

# PEACE IN GOD'S KINGDOM

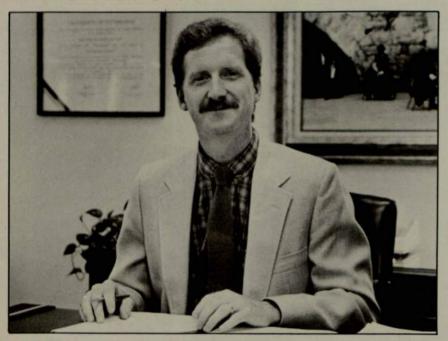


### EDITORIAL

Time to move on, but

# "I'll Be in Touch"

BY DICK LEGGATT



ou might get the impression as you begin reading this editorial that this issue of *New Wine* is on the topic of change. Actually, it's not. But for me and my family, the topic *is* change, because with this issue my role with *New Wine* Magazine will be changing. I will be leaving my position as editor of *New Wine*, and moving with my family to East Lansing, Michigan, to become part of a Christian ministry there.

Ten years ago this month I began working as an editorial assistant for *New Wine*. Those years have been ten of the richest of my life. As editor of *New Wine* for the past three years it has been a special privilege to be involved in the work here and to be in touch with you each month through these pages. Let me hastily add that, at this point, plans call for me to continue to

be involved with the magazine as a consultant, and for that I'm extremely grateful.

For some time now, however, I've been sensing the Lord's preparation and encouragement to step out of my present role into the next phase of His plans for me. He has made it evident that this is the time for that change to take place.

Next month, Charles Simpson will formally introduce to you my longtime friend Bruce Longstreth, who will succeed me as editor. As editor of *Fathergram* and author of the monthly "Tips for Fathers" column, he is no stranger to you. It's a joy to have someone with his tremendous creativity and capability stepping into a position that I have occupied. I know you will be blessed by his work.

I also want to express my deep gratitude to these men at Integrity Communications: Charles Simpson, chairman of the board of directors; Don Basham, chief editorial consultant; and Mike Coleman, president. Their encouragement and support in this step of faith has meant much to us. It is a joy to go with their blessing, and in return, I pledge my continued commitment to them, their ministries, and the vital principles that they share with the Church, particularly through *New Wine*.

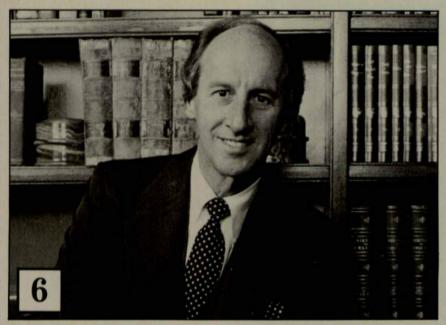
This month, in my final issue as editor of *New Wine*, we are focusing on "Peace in God's Kingdom," a Christmas topic that speaks of unity. In our feature interview, Jack Hayford gives a useful definition of unity, clarifying what unity is and what it is not. Following him is a heartwarming testimony of God's faithfulness to a young Malaysian couple.

Next, Bruce Longstreth looks at the busy season of Christmas as a time to return to the simplicity of Jesus, and Terry Fullam takes an in-depth look at the prophecies concerning Jesus, and what His arrival on earth means to us. Again on the theme of unity, Bob Mumford shares practical tips on how to love our brothers and sisters. And finally, we present our Christmas tradition: a fictional story for your enjoyment.

In closing this editorial I want to say what a privilege it has been to be in touch with you each month through this column. In expressing thanks, my deepest appreciation goes to you, for without you, there would be no reason to write.

I've never liked good-bys. Usually I simply say something like, "I'll be in touch with you," which I've found to be true, because in the plans of God, the paths of His children cross often and in unusual ways. That's one of the wonderful benefits of following our Lord. So this isn't good-by, because...I'll be in touch with you.

### CONTENTS



If he could preach just one message to the entire Church, Jack Hayford says he would invite us to return to the simplicity of Christ, to "just love Jesus."

# **Features**

- 6 GETTING THE CHURCH ON ITS WAY
  An interview with Jack Hayford
- 9 LAND OF OPPORTUNITY by Diana Scimone
  A Malaysian family moved to the United States to find prosperity, but what it found was worth more than gold.
- 12 A CHILD IN OUR MIDST
  by Bruce Longstreth
  How Jesus' birth can have significance in our everyday lives
- 16 IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME
  by Terry Fullam
  God's revelation of His kingdom should revolutionize our lives.
- 22 HOW TO HANDLE (THY BROTHER'S)
  SUCCESS
  by Bob Mumford
  The test of our love for God is really our love for each other.
- 27 ALVIE AND THE GREAT EVENT by Don Basham
  A touching Christmas fable for you and your family



Bruce Longstreth urges us to slow down this Christmas so that we don't miss the Child whose birthday we celebrate.



In his inimitable style, Bob Mumford takes an often humorous, often sobering look at Christian love.

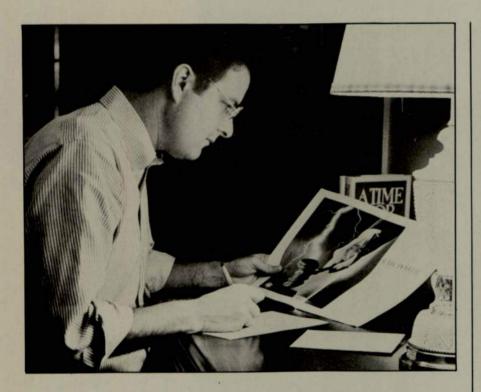
# **Departments**

- 2 Editorial
- 4 Letters
- 15 Did You Know?
- 30 Homespun
- 31 The Word
- 33 Tips for Fathers
- 35 The Way I See It

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



# **Dear New Wine**

Speaks for Itself

Thank you for the timely issue "Taking the Head Off Your Giant" (October), especially the intercessors report on the candidates. Many times we think we know who supports our views, and yet seeing it in print enables us to actively support the candidate of our choice, giving us facts to express that support to our friends.

The article speaks for itself. I passed it around to many friends in hopes that their eyes would be opened to think twice about the specifics of who they would be voting for—and not just the party that generations of their family had voted for.

Mrs. Joe Culling Trenton, TX

#### Behind the Mask

I was very encouraged by the

article on Halloween. The origins of that celebration were brought to my attention more than ten years ago. After doing a little research, I saw that as a Christian I could not be a part of it.

It has not been an easy stand to take. Each year my husband and I wonder how to handle the situation: go out for the evening and leave our house and property prey to tricksters, or stay and try to explain to uncomprehending little children why they won't receive any candy at our house.

The most discouraging thing, though, has been the lack of support from our fellow Christians. As with us before the Lord brought it to our attention, it never occurs to most of them not to participate. After learning the satanic origins of the celebration, they almost always give

the same response. They agree I have a point, but claim it's much easier for me to stand on my convictions (we have no children). They wonder how they could ever make their little ones understand why they couldn't dress up and go out with their friends for candy. Besides, they reason, surely they aren't honoring the devil, especially if they limit costumes to little princesses and cowboys, and are strict to keep ghosts and witches out of it. It all seems so harmless, they say.

This word has long been needed. I thank God it was presented in such a calm, factual, and scriptural way. I pray the Lord has prepared hearts to hear it.

Debra Whited Baton Rouge, LA

**Delivered From Captivity** 

I want to thank you for the October testimony by Diana Scimone, "The Most Dangerous Game." Before I even got halfway through it, I experienced the greatest deliverance and cleansing I had ever dreamed possible. God brought to my mind little incidents as a child and teenager that seemed so innocent, but were forms of occult practices—things that had me in captivity to the power of Satan. But I have been set free, and I am praising God.

Name Withheld

#### From the Inside Out

I read Don Basham's article "Unlikely Disciples" (October) and it gave me a real blessing. I'm an unlikely disciple! I was convicted of several drug and theft violations and am serving a twelve-year prison term. I received a seventh-grade education, and I could go on and on listing all the reasons I'm an unlikely disciple. But one word qualifies me: grace!

I had to have my freedom taken

away to know real freedom. God has accepted a sinner like me and is cleaning me up from the inside out. I'm growing in grace, and hope to attend a Bible college upon my release. But for now I am being faithful in little ways by witnessing and sharing my testimony behind these walls. God has brought me a mighty long way from using more than a hundred dollars a day on drugs, and stealing thousands of dollars a week anyway I could. He changed me from a taker to a giver, a sinner to a saint, totally by grace.

> Billy Parks Hagerstown, MD

#### Thanks to Readers

I commit myself to prayerful support of your work and to make a contribution whenever I can. I live in a country where we are not supposed to export foreign exchange (especially U.S. dollars), so I want to let *New Wine* readers who contribute to this magazine know the blessings and the changed lives that their contributions have brought about in the lives of many who want to give, but for various reasons cannot do so.

Janette Harrison Kingston, Jamaica

#### Power of Praise

I enjoyed reading Brother Terry Law's article (September). There is power in praise. God wants us to minister to Him in praise and worship. Let us just forget about ourselves and concentrate on Him and worship Him. God in turn will release His power and things will happen.

Godfrey Kunzvi Shava Harare, Zimbabwe

Please address all letters to "Dear New Wine," P.O. Box Z, Mobile, AL 36616.

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#### About New Wine

New Wine Magazine, published monthly by Integrity Communications, seeks to promote the maturity of the Church and the individual Christian by publishing scripturally sound content that is personal, action-oriented, and timely. We implement this purpose by including a wide diversity of Christian authors to communicate the message of the kingdom of God to all men.

As a reflection of our desire to be open to all that God is saying and doing, we at New Wine regularly feature material from Christian leaders and groups of diverse points of view. Their appearance in New Wine does not mean they totally agree with us on every issue, nor we with them. It does mean we recognize them as Christians who are saying something that we all need to hear. We recognize that virtually every ministry has its controversial aspects. We deliberately choose, however, not to highlight those areas of controversy but rather, in the interest of Christian unity, to present their views in the context of a more primary issue: the lordship of Jesus Christ. Our desire is to emphasize the common commitment to Him we share with the Christians featured in New Wine, and their contribution to the purposes of God.

All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

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New Wine will carefully consider all unsolicited manuscripts, although we cannot return them unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (Please note we do not publish poetry.)

# Getting the Church on Its Way

An interview with Jack Hayford

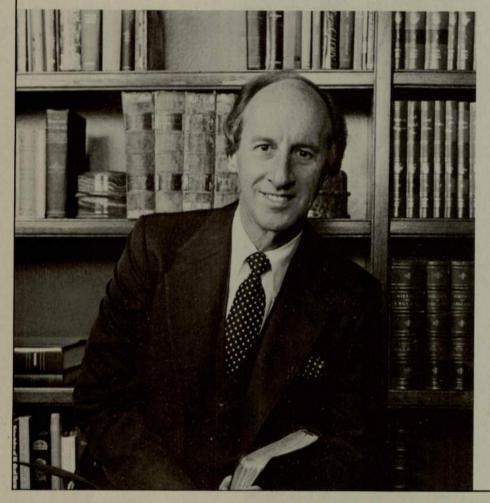
ack Hayford, pastor of Church on the Way, Van Nuys, California, is no stranger to New Wine. His helpful perspectives on prayer (February 1983) and integrity (May 1983) were greatly appreciated by our readers.

You may also know of Jack Hayford as the author of Prayer Is Invading the Impossible and Restoring the Walls of the Human Personality. Or you may know of him as a songwriter (he's written more than three hundred songs). But we'd like you to meet him now on a more personal basis. When we interviewed him recently, we found Jack Hayford to be a man whose staff and congregation feel comfortable calling him "Pastor Jack," a man who is energetic, approachable, candid, and articulate, a man with a pastor's heart.

New Wine: From a pastoral perspective, what topic is being made alive to you these days?

JH: I am very frequently feeling moved to elaborate on the wide dimensions of the objective of salvation. It seems to me the Word of God has a broader perspective than we generally describe. The average born again believer thinks the objective of salvation is to get his sins forgiven and to get him to heaven. But the Scriptures indicate a much wider, long-range goal. Ephesians 2:6-7 and Romans 8:18-30 are examples.

Of course, many sincere believers have often noted our final objective as "bearing the image of Christ," and that's a worthy perspective to be sure. But what are the implications of that image to us? The cultivation of



DECEMBER 1984

character *now* is to be expected—correct!—but does God have a longer range—a cosmic purpose? I think so. I don't feel His goal is only the preparation of saints for an eternal trophy case, but for eternal, purposeful activity.

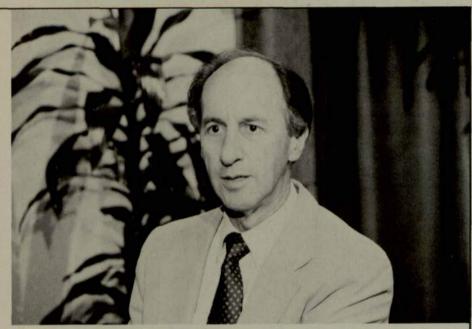
I'm feeling the Holy Spirit drawing us to enlarge our hearts to view the high destiny eternity holds for us. Such breadth of vision will bring us beyond a short-sightedness that often seems to characterize much of the Church's life. I think that shortsightedness on the long view breeds people who don't seek or discover their potential in character and integrity now, because they don't see it in relationship to a long-range purpose in God's plan.

NW: Many of our readers are concerned about redeeming our world. How does the gospel affect your perspective as a citizen of this nation?

JH: I am not a marcher and tend to be a nonactivist on issues that have social and political overtones to them. But I am feeling a new, deep stirring of the Holy Spirit in my own soul against abortion-that spirit of death that is surviving so successfully in its work against the children of this generation. I believe that God is going to show us the way to mount a spiritually penetrating campaign against abortion that involves neither placards nor politics, but does have a strategy for effective prayer and a community outreach.

NW: What prompted this new stirring you described?

JH: Conviction over the unrecognized apathy that had engulfed me. God impacted my heart. He showed me that if I had been pastoring in Germany during the Nazi holocaust, I would have been among those



Most of us tend to substitute activity for a simple, devoted walk with Jesus, says Jack Hayford, pastor of Church on the Way, Van Nuys, California.

who were unwittingly neutralized in the moral dimension; thus, I would have remained silent, not lifting my voice. Those who were mute, of course, were not necessarily favoring what went on. They simply had become numb to the continuous process of the death of hundreds of thousands...of millions.

I saw myself as one of those pastors in Germany at that time. The number of children murdered via abortions since the 1973 Supreme Court decision is about 2.5 times the number of Jews killed by the Nazis. When God pointed out that my attitude had slowly, almost imperceptibly, evolved to one of passivity, I was shaken.

I feel the need for a corporate voice being raised in a new way. When the subject of abortion is approached, the spirit of indignation tends to prevail. Understandably, deep feelings throb and often the Church and other pro-lifers cry out, "This is wrong! God hates this!" Stopping at that point leaves a gap, as I see it. At least for us-my parish-we need a redefinition of the Church's stand and responsibility, not only as conscience to the culture but also as redeemers. Those on the other side of the abortion issue need to be loved and redeemed instead of merely being labeled with easy sloganeering.

NW: As a member of the body of Christ, what do you sense the Lord saying to you concerning the Church?

JH: It's such an old theme, but I'm sensing an even deeper call to unity. But I'm starting to more accurately define that call at least for me.

It seems that what we usually mean by unity is the hail-fellow-well-met camaraderie we feel when we gather at large meetings, feeling united because of common bonds of worship style, doctrinal thrust, et cetera. But that unity is actually nothing much more than crowd dynamics. Such situations don't test our desire for unity.

The true test of our availability to unity is in our willingness to accept those in the body of Christ who vastly differ from us; to forgive the differences that we feel violate some of our tastes and pet feelings. An example for me, a Charismatic, would be in my attitude toward a person who not only doesn't speak in tongues, but who loathes the fact that I do. If I simply say, "I guess I don't mind if he doesn't speak in tongues," I'm only part of the

way. The test of love begins at the point I am rejected. What I do, how I talk, and how I react when being misinterpreted and misunderstood will determine my availability to real unity.

NW: What undergirds your sense of this "deeper call" to unity?

JH: The Bible, and the Lord Jesus' prayer for unity. I cannot imagine the Church Age concluding without some manifest fulfillment of Christ's intercession: "That they might be one." That ultimate unity will never be defined by ecclesiastical structures, ecumenical attainment, or total agreement in doctrine, but I do see it as a real possibility. I believe the basics required are a common acknowledgment of the lordship of Jesus Christ and a full-hearted openness to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Church. And both those need to be applied as heart issues and not as liturgical ones. Believers worship, witness, and walk in many different ways; allowance needs to be made for variety.

NW: How do you see unity coming about?

JH: We need first to see our own lack of unity. Most all of us think we are in favor of unity-I know I did. But we must see ourselves as we truly are. Let me illustrate: When the Civil Rights movement began in the United States thirty years ago, I remember a news commentator saying, "It's impossible to have been raised in this century in the United States and not be prejudiced." Hearing that, I thought, That's untrue. I'm not prejudiced. I honestly believed that because my hometown was an integrated community, I was unprejudiced. But over a period of weeks, the Holy Spirit showed me that prejudice did exist, and thereby I was At the heart of the Church's moving forward and keeping pure is the requirement that we maintain our first love.

able to work toward overcoming it.

Similarly, today many of us members of the body of Christ think we are open to unity because of our hometown setting, so to speak-that fellowship or circle we have been in most of our Christian lives. But true unity isn't tested until we reach points of disagreement and difference. The call to true unity requires us to see ourselves as we really are-to admit that in many ways we are not actually as open as we may have thought. Moving toward the unity for which Jesus prayed will mean we need to love each other despite our differences, and to forgive those differencesnot with a condescending or patronizing forgiveness, but with a spirit of release that allows for each other's differences.



The test of our openness to unity is our acceptance of Christians who vastly differ from us, says Hayford.

NW: What do you see ahead for the Church?

JH: I see a remarkable revival coming. Again, I know that's a common observation today, but it's there-a time ahead that will make earlier revivals pale by comparison. To prepare, we need to dispense with any supposition that what we have experienced in renewal has exhausted God's creativity. We must apply what He has taught us and be ready to move on in His purpose.

NW: If you could preach just one message to the entire Church, what would it be?

JH: At the heart of the Church's moving forward and keeping pure is the requirement that we maintain our first love, so I would invite people to renew themselves in the simplicity that is in Christ-just loving Jesus. My friend Charles Colson, in his recent book, Loving God, centers on the elements of real repentance and piety. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind." Our relationship to this commandment establishes the foundation for all we do. I have just written a booklet, entitled Daybreak: Walking With Christ Every Day, that describes the Lord's fresh call to me to keep my priorities straightto keep Jesus at the top of the list.

Jesus commended Mary for choosing "that good part ... it shall not be taken from her." Yet with all of us, duties invade and press activity as a substitute to a simple, warm walk with Him. My one message if given just one: When we want Him more than anything else. He will work in us what He wants. And when we become what He wants, the Church will be what He has called it to be.

### TESTIMONY



# Land of Opportunity

BY DIANA SCIMONE

A Malaysian family moved to the United States to find prosperity, but what it found was worth more than gold.

t a Christmas dinner two years ago, the members of South Louisiana Covenant Church enjoyed an array of local favorites—roast duck, oyster dressing, French bread with garlic butter, rice and gravy, and . . . a plate heaped high with egg rolls.

That unusual addition to an otherwise Cajun-style dinner was the contribution of the church's newest members—a couple that had recently moved to Louisiana

from Malaysia.

Alan and Tina Che grew up in
Tampin, Malaysia. Raised as Buddhists, they married at an early

dhists, they married at an early age, then pursued a typical middleclass life. Alan was a successful auto mechanic; Tina cared for

their two sons.

Tina's sister and her husband had immigrated to the United States a few years earlier, and their letters home spoke enthusiastically of the benefits of their new country. Although Alan made a good living in Malaysia, he felt that the United States would offer his family greater freedom and economic opportunity, so in March 1981, he and Tina made the difficult decision to emigrate.

Leaving Malaysia meant pulling up roots and forsaking a way of life that their families had followed for generations. But at



Reunited with their sons, Eric, left, and Frank, after almost three years, Alan and Tina Che joyfully anticipate celebrating their first Christmas as a family.

an even greater cost, it meant being temporarily separated from their two sons, Eric and Frank. "We decided to go to Louisiana, where Tina's sister was," explains Alan. "But we knew it would take us a few months to get settled, so we left our boys with my parents in Malaysia until we could send for them."

Boarding the plane, Alan and

Tina promised their sons that in a few months they would be reunited.

Adjusting to a New Life

Shortly after arriving in Louisiana, Alan found a job as an auto mechanic, and Tina started work at a fast-food restaurant. Employment meant they could get work permits, which made

them eligible to apply for permanent resident status for themselves and their boys. Once their applications were processed, they could send for Eric and Frank.

"We thought it would take just a few months," Alan reflects. But he and Tina were shocked to find that because of the large number of immigrants. it could take two years to receive permanent resident status.

Separated from their sons by half a world, Alan and Tina grew more and more homesick. Alan shared his plight with a friend from work, who suggested that he talk it over with his pastor, Richard Baggett. Richard told

Alan how a man named Jesus had helped him get through the low points of his life. But Alan was not impressed.

'When I told him I believed in Buddha," Alan explains, "he said Buddha couldn't help me because he was dead. But Jesus was alive."

The simple explanation touched something in Alan, and he agreed to attend a church service a few nights later. That evening he watched the church members lift their hands in worship, and listened to testimonies of lives that had been changed by the power of God.

Richard remembers one of the

questions that Alan asked after the meetings: "He wanted to know why we were shouting 'Hey, man!' It took us a few moments to realize he meant our shouts of 'Amen!'

The Holy Spirit spoke to Alan, and that same night he asked Jesus to be his Lord and Savior.

Returning home, he told Tina what had happened and convinced her to come to the next meeting. It wasn't long before she also accepted Jesus. They were both baptized in water, joined the church, and began a new life.

#### First Christmas

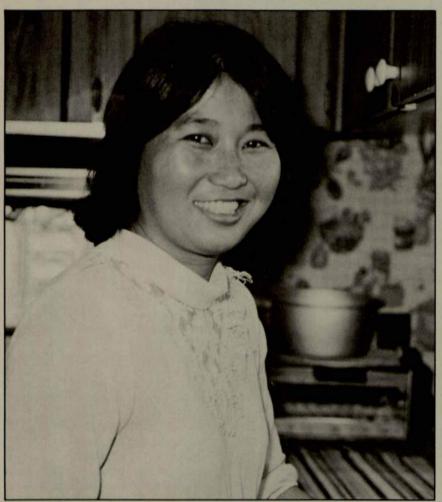
At Christmastime, the Ches joined Richard and his wife at the church's holiday dinner. "Alan and Tina had seen Christmas only in malls and department stores," Richard recalls. "So at the dinner I explained the spiritual meaning of the holiday.

After dinner Alan and Tina stayed behind to ask more questions. "All of a sudden I understood what Richard was saying about Christmas," Alan says, "so we began to pray."

As the Holy Spirit opened their understanding, He also opened their hearts. Alan was first to receive the Holy Spirit, and he began to praise God in tongues joyfully. "Tina was more shy than her husband," explains Richard, "but just as effervescent when she also received the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues.'

The Holy Spirit gave Alan and Tina the grace to survive the remaining separation from their sons. For the first time since their arrival, they felt a tremendous peace, knowing that God would take care of them and their sons.

As they began 1983, the Ches continued to learn about trusting the Lord. They experienced one frustration after another:



For Tina, it was only her newfound faith in Jesus that supported her during the long separation from her young sons.

economic hardship, news from home that Alan's father was extremely ill, and continued delays in obtaining their permanent resident status.

Late one afternoon, just before a prayer meeting, Alan received word that their application had been rejected, and that he and Tina were being deported. By that hour all the government offices were closed. There was nothing for them to do but go to the prayer meeting and ask their new Christian friends to pray for a miracle.

"We stood with them," explains Richard. "We knew this was a lie of the enemy and that God could reverse the situation in spite of the circumstances. The next morning, I called their lawyer in New Orleans, who called the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Washington, D.C. They said it was all a mistake—Alan and Tina were not being deported."

#### Crown of Life

Another year passed with still no word about their application. Yet in spite of the time of adversity, Alan's witness brought two men to Christ.



Alan reads to his sons, who are adjusting well to their new life.



Alan gave up a good job as an auto mechanic in Malaysia when he made the decision to immigrate to the United States, but the Lord blessed him with an even better job at a car dealership in Louisiana.

Finally, in January 1984, Alan and Tina received the long-awaited news: INS had awarded them permanent resident status. Finally Eric and Frank could join their parents in the United States.

"We made travel arrangements as quickly as we could," smiles Alan as he remembers the end of the long ordeal, "and we flew to Malaysia to pick up our sons."

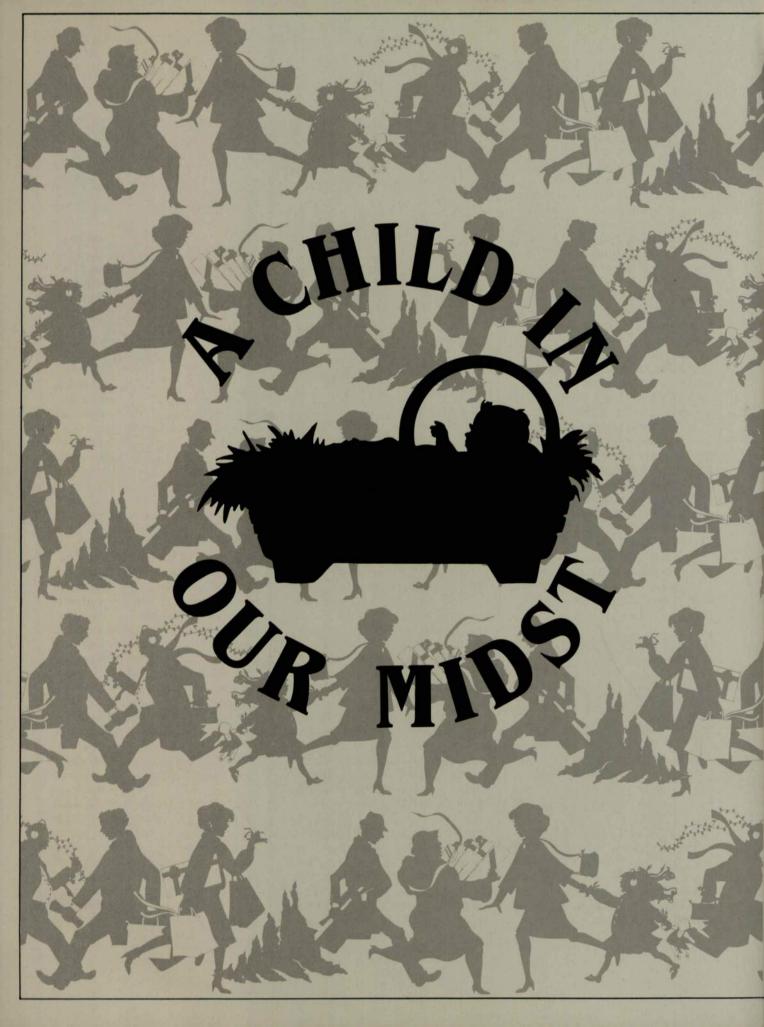
The Lord's faithfulness continued. A few weeks after the family returned to Louisiana, Alan realized that Frank, who had suffered from a respiratory infection since birth, had been miraculously healed.

Alan and Tina have learned firsthand the truth of Jesus' promise in Mark chapter 10:

"There is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age" (vv. 29-30 NAS).

Alan and Tina left everything to come to the United States. And they found Jesus, who poured out His blessings on them in abundant measure. "We have a new home: I have a new job as a mechanic at a car dealership; and Eric and Frank are in school learning English and adjusting to their new life," explains Alan. "We left our family in Malaysia, but God gave us a new family here-our church. I love the people; I love my pastor who stood with us; and I'm telling others about Jesus Christ so that they might be saved too. Glory to God!"

Diana Scimone is an editorial assistant for New Wine Magazine. For eight years she was a free-lance writer in Washington, D.C. Her work has appeared in USA Today, The Washington Post, Travel/Holiday, and other publications. She now resides in Mobile, Alabama.





# How Jesus' birth can have significance in our everyday lives

BY BRUCE LONGSTRETH

he most exciting and busy time of year is upon us. Yes, it's Christmastime and in the midst of all the season's hectic activity, people seem to be friendlier. Neighbors who don't usually speak take the time at Christmas to wish each other holiday greetings. Friends who haven't seen each other for months find time to exchange cards, and relatives who rarely visit plan get-togethers. Tinseled Christmas trees and the sound of carols blend with aromas of roast turkey and freshly baked pies.

But the rest of our year, the Christmas spirit seems bothersome and out of place, like a child's interruption of an adult conversation. For eleven months we stay involved in a grown-up dialog on weighty issues. Then, before we are ready for it, Christmas interrupts, like a child tugging on our coats.

Most of us, when interrupted by our children, ask them to run along and play. We are searching for peace and quiet; besides, we have more important things to do and talk about.

We may feel the same way about Christmas. But Christmas is an important time; it is that time when believers celebrate the Christ-child's divine interruption of the world's self-centered dialog on greatness.

The Christ-child interrupts a parade of celebrities and public figures as they clamor for greater recognition and notoriety, measuring greatness by outrageous salaries, long-term contracts, and excessive fringe benefits.

The Christ-child interrupts the debate on the home front over sexual superiority, where husbands and wives no longer work at becoming "one flesh" but strive to maintain selfish individuality.

And the Christ-child even interrupts our preoccupation with the great things we are doing for Him, longing for attention to be focused on the simplicity of His kingdom.

#### Who's the Greatest?

Jesus' disciples also found it easy to get caught up in the pursuit of greatness even as they walked with the Lord Himself. The incident is found in the Gospel of Mark. While Mark contains no Christmas narrative, this account expresses what is at the heart of Christmas: It illustrates that our focus should be on Jesus, not on our greatness in His kingdom.

Three of the disciples had been with Jesus on the mountain where He was transfigured, an event that probably triggered a conversation among the twelve about which of the "big three" would assume chief administrative positions in the Lord's kingdom. Each man presented the qualifications he believed would merit the Lord's attention when He set up His kingdom on earth.

The disciples' discussion continued as they walked toward Capernaum, and their feelings increased in intensity. They tried to keep the Lord from overhearing their comments, but once they were inside the home of a friend, Jesus asked, "What were you discussing on the way?" (Mk. 9:33 NAS).

How embarrassing! It was like getting caught with both hands in the cookie jar. They said nothing—silenced by their shame.

#### Another Child

The Lord broke the strained silence with a statement about the nature of leadership in His kingdom. "If any one wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all" (v. 35 NAS). He added further meaning to the statement by placing a child in the middle of the group. Then taking the child in His arms, He said:

"Whoever receives one child like this in My name is receiving Me; and whoever receives Me is not receiving Me, but Him who sent Me" (v. 37 NAS).

The Father had used a Child to interrupt the world's fruitless discussion about greatness; now Jesus used a child to interrupt the disciples' fruitless discussion



about greatness in the kingdom of God. In doing so, He made a number of important points. First, He said the leaders in His kingdom would find their place as humble servants. Second, such servants would demonstrate their acceptance of Christ's lordship and show their understanding of the Father's purpose in sending His Son.

Third, He made a statement about the nature of greatness that is a stark contradiction to greatness as the world sees it. The disciples' conversation reflected a worldly idea of what it means to be great, to be a leader, and to have power over other people.

Fourth, it reemphasized what His Father had done thirty years before by sending Him as the Savior of mankind. As the prophet Isaiah said:

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel [which means 'God in the midst']" (Is. 7:14 NAS).

God sent the Christ-child to interrupt our world, calling our attention back to Him.

Response to the Child

But when the Child came, many missed His appearance. Most of the people in Bethlehem on Christmas night must have been too busy about their tasks to notice the birth of Christ. For those who recognized the Savior were only a handful of shepherds, three kings from the East, and an old man and an old woman in the temple.

Others also marked Christ's interruption into the world, but had a wrong response to it. Take Herod. Because the child threatened his authority, he sent soldiers to Bethlehem to kill all the male children two years old and under. Centuries before, Jeremiah the prophet heard the sound of slaughter and wrote:

"A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she



comforted for her children, because they are no more" (Jer. 31:15 NAS).

The murderous hatred of Herod surfaced again thirty years later when Jesus began to preach the kingdom of His Father. The scribes and Pharisees felt threatened because they loved the front-row seats at the feasts and the chief places in the synagogue. Jesus knew their anger would culminate in His death on the cross.

#### Debate in God's House

But before we condemn the hypocrites, or the disciples, or even Herod, let's examine ourselves. Has the world's dialog on greatness so penetrated our lives that we miss the full meaning of a child in our midst?

"May peace be within your walls," the Psalmist penned centuries ago concerning Jerusalem (Ps. 122:7 NAS). But even in God's house we still hear the debate over who is the greatest.

"We'll be the largest church in the denomination in ten years," one pastor boasts. It doesn't matter that his flock may be poorly pastored and the needs of his community left unmet. Forty million dollars has already been spent in striving to become the greatest, yet his church is still only second largest.

The lesson shouted by the manger scene on the church lawn goes unheeded as the senseless dialog on greatness continues.

Today we measure greatness by status and popularity, just as the disciples did. We are no better than the twelve, and Jesus' words to us are the same: True greatness is measured by humility. Rather than exhausting ourselves on great works for Him, He would have us humbly serve the Child in our midst.

Ignoring the Child

In my own life, I, like the pastor of that large church, have often fallen into the trap of doing great things for God while losing sight of "the child in the midst." I come home and my children start climbing all over me. But after a long day doing great things, I need to relax. "Not now, kids. I am not up to it. Run along and play." There is nothing wrong with rest after a hard day; but that is not really



the point. The point is I establish a pattern of using weariness to keep from being involved in simple things.

Before I go to bed, I stop by the kids' rooms and kiss them good night. They are sound asleep and do not wake. As I look at them, they seem to grow up before my eyes, leaving only the memory of their childhood. How much do I miss by refusing their simple demands, by ignoring the interruption of these children? I imagine myself like Rachel, who wept for her children. "She refuses to be comforted because they are no more."

It is Christmastime. If we look past the holly and mistletoe, past the gifts and cards, we can see the Child whom the Father placed in our midst so many years ago, and once more a divine interruption silences our dialog on greatness. In response to His question, "What have you been talking about?" we leave our preoccupation with great ideas and greater deeds, go home to our children, and say, "I receive you in Jesus' name."

The family is the best place to start. Then we can move on to bigger things—a cup of cold water in His name, food for the hungry, clothes for the naked.

Return to the Simple

That first Christmas, the King of kings appeared as a babe in a manger, and few saw Him. Today He conceals His identity in other forms, yet as we humbly accept our role as servants, He will reveal Himself again and again. It is so easy to set a pace that leaves others

behind: the little children, the orphans, the widows, all the slow-moving sheep of His pasture. God forbid that we should out-distance the Lord in these days. I go too fast, and He places a child in my path. I make lofty plans that block His purpose, and children come to be blessed by the Lord.

Too soon, my service in His kingdom will be ended. Too soon, the children I often ignore will move out from under my care and leave my house empty. This Christmas my heart's desire is to return to simple things, to serve the Lord faithfully in whatever He brings into my life, and to know more fully the Father's purpose in putting His Child in our midst.  $\square$ 

Bruce Longstreth has been the editor of Fathergram for three years. Next month he will be assuming responsibility as editor of New Wine. Bruce resides in Mobile, Alabama, with his wife, Janet, and their two daughters.

### Did You Know?

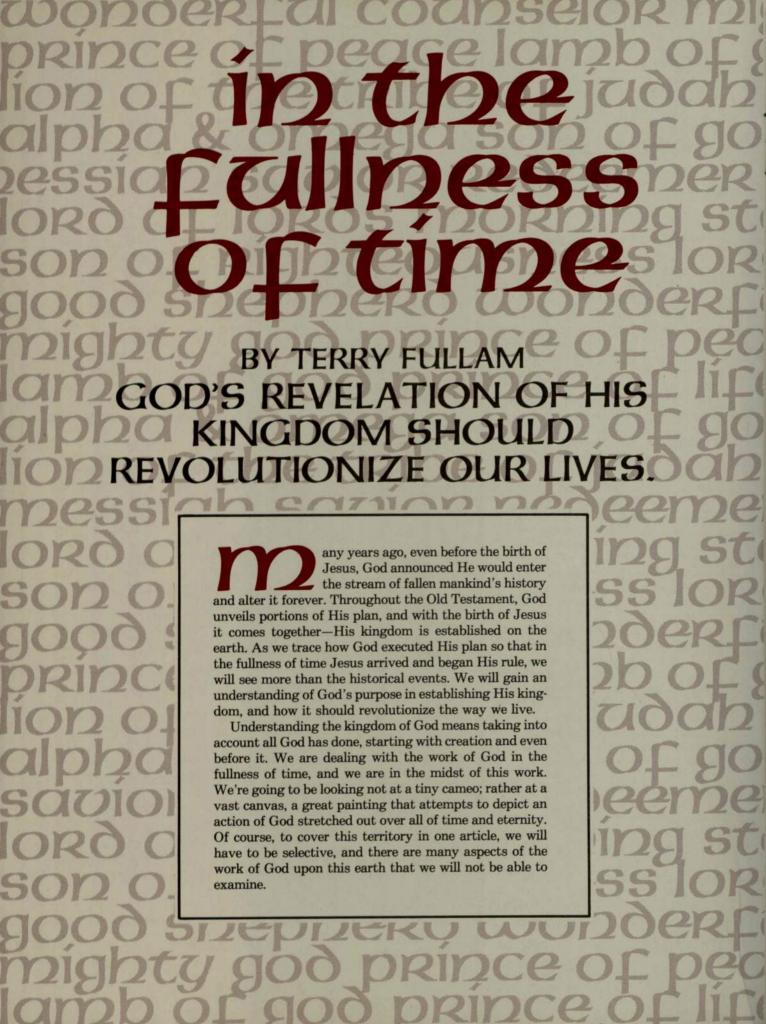


Did you know that there are reasons why New Wine features articles from a broad spectrum of Christian leaders?

Unity in the body of Christ is something we at **New Wine** strongly believe God wants us to pursue year-round-not just during the Christmas season when peace on earth is a thought that is on everyone's mind.

We present a variety of men and women of God who have made significant contributions to the Body, first of all, to increase the vision of God's people for a whole Church. And second, we feature them to enhance the current emphasis of the Holy Spirit on bringing Christ's body together. This is done by allowing God's choicest servants to speak to an audience they normally would not reach.

We at **New Wine** are committed to letting peace and unity begin with us, and we thought you'd like to know.



God's Plan Begins

Approaching so vast a subject is a little like the scene in Alice in Wonderland where Alice stands rather bemused before the judge and cries, "Oh, Judge, I simply don't know where to begin!"

"Begin at the beginning," he tells her, "and when you get to

the end, stop."

I too will begin at the beginning, in Genesis chapter 1, where we find the first recorded hint of God's plan and purpose, where He says, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (v. 26 NAS). God did just that: He fashioned a species of creation in His own image. Whatever else this means, it also includes the notion that we have been given a degree of will over our own actions; we can make deliberate choices.

In Genesis we learn that Adam and Eve disobeyed the Lord, which means they exercised their will contrary to the purpose of God. The consequences of their sin are staggering. Not only were they cast out of the garden, but the whole earth itself was cursed by the Lord, because of their disobedience. As a result, God had to set His plan for redemption into motion.

Hints of Redemption

As we read on, a striking verse appears in the middle of the third chapter. It's the word of the Lord to Satan:

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (Gen. 3:15 NAS).

Bible scholars call this the proto-evangel. It is the first time the gospel is mentioned in the Bible and the first indication that God is going to do something to rectify the mess that Adam and Eve got themselves into.

In that verse, the seed of the woman is singularized: "He will bruise, or crush, your head, but you will bruise his heel." God is saying that He plans to do something about mankind's situation, and He is planning to do it through a human being. The phrase "her seed" never again appears in the Scriptures. We have reference to the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, but

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never the seed of the woman.

Another hint of what is to come is in Genesis chapter 12, where God singles out a man, Abraham, and makes a covenant with him. "The day is going to come when I am going to send into the world someone who will be one of your descendants, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed through this person" (see Genesis 12:1-3).

A King Is Coming

God renewed this covenant with each passing generation: first with Abraham's son Isaac, and then with Isaac's son Jacob. When Jacob was ready to pass the covenant on, he called his twelve sons and gave them a patriarchal blessing that included a prophetic word as he addressed his son Judah:

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples" (Gen. 49:10 NAS).

Here are more hints of what is to come. Not only do we know that God will redeem mankind through a human, but we know that person will be a descendant of Abraham who will come through the tribe of Judah. And when Jacob mentions the scepter, which is symbolic of rulership, he gives us another clue: The promised deliverer will be a king, someone who will have the "obedience of the peoples."

An Eternal Kingdom

God's covenant passes from generation to generation on to David, who lived a thousand years before Christ. God said to David:

"It shall come about when your days are fulfilled that you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up one of your descendants after you, who shall be one of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom" (1 Chr. 17:11 NAS).

David's son Solomon fulfilled that promise when David's throne passed to him and he presided over his father's kingdom. Yet the Lord adds something that might at first seem puzzling in light of history: "I will establish his throne forever" (v. 12 NAS). Solomon's throne did not last forever; in fact, it came to a brutal end in 486 B.C. Like so much of biblical prophecy, this passage has a double reference. God is no longer referring just to Solomon's throne; He is referring to the throne of His kingdom that will proceed from Solomon's lineage.

Then, referring to the person He will use to establish His kingdom, God says, "I will be his father, and he shall be My son" (v. 13 NAS). This is an indication that the promised one will be in a special relationship with God—the relationship of a father to his son.

We now know that the king whom God will send into the world to establish an eternal kingdom will be the one who will preside over that kingdom and sit upon a throne that will never pass away.

He Is Called Mighty God

Moving ahead two centuries, we find more of God's plan unfolding. In Isaiah 9:6, God further identifies the one who will come. First Isaiah says, "For a child will be born" (NAS). Frankly, nothing is so remarkable about that. Children are born every day of the year. Then he says, "A son will be given," and nothing is terribly remarkable about that either. Roughly half the children born are sons. "The government will rest on His shoulders." This is a statement about His future, but even that's not unique, because other people have been born heirs to thrones. But the next part of this passage is remarkable:

His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this (vv. 6-7).

Some claim these words were written about various kings and prophets who redeemed Israel out of one tight spot or another. But no prophet or king in Israel was ever called Mighty God. The whole thing would have been blas-

T SHALL COME ABOUT WHEN YOUR DAYS ARE FULFILLED THAT YOU MUST GO TO BE WITH YOUR FATHERS, THAT I WILL SET UP ONE OF YOUR DESCENDANTS AFTER YOU . . . AND I WILL ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM."

phemous to conceive. Rather, God is telling us that the One He will send will have a unique, divine identity—nothing less than a Mighty God.

A Succession of Kingdoms

Looking next to the book of Daniel, we find God providing even further clarification of His intentions through a dream that Daniel interpreted for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the conquering country that had destroyed the temple of Solomon in 586 B.C. In the king's dream, there was a large statue with a golden head, silver arms and breasts, a bronze belly and thighs, iron legs, and feet made partly of iron and partly of clay. A stone "cut out without hands" struck the statue until it became like chaff carried away by the wind. "But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35 NAS).

Daniel told the king that the image he saw represented a succession of kingdoms that would rule over the earth. The king himself was the head of gold, which history tells us was a correct interpretation, because the Babylonians conquered the powerful Assyrians and the resulting empire lasted seventy years.

In 536 B.C., the Persians and the Medes conquered the Babylonians, replacing them with an empire that lasted 200 years. Then in the year 330 B.C., the Persian Empire came to an end at the hand of Alexander the Great, whose empire ended 8 years later at his death.

After that, there was no one sovereignty. Alexander's empire was divided into four parts, governed by four of his generals, and for a long time there were struggles among the various parts of the empire.

Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream fits right in with ancient history; just as silver is an inferior metal to gold, and bronze is inferior to silver, so there was a decline in the glory of these empires. Neither the Persian nor the Greek empires succeeded in achieving the wealth and wisdom of the empire before it.

The Kingdom Replaces Others

Beginning in verse 40, Daniel describes the fourth kingdom, the Roman, which was known for rule by might. Just as the feet of the statue were of different materials, so was the Roman Empire a divided kingdom—an eastern empire with Rome as the capital and a western empire with Constantinople as the capital. Partly of iron and partly of clay, the kingdom was at once strong and brittle (see Daniel 2:40-42).

Speaking through Daniel, God reveals more of His plan to es-

tablish His kingdom:

"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future: so the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy" (vv. 44-45 NAS).

This is the final clarification of what God tells us in the Old Testament about His kingdom that we will be able to cover. He will establish a kingdom in the midst of all other kingdoms of this world, a kingdom that is destined to replace all other kingdoms of the world.

**Puzzle Completed** 

The Old Testament offers many clues to God's plan for redeeming mankind. We have seen how it predicted that redemption would come from the seed of a woman, and thus would be a human; that this redeemer would be a descendant of Abraham from the tribe of Judah and from the lineage of David; that He would be a king and have the obedience of the people; that His kingdom would last forever; that He would not be an ordinary king but the Son of God; that He would have a unique, divine identity; and that someday His kingdom would replace all other kingdoms on earth.

The New Testament fulfils all these Old Testament prophecies. The first fulfillment is found in Luke chapter 1, where God sent

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the angel Gabriel to Nazareth. Gabriel found the virgin named Mary who was engaged to Joseph, a man from the house of David.

"Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus' (vv. 30-31 NAS).

Gabriel is saying that Mary is the woman whom God referred to in the garden of Eden when He said, "I will put enmity between you, Satan, and the seed of the woman." In this same passage from Luke, we also find an explanation of the stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream that was "cut out by no human hand." Gabriel is saying that Jesus' birth would not depend upon human will or passion. A "stone cut out by no human hand," He was begotten in the womb of a virgin, Mary, by the action of the Holy Spirit.

In verse 32, Gabriel tells

Mary:

"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David" (NAS).

This fulfils what the Lord said to David: "I will be his father, and he will be My son."

Gabriel then says, "He will reign over the house of Jacob forever" (v. 33 NAS), echoing the words of Jacob to his son Judah: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah..."

And last, we see that when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, the people cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Mt. 21:9 NAS). They were acknowledging that Jesus was indeed a king from the line of David, just as the Scriptures foretold.

Making It Real

The prophecies about when Jesus would be born, how, and of whom have all been fulfilled. With these in place, we can count on the fulfillment of the other prophecies that have to do with the eternal nature of His

reign.

The evidence is irrefutable that God is establishing His kingdom on earth, but for it to become a reality in our lives-which should be our goal-we must understand what the Kingdom is. The nearest definition we have of it is in the Lord's Prayer, where Jesus tells us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt. 6:10 NAS). The kingdom of God is that sphere of sovereignty where the will of God is done.

Jesus embodied the kingdom of God, because He became utterly submissive to the will of the Father. He said, "I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (Jn. 5:30 NAS).

Once we know what the Kingdom is, we have a limited number of options as to what we can do about it. We can bring our lives into line with it, in which case it will revolutionize everything about us; or we can ignore the Kingdom, forget about it, or reject it. What we cannot do is change it. God has established a kingdom in the midst of this earth. It's a kingdom made up of people who acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Lord, who choose to live under His sovereignty, and who choose to live by the values and laws of His kingdom.

#### How Will You Respond?

The Bible gives us five brief statements-three of them from Jesus and two from Paul-telling us what our practical response to God's kingdom should be:

First, in Matthew 6:33 Jesus says, "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you" (NAS). Jesus is teaching us about priority living. At the top of our list of priorities should be discerning what the will of God is for our lives, and then doing it. He promises us that if we seek His will for our lives, He will take care of everything we worry about.

Second, in Matthew 7:21 Jesus says:

"Not every one who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (NAS).

Entering the Kingdom is not a matter of mouthing words. We can read prayers and never pray; we can sing hymns of praise and never praise. It is not a matter of saying, "Lord, Lord"; it is a matter of doing the will of God, which is practical and down-toearth.

Third, in Matthew 13:44 Jesus says:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field" (NAS).

Once we come to understand what the kingdom of God is and what it means for us, there is no sacrifice too great for us to make, because living in the will of God is where life comes together. That's where the blessings of God flow, and it is where the peace of God is.

A woman came up to me in a rage not too long ago, asking, "Where is this peace that passes understanding that you're al-

ways talking about?'

I told her where she could find it: "The peace that passes understanding is found in the path of God's purpose for you and nowhere else.

And that is where we will find it too, because we can't have the joy of the Lord and do our own thing. Scripture promises us the power of the Holy Spirit, but nowhere does it promise us the power of God to accomplish our own will.

Fourth, in Romans 14:17 Paul says, "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but

ND THE ANGEL SAID TO HER, 'DO NOT BE AFRAID, MARY; FOR YOU HAVE FOUND FAVOR WITH GOD. AND BEHOLD, YOU WILL CONCEIVE IN YOUR WOMB, AND BEAR A SON, AND YOU SHALL NAME HIM JESUS . . . AND THE LORD GOD WILL GIVE HIM THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID. AND HIS KINGDOM WILL HAVE NO END.' "

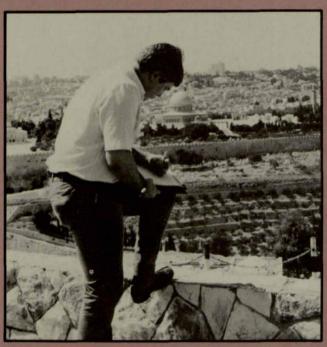
righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (NAS). The kingdom of God is inextricably bound up with the working of the Holy Spirit. It involves righteousness, of course, because we're dealing with the Holy Spirit. It involves peace, because that is what descends upon us when we fulfil His purpose. And it involves joy, because it is joy that we experience when we move into His will.

And fifth, in 1 Corinthians 4:20 Paul tells us, "The kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power" (NAS). It is not talk, but it is power in the Holy Spirit.

Thy Kingdom Come

In examining Old Testament prophecy and New Testament fulfillment, we have sought to understand something of our eternal purpose on this earth, and just hinted at our relationship to it all. We looked at the fact that God's announced purpose was to establish a kingdom-a kingdom that is not of this earth. In a world that had turned against Him, the Lord announced forthrightly that He was going to enter into the stream of history and alter it. God has established a kingdom. And the day will come when all the kingdoms of this earth become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

The Reverend Everett L. Fullam has served for twelve years a rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Darien, Connecticut. The story of how revival spread through his church in the early seventies is told in Miracle in Darien, by Bob Slosser. Father Fullam has written three books: Living the Lord's Prayer, Facets of the Faith, and Your Body, God's Temple. He and his wife, Ruth, live with their three children in Darien.



Stephen Simpson on the international scene

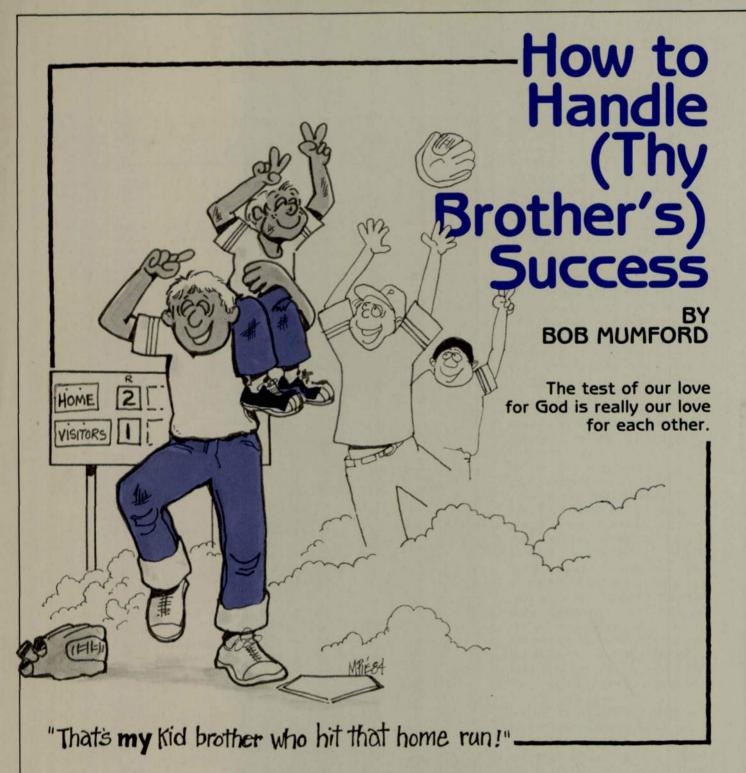
# NEXT MONTH

Find out what God is doing in cities such as London, Belfast, Munich, and Jerusalem. Staff writer Stephen Simpson recently met with important Church and government leaders in these and other European cities. In his travels, Stephen discovered practical ways we can serve our overseas brothers and sisters.

Do we have a future? In a world of uncertainty, we do have hope. It is found, says Ern Baxter, in the historic person and work of Christ.

The times are still a changin' and to move in the purposes of God, we need to understand the process of change from His perspective. Charles Simpson explains change and how to handle it.

All in the January New Wine



number of years back, my wife and I were planning an overseas ministry trip. Because political instability in the countries we would be visiting presented some danger, we decided to draw up a will before leaving. We discussed how we wanted the will to read, and then made an ap-

pointment to see a lawyer. But little did we know our naivete in this matter.

"We've decided to leave all our possessions to our eldest child," we told the lawyer, adding that we would give the eldest the authority to divide everything equitably among the other three children. The lawyer paused a moment, then looked me straight in the eye. "I wouldn't do that," he advised. "I've seen too many family fights when children attempt to divide their parents' property."

"But these are our children!" I protested. And besides, I reasoned to myself, they're Christians and would never act like that.

The lawyer just shook his head. "It doesn't matter. When it comes to brothers and sisters, love can turn to hate very quickly."

The Love-Hate Dynamic

We were shocked, but the more I thought about what he said, the more it rang true. The lesson I saw was that there is a fine line between love and hate, especially when it comes to brothers and sisters. Unrelated folks can be the best of friends and put up with character flaws in each other that would drive a relative mad. But what really amazed me was realizing that this love-hate dynamic affects not only brothers and sisters united by physical blood, but also brothers and sisters united by the supernatural blood of Jesus.

For example, if a man drives up in a Silver Cloud Rolls Royce with steam-heated doorknobs, as long as he's a traveling salesman, it doesn't bother me. But if he rolls down the window and says, "Hi! I'm the new pastor of the church on the corner and I'm your brother in Christ!" something grabs me inside. Why would he drive a car like that? What is he doing with God's money? The love-hate dynamic is set in motion.

Since my visit with the lawyer, however, the Lord has been teaching me about the kind of love He desires to see within the body of Christ, and believe me, it's a far cry from what we think it is. God has shown me three ideals that we must aim for to develop the love that He wants us to have for each other: Love must become a spiritual reality, it must become mature, and it must become practical.

Spiritual Unreality

The best way to explain the first ideal, spiritual reality, is to explain spiritual unreality. I'll

use an example from the natural realm. If I say I can lift five hundred pounds but I really cannot, that is unreality. If, however, I think that I can lift five hundred pounds, it's reality to me. So I go to the gym and the manager puts five hundred pounds on the bar, but I can't even get it off the mat. So he keeps taking weights off the bar until finally I can lift it. When I check the weight, I'm shocked to learn the reality of the situation: I can lift only fifty-five pounds.

It's very painful for me to come to this realization, because in my unreality I believed that I could lift five hundred pounds.

If we are honest with ourselves, we may discover this same type of unreality in our spiritual lives. We hear that old cliche, "God loves you and so do I," and we see it on buttons, bumper stickers, and bookmarks. We say that cliche because we think we have fellowship and that we love everyone, but do we really? Two fellows can be in the same ship and still not have fellowship. Tying two tomcats together by the tails and throwing them over the clothesline is not fellowship either.

#### The One Who Hates

Spiritual unreality is hypocrisy, and it's dealt with in the Scriptures. "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 Jn. 1:8 NAS). And in chapter 4, John writes, "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar" (v. 20 NAS).

Liar! Isn't that nasty? John calls the person who says he loves God but hates his brother a liar not because that person is deliberately lying through his teeth, but because he is living in spiritual unreality.

The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now....

The one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes (1 Jn. 2:9, 11 NAS).

Why does John keep using the word hate? It's so strong! I would prefer the word dislike. "The one who dislikes his brother" sounds much nicer. But he keeps saying, "You hate your brother." God is asking us to be honest. We shouldn't be nervous when He brings us from where we think we are to where we really are, because the closer we get to reality, the closer we get to Him.

#### A Mature Love

The second ideal the Lord has shown me about loving our brothrs and sisters is that love must become mature. In 1 John chapter 4, the apostle illustrates this point when he uses the same word 4 times: "His love is perfected in us" (v. 12 NAS); "By this, love is perfected with us' (v. 17); "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear... the one who fears is not perfected in love" (v. 18). The word perfected means "matured, at its full growth, full end, or intention." A little green apple is not perfected, but a large red apple that has come to its full development is a perfect apple.

For us to develop the mature love that God desires us to have, we must have a clear understanding of perfected love. I have found five insights into perfected love that will help us attain that mature love.

1. The opposite of love is not hate, but lukewarmness. Love and hate are actually very close together, and sometimes we cross over the fine line between them without even knowing it.

In Revelation chapter 3, the Laodicean church is berated for



being neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm (see verses 14-16). Jesus said He would rather someone be a Christ rejecter like Paul, because He can save him faster than He can the pew warmer. The Lord has no problem either converting a man who cusses and drinks and carries on. But the lukewarm person is another story.

When a husband and wife argue, they're not lukewarm about how they feel. They're intense about letting each other know their thoughts in no uncertain terms. When I counsel married couples, I always ask, "Are you to still fighting?"

two still fighting?"

"Oh yes, Brother Bob."
"Great! Come on in."

I love it when they are still fighting. What makes me nervous is when one of them says, "No, we're not fighting anymore. I don't care what he does." Then we've got deep problems, because they have taken their marriage, separated the love-hate relationship, and brought it down to the lukewarm stage—the demilitarized zone.

In the same way, in our relationship with God, He would

rather us be honestly angry with Him rather than retreating into indifference. He prefers that because love and hate are separated by the human will. Contrary to popular belief, love and hate are emotions that we can control. By an act of my will, I can overlook circumstances and say I am going to love that guy who borrowed my lawn mower last August. By an act of my will, I am going to love the pastor of the church up the street who thinks I'm off the wall because of my beliefs. By understanding the love-hate conflict and seeing that the dividing line is the human will, we can overcome hate and change it into love.

2. The highest call in the New Testament is to be a true brother or a true sister. There is a distinction between the *desire* to do this and the *ability* to do so. Everyone says they love their brother, but only those whose love is perfected are able to actually do it.

3. There is an intense conflict in relationships between brothers and sisters in the Lord that is parallel to the sibling rivalry found in natural families.

When my two boys were young, one of them loathed peas. Now every father instinctively knows when his children hide peas under their napkin, but kids always try to get away with it anyway. So when one of my sons casually tossed his napkin over his peas, my other son announced the plot: "Dad, Eric is not eating his peas!"

I don't know why he was so concerned about his brother. Nor do I know why we Christians are so concerned about what our brothers and sisters in Christ are up to either. Sometimes we act just like kids.

Once when our family was driving across the country, my four children were all riding in the back—two boys and two girls packed into the backseat. The sounds they were making are the sounds near and dear to every parent's heart:

'I was by the window first."

"No you weren't. I was!"
"This is the line. Don't cross

And finally, "Daddy!"

After days of this warfare, I could not take it any longer, and turned around and yelled, "Chil-

dren! Quit acting like Christians!"

Now why would I say that? Because my children were picking and fighting and scratching and nagging—acting just like the

average Christian.

A number of years ago when my wife and I had a young growing family and a salary of one hundred dollars a month, we flew to California to be involved in a large charismatic conference. The brother who picked us up from the airport arrived in a luxurious car that seemed to be about a block long. As if that weren't difficult enough to take, he then drove us to his housean enormous home hidden by shrubbery on both sides, with a front door bigger than any front door I had ever seen. It even had a doorknob in the middle of the door; I'd never seen anything like that before. When I turned the knob and pushed open the door, I saw a house that went three blocks in one direction and two and one-half blocks in the other. And to top it all off, I was standing in white shag carpet up to my knees.

Immediately a demon of envy came over me! Nobody can be a Christian and live in this house! Now if he had not been a brother, I wouldn't have cared what kind of house he lived in. But he was my brother, and my brother is not supposed to have any-

thing that I don't have.

We have to be constantly on the lookout for envy. "Brother John, how many people do you have on your mailing list?" I ask another pastor. If he were a salesman and had a hundred thousand on his list, I wouldn't care. But he's my brother.

"I have 100,000 on my list, Brother Bob." Oh, the pain that hits me because I've only got 8,000 on my list. What am I going to do? I start planning. I need another 92,000...no, I need

another 95,000.

If someone is a sinner, we don't care how much money he makes, where he goes, what he does, or what he drives. But as soon as he says he's our brother, we feel the need to make him eat his peas.

4. We can state the fourth principle as a simple question: Is he a son of my Father? If he is then my conduct toward him must change. The question is not, Is he Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Charismatic, or non-denominational? Labels or membership are not the issues anymore. The issue is that he's my brother, and I'm commanded to love him.

5. Psalm 16 illustrates the fifth principle—the sovereign distribution of inheritance.

The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; Thou dost support my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me (vv. 5-6 NAS).

God has created enough for all of us. He's promised us the inheritance of the nations, al-

It wasn't Peter's love for Jesus, but his love for John that would cause men to see they were Jesus' disciples.

though He hasn't given it to us yet, because He knows we would fight and squabble over it like little children. Much of the squawking we do as Christians stems from not trusting our Father in heaven to provide us with what is rightfully ours.

How do we handle what looks like supreme unfairness on God's part, such as when He blesses our brother with a Rolls Royce while we're still pushing around a 1974 Plymouth? Paul gives us the answer in 1 Corinthians chapter 12:

God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same *care* for one another (vv. 24-25 NAS, italics mine).

Paul is not saving that everyone should have the same honor. He says everyone should have the same care. I have never had any problem suffering for another member. If someone is bereaved, hurt, broken, or in financial difficulty, I can get right into suffering with him. But if God were to answer his prayers with a plane that flies over and drops a million dollars in his backyard, I'd have a problem rejoicing with him. Why wasn't it my backvard? But God says we must have the same care.

All the wealth belongs to God, who is sovereign. Therefore, He has a right to do with His wealth what He wishes. Are we going to argue with Him?

When we understand these principles of perfected love, we can strive for the maturity God desires.

**Becoming Practical** 

The third ideal that we must aim for is that love must become practical. When our brothers and sisters need us, there are practical steps we can follow to show them we care for them.

1. Be a good listener. Don't just quote Bible verses or tell them if they joined your church their problems would be over. And please, when someone is sharing his testimony with you, don't compete or compare or try to tell him how much greater or worse your experiences were.

2. The physical touch. By this I am not suggesting anything weird, but a gentle touch on the arm or shoulder can remind

someone that we care.

3. Sit in the kitchen. Formal living rooms are too intimidating. Instead, try the kitchen. Put on the coffeepot, relax, and have something to eat.

4. Know your limits. If you're not certain of the answer, it's all right to say "I don't know"

without feeling guilty.

5. Referral. When you see a problem that's beyond your area of expertise, call in a specialist who can help-a pastor, parent, or another Christian.

6. Empathy. Empathy means "I understand." Sympathy means, "I'll come to your pity party." Avoid pity parties at all costs.

7. Be practical. Sometimes expressing our concerns isn't enough. On one occasion a young man came to me for counseling. After listening at length, I was just about to give him a detailed biblical solution to his problems

when the Lord said to me, "Give him forty dollars."
I said, "What?"

"Give him forty dollars!"

When I did, tears began to stream down his face and I saw that this was God's way of meet-

ing his real need.

Occasionally you have to put your money where your mouth is, or mow someone's lawn, baby-sit, or otherwise lend a helping hand. 8. Don't try to manage others' lives. Help in any way you can, but other people must take responsibility for their own lives. 9. Don't play sheriff. It is not your role in the universe to make your brother eat his peas. If he wants to tell you about the problems in his marriage, don't take the role of assigning blame. Of course, if he is in obvious error, vou must tell him. But it takes two to tangle, so wait until you hear the rest of the story.

10. Persist. Before I talk to someone, I pray: "Lord, I'm going over to my brother's house. I need spiritual bread to offer him. Please tell me what to say so I can minister Your love to him. so I can be his brother in his

time of need."

Hopefully, not all our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ will be centered around their problems. But taking some or all of these steps will help us as we seek to love our brothers and sisters, because our love will be demonstrated in a practical way.

#### The Eleventh Commandment

These three ideals—spiritual reality, mature love, and practical love-are the keys to walking in the kind of love God desires us to have for one another. By pursuing these we can know that we are pleasing our Father, which should be, of course, our ultimate objective in life. For Jesus gave us the commandment: "Moses gave you 10 commandments," He told His disciples, "and I'm giving you the eleventh one. I want you to love one another" (see John 13:34).

Notice that Jesus didn't say. "I want you to love Me." He said, "I want you to love one another." It wasn't Peter's love for Jesus, but Peter's love for John that would cause men to see that they

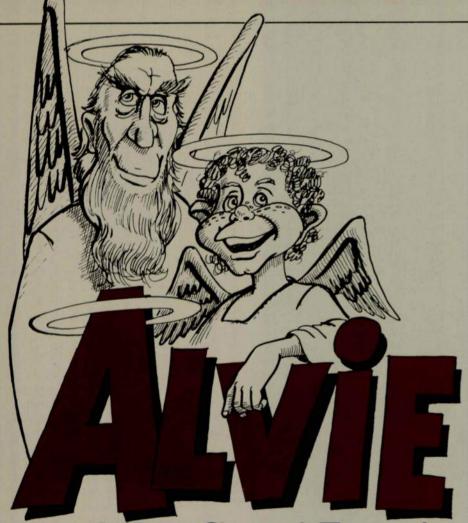
were Jesus' disciples.

It's not our love for God that makes us noteworthy. That would be too easy, because we can all get along with God. It's our love for our brothers and sisters that matters, for that lady in our church who sings off-key every Sunday, for that brother who borrowed my lawn mower last August and still has it. When we aim toward loving these people, then we're moving into spiritual reality, spiritual maturity, and practical expressions of Christ's love.

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 in Lima, New York, and as a pastor, evangelist, and seminar teacher. Bob, who travels widely in ministry to Christians of all backgrounds, has also written a number of books about the Christian life. He is a member of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors and resides in Mobile, Alabama, with his wife, Judy, and their family.

# REMEMBER:

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, IS A NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING.



and the Great Event

BY DON BASHAM

A touching Christmas fable for you and your family

uperintendent Silas, chief guardian of heaven's Outer Province, stood near the edge of the landing platform, frowning as he gazed into the distance. He wasn't angry, because anger isn't allowed in heaven. But he was upset, because Alvie, the smallest angel under his care, was late returning from his assignment.

As always, Alvie's task had been a simple one: bringing a word of comfort in response to a troubled mother's prayer. And, as always, Alvie was taking longer than expected.

Periodically, Silas wrestled with the uneasy feeling that Alvie was really too small to qualify for out-of-province duty. For whether you measured him wing tip to wing tip or heels to halo, Alvie barely met minimum flight specifications.

What's more, the art of graceful flight, which came so naturally to other angels, seemed to have eluded Alvie entirely. They wheeled and soared through the lofty realms of heaven with ease, touching down and lifting off again in graceful rhythm. But not Alvie.

With every new flight, Alvie climbed the sky as if it were an obstacle to overcome. And once safely aloft, knowing that graceful wheeling and soaring were accomplishments far beyond the reach of his stubby wings, he

simply paddled his way through the air with happy earnestness.

Neither had Alvie mastered the art of landing, Silas suddenly recalled as he finally spied Alvie's lonesome, meandering figure. He watched Alvie's erratic approach with rising alarm. "Too high and too fast, Alvie," he shouted, waving his arms frantically in a vain attempt to signal Alvie to go around the flight pattern again.

But misinterpreting Silas's shouts and frantic waving as expressions of welcome, little Alvie sailed high across the boundary of the landing area, angling straight for Silas. Then folding his wings, he fell the final few feet. Narrowly missing his scrambling superintendent, he struck the surface with such a force that Silas winced. Still, it was a better landing than some; he bounced only once.

Climbing to his feet, Alvie dusted himself off, straightened his halo, and smiled innocently at his scowling superior. "Hi, Silas. Sorry I'm late," he said, lifting one arm in a shy gesture that was half wave and half salute.

But to Silas the smile and apology were only added reminders of Alvie's monumental indifference toward his own advancement.

"The trouble with you, Alvie," Silas heard himself reciting the familiar complaint once more, "is that you just aren't flying in the right circles. Every time new assignments come down from headquarters, you choose some insignificant duty, where no one can see or appreciate you. It's not right for you to stay on here while others move up to better things. Besides, it looks bad on my record. Why, I'm the only superintendent in this end of heaven with an angel so long overdue for promotion. Don't you want a home up in the Heavenly City. where you can become eligible to serve in the very presence of the Most High God?" Silas's voice trembled slightly at the mere thought of such a rare and magnificent prospect, and even Alvie knew it was the heart's desire of every angel in the Outer Province to have a chance, someday, to serve in the very presence of the Most High God.

He ducked his head and brushed an imaginary speck of dust from his robe with a wing tip. "I'm sorry, Silas," he said. "I mean to do better. Honest. But someone has to take the little jobs.'

Silas ignored his reply. "Remember how you could have joined the angels climbing Jacob's ladder? But no, you had to help some ragged shepherd boy look for a lost sheep! And how you missed the chance to ride with the other angels in the fiery chariot that picked up the prophet Elijah? All because you went looking for hay to feed the chariot team! Today, every one of those angels has a home in the Heavenly City. And what about all those other times you could have earned a promotion, where were you? Off watching over some nobody in trouble, that's where! I tell you, Alvie, helping shepherd waifs and feeding the livestock is no way to advance your career.'

Alvie didn't answer. Silas wouldn't understand because little jobs weren't important to him. But they were to Alvie. Why, seeing the joy on that little shepherd's face when he found his lost sheep had been worth a century's lease on any house in the Heavenly City. And it wasn't Alvie's fault Elijah's chariot left before he returned with the hav. Besides, the horses were even hungrier after the trip. Everyone else had been so excited about Elijah's arrival that no one thought to look after the horses. Alvie could still remember their grateful muzzles against the palms of his hands as he fed them, and remembering, he felt good inside.

But more important news cut short Silas's recital of Alvie's missed opportunities. "Listen, Alvie," his voice changing from exasperation to excitement, "all heaven is preparing for a Great Event. It's just been announced that the Most High God is going to visit the earth. They say He's going to appear as a king! Now a big operation like that will involve many important assignments. In fact, they say some angels may be given the rarest privilege of all, a chance to serve in the actual presence of the Most High God Himself." Once again, Silas's voice filled with awe.

"All heaven is getting ready, Alvie." he continued. "Look." From the edge of heaven where they stood, Alvie looked. He saw the vast sweep of stellar plains, he saw the matchless gardens with their crystal fountains, and in the distance he saw the soaring walls and towers of the Heavenly City resting high on God's holy mountain. And everywhere he looked Alvie saw bands of angels busily preparing for the Great Event.

Then Silas led Alvie to a large table covered with scrolls, where all the other angels of the Outer Province were standing by.

"These are the assignments for our province, Alvie," he explained. "Each scroll contains the description of a task to be performed in connection with the Great Event. We've all been waiting for your return so that you could have the first choice. There are dozens of important jobs here, any one of which will practically guarantee you a promotion to the Heavenly City. But choose quickly, Alvie, we're late already." With that word, Silas left to make a final check at provincial headquarters.





But Alvie could not bring himself to take one of the important jobs. "I'll just wait and take whatever's left," he said to himself. And stepping aside, he watched each of the other angels move in and make their choices one by one. Alvie was glad that every angel seemed delighted with his choice.

Silas returned just in time to see Alvie reach for the very last scroll. It was wrinkled and a little flat from lying at the bottom of the pile. "Let me see that, Alvie." Silas grabbed the scroll from his hands. Alvie ducked his head as Silas scanned the contents.

"Well, Alvie, you've done it again!" he exclaimed. "Out of that whole pile of magnificent opportunities, you've managed to end up with the only unimportant task!" Shaking his head in dismay, he handed the scroll back to Alvie, then turned to join the other angels, who were preparing to leave. Some were to be a part of Gabriel's procession; some were to sing in the celestial choir; and some were to serve as special messengers to the four corners of the earth. It seemed as if every other angel in heaven's Outer Province had chosen some exciting and important task that could lead to a promotion and

perhaps a chance, someday, to serve in the actual presence of the Most High God. Every angel, that is, except Alvie, who had waited to take the last scroll, the job no one else had wanted.

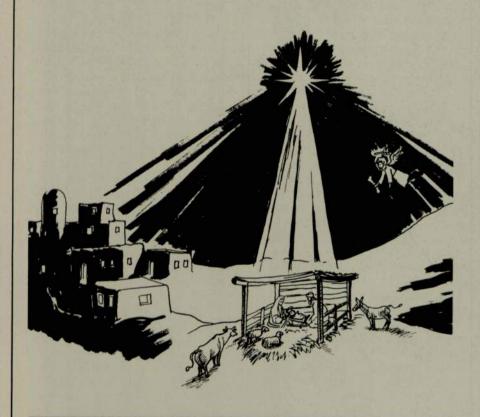
Just before takeoff, Silas paused for a final word.

"Even though you're not coming with us, you still have a job to do, Alvie," he said. "Better get on with it!" And with a rush of wings, Silas and his companions lifted off into a sky already filled with other important angels bent on other important tasks.

Alvie watched until the last angel was out of sight. Then stepping to the edge of heaven, he gazed at the earth spinning far below. He was sorry Silas was upset, but inside he didn't feel left out at all. In fact, in his heart he was delighted with his new assignment. It was the kind of job he loved best: watching over a homeless, newborn infant. He really didn't mind missing all the excitement.

So with a last look at his scroll for directions and with a quick nod of his tousled head, little Alvie spread his stubby wings and dove into the sky. Then slanting himself in earth's direction, he set out to find a stable in a place called Bethlehem.

This story appeared in the December 1980 New Wine.



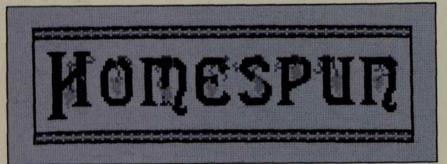
Don Basham holds bachelor of arts and bachelor of divinity degrees from Phillips University and its graduate seminary in Enid, Oklahoma. He is chief editorial consultant for New Wine and the author of several books, including Face Up With a Miracle and Deliver Us From Evil. Don resides in Mobile, Alabama, with his wife, Alice.

### HOMESPUN

A family finds God's help at

# **Lost and Found**

BY CINDI LEGGATT



othing frustrates my husband, Dick, more than losing something. So intense are his feelings that usually he will drop whatever he is involved in to recover the lost item. But God often uses such a situation to demonstrate His faithfulness, which is what He did for us last year at the start of the Christmas season.

It was the day after Thanksgiving, and our family was enjoying what had become a tradition for us-a day of shopping in preparation for Christmas. We were having a great time together, splitting up into various configurations to buy gifts for one another. Sometimes, just to make things more interesting (and confusing for Mom and Dad), the kids would buy gifts for one another while we were all in the same store, sneaking the gift over to the cashier to pay for it as Mom and Dad distracted the others. Intrigue and merriment made the day slip by as Dad and the kids discreetly exchanged money so that other family members wouldn't be aware of what was going on.

Finally, as the kids were carrying their secret packages from the last store out to the car, I noticed a look of consternation

on Dick's face.

"What's the matter, Honey?" I asked.

"I think I'm missing some money. With all the shuffling around I've been doing to help the kids buy their gifts, it's almost impossible to tell. But I know I should have at least twenty dollars more than I have."

We tried to recall all the places where the money might have been lost, but it was futile, because we had made so many stops. Finally Dick sighed as if to close the matter. "I guess it's not going to kill us if we lose twenty dollars. If I lost it, I lost it." And we headed home, trying not to let it spoil the day.

The three boys were well aware that something was wrong and were quiet in the back seat. Except for nineteen-month-old Elizabeth, who chattered beside us in the front seat, the car was silent as we drove home.

Suddenly Dick spoke up. "Honey, I know it's late, but would you mind if we checked just one place? If it doesn't turn up there, then we'll just forget about it."

"Do whatever you need to do," I said.

He turned the car around, and headed for the next-to-last store we had visited. "It will be a miracle if that money is still where I think I dropped it," Dick said as we pulled into a parking space.

As I watched Dick walk into the store, I could hear the boys behind me praying in the back seat, "Lord Jesus, please help Dad find the money."

I could see Dick inside gesturing to a salesclerk near the toy section. After a few moments they walked over to the manager's station to talk with him. When Dick pointed to a spot by one of the toy counters, the manager nodded his head and

handed him an envelope.

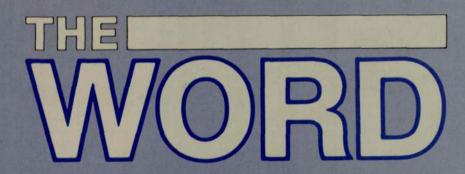
When Dick returned to the car, his first words were, "That is a miracle. They found the twenty-dollar bill I dropped."

"Hurrah!" came the cheers and applause from the back seat, and from the front seat as well, even though Elizabeth had no idea what she was cheering about. In the midst of the jubilation, I said to Dick, "I think we need to thank the Lord."

Dick led the family in prayer, thanking the Lord for allowing the situation to happen just so we could see how much He cares for us in every situation.

Looking back on that incident, I'm amazed to see how particular God is about demonstrating His love. Although twenty dollars can mean a lot at Christmastime, it certainly would not have derailed us financially if we had not recovered it. But in God's plan, it was important for us as a family to see His provision for us, right down to the smallest detail. In the memories of our children-and in ours as well-there is now a small but significant milestone standing as a testimony to the time God cared enough for us to restore a lost twenty-dollar bill.

Cindi Leggatt is the wife of New Wine's editor, Dick Leggatt.



#### December 1984

# I Believe in the Apostolic Church Because...

T	Men Are Called to Fulfil God's Purpose	
	A. Noah	Gen 6:1-22: Heb. 11:7
	B. Abraham	Gen. 12:1-9: Rom. 4:1-25
	C. Moses	Ex 3:1-22: Heb. 3:1-6 Dec. 3
	D. Amos	Amos 7:10-17 Dec. 4
	E. Joseph	Mt. 1:18-25 Dec. 5
	F. Zechariah	Lk. 1:1-23, 57-80 Dec. 6
	G. Simeon	Lk 2:25-35 Dec. 7
	H. John the Baptist	Jn. 1:19-42 Dec. 8
	I. Peter	Mt. 16:13-20; Jn. 21:15-23 Dec. 9
	J. Paul	Acts 9:1-22 Dec. 10
	K. Timothy	. 1 Tim. 1:12-20; 4:11-16; 6:11-21 Dec. 11
	L. Titus	. Ti. 1:1—3:15 Dec. 12
	M. Philemon and Onesimus	Phile, 1:1-25 Dec. 13
II.	Men Are Authorized to Rule in God's Kingdom-	The Principle of Delegated Authority
	A. The apostles	. Mt. 4:18-22; Mk. 3:13-19; Jn. 15:1-27 Dec. 14
	B. The Church	. Mt. 18:15-20; Jn. 20:19-23 Dec. 15
	C. Peter	. Acts 5:1-11
	D. Paul (to Rome)	. Rom. 1:1-17 Dec. 17
	E Paul (to Galatia)	Gal. 1:1-24 Dec. 18
	F. Epaphras, Paul's fellow servant	.Col. 1:1-14 Dec. 19
III.	Men Are Recognized by Others as Chosen of Go	d
	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
	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
	F. The foundation of the Church	Eph. 2:19-22 Dec. 25
	G. Gifts to the Church	Eph. 4:11-13 Dec. 26
***	Men Are Portrayed as Fellow Workers With Go	
IV.	A. Ambassadors	2 Cor 5:20: 6:10 Dec 27
	B. Stewards	Ti 1:5-9 Dec. 28
	C Sarvanta	1 Cor. 4:1-13 Dec. 29
	D. Fathers	1 Cor. 4:14-21 Dec. 30
	E. Colaborers	1 Cor. 3:1-9 Dec. 31
	L. Colaborers	

"The Word," a monthly Bible study by Bruce Longstreth, is a 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. Next month, we will study the nature of God, the Father Almighty. We encourage our readers to use this feature daily, both for personal Scripture study and family reading.

**NEW WINE** 



# **EVANGELISM '85**

MAY 24-27, 1985 STOUFFER'S RIVERVIEW PLAZA HOTEL MOBILE, ALABAMA

#### FEATURING:



BOB WEINER, founder and director of Maranatha Christian Churches, editor of The Forerunner newspaper, and host of Forerunner television program.



TERRY LAW, internationally known evangelist who has ministered in the Soviet Union, Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere behind the iron curtain.

- Want to witness, but don't know how?
- Feel uneasy about sharing your faith?
- Do you sometimes think evangelism is a gift and not a responsibility?

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CHARLES SIMPSON, internationally known Bible teacher.



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ERN BAXTER, prophetic and insightful educator.



DON BASHAM, author of 14 books.

**Evangelism '85** is open to New Wine's readership. It will cover:

- Building a biblical and philosophical basis for world evangelism.
- Inspiring those attending toward personal evangelism.

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We've kept registration costs as low as possible so that more people can attend. The cost is just \$40 for a single registration, \$60 for a family.

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Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about evangelism. Send for details today! For registration, housing, and other conference information, contact:

John Stanko, Conference Coordinator Evangelism '85: Changing the World P.O. Box Z Mobile, AL 36616 (205) 460-9020

Seating is limited to 1,100 participants, so act today!

## TIPS FOR FATHERS

Walking in the Spirit can make us as strange as

# A Charismatic in Red Socks

BY BRUCE LONGSTRETH

met a soggy Episcopal priest the other day—it was unusually hot for a fall afternoon in the Deep South. He had gone to his office to write a brief note, and assuming he would be there only a short time, he had decided not to turn on the air conditioner. But he stayed at his desk longer than intended, and when I dropped by for an unannounced visit, he met me at the door dripping wet.

He was understandably embarrassed and quickly tried to convince me that it was not at all strange to be sitting in an unbearably hot office with a perfectly good but inactive air conditioner less than four feet from

his desk.

To take some of the heat off the priest, I asked him if he knew a friend of mine, a priest in

a nearby city.

"Yes, I know him," he replied. "He spoke at a conference I attended. He seems like an okay guy, but most Charismatics are really weird," he said, wiping perspiration from his face, desk, and letter. "Like the priest I went to hear the other day who wore red socks—he claimed red was the symbol of the Holy Spirit and that if he wore red socks, he would be walking in the Spirit."

Looking self-consciously at my own black socks, I had to admit that any Episcopal priest in red socks must be a pretty strange sight—almost as strange as one dripping wet, sitting four feet from an air conditioner.

But after I left his office I realized the Lord was saying something through the priest in red socks. He reminded me, as a husband and father, of the importance of the scripture that says, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). It dawned on me that any man who walks in the Spirit, including a priest with red socks, would behave in an unusual manner for several reasons:

First, his personal desire is not his primary motivation. Jesus said, "I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me" (Jn. 8:28 NAS). Jesus was not controlled by the pressing needs of others or by His personal goals. He was directed by the fullness of the Holy Spirit in His life.

Second, a man who walks in the Spirit is a nonconformist. "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2 NAS). I don't need to plan ways to be odd, offbeat, or weird. Rather, because the will of God is my aim, I simply commit my way to Him and He supernaturally helps me move against the grain of a self-seeking society.

Third, a man who walks in the Spirit is extremely difficult to label. In his Gospel, Mark says that the scribes tried to "accuse" Jesus (Mk. 3:2 NAS). The word translated "accuse" means to cat-

egorize, but Jesus refused to be categorized. He was neither liberal nor conservative (even though today both sides claim Him), neither liturgical nor cultic. The normal labels never stuck because Jesus walked in the fullness of the Holy Spirit and identified with a kingdom "not of this world."

As a father walks in the Spirit, these three aspects of his unusual behavior take on specific meanings, because walking in the Spirit is indispensable to effective fatherhood. A dad who walks in the Spirit lives a supernaturally energized life. Walking in the Spirit, he daily receives God's grace for holiness, peace, and joy; he finds the necessary patience, wisdom, and kindness to accomplish his tasks. He is "transformed" from trendiness to godliness. He shares much in common with all fathers, but through the leadership of the Holy Spirit he discovers unique ways to meet his family's needs.

The Lord's gentle reminder of my obligations and opportunities to live a Spirit-filled life as a dad was a real shot in the arm. The next morning I was exuberant.

"Walking in the Spirit is exciting," I said to my wife as I

left for the office.

"So is showing up at the office with one red sock and one green one," she said, eying my incongruous footwear.

"Oops! Oh well, it is getting close to Christmas. People probably won't even notice. And it may even serve to remind me to be a better husband and father," I said.

"You're weird, Honey," my wife said, sadly shaking her head.

Bruce Longstreth is editor of Fathergram. For subscription information, write to Fathergram, P.O. Box Z, Mobile, AL 36616.

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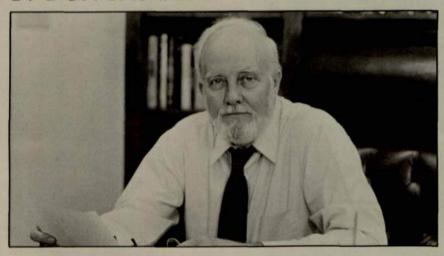
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# THE WAY I SEE IT

Salvation is not by works, but by faith

# Just as I Was

BY DON BASHAM



ears ago, when I was a seminary student, a lady in the little church I served said to me, "I really want to be a Christian, but I'm never sure I'm doing enough to get to heaven."

I was young and tactless, but I had the right answer. "No, Clara, you're not doing enough to get to heaven," I replied. "And you never will."

Then I explained how salvation comes by faith, not by works, and that we get to heaven by trusting, not by trying. I'm not sure I convinced her. Like millions of other sincere people who "believe in God and try to do right," Clara was putting her faith in the wrong person. She wanted to show God she was worthy, and earn her own way to heaven.

For people like Clara, the gospel is too good to be true. They say, "Yes, I know Jesus died on the cross for my sins but..." and then proceed to list any number of additional things they must do—just in case what He did was not enough.

Salvation is a gift we receive by faith, not a reward we earn by trying to be good. Our good works are a response to our salvation, not a requirement for it. Martin Luther once said, "To claim your salvation by works is to kick Jesus Christ in the teeth!"

In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus told "some who were confident of their own righteousness" a parable about two men: a Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like other men, fasted twice a week, and gave a tenth of all he got; and a tax collector who simply cried for mercy. The Pharisee believed the good he had done and the evil he had not done made him righteous, while the tax collector confessed he was a sinner and pled for mercy. But it was the tax collector, Jesus said, and not the Pharisee who went home justified.

I've been a Christian for half a century now, and I've discovered the trouble most people have in trying to be Christian is that they try to be Christian by trying. But being Christian doesn't come by trying; it comes by trusting. This is the heart of the gospel. Miss this and you miss it all.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast (Eph. 2:8-9 NIV).

The most difficult times in my own life have been those brief, foolish periods when I have forgotten what I am and have tried to trust in my own righteousness. But that never works. Reputation, achievement, ministry, service—none of them ever earned me one ounce of righteousness. I'm still a sinner saved by grace.

I remember a spring Sunday morning in 1934 when, as a boy of 8, I walked down the aisle of the First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, and surrendered my life to Jesus Christ. I remember how sinful I felt, and how grateful that Jesus loved me anyway. And when I timidly confessed my faith in Him before that large congregation, I knew something wonderful had happened—I knew He had accepted me.

I also remember the words of the hymn that the congregation was singing as I went forward. They are still the only acceptable basis for my salvation—or for yours.

Just as I am, without one plea,

But that Thy blood was shed for me.

And that Thou biddest me come to Thee—

O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

That's the way the Lord first showed it to me fifty years ago; and that's still the way I see it.  $\Box$ 

Don Basham is chief editorial consultant for New Wine.

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