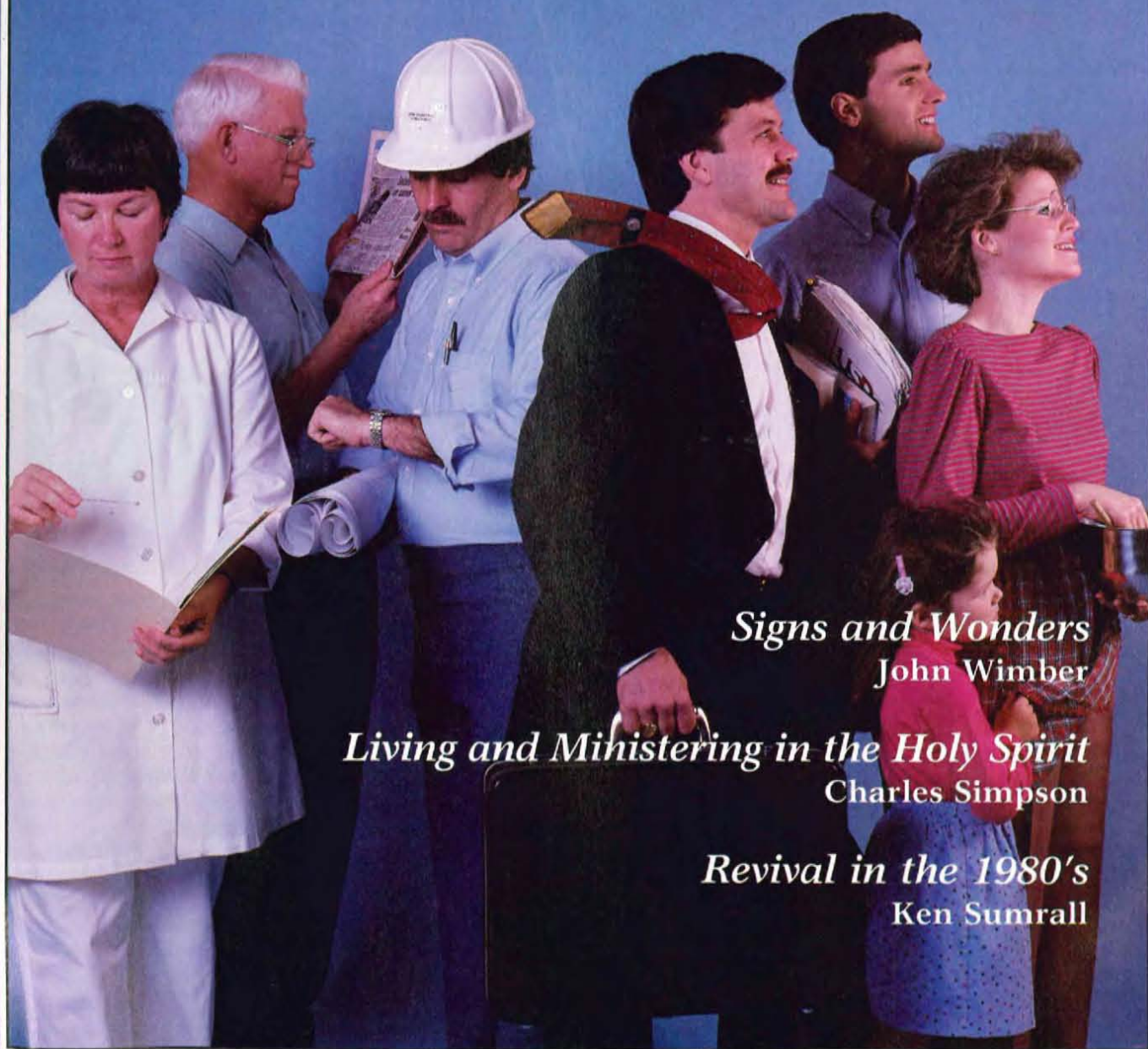


Magazine New Wine®

May 1985

A FRESH MOVE OF THE SPIRIT

Can you see it from where you stand?



Signs and Wonders
John Wimber

Living and Ministering in the Holy Spirit
Charles Simpson

Revival in the 1980's
Ken Sumrall

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Cover Photograph: Chris Poole

Renewed hope for the hardworking believer

A Fresh Move of God's Spirit

BY BRUCE LONGSTRETH

Ninety-three-year-old Charles Osborne of Anton, Iowa, has had the hiccups for sixty-three years. "It depressed me when I realized they weren't going to stop," he said, "but I just decided to work hard and keep on going." He has reduced the number of "hics" from forty to ten per minute, but is resigned to being an incurable "hiccuper."

I was tremendously impressed with this man's gritty determination to keep going, because I can't imagine living with the hiccups for sixty-three years. Osborne's attitude typifies the American way: true grit and commendable toughness in an impossible situation.

But his toughness would not be so commendable if he had chosen to suffer when he didn't have to—if there had been a cure for his hiccuping but he had decided against pursuing it.

Some Christians have chosen to endure things they don't have to accept. For example, they resolutely labor to make the best of a relationship with Jesus that has long since lost its vitality and joy. Like Osborne, they have adopted an attitude of endurance, which is fine for incurable hiccups but not so commendable for a stable walk with the Lord.

True endurance is a vital part

of the believer's life. It means to wait expectantly in the midst of all adversity. But it can come only through the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Without the active presence of the Spirit, we are left with "work hard and keep on going."

The theme for this issue of *New Wine* is the fresh move of the Holy Spirit that is sweeping the world. It's our desire that each article this month will bring renewed hope to any believer who struggles at the work-hard-and-keep-on-going level of existence. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that excitement and adventure return to our walk with the Lord.

John Wimber, founder of Vineyard Ministries International, Placentia, California, whets our spiritual appetites by relating what the Spirit is doing in his local church and in other evangelical churches where he ministers.

Charles Simpson gives a sober warning to born again believers, saying that they may miss the current move of the Spirit through their own carnality. On the positive side, he explains several steps for releasing the Spirit within us for effective ministry to Christ's body.

Ken Sumrall, senior pastor of Liberty Church, Pensacola, Florida, and a contributing editor to

New Wine, gives a pastor's perspective on why churches may be lukewarm and lack the Spirit's presence. The key to revival, he tells us, is the same today as it has been throughout the history of the Church: First, repentance, and then revival follows.

The move of the Holy Spirit and evangelism are vitally linked together. Francis Anfusio of Glad Tidings School of Evangelism, South Lake Tahoe, California, explains how the power of the Holy Spirit makes the challenge of witnessing an adventure rather than hard work.

A Christian who merely works hard and keeps on going will miss significant opportunities to serve the Lord. We are not in an endurance contest but in a victory march to bring all things under His feet. Our desire should be to experience the power of the Holy Spirit and to participate in the victorious reign of King Jesus, Lord of the Church. □



Bruce Longstreth graduated from Simpson College in San Francisco and did graduate study at Golden Gate Seminary, Mill Valley, California. Besides serving as editor of New Wine, Bruce is editor of Fathergram, a newsletter ministry to fathers. He and his wife, Janet, have two children.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear New Wine

Takes Exception

Congratulations on the quality appearance of your magazine!

However, I regret having to take exception to Charles Simpson's blanket endorsement of "TV preachers" and the amounts of money they roll in that appeared in his article in March. He implies that it is the secular media's erroneous reporting that is the real culprit.

I suggest the Reverend Simpson read the February issue of *Charisma*, which reports how Jim Bakker acquired a home valued at \$449,000 and owns two luxury automobiles valued at \$55,000 and \$45,000.

He should also read *Ashes to Gold* by Patti Roberts, former daughter-in-law of Oral Roberts

and ex-wife of Richard Roberts. Describing the affluent life-style of the Oral Roberts Corporation, she writes:

I bought Richard a blue Mercedes for Christmas and shortly after that I got my first Jaguar . . . We went from living in a duplex . . . to owning an expensive home . . . from buying . . . off-the-rack clothing to ordering the finest Italian suits, silk ties and hand-crafted leather accessories. We justified our increasingly lavish life styles because all of our efforts were directed toward building a Christian empire . . . At first I was . . . a little uneasy about the huge amounts of money that were made available to

us . . . [Richard] always reminded me that . . . a workman was worthy of his hire.

Who was the publisher of this book? Some secular religious bigot? No. It was Word Books of Waco, Texas, a foremost Christian publisher.

As Christians, I think we need to show more concern for truth instead of covering up for rampant greed.

Tony Badillo
Dallas, TX

My article was not intended to be a blanket endorsement of TV preachers. I am sorry if it appeared to be. To quote the article in the section entitled "A Question of Motivation," I said, "There are, no doubt, some abuses."

As for the cases our brother relates, I must treat them as I would any other report against a brother or sister in Christ.

The Word of God doesn't grant Christian enterprise the freedom to abuse fund raising in order to make money, nor does it grant us the license to broadcast each other's sins in order to make money.

Charles Simpson

A Free Salvation

Several years ago I read an article in a denominational newspaper that explained the necessity for us to do good works—that Jesus' death wasn't enough by itself. One of the verses quoted was Colossians 1:24, where Paul speaks of "filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (NAS). I was able to draw a different conclusion about that verse, but Charles Simpson's article "Free . . . But Not Cheap" in the March *New Wine* expanded on it very nicely.

Steven Haag
St. Louis, MO

A Similar Experience

I am incarcerated at Tehachapi State Penitentiary and was introduced to the magazine with the March issue. I was touched by your article "Looking for a Father." It somewhat related to my life-style. I've been away from my family since I was twelve. I love God. I believe in Jesus as my Lord and Savior and I do want to know about Him. Please send me *New Wine*.

Manuel Diaz
Tehachapi, CA

A Burden for the Simple

Thank you for the touching article "God's Simple People" (March). I was very moved by it. As I read it, tears flowed for all the handicapped and unwanted people who are deemed worthless by our society. It also showed me that I had anger in my heart toward the Lord because I couldn't see answers to my prayers for the handicapped in our area. I've confessed this sin and know that I am forgiven.

Thank you for including this article.

Jayne Smith
Castle Hayne, NC

Remembering the Simple

Your March issue has caused my to cry and remember keenly again a family of "simple people" I have been blessed to know. They too are God's precious people who have a special place in His heart. These people taught me more about acceptance, appreciation, and forgiveness than any book or sermon ever could.

Corinne Killam
Framingham, MA

Tearing Down the Curtain

I minored in Russian in college and always had compassion for

people oppressed by communism. When I became a Christian, the Lord gave me a special concern for Christians persecuted under communism. So I greatly appreciated the article in March by Charles Colson, "A Russian Doctor." It truly encouraged me to keep praying.

Nancy Fick
Capistrano, CA

Coming to Rest

We are in the process of selling our home and like Bob Mumford ("The Rest of the Prayer," February) find there is a real need to trust the Lord. Unlike Bob, we have already purchased a home in North Carolina even though we do not have a buyer for our original house. After reading his article about the various aspects of the Lord's Prayer, both of us felt that our minds can "come to rest." Anxiety is difficult to overcome, but we both know that the Lord will work out what is making us anxious. Our thanks go to Bob for reminding us to walk in the will of God "even as Jesus did."

Frank and Marjorie
Thomas
Chicago Heights, IL

Friends in France

Thank you for sending *New Wine* to our little town in France. It is very helpful for us and our ministries. Each time we read it, it's as if we have been in one of your meetings. We believe you'll see the fruit of your ministry when we are in heaven. We love you and pray for you regularly.

Les Sarments
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Clermont-Ferrand,
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New Wine Magazine seeks to promote the unity and maturity of the Church and individual Christians by presenting sound biblical teachings and testimonies from a variety of Christian authors.

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TIPS FOR FATHERS

One of the best ways to express our love for our children is to give them

A Hug a Day

BY DICK LEGGATT

A book title caught my eye as I walked past a bookstore the other day. It was *The Book of Hugs* (by David Ross, Harper & Row), and I noticed it because the topic of this article was very much on my mind: the importance of a physical expression of affection between parents and children—in a word, hugs. It almost seems too trite a topic to write about, but it is a vital part of family life.

In raising our children, my wife, Cindi, and I have always made a point of being affectionate with them. Consequently, they tend to be very affectionate young people—both with us and others.

Hugs are a natural part of our family life. They usually take place spontaneously, but at times some friendly coercion is necessary. Cindi has her own special method. From the time our kids were tiny, she has let them know that "hugs make moms pretty"—so they make regular contributions to the process. Even though most of them are now old enough to realize that she is stretching the truth slightly (or is she?), they nonetheless willingly comply. Our family is convinced that hugging is one of the best ways to express our love for one another.

I can't supply hard scientific data to back up my theory that hugs are important; I just know

it's true. Along with the ample evidence of our own family and many relatives and friends, there are other convincing indicators. For example, I believe that something of eternal value would have been lost in that moment of reconciliation between the prodigal son and his father if they had merely exchanged a hearty handshake (see Luke 15:20). A hug communicates love and acceptance in a uniquely effective way.

In his book *Seven Things Children Need* (Herald Press), John M. Drescher relates the story of a boy who wanted to wait up for his father, but had been sent to bed for misbehaving. When he heard his father arrive home, the boy ventured downstairs to greet him, risking the probability of a sharp rebuke.

Instead of the harsh words the son expected, his dad took him into his arms, held him close, and said, "My own little child." Even today, many years later, the son says he can still remember "the delicious sense of belonging to my father."

What can we fathers do to create a consistent, healthy atmosphere of physical affection in the home?

1. Be affectionate with our wife. Dad and Mom can set the tone for the household by their own loving actions.
2. Encourage our children to hug. I can't count the times my kids

have sidled up to me for a hug, and rarely do I turn them away. Besides hugging Dad and Mom, they also need to be encouraged to hug their brothers and sisters, especially when they have to make up after a spat. One of the greatest types of hugs a father can initiate is one recommended by Don Basham. It's called the family hug—and every member gets in on the act as the whole family hugs in one big clump.

3. Hug our kids often. That's the bottom line.

Hugs are not a cure-all, but they are a vital part of our total effort as fathers to create a loving climate in our homes. And the best news of all is that it's never too late to start hugging. □



Dick Leggatt, a former editor of New Wine, lives in East Lansing, Michigan, with his wife, Cindi, and their four children.

For more on successful fathering, you may be interested in *Fathergram*, a monthly newsletter that provides insights, tips, and testimonials from fathers who care about their families. To receive a free copy of the latest issue, check the special *Fathergram* box on the response form on page 19.

Father keeps a neighborhood argument

All in the Family

BY JOYCE WILKINSON
as told to Christine Alexander



Push was fast becoming shove as the tone of the conversation I heard through the screen door began to alarm me.

"Move it, kid!"

"Hey, this is my house."

My daughter was being challenged by a little girl from our neighborhood. I hesitated a moment, questioning the wisdom of interfering in the argument.

This kind of strife had become all too common since my husband, Bob, and I followed what we believed was the Lord's call to move with our four children from a secure, quiet neighborhood to a racially mixed and decaying section of the inner city.

We weren't prepared for the intense hostility we found. To suddenly be the minority was tough, especially on the children. But we believed in brotherhood and wanted to share our vision. We often talked with our children about how saying we love others is nothing without action to back it up. Somehow they understood.

Feeling called to witness in this racially tense area and ac-

tually doing it were two different things. And so we waited upon the Lord. Most of the time that's all it seemed we were doing. Sometimes we had to fight to hold on to our vision.

There was the battery stolen from our car, the television set taken in a break-in, the frequent taunts and arguments from the children, and then some of our Christian friends were even telling us to give up.

I knew I shouldn't, but I was ready to explode on this muggy afternoon as yet another confrontation increased the tension.

"Get off the sidewalk!" the little girl demanded.

It sounded as if the crowd was growing, and the exchange was getting louder. Finally I moved out the door and down the steps. My heart was pounding as I struggled to control my anger.

"Okay, kids, what's the problem here?"

"What's it to you?"

I took a deep breath and managed to calmly say, "There's plenty of room here for everyone and

no need to fight. Let's try to get along."

"Hey, lady, I'm not afraid of you!"

Every set of eyes was riveted on me. The gauntlet was thrown and I felt helpless. *What now, Lord?* I pleaded inwardly, more in despair than in prayer.

"I'm not scared of you," she repeated. "You don't even know my name. You don't even know my father."

"Oh, yes, I do!" I said, suddenly sure of myself. The words were like cold water in her face, and I heard one of her friends gasp at my statement.

"I do know your Father," I told her. "As a matter of fact, we all have the same Father." It was so simple—like a picture brought into focus. "We're all children of God," I said, "and He expects us to treat one another like brothers and sisters." Without a word, the group began to disperse.

Several days later I heard a knock on the door. It was the little girl. *What now?* I thought.

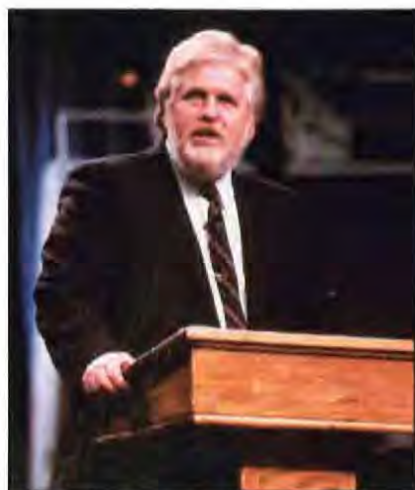
"Hey, lady, I just wanted to tell you that my mom said you were right."

I must have looked dumfounded but she continued. "You know, about Jesus making us brothers and all of us having the same Father—she said that was right."

I smiled from ear to ear. "Thank you for coming back to tell me. Thank you very much."

I had tried to witness many times in the past, but that day on the sidewalk the thought of God's unreserved fatherhood had been the farthest thing from my mind. I don't know how the words came out of my mouth except by the Holy Spirit. The triumph of seeing the truth of God cut through hostility to the heart of a child was quite a reward. □

Joyce Wilkinson and Christine Alexander are New Wine readers who live in Toledo, Ohio.



Signs and Wonders

With John Wimber, miracles aren't just talk; they're everyday events.

One day, John Wimber asked a member of the church he had pastored for thirteen years why he hadn't been attending. To his astonishment, the Lord asked John a question: "Would you attend this church if you weren't paid to come?" John realized then that he had lost his love for the Lord and gotten caught up in the machinery of an institution.

In response, John began to seek the real ministry of the Lord and His Church. He became convinced that the Church needed to do what Jesus and the disciples had done: preach the gospel, heal the sick, and cast out devils.

That journey has yielded amazing results. He is now teaching one of the most popular courses at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California—MC 510: Signs, Wonders, and Church Growth. In this class, prospective missionaries are actually trained to do the miracles that Jesus did.

With that same emphasis, John founded a movement of churches called Vineyard Christian Fellowships, which now involves 135 churches and 40,000 people.

We asked John to share with us some of his insights into the current work of the Holy Spirit.

New Wine: In the past few years, both your life and ministry have taken a significant turn. Would you tell us what brought that about?

John Wimber: I've received the most visibility teaching the signs and wonders course at Fuller, which evolved out of my personal pilgrimage of learning to do what I saw Jesus, the apostles, and the disciples doing in the New Testament. I set out on that journey because it seemed to me that the Church assumed only a small portion of the discipleship that Jesus had called it to.

The Church has focused almost

entirely on what I would call a cosmetic Christianity in which we try to become better people, better parents, better husbands and wives, better workers, and have a better life-style—which is not bad. But it's not complete. All of those things are important but I don't think they are of the same value as learning how to heal the sick, cast out demons, lead the lost to Christ, perform inner healing, minister to the poor, and care for the hungry. It seems to me that those are much more weighted in Scripture than we in our culture want to acknowledge.

Jesus has called all of us through the great commission to make disciples unto Him, teaching them to do all that He had commanded the apostles: to heal the sick, to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom, to cast out demons, to even raise the dead.

NW: Are you seeing an increased manifestation of supernatural



Photos by John Mikkelsen, courtesy of James Robison Evangelistic Association

gifts and power in your own fellowship and ministry?

JW: Yes, but I want to hasten to say that our focus isn't on signs and wonders. Our pursuit is really for the empowering and purification of the Church. Because of the absence of signs and wonders in the Church, much attention is focused on that aspect of our ministry. But I teach very little from the pulpit on healing or other manifestations of power. That's because they're understood in our fellowship; it is ground that has already been fought for and won.

God has spoken to me through the Scriptures, dreams, visions, and prophecies and has told me that He has called us to two basic ministries. One is church renewal and the other is church planting. About eighty percent of the time I spend away from my local church is given to renewal, interacting with the larger Church in conferences and seminars. About twenty percent is given to church planting, the apostolic ministry of going into an area with the intent of having a church there when we leave.

NW: What kind of reaction has there been to your signs and wonders course from people who ei-

ther don't acknowledge the gifts of the Holy Spirit or haven't experienced them?

JW: We have few critics and little negative reaction to what we are doing. I happen to think Fuller is one of the finest seminaries in the world and I am proud of it.

Keep in mind that we have three schools at Fuller: the School of Theology, the School of Psychology, and the School of World Mission. The faculty members of the School of World Mission endorsed my course on signs and wonders, although most of them have not had firsthand experience healing the sick or casting out demons, as I have had.

Because of their many years of experience in the mission field, however, the other faculty members recognize the necessity for these things and are committed to the idea that every missionary who leaves Fuller should be able to heal the sick and cast out demons if his ministry is going to have any impact. The academic policy of the school is freedom to teach as long as there is a responsible core of literature and a responsible attitude on the part of the professors to do a legitimate academic job. So there has been only isolated negative response.

To date we've had in excess of a thousand students take the course, making it one of the largest classes in the history of the school. According to our records, ninety percent of the students become practitioners. That is, they regularly pray for the sick. So we are achieving what we set out to do, which is to train skilled healers. But I think there is more to it than that. Healing is only one part of the signs and wonders spectrum and it's only one part of the training needed to make effective missionaries, but it's an important part, a part long overlooked in the curriculum of most schools.

NW: You mentioned your concern for the Church's purity. Would you comment on that?

JW: I think that one of the weaknesses many prominent Pentecostal healing revivalists and evangelists have suffered from in the last eighty years is an unfortunate amount of corruption. Some of them were not very good at handling money; others fell into sin and immorality. A.A. Allen, for example, died of alcoholism.

I think the biggest struggle of these who fell was not their con-



Our western world-view with its secular notions has all but obliterated our understanding of the supernatural.

troversial ministries, but their spiritual dislocation. They became "out of joint" with the body of Christ. They weren't under authority; they weren't interacting in a positive way with a community of elders; they had nothing to govern their behavior other than their own ideas and desires.

The secondary problem was what they actually did with their freedom. Their lack of accountability in some cases led to the misuse of funds, in other cases the making of grandiose claims that couldn't be backed up, or succumbing to carnal temptations. Having said that, I believe that although many ministers who were so visible had their problems, there were also many others, who were not so visible, who "stayed in joint," so to speak. They did not fall by the wayside. God used them mightily in the Pentecostal movement. Some of them had an amazing impact on the Third World and in the South and Central American nations.

So I believe that God is calling

the Church to purity. Furthermore, I believe there is a necessity for purity, because there are legal and illegal entries into Kingdom power. Jesus called Himself the door to the sheepfold, and spoke of other people trying to make entry by some other means.

Some may think that this is stretching the text a little, but I think that from time to time people serendipitously receive revelation as to how Kingdom power is released. Some are not very moral, very stable, or very sound people. Yet they are able to operate in Kingdom power. My perception is that they are operating in legitimate power, although they themselves made an illegitimate entry into that power. But if there was anything that was profoundly evident in the life of Jesus, it was the purity of His character.

I do believe the qualitative dimension to Christian living—the social, emotional, spiritual, familial aspects of it—are ab-

solutely necessary. I don't think they are peripheral. I think they are important, but are not an end in themselves. So I would endorse heartily a man getting his family straight or working out some character blemish in his life or committing himself to responsible interaction with elders and working through any major problem area in his life. At the same time, I believe that his ultimate goal has to be service to God.

NW: What would be your counsel to an evangelical pastor who is not experiencing these signs and wonders?

JW: First, I would tell him we are not seeking experiences. They are the aftermath; they're the accoutrement of encountering God. So I think anyone who loves the Lord and His Word would agree that our highest priority must be seeking Him first, and His purposes—His mission—second.



On the other hand, if I were sitting down and talking directly to an Evangelical, I would affirm that much of the faith, teaching, and spiritual reality he is now aware of is valid.

I think our western world-view with its secular, materialistic, and rationalistic notions has all but obliterated our understanding of the supernatural. There is very little in the average church meeting that would indicate the presence of God. But I also believe that's changing. Billy Graham said that the eighties would be the decade of the Holy Spirit. I believe he is right.

True, virile, and vibrant Christian experience and reality are easy to spot. The evidences of the kingdom of God are things like the lost being found, the deaf hearing, the dumb speaking, the blind seeing, the dead being raised. Jesus prophesied that the Spirit of God was upon Him to do these very things. And He has called us to this ministry. So when we see those things happening, it doesn't matter whether it's Greek Orthodox or Catholic or Protestant. If people are being won to Christ, healed, and delivered, the Kingdom is there. Anything short of that is something less than the kingdom of God.

NW: Would you elaborate on how the western world-view conflicts with spiritual reality?

JW: *World view* is a sociological term dealing with the presuppositions that any culture has concerning the nature of things.

One of the presuppositions of the western world is that knowledge is power. That is to say, if I can get enough knowledge about anything, I can control it, whether it's cancer or the universe. World view affects what we learn, and what we think of as good and bad, right and wrong, real and unreal.

We have a limited cosmic reality in the western world. Anything intangible is less real to us than anything tangible. We have difficulty understanding paranormal activity, the supernatural, or anything in the realm of the Spirit.

Practically every born again Christian knows his life was significantly altered because of personal supernatural experience. But the incredible thing is that we'll have that supernatural experience, and affirm it through proclamation and testimony the rest of our lives, but never expect another one! In fact, we'll even reject the notion that there are any

other supernatural experiences. It's commonplace in the Church today for someone to say to me, "Are you saying that I ought to have another experience?"

I'm saying, "No, you ought to have ten thousand more experiences," because I believe that after becoming a new creation, we are to learn to operate in the context of both realities: the natural and the supernatural. As we entered reality with God by a supernatural experience, we're to continue.

I haven't abandoned the objective truth of Scripture. I'm absolutely committed to the Bible as the Word of God. But having said that, I believe my life ought to be marked by a continuing encounter with the living God. I need to know God every week, every day. I need to walk with Him all the time. But our western world-view inhibits that process.

NW: Once someone is in tune with the supernatural and understands the workings of the Holy Spirit, how can it help him with evangelism?

JW: The gifts may operate in any setting. Here are two examples. One of our young people was in Huntington Beach, California, re-

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that many New Wine readers are also New Wine writers?

Last year we asked our readers for testimonies and "Homespun" stories, and we were so pleased with the response that we'd like to renew that invitation.

Your initial response to this idea might be, "I don't have anything to say." But as we talk with the "redeemed," we find exciting accounts of God's faithfulness in their lives: Friends have been born again; family members have been healed; and material needs have been met.

As you recall the goodness of God in your life, here are a few guidelines to help you write it down. A testimony is a two-thousand-word dramatic narration of a life-changing or miraculous event. Write the testimony in the order it happened and avoid "preaching."

"Homespun" stories are eight-hundred-word everyday events in which God teaches you a special lesson. They are folksy, humorous, and touching, as well as light, easy reading.

Manuscripts should be typed and double-spaced, and should include your name, address, phone number, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Send them to Review Editor, P.O. Box Z, Mobile, AL 36616.

There are thousands of people all over the world who would be blessed to learn what God has done for you, and we'll be blessed by it too. We thought you'd like to know. □

cently and walked by a bar that is frequented by motorcycle people. A biker walked out of the bar, past the young man, toward his motorcycle. As he passed, the Holy Spirit revealed to the young man the biker's sins and fears. So he approached him and described these things to him. The biker began sobbing and turned to Christ right there in front of all his friends. He is now in our church.

We've had many situations like this, where God has revealed sins of people either through a word of knowledge or a combination of that and a word of wisdom or prophecy. For example, once on an airplane I turned and looked at the passenger across the aisle and saw the word *adultery* written across his face in big letters. The letters, of course, were only perceptible to spiritual eyes. He caught me looking at him (gaping might be more descriptive) and said, "What do you want?" As he asked that, a woman's name came clearly into my mind. I leaned across the aisle and asked if the name meant anything to him. His face turned white, and he asked if he could talk to me.

It was a large plane with a bar, so we went there to talk. On the way the Lord spoke to me again, saying, "Tell him to turn from this adulterous affair or I am go-

ing to take him." When we got to the bar I told him that God had told me he was committing adultery, the name of the woman, and that God would take him if he did not stop. He just melted on the spot, and asked me what he should do. I led him through a prayer of repentance, and he received Christ. This was in front of a stewardess and two other passengers, who were shocked but then began to cry.

Then he said that his wife was downstairs in the seat next to his. I told him to go tell her the entire story, which he did. And he led her to Christ.

My point in telling you this is that the spiritual gifts can be the main generator for all kinds of evangelism, yet there is not a single evangelistic training method of which I know that teaches this. I know of no one who has written, "Ask God to show you the secrets of people's hearts." But we do it all the time here at the Vineyard Christian Fellowship.

NW: Thank you very much, Dr. Wimber. How can someone get more information about your ministry?

JW: They can write to Vineyard Ministries International, P.O. Box 1395, Placentia, California 92680. □

REMEMBER:

THURSDAY, MAY 2, IS A
NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER, AS
PROCLAIMED BY PRESIDENT REAGAN.

THE WORD

May 1985

I Believe in the Holy Spirit, the Promise of the Father, the Comforter, Sent by the Risen Christ, Pictured in Scripture as:

- I. **A Dove That Brings Order, Peace, and Comfort**
 - A. The agent in creation and re-creation Gen. 1:2; 8:6-12 May 1
 - B. The crown for the Prince of Peace Mt. 3:1-17 May 2
 - C. The comfort for all believers Jn. 16:1-16 May 3
- II. **A Seal That Brings Security and Belonging**
 - A. Sealed for restoration Jer. 32:6-15 May 4
 - B. Sealed for future glory Eph. 1:1-14; 2 Tim. 2:19 May 5
 - C. Sealed for the day of redemption Eph. 4:25-32 May 6
- III. **An Anointing Oil That Brings Consecration, Illumination, and Joy**
 - A. Anointed to demonstrate God's character Ex. 30:22-33 May 7
 - B. Anointed to overflow Ps. 23:1-6 May 8
 - C. Anointed for service Lev. 8:10-13; Acts 10:38 May 9
 - D. Anointed to build Zech. 4:1-14 May 10
 - E. Anointed to bring good news Is. 61:1-11 May 11
 - F. Anointed to know the Lord 1 Jn. 2:18-29 May 12
- IV. **A Fire That Brings Purification, Judgment, and Vindication**
 - A. A fire that refines Mal. 3:1-5; Lk. 3:15-18 May 13
 - B. A fire that reveals God's choice 1 Ki. 18:16-39; Acts 2:1-4 May 14
- V. **Water That Brings Refreshing, Fruitfulness, and Evidence of Abundant Grace**
 - A. A refreshing visitation Ps. 65:1-13; Is. 44:1-5 May 15
 - B. A satisfied thirst Is. 41:17-20; Jn. 4:1-15 May 16
 - C. A heritage for God's people Is. 43:14-21; Jn. 7:37-44 May 17
 - D. A rain of restoration Ps. 72:1-7; Hos. 6:1-3 May 18
 - E. An evidence of vindication Joel 2:18-32 May 19
 - F. An abundant provision Lev. 26:1-13; 2 Cor. 9:6-15 May 20
 - G. A gracious benediction Gen. 27:28; Ps. 133:1-3; Pr. 19:12 May 21
 - H. A healing touch Hos. 14:1-9 May 22
- VI. **A Holy Environment That Brings a Place for God's Character to Grow**
 - A. A new place to walk Gal. 5:16-26 May 23
 - B. A new way to live Rom. 8:1-39 May 24
 - C. A new Kingdom to serve Eph. 5:1-21 May 25
- VII. **Wind That Brings Life and Power**
 - A. Life to the dead Ezek. 37:1-14 May 26
 - B. Life from above Jn. 3:1-21 May 27
 - C. Life for a new creation Gen. 2:7; Jn. 20:19-23; Acts 2:1-4 May 28
- VIII. **Clothing That Brings Equipping, Endowment, and Strength**
 - A. Clothed in the Spirit Judg. 6:34; Lk. 24:49; Rom. 13:11-14 May 29
 - B. Clothed in a new man Zech. 3:1-10; Col. 3:9-17 May 30
- IX. **An Earnest That Brings a Taste of Future Glory**
 - A. The down payment of an eternal dwelling 2 Cor. 5:1-10 May 31

A monthly Bible study by Bruce Longstreth

Living and Ministering in the Holy Spirit

You don't have to live your life within your human limitations. You can walk in the power of the Spirit and be His instrument.

BY CHARLES SIMPSON

In 1957 I was a young Southern Baptist pastor leading my first congregation. My main concerns were how to succeed in preaching the word of God and building a strong church.

Seven years later the church was larger, but I saw that a larger church was not necessarily a more effective church, and I began to have different concerns: How could I get these people more involved with the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the same way that early Christians were involved?

In the ensuing years, the Holy Spirit did come to our church in power, and many people were spiritually renewed and became involved with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Today, twenty years later, I am concerned about the same issue: How can I, as a leader, get people involved in the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the same way early Christians were involved? I believe that God is in the process of moving the entire Church to deal with this issue. Many Christians are not personally involved with the ministries of

the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they are not equipped to build the Church and affect the world. God wants to remedy this.

Some of my fellow ministers are proclaiming a new wave of spiritual power. Some refer to this new wave as "the third wave"—the first wave being the Pentecostal movement, the second being the charismatic movement, and the third being an even broader movement that will penetrate the entire body of Christ with supernatural power. I agree that God is moving again in a broader dimension to extend ministry power beyond the few to the entire Church.

If such a stirring of God is upon us, we should reacquire ourselves with the foundations of the faith, submit ourselves to the lordship of Jesus, and be squarely positioned in Kingdom truth, so as not to be swept away by mere subjective excitement or new and novel notions. We need to be well rooted in Christian history and faithfully ready to move under the Spirit's inspiration. In other words, we need to

retain the lessons of the past and be ready for new lessons and adventures with God the Holy Spirit.

An Important Question

The question is this: Are you ready to be an instrument of the Holy Spirit? If God should have a gift for you now, or a gift for someone else through you, are you ready to cooperate? Are you ready for a time in history when every believer might become engaged in the ministry of Christ to other believers and to the world?

In order for each of us to answer these questions, we must reacquire ourselves with the Holy Spirit. Who is this person to whom we're supposed to respond, and how can we cooperate with Him? What is His nature and ministry?

Looking at the example of our Lord Jesus will help us to understand how He cooperated with the Spirit and how we should also. John 4:7-24 records an episode in Jesus' life: an encounter with an immoral Samaritan woman. The scripture tells us



that Jesus felt compelled to go through Samaria. Most Jews went around Samaria, but Jesus was led by the Spirit to do the unusual. As He stood by a well in Samaria, waiting for the purpose of God to unfold, a woman came to draw water.

"Give Me a drink," He said to her.

She was startled that a Jewish

man would even be there, much less speak to her.

"If you knew who was talking to you, you would ask Me for a drink," He continued.

Now she was really puzzled, because Jesus had no bucket. How could He give her water? But Jesus knew that she had an unsatisfied thirst. She had been married five times and was now

living with a man who was not her husband.

Then the conversation got personal. "Go, call your husband," Jesus said.

"I don't have one," she replied.

"No, you don't. You have had five, and now you are living with a man who is not your husband."

The woman was rattled! Who

God wants both the Church and the world to see a fresh demonstration of His power.



was this man who knew her life's story? Embarrassed, she shifted the subject to religion and the proper location for worship: "Where is the proper place to worship, Jerusalem or Samaria?"

Jesus answered, "The hour is come when neither Jerusalem nor Samaria will suffice. God is spirit, and true worshipers must worship in spirit and truth."

In a few moments, this confused, immoral Samaritan woman was drinking the life of the Holy Spirit and introducing her entire village to Jesus Christ. This episode occurred because Jesus cooperated with the Holy Spirit, and it is an example for us.

The Nature of the Spirit

God is not religion; He is spirit. The word *spirit* can be translated "breath" or "wind." When Jesus said that God is spirit, He was saying that God is like the wind. Jesus says something similar to Nicodemus in John chapter 3:

"The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (v. 8 NAS).

At issue here is what we follow. We should not follow our minds, doctrines, or customs. We should not worship in "this mountain or that mountain." We should follow the Holy Spirit. And who is the Holy Spirit? What is He like?

Several attributes of the Holy Spirit are important for us to consider as we seek to reacquaint ourselves with Him. First, He is holy. Scripture underscores this point many times. *Holy* means "other than," "something else," or "something outside of." It is akin to the word *sanctification*, which means "separate."

We call the Spirit of God the

Holy Spirit because He is "other than" any created being or spirit. He is separate and above. He is holy.

Second, the Holy Spirit is love. First John 4:7-8 says:

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love (NAS).

God is love, so God the Holy Spirit is love.

Third, the Holy Spirit is truth. First John 1:5-6 says:

And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth (NAS).

In addition to these three qualities—holiness, love, and truth—there is a fourth: God the Holy Spirit is invisible. Although it is possible to see where God is working, one cannot see the Spirit of God.

In John chapter 14, Jesus speaks comforting words to His disciples. He promises that He will not leave them orphaned, but that He will send "another Comforter":

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold [see] Him or know Him" (vv. 16-17 NAS).

Although we cannot see the Holy Spirit, we can see what He does. The Apostle Paul explains

this to the Corinthian church:

And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. . . . And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (1 Cor. 2:1, 4 NAS).

Paul says it is not wrong for faith to be built upon a demonstration; in fact, he wanted them to see a demonstration of the power of God, and be built up in their faith. People can come to a relationship with the invisible Holy Spirit through visible demonstrations of His power. Faith should not be built on theological concepts alone, but on the power of God.

I believe in sound theology and Kingdom principles. I believe that God is a God of order; He framed the world with certain precepts. But my faith and my salvation are based on the power of God. I was not saved by a precept; I was saved by a Savior, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures. His resurrection was a supernatural demonstration of the power of God.

The world needs to see a demonstration of the power of God. I believe the Church wants to see it. I believe that God wants both the Church and the world to see a fresh demonstration of His power.

Now the personal question arises, how can I move into a place of spiritual sensitivity and be used to demonstrate the power of God? The Apostle Paul makes it clear in 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 that our eyes cannot see nor our ears hear what God has prepared for those who love Him. But those very things are revealed by the Spirit.

Let's go back to our story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. The Father had a good experience in store for Jesus; an entire village was ready to receive Him. But Jesus would not have seen the opportunity had His eyes and ears been governed by logical thinking or current customs. He was governed by the word of God and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. He could receive what the Father had for Him only by being led by the invisible, loving, and truthful Holy Spirit. Out of the Holy Spirit came guidance—a word of knowledge about this woman that unlocked her heart, and the whole town!

A Job Description

Another question we must answer about the Holy Spirit is, what does He do, or what is His ministry? The Holy Spirit has many ministries. I will list seven of them.

1. The Holy Spirit carries out the purpose of God. We can spend our lives trying to get God to help us with *our* purpose, or we can spend our lives living according to *His* purpose. The Holy Spirit does not wait on us to find out what He should do. He is committed to the divine purpose.
2. The Holy Spirit exalts Jesus Christ. This is a primary ministry. In John 16:14, Jesus says the Holy Spirit will testify of Him.
3. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin. In John 16:7-8, Jesus says when the Holy Spirit comes, He will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. We know we are dealing with the Holy Spirit whenever He points out our errors with a view to helping us grow toward the image of Christ.
4. The Holy Spirit inspires the word of God. When the Holy Spirit moves, He issues or inspires God's word. Second Peter 1:21 says that holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

How could I get these people more involved with the ministry of the Holy Spirit?



The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God.



5. The Holy Spirit regenerates and renews. The Holy Spirit is able to make new creatures in Christ out of bruised and broken people. His mission is to renew and repair. This ministry is described in John chapter 3 and many other passages.

6. The Holy Spirit empowers. In Matthew 3:11, John says:

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not even fit to remove His sandals; He Himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (NAS).

Jesus says in Acts 1:8, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (NAS). The word *power* is the root for *dynamite*.

7. The Holy Spirit provides gifts for building up the Church. In 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Paul lists some of the gifts of the Spirit, as he also does in Romans 12:6-8. First Corinthians 14:12 says, "Since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound [excel] for the edification of the church" (NAS). The Body cannot be built up without gifts or manifestations of the Spirit.

Encouragement or edification comes by the Holy Spirit. I heard a pastor say, "Discouragement is leukemia of the soul." Discouragement causes our soul to die. But when the Holy Spirit is moving, He quickens our spirits and encourages us. Ideally, we should all be in a church where the Holy Spirit is always moving. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every person's tongue was controlled by the Spirit, and if everywhere we went, we met someone who had a gift or manifestation of the Spirit for us? It can happen.

The Spirit Today

What is the Holy Spirit doing today? It's safe to say the Holy

Spirit is still doing all the things mentioned above: fulfilling God's purpose, exalting Jesus Christ, convicting of sin, emphasizing God's word, regenerating and renewing, empowering, and inspiring and building the Church. God the Holy Spirit is doing these things everywhere, in a wide variety of Christian groups.

If we want to stay involved in the work of the Holy Spirit, we must never try to limit God or get in His way. He does not have to defend Himself to His people, or continually deal with their unbelief. And we always need to be looking beyond our own borders, understanding that God is working with all Christians, not just our group.

One reason the people of Israel stayed in trouble with God was that they were parochial. They couldn't believe that God wanted to work with anyone else. But God is bigger than that. He is the God of all nations and is interested in everyone and everything. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

If we want to be a part of God's work, we must believe that He will fulfil what He promised in Joel 2:28, that He is going to pour out His Spirit on all flesh, and that He is going to bring, not just *some* things, but *everything* under the headship of Jesus Christ. He intends to fill all creation with Himself.

A fresh outbreak of supernatural power is ahead. By His word, precepts, and power, God intends to build a body that can reflect His glory.

Are you prepared to be an instrument of the Holy Spirit—not just a *believer* in the Holy Spirit, but His *instrument*? If the Holy Spirit says, "I select you, and I have something I want you to do," are you ready to respond?

Why We're Not Open

God could be saying some-

thing to you right now that you are not open to accept because it is illogical to your natural mind or because you feel unable to respond. You may be telling the Holy Spirit, "I can't accept that!" And you may be missing the door into God's supernatural purpose. Even Jesus' disciples often missed the door into God's provision through the Holy Spirit.

Just before He was betrayed, Jesus said to the disciples, "This night all of you will be scattered because of Me. I am going to be betrayed and crucified, but I will rise again" (see Matthew 26:31-32). But they all rejected such a thought. They could not "see it," and vehemently insisted that He was wrong. Jesus was trying to offer them hope for the night ahead and comfort for the darkness. He was trying to let them know that beyond the trials there was redemption. But because they couldn't accept what He was saying, neither could they receive the grace He was offering to sustain them through the dark nights before His resurrection.

The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. He finds himself walking in his understanding, trying to figure everything out for himself, stumbling and bumping into all sorts of things. It is impossible to live the Christian life without the Holy Spirit.

But you don't have to live your life within the limitations of mere humanness. You can walk in the power of the Spirit and be His instrument. Here are some things you can do to get ready for God the Holy Spirit to move in your life:

1. Get your attention off yourself and onto the purposes of God. You will begin to anticipate a new, exciting adventure. Your joy will be restored. Self-centeredness is a recipe for misery, but being spiritually-minded results in joy and peace.

2. Get your relationships in order. Humble yourself. The Holy Spirit is offended by pride and disharmony, but He will exalt the humble and the peacemaker.

3. Practice a new sensitivity. Listening to the Holy Spirit is the normal Christian process, but it takes patience and a willingness to defer to the Holy Spirit. Ask God to help you avoid rushing out, or talking without listening to the Holy Spirit.

4. Believe that you can hear from God, and trust the Holy Spirit to lead you. His guidance does not have to be dramatic or mystical; His is a gentle, peaceful voice. He can speak to you intuitively, through Scripture, through a friend, or through a situation.

5. Don't be afraid to fail. God loves you. If your heart is open to Him, He will not allow you to be deceived, nor will He condemn you if you misinterpret His guidance.

6. Study the Scriptures thoroughly and regularly as a means of knowing the Lord and His way better. The Holy Spirit will use the Scriptures to lead you, and He will not contradict them.

7. When in doubt, consult with your leaders and Christian friends.
8. When you do make a mistake, learn from it and don't react by withdrawing. Lessons from past mistakes can become foundations for future triumphs.

The most exciting and wonderful possibility of life is that it can be lived in cooperation with the same Spirit who raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and sat Him at the Father's right hand. □

Charles Simpson, senior pastor of Gulf Coast Covenant Church in Mobile, Alabama, ministers extensively in the United States and abroad. He also serves as the chairman of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors. Charles resides in Mobile with his wife, Carolyn, and their three children.

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REVIVAL IN THE 1980's

Jesus' message to the early Church
holds the key to a fresh outpouring
of His Spirit.

BY KEN SUMRALL

In recent years there have been many prophecies, often confirmed by reputable ministers, that a revival is coming—one greater than any revival in the history of the world, greater even than that which took place on the day of Pentecost. Those who envision this outpouring see it affecting every nation, resulting in a great host of people being gathered into the kingdom of God.

Some predicted that 1982

would be the year of the revival. As that year passed, others foresaw the outpouring coming in 1984. Now some are setting the date for 1985.

When I agreed to write this article, I began to have doubts about this coming visitation, even though I published my own prophetic utterance about it in 1979. Did God really speak to me and to others? And if He did, why is He waiting so long to move?

As I was praying about this, God reminded me of a familiar scripture:

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chr. 7:14).

The Lord impressed me that the promise of revival carries with it certain conditions. When we meet His conditions, He will send revival: "When My people humble themselves and repent," then revival will come.

History holds no record of any genuine, lasting revival without the expression of repentance from God's people. Once again, God is calling us to old-fashioned conviction and godly sorrow over sin. Of course, there must be balance between a continual, overscrupulous introspection, which God is not calling us to, and a healthy examination of ourselves.

When the Apostle John was exiled to Patmos, a small rocky island in the Aegean Sea, Jesus gave him messages to write to seven of the more than five hundred churches in Asia Minor. The Lord spoke to only seven because they represent churches throughout history that need these special messages.

The messages to five of the churches fit our theme of "repentance, then revival." The problems they endured were serious enough for Jesus to speak in no uncertain terms of their need to repent. The other two churches He discussed were among the few that remained in perpetual revival.

Ephesus: Forsaken Love

"You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent



History holds no record of any genuine, lasting revival without repentance from God's people.

and do the things you did at first" (Rev. 2:4-5 NIV).

Acts chapter 19 records what happened in Ephesus when the church first heard the good news. Through Paul's ministry, the people experienced the living Lord, witnessed powerful miracles, and burned their idols. But since that first visit, their love for the Lord had faded.

I believe their fall was similar to what happened to a friend of mine, who wrote me a letter about the fading of her first love for Jesus:

Luke 7:47 came alive as I read, "He who is forgiven little (because of a lack of repentance) loves (Jesus) little." I was enlightened. Never had I realized that by my lack of tears over my weekly sins I had hardened my heart in my love for God. But how little and how lightly I took the decrease in my repentance and my bridal love for Jesus. In fact, I couldn't bear to look at the Song of Solomon. I was embarrassed by the Shulamite's complete abandonment to her lover. I had come to know Jesus as my Savior, my counselor, my brother, my friend, my deliverer, but I had lost Him as my lover. When I first met Jesus, oh, how I loved Him. I wept at the sound of His name. I would drop everything to draw near to Him. But as I became a more "mature" Christian, no longer a babe, I became more sure of myself and less repentant and brokenhearted at how I could hurt Him. My repentance became shallow, and in proportion, my joy and love in the Godhead very slowly and subtly ebbed.

Jesus still speaks the same message to us that He spoke two thousand years ago to the church at Ephesus: If we want personal revival, we must begin with personal repentance. If we want revival in our church, we must begin with repentance in our church. Repentance, then revival.

Pergamos: Ministers for Hire

"You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality... *Repent therefore!* Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against

them with the sword of my mouth" (Rev. 2:14-16 NIV, italics mine).

This message applies to the whole Church, although God is specifically speaking to His special messengers, such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

After forty years of testing, the nation of Israel rose up to enter its promised inheritance. To do so it had to pass through Moab, a route that frightened Balak, king of Moab. His only hope for survival, he reasoned, was to hire the prophet Balaam to curse Israel.

Now Balaam was a prophet who had started out on the right track. He had a reputation for accurate prophetic predictions. Balak was initially unable to persuade him to turn against Israel, but he believed every man had his price and offered Balaam more prestige and money. This offer sorely tempted the prophet (see Numbers chapter 22).

Peter tells us that many church leaders are like Balaam: "They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam . . . who loved the wages of wickedness" (2 Pet. 2:15 NIV). Jude adds another warning: "Woe to them . . . they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error" (Jude 11 NIV).

God has never commanded His servants to take a vow of poverty, but rather gives abundantly to those who sow bountifully, and gives His people all things to freely enjoy. Preachers are not excluded. But the fact that God's people are abundantly blessed is no excuse for His ministers to compromise the integrity of their calling out of greed or covetousness.

Thank God for the many true men of God who love, care for, and feed His sheep. But we shouldn't wonder why revival



**We
shouldn't
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hasn't
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needs.**

hasn't come when there are those who are guilty of neglecting the people to satisfy their own needs. Ministers must repent. Repentance, then revival.

Thyatira: Religious Pride

"I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants . . . I have given her time to repent . . . I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely,

unless they repent. . . . Do not hold to her teaching. . . . Satan's so-called deep secrets" (Rev. 2:20-22, 24 NIV).

Whatever else Jesus saw in this church, spiritual pride angered Him to the point that His eyes were "like blazing fire" (v. 18 NIV). His command to repent had been ignored by leaders who considered themselves to be the spiritually elite, but who misled God's people with their "thus saith the Lord."

Paul admonishes us to "covet to prophesy" (1 Cor. 14:39), but he adds a warning concerning the possible abuse of the gift: "Test everything. Hold on to the good" (1 Th. 5:21 NIV).

The rebuke to the church in Thyatira was not to those who mistook their own feelings or thoughts for the voice of God and brought forth exhortations that did not edify the church. Rather the reference to Jezebel speaks of a spirit of wicked manipulation that controls people through witchcraft (see 1 Kings chapter 21).

Many so-called deep truths of God are nothing less than evil spirits sowing doctrines of elitism and religious pride that ultimately lead Christians into immorality and lasciviousness. Examples of this error have been manifest in every major revival throughout Church history—even in the charismatic renewal.

If one has become entangled in spiritual pride and considers himself to be one of God's elite, he needs to focus his attention on the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ and return to the simplicity of God's message of love as demonstrated by the cross.

Judgment must begin in the house of God. Repentance, then revival.

Sardis: Competitive Spirit

"You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up!

...and repent" (Rev. 3:1-3 NIV).

Reputation is far too important to most of us. We want to be known as the church with the biggest crowds, the best programs, and the most beautiful buildings. We desire to have the most talented choirs and the most articulate pastor.

Not one of these things is wrong in itself; it is scriptural to strive for excellence in the kingdom of God. The early church at Jerusalem had a good reputation with many people and we know it pleased the Lord (see Acts 2:42-47).

Jesus also had fame among the common people and "grew in... favor with God and men" (Lk. 2:52 NIV). Yet He willingly "made himself of no reputation... and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:7-8). His concern was not for His reputation but for the people He came to serve.

Unlike Jesus, the church at Sardis had developed a spirit of competition, existing for itself and using people for its own exaltation and preservation. Jesus commanded the people to repent and to return to ministering and giving their lives as servants in their city. Repentance, then revival.

Laodicea: Lukewarm

"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16 NIV).

The Laodiceans expressed their self-satisfaction, but their confession did not match God's view of their miserable condition. Theirs was a Christianity of diplomacy—"I'm okay. You're okay." They were satisfied, but Jesus was very dissatisfied.

Though Jesus was disgusted



**Jesus
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their city.**

with Laodicea, His long-suffering toward that calloused, spiritually blind, and naked church is amazing. This is the offer He makes:

"I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see" (Rev. 3:18 NIV).

Repentance, then revival.

If We Want Revival

Five times in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, God issues a command to the churches to repent. His call to the Church today is the same.

If we want revival to visit us, we must heed the conditions God has set before us. We must first cleanse our hands and purify our hearts. God's hand is not so short that He cannot heal. His ear is not so heavy that He cannot hear. It is not He who has kept back revival. It is our sins—yours and mine—that have kept back the prophesied revival. "If My people humble themselves and pray and seek My face..." More specifically, *when* My people...

Repentance, then revival. □



Ken Sumrall, a contributing editor to New Wine, is the founder of Globe Missionary Evangelism, which sponsors missionaries in fourteen countries. He is president of Liberty Bible College in Pensacola, Florida, and pastors Liberty Church there. Ken is also the author of five books, including From Glory to Glory. He and his wife, Wanda, live in Pensacola.



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THE DAY NATHAN DROWNED

Through her son's accident, a young woman learns a dramatic lesson on motherhood.

BY CINDY MILLER

Mother's Day is always a special Sunday for women across the country. But since 1975 it has taken on a distinct significance for me—it was the day my son Nathan drowned. It was a traumatic, painful experience, but God used it to teach me a lesson on motherhood that changed my life and my family's forever.

My husband, Danny, and I already had a son when I found out I was pregnant again. Friends assured me I would have the daughter I wanted for a second child, encouraging me to "think pink."

When I gave birth to a second son, I tried to hide my disappointment, but it managed to surface from time to time. The negative feelings bothered me because I knew that Nathan was God's gift to us, and I loved him.

I also had to work hard at accepting the fact that Nathan was the complete opposite of our first son, Daniel, a well-behaved child who did everything by the book. It didn't take long for my preconceived notions of motherhood to fly out the window. With my second little bundle of joy, I needed eyes all over my head just to keep up with him! He loved to climb and get into things, and if I let him out of my sight even for a minute, he would be down the stairs, around the corner, and halfway up the street.



As a young Christian, I was studying the Bible and learning how to be a good wife and mother. But keeping up with such an active child took its toll, and before long Nathan had worn me out—mentally and spiritually.

During the early 1970's there was a lot of talk of women's liberation, which only served to fuel my feelings of discontent. *Why must I be stuck here? I fumed to myself. I could be finishing nursing school and doing something really "useful" with my life! I would be a better person if I could only get out of this house and use my brain for a change!*

I was to find the answer to my question on Mother's Day 1975.

A Picnic at the Lake

A group of our friends had planned a Mother's Day outing to Lake Zaca in California's Santa Ynez Valley, and asked us to go along. Lake Zaca is a beautiful, if somewhat eerie, body of water. Branches from towering oak trees hover over its banks and fallen logs float aimlessly about.

There is very little beach at the water's edge. The bottom drops almost straight down from the shoreline, but in a few spots swimmers can wade out up to their knees before the lake bottom falls away. No one has ever found the bottom, and legend has it that Lake Zaca is really bottomless. Whether or not that is true, it can be a dangerous place, and I resolved to watch Nathan—just barely one year old—with an eagle eye the entire time we were there.

Arriving at noon, we found a good place to picnic. Although there were other families enjoying the lake that day, we found a spot all to ourselves. We explored the woods, went hiking around the lake, and even took a few turns in a rowboat, laughing as our children watched the fish



Danny Miller and his sons, Nathan and Daniel, feed the ducks at Lake Zaca close to the spot where Nathan later nearly died in the "bottomless" lake.

swimming in the water.

When it was time to leave, I breathed a sigh of relief because we had made it through the day without incident, and I put Nathan in the car for safe keeping while we cleaned up the area and packed our gear. After a few moments, my husband told me Nathan was climbing all over the seats and that he was going to take him out so he wouldn't get hurt. I assumed Danny would watch him. But Danny assumed that I would watch him, and Nathan was free to wander.

I chatted with the others and busied myself with the final packing details, but then I looked around for my son. After watching him for twelve months, it was second nature to keep an eye on him, even though I thought he was with his father. Then I saw Danny standing by himself.

"Where's Nathan?" I nervously called. Someone suggested that he might be on the road. But instinctively I knew I needed to get to the lake.

A Frantic Search

I yelled for Danny and together we ran to the lake, scan-

ning the shoreline as we ran. *Surely he couldn't go that far, that fast,* I thought, but as the minutes ticked by, my sense of dread increased. None of the picnickers nearby seemed concerned about anything, but with Danny standing just a few paces behind me, we continued surveying the lake for any ripples or movement that would show us that Nathan might be in the water.

There was no movement. There was nothing.

Suddenly Danny burst past me and dove into the water. To this day—ten years later—words cannot describe how I felt. I was numb. I couldn't react. I couldn't cry or scream. I couldn't do anything. A nightmare was unfolding before my eyes—I knew that my child had drowned.

The place where Danny had dived in was not the part of the lake where he could wade. Danny had plunged straight down into the murky darkness and disappeared. Suddenly he shot up again and in one quick movement threw something toward the shore. I recognized the limp figure of my son, like a little rag doll floating through the air. I covered my eyes and turned my



Today, ten years since the near tragedy, Danny and Cindy live in Mobile, Alabama, with their three children, Nathan, left, Daniel, and Tricia.

head, because I knew enough to know that a drowning victim is not a pretty sight, and I didn't want to remember my little boy like that. I wanted to remember his face full of life and smiling.

Then I dropped to my knees with my head in my hands, calling on the name of Jesus over and over again. I couldn't do anything else. "Lord, You can't let my baby die! He has his whole life ahead of him! You can't let him die!"

Two of the friends with us that day had served as medics in the Army, and they quickly started giving Nathan mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. While they worked furiously, I watched and prayed. Knowing he could do no more, Danny fell to his knees by my side, lifting his hands to the Lord, beseeching Him for our son.

After what seemed an eternity, I heard one of the men working on Nathan say, "He's going to make it." A little moan came from Nathan's mouth, and I ran to him. I could barely recognize my own child. His face was bloated and white as a sheet, his hair a tangle of matted leaves and moss. He was soaked to the

bone, stiff and cold, but, thank God, he was alive! I tenderly picked him up and cradled him in my arms, my tears falling all over his cold little face.

Medical Miracle

By this time a doctor had arrived. He was shocked to find that Nathan was still alive after what we calculated was at least four minutes under water. He told me that I didn't know how fortunate I was; usually children who are under water for that length of time never revive. I looked him straight in the eye and said it was Jesus who had saved him.

The doctor told us to keep Nathan's head down and get him warm. That time of year, none of us had warm coats we could wrap him in, but the Lord had arranged all the details. We found a snowsuit—just Nathan's size—in our friends' van. It was pink, but it was what he needed. Quickly, I removed his wet clothes and put him in the snowsuit to get him warm. The doctor encouraged me to keep him crying, because it would be good for his lungs. Nathan didn't need much encour-

agement to cry.

We rushed Nathan to our family physician for a checkup, and were amazed at what he told us. Nathan was in perfect condition with not a drop of water in his lungs! In the days ahead, he even managed to avoid pneumonia, which plagues many children who recover from drowning.

We later pieced together what had happened at the lake that afternoon. Apparently Nathan had wandered over to the shoreline and fallen over a log into the water. Because the lake bottom dropped off so quickly at that point, and because he was wearing dark blue pants that blended in with the water, at first we couldn't see him. But the pants were a size too big for him and managed to hold enough air to bob him up just below the surface of the water. Somehow, Danny saw the cuff of the pants. He dove in and threw Nathan onto the shore, possibly jarring him enough to cause his little heart to start beating again.

A Change in Attitude

I felt that God wanted to use the near tragic event to teach me something—but I wasn't quite sure what it was. Although the devil tried to make me feel guilty, I knew in my heart that I was a good mother and that I hadn't been negligent. "Lord, I know I am not supposed to ask why," I prayed, "but what do You want me to learn from this?"

His answer came very distinctly: "Never take your children for granted, Cindy."

Suddenly, my attitude toward motherhood changed 180 degrees. *How could I ever have wanted to leave my children to go back to school or to work when it really wasn't a necessity?* It would have been acceptable for me to go back to work for financial reasons, but not simply because of my own discontentment.

NEXT MONTH IN NEW WINE: FAMILY



Satan's favorite target often is the Christian family. Don Basham exposes the devil's tactics and gives practical steps that every Christian family can take to ensure victory on the home front.



Priest, prophet, and king are the primary roles that God has ordained for fathers. Derek Prince discusses these as he explains God's call for fathers.



Becoming the Proverbs 31 woman is possible. In an excerpt from her recent book, *Women: Beyond Equal Rights*, Dee Jepsen, wife of former U.S. Senator Roger Jepsen, offers practical advice on how to become a woman of excellence.



Connie Marshner, chairman of the Child and Family Protection Institute, explains how profamily forces in Washington, D.C., are fighting for the family in the public affairs arena.

ALL IN THE JUNE NEW WINE

Because I realized that my children were gifts given to me for a short time and that God could take them back whenever He wanted, I became so grateful that I was quite happy to stay home and care for them and just watch my children grow up. Many times after that frightful day, I would put Nathan to bed and just weep—simply because he was there.

I vowed that I was going to enjoy my children and not let the world dictate to me what I should be doing. I saw that God has established mothers and fathers for a purpose, and that children need to be loved and accepted by their parents, and allowed to be themselves. Of course, there would still be times when I would get tired, when I wouldn't have a moment for myself, and when I would probably throw up my hands and cry for help. But never again would I take my children for granted.

Nathan's near tragedy also gave me a fresh start when our third child, Tricia, was born four years later. I devoted myself to her rather than to meetings and other things that in the past I thought I had to do. With my priorities in order, I didn't feel guilty if I had to skip some activity or function. My baby needed me and that was more important. After she was grown I could do what I wanted. The difference between how I enjoyed her first few years and how discontented I had been with Nathan was amazing.

I don't think it was a coincidence that Nathan's accident occurred on Mother's Day. God used it to teach me the most important lesson a mother can learn: Our children are special in His eyes, and we need to see them that way too. Nothing is more important. □

Cindy Miller is a New Wine reader who lives in Mobile, Alabama.



With a good teacher and the right Helper, anyone can become

An Empowered Evangelist

BY JACKIE CONN



Our church is sponsoring an evangelism conference this month, and frankly, I'm terrified. I'm not afraid of conferences, but I am afraid of evangelism.

My stomach does somersaults every time I think about sharing the gospel with someone. Who will I talk to? What will I say? Can God really use *me*?

If I'm honest with myself, I have to conclude that I'm afraid because I'm not adequately prepared to tell people about the joy of a relationship with the Lord. But I suppose I'm not that much different than many other Christians. The Lord knows this, and He has raised up people to teach me and others about evangelism. One such person is Francis An-



"When we find someone who receives the Lord and is responsive, we can begin the process of following up and becoming a friend. That's making disciples."

fuso of South Lake Tahoe, California.

Over the past ten years, God has taught Francis some important principles about evangelism, and he in turn is sharing them with others through the Glad Tidings School of Evangelism. I spoke with him recently, and got some helpful insights.

Sensitivity to the Spirit

I already knew from Acts 1:8 that Jesus had commissioned all Christians to be His witnesses. But I found out that between fifty and seventy percent of us say that fear, and not knowing what to say, are our greatest obstacles to witnessing. I was relieved to know that Francis also battles fear himself. "I once thought I was a deformed evangelist because I had so many fears, inse-

curities, and struggles," he said.

Francis reminded me—surely the most fearful of all—that Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt. 4:19). In other words, we really don't have anything to fear because Jesus is going to help us if we'll just follow Him.

One way He has already helped us is by sending His Spirit to prod us. Francis said, "The Holy Spirit is like a telephone. Every Christian has that telephone in his heart. If we become sensitive to hear the ring, then we're able to listen to what God is saying for us to do."

"I was driving down the street a few weeks ago and saw a man. The Holy Spirit quickened to me that this man was going through many changes and that I should stop and talk with him. So I

pulled over and shared that I was a Christian and that God had impressed on me that he was going through a lot of difficulties. He said, 'Yes, as a matter of fact I'm really feeling sorry for myself today.' So I witnessed to him, invited him to church, and gave him a tract. It was a brief exchange but it was significant."

Many Christians don't evangelize because they mistakenly feel that evangelism means sharing the gospel with every person they meet—and that intimidates them. But, Francis explained, we're actually responsible to approach only those people to whom the Holy Spirit directs us. Our responsibility is to support what the Father is doing, just as Jesus did what He saw the Father do.

"For years I was under the

legalistic yoke that I had to approach everyone," Francis recalled. "If I went to the store, I had to approach one or two people. And many times I was just throwing myself at them. I wasn't really led by the Holy Spirit, and I ended up feeling guilty and condemned.

"Now I don't have to do anything except what the Holy Spirit says to do. He is like the third-base coach in baseball. He's giving us signs as to what to do, whether to bunt, hit, or take the pitch. We're to be watching Him and doing whatever He says to do."

It's important, however, to always be aware of others around us, he added, so that the Holy Spirit can point out those to whom we should speak. "I want to be ready, not walking around in a stupor, but ready and available to God."

Tools of the Trade

Once the Spirit has directed us to someone, tracts can be very helpful for witnessing, although they are not always appropriate. "I have found that if I have the option, I will use a booklet to share with someone, because that way he is not only hearing but also seeing," Francis explained. Tracts and booklets are tools, but they should not in any way usurp or override the direction of the Holy Spirit, he added.

Other times our testimony is the best way to share Jesus with a person, he said. Revelation 12:11 says, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Some people like to argue and debate Scripture, but no one can argue with what happened to us personally.

However we share with a person, we have to make sure we listen as well as talk. "Our tracts contain questions that we ask people in order to carry on a dia-

"For years I thought I had to witness to everyone. Now I don't have to do anything except what the Holy Spirit says to do."

log instead of a monologue. Years ago I had memorized a lot of scriptures and I'd go out and fire away. One guy said, 'You sound like a tape recorder.' But I just turned the cassette over and gave him side 2! If we can relate to people, listen to them, befriend them, love them, then we'll have opportunities to share based on whatever their needs might be."

When we are able to share with someone, it's important that we communicate his need for Jesus, Francis said, but too often we give away the solution without explaining the problem. We merely tell him, "You need Jesus," but he can't see the need.

"If I walked into a doctor's office and he approached me with a knife and said, 'I need to cut you,' I'd say, 'Forget it.' But if he sat down and spent an hour with me and showed me an X ray of a tumor in my body, then I might say to go ahead and operate. But many Christians tell people they need Jesus without

explaining why."

We should first explain who God is—His nature, character, and holiness—and who we are—sinful, fallen people. Then we can present the solution, Francis said, because they'll have the perspective to understand it.

Ready for Revival

Overcoming our fear of witnessing and learning how to do it are particularly important for the time we are in. Many Church leaders have sensed that a revival is coming—one greater than any recorded in history—and we must be ready for it.

Francis said that revival produces evangelism. The great awakenings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for example, were sparked by the Spirit's moving in a unique way on individuals like John Wesley and George Whitefield. These movements resulted in evangelism. "If churches are not prepared, then when revival does come, they will not have people who can minister, counsel, nurture, and care for the harvest," Francis said.

One aspect of preparation, he said, is having the right objective in witnessing. That is, we must be willing to love whomever we share with, not as a statistic but as a real person, because our ultimate goal is to get him established in a church. "Some of my closest friends are people I've led to the Lord," he explained. "They don't have to be my close friends, but they are. If you can get close to someone who receives the Lord and then follow up with him, he can become a friend for life." On the other hand, he said, if we can't remember him realistically, we shouldn't boast of him evangelistically.

Cleaning the Fish

The bottom line of evangelism is follow-up, although it's often the area of most neglect, Francis

On the Right Tract

If the Holy Spirit clearly told you to share the gospel with someone, would you know how? That's an important question and many of us would probably answer no.

Christian Equipppers International, the parent ministry of Glad Tidings School of Evangelism, believes that we must "have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel." In addition to holding training seminars, it publishes more than seventy-five booklets and tracts that cover all kinds of witnessing encounters—cults, questions about the authority of the Bible, the deity of Christ, and many others.

The booklets are designed to be read aloud so that people both see and hear the gospel message. They are colorful, creative, and to the point. Francis Anuso, coauthor of the material, says, "We live in a society where people like things to be brief and amazing. You have commercials, video games, fast-food chains—even some people's marriages are brief and amazing.

"So our attractive and contemporary tracts and booklets keep people's attention and



are a help to Christians."

In training Christians to witness, Francis offers helpful advice for using a tract:

- Familiarize yourself with the booklet and the scriptures used in it.
- Ask permission to read the booklet. Never force yourself on anyone.
- Look for a quiet place to talk.
- Read the booklet out loud at a moderate speed.
- Use the person's name often.
- Smile and show the love of Christ.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Maintain eye contact, and ask questions to retain the person's attention.
- If necessary, stop briefly to further explain a point, describe a personal experience, share an appropriate analogy, or turn to a pertinent scripture.
- Stay on the subject.

A tract can be a valuable tool for effectively presenting the gospel. It also may give the experienced evangelist information and specific scriptures he needs to address unique witnessing situations.

For more information about the ministry of Christian Equipppers, please contact Christian Equipppers International, P.O. Box 16100, South Lake Tahoe, California 95706, (916) 542-1509. □



Francis Anuso founded Glad Tidings School of Evangelism in 1980. He lives in South Lake Tahoe, California, with his wife, Suzie, and their children.

said. "It's like the old proverb: 'Evangelistic types like to catch fish, but they don't like to clean them.' That's almost like having illegitimate children, or having children that are not taken care of."

Follow-up is important, because it gets us involved in a person's life. "When we find someone who receives the Lord and is responsive, we can begin the process of following up on him and becoming his friend, grafting him into our life. That's making disciples. Jesus didn't just say, 'Preach the gospel.' He said in Matthew chapter 28, 'Make disciples, teaching them whatsoever I command you.' And that involves a lot more than just the gospel."

From the initial leading of the Holy Spirit to the all-important aspect of follow-up, getting a larger perspective on evangelism helped me. Now I know I have nothing to fear because the Lord will help me. I just need to be available to Him and sensitive to His Spirit. It'll take some work, but I'm encouraged. Thanks, Francis, I needed that. □



Jackie Conn is an editorial assistant for New Wine. A graduate of Louisiana State University, she was a reporter for several daily newspapers, including The Times Picayune/The States-Item, New Orleans, and The Clarion-Ledger, Jackson, Mississippi. Jackie and her husband, Henry, live in Mobile, Alabama.

A Hug From Sister Wilma

"I managed to escape that moment
I dreaded by remaining seated with my Bible open
in an apparent attitude of deep prayer."

BY THOMAS GOETZ

I'll never forget my first Pentecostal hug. It holds a special place in my memory Hall of Fame, right next to my first visit to the dentist, my broken arm in the second grade, and the time our milk cow stood on my bare foot and my mother couldn't hear my screaming because she had the vacuum cleaner running. The hug took place in 1970 on a Thursday night in San Francisco at 8:15 p.m.

My wife, Jeanne, and I were living in San Francisco, where I was stationed with the U.S. Army. For several weeks we had been attending the Night of Miracle rally at the Teen Challenge Center. Located in the center's old San Francisco row house in the mission district, the rally lived up to its name. Week after week we saw the San Francisco street people transformed by the power of God. It was our first exposure to the charismatic dimension of the Christian faith, and some things made me uncomfortable—especially the hugging.

Most of the meetings followed the same format. There was singing and worship, then a time when everyone greeted each other with a hug. So far I had managed to escape by heading for the rest room just prior to the greet-



Photos by Tony Reed

Once, in a moment of total religious abandonment, I conceded that I might be willing to hug someone.



ing time or by remaining seated with my Bible spread open on my lap in an apparent attitude of deep prayer. I had discovered they would not disturb a man who looked like he was receiving a revelation. Besides, I *was* praying—that they would leave me alone.

But after several weeks of witnessing their undeniable joy and love, my resistance and my Baptist backbone began to weaken. I had even gone so far as to stand up during the greeting time, shake a few hands, and mumble "Yes" when someone exclaimed, "Praise the Lord, Brother!" Once, in a moment of total religious abandonment, I even conceded to the Lord that I might be ready to hug someone myself—anyone, that is, except Sister Wilma.

A Dedicated Hugger

Sister Wilma was a roundish black grandmother of seventy-five years who stood four feet ten inches tall and weighed about two hundred pounds. She attended all the meetings at the center and had become the honorary grandmother to all who lived there.

She was a wonderful old lady whose love for Jesus was matched only by her dedication to hugging His people. Furthermore, she had a special hugging technique that had put the fear of God into more than one visitor. She would grab the "hugee" around the waist and with the strength of Goliath would hug and bounce her victim around the room. Many times I stood and observed, like a man watching a school of piranhas devour its prey, as she bounced another one closer to God.

In addition to her physical assault, there was also a constant verbal barrage of phrases, such as "hallelujah," "praise the Lord," "I love you, Brother," and assorted other religious "threats," guar-

anteed to strike fear in the heart of any Baptist bystander like myself. Nevertheless, I felt ready to try a few hugs—with anyone except her—and I began looking forward to the next meeting.

Tonight, I'm going to raise my hands and even hug someone—maybe two or three people, I resolved that appointed night.

I assumed the Lord knew I meant anyone but Sister Wilma. Besides, God wouldn't do that to me. I had told Him anyone except her, hadn't I? And hadn't I said, "I *might* be ready"? If you can't trust God, who can you trust? (I have since learned that statements containing such words as "except" and "might be ready" should not be uttered to the Lord under any circumstances.)

It's Greeting Time

The meeting began as usual. We sang and prayed for a few minutes and then it was greeting time.

"Okay, everyone, turn to someone and give him a hug in Jesus' name!" prompted the young man in charge of the meeting.

I had been gradually psyching myself up during the first part of the meeting, getting ready for this moment, and had concocted a plan. It was simple. I would begin by hugging my wife and then move on to another timid newcomer. If all went well, next week I would try a fanatic. Now it was time and I was ready.

Confidently I stood and turned to embrace Jeanne—but she had disappeared. Quickly, I searched the crowd, but she was nowhere in sight. Suddenly realizing I had been set up, I cautiously turned toward the middle of the room. There before my eyes unfolded a miracle comparable to the parting of the Red Sea.

One by one the people were moving away from each other, leaving a long open space run-

ning the length of the room. At the other end, ready for action, stood God's hugging machine—Sister Wilma. Desperately, I looked for a way of escape but saw none. I began to pray.

"I'll tithe thirty percent," I pleaded with God as she started toward me.

"I'll become a missionary—Baptist missionary," I quickly added, lest He get the wrong idea. She was moving with the determination of a woman with a cause.

"I'll start getting up at four in the morning to pray—even Saturdays." She was a jungle cat stalking its prey.

"I'll give up pizza and get a haircut." She was a heat-seeking missile and I was the target.

"I'll call my third-grade teacher and tell her the truth about those frogs in her desk," I offered as a final negotiation. But it was too late.

The Bouncing Baptist

"Ain't Jesus good?" she screamed as she grabbed me around the middle and began to bounce me up and down.

My first inclination was to run but she was hanging on so tight I couldn't. So we kept bouncing.

"Praise the Lord!" she yelled. Bounce. Bounce. Bounce.

By this time I was fighting back wild urges to do something desperate. *Maybe I could place both hands on the back of her head, pull her face into my sweater, and suffocate her,* I thought. But there were too many witnesses, so we kept bouncing.

To further complicate matters, I found that she was so short I couldn't return her hug. All I could do was rest both elbows on top of her shoulders and hope for the rapture.

"Hallelujah. I love Jesus better every day, don't you?" she asked as we continued bouncing around the room.

"I just love seeing all these youngsters getting saved. Are you saved?"

"Well-I-was-when-we-started," I stammered between jolts, "but-I-think-you-bounced-it-out-of-me."

Undaunted by my agony, she kicked into overdrive.

"Ga-lor-eeey!" she squealed. "Can't you just feel the joy of the Holy Ghost?"

Is that what that sharp pain is? I thought to myself, trying to maintain what dignity I had left. (I was secretly afraid I'd ruptured my spleen.)

"Praise the Lord, young man," she said as we made the final turn and headed for home. "I love you, Brother!"

By this time we had gone full circle around the room and all the Baptist had been bounced out of me. It was lying in little puddles all over the floor. Finally, I thought, *Oh, what's the use?* And in a moment of desperate surrender destined to change my life forever, I said, "I love you too, Sister Wilma. I love you too!"

And I meant it. □



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Often the Lord asks us to trust Him

Just Because He Says So!

BY DON BASHAM

When I was growing up, I sometimes complained about having to obey my parents. My favorite protest began, "I don't see why I have to . . ."

Dad's response to my complaint was always quick and consistent: "Because I say so—that's why!" And through the years I learned my dad's word could be trusted. Whether he was demanding obedience or making a promise, he meant what he said.

Recently I preached a sermon in my home church here in Mobile, Alabama, on learning to trust God, and the message seemed to encourage some people. Of course, I was preaching to myself as well as to the congregation. I've been a Christian for more than fifty years, a minister for over thirty, and I still find my greatest challenge to be how to trust God. I suspect the same thing is true of you.

Our major battle in spiritual warfare rages around that struggle. God encourages us to believe Him; the devil entices us to believe him; and we must choose whom we will believe. As my old friend Rufus Moseley was fond of saying, "God is always voting for us; the devil is always voting against us; and the way we vote carries the election."

The truth is, man's problems on earth began when he started to doubt God's word. Adam and Eve had it made until the serpent tricked Eve into doubting God's word. "Did God really say . . ."

Trusting God. How can some-

thing that sounds so simple be so hard?

One of my favorite Bible stories is the one where Peter walks on the water (see Matthew chapter 14). There he is, striding over the waves, heading straight for Jesus, when suddenly doubts assail and he begins to sink. When he cries for help, Jesus grabs him by the hand and hauls him back up on top of the waves, saying, "You of little faith, *why did you doubt?*" (v. 31 NIV, *italics mine*).

We can forgive Peter for not pausing at that particular moment to give Jesus a carefully thought-out reply. But back in the boat he might have pondered the question, "Why did I doubt?" He may have even remembered another day when his faith was put to the test: the day he was first called to be a disciple. That was the day Jesus came and sat in his boat to preach to the people. Then afterward, He said to Peter, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch" (Lk. 5:4 NIV).

Peter had rejoiced when Jesus had healed his mother-in-law, and I'm sure he had rejoiced to see Jesus cast out demons and heal others who were sick (see Luke 4:38-41). But now with his own faith being put to the test by Jesus' command to let down the nets, it wasn't so easy to believe. After all, Jesus knew about God and man, but Peter knew about fish and fishing. And right then, fishing wasn't all that good! He told Jesus so. "Master, we've

worked hard all night and haven't caught anything" (Lk. 5:5 NIV).

The Bible doesn't say, but I believe Peter's first response was followed by a long pause. I think Jesus just sat there in the boat, looking at Peter and waiting—along with James and John, and the crowd on the shore. All of them waited to see what the big fisherman would do.

Well, Peter said and did exactly the right thing; he acted on the word of God.

"But because you say so, I will let down the nets" (v. 5 NIV).

You know what happened. The nets encircled so many fish that two boats couldn't hold the catch. Peter fell on his knees and asked Jesus to forgive him for doubting.

Peter wasn't always so faithful or so fortunate. All his life he struggled to believe, just as we do. But the Lord was patient with Peter, just as He is with us. Even when we're tired of hauling in empty nets, He wants us to know His word can still be trusted. *Because He says so*, let's push out into deeper waters this time and try again. He still knows where the fish are. At least, that's the way I see it. □



Don Basham is chief editorial consultant for New Wine.

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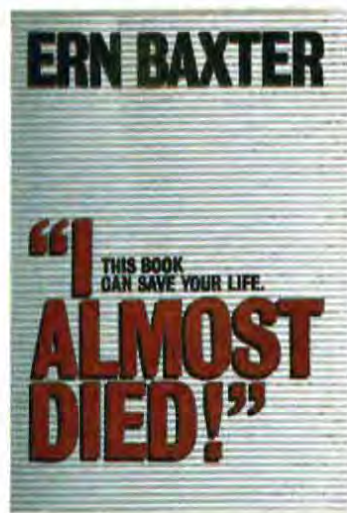
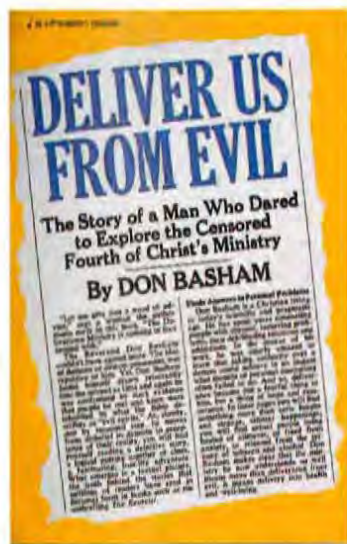
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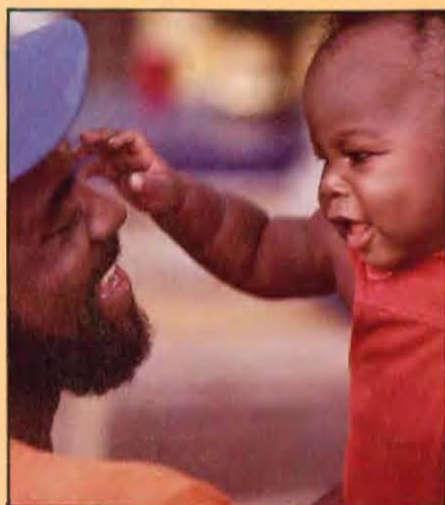
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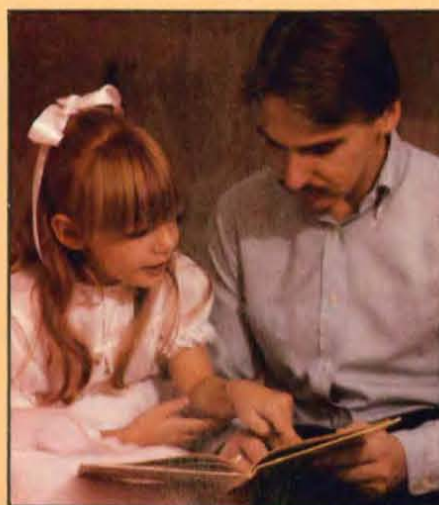
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