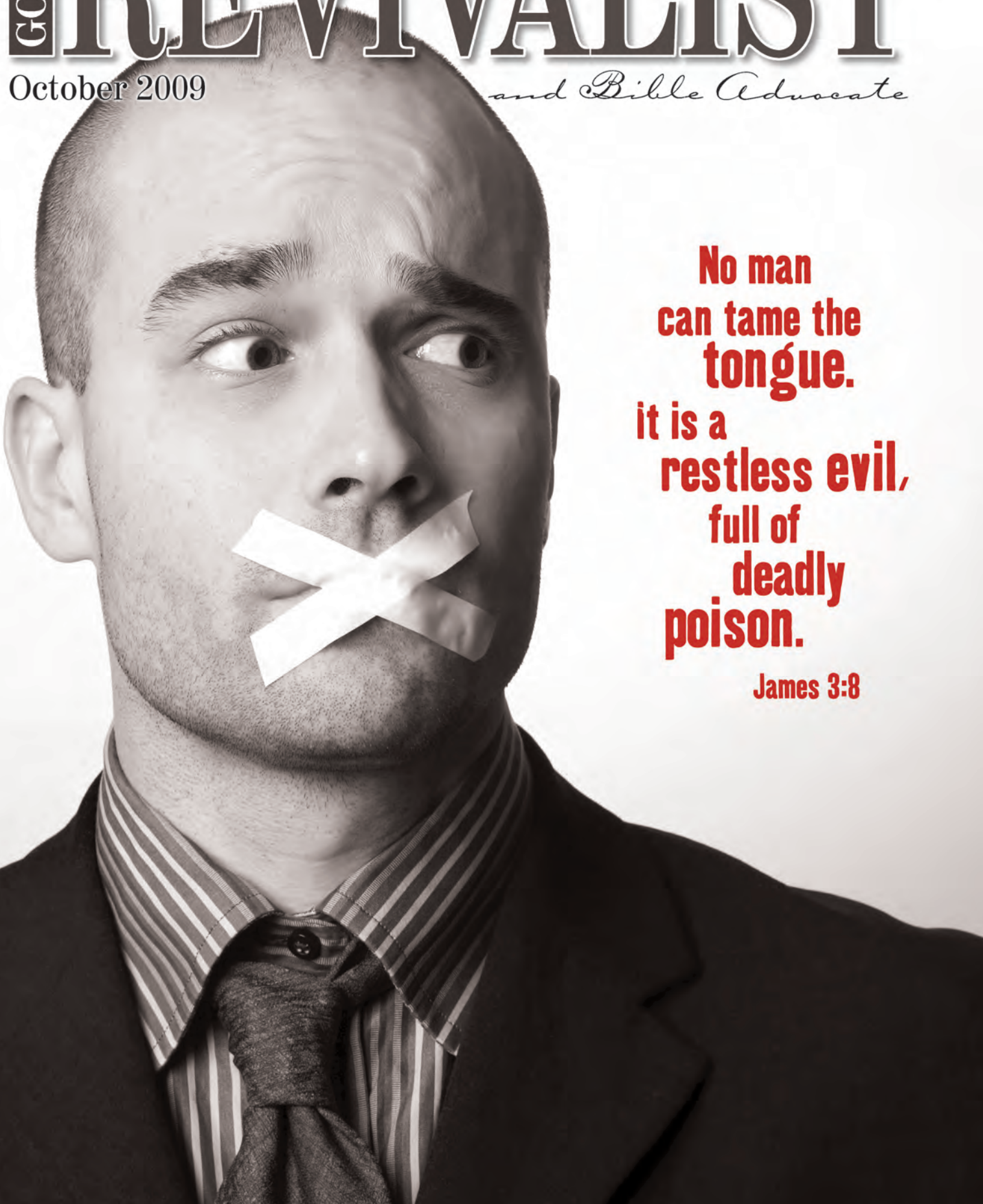


GOD'S REVIVALIST

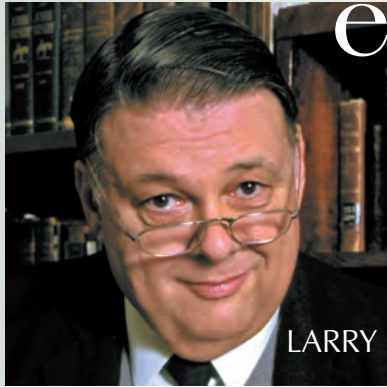
October 2009

and Bible Advocate



**No man
can tame the
tongue.
it is a
restless evil,
full of
deadly
poison.**

James 3:8



the editor's view

LARRY D. SMITH

GRACE SPRINKLERS

“**S**prinkling grace on a fallen world!” This is how my friend Richard Miles describes his own calling in Christ, a calling which he admirably fulfills with both students and colleagues on the Mount of Blessing. Of course, God calls us all to do the same—to sprinkle grace upon men and women who everywhere so desperately need it. For in doing this we follow Jesus, whose entire purpose was to bring us grace, though as its Divine Source, He did not merely sprinkle it upon us but actually poured it out in gushing torrents. *“And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:16).*

Grace, as we have heard so often, is God’s “unmerited favor”; and it is expressed continually through His saving purpose by the Spirit, who enables us to receive His offered gifts, advancing us “from glory to glory” in love, holiness, and maturity. It is grace that frees us from sin’s shameful bondage. It is grace that empowers us to renounce Satan and follow Jesus. It is grace that leads us safely through earthly trial to heavenly reward.

Snarling enemies will pursue our every step, but grace ensures that we will never face their attacks alone. For God is not merely a distant well-wisher, smiling pleasantly but passively as we raise the Spirit’s sword “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12). For the “battle is the Lord’s,” as David once warned Goliath; and He still will “give...into our hands” all those lurking giants who lay wait to assault us.

Long ago, He sent His Son on our behalf to engage all these evil forces, and “having disarmed” them, “he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (Col. 2:15, NEB). Still He leaps furiously into all our bloody conflicts, encouraging, protecting, and (p22)➡

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God's Revivalist and Bible Advocate (ISSN 0745-0788) is published nine times a year for **\$12.00 per year (\$28.00, Canada; \$45.00, other countries)** by the Revivalist Press of God's Bible School, College and Missionary Training Home, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202. Periodical postage paid at Cincinnati, Ohio, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER: send address changes to God's Revivalist and Bible Advocate, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.**

God's Revivalist and Bible Advocate, the official organ of God's Bible School, is a magazine founded by Martin Wells Knapp in July of 1888. We seek to proclaim the good news of salvation; to stir a revival spirit among Christians; to stimulate Christian growth and responsible Christian living; to present the happenings and interests of God's Bible School.

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God's Bible School and College seeks to glorify God and to serve His Church by providing higher education centered in Holy Scripture and shaped by Wesleyan conviction, thus preparing faithful servants to proclaim Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness throughout the world.

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the president's page



“NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I’VE SEEN”

by Michael R. Avery, President

Based on I Peter 1:6–7

The day of trouble eventually ends up on everybody’s calendar. It doesn’t discriminate in whom it visits or how it comes. It may be a phone call, a letter in the mail, a pink slip, or a diagnosis. It may involve your work, your family, or your money. But it will surely involve your mind and your spirit with nagging questions like, “Why me, why this, and why now?” The very fact that troubles come upon good people has puzzled saints from Job to John the Baptist. There are no easy, all-encompassing answers; but the Apostle Peter offers some amazing insight into trials in the opening verses of his first epistle.

Trials meet needs in our lives

Peter reminds us that life today is a school in which God is training us for usefulness in eternity. Trials discipline us, prepare us for spiritual growth, build faith and

teach us important lessons about the ways of God. The phrase “*if need be*” indicates that God knows there are times when we need to go through certain trials to experience spiritual growth that would not come otherwise.

Trials are tailor-made

Peter speaks of “manifold” trials. The word *manifold* means variegated or various. God matches the trial with our immediate need and present strength. Just as He knows what we are able to bear, He also knows exactly what irritant we need in order to experience genuine growth and transformation. At times He uses a hammer—a swift blow or series of blows that bring a quick and needed submission. At other times He uses a file—a more lengthy process of scraping and eating away at the rough edges of our life until He has shaped us into His will. And when necessary, He will use the furnace. The furnace attacks with ruthless fury until every ounce of impurity is consumed and nothing is left but pure gold.

Trials are not meant to be easy

Peter said that trials produce “heaviness.” It’s a word that means to experience grief or pain. It is the same word that was used to describe the sorrow that Jesus experienced in Gethsemane. It is also the same word used to (p19)➡

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Letters should be addressed to the Editorial Office, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202, or emailed to revivalist@gbs.edu. Letters reprinted here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor of God's Revivalist nor those of the administration of God's Bible School. Names and locations of writers will be withheld at their specific request or at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to edit and condense.

KNOWLEDGE AND VITAL PIETY

I have enjoyed articles by the editor in the *Revivalist*. The one on "Knowledge and Vital Piety" (Summer '09) [and how] they belong together, and the one where you referred to Bishop Marston ["Barren Banks or Stagnant Swamps?" March '09] were especially good; also the one concerning the resurrection of believers ["Final Vindication," April '09], a delightful hope. To return to your article on "Knowledge and Piety," I remember my time at GBS. The unity [of piety and knowledge] was so true at the school. Both were enjoyed and appreciated by students and the faculty.

REV. JAMES L. MASON
Sugar creek, Ohio

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

I was especially impressed with Dr. Randall McElwain's article, "What We Sing—Does It Matter?" (Winter 2009).

ROSELLA McCONKEY
Beaver, Pennsylvania

I don't want to miss any [issues]. I do appreciate all the wonderful Gospel messages and news articles.

CHRISTINE FISHER
Roanoke, Virginia

We are blessed with this publication.

REV. H. BLAINE WEST
Apollo, Pennsylvania

I appreciate the emphasis on holiness in your articles. Keep up the good work until Jesus comes.

ROSETTA GROVER
Greenwood, Delaware



the world to win

Each month we publish brief "field reports" from missionaries around the world. Missionaries are invited to send us their newsletters and other information about their activities. GBS graduates are especially urged to respond, but we also wish to include others who uphold our vision and our commitment.

COLOMBIA. "The first annual conference of the Christian Nation Church of Colombia has been held.... Please pray for strength, for resources, and for wisdom; and please pray for holiness to spread all over Colombia...." —*Phillip Dickinson (Global Holiness Mission), Dickinson Update newsletter*

EGYPT. "Recently five men were ordained into the ministry of the Faith Church of Egypt.... These men are now active in full-time ministry...[and] in urgent need of monthly support. Please continue to pray for the expansion of God's kingdom in Egypt." —*J. Steven Manley, (EFM) Missionary Herald*

ESTONIA. "Stephen Blowers (Wesley Chapel) praises the Lord for the *New Testament and Psalms* that was published in Estonia a few weeks ago.... God will honor His word." On a different note, they are concerned about a pending government proposal that "would greatly enhance" a government agency "to disrupt families. Please pray that this will not happen." —*Ropeholders*

WORLD. "We have a tremendous challenge and opportunity to spread the Gospel. I was reminded of this recently when I was looking at some statistics. China will soon become the number-one English-speaking country in the world. The *New York Times* contains more information in one week than a person would encounter in a lifetime in the 18th-century. In about seven minutes, 67 babies were born in the U.S., 274 in China, and 395 in India. The population of our world is growing, and more information is available than ever before. Christian radio can help to spread the message quickly to a large population." —*Seth Stevenson, The Signal* ■



“Have You
HEARD?
Well...”

Thoughts on Gossip, by Glenn D. Black

“Have you heard?”
“No.”
“Well...this is the way I heard it. Brother Doe actually.... And, because of the whole mess he.... And a lot of us have lost all confidence in him. If they don't drop him from the church membership list...”

Sound familiar? If it's not about a trusted individual, then it's about a local church, a church denomination, or some missionary endeavor.

What should be our reaction when we are used as a garbage can for degrading information about others? When we are tempted to repeat harmful information about others, how should we react? After all, if it's the truth, why not share it with others? The truth is the truth! Yes, but a word of warning is in order: judgment for man is scheduled after death (Heb. 9:27) and not as soon as you or I hear about the latest deed or misdeed about someone. Indeed, truth is truth, but how you handle truth is extremely important. So let us use wisdom and mature judgment before we crank our tongues into gear.

Bridle the Tongue

The Psalmist resolved, “I will keep my mouth with a bridle.” (39:1) The Apostle James advises, “...let every man be swift to hear (listen), slow to speak (repeat), slow to wrath (judgment)” (1:19).

Dr. Mendall Taylor suggests that we need to bridle our tongues in five areas:

- What we say to another person
- What we say about another person
- What we say to ourselves, under our breath
- What we say in mixed company (male and female)
- What we say when the company is unmixed

Inability to control our tongue causes enormous personal grief, creates strife and division among good people, and destroys unity and love in families.

When Should We Talk About a Person?

The late Dr. R.G. Flexon told me there are only four good reasons ever to talk about a person. They are: 1) To praise him, 2) To help him, 3) To help the person to whom we are talking, 4) To save the work of God from disgrace.

These four guidelines would discipline a lot of us. Actually, there are very few reasons ever to talk about a person, relatives, a church—except to praise them! Most people pass on degrading information to others for ulterior motives, not from a heart of love and compassion.

When You Hear Gossip

What do you do when you hear gossip? Too many repeat it. If more of us would pray for the person involved and show compassion and understanding, then less untrue information would be circulated. Consider this—

*If some bit of gossip come, File the thing away.
Scandalously spicy crumb, File the thing away.*

*If suspicion comes to you
That your neighbor isn't true,
Let me tell you what to do, File the thing away.*

*Do this for a little while,
Then go out and burn the file.* —John Kendrick Bangs

Gossip is a vicious practice that brings delight to Satan, havoc to churches, and harm to good people. I have come to the conclusion that great minds dwell on ideas and facts, while little minds talk about people and the latest piece of gossip. ■

Reprinted from the Kentucky Wesleyan Messenger. Rev. Black, former editor of God's Revivalist, is district superintendent of the Kentucky District of the Wesleyan Church.

Carnal Suspicion and Spiritual Discernment

Oswald Chambers came to the “Mount of Blessings” late in 1906 and joined the GBS faculty in January. He wrote various articles in the *God’s Revivalist*, one of which we reprint below in condensed form. It originally appeared in the issue of January 31, 1907, shortly after Chambers’ arrival.

Carnal Suspicion

Carnality is the genius of discovering defects and sins in others.

To accuse the brethren is from the devil, and we know the source of many people who do this work today. We need to remember that carnality is the most desirable thing in the world and the most admired by every natural man and woman. In Hebrews 12, a very noteworthy marginal rendering of “*The sin that doth so easily beset us,*” is given in the Revised Version, “*The sin that is admired of so many.*” That very well could be carnality, not sins. Again, in Psalm 39:11 the margin of the Authorized Version puts it, “*When thou with rebuke dost correct man from iniquity, thou makest that which is to be desired in him to melt away.*”

Carnality cannot be discerned by the natural man; he can only discern sins (John 15:24, 16:9). Carnality always ignores God’s claim to me and emphasizes the idea that “I have the truth of God and whoever does not agree with me shall be damned.”

Carnality takes its right from itself and consequently every suspicion arising therefrom is devilish in God’s sight. Our Lord said to the Pharisaic edition of carnality in His day that they could not escape the damnation of Hell (Matt. 21:31–32). Carnality in blunt Americanism is *Bossism*. Any self-conscious, self-appointed leader in holiness is carnality done up in good form, and is of the devil.

Carnality and its suspicions ever arise from its own nature, and it can only see in other people what it is most liable to itself if placed under similar conditions. Every judgment carnality brings against another is a revelation of carnality—“set a thief to watch a thief.” Moral lepers are the first to detect moral leprosy in others, and most often it is not in the other at all, but merely a revelation of carnality. Read how strong God’s word is on “busybodies” (I Peter 4:15, I Timothy 5:13).

“*Study to shut up and mind your own business*” (I Thess. 4:11). This is a full and free translation that should be engraved on carnality’s tombstone.

Spiritual Discernment

Spiritual discernment intuitively observes any person, teaching, or doctrine that does not glorify God. Sanctification discerns whatsoever things are true, venerable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. Sanctification discerns any virtue and anything praiseworthy, and delights in these. Sanctification and spiritual discernment are easily entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, and never seem what they are not (James 3:17).

The discerning of spirits is one of the gifts of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:10). It is not the vague impressions of a powerful nervous system and a lively imagination. It works by the Word of God. The Holy Spirit glorified Jesus, and likewise the sanctified saint intuitively discerns any person, teaching, or doctrine that does not glorify Him (I John 4:2, 20). Also, the sanctified person knows from within immediately, because the Holy Spirit brings to remembrance all that Jesus said and leads into all truth, so that the heart of every sheep of the Lord tells them of a stranger’s voice and the hireling’s voice they cannot and will not hear (John 10:3,5,8,14). The sanctified saint ever heeds the witness of his heart, as it is verified by the Word of God. And every other emotion, voice, or leading that does not glorify Jesus, or bring to remembrance what He said and lead into truth about that, he takes unhesitatingly to be alien and from the devil. He is not driven to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

Sanctification is self-effacing devotion to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and is full of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Spiritual discernment is keenly sensitive for the glory of God, and counts not a man’s life dear unto himself. It cannot deceive; it walks *in* the light and *with* the light, who is Jesus Christ. ■

Oswald Chambers

Evil Speaking

by the Rev. John Wesley, Founder of Methodism

"Speak evil of no man," says the great Apostle, and this is as plain a command as "Thou shalt not kill." But who, even among Christians, is careful about this command? Yes, how few who even understand it! But what is evil speaking?

It is not the same as lying or slandering. All that a person says may be as true as the Bible and yet his telling it may be evil speaking. *For this sin is nothing more nor less than speaking evil of an absent person—relating something evil which was really done or said by one that is not present when it is related.* Suppose I have seen a man drunk or heard him curse or swear, and I tell this to someone else when he is absent. This is evil speaking or backbiting, even though it is delivered in a soft and quiet manner, perhaps with expressions of goodwill for the absent person and of hope that things may not be so bad as they seem.

How extremely common is this sin! What conversation do you ever hear of any considerable length in which evil speaking is not one ingredient? This is true even among persons who in general have the fear of God before their eyes and do really desire to have a conscience void of offense toward God and man. The very commonness of this sin makes it difficult to avoid.

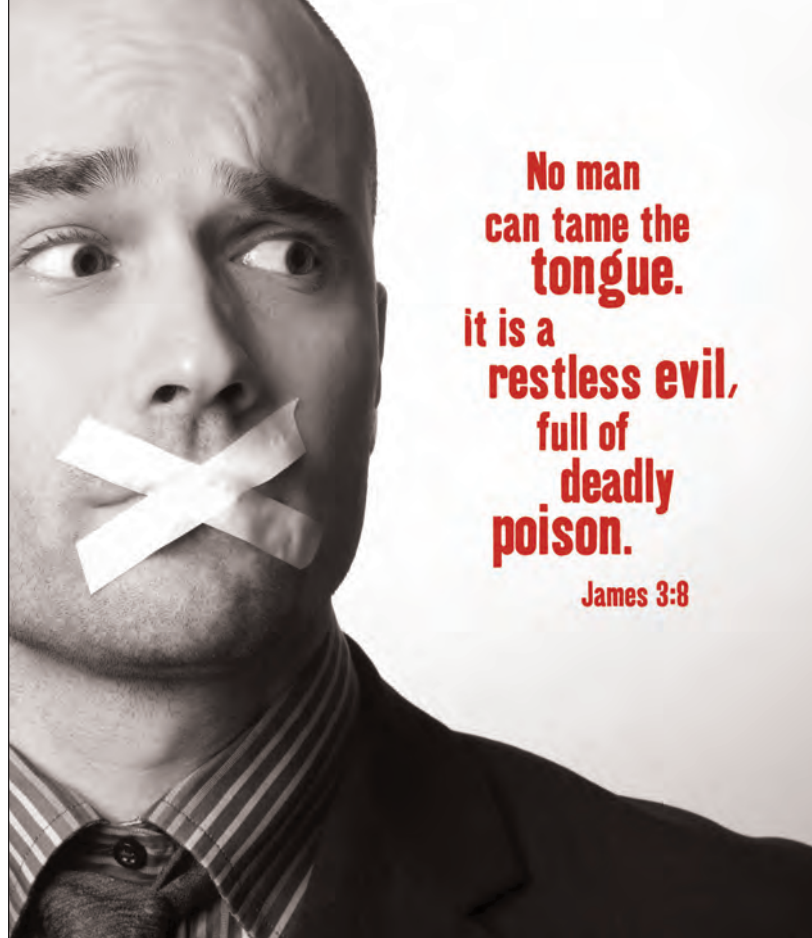
Moreover, it gratifies our pride to relate the faults of others when we think ourselves not to be guilty of those faults. Anger, resentment, and all unkind tempers are indulged by speaking against those with whom we are displeased. In many cases people indulge their own foolish and hurtful desires by reciting the sins of their neighbors.

But is there no way to avoid this snare? Unquestionably there is, for in St. Matthew 18:15–17 our blessed Lord has marked out a sure way to do so. Consider His cure for evil-speaking.

1. "If thy brother shall sin against thee, go and tell him of his fault between thee and him."

If you see with your own eyes a brother or a sister, a fellow-Christian, commit undeniable sin, or if you hear it with your ears so

What conversation do you ever hear of any considerable length in which evil speaking is not one ingredient?



No man can tame the tongue. it is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

James 3:8

that you cannot deny the fact, your duty is clear. Take the first opportunity of going to that person and "tell him of his fault between thee and him alone." Be sure that you do this in a right spirit and in a right way, prayerfully, meekly, and in a spirit of tender love. Remember that if love is not conquered, it conquers all things. Though you may use great plainness of speech, let there be no reproach, no railing accusation, no bitterness, nor sourness of expression—nothing but that of love.

Do not try to excuse yourself for not doing this, saying, "Why, I had to tell someone else since I was so burdened that I could not refrain." You were burdened? It was no wonder you should be, for you were under the guilt of sin by disobeying a plain command of God. You should have gone immediately to your brother and told him "of his fault between you and him alone." God reproves you for a sin of omission for not doing this, and then you comfort yourself by a sin of commission by telling your brother's fault to another person! The only exception I know of is when you must accuse the guilty in order to preserve the innocent. Then, and only then, is it right—and even our duty—to speak negatively of an absent person in order to prevent that person from doing evil to others and to himself.

2. But what if your offending brother or sister "will not hear" your reproof? (p19)➡

OCTOBER 2009

REFLECTIONS after a decade in the pastorate

TEN THINGS I'VE LEARNED DURING TEN YEARS IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

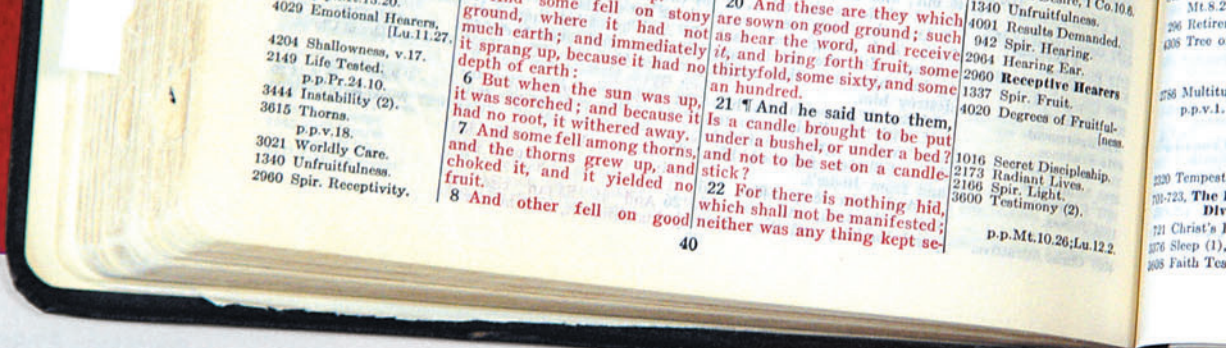
by Mark D. Stetler

- 1. Reading the Word of God is absolutely essential.** You will notice I did not start with "preaching" the Word of God. I have found as I live in the Word, reading it through annually, that the preaching side of things takes care of itself. *If I fail to read the Word, I fail to preach the Word!*
- 2. Praying makes the greatest difference in ministry.** By this I don't mean "preaching-prayer" but simple prayer! This is prayer that allows God to *examen* (Latin for "leave no stone unturned," according to Richard Foster) my conscience and that acknowledges God in my consciousness. If God is the surveyor of the heart, then my life is at least pleasing to Him. If, through prayer, I can consciously see what God is doing in my life, then that awareness helps me to know that God is at work in the world as well.
- 3. Preaching the Word of God is my calling.** The proclamation of the Gospel in my own life has made all the difference. Now I see others coming to Christ because of the powerful message of the Gospel. It is still life-changing!
- 4. Ministry brings out of me what is in me.** When lemons are squeezed, lemonade is made. When the heat is on in ministry, you soon find out what really makes you "tick." What comes out of me when I experience resistance to my ministry? Will I choose to run? Will I choose to allow temporary circumstances become life-long concerns? Yes, ministry brings out what is in me.
- 5. People can be amazingly supportive.** I have had the privilege in the last ten years to knock on almost every door in our community of Fort Scott. I can mention this accomplishment because I have had a team of six people who have helped me in the process of trying to meet lost people where they are.
- 6. People can be amazingly fickle.** I have had people try to garner their pastor's friendship by doing things, buying things, etc. and then mysteriously disappear out of their pastor's life like a big puff of steam from a tall-stacks boat on the Ohio River. Now I know that some of my biggest fans can become my worst nightmares. People can be amazingly fickle!
- 7. Formal education pays but is not required.** I thank God for both undergraduate and graduate degrees. They have helped me in so many different ways. However, there are multiple experiences that occur in this life for which formal education is no match. You can never gain enough education to preempt the work of the enemy in this battle between good and evil. Some things only come by prayer and fasting, and from an often-attended school of hard knocks.

- 8. A good, strong leadership team can help keep a pastor steady.** I have been blessed to have a board that has been overwhelmingly supportive of the work of God in our local community. They have been great bosses to work for. They have been "yes" people at times and "let's think about this" people at other times. Both responses have been greatly appreciated. Both responses have guided ministry in a way that has been beneficial to the Kingdom.
- 9. Ministry has been a family thing.** My wife is a very talented person who is content to be the queen of the parsonage. She takes her role very seriously as a "stay-at-home mom." She has also been a wonderful blessing musically to our church. My children, as I believe, understand and even enjoy their daddy's being in ministry—at least as much as kids can do so. When my kids sing a special song at church, my heart is overwhelmed with joy that they, too, are enjoying being in ministry.
- 10. Ministry is oiled by the work of the Holy Spirit.** I have seen the Spirit move in such a way that separated couples have returned to the commitment of marriage. I have seen people delivered from the shackles of sin. I have seen wayward children come back home. I have seen big, long-haired guys cry like babies when the Spirit of God was in the sanctuary. I have seen bitter hearts become tender. I have seen the light come on in the mind of a believer to the truth of entire sanctification. I have seen family members who were at odds with one another hug, kiss, make-up, and live happily ever after. I have seen the Spirit of God do some awesome things that absolutely no one else could take credit for. Goody, goody! Hallelujah! 🎉



Mark Stetler ('98 ThB) is an alumnus of God's Bible School where he also served as dean of men (1995-99). He is pastor of the Church of God (Holiness), Ft. Scott, Kansas, where he lives with his wife Kathryn ('97 BA) and their children.



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NEWS

from the Hilltop

CONVOCATION SUNDAY BEGINS 2009-10 ACADEMIC YEAR

Opening GBS's 110th academic year were campus "Convocation Services," held Sunday morning and evening, August 23, in the Adcock Memorial Chapel. Students both old and new, together with faculty, staff, and visitors, offered praises to God for His mercies and invoked His blessings on the school term lying before them. President Avery spoke at the morning service, calling for faithful continuity with the school's

rich heritage of Wesleyan holiness witness. Campus pastor Mark Cravens gave the evening message.

In the morning service, as is customary, students who had been awarded scholarships (pictured below) were recognized and congratulated

by appropriate school officials. Among these were the following newly-established scholarships:

The Isaac T. Monce Memorial Scholarship. Established through the generosity of David and Rebecca Smith and their friends, its purpose is to provide an annual scholarship to college ministerial students who



Scholarship Recipients

REVIVALIST FAMILY

On these pages, we feature items about GBS alumni, vital statistics, significant events scheduled throughout the "Revivalist family," and brief news notes from across the holiness movement. An item for inclusion in the "Revivalist Family" must be submitted within four months of the event which it reports and should be addressed to the Editorial Office, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202; or revivalist@gbs.edu.

BIRTHS



To **Daniel (GBS '98 AA Bible/Theology) and Kathryn Huskins**, Findlay, Ohio, a son **Scott Alton Huskins**, born July 21, 2009. Until a recent layoff,

Daniel worked for Unarco Material Handling; Kathryn is an LPN at Judson Palmer Home. The Huskins attend the Findlay Bible Methodist Church.

MARRIAGES

Morgan Litchfield to Rev. Andrew Street, Sunday, June 7, 2009, Tocsin, Indiana. Officiating were both their fathers, Rev. A. David Street and Rev. Don Litchfield, and also participating were Morgan's uncle,



Rev. Robert Morey, and her grandfather, Rev. Reimar A.C. Shutz. Morgan is currently a GBS ADEP student, and Andrew is a 2005 GBS graduate (BA in Min Ed) who served the Revivalist Press as production manager while a student. The wedding was at Trinity Bible Methodist Church, where Andrew serves as pastor. He writes that it "was held as a dynamic service of corporate worship symbolizing the love that Christ has for His Church."

DEATHS

Gerald J. Harvey, 65, died July 22, 2009, at Auburn, Nebraska. He spent his

demonstrate a definite financial need. *Recipient: Asun Delong.*

The Rev. Francis A. Taylor Memorial Scholarship Fund was founded through the generosity of Larry and Carol Glass. Rev. Taylor was an alumnus of God's Bible School and College who pastored for over 50 years. He also served as a teacher, college president, and a missionary in Guyana and Haiti. Awardees shall demonstrate a loving, humble, Christlike spirit; participate in off-campus ministries; show commitment to winning a lost world, and also demonstrate a definite financial need. *Recipients: Courtney Prior, Brent Roberts, Heather Moore, Kara Moore.*

The Ward Family Legacy Memorial Scholarship was established through the generosity of Mr. Merrill Ward and family. Its purpose is to provide an annual scholarship to college students who demonstrate a definite financial need. *Recipient: Joseph Hough.*

The Vernon Scholarship is established through the generosity of the Greensboro Bible Methodist Church, the Vernon family, and friends of the family. The scholarship was begun as a means to honor Rev. Steve Vernon for thirty years of pastoral ministry and to recognize the long tradition of the Vernon family at GBS. Twenty-six members of the Vernon family have attended GBS. *Recipient: Glenn Keaton.*



Rev. Chris Cravens

REV. CHRIS CRAVENS SPEAKS AT OPENING REVIVAL SERVICES

Rev. Chris Cravens, Bible Methodist pastor from Findlay, Ohio, was evangelist at GBS's opening revival services, beginning Monday evening, August 24 and continuing through Friday morning,

August 28. In both morning and evening services our speaker boldly, scripturally, and compassionately presented God's call to adopt His priorities. In several services Pastor Cravens focused on Jonah, his rejection of God's call to Ninevah, his subsequent acceptance of that call, and then his negative response ➡

teen years in Papua New Guinea with his missionary parents, and while there he became a Christian. He attended Adirondack Bible College and was later ordained a deacon in the Evangelical Wesleyan Church. On August 7, 1965, he was married to Donna Register. They served in PNG as full-time missionaries 1967-1970 and 1983-1986. Later Jerry served as pastor to congregations in Ansley and Fremont, Nebraska, and Council Bluffs, Iowa. He also helped in the building program at Fletcher Christian Academy, Axtell, Nebraska. He was a fine carpenter and also a truck driver for many years.

He is survived by his wife Donna; his children Kevin, Cynthia, Jeffrey, and Michael; his sister Linda; his brother Brian; and nine grandchildren. Funeral services were held first in Auburn, Nebraska, and then in Axtell, Nebraska, Rev. Larry D. Smith and Rev. Corey Miller, officiating. Burial followed in the Salem Methodist cemetery, Axtell.

Randy W. Loper, 35, of Middletown, Ohio, died July 12, 2009, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, as a result of

a boating accident. A faithful Christian and a member of the Bible Methodist Church, Franklin, Ohio, he had been a truck driver for five years.

Randy is survived by his wife of almost 15 years, Heather Loper; his children, Kaitlyn, 12; Megan, 10; Konnor, 4; and Kade, 1; his parents, George and Diana Loper; his maternal grandparents, Rev. Howard and Jean Ayars; his paternal grandmother, Thelma Loper; two brothers, Robert and Rodney; three sisters, Suzanne, Joanne, and Amy; and other relatives. Funeral services were conducted at the Franklin Bible Methodist Church, Rev. Jack Hooker, officiating, assisted by the Rev. Rodney Loper, the Rev. Robert Loper, the Rev. Howard Ayars, and the Rev. Clair Sams.

Beulah Maxine Lewis Slothower, 83, died July 12, 2009. She graduated from GBS's Christian Workers Course in 1948, and served as a minister in the Church of the Nazarene from 1947-1961, working alongside her friend Fran Carpenter. Later she worked at Bethany Nazarene College in the registrar's ➡

➡ to the revival that came to that ancient city. He ended with an appeal to faithfulness in ministry, basing his remarks on John the Baptist.

Students responded gladly to the pulpit messages both at the public altar and in prayer services on the campus. Rev. Cravens has spoken repeatedly at GBS, where his ministry is deeply appreciated.

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RISES FIVE PERCENT

Enrollment statistics for the college department of God's Bible School and College for Fall 2009 are as follows: 293 (253.4 FTE) which is a 5.4% increase from fall 2008 and a 11.0% increase from the more recent spring 2009 enrollment. Pray for these new students that God will make this time of training a real blessing. Readers



of the *God's Revivalist* can also help our recruitment staff as our focus turns to Spring 2010 and Fall 2010 by sending names of prospective students to our Student Recruiter, Tim Makcen (tmakcen@gbs.edu, (513) 721-7944 ext. 1163). Thanks for your help! —*Dr. Ken Farmer, Vice President for Academic Affairs* ■

ATTENTION! REVIVALIST FAMILY and friends of God's Bible School:

In order to serve our friends and supporters better, we will be calling all our constituents over the next few months to update and correct our address files. If we miss you, please call us at 1-800-486-4637, ext. 1211, and ask for Mandy Buckland.

REVIVALIST FAMILY continued

➡ office for nearly 30 years. She is survived by her husband, B.J.; her son, Dean; three grandchildren; ten great-grandchildren; and other relatives. Funeral services were held at Oklahoma City First Church of the Nazarene with interment in Bethany Cemetery.

CORRESPONDENCE

"I just could not wait to write about the Men's Retreat at Hebron New Hampshire, where 88 men gathered for spiritual renewal. Basically two United Methodist churches formed this retreat, which is now in its third year. What a thrill it was for me to attend and speak! From the first to the last service I saw men from all walks of life bowing to the will of God. I counted seven new converts and thirteen others recom-

mitting their lives to Christ who were baptized in a cold, beautiful lake.

"New ones included three teens who told me they were determined to serve the Lord and one man who told me he had been in deep sin but was determined now to serve the Lord. When he was baptized, he came out of the water with a shout with his hands raised in surrender to Christ. The highlight was on Sunday morning. As we were singing a chorus, 'I Surrender All,' I watched men get on their faces before the Lord, tears running down their cheeks, as they surrendered to the King of Kings!

"God still is reaching the lost and renewing the hearts of those who, in the the words of the retreat theme, are 'Strong Enough to Surrender.' In a measure this was a small Pentecost." —*John Case, email*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Shirley Ann Hanks (GBS 1952–57) and her husband Roy L. Seagraves (Kentucky Mountain Bible College graduate '75) are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on October 8, 2009. Their home now is in Grayson, Kentucky.

JUNIOR CHURCH DIRECTOR POSITION AVAILABLE JANUARY 2010. The position of Junior Church Director will be open at the Pilgrim Holiness Church, Schenectady, New York. A husband-wife team is preferred. Responsibilities include calling on 40-plus junior church families, conducting Sunday morning junior-church services, and working with the pastors. Salary, housing, and insurance provided. For information call Rev. Dickerson at (518) 355-2295 or e-mail the2ladies@juno.com. ■



— Called Unto Holiness —

In this space we use writers both past and present to discuss various aspects of Christian holiness.

GOD'S REMEDY FOR SIN

by the late Rev. V.O. Agan

For God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. (1 Thess. 4:7)

Holiness is the standard of God's Word for everybody. It seems to me that when holiness is properly understood, everybody in the universe would want it. Regeneration and entire sanctification are the two crises by which He deals with the sin problem in us. He takes us out of sin in regeneration, and in entire sanctification He takes the nature of sin out of us. This brings a positive condition in which the heart is filled with the perfect love of God, and thus we are enabled to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourself. Holiness is to the soul what health is to the body.

The first step to the experience of entire sanctification is to see and acknowledge the desirability of it. After I was converted I felt an uprising in my heart. I said, "There is something wrong with my experience, and I haven't backslidden." I prayed and became a seeker of second-blessing holiness before I knew it was theologically correct. I said, "Oh, God, if you will sanctify me, you can depend on me. I make my choice to go this way. If my mother, father, brother, or sister never go, I'll still go on." I settled things so well that I never had to settle them again. I have made my choice forever, and this is the way of holiness. There is a choice in getting saved. There is a choice in getting entirely sanctified. The desire alone is not sufficient.

Another step to getting this experience is to make a full commitment of yourself to the Lord, not to some project, church, or program. When you come to repentance, you come with your hands up, so to speak, declaring, "I'm sorry I've sinned. I've rebelled." And you repent of all your sins, and God for Jesus' sake kisses them away. When you come to be fully sanctified, you

come with your arms full. "Here I am, Lord. I love you. I want to go all the way with you. Here's my time, friends, everything I have. I take my hands off. I give my all to God without reservation!"

Amanda Smith sought this experience. She recognized her need and came to the altar. She was told she would have to put everything she had on the altar and get on it herself. She got up from the altar and left. The altar workers wondered if they had said the wrong thing. But after awhile she reappeared and placed two washtubs and the washboard on the altar, then climbed over into the tub, sat down, looked up and said, "Here we are, Lord, tubs and all." What did God do? The only thing in the universe that He could have done! And when you get your all on the altar, God the Holy Spirit will entirely sanctify you, too.

The final step is faith. Feeling will come, but it must be preceded by faith. You put your all on the altar and then believe that God the Holy Spirit comes and sanctifies you. If you have met every condition, there is nothing more that you can do. There must be that positive faith that God Almighty will do exactly what He says He will do. A God who can raise Jesus Christ from the dead is able to sanctify you wholly. Put your faith in Him without wavering. If the devil suggests doubt, refuse to listen. You can get through so clear that if you come back next year, you will still be clear. ■

The Rev. V.O. Agan (1924–2006) was a GBS alumnus, church leader, and well-known preacher of scriptural holiness. He was also one of the founders of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches and of the Conservative Holiness Movement.



Dear Phil

FORGIVENESS FOR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE SIN?

When a person receives forgiveness from the Lord for sin, does it include past, present and future sin? If not, how is our life in Christ everlasting? —Jonathan

Dear Jonathan,

Let's begin with a quick review of forgiveness. There are at least three components to forgiveness. First, according to Lev. 5, when God forgives us He removes our guilt. Guilt is liability to punishment, not a bad feeling about what we did wrong. Forgiveness removes our liability to punishment. Second, the record of our sin is removed (Jer. 31:34; Psa. 32:2; 103:12). God does not "forget" anything. Forgiveness means God does not take into account the sins that have been confessed and forgiven when dealing with us. Third, we are reconciled to God. God restores us to relationship with Himself (Eph. 2:12–14; Rom. 5:10).

The relationship between Christ's atonement and forgiveness is this: (1) Christ's atoning sacrifice was an infinitely sufficient *provision on behalf of* the sins of all humanity (1 Tim. 4:10; 1 John 2:2). God's wrath was *provisionally* propitiated for all men's sins. God's wrath was *actually* propitiated at Calvary only for sins that had been committed and confessed (Rom. 3:25–26). (2) God applies Christ's atonement only to those who evidence their faith in Christ

by confessing and forsaking their sins (1 Tim. 4:10). (3) Only sins that have actually been committed up to the point of repentance and faith are forgiven. For sins to be forgiven which have been committed after salvation, there must be repentance. There is no forgiveness apart from repentance (Heb. 6:4–6). (4) As we walk in the light with God—doing right and avoiding all known sin—the blood of Jesus Christ His Son is cleansing us from all past sin as well as present sins we may commit unknowingly (1 John 1:7). It does not cleanse us from sin we have not committed (future sin).

The claim that God forgives our sins, past, present, and future may come from several different angles. Some argue that Peter's statement "he bore our sins in his body on the tree" means Jesus actually paid the penalty for all our sins and, therefore, God's wrath was satisfied and our sins were all forgiven at Calvary. This is incorrect and necessarily leads either to universalism, Calvinism, or double indemnity (both Christ and the sinner are punished for the same sin).

A second argument in support of forgiveness of sins past, present and future relates to your second

question, "How is this everlasting life?" Some claim that since Christ is the source of "eternal salvation" for all those who obey Him (Heb. 5:9), once a person is saved, they cannot be lost and this must imply that all their sins have been forgiven. This argument involves a misunderstanding of the biblical words "eternal" or "everlasting."

When we use the words "eternal" or "everlasting," we usually mean "without end" or "never ending." However, John 17:3 tells us that eternal life is knowing God. Eternal life is not unending existence. Those who go to Hell have unending existence. Eternal life is a relationship with God through Christ that has no inherent ending point. Adam had eternal life in the John 17:3 sense. He was in relationship with God. But by choosing to willfully rebel, he terminated his relationship with God. So too, we can choose to terminate our eternal life, that is, our relationship with God. Eternal salvation is a salvation that has no inherent ending point for those that obey Him. If we cease to obey Him, we can terminate our saving relationship with Him.

A third argument is based on Heb. 10:14, "by one offering he perfected forever those who are being sanctified." Some claim that since Christ's self-sacrifice perfected us, all our sins must be forgiven. Heb. 10:14 actually teaches the same thing as Rom. 8:29–30—all the benefits of Christ's atonement are provisionally ours the moment we're saved, i.e., we are positionally perfected. However, we receive those benefits in a God-determined sequence. Forgiveness applies only to sins confessed and renounced.

Thank God for His forgiveness!
Philip ■

Dr. A. Philip Brown II is a member of the faculty in the Division of Ministerial Education at God's Bible School and College.

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mediaminute

Resources for the Christian Family

Compiled by Robbie and Rachel England, this feature is provided as a service to our readers. The opinions presented here are those of the individuals making the recommendations and do not necessarily reflect an endorsement by God's Bible School or the Revivalist Press.

Time Management Resource

Getting Things Done by David Allen

This book is for those who have too many things to do in too little amount of time! Are you constantly afraid of forgetting something? This book is for you. —Robert Booth

Parenting Resource

**Wild Things—
The Art of Nurturing Boys**
by Stephen James and
David Thomas

This book is an excellent “hand-book” on raising boys. It covers all aspects of the physical and emotional development of boys and the authors break down each stage of a boy’s journey to manhood. It encourages parents (and others) to nurture and love their boys into the honorable men God intended for them to become. —Susanna Shuey

To submit your recommendations for the Media Minute, please send titles, authors, and a sentence or two about each book to robnrach@verizon.net.

“Grace understood is holiness desired.” —Stan Mitchell

MORE FUNERALS GOING SECULAR

“A growing number of people want to celebrate a loved one’s life at a funeral or memorial service without clergy—sometimes even without God,” according to *USA Today* writer Cathy Lynn Grossman. “And that’s giving rise to the new specialty of pastoral-style secular celebrants who deliver unique, personalized eulogies without the rituals of organized religion.” She quotes John Reed, Sr., president of the National Funeral Directors Association, to the effect that half of today’s Americans claim they do not belong to any church and “don’t see value in a religious funeral. But ‘they still want ceremony and celebration at the end of life.’” Grossman also cites authorities who remark that even in secular funeral celebrations it is still customary to offer prayer and quote scripture passages, often Psalm 23.

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV) TO BE UPDATED

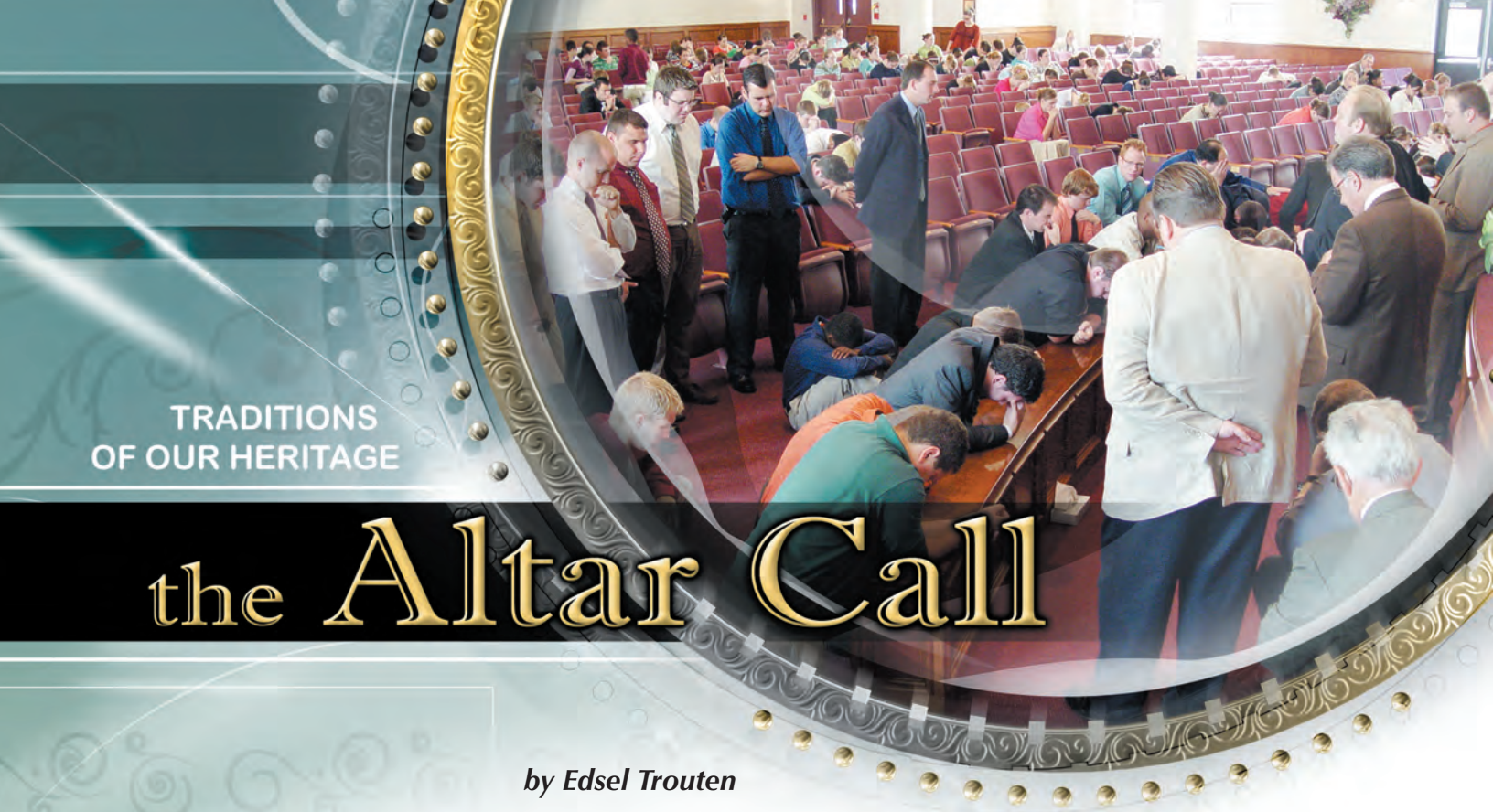
“The popular New International Version (NIV) of the Bible will be revised for the first time in 28 years, global ministry Biblica announced on Tuesday,” according to Audrey Barrick, a reporter writing for the *Christian Post* appearing online September 1. Recognized as the most popular modern biblical translation among evangelicals, the NIV was first published in 1978 and was revised six years later. According to Keith Danby, head of Biblica, the

NIV is in need of updating. “If we want a Bible that English speakers around the world can understand,” he is reported as saying, “we have to listen to, and respect, the vocabulary they are using.”

Controversy has raged around earlier attempts to make the NIV more “gender neutral” by eliminating male pronouns and other references supposedly unsubstantiated in the original text. One revision, called the Today’s New International Version (TNIV) was heavily criticized by conservatives because of such gender-neutral language. The latest NIV revision is scheduled for publication in the year 2011, which will coincide with the 400th anniversary of the King James Version, regarded as the greatest classic English Bible translation.

LUTHERAN LEADER DISTRESSED BY ELCA’S AFFIRMATION OF HOMOSEXUAL CONDUCT

The Rev. Gerald Kieschnick, president of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, has publicly addressed the national assembly of a sister denomination, the larger Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, expressing his concern at the ELCA’s August vote “to grant non-celibate homosexual ministers the privilege of serving as rostered leaders” and its affirmation “of same-sex unions as pleasing to God.” Conservative pastors and lay members of ELCA congregations have also disowned their denomination’s action. ■



TRADITIONS
OF OUR HERITAGE

the Altar Call

by Edsel Trouten

One of the most familiar parts of an evangelistic service in the Holiness Movement tradition was the altar call. All of us have at the behest of the evangelist “stood with our heads bowed and our eyes closed, no one looking around” while the congregation sang the familiar words of the gospel song, “Just As I Am.”

The altar call, like many things in our church tradition, is being set aside for “the newer methods of dealing with seekers.” In many holiness churches the altar call is a remnant of the past. Pastor after pastor refuse to use this time-honored tradition to invite sinners to make a public commitment of their faith in Christ. Recently a younger minister told his congregation that he was not going to use the altar call any longer because it was relatively new.

When exactly was the altar call introduced? Quite often either Charles Finney or D.L. Moody is credited with the introduction of the altar call and the use of the “mourner’s bench” or “anxious seat.” Kregels Publications introduced a book in 2004 authored by R. Alan Streett, *The Effective Invitation*. Streett made the observation that would cancel the Finney and Moody assertion. He is quoted as saying, “Wesley’s use of the ‘mourner’s bench’ pre-dates Finney by fifty years.” The Wesleys preferred calling it the “anxious seat” rather than “mourner’s bench.” Streett credits Charles Wesley with its first traceable use when he supposedly said, “Oh that blessed anxious seat.”

The *Dictionary of American Regional English* lists “mourner’s bench,” also “mourners’ pew,” and “row, seat.” The dictionary defines the words by saying, “a bench, seat, or rail set aside for penitents at the front of

a church or revival meeting...; anxious seat, 1834.” If one accepts *DARE*’s date of 1834 as the first use in print in America, it would seem reasonable to assume that it had earlier oral use, probably as early as the beginning of the 19th century. It probably has been part of the religious vocabulary in America for at least 200 years.

“Relatively new?” one could ask, “Is 200 years relatively new?” It would seem to the author that any common practice that pre-dates the beginning of all of the American holiness churches should be considered as having a “time-tested credibility.”

Granted, the altar call has changed in the 175-year history of its use in America. The author remembers the heightened emotional atmosphere that surrounded the altar call of his youth. But, in spite of the changes, he must argue that not only does the altar call have “time tested credibility,” it also has “Spirit-affirming credibility.” By this it is meant that God has placed His seal of approval on its common use.

Most readers will affirm that their first response to an evangelistic gospel appeal was at a public altar call. The author can testify that he has seen thousands, maybe even tens of thousands of men and women, boys and girls, respond to the invitation of the gospel at an altar call.

What about the practice of giving an altar call? Is it time to set aside its use for some of the newer methods? It is true there is no reference to, or record of, an altar call being used in scripture. But it is also true in our Wesleyan hermeneutics that when a practice in question does not directly violate scriptural injunctions, (p19)►

testimony. Nor must the present tenses in 7:14–24 necessarily indicate Paul’s present experience at the time he is writing Romans as the mature Christian apostle and missionary. The “historical” or “dramatic” present tense is a well-known use of the present tense in Greek when the writer wished to make a past event or experience more vivid to his readers.² Although the historical present tense occurs usually in narrative literature and not in the epistles, through the use of autobiographical information Paul has introduced personal narrative into his epistle.

3. What about the parallel between this passage and the struggle many Christians find in their life? *Answer:* There is no dispute as to whether believers, before they are entirely sanctified (1 Thes. 5:23, 24; Rom. 6:11, 13, 19) struggle with indwelling sin. However, the struggle is quite different. The “wretched man” of Romans 7:14–25 cannot stop sinning. He is a slave of sin. This is not the case of a true Christian. A Christian may have periodic struggles and failures, but his life is not one of slavery to the law of sin and death. The Christian is united with Christ and is set free from the power of indwelling sin (Rom. 6:1–10).

CONCLUSION

The wretched man of Romans 7:14–25 is not a Christian. A man cannot not simultaneously be free from sin and be a slave of sin. A man cannot be God’s slave and sin’s slave, for as Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters” (Mat. 6:24; Luke 16:13). The language of Romans 7:14–25 stands in direct antithesis to the assertions of Romans 6 and 8 concerning the believer’s emancipation from slavery to sin. Therefore, 7:14–25 is a continuation of the description of an unregenerate person’s relation to sin and to the law that was begun in Romans 7:1–13.

1. Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1998), p.1132.

2. E. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961), 167, para. 321.

—sermon by DR. ALLAN P. BROWN



“COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE
IN PREACHING”

WHO IS THE “WRETCHED MAN” OF ROMANS 7:14–25?

by Dr. Allan P. Brown, Chair
GBS Division of Ministerial Education

Scripture Reading: Romans 7:7–25

There are two basic answers to the question, “Who is the ‘wretched man’ of Romans 7:14–25?” The first answer says that Paul intended Romans 7:14–25 as a description of himself in his on-going struggle against the power of indwelling sin as a mature Christian apostle and missionary (e.g. John Calvin, Charles Hodge, John Murray, C.E.B. Cranfield, John MacArthur).

On the other hand, the second answer says that Romans 7:14–25 is Paul’s description of himself in his pre-conversion days when he tried to keep God’s Law but was defeated by the power of indwelling sin (e.g. J. Wesley, Adam Clarke, H.A.W. Meyer, F. Godet, W. Sanday, A.C. Headlam, J. Denney, A. Hoekema, M. Lloyd-Jones). It is interesting that the two views do not align themselves with any particular system of theology. Calvinists and Arminians are found in both camps.

I am convinced that the wretched man of Romans 7:14–25 cannot be a description of a saved individual and must be the testimony of Paul in his pre-conversion days for the following reasons.

The preceding passage in Romans 7:7–13 is clearly autobiographical. In those verses Paul is relating his experience as an unsaved Pharisee and tells us how he finally came to see his need for Christ. Before the Holy Spirit opened his eyes to his true spiritual condition, his estimate of himself is given in Philippians 3:6, where he says, “touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” As a strict Pharisee he thought he was right with God because he faithfully kept God’s law (Phil. 3:9). After the Holy Spirit opened his eyes to the covetousness of his heart (Romans 7:7), he felt that he died spiritually (Rom. 7:9). This is obviously a comparative statement:

he once thought he was spiritually alive, but when he became aware that he was guilty of covetousness, which is a violation of the law, he realized that he was actually spiritually dead.

Paul continues giving his own history in Romans 7:14–25. He says in Romans 7:11 that his sinful human nature, seizing the opportunity provided by the commandment's unrelenting demand of obedience, “killed” him. He then asks the question, “Did that which is good [the law] then become death to me?” (7:13). In other words, was the law the “killing thing”? He answers, “Absolutely not,” and declares again that “it was his sinful human nature, through the ‘good’ commandment that forbade coveting, that both produced death in him and showed, in its willingness to use the holy law for such a purpose, its ‘utter sinfulness’ (7:13). It is both this last point—the ‘utter sinfulness’ of his sinful nature—and the impotency of the law in the struggle against sin—that Paul develops in 7:14–25, arguing that even when as the convicted Pharisee he wanted to do the good and obey God, his sinful nature would not let him, and the law did not help him; to the contrary, the sinful nature ‘waged war against the law of his mind [his desire to do good] and made him a prisoner of the law of sin at work within his members.’ His conclusion: his unregenerate state had been a ‘wretched’ existence; so wretched, in fact, that he cried for deliverance from it! Not knowing where to turn (for he still did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah or that Jesus could help him), however, he continued in his impotency to struggle against sin’s potency until his Damascus Road conversion finally brought him deliverance from his slavery to sin (8:1–4)!”¹

Notice the contrasts between the saved man of Romans 6 and 8 and the wretched man of Romans 7.

<p>The Saved Man of Romans 6 and 8</p> <p>He is no longer the slave of sin (6:6). He has died to sin and cannot live any longer in it (6:2). His union with Christ in His death to sin means that he is freed from sin (6:7).</p>	<p>The Wretched Man of Romans 7</p> <p>He is carnal, sold under sin and therefore is still being controlled by sin (7:14).</p>
<p>He walks in newness of life (6:4). He does not walk in the flesh, but in the Spirit and the Spirit dwells in him (8:9)</p>	<p>He does what he hates and knows is displeasing God (7:15, 19).</p>

He has been set free from sin, is the servant of God, and produces the fruit of holiness (6:22).

He is not able to do what he knows is right (7:15, 19).

Sin no longer has dominion over him (6:14). He fulfills the righteous requirements of the law as he walks in the Spirit (8:4).

There is a desire to do right, but no accompanying power to do right (7:16, 18).

He has been set free from the law of sin and death that used to control him (8:2). He is no longer to let sin reign in his body and is not to obey it (6:12).

The law of sin is controlling him (7:20) and resisting the law of his mind (7:23).

He is no longer the slave of sin (6:20). He used to be the slave of sin, but he has been delivered from the slavery of sin (6:17).

He is a captive of the law of sin (7:23).

He experiences no condemnation because He lives in Christ (8:1).

He is a wretched man who is miserably unhappy because of his sin (7:24).

He has been set free from sin and is now the servant of righteousness (6:18).

He is a divided person: His mind serves God, but his flesh serves the law of sin (7:25).

Here are answers to some questions that frequently arise:

1. What about Paul’s statements that he delighted in the law of God after the inward man (Romans 7:22)? Can an unregenerate man delight in the law of God? Answer: Any Pharisee would have said that he delighted in the law of God in his heart. Through the enabling of prevent grace, Paul admired the Law and desired to obey it. But as an awakened sinner, Paul found that he did wrong despite the grace-enabled desire of his mind to do right.

2. What about the present tenses in Romans 7:14–25? Answer: The shift of verb tense from past tenses in Romans 7:7–13 to present tenses in Romans 7:14–25 in no way affects the autobiographical character of his

➡(p7) **What if he be angry with you instead of being convinced? What are we to do then? Our Lord tells us clearly that we are to “take with thee one or two more.”** Love will dictate the manner in which you should then proceed according to the nature of the case. But those who go with you should be persons of understanding, wise, unbiased, impartial, and free of prejudice. They should affectionately and mildly tell the person you go to see that they have no anger and prejudice toward him and that it is only from a spirit of goodwill that they concern themselves with his affairs.

3. But “if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church.” This does not mean that you should tell the faults of others to the whole congregation, but rather go to the governing authorities of the church, for they watch over the souls of others “as they that must give account.” When you have done this, you have done all which the Word of God or the law of love requires of you. You have delivered your own soul.

But if this is the rule by which Christians walk, where do the Christians live! How very few there are who follow this command of our Lord Jesus! From now on, are you determined to do so? If you see your brother do evil, will you “tell him of his fault between thee and him alone?” And afterwards, will you “take one or two” witnesses, and only then in the last resort “tell it to the church?” If so, you should also learn to “hear evil of no man.” For if there were no hearers, there would be no speakers of evil. If anyone should start to speak evil of someone in your presence, you should stop him immediately. Refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, even if he uses a soft and mild manner and professes good will for the absent person he is stabbing in the back.

O that all of you who bear the reproach of Christ, who are called Methodists, should set an example! Put away evil speaking, talebearing, whispering! What a blessed effect this would bring to our hearts! How would our “peace flow as a river,” when we thus “follow peace with all men!” How would the love of God abound in our own souls when we confirm our love to our brothers and sisters! Even men and women in the world would soon cry of us, “See how these Christians love one another!” ■

This selection, abridged and adapted by the editor, is taken from Mr. Wesley’s sermon, “The Cure of Evil Speaking.”

➡(p3) describe what one feels at the loss of a loved one. No one should ever minimize the sorrow that trials can bring or speak of it in a cavalier manner. The grief and sorrow are actually a part of the process. A trip into the valley of sorrow has a way of cleansing the soul and reorienting life.

Trials are timed and tempered by God

Peter tells us that trials last only “for a season.” Warren Wiersbe said, “When we walk through the furnace of trouble, God keeps his eye on the clock and his hand on the thermostat.” Troubles last just long enough to remove the dross and purify the gold.

Saints and scholars still cannot adequately explain the nagging problem of trials to anyone’s satisfaction. And in all probability some of what I have said will not help the one undergoing present trials. But the testimony is unanimous from those who reflect on their years of walking with God that everything that truly enhanced and enlightened their spiritual existence came through pain and affliction and not through pleasure or times of happiness. Though we can’t explain them, we would be immeasurably poorer without them. ■

THE ALTAR CALL continued

➡(p16) then one may appeal to tradition for its validity. Is it true that altar calls have been supported by godly church leaders in our past? The answer to this question is a resounding “yes.”

Even though Billy Graham has not been part of our holiness tradition, his use of the public altar call in his great city-wide crusades is one of the greatest testimonies to its effectiveness. The author was thrilled as he witnessed Dr. Graham give an altar call in his greater Cincinnati Crusade back in the late 1970’s. Literally hundreds and hundreds of men, women, and young people responded to Graham’s appeal at the conclusion of his message.

The author has been part of congregations where the practice of giving altar calls was on the decline. It was argued that “baby boomers,” “the younger set,” did not like to publicly come forward to pray. It is true that men and women can make a commitment to Christ without responding to a public altar, but it is also true that nothing this author knows of can take the place of the act of walking down to the front of the church to openly confess one’s sins.

Charles Stowe’s book *Charles Finney and the Spirit of American Evangelism* affirms that Finney made the argument that although altar calls were not part of the early church practice, they did have something of its kind to answer its very purpose. The gospel was preached, and then all those who were willing to be on the side of Christ were called out to be baptized. The baptismal confession was always public. ■



ALUMNI news

compiled by Rev. Jack Hooker, President, National Alumni Association of GBS

A FEW BIKES AND AN IDEA

Craig Brown and Kevin Moser have been friends since their days of traveling together in the Hope Quartet, a GBS high school group in the mid-1980's. For years they had tossed around the idea of a bicycle trip across Ohio. That dream became a reality in August after they agreed to connect their adventure with a worthy cause.

"I had been exposed to atrocities committed against Christians around the world through The Voice of the Martyrs (www.persecution.com), and I had been supporting World Help (www.worldhelp.net) in its efforts to



supply Bibles to places like Iraq," says Kevin. "Then, a few months ago, 33-year-old Ri Hyon Ok, a North Korean woman, made the headlines when she received a death sentence for distributing a Bible. On the day following her execution, her husband, parents, and three children were carried off to prison. Atrocities like this are committed daily against our Christian brothers and sisters, most of them known only to God.

"Hebrews 13:3 admonishes us to 'remember those in prison as if you

were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.' Every year, tens of thousands of Christians around the world die for their faith. One organization estimates that more than 150,000 Christians have been martyred in the past year alone! Many more are living under terrible persecution.

"Suddenly it occurred to me that we could use the bicycle trip to promote awareness of and prayer for the persecuted Church, and to raise money to supply Bibles to persecuted Christians who have none."

That was all the incentive he needed to begin getting in shape for the 330-mile trip.

"My brother Brandon and I went with Kevin on several weekends at the beginning of the summer to map out the trail from Cleveland to Cincinnati," says Jonathan Klotz, who graduated from Aldersgate Christian Academy in May. They carefully followed maps downloaded from the official website of the Ohio to Erie Trail. About two-thirds of that route follows dedicated bicycle trails converted from abandoned railroads. However,

about 100 miles of the trail required navigating regular roads, so they took careful notes and photographed intersections and landmarks along the way.

On August 3, at 4:30 a.m., the group set out from Lake Erie in Cleveland, Ohio, on their four-day adventure. Participating were Kevin Moser, 45 (HS '82, BA music '90); Craig Brown, 40 (HS '86); Jonathan McCaman, 28 (GBS '98-'01); Jonathan Klotz, 18 (HS '09); Anthony Frederick, 17; and Joshua Klotz, 13.

Sixteen-year-old Brandon Klotz (HS '09) prepared daily prayer lists for the trip utilizing the World Help and The Voice of the Martyrs websites. Unfortunately he had a severe asthma attack and had to be hospitalized just prior to the group's departure, so he was unable to bicycle with them. Another gentleman, Harvey Davis, the parent of a recent graduate of GBS's Aldersgate Christian Academy, graciously drove a vehicle for the bicyclers to carry their supplies and assist in whatever way needed.

"As a group, we prayed each day for specific persons and needs throughout the persecuted Church, and we urged family and friends to do the same through daily telephone, text and email updates," says Craig Brown.

He personally made contact with Rev. Richard Miles, V.P. for Student Affairs, during the morning staff prayer meetings at GBS. Those in attendance received a live update on the progress of the bicyclists and were reminded to pray for persecuted Christians.

In addition to assigning specific prayer requests to each bicycler, various email messages of encouragement were shared among them.

They received messages from all over the U.S., and even one from Phil Dickinson, a missionary friend in Colombia, who wrote, "Thank you... for remembering our persecuted brothers and sisters. I love The Voice Of The Martyrs ministry.... [They] brought me to a greater awareness of Colombia before God called us here. [Phillip and Heather Dickinson, Global Holiness Mission]"

Several mishaps occurred during the 107 miles traveled on the first day. Jonathan Klotz collided with a streetlight in Akron, and Anthony Frederick flipped headfirst over his handlebars when trying to stop too quickly at an intersection. While traversing the Sippo Trail between Massillon and Dalton, the bicyclers had to scramble down an embankment, ford a creek, and clamber up the opposite side to regain access to the trail because the old railroad bridge had been burned down. The most memorable incident, however, took place later in the evening while approaching Fredericksburg in beautiful Amish country.

Craig and Jonathan McCaman had just begun to pass a horse and open buggy with a single rider. Suddenly, the horse bolted hard to the right, down through a ditch, and up into a bean field. "Glancing over, I got a good look at an Amish man in crisis," says Craig. "His eyes were wide with fright, his mouth was slightly ajar, and his body was tense with the death grip he had on the reigns. The horse galloped wildly through the field with the buggy bouncing like a tin can behind it. In another moment, the man was sailing through the air."

Picking himself up from the dirt, he hobbled to the vehicle driven by Harvey Davis, who helped chase down the runaway horse and buggy.

"We were relieved to learn that the horse had been hitched to a buggy only once before, so it really wasn't our fault that he had been spooked."

Timothy Glick, 14, joined the group as they reached his grandparents' home in Apple Creek near the end of the first day.

While that day was the longest by time, the third day was the longest by distance. The guys covered 109 miles from Mount Vernon, through Ohio's capital city of Columbus, and on to Cedarville.

Family and friends were waiting at the Serpentine Wall by the Ohio River in downtown Cincinnati on Thursday, August 6. A cheer went up as the bicyclists in single file broke through a blue ribbon and crossed the finish line at 7:32 p.m. They had traveled a total of 332 miles.

During the celebration picnic, a former Muslim man from north Africa shared his testimony about how he came to know Jesus Christ because of a Bible that was given to him as a gift. Then Rev. Bennie Durr, Sr., prayed a closing prayer.

According to Vernon Brewer, president of World Help, "the money that [the bicyclists] raised was enough to provide hundreds of Bibles [for Iraq]. These individuals are truly accomplishing something that will outlast and outlive them for eternity. I hope you take the time to ask yourself [what] difference you could make. Great things always start off small. For this group of men, it started with a few bikes and an idea." ■

Gentlemen interested in joining "Pedaling for the Persecuted" in the summer of 2010 should contact Kevin Moser or Craig Brown personally. Kevin can be reached at kmoser@gbs.edu.



➔(p2) fortifying us, dispersing our foes, and leading us on to the final conquest. In the worst of times—as, indeed, in all our times—He assures us, as He did St. Paul, “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (I Cor. 12:9). This is why we sing so gladly, *“Through many dangers, toils, and snares / I have already come; / ‘Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, / And grace will lead me home.”*

God gives grace in different ways, some of which are unusual and unexpected; and then it may be said that grace “overflows” its ordinary channels. Yet in the usual course of Christian life, these ordinary channels are the “means of grace” that He uses again and again to strengthen us with His favor. It’s true that almost any circumstance—even hostility, loss, and suffering—may become a means of grace if we embrace that circumstance obediently and in faith. Yet as the Bible makes very clear, there are certain appointed means that we must use faithfully to sustain our relationship with Christ. That is why the earliest Christians “continued steadfast-

Sin is the disease that blights us all, but grace is the medicine that the Great Physician offers, first, to heal us, and then, through us, to heal the world.

ly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

United in the Church, which is the baptized company of all the faithful, they benefited continually as they shared the Word that it preached, the community life that it provided, the Holy Communion that it celebrated, and the public prayers that it offered. Together with fasting, these are the five “instituted means of grace” which our Methodist ancestors emphasized as normative to all fellowship with God. It remains true for us, as it did for them and for those earnest believers in the book of Acts, that if we are to receive grace we must regularly use the means of grace through which God has chosen to provide it.

But if we receive grace, we also must extend it. In other words, we must joyfully open ourselves to God, offering to become the points of contact which He uses to pass on to others what already He has given us. *“Freely you have received, freely give”* (Matt. 10:8). This is

why we must be sure that we ourselves are always brimming over with the grace imparted to us in His appointed means, as we too “continue steadfastly” in them. For in this way He enables us to do His work in His name by His Spirit—“sprinkling grace on a fallen world,” to use Dick’s gripping metaphor—going about doing good, as did Our Lord, bringing others into sanctifying contact with the same dynamic force that has increasingly transformed us into His own likeness.

So as the Lord once reminded Gideon Ousley, that staunch old Irish preacher, we Christians must focus all our witness simply on the “disease and the cure,” diagnosing the first, as we must, in order to prescribe the second. For sin is the disease that blights us all, but grace is the medicine that the Great Physician offers, first, to heal us, and then, through us, to heal the world. *“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound”* (Rom. 5:20).

What joy, therefore, it is to be “laborers together with God” (I Cor. 3:9), bringing His grace to bear upon the heartbreak and disruption that sin has wrought. God’s blessing will make all the difference in whether we succeed or fail in that blessed task. But He has given specific guidelines for all who have responded to His call to be grace-sprinklers on a fallen world. Let us consider a few of them.

INTEGRITY IN RELATIONSHIP

“Speaking the truth in love...” (Eph. 4:15). To bring Jesus’ grace to shattered men and women demands that we be honest, forthright, and transparent as we speak His name. Not only does God despise hypocrisy, but so does everyone else—even those who practice it themselves. Religious humbug becomes readily apparent to those we seek to help, and they are quickly repulsed by it. Thus, we dare not demean the gospel by mouthing empty platitudes or pretending empathy we do not feel. To speak the truth in love is first of all to live that truth, being ourselves authentically in Christ, hating sin passionately but loving sinners utterly, as did He.

AFFIRMATION IN COMMUNITY

“Love the brotherhood...” (I Pet. 2:17). “Charity begins at home,” and since the Church is spiritually our home, we must begin there as we lovingly reach out to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Thus we encourage them, overlook their faults, heal their wounds, and share their agonies, and in this way we bear “one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:3). Too many even in our churches have succumbed to a negative “sour godliness,” described by Mr. Wesley as “the devil’s religion.” Every congregation is in urgent need of upbeat, affirming, and helpful members who spread

their irresistible spirit of Christian camaraderie through all its common life.

COMPASSION IN ADVERSITY

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:15). It’s easier to do the first, of course, than it is the second. But the whole world is filled with weeping sufferers; and if we are to minister Jesus’ grace to them, we must identify with them as did He in deeply-involved, tender outreach. Think of Catharine Booth, who broke through the restraints of Victorian propriety and social caste to bring the pimps, drunkards, and prostitutes of London to the Saviour’s healing and restoration. After her death they lovingly returned her tears. It was said that, as they filed beside her open coffin, they so drenched it with their weeping that she could not have been more wet had she been dipped in the River Thames!

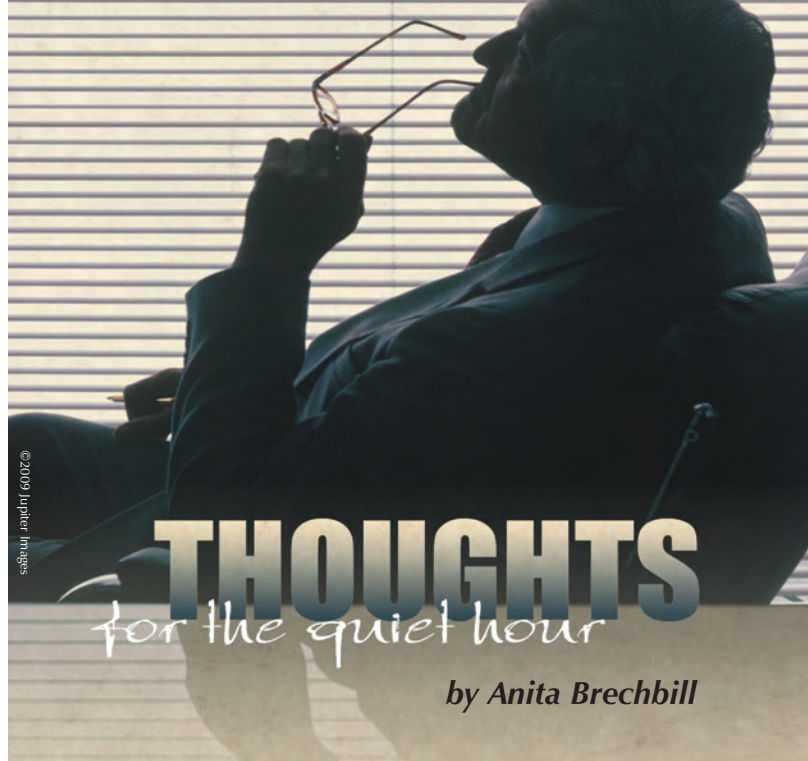
GENTLENESS IN RESTORATION

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness...” (Gal. 6:1). Sin’s deceit has brought down many a careless saint who needed a fearless but loving Nathan, first to thunder, “Thou art the man!” then to preside kindly and persistently over his restoration. As grace-sprinklers, we are to believe the best of everyone, but when we have no choice but to accept the worst, we are summoned to exert every effort to bring the wanderer back to health and soundness. *“Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness, / Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.”*

VICTORY IN CONTINUITY

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us (Rom. 8:37). Nothing impacts us more than a victorious, happy, and consistent Christian who through the Spirit’s strength humbly and consistently models the Jesus life before us. In the midst of pressure, reverse, and trial, these are the saints who overcome “by the blood of the Lamb and the words of their testimony” (Rev. 12:11). As Jesus lives out His lovely life in them, they increasingly attract others to follow Him as they do so winsomely and faithfully. How many shall rise and call them blessed in that day!

Granted, there are far too many misery-spreaders everywhere; but God has called us to be grace-sprinklers, doing as Jesus did, whose entire purpose was to bring us grace, though as its Divine Source, He did not merely sprinkle it, but poured it out in gushing torrents. *“Freely you have received, freely give.”* ■



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THOUGHTS

for the quiet hour

by Anita Brechbill

A NEW CREATURE! A NEW RACE!

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature...” II Cor. 5:17

There walks upon the earth today a race not only made in God’s image but having taken advantage of God’s offer of cleansing from the tragic effects of The Fall. Those who belong to this new race in Christ walk a polluted earth with power to resist the temptations which swirl about them. This power is generated in the blood of Jesus Christ, the sinless Head of their race.

Three worlds watch their progress through time. The inhabitants of a heavenly, sinless country toward which this new race is bound cheer them on. Their adoring gaze is centered on the “Lamb in the midst” whose blood has effected the Cure. And “He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied.”

In helpless rage, the hosts of Hell watch from regions below as they view mortal men and women with full power of choice, turning from that which is sensual, choosing that which is holy. These evil spirits still attempt to claim those who once shared the same fallen nature as their own. But the “new race” comes through each conflict stronger than before.

Fellow inhabitants of time, we must make the choice between the two unseen worlds. The outcome is beyond any value to compute. Yes, a new creature! A new race! An awesome future secured to those who stay under the cleansing blood; “and it doth not yet appear what we shall be!” ■

Anita Brechbill, Mifflinburg, PA, former editor of RopeHolders, has been a regular contributor to this column in the past.



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