo courtesy of H. Armstrong Roberts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Who were the Wise Men? In the Greek, the word translated as “wise men” is literally “Magi.” Some modernist translators and commentators have rendered this as “astrologers” or “Magicians,” distorting the text. The Magi were quite literally *wise* men.

Their origins go back to the ancient world, to the antiquity of Babylon—at least to the days of King Nebuchadnezzar.

It was the custom in Babylon to seek out very young boys, usually barely in their teens, who showed great promise with respect to intelligence and various aptitudes. These boys were then trained in the palace college to be the “brain trust” of Babylon. They would become astronomers, various administrative officers, experts in agriculture, commerce, or military matters. All in all, the Magi con-

stituted a highly trained “brain trust” for Babylon.

The dream of Babylon was to create a one-world order, a paradise without God; and so it was that Babylon scattered the populations of the captive countries, seeking to destroy all the old loyalties and allegiances and make of them one people under the rule of Babylon. But the concept did not die with Babylon. “Wise” men became increasingly an aspect of various empires which followed: Medo-Persia; the Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great, one of whose “wise” men was Aristotle; and Rome.

Life at a Dead End

When Christ was born in Bethlehem, the world had reached a dead end. The planners had planned their plans. The “wise” men of Babylon had failed; so had the “wise” men of Medo-Persia, Macedonia, and now Rome. All sense of meaning was departing from life.

In the Roman Empire, life was increasingly reduced to one dimension alone, and the life of that day has a familiar ring; men saw no meaning in life except pleasure, and the essence of pleasure for them was sexual. Sex was seen by them not as the

love and communion of man and wife under God, but as power, as the exploitation of feeling, of emotion, as well as of other people. There was an extensive cynicism. There was very little left of which men could be proud. This was the world of the “wise” men of the day, a world of experts who were steadily destroying mankind and civilization. And of all the “wise” men, very few were truly wise.

There were here and there men moved by the Spirit of God, who, recognizing that mankind was at a dead end, that there was no hope for man, that man was reducing everything to ruins, and that the future of civilization was very bleak and dark, returned to the Old Testament Scriptures. We know there were a few such men in the region of Ancient Babylon, a few here and there throughout the Asiatic world as far east as China. To certain of these men God spoke and gave a sign; and He rewarded their long, long prayer and search: it was revealed unto them that the Christ Child had been born.

So they left home. How many of them, we do not know. The familiar song says, “We Three Kings of Orient Are,” but actually the Scripture does not

specify the number; it simply gives the plural—Wise Men. They could have been three; they could have been ten. The number three comes from the three kinds of gifts they brought. These were the men who were truly wise. They came from somewhere in the East, probably from the region of Babylon, sometime after the birth of our Lord. We know that Christ was no longer in the manger. They were now in a home.

When Herod questioned the Wise Men, they indicated that the Christ Child had apparently been born sometime previously, so that later when Herod gave the order to slay all children in the region of Bethlehem in his attempt to kill the young Christ-King, he ordered that all children two years old and under should be slain, thereby hoping to make sure that he killed the child.

The Significance of the Gifts

The Wise Men came to the house where Joseph and Mary and the Babe were to be found. They fell down and worshipped Him, and they presented their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gifts in ancient times were symbolical: a gift was given in terms of the person's office and station; the gift had to suit the person to whom it was given. By their gifts, these Wise Men indicated that they knew the full meaning of the Christ Child.

Gold... the gift for a King. Thereby they declared that the world now had its King, Him who was ordained to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords, King of creation, King of the world, King of men and nations. Giving Him gold, they acknowledged Him to be God's King of the Kingdom of God.

Frankincense... belongs in a temple. It is used for worship. By the gift of frankincense they acknowledged that Jesus Christ was the great High Priest, He who had come to make intercession with God for His people, to offer up the acceptable sacrifice,

and to make atonement for the sin of His people. By the gift of frankincense they acknowledged that at last the great High Priest had come, the Priest appointed by God, the Priest for whom all previous priests appointed by the Old Testament had been merely substitutes and stand-ins. The Babe, therefore, was the great Priest "after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 5:6), having no ancestry nor parentage with regard to His office, His Priesthood, but receiving it like Melchisedec, directly from Almighty God.

Myrrh... was used in ancient times for embalming. By this gift they recognized and acknowledged that Jesus Christ was not only the great King and Priest but also the sacrifice, that He Himself was both Priest and sacrifice. He had come to lay down His life as a ransom for His people.

Their gifts indicated that they were indeed *wise men*, wise in Scripture, wise in the Holy Spirit.

The world around us is not unlike the world in which the Wise Men lived. It is again a world in which the experts are destroying civilization, in which self-styled wise men—the pseudo-wise men—are again laying plans for a great one-world order—without Christ—a world in which they are dreaming filthy dreams of a humanity reordered in terms of humanism.

But wise men, who are truly wise, *still* adore Him. And we who at this time give thanks unto Almighty God for the birth of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord, are, therefore, in the sight of God and by His Grace the Wise Men of our generation. We know that the world around us will crumble and fall as surely as Rome crumbled and fell. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

Liberty, Not Slavery

The basic remedy of the "wise" men of the Caesars was slavery. Their answer to every problem of man in that day added

up to slavery. They called it then as they call it today "cradle-to-grave" security, but the "perfect" life of security is *slavery*. It was in the Roman Empire that serfdom was begun: in exchange for their liberty people gained cradle-to-grave security from the hands of the Caesars and became members of his household, worked on his estates, worked in his shops, became his servants. Today, men who are without Christ are exchanging their liberty again for serfdom, for slavery to the Caesars of our day. Again the world is at a dead end, a dead end created by the falsely wise men.

Wise men came and they rendered unto Him their adoration as their great King, as their Priest, and their Saviour. They returned to their homes in confidence, because they knew the Scriptures which declared Him to be the Wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the Prince of Peace, also declared that the government should be upon *His* shoulders and that of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end.

As we come today, by the grace of God the Wise Men of this generation, as we worship Him, we too can return to our homes in the serene confidence that the government is upon His shoulders, and of the increase of His government and of His peace there shall be no end. For we have been born not into the slavery of Caesar but into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and we have this confidence in Him, that what He has begun in us, that He will accomplish, and "If God be for us, who can be against us?"



Rousas John Rushdoony received his B.A., M.A., and B.D. from the University of California's Pacific School of Religion. He has served as a pastor, missionary, and vice-president of the Christian Freedom Foundation. The author of numerous books and articles, Rev. Rushdoony is currently the president of the Chalcedon Foundation, an educational organization established to encourage and publish Christian scholarship.

The Christmas Tradition: Three Approaches

interviews with Glen Roachelle, McCready Johnston and John Beckett

Christians today approach the Christmas season in a variety of ways, some positive and some negative. To get a tiny sampling of how this tradition is observed, we talked with three pastors and leaders about their impressions of the holiday and the meaning it holds for their families. We present the interviews here, not necessarily to provide models for celebrating Christmas, but rather to stimulate our thinking about how we should respond to what is a significant tradition of our culture with roots in the gospel.



Glen Roachelle is the senior pastor of the Metroplex Fellowship of Covenant Churches in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Finding Jesus in the Rubble

NW: What are some general observations you would make about Christmas in our society?

GR: Lately, I have sensed the Lord emphasizing our mandate to restore integrity, soundness and definition to the structures He has ordained. That principle can be applied to our traditions. A basic soundness has been lost in Christmas for any number of reasons we could cite—such as commercialization. For whatever reasons, the integrity of Christmas has been lost.

Some might say that the meaning of Christ is missing from Christmas. Others would say that Christmas has pagan roots and therefore should not even be observed by Christians. But I personally believe that this holiday is an excellent opportunity to proclaim and observe the gospel of the Kingdom, because it is one of the few times when unbelievers have the words of the gospel in their mouths, such as when they sing, "Oh come let us adore Him—Christ the Lord."

The other day, I picked up a hymnal and looked at the words to "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" by Charles Wesley. If you just read the verses of that song, you'll realize that they are a powerful declaration of the gospel. Unbelievers sing these words at Christmastime, so if people continue faithfully to observe Christmas, who knows when the Spirit of God might cause this tradition to come alive to someone, or cause the words of these carols to touch those who unknowingly sing them, breaking open their prison doors?

NW: What do you think God wants to do in our

society through Christmas?

GR: I believe God wants His people to observe Christmas properly, making it an opportunity to spread good will. The Scripture that is often quoted, "Peace on earth, good will toward men" would be more accurately translated, "On earth, peace to men of good will." If God's people are to fulfill the demands of the covenant they must be people of good will. I believe God intends to use His people to speak to their society on every occasion—and Christmas is one special occasion. Whatever God is going to say to society, He will say through His people.

What God wants to say to this society concerning Christmas is that it is a time when all of the earth should recognize that the Son of God was born to bring life and hope to the world.

NW: Do you believe that God can use traditions such as Christmas to touch people's lives?

GR: Yes. When people become part of our church here, we try to instill within them an appreciation for heritage and for tradition, and these carry over naturally into Christmas. My own definition of heritage is that it is a way of life which has been received in order to pass it on to subsequent generations. Heritage by secular definition has a connotation of inheriting physical property. But in the lasting sense of the word, heritage is not so much physical property as it is an intangible estate or possession that can be lost if it is not properly appreciated and administrated.

Tradition is a vital part of heritage. It is the practice of passing on stories, beliefs, customs and practices, which when observed and stewarded properly over a period of time become boundaries and laws which people come to live by. In Psalm 16, David says the boundary lines have fallen to him in pleasant places, and that surely he has a delightful inheritance. The New American Standard Version says "heritage." Traditions are necessary; they are the moorings of society. Even unscriptural traditions will help keep a society stable until better traditions are established to replace the bad ones.

NW: Have you always had a positive attitude toward celebrating Christmas?

GR: No. I must confess that about eight years ago, I had what you might call a "zealot's view" of

Christmas. I considered it to be a pagan holiday, arguing that Jesus wasn't even born in December. But in recent years I have come to understand that Christmas is more than just a holiday—it is part of a tradition in the lives of stable people I know whose lives and families are exemplary. As I have seen how these people have observed Christmas it has made me want to establish some of the same stable traditions.

NW: *What caused the change in your mentality from disdaining Christmas as a pagan holiday to celebrating it and making it a family tradition?*

GR: I don't think it was a sudden change. For a couple of years during the time of my idealism about Christmas, I was uncomfortable with the degree to which my wife and children wanted to decorate the house. They didn't press me about it, but I got the message in various ways. It took me a year to see what I was doing. The Lord let me know that I wasn't really being fair and that this "anti-pagan" zeal of mine was rather sterile. It wasn't at all fruitful, because it was a concept that was born out of reaction rather than vision. So God began to speak to me about vision rather than reaction to something that I considered distasteful or unscriptural.

I have come to see that many movements start out of reaction rather than vision. What many of these movements fail to see is that there are many scriptural principles hidden in the rubble of man-made tradition. Many times, in being zealous to clear away the rubble, we can bulldoze part of the foundation away if we are not careful.

We need to go through that rubble like an archeologist would in a dig. Rather than just throwing it all out, we must carefully and painstakingly sort through tradition with brushes, little air hoses and small shovels instead of with bulldozers. And it can take years to do that.

This process took a few years for me, but God finally got through to me that my treatment of Christmas was really a sterile and negative approach rather than a constructive one. In essence what God was saying to me was "Don't get rid of the moorings of the tradition unless you have something to take its place that will be just as lasting."

As I began to sort through Christmas, I began to find Jesus everywhere. He had been covered over by the rubble of secularism, but He was there nonetheless. It really hit home with me about four or five years ago when (for some reason I have now forgotten) I was watching the Dean Martin Show on television. God only knows why I happened to see that show, because I normally made a point not to watch it—I considered it sleazy and suggestive. But I happened to be watching it the night of their Christmas special, and there were all these unbelieving television stars singing, "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." As they were singing, "Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners recon-

ciled," I just broke down and cried, because God was speaking to me through it. God was using those unbelieving people to bless me with the words of the gospel, and God said to me, "What is wrong with this?" He wasn't asking, "What is wrong with Dean Martin's show and the people on it?" but rather, "What is wrong with once a year My causing My creation to sing about My advent to the earth?" God was using those people to speak to me.

NW: *What are some specific ways you and your family celebrate Christmas?*

GR: We are very traditional in the way we observe Christmas. When Christmas season approaches, we decorate the house in a warm and festive way



with wreaths, Christmas cards, and the biggest tree we can find. We also play Christmas carols—the whole works. For the last few years we have had an observance on Christmas Eve in which we either give presents to our neighbors or bake something for them. On Christmas Eve, we pay a brief visit to each one of their homes to distribute these presents, wish them a Merry Christmas, and express our appreciation for their being our neighbors. In other words, we try to spread "good will."

Everything that we do concerning Christmas is done to set the pattern or custom for my grandchildren as well as for my children. Because I have come to realize the richness hidden in the Christmas tradition, I intend to see that the joy of Christmastime extends to my children's children as a treasured heritage from the Lord.

Just Around the Corner: Setting Priorities

Recognizing and doing what is important

McCready Johnston is the senior pastor of the Church of the New Covenant in Tustin, California.



A Joyous and Sad Occasion

NW: What is the significance of Christmas to you and your family?

MJ: We look at Christmas as more than just one day—we look at it as a season. We try to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in such a way that the people in our community and in our immediate family understand its significance. As you know, there is so much commercialization associated with the season that it essentially loses all reference to God and to His Son, Jesus. We try to counteract that by making Christmas a week-long celebration centered around Christ.

In that respect, on the Sunday preceding Christmas we have a community Christmas service, which consists of worship and a message. This year, the Christmas message will be brought by Ern Baxter. At that service, we also have the covenant meal—communion—and then we have a traditional Christmas dinner—turkey and all the trimmings.

NW: That takes place the Sunday before Christmas?

MJ: Yes. Then each following evening of the week, carolers from our group—about forty men, women and children from the same families—go out into different neighborhoods, apartment complexes and shopping centers here in the Tustin area, presenting about a forty-minute program in each place. We find that people thoroughly enjoy it, and of course we are delighted to have an opportunity to sing to others about Jesus and God our Father.

On Christmas Eve, we have a community open house at our home, where people can drop in to see us. Then Christmas Day is kept strictly for our families. When we get up in the morning, the first thing we do—which has been a tradition in our home for about twenty-seven years now—is to have a little birthday cake and read the second chapter of the gospel of Luke. After that we open our gifts with the family, and then we have a brunch at about eleven o'clock in the morning to which all of our immediate family is invited. That is, in brief, how we celebrate Christmas.

NW: What are the primary elements you think God would like to see restored to Christmas throughout society?

MJ: I think God looks at Christmas in two ways—both joyously and sadly. His joy at the occasion is born out in the Scriptures where Luke speaks of a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God and singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth."

The New American Standard translation says, "on earth, peace among men with whom He is pleased." That is where the sadness comes in, because I don't believe God is pleased with the state of mankind at this point of history. I don't believe He is pleased with all the greed—particularly the greed manifested in the commercialization of the birthday of Jesus—or with the corruption, sexual perversion and drunkenness that is displayed at Christmastime (of course, this takes place all year round as well). Crime is rampant at Christmastime—even people who wouldn't normally commit a crime will shoplift during the holiday season. All of this represents rebellion against God, and I'm sure God is not pleased with that, and that it saddens Him greatly.

But I believe God desires all of us to return to His view of Christmas. That can't occur in just one day, or even one week. It must come about through a total lifestyle in which we must walk more closely with God each day. That, of course, means more than just renewing a Christmas tradition—it means the very renewing of our lives.

John Beckett is the president of Intercessors for America in Elyria, Ohio.



A Family Heritage

NW: What are some of the most meaningful aspects of Christmas to your family?

JB: I think there are probably three priorities for us in the Christmas season: the first is the Lord, the second is the family and the third is giving. In each of those areas I feel that we have developed a

pattern and some insights that have been helpful to us in appreciating the season.

Unfortunately, the secularization of our culture has caused Christmas to become a materialistic event for a large segment of our society. Consequently a tremendous amount of pressure is placed on families who feel they must observe Christmas in a materialistic rather than in a spiritual sense. For this reason it is essential that we clearly establish the Lord as the center of our celebration.

One way in which we focus on Jesus in this season is through our tradition of having a family gathering on Christmas Eve, when we spend some time telling the children again the Christmas story out of the gospel. We then discuss the story and have a meaningful time of prayer together in which we try to focus on the gift of the Lord to us.

Secondly, we view Christmas as a time for the family to be together. We have six children—three boys and three girls, ranging in age from five to nineteen years. In addition, relatives from Canada usually come to stay with us during that time, and these extended visits are simply times when we enjoy being together. The local family members visit back and forth in each other's homes, having dinners or get-togethers for each other.

The third area of priority is our emphasis on giving. We've been delighted to see the spirit of giving that has developed over the years in our children. I can honestly say that without exception our youngsters are more enthused at this point about giving to one another than they are about receiving. We have tried to encourage that, while at the same time avoiding an emphasis on the gifts themselves.

We've tried to encourage our children to be creative about giving, and usually several gifts will be handmade by the youngsters for others. As parents we try to do a certain amount of that as well, sometimes with humorous results. I built a jungle gym in our basement one year, finishing it after midnight on Christmas Eve. It was built in secret, and the plan was to bring it upstairs and have it in the living room where we would celebrate Christmas the next morning. When I tried to bring it up from the basement, however, it wouldn't fit through the door. So we had to rearrange our whole Christmas, cleaning up the basement that night so we could have our Christmas celebration around the jungle gym downstairs. That kind of flexibility along with an emphasis on creativity is, I think, enriching for the children.

NW: *In what ways does your family plan and prepare for Christmas?*

JB: Over the last several years we have planned a time early in the season when we all go out shopping together as a family. We go to a shopping mall that is some distance from our home and spend the better part of an afternoon going out in pairs, arranging rendezvous points and having a meal together. We have a tremendous day of fun together.

Another family activity we have prior to Christmas is the decoration of the tree—a live one—usually a week or so before Christmas. As part of our tradition of decorating the tree, we have collected over the years quite an assortment of tree ornaments that the youngsters have made themselves, and we keep those treasures carefully stored away until time to decorate. Each year the tree ornaments themselves stir a number of memories of the time when the children who are now much older made them. The ornaments represent for them our family's continuity and tradition. We decorate the tree as a family, and every family member's participation makes it fun. We drink hot mulled cider, play Christmas music, and make it a great family activity.

NW: *Are there any other special Christmas traditions your family observes?*

JB: One other feature of our Christmas that has developed over the years is an area we want to focus on more in the future: an effort to extend beyond our own family. We have made it a tradition over the years to provide at Christmas for another family that is needy. We have been doing this with one particular family for several years now. We take the whole Christmas meal, including a turkey, over to them. It gives us a chance to brighten their Christmas and it deepens the spiritual dimension of the holiday for us as well. It is an opportunity to share the Lord's love with them.

We also have a friend in a nursing home, an elderly woman who is not a relative but a precious person we've come to know in the Lord. We try to make her a part of our Christmas season by having her in our home during the holidays while the tree is up and the family is around. In that way we extend our family to include her.


NW: *Do you think that your family's Christmas traditions help to enrich its spiritual heritage?*

JB: Yes. We view Christmas as a memorial of a kind: it is a celebration, a historical reminder. We see the holiday as a time to consider our Christian heritage, a kind of "anchor" in our Christian experience which it benefits us to observe. In the same way, as we recall at Christmas events in our family life from years past, it helps to reinforce the concept of family heritage.

As we have tried to reassess Christmas, we have become aware of the complexity—the busyness—that is involved in the holiday. Our family traditions certainly add to the complexity, and the fact that our family is large and growing larger makes us busier still. Yet we are realizing that our lives will probably always be complex just because of the place in which the Lord has us. For this reason, our focus, we think, should not be so much on reducing the complexity of our Christmas celebration, but rather on praying for real grace to function in that complexity and to be able to maintain our peace and joy in the midst of it. ♥

Knowing When God Has Spoken

by Bob Mumford



In the book of Acts we find many examples of guidance by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. One example appears in Acts 8:29: "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot."

My question is, How did the Holy Spirit speak to Philip? Was it an audible voice? Was it something within Philip's spirit? We aren't told how the Spirit spoke, yet Philip knew the words and obeyed.

Men whom I trust, scholarly, Bible-believing men, have heard God speak in an audible voice. Such was the experience of young Samuel with Eli in the

Temple (1 Sam. 3:10). Although I have never heard God speak in an audible voice, I have heard Him speak distinct words deep inside me. In Colombia, South America, I was lying upon my bed when the presence of the Lord came into the room and the Holy Spirit said very distinctly, "I want you to go back to school!"

It couldn't have been any clearer if my wife had spoken the words right next to me. It was spoken straight and strong and right into my spirit. It wasn't a demanding, urgent voice. If it had been, I would immediately have suspected the source to be someone or something other than the Lord. The vocal impression was warm, but firm. I knew it was the Lord.

The wisdom from above is always peaceable and pure. When God speaks, there is always a sense of peace deep within our spirit, even if we don't like what He's saying.

I didn't like it when I was told to go back to school. I had already graduated from one Bible college. I had a wife and children to support, and I argued with the Holy Spirit. Three days later, however, there were further instructions: "I want you to go to the Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania."

It didn't seem logical to me at the time for a Spirit-filled Bible teacher to go back to seminary, but the voice that spoke to my spirit was indeed the voice of God. He didn't speak to my mind, emotions, or will. Rather He spoke to my inner being—that *me* which is spirit alone. And so I said, "Lord, I'm willing. Now please arrange the circumstances."

He did, and we went. Many times across the years we have seen the fruit of our obedience.

The Holy Spirit can and does speak sometimes in distinct, understandable words. On occasion this may be external and audible, but this is the exception. Most often it is internal, subjective, but perfectly clear and distinct.

Receiving guidance depends greatly on our ability to recognize the voice of God when He speaks to us. It was important for Philip to recognize and obey when the Holy Spirit spoke to him. It is important that we do too.

Our textbook for this kind of direct guidance is the book of Acts. Here we find countless examples of the Holy Spirit giving specific instructions to the disciples: "Go here—don't go there." Earlier Jesus Himself had told the disciples where to go and what to do. Jesus told His disciples that He would soon go to the Father, but that they should not grieve: "I assure you that it is a good thing for you that I should go away. For if I did not go away, the divine helper would not come to you. But if I go, then I will send him to you... he will guide you into everything that is true" (Jn. 16:7, 13 Phillips).

After Jesus' resurrection, He showed Himself to the disciples, and before His ascension He emphasized that they were to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the fulfillment of the promise: "Before many days are passed you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit... you are to be given power when the Holy Spirit has come to you" (Acts 1:5, 8 Phillips).

At Pentecost, tongues of fire descended from heaven and the assembled followers of Jesus Christ were baptized in the Holy Spirit, just as He had promised. This introduced the disciples into a brand-new realm of experiencing the presence and power of God. It also opened them to the influence of other spiritual powers, and in reading the book of Acts we see how the disciples had to *learn the skill* of knowing the voice of God, often by trial and error.

In our lives the baptism in the Holy Spirit opens the door for us to receive God's power. It is our tool kit, but we must learn to use it. This can be likened to learning to play the piano or the accordion or learning to use the

typewriter. At first you hunt and peck, thinking you'll never learn. A sense of failure or inability nags until you pass a certain point at which time faith responds and you realize that you can—you will be able to learn.

On several occasions I have followed what I thought was the leading of the Holy Spirit only to find myself in a blind alley.

"Go down this street; there's a brick house on the right. Go there. The man needs Jesus." I drive down the street but there's no brick house! However, I'm learning! And at least I'm willing to be obedient and am encouraged by the fact that the disciples didn't *always* recognize the leading of God either.

Restrictive Guidance

Often we find that the Holy Spirit *restrains* us from a certain action. This wouldn't be necessary if we went in the right direction in the first place. The apostles, being human, had the same experiences. Paul and Silas were on their way through Phrygia and Galatia, "but the Holy Spirit prevented them from speaking God's message in Asia" (Acts 16:6 Phillips).

It seems strange that the Holy Spirit would ever forbid anyone to preach the good news anywhere. Shouldn't we preach the Word to everyone, everywhere?

No—there is a time to speak and a time to refrain from speaking. This is especially good advice for people who try to cram religion down everybody's throat.

"But I feel led to stand on the street corner and preach about Jesus Christ," one man told me. "I ask everybody who comes by if he knows Jesus as his Savior."



Bob Mumford completed his studies for the Bachelor of Divinity degree at the Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Philadelphia. He has served as dean of Elim Bible Institute and as a pastor, evangelist and seminar teacher. Bob has also written many books on various aspects of the Christian life. He is a member of New Wine's Editorial Board and has recently moved his office to Mobile, Alabama, where he resides with his wife, Judy, and their family.

That's good if the Holy Spirit commissioned you to do it. But if you're down there on the corner because you have a strong urge inside you, no peace, and you've got to do *something* to satisfy your restlessness, then it isn't the Holy Spirit's direction. It's simply your own undisciplined human spirit. Such "ministry" does incalculable harm to the spreading of the gospel. God knows the perfect timing. He knows when hearts and minds are tender and ready to receive His Word. When *He* sends you, people listen and a harvest is reaped. . . .

When Paul and Silas came to Mysia they tried to enter Bithynia, "but again the Holy Spirit wouldn't permit them." They still didn't know where God wanted them to go. They wanted to get at the teeming millions of Asia, but God said "No." He was leading them by restrictive guidance.

I once thought that Paul, Silas, and the other apostles

wore halos over their heads. I thought they were able to discern instantly what God wanted them to do. I was glad when I discovered in practice this wasn't the case.

In Bible college I had a professor whom I respected greatly. Once in class he told us, "This morning I got up to pray and I fell asleep!"

Spontaneously I said out loud, "Glory!"

Everyone in the class turned to look at me. The professor grinned and said, "What's the matter, Mr. Mumford? Are you glad to find out that I'm human?"

Embarrassed, I confessed, "To tell you the truth, sir, I am. I sometimes fall asleep during my morning prayer time, but I didn't think anybody else did."

When I first started listening to the prompting of the voice

within, I often went in the wrong direction, but I wasn't aware that anybody else did. I was relieved when I discovered that Paul and Silas and the other apostles had the same problem. So do our present-day spiritual "giants"!

Remember the occasion when the disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee and Jesus said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees"?

Reasoning among themselves as to what He meant, one of the disciples said, "He must have forgotten the lunch." This, of course, had nothing to do with what Jesus was seeking to impart. Their inability to perceive is comforting to me in two ways. One, it shows that all good disciples are a little thick and, two,

**If God gave
us a call today,
would He find that our line was busy?**



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(See order form page 34)

that the Master is always rich in patience as He teaches us His ways. In fact, it's because of our thickness that God is forced to use more dramatic forms of guidance (visions) to impress His will upon us.

What would have happened if Paul had persisted in going into Asia? Possibly, the whole course of history could have been changed by this one man's failure to follow his guidance. Paul wasn't able to discern *where* God wanted him to go, but he did know God wanted him to go somewhere. He probably reasoned: "There's a real need in Asia; I think I'll go there." How did the Holy Spirit restrain him? It may have been by an audible voice, but more likely it was by upsetting Paul's peace. He tried preaching in Asia, but suddenly the peace of God inside was upset, and he knew he was on the wrong track. This trial-and-error method continued until Paul finally was in position to hear the positive guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Get Moving

There are people who sit still waiting for God to speak. "God, if you want me to go to church this Sunday, speak to me." But God wants us on the move. It is very difficult to turn the steering wheel on a stopped car. Get it moving and you can turn the wheel easily. Likewise, you can turn the helm of a docked ship, but nothing happens. It's only when the ship is on the move that it responds to the helmsman's touch on the wheel.

If I can't seem to get any direct guidance from God about where I'm to go or what I'm to do next, I use my best judgment, my sanctified intellect, and get moving. I've already surrendered my will to God and asked Him to lead me or restrict me if I'm heading the wrong way. I keep my inward ear listening for the prompting of the Spirit, and as I go I let Him guide. . . .

A young man who showed great promise in school graduated from Bible college with me.

He was married, had three children and was living in one of the small cottages provided for married students. A couple of months after graduation I went to see him.

"What are your plans?" I asked.

He said, "Well, I haven't had any leadings from the Lord so I'm just going to stay right here until Jesus tells me what to do." And there he sat until the "unspiritual" faculty helped him move out to give room to another family just starting to school.

"What should he have done?" you ask. Even without *specific* leading he could have used his sanctified intellect and at least begun to *move*.

"I'll find a home for my family and start traveling as an evangelist. . . ." If he received negative guidance from the Lord he could have changed directions. "I'll find employment and at least assume the responsibility of providing for my family." That's one thing he could be sure God wanted him to do. If you walk in the little light you have, God will always supply more light.

As long as you move with a sincere desire to do God's will, He will guide you into the right place. But if you sit still and try to sweat God out, you'll find that He will not yield. I've tried it!

God will not be manipulated, and it's useless to try to figure Him out. Guidance involves principles to be learned—not techniques to be mastered.

I once knew a fellow who wanted to learn all about healings. He studied every incident of healing in the New Testament. He thought that by figuring out the *technique* Jesus and the disciples used, he would tap the secret of their power. Much to his dismay he discovered there weren't two healings alike. The only common denominator was dependence upon the Father—which, incidentally, is the secret of the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Guidance is like that. Learn-

ing to discern the voice of God is a skill, and it can be learned, but there are no two circumstances alike.

The Restraining Hand of God

When the Holy Spirit speaks He may speak in positive guidance, or He may use negative guidance. And negative guidance, which often manifests it-

As long as you move with a sincere desire to do God's will, He will guide you into the right place.

self by the disruption of inner peace, may be a preventive guidance to keep us away from harm which we'll never know about (unless we fail to heed the guidance).

While I was Dean of a Bible college in New York, my wife and I started on a trip to Delaware to interview some prospective students. We hadn't planned the trip or prayed about it. The farther I drove down the freeway, the more upset I became deep inside.

"Lord, what's the matter?" I asked.

Inside I felt the response, "You'd better stop right now."

I said to my wife, "Honey, do you sense something wrong?"

She said, "I certainly do." I put on the brakes and pulled over to the side of the road.

"Let's just stop and see what happens," I said. As soon as we stopped the car, the unrest and heaviness lifted. I said, "Thank You, Jesus," and turned the car around.

When we started back in the other direction, the glory of the Lord filled that car, and we began to worship Him. What had we been heading for? God only knows. But whatever it was, God's negative guidance had

Remember: Friday, December 4, is a national day of prayer and fasting.

disturbed my peace and warned me not to go farther. It is important that we learn to recognize the restraining hand of God.

Sometimes we wonder if the negative guidance could be Satan's method of keeping us from doing God's will. Remember, though, that Satan cannot imitate the peace of God. When that peace is disturbed, take care.

We may hear an inner voice saying, "You're not praying enough. You need to pray more." Surely, Satan wouldn't tell you to pray! Sure he would. There are

two ways Satan can trap us: either by leading us into obvious worldly sin or by pushing us overboard on some spiritual tangent. Sometimes God wants us to act—not pray. Satan can quote scripture also, talking about spiritual things, impressing upon us great religious fervor.

I counseled with a lady who had come under counterfeit spiritual pressure. Voices were telling her to fast and pray, deprive herself of sleep, wear long black dresses, never read the newspaper or listen to musical instruments. She was under great duress, and she was forced to take another look and see that even "spiritual" guidance can come from Satan.

The Voice of Peace

One way we can tell the difference between the voice of God and a counterfeit is the sense of peace. The voice which speaks peace is of God; the voice which speaks urgency is either of Satan or comes from your own human nature. God leads; Satan pushes.

The demanding voice says, "Quit your job right now. Don't wait for tomorrow. You're disobedient if you don't!" If we follow such advice we're in trouble, because God seldom speaks like that except in emergencies.

The Greek word for god is *theos*. This is the same root that our word "enthusiasm" comes from. The ancient Greeks looked at someone who was *entheos* as someone who was possessed by a god and transported into ecstasy. We need to recognize the fine line between genuine spiritual enthusiasm (which like deep water in a river may run fast but without froth and foam) and a kind of demonizing that leads us to play frantically the role of a religious cheerleader without any inner peace. As far as I am concerned, enthusiasm in religious realms can be a symptom of spiritual disease.... Building programs and personalities are not an adequate substitute for the presence of God to keep God's people "enthusiastic" about

"religious things." Mountain peaks of enthusiasm can be just as dangerous as deep valleys in our walk with God.

When we come to know the abiding peace of God deep in our spirit we have reached a balance and a stability that cannot be upset by circumstances or urgent voices speaking to our mind or emotions. Nor can we be fooled by counterfeit guidance, because we've learned to recognize the voice of God. Receiving divine guidance involves learning certain principles.

There are multitudes of people who have come into a relationship with Jesus Christ and been baptized in the Holy Spirit, but they go through life without practicing and developing the skill of following God's daily leading. They are like one who receives as a gift a beautiful concert piano, but is satisfied to play with only one finger.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit potentially brings with it the promise of divine guidance, but we must understand the need for practice and development in receiving it. The author of Hebrews writes: "At a time when you should be teaching others, you need teachers yourselves to repeat to you the ABC of God's revelation to men. You have become people who need a milk diet and cannot face solid food! For anyone who continues to live on milk is obviously immature—he simply has not grown up. 'Solid food' is only for the adult, that is, for the man *who has developed by experience* his power to discriminate between what is good and what is bad for him" (Heb. 5:14 Phillips).

The only way to develop the ability to discriminate between the voice of God and other voices is by *experience*, by use. There are many voices clamoring for our attention. More than ever before in history it is important that we learn to know the voice of God. ♣

Adapted from *Take Another Look at Guidance* by Bob Mumford, ©1971 by Logos International. Used by permission.

Tips for Fathers

In the spring of 1977, Dad and I spent a lot of time discussing the needs of the family, and fathers in particular. Our conclusions were: 1) that family roles are in an upheaval and in serious need of redefinition; 2) that the role of a father has become vague, often totally lacking, or severely distorted; 3) that the role of a father is essential to producing identity, security and stability in society; 4) that what was needed was a continuing effort, not just a "one-shot" approach.

After praying and talking with other Christians, we decided to write a letter to fathers on a regular basis. We knew that the letter had to be practical, filled with relevant news, tips and resource material, not just saying "you ought to," but rather "how to." That's the way **Fathergram**—a service to fathers—came into being.

—Charles Simpson

"Tips for Fathers" are excerpts from **Fathergram**. If you would like to be added to their mailing list, write: **Fathergram**, P.O. Box Z, Mobile, AL 36616.

A mounting attack is being aimed at conservative Christian leadership in America. The principal target has been the Rev. Jerry Falwell, the Moral Majority, and "moral majority types." The latter category broadly identifies those who are challenging the status quo with an agenda that includes concerns about abortion, humanism, homosexual rights, prayer in public schools, the spread of pornography, crime, our position with respect to Israel and national defense. Opposition has mounted, it seems, in direct proportion to the effectiveness of Christians in "setting the agenda" for national debate and influencing national and local elections.

The attack is coming from two directions: inside and outside the Church. From within the Church, the primary concern is from those who have set a different agenda—one which includes nuclear disarmament, human need, indignity, injustice and our endangered environment. Many Christians with this agenda are motivated by biblical truth and deep conviction. We must respect the particular burdens they feel, and be sensitive to what the Lord is saying about these issues. In the same way, these Christians need to be more tolerant of those who believe, as IFA has maintained, that there is no higher priority in America today than to halt the killings of innocent human life through abortion and the parallel disintegration of moral values in almost every segment of our national life.

Outside the Church is a rising chorus of attack from journalists, television commentators, and educational and political leaders who are openly atheistic and suspicious of any agenda linked to God. Terms being used to describe Bible-oriented Christian leaders are "religious bigots," "the religious new right," and "right wing nuts." For example, Norman Lear's

counter-group, "People for the American Way," has targeted men like Falwell and evangelist James Robison, the Roundtable and of course the Moral Majority, by accusing them of "teaching people to hate, but in a 'Christian' way."

Many of us, particularly in leadership, are becoming targets of the increasing invective against "the religious new right." What should be our posture? How should we conduct ourselves in the face of such opposition? Please consider these suggestions and the accompanying scriptures:

1. *Be careful of our own walk before God.* We are sinners saved by grace. We need to be clothed daily, not in our righteousness, which is as filthy rags, but in God's righteousness. We must keep our spirits washed with the pure water of the Word, and not adopt the "ways of the world," regardless of how successful they may appear (Is. 64:6; Eph. 5:26; Rom. 12:2).

2. *Seek proper relationships with other Christians.* Those in "lone ranger" ministries are particularly vulnerable to deception, and many effective Christian works have crumbled under the spiritual pride of leaders who were unable to receive the correction and balance that comes from accountability to other believers (Eph. 5:21; Lk. 21:8; Pr. 15:32).

3. *Stay open to adjustment.* While God doesn't change, the Holy Spirit, God's administrator on earth, moves as the wind, changing emphasis from "season to season" in the Father's timetable. We need to follow His agenda (Heb. 13:8; Jn. 3:8, 6:38).

4. *Don't be surprised at opposition or insult,* for as long as "the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you," this can be expected, and can be a measure of both God's refinement and His blessing (1 Pet. 4:12).

5. *Stand fast if God has placed*

you on a particular battlefield.

"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small" (Pr. 24:10). "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, fear not" (Is. 35:3, 4).

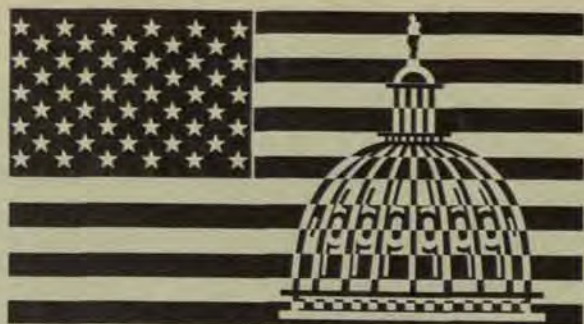
6. *Remember that we are in spiritual warfare and that battles will be won through prayer that will not be won any other way.* Our responsibility is to give ourselves to the Lord and His cause. The battle is the Lord's and He is responsible for the outcome (Eph. 6:12; 1 Sam. 17:29; 1 Sam. 18:47).

7. *Pray for the leadership God is giving us.* Men like Dr. Falwell are in a place where few of us could be, and our prayer will enable the Lord's protection and anointing to rest on them (Pr. 29:2; Heb. 13:7).

Finally, we need to keep our focus on God's ultimate goal, which isn't limited to any of the "agenda" items listed above but is much more profound. God is gathering to Himself a redeemed community of believers who are voluntarily and whole-heartedly submitted to His lordship and are prepared to reign with Him, now and in eternity. Our goal must be to let our characters be so conformed to His purpose for us that we can truly enter into the high place to which He is calling us.

If you would like to receive the Intercessors for America Newsletter, write:

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Intercessors Report

by
John Beckett

A King Should Be Welcomed Home

by Paul Thigpen

A Christmas story for you and your children about spiritual sensitivity.



Malachi sighed and leaned against the stable wall, his ear brushing against a spider web. Even for a donkey, the trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem is long and dusty. And what a load he had carried! His master's wife was a small woman, but she was heavy with a child who would be born very soon now. Malachi had felt as if the whole world were riding on his back. He was glad it was time to rest.

The little beast shut his eyes, but he couldn't sleep. Over and over again Malachi heard the words that Joseph, his master, had spoken to his wife: "This child will be born the King of Kings." For months now Joseph had acted strangely; he rarely slept and spoke often of dreams. All his talk about angels was more than a simple donkey could understand. But Malachi knew that his master was a good man, and very wise. If he said that a king was coming, then it must be true. And that much even a donkey could understand.

If a king is coming, Malachi thought, someone should be here to welcome him. He looked around at the noisy, dusty stable—hardly a place for a king. "This is a place for beasts," he said to himself. "Will people come to greet a king in such a place as this?"

Suddenly an idea was born between his two furry ears. "People may not visit a stable, but surely *animals* would. A stable is a home for beasts, and if a king comes to visit a stable, then it is the beasts who should greet him there. *Wherever* it is he comes to dwell, a *king* should be welcomed home!"

Proud of his grand idea, Malachi pranced toward the stable door. "I must find other animals to greet the king! We will welcome him home!" And with the kind of stubborn determination that only donkeys have, Malachi set out down the street.



The first animal he met on his way was a young, royal-looking stallion. He was in the large corral at the edge of town where the Roman soldiers kept their horses, but he was standing apart from the others, facing away from them. The little donkey could hardly see more than his underside, because the horse was tall and kept his head in the air. Looking at him, Malachi felt very close to the ground. It took him a moment to get up his courage, but finally he spoke.

"Excuse me. My name is Malachi. May I speak with you?"

The horse waited so long to answer that the donkey thought he hadn't heard. But just as he was about to ask again, the tall creature looked down with a cold stare.

"My name is Claudius. I am a Roman, and you may address me as 'Sir.' "

Malachi felt even smaller and wanted to run away. He was afraid. But he had made up his mind, and he was more stubborn than he was afraid.

"Sir," the donkey said, almost whispering. "I have important news for you."

Claudius swatted a fly with his tail and yawned. "Important news? Nothing important ever happens in *this* town. Now in *Rome*, where the Emperor lives, *really* important things happen. Kings ride in and out like ants in an anthill. But not here."

The donkey's eyes brightened. "Have you ever been ridden by a king?"

"I have never been ridden by *anyone*," Claudius stuck his nose in the air. "Though, perhaps, I might *possibly* allow a *king* to ride on me—if he were well behaved."

"Well, Sir—that's what I came to tell you. A king has come to town today. Come with me and you can welcome him!"

Claudius snorted rudely. "And how did this king arrive? In a chariot? In a parade? I heard no trumpets."

"No, Sir," Malachi replied. "I carried him on my back."

The horse snickered. "You carried him? A donkey? Then he is no king. Kings do not ride on *donkeys*; kings ride on *horses*—and *Roman* horses at that." Claudius ended the conversation by swishing his tail in Malachi's face as he turned away and trotted over to another empty corner of the corral.

Malachi hung his head. He felt small and silly. But he was too stubborn to give up. The little beast shook the dust off his hooves and headed down the street. "Wherever it is he comes to dwell," he said firmly, "a *king* should be welcomed home."



Just off the street Malachi spied a tired old ox, yoked to the grinding wheel of a mill. Round and round she walked, turning the heavy stone, grumbling to herself above the creaking of the wheel. Malachi came close and shouted over the noise.

"Excuse me! My name is Malachi! May I speak with you?"

The ox kept turning the wheel and answered glumly without even looking up. "Can't you see I'm busy?"

The donkey was puzzled. "But no one is here driving you," he said. "You're alone. Why are you working when your master has gone home for the evening?"

She continued her path around and around. The grain in the mill had been ground to a fine dust long before, but still she labored.

"What do I care if my master is lazy?" she mumbled. "I have work to do, and the sun will soon go down."

Malachi realized that he wouldn't get very far trying to talk from where he stood, so he began to walk along beside the ox as she turned. "What is your name?" he asked.

"Marta!" she bellowed. "Now go away! You're slowing me down." But Malachi was persistent. He continued to walk around, though it made him tired. But he had made up his mind, and he was more stubborn than he was tired. He tried again.

"I have important news for you, Marta. You must stop grinding and come with me. A king has come to town today. Come with me and you can welcome him!"

For a moment the old ox looked as if she would stop. She slowed down a little, lifting her shoulders up under her yoke as if to throw it off. But finally she lowered her head and began to walk faster again.

"I can't go anywhere while I'm bound to this wheel—except in circles. My yoke is too heavy." She munched a stalk of wheat and then added with a bitter smile, "But I don't suppose a *king* would know anything about yokes, would he?"

Malachi thought a moment and then answered. "My master is a carpenter. Perhaps the king could learn from him to make a lighter yoke."

"A lighter yoke!" Marta spat the wheat stalk on the ground. "I want a king who will *break* my yoke, not give me a lighter one!" She tried to kick the donkey, but he moved out of her way. Her anger made her turn the wheel faster and faster, until the stones were grinding themselves. Marta went back to her grumbling.

Malachi hung his head once more. He felt as weary himself as the ox, just from being around her—and he was sad as well. But he was too stubborn to give up. The little beast shook the dust off his hooves and headed down the street again. "Wherever it is he comes to dwell," he brayed, "a *king* should be welcomed home!"

The sun was setting, and Malachi looked up at the glory of the western skies. Heaven was dressed in scarlet and gold—to *greet the king*, he thought. Suddenly he spotted some movement in the clouds above his head. It was a large crow, climbing and diving and looping through the air. Malachi called to him.

"Excuse me! My name is Malachi! May I speak with you?"

The crow was in the middle of a somersault, chattering to himself, when he heard the donkey's call. Without even turning right side up again, he plunged downward toward Malachi. Before the little beast could get out of the way, the bird had landed upright on Malachi's head.

"Pretty fancy, huh?" The crow brushed his wings off. "Phinehas is the name. Did you say something?"

After such difficult conversations with the horse and ox, the donkey was delighted to find someone so willing to talk. "Yes, I did," he answered. "I have some important—"

"Well, then," Phinehas interrupted, "good, my boy. You see, I had a cloud in my ear and I wasn't sure whether it was someone's voice or just thunder."

Malachi started his sentence again. "I have some important news—"

"Well, I certainly *hope* it's important. I *love* being up there—close to heaven, you know—and I *hate* putting my feet on the ground. It had *better* be important."

In frustration the donkey shook his head, upsetting the crow's roost, and blurted out the rest of his message. "A king has come to town today. Come with me to welcome him!"

Phinehas pulled himself back up to his perch from behind Malachi's twitching ear. "A *king!*" he



cawed. "When? Where?"

"Today!" the donkey brayed. "Right now! Come with—"

"A king!" Phinehas broke in. "With trumpets and banners? With music and dancing? With crowns and jewels and gold and magicians?"

Malachi hesitated. "Not exactly. He's probably wrapped up in a blanket, and lying in a—"

"A king!" the crow jabbered. "I must go see this wonder. Thank you, friend—what did you say your name was? Anyway, I'm off to the palace to see the king! Now, let's see, where is the palace?" And Phinehas was off with a flutter and a chatter.

"Wait!" cried Malachi. "He's not in a palace; he's in a stable!" But it was too late. The crow was already halfway to the next town, but he was headed toward Egypt.

Once more, the donkey hung his head. He felt confused and dizzy. And though he was stubborn—more stubborn than anyone else—he was ready to give up. The little beast shook the dust off his hooves and headed home. "Wherever it is he comes to dwell," he sighed, "a king *should* be welcomed home. But instead of a cheering crowd, he will have only a silly, tired, confused donkey to welcome him." And a big donkey tear rolled down his muzzle.

The way home was dark and dusty. He took a different road from the way he had come so that he wouldn't have to pass by Claudius or Marta again. The road went just around the edge of town, next to the hills that led out to the wilderness.

The stars were coming out, and a very bright one had begun to shine like the moon. But still it was dark, and Malachi was too deep in thought to notice the broad mud puddle that stretched across the path—right in front of him.

The donkey sloshed right into the mud, and as he did his hoof stumbled onto something that moved. A squeal went up from the mud, with a great confusion that sent dirty water flying everywhere. Malachi was so terrified that he fell backwards into the puddle, his heart pounding in his muddy ears.

"Terribly sorry!" he cried. "Please forgive me!" He wasn't sure who or what it was he had disturbed. In the darkness he could only make out the muddy form of some animal smaller than himself. "Has someone hurt you and left you lying in the road?" he asked.

"No," the creature answered meekly.

"Were you sleeping, then?" Malachi asked.

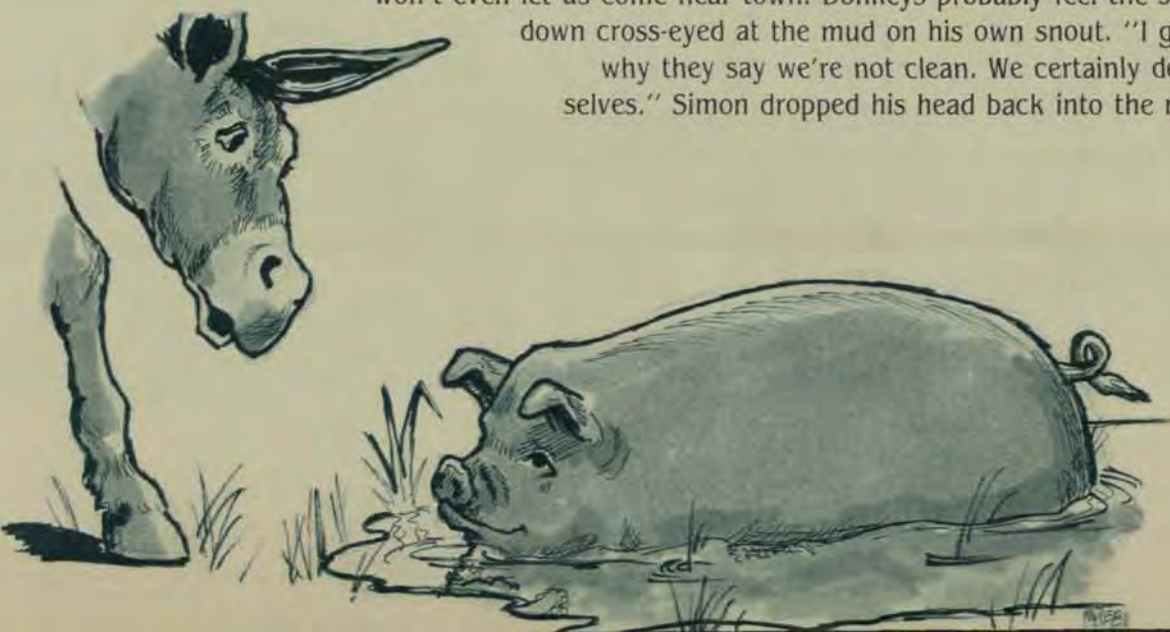
"No," came the reply, "just listening."

"In the mud?" said the donkey. He squinted to see better in the dark and got a closer look at his new acquaintance. "Why, no wonder! You're a pig!"

"Please call me Simon," the pig said, lifting his head from the mud. "I really wasn't sleeping, you know. Everyone thinks pigs are lazy because they lie still in the mud all day. But they're not sleeping; they're *listening*."

Malachi was so taken back that he forgot to ask Simon what it was he expected to hear. "A pig!" he repeated.

"I know what you're thinking," said Simon. "Everyone says we're unclean. The people won't even let us come near town. Donkeys probably feel the same way." He looked down cross-eyed at the mud on his own snout. "I guess I can understand why they say we're not clean. We certainly do make a mess of ourselves." Simon dropped his head back into the mud again and sighed.



For the first time in his life, Malachi felt a little sorry for pigs. "Well, being unclean isn't *all* bad," he suggested. "At least you don't have to worry every day about ending up on a dinner table." But somehow that small encouragement failed to lift Simon's spirits.

Malachi tried to rub the mud off his muzzle, but it was already drying. "I'd best be on my way," he said. He didn't like the thought of being seen in public with a pig.

"Where are you going?" Simon asked. "Surely a donkey would not be traveling around unless he had a burden?"

Malachi felt uncomfortable. "I . . . I've been out to tell everyone that a king has come to town today."

"A *king*?" Simon whispered. "A *real* king?"

"Well, he has no crown or throne—no palace or trumpets or gold or jewels."

"But what about his subjects?" asked Simon. "Does he have a crowd to welcome him? No real king needs a palace or those other things—wherever he lays his head is his palace. But does your king have a throng of loyal hearts who love him? That is what makes a king!"

Malachi was speechless, and his face burned with shame. *This pig*, he thought—*this muddy, outcast pig—is the only beast who has listened to me, the only one who knows what a real king is. And to think I wanted to pass him by.*

The donkey's eyes filled with tears. "Yes, my brother," he finally answered. "He is a *real* king. He has subjects—he has a loyal throng, a loving crowd to welcome him. Come with me and you'll see."

"But I'm unclean!" cried Simon. "What king would want to be greeted by a pig?"

"I'm a bit dirty myself," said Malachi. "We both need a bath. But a *real* king looks beyond the dirt. Even a dusty stable will do for his resting place, if someone is there to greet him. Now come with me, Simon." He pushed the pig up from the mud with his muzzle, and the two set out down the road together.

"We must hurry along," said the donkey. "For wherever it is he comes to dwell—"

"A *king*," said the pig, "should be welcomed home." ♡



**A better magazine for a
better way to live.**

This Christmas season give
New Wine Magazine.



(See the gift form
on the envelope.)

Administrator's Letter



Because 1982 could be one of the most significant years in *New Wine's* development, I wanted to take this opportunity to give you a preview of what we believe may be ahead and to enlist your support.

For the next year and beyond, there are two basic goals that are highest on the agenda for *New Wine Magazine*. First, we want to continue to take good care of our current readers; and second, we want to reach out to many new potential readers. We hope to do this in the following ways:

1. In 1982, we will inaugurate our New Wine Conferences. These meetings will be designed to introduce thousands of people to a new way of life. Through

these informative conferences, we hope to strengthen our current readers, find many new readers, and provide encouragement to the local Christian community and church leadership in each city we visit.

2. Because we live in a society saturated with communication, we realize the difficulty in introducing *New Wine* to potential readers who may feel they just don't have time to read one more publication. We're encouraged that 1982 will mark the first year that we can effectively face this challenge through a marketing and promotional team on our staff with the expertise to reach a broader audience with the vital message *New Wine* presents.

3. Significantly enough, Jesus didn't approach the people of His day from a "religious" perspective. Instead, He spoke the truth in a direct way in terms they could understand. While being careful not to water down the truth that has been the strength of *New Wine* for over twelve years, we want to present our message in a way that can go beyond religious jargon, stereotypes and prejudices to speak directly to people at their point of need.

4. We want to continue in 1982 to give our present readers more information on how to lead a successful Christian life. However, we don't want to be just an "information machine." We want to help you draw closer to God in your personal walk with Him. We believe this is central to our purpose as a magazine, and it is one of our most important goals for the new year.

In short, then, through New Wine Conferences, effective promotional campaigns and a direct approach to people at their point of need, we are hoping to reach a wider audience. Even more importantly, we desire in the process to bring each reader of *New Wine Magazine* into a close daily walk with God.

We're excited about 1982. The coming year could possibly

be the most significant one in our history as a magazine. Please pray for us, and when you can, help us financially. Much of what we do in 1982 will be new. For this reason we will need to fund the necessary start-up costs of increasing circulation and laying the foundation for New Wine Conferences.

Together We Can Bring Change

We take our role as publishers of a Christian magazine very seriously. In the face of increasing world unrest and instability, we realize that we must be effective in communicating our message of the Kingdom of God. As a part of the Christian community, our hope is that we may be able to provide people with "a better magazine for a better way of life," and with God's help, to bring change to the world.

Here are four practical ways in which you can help:

1. *Make a commitment to read New Wine each month.*

If possible read each issue in its entirety on the day it arrives. When you finish, use the envelope in the center of the magazine to send us a note. Let us know if we provided help or if we fell short of the mark.

2. *Make a commitment to reach out to others.*

A good way for you personally to help us promote our magazine is to send *New Wine* to a neighbor, a family member or a friend. Each time you make it a priority to put those you care about on the *New Wine* mailing list, you make an investment in someone's life. (The envelope at the center of this magazine can be used for a gift subscription.)

3. *Pray for this ministry.*

We need your intercession on our behalf. Spiritual warfare is a reality for us—we face daily spiritual opposition in our efforts to communicate the Word of God to our readers. But we are confident that



The New Wine Editorial Board

with your prayer support, we will prevail in the battle. Include the ministry of *New Wine* on your daily prayer list.

4. *Help us financially.*

In the same way that we need your prayer support, we also need your financial support. We encourage you to contribute to this ministry to the extent you are able.

If you can, write to let us know your response to our assessment of *New Wine's* goals for 1982. We need to know that you are standing with us as we face the future.

We Appreciate You

Thank you for helping us in 1981. We can't adequately express how important your encouraging letters are. We also welcome your corrective comments. A single letter coming at just the right time often helps to bring about a needed correction in our course. We read every letter that comes to us.

As we approach this holiday season, let's agree to make it one to remember. Join with us as we try to de-commercialize and re-

spiritualize Christmas. Perhaps these four key words can govern our thinking:

Celebration—Rejoicing that we made it through the year and didn't give up, but instead grew stronger in faith.

Gratitude—Telling God that we appreciate His faithfulness to us, whatever our immediate circumstances may be.

Friendship—Expressing with sincerity our love, faithfulness and commitment to those who are near and dear to us.

Heritage—Understanding the privilege of joining many other generations before and after us in celebrating the gift of God's Son.

It is our hope that this holiday season and the years to come will be for you a time when blessing, grace and prosperity are your reward.

Sincerely,

New Wine Magazine
George P. Gundlach
Publishing Administrator

Instruction in the fundamentals of the faith is an important part of our Christian heritage. "The Word" feature over the course of the year will provide a systematic, seasonal study of basic teachings about the creation and fall of man, the person and work of Christ, and the nature and destiny of the Church. We encourage our readers to use this feature daily, both for personal scripture study and family reading.

THE WORD

I Believe in the Apostolic Church Because...

I. Men Are Called to Fulfill God's Purpose		
A. Samuel	1 Sam. 3:1-21	Dec. 1
B. Isaiah	Is. 6:1-13	Dec. 2
C. Jeremiah	Jer. 1:1-19	Dec. 3
D. The Twelve	Mt. 9:35; 10:23	Dec. 4
E. Paul	Acts 9:1-22	Dec. 5
II. Men Are Empowered to Do God's Work		
A. Joseph	Gen. 41:14-45	Dec. 6
B. David	1 Sam. 16:1-23	Dec. 7
C. Daniel	Dan. 2:1-30	Dec. 8
D. The Seventy	Lk. 10:1-20	Dec. 9
E. The Twelve	Acts 1:1-11	Dec. 10
F. The One Hundred and Twenty	Acts 1:12; 2:4	Dec. 11
G. The Church	Acts 4:23-37	Dec. 12
III. Men Are Authorized to Rule in God's Kingdom—The Principle of Delegated Authority		
A. Jesus	Jn. 5:19-47	Dec. 13
B. The Apostles	Mt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:14-20	Dec. 14
C. The Church	Mt. 16:13-20; 18:15-20; Jn. 20:19-23	Dec. 15
D. Peter	Acts 5:1-11	Dec. 16
E. Paul (to Rome)	Rom. 1:1-5	Dec. 17
F. Paul (to Corinth)	1 Cor. 4:14-21	Dec. 18
G. Paul (to Thessalonica)	2 Th. 3:1-15	Dec. 19
IV. Men Are Recognized by Others as Chosen of God		
A. Receive the Messenger as Christ	Mt. 10:40-42	Dec. 20
B. Seeing Jesus in the One Sent	Mt. 23:37-39	Dec. 21
C. Apostles' Doctrine and Decrees	Acts 2:41-47; 16:4-5	Dec. 22
D. God's Word and Apostles' Word the Same	1 Th. 2:13-16; 4:1-8	Dec. 23
E. Those Who Have the Rule	Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28	Dec. 24
F. The Foundation of the Church	Eph. 2:19-22	Dec. 25
G. Gifts to the Church	Eph. 4:11-13	Dec. 26
V. Men Are Portrayed as Fellow Workers with God		
A. Ambassadors	2 Cor. 5:20; 6:10	Dec. 27
B. Stewards	Titus 1:5-9	Dec. 28
C. Servants	2 Cor. 4:1-14	Dec. 29
D. Fathers	1 Cor. 4:14-21	Dec. 30
E. Co-laborers	1 Cor. 3:1-9	Dec. 31

A monthly Bible study by Bruce Longstreth.

I am a physician and surgical resident at Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis. Recently a nineteen-year-old black male was admitted to our hospital with severe head injuries. He and another man had been involved in a minor misdemeanor and were fleeing the police on a motorcycle. The other man was driving—this young man was a passenger—and they were traveling down a busy street in Minneapolis at about ninety miles per hour. According to witnesses, the motorcycle crashed into the back of a car that was stopped at a traffic light. The driver of the motorcycle was killed and the passenger, who became my patient, was thrown ninety feet and struck his head on the pavement.

I was called to see the injured man in the emergency room. The examination revealed he had a critical head injury, so we ran an emergency brain scan that would determine what kind of damage had occurred inside his skull. The results of the scan—obtained just a few minutes after his admission—showed that he had damaged several portions of his brain, a great deal of swelling was taking place inside the skull, and a blood clot had developed there as well.

When someone receives a severe blow to the head, the brain swells, just as other parts of the body swell when injured. The critical problem with brain swelling, however, is that the brain is restricted by the skull and has no room for expansion. Consequently, pressure develops inside the head, causing the brain to stop functioning, resulting in the death of the patient.

The pressure inside the head is measured by an instrument designed for that purpose. Normal pressure in the head is registered by this instrument as a reading within the range of four to eight. A reading above twenty indicates ongoing brain damage. When the pressure reaches forty,



“The Boy Is Healed”

a testimony by Dr. Paul Severson

the patient usually cannot live for more than a short time.

After completing surgery to remove the blood clot and bringing him back to the intensive care unit, we attached a pressure monitor to his head. The monitor reading was about thirty—a critical level. To make matters even more grave, this was only the pressure occurring immediately after the injury—and the swelling usually does not reach its peak until three to five days later. For this reason we were relatively certain that this young man had suffered a fatal head injury and would die within a short time.

“There Is Nothing More I Can Do”

I went to tell all this to the father of the boy. He asked me straightforwardly, “What are his chances?” So I told him straightforwardly, “His chances are not good; I believe he is going to die.” The man replied, “Could we just be with our son?” and I consented to his request.

The father and mother went into their son’s hospital room. The boy was lying there comatose—unconscious, unable to

move a muscle, on a respirator, with a number of tubes running into his body. The pressure monitor was still reading thirty. Since I had thoroughly explained to this man his son’s condition, I went outside the door to my desk to write my usual orders.

We deal with so many fatalities in our work that this case was not unusual. But what happened next was an indication of the significance of the events to come. This father went over to his son and laid his hand on the boy’s head. He lifted his other hand up to God and said aloud the most beautiful prayer I had ever heard in my life. I dropped my pen and listened to him as he cried out, “Father God, there is nothing more I can do for my boy. I just give him to You; He’s in Your hands. Please have mercy on him, forgive him for what he’s done and save him.” At first he struggled to hold back the tears, but when his wife began to weep he also began to weep openly.

As they left, I felt something moving deep inside me, and I lept up from my desk, ran over to them, and blurted out without even thinking, “I believe

God is going to answer your prayer." I don't usually do that—I try to be "scientific" and professional. So then of course I had to explain my feelings. I said, "I'm a Christian, and I believe in prayer, and I will pray for your son as well." The father answered, "Thank you, Doctor; give me a call if anything changes." Then they went home.

"The Boy Is Healed"

As I resumed writing my orders, I began to pray for the boy. Just a few minutes later an older man and his younger companion walked into the intensive care unit. He hobbled up to the desk with his cane and said, "Excuse me; I'm looking for the young boy who was in the motorcycle accident." I introduced myself as the boy's doctor and took him to his room.

The older man was the patient's pastor. He said, "I'd like to pray over the boy." Usually when pastors come in they don't say that. They usually ask "Doctor, what are his chances?" They want to know the medical facts. But this man simply said, "I want to pray over the boy." I replied, "Well, good; I'm a Christian and I'd like to go in and pray with you."

He agreed, so we both went into the patient's room. The pressure monitor still read about thirty. The pastor said to the young man with him—his nephew—"Isaac, bring out the oil." Then he anointed the injured boy with oil. We laid hands on him and began to praise God. The pastor prayed in tongues and prayed for the boy's deliverance. That kind of prayer was unusual in a hospital setting.

Usually chaplains are more "discreet"—that is, they don't want anyone else to hear them. But this pastor didn't care if he were heard by others—he just wanted God to save this boy.

As we were praying with our hands on the patient, the reading on the pressure monitor began to fall drastically. As we prayed, the monitor dropped steadily—28, 22, 18, 14, 8, 6, until it hit 4—a normal reading. I must confess that at that point I was not at all sure about the accuracy of that monitor. I tried to adjust it, checked it over, and recalibrated it. But the reading remained at four. The pastor turned to me and said, "The boy is healed."

The next day the patient awoke from his coma, pulled out every one of his tubes and tried to get out of bed in the intensive care unit to walk around. The nurses had to hold him down. He was discharged from the intensive care unit the next day and four days later he was sent home—just when he should have reached the peak of head pressure from the injury.

God's Further Intention

This was undoubtedly a miracle of God. But significantly enough, God's working didn't end at that point. At the time of this case, a white male nineteen-year-old had been admitted to the hospital with severe head injuries from a motorcycle accident. The pressure in this patient's head had already reached forty and had remained at that level for some time. I called the whole family in for a conference to tell them that it looked as if we were going to lose the boy. But I encouraged them not to lose hope, because miracles were possible through prayer.

Word had gotten out about the miraculous healing of my other patient—the nurses, patients and visitors in the lounge were all talking about it. Of course the father of this second boy heard the story and began to hope that if it could happen to another boy in a similar situa-

tion maybe it could happen to his son as well. So he sought out the pastor and asked him to anoint and pray for his son. This was an important step of faith for the father. It was also significant in that he was white and the pastor was black, because his need was providing, perhaps for the first time, an occasion for him to relate in a meaningful way to a black man.

To make a long story short, the pastor prayed for the young man with his family, and though he was not instantly healed, his recovery was miraculous. We had expected the boy to have extensive and permanent brain damage because part of his brain—the part that controls speech—had to be removed, and because the pressure in his skull had been at such a high level for so long. We had thought that even after a year or two in a nursing home, he would still be just barely functional—if he lived at all. But over a period of about a week, the pressure began to fall. He was eventually moved to a rehabilitation unit, and I have never in my career seen anyone recover in the way this patient has.

A short time ago, the same young man visited my clinic. He is now registered for the fall quarter at the University of Minnesota—resuming his studies right on schedule. He has no speech defects or other problems resulting from the accident. He is totally healed.

These two cases of God's miraculous intervention demonstrate His compassion for us. They also illustrate the Lord's intention, not only to bring people to Himself, but to bring them together with each other. Most important of all, they serve to remind us that beyond our human limitations are the unlimited power and grace of God, which He has chosen to make accessible to us. Truly God "is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us" (Eph. 3:21 NIV). ♥

Dr. Paul Severson is a graduate of the University of Minnesota Medical School. He is presently a surgical resident at the Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis. Dr. Severson lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, with his wife, Theresa, and their three children.

SECULAR HUMANISM

Man Striving to Be God

By

R.J. Rushdoony, Robert Grant, Bob Sutton, Howard Carter and Ern Baxter

SECULAR HUMANISM

Man Striving to Be God



Ern Baxter, Howard Carter,
Robert Grant, R. J. Rushdoony,
Bob Sutton

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Ministers to youth

Just a note to tell you how much we appreciate your magazine. My wife and I have been involved with youth work for a few years, and when preparing devotions, etc., *New Wine* is the first place we look for coverage on topical issues. We always know that your magazine is biblically based and doesn't pursue tangents like so many publications do. We always look forward to the next issue in the mailbox. Keep up the great work and may God bless your ministry as you strive to further the gospel.

Shirley and Ken Keeler
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Ministers to the military

I wanted to tell you how deeply *New Wine* has ministered to me and my husband. We were given a gift subscription and I quickly found out that God spoke clearly to me through at least one article every issue. Since we are in the Air Force (my husband flies B-52's), we find that our mobility only serves to widen His Kingdom through our encouragement, example and witness. Often we need encouragement and God uses *New Wine* for just that and more.

Lorena Heydenburk
Grand Forks, ND

Ministers in India

Greetings to you all from India. Very few magazines give such solid meat as *New Wine*. As leaders, we have been greatly blessed by the contents of your magazine. It has opened our

mind to what God is doing on the earth. I am a pastor who has taken up this parish with no seminary training and *New Wine* is of very great help in knowing what the Spirit is saying to the churches. I have written the above not to flatter you but to encourage you in your ministry.

Stanley Mehta
Bombay, India

It's no coincidence

Every month I read your letters and am especially impressed by those coming from readers commenting on the perfect timing of your articles. The September issue on neighborhoods was no exception. We are members of a community in Maryland and next month we are moving into the neighborhood described in Dave Nodar's article. This issue on neighborhoods and Dave's article are especially appreciated by all of us.

Peter Kuzmak
Baltimore, MD

To the point

As a father of nine children, I have always found *New Wine* a useful tool in encouraging and exhorting myself first, then other members of my family.

Lately your "To the Point" feature has been very informative. It confirmed many of the understandings we as a family practice when we go after a guide to morality—which is the "Bible."

Alfred Pilog
Sandwich, MA

Dear New Wine,

God answers prayer

Some months ago I wrote to tell you we were having problems. We were generally in a very bad way. Since then we have stabilized greatly through God's help. Thank you for praying for us. We have had much support in our church as well, but I wanted to write to give you this small testimony. I appreciated your response at that time and also your willingness to send *New Wine* along even though we couldn't pay for it. God bless you and make His work in your magazine flourish!

[Name withheld]
Minneapolis, MN

P.O. Box Z, Mobile, AL 36616

The editorial policy and purpose of *New Wine* are (1) to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God to all nations, (2) to work with all Christian ministries for the maturity and unity of His Church, (3) thus making ready a people prepared for the coming of the Lord. We recognize that, according to the Scriptures, God uses men given as ministries to build His Church in the earth. However, the basis of our relationship is not primarily commitment to human personalities, but to Jesus Christ as Head, to the Holy Scriptures as the ultimate standard by which all revelation and practice is to be judged and to God's purpose for His people in the earth at this time, as interpreted by the Holy Spirit. *New Wine* is a non-subscription magazine supported by

the voluntary contributions of those who believe in its mission. All gifts are tax-deductible. A tax-deductible receipt for contributions is available at year-end upon request. *New Wine* Magazine is under the supervision of an editorial board which meets several times each year to provide direction and oversight. The board consists of Don Basham, Ern Baxter, Bob Mumford, Derek Prince and Charles Simpson, who receive no remuneration for their service on the board. Please use the form found in this magazine to request *New Wine*, for address changes and contributions. All foreign contributions or payments should be made in the form of a check for U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank or International Money Order for U.S. dollars.



For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on
his shoulders.

And he will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty
God, Everlasting Father, Prince
of Peace.

Of the increase of his govern-
ment and peace there will be
no end.