



GOD'S REVIVALIST

October 2010

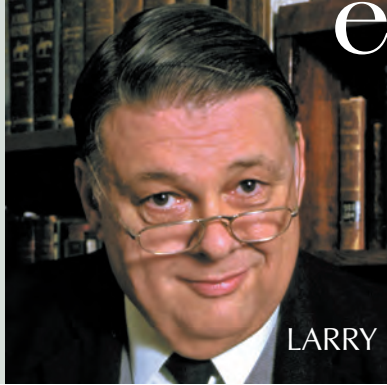
and Bible Advocate

This Little Book Brings

**LIFE & DEATH in
NORTH KOREA:**

**Life For Those Who Believe Its Words.
Death For Those Caught Distributing It.**

see page 5



the editor's view

LARRY D. SMITH

O FOR A THOUSAND TONGUES!

“O for a thousand tongues to sing / My great Redeemer’s praise!” You probably have sung these words many times. They’re from the seventh of 18 verses, now reduced to five or six, in a hymn so beloved that it has ranked first in every Methodist hymnal since 1780. “It well deserves that place of honor,” as Canon Frank Colquhoun emphasizes, “not only because it is indisputably one of Charles Wesley’s finest hymns, but also because it is representative of his hymnody at its best.” Written on the first anniversary of his conversion, Wesley’s exuberant lyrics echo the heartbeat of Christ’s gospel with its universal appeal, its uplifting assurance, and its liberating power.

In line after line, as we lift our voices, we glorify the name of Jesus, for it is His name that “charms our fears” and “bids our sorrows cease.” We exalt the authority of Jesus, for it is His authority that “breaks the power of cancelled sin” and “sets the prisoner free.” We thrill to the voice of Jesus, for it is His voice that brings surging life to the dead and causes the “mournful, broken hearts” to rejoice. “O for a thousand tongues to sing...”

Yet even so many could not sing all the honors that He deserves. For our praises never are enough; and yet Our Lord receives them gladly whenever with sincere hearts we freely offer them to Him, exalting “the glories of [our] God and King, / The triumphs of His grace.” These “triumphs of His grace” are proofs both of His divine character and of His saving work; and as such, they fill us with renewed confidence, for Jesus is Lord of all our lives in shadow and in sunshine, in poverty and in wealth, in time and in eternity.

Through all the ages, as we know, He never has failed to keep the promises that He so graciously has (p22)➡

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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



WHAT RELIGION DO YOU PREACH?

by Michael R. Avery, President

In his booklet *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, John Wesley tells of a man he once met who had fallen into deep despair and unbelief. Out of the bitterness of his soul, the man said to Wesley, "All is dark; my thought is lost. But I hear you preach to a great number of people every night and morning. Pray, what would you do with them? Whither would you lead them? What religion do you preach? What is it good for?" Wesley's answer was remarkable:

"You ask what I would do with them: I would make them virtuous and happy, easy in themselves and useful to others. Whither would I lead them? To heaven; to God the Judge, the lover of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. What religion do I preach? The religion of love; the law of kindness brought to light by the gospel. What is this good for? To make all who receive it enjoy God and themselves: To make them like God; lovers of all; contented in their lives; and crying out at their death in calm assurance, 'O grave, where is thy victory! Thanks be unto God, who giveth me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ.'"

Religion in its purest form is a fundamental set of beliefs, practices, and traditions through which the Christian faith is promoted and by which it is protected. But far too often, religion has offered a form empty of content and a ritual void of presence. It has, in too many cases, become a cold, sterile, unattractive practice that obscures the beauty of the gospel. Wesley's answer offers a rare glimpse into a religion that is solidly scriptural, as well as winsome and beautiful. He saw the religion that he preached as one that offered the following:

1. *Happiness and peace as the fruit of transformed character.* I have never met a person who didn't want to be happy, just as I have never heard of a religion that didn't offer some means to happiness. But rarely do either talk about virtuous living as a key component to real happiness and peace. No one can find happiness and peace through his own efforts. Neither happiness nor peace are self-originating, but are the fruits of a redeemed and holy life. Wesley offered a gospel that so transformed the life and so renewed the mind that the end result was a happy, contented, and useful life! "Oh the bliss of the pure in heart..." (Matt. 5:8).

2. *Heaven now and heaven to come.* Wesley wanted to get men to heaven, but he also wanted to get heaven into men here and now! Notice his words, "To make all who receive it enjoy God and themselves: To make them like God; lovers of all; contented in their lives...." Wesley understood that those who find great joy in God also find great delight in others and great strength in themselves—a recipe that allows one to accomplish more in one lifetime

than would otherwise be possible. John Piper is right when he says that God is most glorified in me when I am most satisfied in Him. "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh.8:10).

3. *To know the one true God through Jesus Christ His Son.* Every human heart has within it the hunger to know and be known by God. Sadly many religions can't seem to find the right balance. They create a God who is angry and distant or one that is tolerant and casual—neither of which are an adequate understanding of who God really is. Wesley's view is both balanced and beautiful. He speaks of a "Holy God" that is the "Lover of all!" This is a God who is against sin—a Judge who condemns the transgressor but who also sends His own Son to die for that transgressor and be the mediator of a new covenant that will bring reconciliation and forgiveness to the condemned.

4. *Love enthroned.* Wesley says he preaches the "religion of love—the law of kindness." To Wesley true religion was to "love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and your neighbor as yourself." This is religion controlled not by the letter of the law but by love—a love that is pure, patient, and kind. It is not a love controlled by passion but by pathos—not of emotion but disposition. There is no greater need in our world than a religion of holy love that flows outward in "kindness to all."

5. *Assurance.* Most of the religions in the world do not believe that one can be sure of personal salvation. Wesley, however, preached a religion that offered every man the "calm assurance" of eternal life. Wesley's father, an Anglican priest, left these dying words: "The witness, son, the witness; that is the proof of Christianity." In his sermon "The Witness of the Spirit," Wesley defines the testimony of the Spirit as "an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God, that Jesus Christ hath loved me and given himself for me, and that all my sins are blotted out and I, even I, am reconciled to God."

Religion is not often spoken of as something that is beautiful, but the religion that Wesley offered to the poor man drowning in despair is something that I find absolutely winsome. May the religion I preach be so! ■

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.

GAREN WOLF'S INFLUENCE

I was particularly interested in the issue honoring Mr. Garen Wolf [Summer 2010]. I was his pastor when he came to GBS, and our friendship has continued to the present day. Garen and his family are very special to us, and there is no way to calculate the results of his influence across the Holiness Movement. May God richly bless him and Sheila as they march toward the future!

TERRY D. GOING
Email

"MOTHER, COME BACK!"

I just finished reading your excellent, eloquent editorial on the Free Methodist Church ["The Editor's View," May 2010]. My, what a masterpiece! It is written so kindly, with such a deep Christian heart of love. Thank you for naming out the gifts of "Methodist Piety," "Intense Discipleship" and "Spiritual Worship."

LINDA KELLEY
Email

I read your article with great interest. I am a third generation Free Methodist [and] agree with every word, every sentence, every thought you put into the article. I, too, mourn the historical drift that has made our beloved denomination almost unrecognizable as the church of my childhood.

I learned about God's Bible School and College from their choir presentation at Avon Park Holiness Camp in Florida. What a blessing these Spirit-filled young people are each year as they minister to us in song and testimony!

KEN ANDREWS
Reed City, Michigan

My wife and I were profoundly moved upon reading the editorial. I appreciated the spirit in which you wrote; no rancor but a compassion for the church that she would exemplify "the Bible standard of Christianity...holiness of heart and life actualized in personal experience and fleshed out in the daily life."

REV. FLOYD L. COOPER
University Park, Iowa

(continued on page 15) ➡



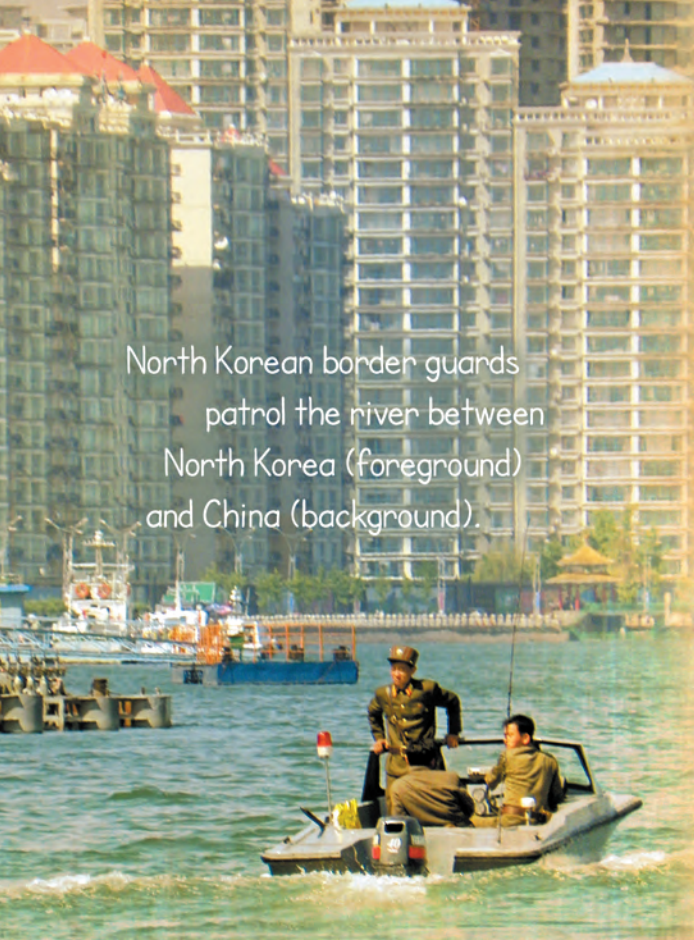
North Korean Christians suffer bitter persecution as they courageously witness for Christ

at the **BORDER** of **LIFE & DEATH**

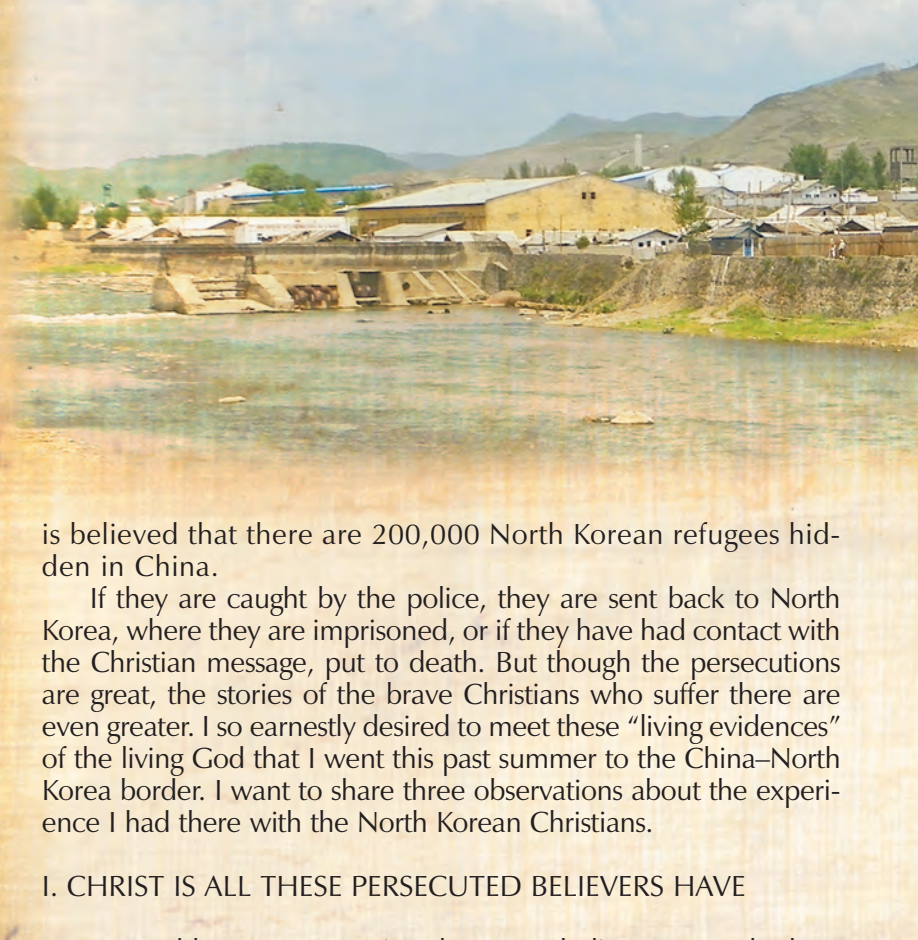
by Choi Chang Hoon

Every year, Open Doors International announces its World Watch List, utilizing fifty questions to determine what countries have the worst record for persecuting Christians. Among the top ten are Somalia, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, but the worst is North Korea. In *Juche: A Christian Study of North Korea's State Religion*, Thomas Belke estimates that there are 200,000 prisoners in the country's labor camps, and 50,000 of them are Christians. He adds that Kim Il Sung, the Communist dictator who died in 1994, destroyed 1500 churches and murdered 300,000 Protestants. Only last July a Mrs. Ri Hyon Ok was caught distributing Bibles. She was executed publicly, and the rest of her family—husband, parents, and three children—were sent to a concentration camp.

"There's no other country at the levels that North Korea is...systematically persecuting Christians..." according to Dr. Moeller, CEO of Open Doors International. "North Korea stands alone in its repressive, deeply-rooted, horrible treatment of Christians." Because of this, believers often try to escape into China, crossing the river that divides the two countries. Estimates vary, but it



North Korean border guards patrol the river between North Korea (foreground) and China (background).



is believed that there are 200,000 North Korean refugees hidden in China.

If they are caught by the police, they are sent back to North Korea, where they are imprisoned, or if they have had contact with the Christian message, put to death. But though the persecutions are great, the stories of the brave Christians who suffer there are even greater. I so earnestly desired to meet these “living evidences” of the living God that I went this past summer to the China–North Korea border. I want to share three observations about the experience I had there with the North Korean Christians.

I. CHRIST IS ALL THESE PERSECUTED BELIEVERS HAVE

I was able to meet two North Korean believers near the border. This was at night because secrecy was essential. One of the South Korean missionaries now in China (let’s call him Missionary Kim) told me he did not even know the names of others in his organization or much about their activities. Otherwise, if he were caught, he might be forced to give such information to the authorities and thus betray his fellow Christians.

One of those missionaries whom I met that night would soon go back into North Korea to distribute Bibles. This, of course, would be at the risk of his life; and before he left, we had a service at a secret “discipleship apartment.” These brothers—without money, possessions, or security—are the kind of people whom the world says we should never be like. But when they found Jesus Christ as their own, their desire for and enjoyment of Him were indescribably intense and deep.

How could this be true? Simply because Christ is all they have. Realizing this, I asked myself, “What do I really want most? Christ Himself? Or something else?” Think of what Paul the Apostle said, “Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ” (Phil. 3:7-8, NKJV). I never want to lose Christ, the true Treasure, by trying to gain what the Apostle refers to as “rubbish.”

II. CHRIST GIVES DIFFERENT TASKS TO DIFFERENT WORKERS

At the secret “discipleship apartment,” Missionary Kim washed the feet of two North Korean defectors. I saw the tears flowing down his face. “I am sorry that I cannot go with you,” he said again and again. “I should go with you. I am so sorry. I am so



Choi prepares to enter a secret discipleship apartment.



View of a North Korean border town from the Chinese side of the river

sorry.” He desired to go into North Korea because of his urgent concern for those caged inside.

If he were to go, however, he would be easily caught by the police or others, because he looks healthier than most North Koreans and speaks a different dialect. So the mission to enter North Korea was entrusted to a North Korean Bible smuggler whom we will call Missionary Kang. But the duty to support Missionary Kang was entrusted to Missionary Kim, while the duty to tell their stories to the world is given to someone else.

So Christ our Lord and our Commander commits different tasks to different workers. All of these must be sure that they are faithful to Christ and to His work (I Cor. 4:2), for it is faithfulness that He requires and expects; and through our faithfulness to Him He achieves great things by His power.

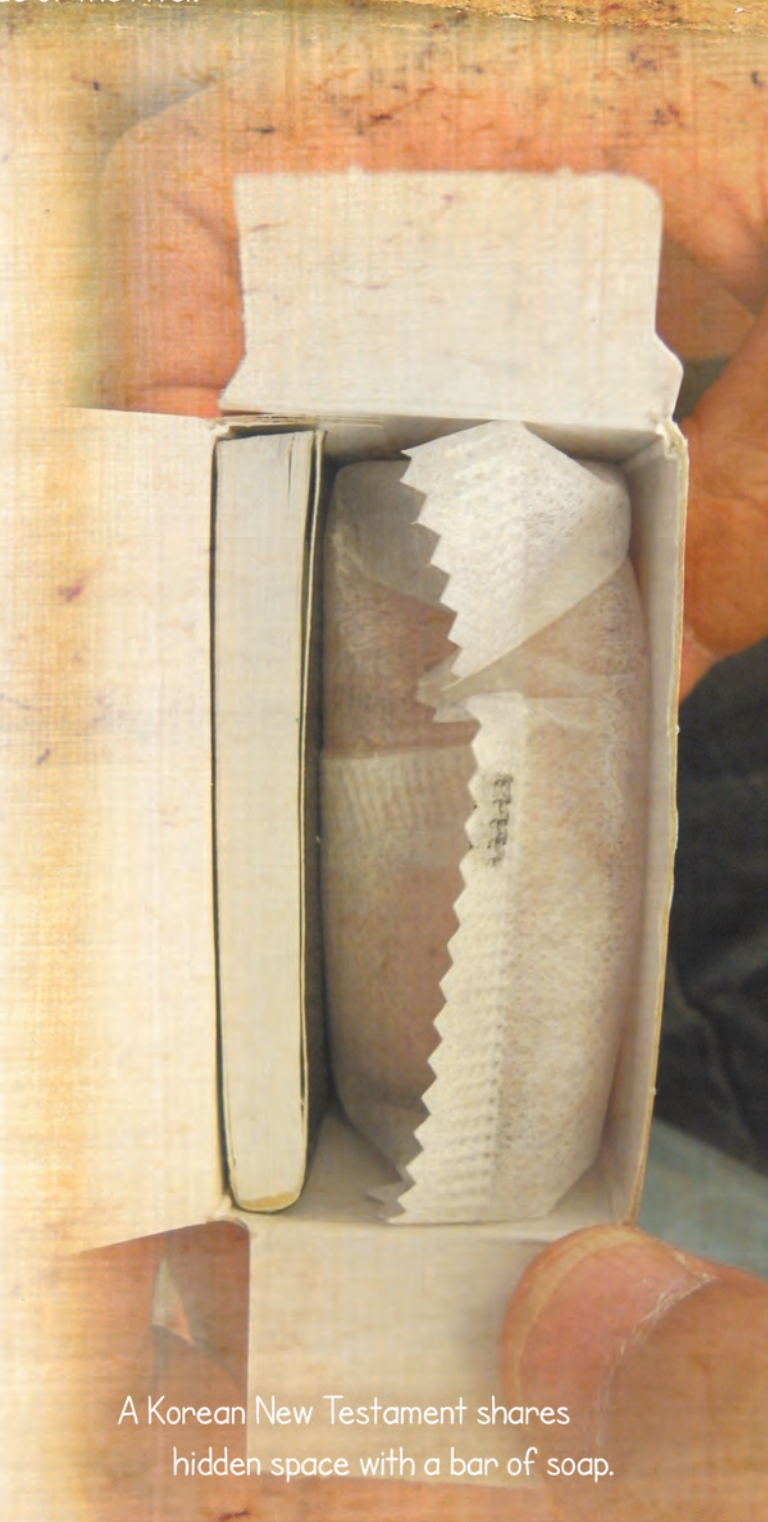
III. CHRIST ENABLES EACH BELIEVER TO CARRY HIS OWN CROSS

Missionary Kang crossed the river into North Korea under cover of darkness, knowing that death might be waiting for him. Just as Jesus went up to Jerusalem to obey the Father’s will, even though He knew that He would be crucified, Missionary Kang also went to his own Jerusalem to carry his cross. He was carrying Bibles in his bag, and this was the most dangerous thing one could do in North Korea! He was offering his own life to bring the gospel to the darkest place in the world. It was urgent and seemed even cruel!

Yet I reflected on how the gospel shines more brightly in the place where we are asked to deny ourselves. “Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:27 NKJV), as Jesus declared. Not only Missionaries Kang and Kim, but also all of us have a cross that we must carry. Who expects ever to be exempted from these words of Jesus?

I was a bit worried that I was not as brave as the witnesses of Christ in North Korea. But then I realized that their bravery in advancing God’s Kingdom does not come from their own strength. The secret of their valor is found in the enabling grace of God; and this same God is able to make us all true soldiers of Christ. 🇰🇷

Choi Chang Hoon (a fictitious name) is a GBS student who grew up in a Methodist home in South Korea and was converted at the age of 23. Recently he founded Suitable Helper Ministry (www.suitablehelperministry.com) to support North Korean missionaries, refugees, and an orphanage.



A Korean New Testament shares hidden space with a bar of soap.



— Called Unto Holiness —

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

BOTH GRADUAL AND INSTANTANEOUS

by the Rev. John Wesley

Let us strongly and explicitly exhort all believers on to perfection. That we may all speak the same thing, we ask once for all, shall we defend this perfection or give it up? We all agree to defend it, meaning thereby (as we did from the beginning) salvation from all sin, properly so-called, by the love of God and man filling our heart. Some say, "This cannot be attained till we have been refined by the fire of purgatory." Others, "Nay, it will be attained as soon as the soul and the body part." But others say, "It may be attained before we die; a moment after is too late."

Is it so or not? We are all agreed we may be saved from all sin before death—that is, from all sinful tempers and desires. The substance, then is settled. But as to the circumstances, is the change gradual or instantaneous? It is both the one and the other. "But should we in preaching insist both on one and the other?" Certainly we should insist on the gradual change, and that earnestly and continually. And are there not reasons why we should insist on the instantaneous change? If there be such a blessed change before death, should we not encourage all believers to expect it?

And the rather, because constant experience shows the more earnestly they expect this, the more swiftly and steadily does the gradual work of God go on in their souls, the more careful are they to grow in grace, the more zealous of good works and the more punctual in their attendance on all the ordinances of God. Whereas, just the contrary effects are observed whenever this expectation ceases. They are saved by hope, by this hope of a total change, with a gradually increasing salvation. Destroy this hope, and that salvation stands still, or rather decreases daily. Therefore, whoever would advance the gradual change in believers should strongly insist on the instantaneous.

In the year 1764, upon a review of the whole subject, I wrote down the sum of what I had observed in

the following short propositions:

1. There is such a thing as Christian perfection, for it is again and again mentioned in Scripture.
2. It is not so early as justification; for justified persons are to "go on to perfection" (Heb 6:1).
3. It is not so late as death, for St. Paul speaks of living men that were perfect (Phil. 3:15).
4. It is not absolute. Absolute perfection belongs not to man nor to angels, but to God alone.
5. It does not make a man infallible. None is infallible while he remains in the body.
6. It is perfect love (I John 4:18). This is the essence of it. Its properties or inseparable fruits are rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks (I Thes. 5:16, etc.).
7. It is improvable. It is so far from being incapable of increase that one perfected in love may grow in grace far swifter than he did before.
8. It is capable of being lost, of which we have had instances.
9. It is constantly both preceded and followed by a gradual work.
10. But is it instantaneous? It is often difficult to perceive the instant when a man dies, yet there is an instant in which life ceases; and if ever sin ceases, there must be a last moment of its existence, and a first moment of our deliverance from it.

Therefore all our preachers should make a point of preaching Christian perfection to all believers constantly, strong, and explicitly; and all believers should mind this one thing and continually seek for it. ■

The Rev. John Wesley (1703–1781) was the leader of the great Evangelical Revival and the founder of Methodism. This is an extract, slightly edited, from his famous treatise A Plain Account of Christian Perfection.



the DANGER of TITHING

by Jim Olson, CPA

©2010 Jupiter Images

Did you ever expect to read an article with that title—especially when there are so many who do not even come close to tithing? This article is written for those who do practice tithing and who limit their giving to just tithing. The Old Testament teaches the concept of tithing, but the New Testament goes beyond tithing and teaches that everything we have is the Lord's and that we are managers of what He has entrusted to us. Notice that I said that *everything* we have is the Lord's, not just 10 percent.

In our circle of churches, we have done a poor job of training our people how to give to the Lord's work. We have limited our teaching to just the Old Testament concept of tithing and have neglected the New Testament concept as noted above – that it is *all* the Lord's! As a result, missions organizations, Bible colleges, and churches struggle financially because many of our people do not know the joy of giving beyond tithing.

I was fortunate to have a father who knew the joy of giving, and when he passed away at close to 90 years of age, he was still giving away about 50 percent of his income. I share with you a personal experience of following his example. When I graduated from college and started my first job, I decided to increase my giving each year beyond the 10 percent. At the end of four years I noted that as my giving had doubled to 20 percent, my income had also doubled in that same four-year period. Now I will quickly say that doubling your giving does not guarantee doubling your income, but it proved to me a statement we have all heard many times: "You cannot outgive the Lord."

Your question may be "How can I give more than 10 percent?" In some cases it may not be possible. You will not know how much you can give without having the number-one indicator you need – a budget. With a budget you will be able to tell how much you can be giving, and a budget will also help you manage all of your finances.

One reason we don't think we can afford to give more is because our friends are always buying things we don't have and cannot afford; but we buy them anyway. A budget reminds us that we cannot afford that kind of living.

If you would like a sample of a budget format and instructions for how to fill it out – at no cost to you – e-mail me at jolsencpa@aol.com. I would encourage everyone, whether to increase your giving or to get your financial house in order, to get involved in establishing a budget. It will show you the financial areas where you can make changes, so that you might be able to give more than 10 percent. It also will help you in other areas of managing your finances – like getting out of debt, planning for retirement, etc.

Finally, if the extent of our giving is tithing when we could be doing more if we planned accordingly, then we will not reap the eternal dividends that we could from investing more in the Lord's work. ■

NEWS

from the Hilltop

SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS WITH ANNUAL CONVOCATION SERVICES

GBS's 2010–11 school year began officially with morning and evening convocation services, held Sunday, August 22, in the Adcock Memorial Chapel. President Michael Avery preached at the morning ser-

vice, basing his remarks around the life of the Old Testament character of Joseph. The Rev. Mark Cravens, campus pastor, preached in the evening service.

As is customary, a large number of college scholarships were presented during

the morning service. This year, 62 endowed scholarships were awarded to 57 students totaling \$47,950. In addition, divisional scholarships totaling \$55,000 were awarded to 13 students; and Wingrove Taylor scholarships totaling \$88,000 were awarded to 22 students. Presented also was a



God's Bible School and College Scholarship Recipients

REVIVALIST FAMILY

On these pages, we feature items about GBS alumni, significant events scheduled throughout the "Revivalist family," and brief news notes from across the holiness movement.

BIRTHS



To **Daron (GBS '00–01) and Amber (Davison) (GBS HS '01) Jones**, a son, **Collin David Jones**, born September 1, 2010, in Lansing, Michigan. Daron is a veterinarian, practicing at Countyline Veterinary Services in Pewamo, Michigan. He and Amber are also parents of Spencer, 3 years old.

DEATHS



Naomi Parsons, 78, a longtime resident of Overland Park, Kansas, died August 15, 2010, at her daughter's home in Ash Grove, Missouri. She was united in marriage August 6, 1950, to Charles Vernon Parsons, with whom she shared over 49 wonderful years. Mrs. Parsons loved the Lord, her family, and flowers. She was a compassionate mother who taught her children by example to love, to laugh, and to care for others.

Besides her husband, she was preceded in death by her parents; her son, Stan; three grandchildren; and seven siblings. She is survived by a son, Charles; three daughters, Sheila Wolf (a faculty member at God's Bible School and College), Nancy Mozier, and Lisa Antrim; a daughter-in-law, Deanie Parsons; 14 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held at the Overland Park Church of God (Holiness) where she was a member. Revs. David Fry (grandson-in-law) and Kenneth Peterson (pastor) officiated.

NOTICES

Registration is now open for the ninth annual Indianapolis Christian Writers Conference, November 5–6, 2010, to be held at The Wesleyan Church World Headquarters in Indianapolis. Join keynote speaker Jerry B. Jenkins, author of more than 175 books, for insights and inspiration that will advance your writing skills! Also, publishing professionals from Wesleyan Publishing House, Tyndale, DaySpring, and others in Christian publishing will present workshops and one-on-one consultations that will inform and encourage you as a writer. Register today at www.IndyChristianWritersConf.com or by calling 800-493-7539. ■

one-time award made possible by donations given in memory of Jennie “Marie” Van Dalen. The recipient, Loren Albright, was awarded \$350.

One new scholarship was also explained and awarded. This was the Allan Clarence Strong Scholarship, established in 2009 by Mr. Strong’s daughter Sarah Jane Strong Voas. Allan Clarence Strong came to God’s Bible School in 1928 from Bronson, Iowa, to complete his high school education. After graduating in



Allan Clarence Strong



Alex Fourman Receives Scholarship

the class of 1929, he returned to Iowa where his subsequent vocational life involved being a commercial paper salesman and then a welder during World War II. Farming followed this with the last area of his work being a postal letter carrier. His spiritual foundation was enriched during his time in Cincinnati and served as a basis for living a life that focused on Paul’s admonition in Colossians 3:23, which declares, “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” The first recipient of the Allan Clarence Strong Scholarship of \$1,000 was Alex Fourman.

GBS COLLEGE ENROLLMENT HIGHEST SINCE 1983 *by Dr. Ken Farmer, V.P. for Academic Affairs*

The enrollment goal we had set for the college this fall was 305. We thought that was quite ambitious. Only once before under the current administration had we managed to break the 300 level (Fall 2004, 301). The good news is that we exceeded our goal! Praise the Lord!

Enrollment statistics for the college department at God’s Bible School and College for Fall 2010 are as follows: 310 (255.2 FTE) which is a 5.8% increase from 293 in Fall 2009. In fact, this is the highest college enrollment since Fall 1983 (338) and the fourth highest according to our records.

The goal we had set for Aldersgate Christian Academy was 130. That too was exceeded. ACA enrollment is 135 which represents a 14.4% increase over 118 from Fall 2009.

Thanks to all the campus family who tirelessly worked to make this happen. Also, thanks to each of our readers who act as good PR representatives for their Alma Mater!

PASTOR TROY TRUITT GUEST SPEAKER AT OPENING REVIVAL

Guest speaker for this year’s opening school revival, August 23–27, was the Rev. Troy Truitt, pastor of the Pilgrim Nazarene Church, Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Known for his winning presentation of spiritual realities adapted especially to young people, Rev. Truitt—who prefers to be called “Pastor Troy”—was used by the Holy Spirit to make a deep impact on GBS’s campus family. Drawing from Scripture, his own personal life, and pastoral experience, he challenged our students to active involvement in Christ’s service. Their response was obvious throughout the week. Testimonies to victory and spiritual advance



Pastor Troy Truitt

were both welcome and uplifting. We ask GBS’s friends to pray with us that the good work shall continue and that this shall be a year of grace and revival on our campus.

GBS AND WESLEY BIBLICAL SEMINARY TO OFFER DUAL CREDIT CLASS IN THEOLOGY

ADEP is pleased to announce that GBS and Wesley Biblical Seminary are jointly offering a class this fall called “Christ, Revelation, God, and Humanity.” Students may receive both college and seminary credit for taking the class. This is a wonderful opportunity for both upper-level college students and college graduates interested in learning Systematic Theology on a master’s level. Dr. Bill Ury, professor at WBS, will be teaching the course. Dr. Ury is dynamic and deeply immersed in classical and Wesleyan theology. The class will be predominantly online, with a block session held with Dr. Ury at the Higher Ground Conference and Retreat Center in West Harrison, Indiana, on Nov 12–13. Contact Mark Bird, mbird@gbs.edu for more information. ■

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PS Form 3526, September 2007 (Page 2 of 3)



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.

CHINA. "We had met a couple who were called to China. She, a Chinese, was converted in her late elementary years through the witness of her sister who was in college. Through their witness, both parents, former Communist leaders, became believers. He felt called to China and directed to leave the US and study for his seminary degree. They are now leading an undisclosed training program. While in the States for three months this summer for funding, they arranged to spend a weekend with us and meet with a group of Chinese. As they shared with us their vision and need for teachers, they inquired about the possibility of our visiting them while we were in the Philippines. [We thank God] for reconnecting us with our Chinese friends and giving us this opportunity for ministry" —Robert and Kay Bickert, Email Newsletter

EVANGELISTIC FAITH MISSIONS. "On July 9, 2010, the Board of Directors of Evangelistic Faith Missions voted to make some major cuts in ministry. The first six months of 2010 we saw a shortfall of over \$28,000 per month. In light of the financial shortfalls, the Board of Directors voted to close the radio ministry as of August 31, 2010. It is with sad hearts we end this phase of ministry which has continued for well over fifty years...." —Missionary Herald (Evangelistic Faith Missions)

EGYPT. "Leroy and Myrtle Adams (EFM) request that you pray for the new graduates who will be planting churches in Egypt. It is very hard to get permission to start a Christian church there, as it is a Moslem country. It could be a long drawn-out process. Pray also for Pastor Samir, an administrator in the Bible college. He struggles with kidney problems, and the machine is very expensive." —Ropeholders

HAITI. “Jeemps is a young Haitian boy who came to Despinos about two years ago and began working alongside us, helping interpret, helping with Bible studies, working in the clinic pharmacy, and in many other areas. He had begun studying in a school here to be a pastor, but after the earthquake the school was destroyed. Even before the earthquake we had begun to try to get him into God’s Bible School and College in Cincinnati, Ohio, where we had attended. After a lot of prayer, and hard work, Jeemps was accepted at GBS! We quickly began to take the necessary steps to get his visa, and much expense and many prayers later, he was granted his visa two days before needing to arrive at the school! God worked it all out. We were able to get tickets and get him to GBS! We are confident Jeemps will do his very best and will succeed, and will follow his dream to come back and help minister to his people. He has such a heart for ministry and for those who are in need.” —*The Hess Family, Email*

MYANMAR. “This year’s camp was held April 12–18 about thirty miles from Mandalay. [Its director] Andrew [Bawi Ceu] was amazed at the number who attended. He wrote, ‘The Lord brought 139 people from our mission fields, as well as some of our Bible students’ villages. There were about forty people from Buddhist backgrounds, most of whom were Burmese, some were Indian and Chinese and other tribes were present.’ As a result of Andrew’s salvation class, seventeen people testified to being born again! One of these was a lady named Sawng Hnin Phyu who had been a Buddhist nun for eight years.” —*Church Herald and Holiness Banner*

NEW JERSEY. “In May 2010 EFM’s Hispanic church in Trenton, New Jersey, celebrated its sixth anniversary, according to the *Missionary Herald*. In the same article, Pastor Victor Rodriguez recounts the beginning of the congregation by Ronaldo Gomez Moran. It met for its first service in his living room in March 2004. Named *Evangelica Emanuel Camino de Santidad* (Way of Holiness Evangelical Emanuel Church), it is now “fully organized with a church board and is supporting its pastor. Its ministries include the women’s and youth societies, each with its own officers. In 2008 the church began an outreach to Stamford, Connecticut, which is now being directed by a couple from our congregation. We expect a bright future and growth as we continue to carry the gospel to other areas.”

PAPUA NEW GUINEA. “After many months of preparation, Lawrance and Christy Doyle, along with Lawrance II, left for Papua New Guinea on June 22. We are grateful for God’s help through the generosity of His people that has made this exciting event possible. [They plan to work] with the Linguistics department in PNG and

choose a translation project. [They will also receive a] Pacific Orientation Course which includes a stay in a local village.” —*Church Herald and Holiness Banner*

PHILIPPINES. “In June we were formally commissioned as missionaries to the Philippines and were also privileged to spend some time with two of the Filipino Bible Methodist leaders, Rev. David Yucaddi and Rev. Brendel Macadangdang. On July 18 we held our final services as pastor of the First Bible Methodist Church in Chattanooga, and are set to depart for the Philippines on September 6. For the next six months we will be living in Manila where we will be attending the Christian Language Study Center. During this time we will be devoting our full attention to learning the Ilokano language before moving further north in the island of Luzon to a more permanent residence in the region where we will serve.” —*R.G. (GBS ’98 BA) and Sarah (GBS ’97 BA) Hutchison, Email Newsletter*

SOUTH AFRICA. In his email newsletter, Rev. Tim Keep, newly-elected General Missions Secretary for the Bible Methodist Connection reports that in a recent trip to South Africa he was “privileged to hear the testimonies of families whose lives have been wonderfully transformed by the power of the Gospel:

“(1) Dirk was a deacon in [another denomination] for many years, but he didn’t know the reality of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Personal failures and crises, however, made him a seeker after God and about a year ago he started attending our Middleburg Bible Methodist Church where the Pretorioueses faithfully shared the reality of spiritual new birth. This past January Dirk took the step of faith and became a new creation in Christ Jesus. He testified that his life has been completely transformed and that since his conversion he is now eagerly studying the Scriptures in Sarel’s Tuesday night Bible class.”

“(2) About two years ago, Eugene came to Brother Sarel under deep conviction. That night he was saved. That Sunday afternoon Sammie [his girlfriend] came back to the parsonage broken and humble, and she, too, found the Lord. Less than a week later, Eugene and Sammie were married and Sarel testifies that since the moment of their conversion the power of vice was broken and they have been consistently growing in their walk with the Lord. Eugene is now a deacon in our Middleburg Church.”

UKRAINE. “We expect to arrive in Ukraine about October 1. We have explained that our focus is to labor in a team effort with partners Stephen and Vita Krohutka in a ministry primarily evangelizing and helping youth and children. This ministry is centered in Perechin near the western city of Uzhgorod. Our goal is to develop a ministry center in that area offering a variety of Christian ministries, which will pursue almost unlimited opportunities in the mountain villages of the Carpathian region.” —*Tim and Cheryl Boyd* ■

Dear Phil

BROKEN VOWS

Are there foolish vows and sacred vows? Are there vows God will forgive, or does God hold one accountable for all vows until death?
—Obert Campbell

Dear Sir,

Here's the short answer: all vows are sacred; some are also foolish (Pro. 20:25; Eccl. 5:2-4). Breaking any vow is sin (Deut. 23:21; Eccl. 5:5-6; Num. 30:15). God will forgive vow-breakers (Num. 30:6, 9, 13), though He warns there may be dire consequences for failing to keep a vow (Eccl. 5:6). My best understanding of Scripture is that God does not continue to hold a person responsible to fulfill a vow that has been broken, repented of, and forgiven. The key texts where God reveals His perspective on vows are Leviticus 27, Numbers 30, Deuteronomy 23:21-23, and Ecclesiastes 5:1-7. Interestingly, the two New Testament texts (Acts 18:18; 21:23-24) that mention vows give no indication that God's perspective on vows has changed.

A vow is a voluntary promise to God to do or not do something (cf. Deut. 23:23). Vows are not limited to "If-you-do-this-for-me, I'll-do-that-for-You" bargains with God. You don't have to use the words "vow" or "promise" to make a

vow. Anytime you voluntarily tell God you are going to do or not do something *for Him*, it is a vow.

In Ecclesiastes 5, Solomon warns us that vows should not be made lightly: "Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you are on earth; Therefore let your words be few" (5:2). In verse 4, he cautions us not to be late in paying our vows, for God takes no delight in fools who fail to pay their vows. It is better, the wise man counsels, not to vow at all, than to vow and fail to pay (Eccl. 5:5). This echoes Deut. 23:22 where Moses informs Israel it is not sin to abstain from vowing: "if you abstain from vowing, it is not sin."

On the other hand, if you vow and fail to pay, it is sin (Deut. 23:22; Eccl. 5:5). Not only is it sin, but Solomon warns, "Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger, "It was a mistake." Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands?" (Eccl. 5:6). In other words, God punishes those who

break their vows. Claiming that you made a mistake and shouldn't have vowed or didn't really mean what you vowed arouses God's anger against you. Thus, Solomon concludes, "Fear God" (Eccl. 5:7).

The seriousness of vows is further underscored in Numbers 30 where God identifies which vows are automatically binding and which may be nullified. God distinguishes the vows made by adult males, widows, and divorced women from those made by female children and wives. In the case of adult males (30:2), widows, and divorced women (30:9), they must fulfill any vow they make. In the case of female children (30:3-5) and wives (30:6-8; 10-15), if their father or husband nullifies their vow on the day that he hears it, then they are absolved from their vow (30:5, 8, 12). However, if the father or husband does not nullify their vow, then their vow stands. They are responsible to fulfill it. If the father or husband does not say anything the first time he hears it but chooses to nullify it at a later time, then he will "bear the iniquity" of the broken vow (30:15).

Because Numbers 30:2 includes "swearing an oath" as an equivalent of taking a vow, the guilt offering prescribed for breaking an oath (Lev. 5:4) would likely apply to a broken vow. Since God provides a sacrifice for atoning for a broken vow, we can infer that forgiveness for breaking a vow is available through Christ, who is our guilt offering (Isa. 53:10).

Blessings,
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.

APPRECIATION FOR THE REVIVALIST

We sure do appreciate the *Revivalist*. The quality of material as well as the quality of the design make it a paper to be proud of and a great blessing.

BLAKE AND SAUNDY JONES
Cedar Lake, Michigan

I want to say how much I appreciate your holiness magazine. It means so much to us as seniors.

SAM AND VIV LEARNING
St. Catherines, Ontario

Thank you for the continued pleasure and soul food.

ANITA BRECHBILL
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania

We believe *God's Revivalist and Bible Advocate* is one of the greatest holiness publications in print today.

WILSON AND RAMONA KEYS
Winchester, Indiana

We enjoy many of the articles, especially the editorials and the President's Page. The Lord bless you and your labors for Him.

R. RHOADS
Tacoma, Washington

Please renew my subscription to the *Revivalist*. I enjoy it very much. It is my favorite periodical.

JOHN BASHAM
Hobe Sound, Florida

HAULING THE REVIVALIST TO THE POST OFFICE

The *Revivalist* is one of the very best church periodicals in print today. When it arrives I always think of the times I hauled it to the post office back in the '40's. I would be so pleased if the school would notify me of the address of Glen Pelfrey, who used to sing with us in a quartet.

REV. J.T. HOLSTEIN
Cincinnati, Ohio

Editor's Note: Rev. Pelfrey was a veteran missionary who is now deceased.



PLEA FOR THEOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE IN YOUTH MINISTRIES

"Entertainment for the sake of entertainment is missing the point," according to Cameron Cole, a church director of youth ministries in the conservative Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina, as quoted in *The Birmingham News*. "A lot of youth ministry focuses on entertainment and behavior modification, not on long-term spiritual formation."

Over 30 church youth leaders attended "Rooted: A Theology Conference for Student Ministry," held at the Cathedral Church of the Advent. According to Garrison, participants believe that "Christian youth ministry often leans too much on entertainment value and lacks theological depth." Dave Wright, diocesan coordinator of youth ministries "recalled youth events earlier in his career that were so driven to attract crowds that youth ministers would offer to swallow a live goldfish if a certain number attended."

STUDY IDENTIFIES MARKS OF CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY

The United Methodist Church has "recently concluded a study of more than 32,000 Methodist congregations across North America, seeking the 'key factors impacting vital congregations,'" according to Alfredo Garcia of Religious News Service in a release by the Pew Forum. Like most mainline American Protestant denominations, the UMC has seen serious membership decline for decades. The recent study "identified four key areas that fuel vitality: small groups and programs; worship services that mix traditional and contemporary styles with an emphasis on relevant sermons; pastors who work hard on mentorship and cultivation of the laity; and an emphasis on effective lay leadership."

NEW LUTHERAN DENOMINATION ESTABLISHED

The Rev. Paul Spring has been elected bishop of the North American Lutheran Church, formed August 27 in Grove City, Ohio. Members of the Lutheran Coalition for Reform voted overwhelmingly to establish the new denomination in the wake of last year's decision by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to allow gay clergy who are in non-celibate but committed relationships. Spring had served for 14 years as an ELCA bishop in northwestern Pennsylvania. Leaders of the new church charge that the parent denomination has departed from the teachings of scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. "Our Lord's reconfiguring of the Lutheran landscape...is breathtaking and exciting," said the Rev. Mark Chavez, director of Lutheran CORE. ■



Classics

THE WISDOM OF FRANCIS SCHAEFFER

Showing Both God's Holiness and Love

The Christian really has a double task. He has to practice both God's holiness and God's love. The Christian is to exhibit that God exists as the infinite-personal God; and then he is to exhibit simultaneously God's character of holiness and love. Not his holiness without his love: that is only harshness. Not his love without his holiness: that is only compromise. Anything that an individual Christian or Christian group does that fails to show the simultaneous balance of the holiness of God and the love of God presents to a watching world not a demonstration of the God who exists but a caricature of the God who exists.

Our Unloving Attitudes and Words

I have observed one thing among true Christians in their differences in many countries: What divides and severs true Christian groups and Christians—what leaves a bitterness that can last for 20, 30, or 40 years (or for 50 or 60 years in a son's memory)—is not the issue of doctrine or belief which caused the differences in the first place. Invariably it is lack of love—and the bitter things that are said by true Christians in the midst of differences. These stick in the mind like glue. And after time passes and the differences between the Christians or the groups appear less than they did, there are still those bitter, bitter things we said in the midst of what we thought was a good and sufficient objective discussion. It is these things—these unloving attitudes and words—that cause the stench that the world can smell in the church of Jesus Christ among those who are really true Christians.

Quotations from The Mark of a Christian by Francis Schaeffer (1970) used by permission of Intersity Press (IVP).

Thes. 5:23, 24), that He will fill him with His Spirit (Eph. 5:18), that He will empower him to be the witness that He desires him to be (Acts 1:8), and that He will purify his heart by faith (Acts 15:9).

To trust in God enables the Christian to “rest on” what God has promised. The act of resting on God’s Word produces a calm assurance within the heart of the believer. By the phrase, “calm assurance,” I am emphasizing that a person can know when he is at rest, fully trusting the promises of God’s Word, and therefore can be confident that God has done what He promised He would do.

If a person is having a battle of faith, he will be assailed with doubts and fears about how he can know for sure that God has entirely sanctified him. A Christian must fight off such doubts and fears. One does this by meditating on the unchanging and fully trustworthy character of God, resting upon His unfailing promises, and by reading testimonies of other people who have been entirely sanctified.² Although none of the testimonies are to be taken as the pattern for God’s sanctifying work in us (2 Cor. 10:12), such testimonies can be helpful in fighting off doubts and fears by reminding one that many people from all walks of life and from greatly differing theological perspectives, have personally experienced entire sanctification.

Until a person has settled it in his heart and mind that God is fully trustworthy and always does what He promises, he will not be able to rest in His promises. However, when a person’s faith reaches the place of “resting on” God’s promises, such a person can say with utmost confidence and assurance, “I am resting on the promises of God and therefore am confident He has done what He promised to do.” Paul tells us that joy and peace are the fruits of biblical faith: “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing...” (Romans 15:13).

CONCLUSION

The first and most fundamental way for a Christian to have assurance of entire sanctification is through biblical faith. In our next sermon we will consider the assurance that comes through the direct witness of the Holy Spirit to the heart of the Christian.



—sermon by DR. ALLAN P. BROWN

“COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE
IN PREACHING”



HOW TO KNOW FOR SURE YOU ARE ENTIRELY SANCTIFIED (part 1)

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

INTRODUCTION

How can I be sure that I am entirely sanctified? This question is of great concern to us who believe that the Bible teaches that a Christian can be entirely sanctified in this life and that we must give an account to God as to whether we have obeyed all the commands of Scripture. All Christians are clearly commanded in Scripture to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), to reckon themselves to be dead unto sin but alive unto God, to stop allowing sin to reign in their bodies (Rom. 6:11–12), and to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God (Rom. 12:1–2).

- *Ephesians 5:18:* “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”
- *Romans 6:11–12:* “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”
- *Romans 12:1–2:* “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Although these commands do not use the phrase “entirely sanctified,” they address various aspects of what we have come to call “entire sanctification.” God expressed His desire that all Christians be entirely sanctified when he had Paul write, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” God’s willingness and abil-

¹ Note that this is something the Christian must do for himself. There is no mention of any attendant feelings one should expect as the result of obeying God’s command.

² See for example, V. Raymond Edman, *They Found the Secret*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 1984.

ity to entirely sanctify Christians is expressed in the following verse: “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (1 Thes. 5:24).

There are three ways that Scripture offers a Christian assurance of entire sanctification. The first and primary way is through biblical faith in God’s Word. The second way is through the direct witness of the Holy Spirit to the heart of the Christian, assuring him that his life is fully surrendered to God, that he has been cleansed of self-centeredness (inherited depravity), and that the Holy Spirit has full control of his life. The third way is through measurable attitudes and actions that may be expected as the fruit of entire sanctification.

I. ASSURANCE THROUGH BIBLICAL FAITH IN GOD’S WORD

The first and most fundamental way for a Christian to have assurance of entire sanctification is through biblical faith. The focus of biblical faith is God’s written Word. For this reason the apostle Paul calls it “the word of faith” (Rom. 10:8). When believed, the “word of faith” effectually works in the one exercising faith (1 Thes. 2:13).

There are three indispensable elements to biblical faith. Hebrews 11:6 teaches us, “*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*” In addition to belief in God’s existence, biblical faith requires us to believe that God has spoken to us through special revelation (the Bible). The phrase, “He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him,” implies: (1) a person must believe what God says (“*He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*”); (2) a person must obey what God requires (“*diligently seek Him*”); and (3) a person must trust in and rest on what God promises (“*He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*”). Let’s explore the implications of each of these three elements.

A. Biblical faith believes what God says.

The first element of biblical faith requires a mental assent to what God has said in Scripture. For example, when God commands Christians, “Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18), one must believe that it is possible for Christians, who already have the Spirit dwelling in them (Rom. 8:9–11), to be “filled” with the Spirit. When God says to all Christians, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1), the Christian must believe that God really expects him to do this. When God inspired Paul to pray that the Thessalonian believers would experience God’s provision of entire sanctification and concluded his prayer with a sovereign promise from God, “Faithful is he that calls you, who also will do it” (1

Thes. 5:23, 24), the Christian must believe that God wills all Christians to be entirely sanctified. We must believe what God says.

B. Biblical faith obeys what God requires.

The second element of biblical faith requires the act of the will—that you must do what God requires. This step requires that the Christian, who is dead to sin and free from sin due to his union with Christ (Rom. 6:2, 7), must reckon himself to be “dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:11).¹ The Christian must present his body to God as a living, holy, and acceptable sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). He must, by faith, turn over to the Holy Spirit’s full control every aspect of his life (Eph. 5:18) thus responding to God’s call to be entirely sanctified (1 Thes. 5:23, 24).

The Christian must not proceed to element three of biblical faith until he is sure he has successfully completed steps one and two. Successful completion is measured by a clear conscience and an unconsciously surrendered attitude of heart and mind toward God. This includes all things past, present, and everything God may wish to bring to mind in the future.

C. Biblical faith trusts in and rests on what God promises.

The third element of biblical faith requires one to “trust in” and “rest on” what God promises. One “trusts in” what God has promised because God’s Word is immutable and eternal (Psa. 119:89). “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Luke 21:33; Mat. 24:35). Further, Hebrews 11:1 tells us that biblical faith is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The words “substance” (*hupostasis*) and “evidence” (*elegchos*) are better translated “confidence” and “certainty” respectively. Faith brings confident trust. A person has not exercised biblical faith if he is not able to trust God with complete confidence to do what He promised.

For example, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness” (Rom. 4:3). When God told him He was going to give him a son, Abraham, without any outward proof, chose to believe God simply because He had said it. As a result, God counted Abraham’s faith for righteousness. Paul tells us that Abraham, “in hope against hope” believed (Rom. 4:18). Abraham did not look to himself or to others for assurance. He simply believed God because God cannot lie (Titus. 1:2). He fought off doubts and did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God (Rom. 4:19, 20).

What has God promised the Christian about entire sanctification? God has promised the Christian that He will sanctify him entirely (1



compiled by Rev. Jack Hooker, President,
National Alumni Association of God's Bible School and College

WAYNE STEURY ('73-'74): "FOND MEMORIES"

My wife, Carla (Boyd), and I are pastoring the Church of the Nazarene in Berne, Indiana. We have four children and seven grandchildren. I also teach online for Park University and do part-time computer work. I still enjoy my Greek New Testament and have fond memories of GBS.



**JAMIE FOSTER MERRITT ('77-'82):
"ETERNALLY GRATEFUL"**

I attended GBS 1977-82. When I first came I was 14 years old and wore little-girl-size clothes. During the next year I was sanctified and also doubled my size and weight. I was enrolled in the school work program, working in the kitchen and also for the principal and his wife. This, along with Sister Wolf's instruction and example, allowed me to develop good work ethics and skills that have helped me be a better pastor's wife.

The six years of classes in child evangelism under Mrs. Reynolds' instruction has allowed me to lead over 20 VBS sessions and lead children's ministries in churches that we have pastored. The faith and examples of godliness that I experienced at GBS is what has given me stamina to make it through the tough times that life has thrown my way. The emphasis of hiding God's Word in my heart has also been my stronghold. Brother Hyatt taught me how to truly study God's Word. I will be eternally thankful for my family and friends, as well as the GBS staff and faculty who have given me instruction and support.

I met Paul Merritt in the school snack bar in the fall of 1981 and we got married in August of 1983. I

also began nursing school that fall at Christ Hospital but got ill. During the next 20 years I worked as a nurse's aide in different capacities. In 2004 I decided to go back to nursing school.

Our oldest son is now a United States Marine. He has served in the Persian Gulf and in Afghanistan. He is married with two boys. Our daughter graduated from college and is married. Our next son is attending college, and our youngest son is in high school.

Paul pastors a Nazarene church in Chesapeake, Ohio, is night chaplain at St. Mary's a couple times a month, and works with the homeless in Huntington, West Virginia. I work as a cardiac nurse at St. Mary's Medical Center in Huntington and am actively involved at church and plan to further my education.

We have a busy life and love it that way. God has richly blessed us in many ways. I have truly learned to "count it all joy" for trials and tribulations and will be eternally thankful for a family and school that helped me

Investing in Tomorrow's Christian Leaders

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develop into the Christian I am today. God is not through with me yet. Coal takes a lot of pressure before turning into a diamond. Please pray for our family that we will be faithful to the end.

PEDALING FOR THE PERSECUTED: ROUND 2

At 4:30 a.m. on Monday, August 2, a group of GBS alumni and current students assembled at the Cleveland, Ohio, pier on Lake Erie. After a time of prayer in which each person petitioned God on behalf of specific persecuted Christians around the world, they commenced bicycling 335 miles on a four-day trip across the state, ending at the Serpentine Wall of Cincinnati's riverfront. This was the second year for this event, which was organized to raise awareness of the persecuted church (Voice of the Martyrs, www.persecution.com) and to raise money for Bibles for Iraq through World Help (www.worldhelp.net).

The 11 cyclists ranged in age from 15 to 46 and included Craig Brown, Eric and Nate Davison, David and Anthony Frederick, Timmy Glick, Jonathan and Brandon Klotz, Jonathan McCaman, Kevin Moser, and Bill Roark. Harvey Davis once again drove the chase vehicle.

According to World Help, "The believers in Iraq cry out for God's Word! The need is so great that the Bibles disappear as quickly as they are printed. Iraqi believers

grab God's Word with tears in their eyes. They hug and kiss it and hold it to their foreheads, a sign of respect.

"Our ministry partner there tells us firsthand accounts of horrendous situations they face daily—kidnappings, murders, torture, harassment, and bombings. His family does not go out together at any time. He and his wife shop one at a time, so if one dies, there will still be one left to take care of the family. They hug and kiss their children as they leave for school, not knowing if they will ever see them again. Every time a car drives slowly by their home or church, they hold their breath and pray it does not contain a bomb."

Organizers Craig Brown and Kevin Moser wish to thank all those who took part in this event, either by bicycling, by praying for persecuted Christians, or by giving a donation to supply Bibles to Iraq. Those readers who followed last year's adventure (a detailed description can be found in the October 2009 issue of *God's Revivalist*) will recall the unfortunate accident involving an Amish man and his horse and buggy. We are happy to report that although the cyclists experienced numerous flat tires, inclement weather, and a few minor accidents, they all slipped quietly through Wayne and Holmes counties this year without drawing undue attention to themselves, injuring anyone outside of their group, or damaging the local economy! ■

The bicyclers pause for a photo at the trailhead of the Mohican Valley Trail, Brinkhaven, Ohio, on day two of the 335-mile trip.



➡(p2) given. Still He takes away our sins, renewing us in holiness and love. Still He heals our wounded hearts, bringing “beauty for ashes” in lavish measure. Still He hallows our lives with “goodness and mercy,” banishing our deepest fears, and pledging that we “shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Yes, these all are the “triumphs of His grace.” And whenever we are faithful to the call that He lays upon us, we celebrate them with gladness and excitement. For ours is the same message that an angel brought to those ancient shepherds “keeping watch over their flocks by night.” “Fear not!” he assured them, just as we must assure those troubled ones to whom we must minister. “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy!” These “good tidings” are the focus of every sermon that we preach, every kindness that we extend, and every testimony that we share. Yes, Christ Our Lord has come, and the whole world reflects “the triumphs of His grace.

*Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.*

This “music in the sinners’ ears” is music also for His saints, and it saves them from that sad and sour negativism which paralyzes all spiritual life. Since the days of the Wesleys, we who claim to be their sons and daughters have announced our message with exuberance and excitement. How often have notes of victory risen from those kneeling at our altars! But, alas, in our darker hours we sometimes have turned our lilting melodies into heavy dirges, gripped more by the horror of human sin than thrilled by God’s relentless purpose to redeem it.

It is foolish, to be sure—even fatal—to ignore the greed, arrogance, and contempt that continually insult the Majesty of Heaven and mock the judgments of His law. Thus, God has summoned us to expose sin, not ever to excuse it. Those “lilting melodies” He has planted in our hearts are not naive and silly songs that plaster over the realities of entangling evil. Rather they are noble and majestic anthems that exalt Jesus’ costly triumph for us by His cross and resurrection, as well as His holy triumph in us by His word and Spirit.

Our joy and duty, therefore, is to lift Him up, “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.” To do this, we also urgently call sinners to repent and believe on Him who is their Savior, keenly aware that eternal destiny hinges upon their response. “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men.” This is why we must bravely unleash the Spirit’s sword, engaging our enemy in ferocious combat, attacking sin for the insult against Heaven that it is and warning our hearers without delay to escape the coming wrath.

Yet sin and judgment are not the theme of our message, but only the prelude to it. For, as the scholars remind us, the essential thrust of our Wesleyan proclamation is not the “pessimism of nature” but the “optimism of grace,” even as it is in the New Testament itself. “Fear not: For, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy!” Granted, we must fully describe the curse, but it is only that we may freely extend the cure. But always it is the cure, not the curse, that is the pulsating purpose of our mission. Our greatest evangelists have been fearless in their uncovering of sin but boundless in their offering of grace.

“But where sin did abound, grace did much more abound!” Here, then, is all our hope both for this life

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and for the life that is to come. Jesus Our Lord—appointed by the Father as the great Mediator between God and man—is our Second Adam, and He has won back at Calvary all that the First Adam lost in Eden. In the fullness of His purpose, the benefits which flow from His incarnation and atonement overflow all the evils of our fallen race, which in purpose and provision is already freed from its guilt and penalty.

Readily, therefore, we assure every man and woman, however twisted and demented, “Christ died for you,” offering to “whosoever will” His gifts of “pardon, holiness, and heaven!” “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” To every-

one—yes, to everyone—is gladly extended the “triumphs of His grace.”

There are no exceptions—none at all. If only the whole world would believe, the whole world would be saved! For everywhere Jesus hears the feeble cries of the broken and forsaken ones. He strengthens the faint desires of the failing and faltering ones. He offers hearty welcome to the sinful and the shameful ones. To them, as to all who will forsake their sins and follow Him, He brings the healing and restoration of His love, and the conquests of that love are utterly without limit.

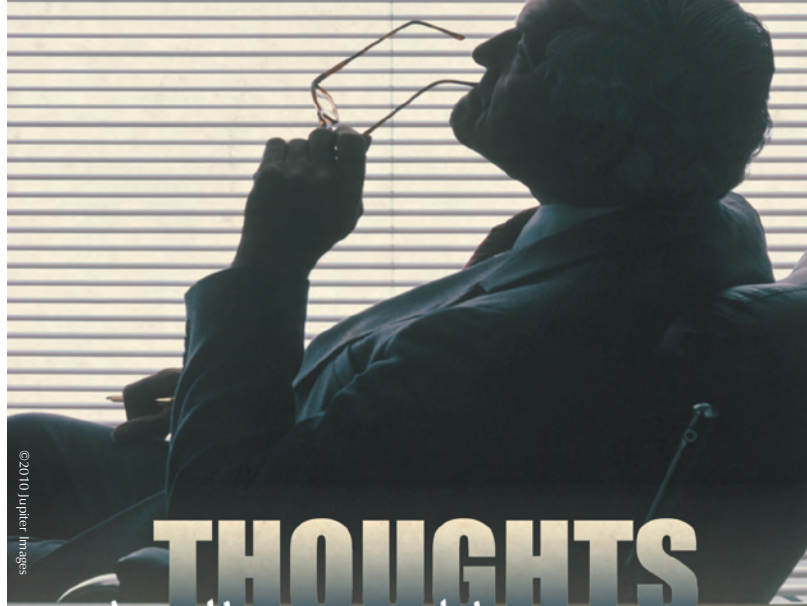
For as John Wesley reminds us, “This love we believe to be the medicine of life, the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world, for all the miseries and vices of men. Wherever this is, there are virtue and happiness going hand in hand. There is humbleness of mind, gentleness, long-suffering, the whole image of God; and at the same time a peace that passeth all understanding, and joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

Yes, “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” *Christ’s love is “the medicine of life...for all the evils of a disordered world.”* Then let us offer that medicine faithfully and gladly, assured that it brings health and restoration, first in personal conversion, and then in social transformation. For as we extend His loving hands, the Great Physician not only brings back the diseased and despairing, but He also extends renewal to the civil, academic, and financial structures in which they must live out their lives.

Increasingly we feel those hostile pressures which are exerted against us by the secular and often pagan culture where Our Lord has called us to speak His name and raise His cross. These forces we must confront with purpose and courage, determined that they shall not turn “our lilting melodies into heavy dirges.” *“Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place” (II Cor. 2:14).* With soaring hope, therefore, we shall press His “crown rights” everywhere, knowing that however long our struggle, it shall be consummated in His triumph. So we press the battle on, singing joyfully as we rally to His cause.

This soaring confidence was the platform for our past, as it shall be for our future. Heaven rejoices above us, and the world listens around us, as we repeat “good tidings of great joy.” And again we open our hymnals to sing Charles Wesley’s lyrics that so gloriously echo the heartbeat of Christ’s gospel with its universal appeal, its uplifting assurance, and its liberating power.

*O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace! ■*



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THOUGHTS

for the quiet hour

by Sonja Vernon

AFLAME

“So He poured out on him the heat of His anger and the fierceness of battle; and it set him aflame all around, yet he did not recognize it; and it burned him, but he paid no attention.”

—Isaiah 42:25 NASB

On August 8, 2010, a Russian man, his body covered in burns and blisters, died after spending approximately six minutes in a sauna heated to 230°F. (Water boils at 212°F.) Why? He was competing. Winning a prize at the World Sauna Championships evidently became so important that it drove him past all the warning signs his body gave. His desire cost him his life.

The end of Isaiah 42 speaks of God’s frustration with a people who are willfully blind and deaf to His overtures. They openly rebel. They reject His messengers. They are so intent on going their own way that even when He pours out His wrath upon them they don’t even stop to notice. Their desire for personal gratification is such that, like our Russian friend, they push past every warning sign. They are aflame and don’t recognize it. They are burned but pay no attention.

How easy it is for us to pass judgment on Israel and to comment on death by sauna, but our society is in precisely the same place! Pursuits of pleasure, gain, and self-fulfillment so consume us that we ignore the warnings all around. Families crumble, the unborn are discarded, morality becomes conditional, and the red flags wave. We are all part of society and affect it in some way either by our presence or our absence. There is no neutral ground. We are aflame. What will we do? ■

Sonja Vernon is Dean of Women at God’s Bible School and College.

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