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THE PENTECOSTAL evangel

NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, SAITH THE LORD

NEW
INTERNATIONAL
EDITION

BY MY SPIRIT



Choir from Central Bible Institute of Nigeria poses with American delegates (J. P. Hogan, E. L. Phillips, T. F. Zimmerman) during Pan-African Conference at Enugu, Nigeria, in September. See pages 8 and 9 for the story of this history-making event.



NOVEMBER 1, 1964
TEN CENTS



FAITH ...AS A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED

By John F. Green

IN MATTHEW 13:31, 32 JESUS USES THE MUSTARD SEED, which He calls the least of all seeds, to illustrate the growth of the kingdom of heaven. That which has a relatively insignificant beginning may become something of unusual and notable size.

In Matthew 17:20 Jesus again turns to the mustard seed for an illustration of faith. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed," He says, "ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you."

Notice how the Lord encourages the small and the weak. He sees the smallest fire, for it is written, "Smoking flax shall he not quench" (Matthew 12:20). He regards the weakest experience, for, "A bruised reed shall he not break" (Matthew 12:20). He blesses the smallest of congregations, declaring, "Where two or three are gathered in my name" (Matthew 18:20). He invites the least among us, saying, "Suffer the *little* children to come unto me" (Mark 10:14).

We are never too small or too weak to get His attention. A satisfying spiritual experience is in reach of all.

How often we lament the smallness of our faith. Many times it seems no larger than a mustard seed. We can take heart and be thankful if we have any faith. It is not the size of our faith, but the sincerity, that is important, and the One in whom our faith is placed is all-important.

Jesus says, "Faith as a mustard seed," not, "Faith the

size of a mustard seed." The comparison is in similarity, not in size.

Consider the mustard seed. Though it is the smallest of seeds, it is a seed. That small seed, properly planted and cared for, will produce a luxuriant growth far out of proportion to its original size.

The mustard seed does not say to itself, "I'm such a small seed that I am utterly useless." Nor does it say, "Because I'm not as big as an avocado seed I can't do much." That small mustard seed has all the elements necessary to produce life, and it quietly goes to work producing it.

So with faith. It is not the quantity of our faith, but the quality, that counts. True faith contains all the elements needed to produce spiritual life, growth, and maturity in us. Like the seed, faith is a creation of God. It binds the heart of man to Him. That seed of faith, properly planted and nourished through prayer, Bible reading, and the rain of the Holy Spirit, will produce in us the divine nature. Like the mustard seed it quietly goes to work producing that which it was created to produce.

Human experience bears witness to this. From some seemingly insignificant beginnings have come lives of spiritual vigor, growth, and fruitfulness. Men with a little faith have placed that faith in God. He has honored the elements of life in that faith and those men have grown to make their influence powerful in the cause of the Lord.

Hebrews 12:1, 2 contains an answer to many problems we have with faith. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..." Jesus is the creator of faith. He is the perfecter of faith. He is also the rewarder of faith. We are to run the Christian race looking to Him, trusting in Him.

Let us plant our little "mustard seed" of faith in the Lord Jesus. Let the sunshine of God's love and grace beam upon it. Let the Holy Spirit cultivate it. The growth that develops will be soul satisfying, Christ exalting, and acceptable in the eyes of God. "Nothing shall be impossible to you." ◀◀

THANKFUL FOR GIFT OF "DIVINE HEALTH"

I wonder if anyone has more for which to thank the Lord than I do. As a practical nurse I have wonderful opportunities to testify to God's saving and healing power to my patients. This I can do with conviction because of what God has done for me.

November 19, 1964, will mark the tenth anniversary of my healing from cancer of the bowels and other disorders. This was the turning point in my life from years of suffering to the joys of good health.

I was beyond human help when I went to the Assembly of God church in Chester, Pa., for prayer. That night I was instantly healed of cancer and have had no recurrence of it. At the

same time God delivered me from addiction to narcotics which I had been taking in large quantities to control the pain.

A few months later God healed me of heart trouble which I had had for three years. When I could not see because of cataracts, God removed them in answer to prayer in 1955. Two years later I lost the sight in my left eye when it was pierced by a wire, but God healed that also, and after that I did not even need glasses.

In 1960 I had a complete check-up for insurance purposes. The agent who read the doctor's report said he had never had such a good report on a person my age. This gave me another

opportunity to testify to God's goodness to me.

I do not magnify the afflictions that I have suffered, but I give glory to God who is my great Physician. For every day of health and strength I praise Him, for it gives me opportunity to serve my Jesus. He is my strength. I recently worked 16 to 18 hours a day for five days, painting the walls and ceilings of five rooms, and had no aches or pains as a result.

I give God all the glory.—Mrs. Geneva W. Hess, 305 N. Monroe St., Media, Pa.

(Endorsed by William R. Crew, pastor, First Assembly of God, Chester, Pa.)

The Good Fight Of Faith



By PAUL C. SORENSEN

IT IS EVIDENT THAT WE ARE LIVING IN THE LAST DAYS. The whole world that surrounds us shows the prevalence of moral, material, and spiritual decay. "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." Even the Christian is not free from the ferocious attacks of the enemy. Yet, praise be to God, there is One who restraineth and He is on our side. For that reason Paul exhorts us to "fight the good fight of faith."

ATTACKS ON THE BODY

The most frequent contest and one we understand the best is the battle for the control of the body. I am not referring to the carnal nature but to the physical body that God created in the beginning, and which He created good. Because of the fall of man, the body came under the control of sin. When redeemed by Christ, the body can serve God in honor and sanctification.

There are two things in which we must exercise carefulness if we would like to enjoy spiritual growth. The first is love for comfort or laziness. Indulgence in comfort brings lack of self-discipline. The body becomes the master instead of continuing to be the servant. We make use of physical weariness as an excuse for not fulfilling our spiritual responsibilities. We do those things that are pleasant to us and neglect the unpleasant ones. We take too much time in pastimes such as calling on friends, talking, reading, watching television, practicing sports, instead of dedicating ourselves to spiritual things.

To engage in the reading of God's Word and prayer will help us to better discharge our duties in the church of Jesus Christ. We must overcome the love for comfort and laziness. Only Christ can help us to discipline our lives to that end.

ATTACKS ON PHYSICAL APPETITES

Secondly, there is the battle concerning physical appetites. Let us remember that the natural physical appetites in themselves are good. But when we allow these appetites to go far beyond the normal, divinely established limits, they become sins. Just as too much sleep can make a person lazy, and too much eating can produce a glutton, if we allow lustful desires to dominate our lives we are in danger of becoming licentious.

The work of the devil, the enemy of our souls, is to take the good things created by God, and to twist them to fit his plans by transforming them into something sinful that eventually will destroy our lives!

The secret for victory for all of this is not to try to eradicate all natural appetites but to consecrate them

to the Lord. All must be brought to the cross, to Christ, the only Teacher of our inner man, the only Master of our lives. (Read 1 Corinthians 6:12, 1 Corinthians 10:23 and Matthew 18:8, 9.)

ATTACKS ON THE MIND

But there is a more strategic battle than the battle for the control of the body. It is the battle for the control of the mind. It is more ferocious since every sin is born in the mind before it becomes apparent in the body. It is my opinion that one of the worst battles in the believer's life—and it is especially true in the lives of young people today—is the temptation to impurity of mind. Do not try to overcome these battles on your own strength. Take your problem to the Lord. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). A faster way to overcome the evil thoughts is to turn our thoughts to something good. If we shut ourselves in with our struggles, we will succumb. Let us overcome evil with good; let us look to Christ and worship Him. The forces of evil will relent and retreat.

Many doubts would upset our minds; doubts in relation to the authenticity of the Scriptures and our Christian faith; doubts in relation to ourselves. Also there are doubts in regard to the pardon of our sins; doubts concerning the answer to our prayers. On occasion we are tempted to doubt God's love. Whatever the mental conflict, we must take it to Jesus. It takes only a moment in His presence to scatter the cloud of doubt.

ATTACKS ON THE SPIRIT

Finally, there is the battle for the control of our spirits. This is the greatest conflict. It is the greatest because the spirit is the most elevated part of man, that part of him that is able to have fellowship with God. Sometimes we believe the sins of the flesh are the worst, because we see them, but I believe the worst sins are those of the spirit. In 2 Corinthians 7:1 Paul admonishes: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." We must guard ourselves against pride and rebellion, the basic motivations for sin. Selfish ambitions, the desire for status and prestige, these are evil.

It is very easy to harden the heart. How often we see the evidences of a contentious and critical spirit. If we allow these things to dwell in our spirit they will ruin us. Here again we have the answer in Christ. Bring each problem to Him, "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. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." ◀◀◀

Pablo (Paul) C. Sorensen is superintendent of the Union of the Assemblies of God in Argentina. This article is translated from the Spanish-language C. A. magazine *Embajadores*, published in Argentina.

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STATEMENT OF FAITH

WE BELIEVE the Bible to be the inspired and only infallible and authoritative Word of God. WE BELIEVE that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. WE BELIEVE in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal future return to this earth in power and glory to rule a thousand years. WE BELIEVE in the Blessed Hope, which is the Rapture of the Church at Christ's coming. WE BELIEVE that the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Christ. WE BELIEVE that regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for personal salvation. WE BELIEVE that the redemptive work of Christ on the cross provides healing of the human body in answer to believing prayer. WE BELIEVE that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:4, is given to believers who ask for it. WE BELIEVE in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life. WE BELIEVE in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, the one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting damnation.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

New International Edition

The regular monthly issues of the International Edition of the *Evangel* will not begin to appear until January, but the issue you are now reading is a sample of what you may expect in it. The International Edition will have a global air by featuring articles by Pentecostal leaders in various countries and stories of the Lord's gracious miracles reported from all parts of the earth.

The International Edition will be one of the regular weekly *Evangels* received by more than 185,000 subscribers in the U.S. and other lands. In addition, this particular Edition will be circulated outside the U.S. as a monthly for \$1.00 a year.

By adding many thousands to the mailing list, as a result of the new low rate, the *Evangel* will help to satisfy a growing hunger for sound, Spirit-filled literature in every land. The Assemblies of God already is turning out great amounts of gospel literature. Presses have been set up in many countries to publish Christian literature in various languages. There is also a large staff in Springfield, Missouri, U.S.A., producing a full line of Spanish publications which are shipped to all the Spanish-speaking parts of the world. In addition, the Gospel Publishing House sends a regular stream of English-language books and periodicals, including Sunday school materials, to scores of countries. Now we are offering an International Edition of *The Pentecostal Evangel* to supplement this worldwide literature program.

Churches and ministers everywhere have been wanting an edition like this. The worldwide rise in literacy is producing millions of new readers who understand English (for one out of four people on the earth speak English). Every year 40 million persons learn to read. This is over 2½ million a week—over 260 persons a minute. After they learn how, they look around for something to read, and what do they find? Most of it is non-Christian, or even anti-Christian, for Christian literature is very scarce in most countries.

A letter from Burma says: "Any evening in the colorful downtown area of Rangoon around the Sule Pagoda, hundreds of Burmese cluster around the many book and magazine outlets. Here you can buy anything from a two-year-old copy of *Time* magazine to the latest American textbook on nuclear physics." We want the *Evangel* to be there, too.

A Christian in Turkey tells how avidly the young Turks are reading books of all kinds, including English. The same is true in Japan, Africa, anywhere you go. In Singapore and other places you will find sidewalk bookstalls with English magazines and books favoring Communism. Recently the U.S.S.R. increased its production of literature in English by 82 per cent in a single year because English is the fastest-spreading language in the world today. It is the most widely studied language. Chinese is the only language that is spoken by more people than English.

The International Edition of the *Evangel* offers a new opportunity to spread the gospel. Its ministry will be to evangelize, to teach new converts the Word of God, to strengthen the faith of believers, and to constitute a bond of fellowship between Spirit-filled people in every continent. Local news and other items that concern only American readers will be omitted from the International Edition so it will have a universal appeal.

If you have relatives or other friends outside the U.S. we invite you to order the International Edition for them at the low rate of \$1.00 a year. (An order form will be found on page 15.) If you do not wish to order subscriptions for specific individuals, perhaps you can send an offering to pay for free subscriptions. Five dollars will enable us to send the International Edition to five carefully selected foreign addresses for a year.

If the *Evangel* is a blessing to you, will you not do everything you can to put it in the hands of others who need its faith-building message?

—R.C.C.

Worldwide Fellowship in Prayer Results in Many Miraculous Healings

AROUND THE WORLD, HEARTS WILL BE UNITED IN A time of concerted, purposeful prayer through the *Revivaltime* World Prayermeeting on Sunday November 22. This year's theme is, "Let your requests be made known" (Philippians 4:6).

Planned in cooperation with the Women's Missionary Council, Men's Fellowship, and Radio Departments of the Assemblies of God, the World Prayermeeting is an annual invitation to listeners around the world to share their urgent requests for prayer with *Revivaltime's* worldwide congregation.

It is a challenge to Christians everywhere to act upon the faithfulness of our Saviour. When the burdens of the world are placed at this altar of prayer, barriers of distance and language disappear. Prayer is the universal language of believers before the throne of God.

A year ago 919 local groups joined *Revivaltime* in praying for nearly 22,000 individual needs. In mammoth auditoriums, in small pioneer churches, in mission stations, in tiny jungle outposts, 36,362 Christians banded together in a time of fervent prayer at the great World Prayermeeting. This year we expect even greater participation.

God responded to the petitions of His children! Scores of testimonies have reached the Radio Department including this thrilling testimony from a woman in Port of Spain, Trinidad:

"I had lost my child, and my marriage had gone on the rocks. I could not find employment. After listening to one of your radio services I decided to write for prayer and ask to be included in your World Prayermeeting.

"During the broadcast before the Prayermeeting I can remember your words as if it were yesterday—you said, 'God doesn't only answer prayer, but He answers it quickly!' Within one month I received a Civil Service appointment. I am employed as stenographer. I have so much for which to thank God."

MANY FIND GOD

From Anchorage, Alaska, came this glad news: "I requested prayer for the salvation of my husband and son last November. My husband has been saved, and our homelife is vastly different after all these years."

Seldom Fogo, Newfoundland, was the scene of another answer to prayer: "Not long after the World Prayermeeting I received a letter from my mother telling me that my father was saved in a revival in my hometown. Keep praying with me, and I know God will save the rest of our family!"

Another grateful letter came from a woman in Dor-



Prayer was requested at last year's *Revivaltime* World Prayermeeting for the pioneer work at Surigao del Sur, Philippines. This picture, taken since that time, indicates God has blessed the new church and has added many to its numbers.

rance, Kansas: "I too can praise the Lord for answered prayer in that great Prayermeeting last November. My loved ones have come back to the Lord and are happy once again."

DELIVERED FROM ALCOHOLISM

This joyful news reached us from a man in Auburn, Washington: "How we praise the Lord for *Revivaltime* and for what it has meant in my family. My two brothers were hopeless alcoholics until mightily delivered through the great World Prayermeeting two years ago. Their deliverance is wonderfully real today."

A husband in Fresno, California, says his wife is now free from alcoholism: "Thank you for honoring my prayer request last year at Prayermeeting time. God answered in a few months, and my wife has had no inclination or apparent desire for alcoholic drinks."

RECEIVES SPECIAL BLESSING

"Last fall," wrote a woman in Wilton, North Dakota, "I wrote you for prayer. I received a letter with a beautiful gift in memory of the Prayermeeting. One day as I sat with the Bible and this bookmark, I suddenly realized that the chains had fallen off. I had needed light and help concerning some needs. God answered your prayers and helped me."

There are many other testimonies—too numerous to list, but we want you to realize one thing: God is willing and eager to meet your need, if you will but make it known!

Prayer warriors are needed. If you are interested in sponsoring a local prayer group in your church or community, write to *Revivaltime*. Be sure to mention the approximate number who will be participating in your service so that we may send you an adequate number of prayer requests.

We are preparing a beautiful prayer reminder bearing the Prayermeeting theme and Scripture text, which will be sent to every person taking part. Be a *Revivaltime* prayer warrior! Join us as we pray for the needs of the world.

If you have needs, let us know of them. Send your requests today to *Revivaltime*, Box 70, Springfield, Missouri 65801.

By RON ROWDEN

WORLD PRAYERMEETING NOVEMBER 22



THIS PRESENT WORLD

Bible

Worldwide Bible Reading Begins November 26

For the 21st year the American Bible Society is suggesting that Christian people all over the world join in reading the same portion of Scripture each day between November 26 (the American Thanksgiving Day) and December 25 (Christmas Day).

Last year millions of persons in 131 nations participated. Often referred to as the "world's largest Bible-reading class," the program had its origin during World War Two when a lonely American soldier on Guadalcanal wrote his family in the U.S. asking that they maintain their ties by simultaneous readings of identical Scriptures.

The Bible Society has printed 14,000,000 bookmarks on which the daily readings are listed.

Bible Now Published in 1,216 Languages

Some parts of the Scriptures have now been published in 1,216 languages and dialects but there remain "well over 1,000 mutually unintelligible languages and dialects which still have nothing of the Bible." The American Bible Society says only 231 languages have entire Bibles and only 290 more have the entire New Testament. More than 3,000 translators in 130 nations are currently at work translating and revising previous translations, in more than 500 languages.

Canada

Canadian Assemblies Report Great Growth

From 13 ordained ministers in 1917 to 666 in 1964. This is the remarkable record of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

Dr. Charles M. Wortman, general secretary of Canada's fastest growing denomination, says that membership in the Pentecostal Assemblies reached 144,000 by 1961, date of the last Dominion-wide census. This was a 52 per cent increase in 10 years. During the same period Lutherans increased 49 per cent and Roman Catholics 38 per cent.

Of the 685 Pentecostal Assemblies in the Dominion of Canada 17 are French, 33 German, 26 Slavic and 10 Finnish.

Cuban Pastor Flees to Canada

A Cuban pastor, seeking asylum in Canada, reached Gander, Newfoundland, on September 7 on a Cuban airliner which was en route to Spain and Czechoslovakia. His wife and four children were with him. He said he left Cuba because the present government had started teaching children hatred and persecution. "They teach them to inform on their parents and the youngsters are in danger of having their faith in God destroyed," he said. Clergy in Cuba are despised and humiliated, he declared, and are under constant surveillance by the police.

Catholicism

Catholics Outnumber Protestants in India

After 17 years of Indian independence, membership in all Christian sects totals 10,498,077 out of a population of 439,022,893 according to the government's latest census. Catholics number 6,282,409. There are 366,162,693 Hindus, 46,911,731 Muslims, 7,846,074 Sikhs, 3,252,804 Buddhists, and 2,027,246 Jains.

Theologian Cites Faults in Catholic Doctrines

According to *Ecumenical Press Service*, Dr. Karl Barth has made the following comments concerning the ecumenical movement:

"In my view the greatest obstacle to rapprochement between the Reformed Church and the Catholic Church is a tiny little word the Roman Church adds after each of our statements: the word 'and.' When we say Jesus, the Catholics say—Jesus *and* Mary. We try to obey Christ as our only Lord; the Catholics obey Christ *and* His 'representative on earth,' the Pope. We believe that the Christians are saved by the merits of Jesus Christ; the Catholics add, *and* by their own merits, that is, by their works. We believe that the sole source of revelation is Scripture; the Catholics add *and* tradition. We say that knowledge of God is obtained through faith in His Word, as expressed in the Scriptures; the Catholics add *and* through reason."

U. S. A.

Federal Funds Used to Study Glossolalia

Due to the rapid spread of the glossolalia (speaking in tongues) phenomenon among Protestant groups, a special psychological and linguistic study is being made under a federal research grant. Lutheran Medical Center, Brooklyn, N. Y., has received a \$5,000 grant from the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare for the project.

Depository to House Works on Glossolalia

A depository of writings on glossolalia (speaking in tongues) will be established at Springfield, Missouri, by the Assemblies of God. The collection will include a complete set of current books on all phases of the work of the Holy Spirit, together with out-of-print volumes which are available, and theses on the subject which have not been printed. There also will be a "clip file" preserving articles and excerpts from various periodicals.

Officials at the national headquarters of the Assemblies of God authorized the depository in the light of current interest among churches and ministers of all denominations in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. The depository will be available to individuals interested in researching Pentecostal theology and Pentecostal experience.

U. S. S. R.

Russians Buy Bibles on Black Market

One of the hottest black market items in the U.S.S.R. today is the Bible, according to a New Jersey clergyman who recently visited Moscow. One emigrant said he was offered a cow in exchange for his Russian-language Bible, and on another occasion was offered an entire month's wages for it.

The Moscow Radio recently complained that tourists are bringing Bibles into Russia and leaving them with Russian people. It called for tighter restrictions and asked Russian citizens not to accept Bibles and religious literature from tourists.

Labeling these "imperialist propaganda," the Soviet radio said "this kind of so-called literature is the flesh and blood of anti-Communist organizations acting with the church against Communist countries."

Israel

Older Folk Get Job Preference

Unemployed people in Israel may find that "life begins at 40." Women over 40 and men of 45 and over will be given preference for jobs in public institutions if they have the same qualifications as younger applicants, under an agreement recently signed in Jerusalem. The authorities explained this is not merely a humanitarian step but the outgrowth of a conviction that the country needs the benefit of the ability and experience possessed by older people.

German Youths Make Restitution to Jews

Twenty young non-Jewish German men and women spent the past summer in Jerusalem erecting buildings for the Jewish Institute for the Blind. The volunteer laborers, including printers, nurses, teachers, university students, and professional photographers ranged from 18 to 27 years of age. They are members of *Aktion Sühnezeichen* (Symbol of Repentance), a church-sponsored organization which seeks by good deeds to make restitution for sins of the past generation and to foster goodwill between Christians and Jews.

None of the young people had ever set eyes upon a Jew until they went to Jerusalem. In addition to providing the labor, the German organization provided most of the \$75,000 needed for the Jerusalem project.

Asia

Japanese Sect Builds New Temple

Rissho Kosei Kai, one of the biggest of Japan's "new religions," has dedicated a new temple in Tokyo for the use of its 2½ million members. The seven-story structure, largest building for religious use in the Orient, has 20,000 visitors a day and can accommodate 30,000 persons. Rissho Kosei Kai beliefs center on Buddhist doctrines as interpreted by the 13th-century Japanese teacher Nichiren Shonin.

Scripture Published in Vietnamese Newspaper

A Chinese newspaper in Saigon is publishing a weekly Scripture passage in its Sunday edition. Under the heading, "God's Word for a New Age," the newspaper is publishing the entire Gospel of Mark in serial form.



Your Questions

Answered by Ernest S. Williams

Who baptized John the Baptist?

We do not have any record that he was baptized. He introduced a baptism of repentance as part of his ministry.

Does the statement that "even the hairs of your head are numbered" mean that God knows just how many hairs each person has? (Luke 12:7).

No doubt God does know that, but I believe the lesson He would have us learn is that He knows every detail of our lives and is able to meet our every need.

Do you think little children should be permitted to partake of the bread and wine at communion?

Since we have open communion of which all are invited to partake, children as well as adults will partake as a feature of church worship unless their parents teach them that only those who know Jesus as their Saviour are to participate.

Please explain, "For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (Matthew 24:28).

There are several opinions concerning this. Since the Roman emblem at the time of Christ was the eagle, there are those who believe the Jewish people at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem represented the carcass, and the Roman legions the eagles. Those who hold this view believe Matthew 24 should be interpreted largely as related to Israel, and that there was a fulfillment when Jerusalem was destroyed. They believe also that it will be those of the revived Roman Empire under the Beast who will become the great persecutors of the Jews during the tribulation.

Others believe the carcass represents Christ who died for us; the eagles represent the eagle-eyed saints who will be looking for Him when He comes again.

Does "Confess your faults one to another" (James 5:16) mean we must confess everything to everybody? I have many faults. Is it not enough to confess them to God?

There would be no value in confessing all our faults to everyone. Most people at some time have thoughts or feelings which, if expressed, might injure others. When not expressed they have done no one any harm and are between God and ourselves. A good rule is:

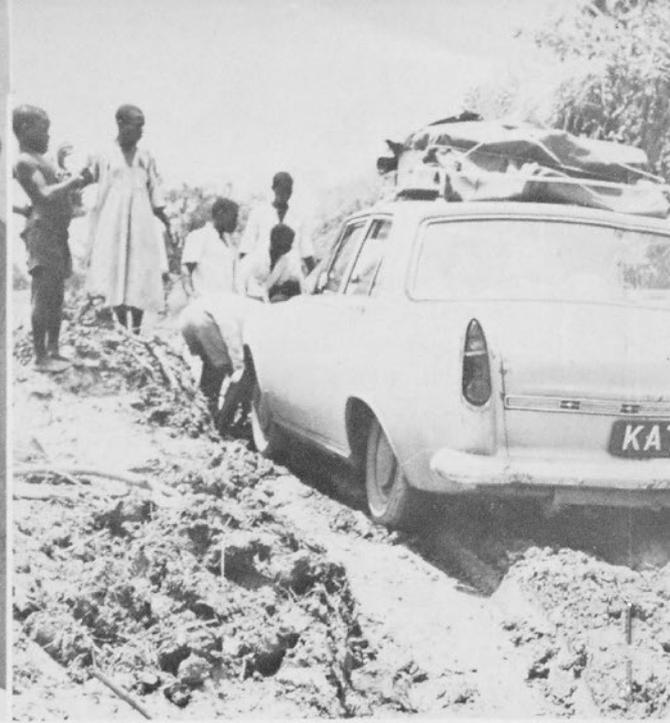
If we have sinned against God, confess to God. If we have sinned against an individual, confess to him, seeking forgiveness and reconciliation. If we have sinned against the entire church body, then public confession is in order.

While this rule is a general guide, there are times when a person becomes so convicted for what he has said or done that he feels he must confess to others to humble himself and relieve his conscience. Let him then obey the conviction of his heart.

If you have a spiritual problem or any question about the Bible, you are invited to write to "Your Questions," The Pentecostal Evangel, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, Mo. 65802. Brother Williams will answer if you send a stamped self-addressed envelope.



The mayor of Enugu (wearing hat), with leaders of the conference, welcomed delegates from 13 different countries.



Not all the delegates came by jet; some struggled over impassable African roads.

PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE

A photo feature on the first continent-wide Assemblies of God Conference in Africa

THE VERY NAME OF THE CONFERENCE indicates the depth of the revolutionary time in which we live. Until now there has never been a day since the Dark Continent was first surveyed by David Livingstone when the

term *Pan-African* could be used realistically.

It has been said that the 19th century was the white man's century in Africa but the 20th is the African's century. With the breakup of vast co-

lonial empires and the emerging of more than 30 nations in the last 10 years, Africans have indeed discovered each other.

What is true of the continent politically is also true of the work of

Matthew Ezeigbo (left), Nigeria Assemblies of God Superintendent, welcomed Everett Phillips, Africa Field Secretary who was convention coordinator.



Missionary John Hall (left) interpreted into French the final evening's message by Assemblies of God Foreign Missions Director J. Philip Hogan.

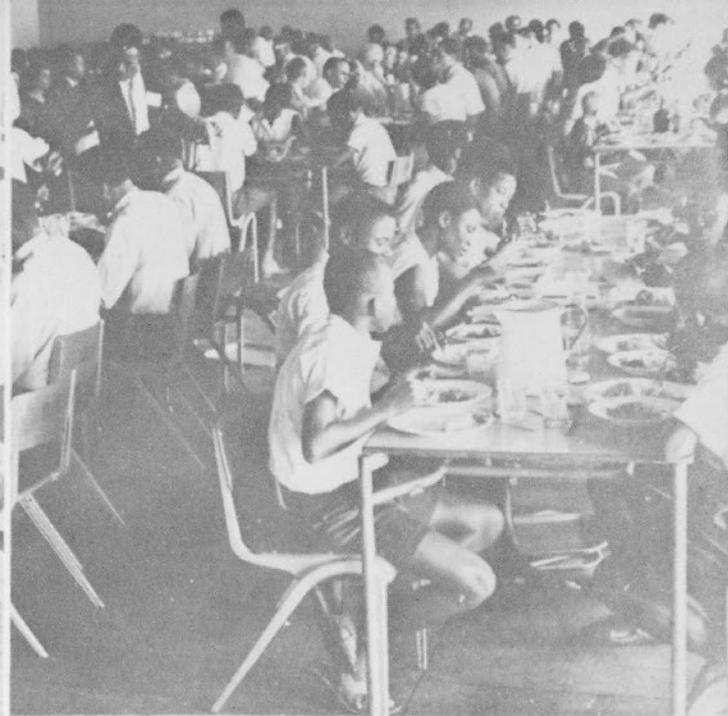




ed over almost



The conference, which was attended by more than 200 missionaries and nationals, was held in the University of Nigeria.



University cafeteria served both African and European style meals.

the Assemblies of God. The American Assemblies have been sending missionaries and resources to Africa for more than 40 years, but only now has it become possible for the leaders of the various fields to meet together for planning and fellowship.

The Pan-African Conference held September 2-9 on the Enugu campus of the University of Nigeria was a major milestone for the Assemblies of God. More than 200 missionaries and nationals were in attendance. There were representatives from every country in Africa having Assemblies of God work with the exception of tortured Congo.

For the missionaries perhaps the greatest thrill was to see the enthusiasm with which the African brethren from all over the continent responded to one another.

For seven intensive days we prayed, sang, and praised together. We ate

at a common table, slept under a common roof. Men who are little more than a generation removed from raw paganism led the meetings, chaired the committees, and in general master-minded the convention. Their maturity, their spiritual poise, their sensitivity to God's Spirit, their tremendous enthusiasm and vision to get on with the job of evangelizing Africa—these were at once a benediction and a challenge to the missionary family.

The new spirit of pioneering and independence in the political realm which has captured every African cannot help but have its effect in church affairs.

We believe this conference was most timely. It highlighted our common purpose, brought our efforts into coordination, and above all provided new incentive for bringing every part of Africa the witness it desperately needs.

—J. PHILIP HOGAN

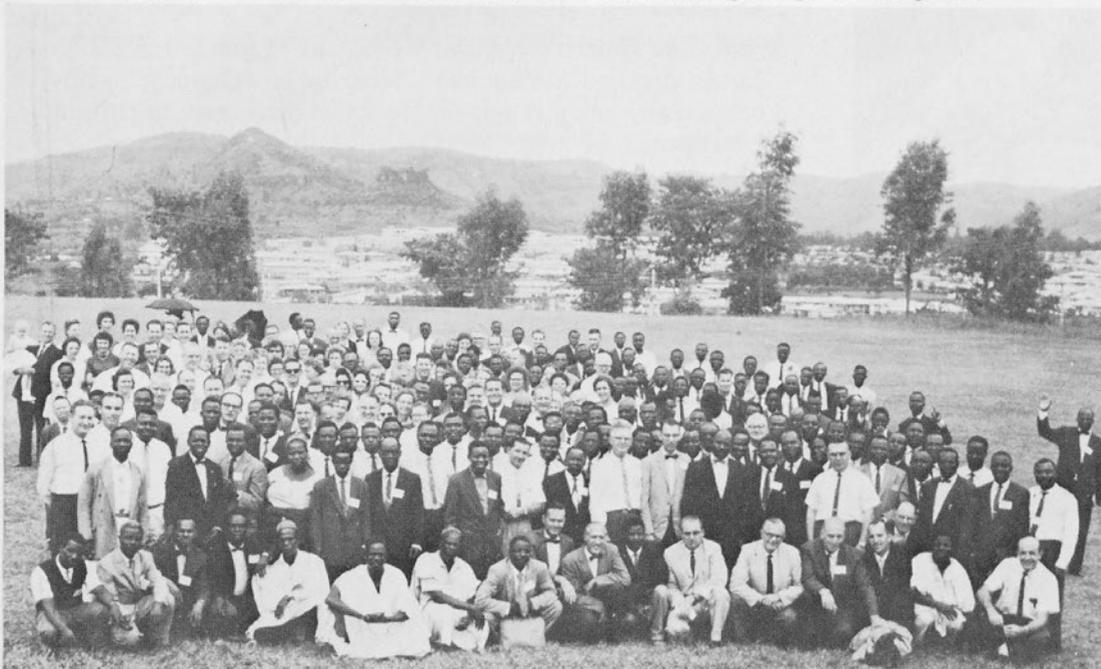


Though from widely separated parts of Africa, delegates shared Pentecostal freedom in worship.

J. Philip Hogan and Assemblies of God General Superintendent T. F. Zimmerman (right) boarded chartered plane which carried a group of delegates to Lagos after the conference.



"Official photo" of the conference was taken in a field showing Enugu in background.



HYPOCRISY

Next Week's Sunday School Lesson

LUKE 11:37-44; JAMES 1:22-27

BY J. BASHFORD BISHOP

The most scathing and denunciatory words Jesus ever spoke were addressed to the Pharisees—to people who were very, very religious. Seven times in Matthew 23 He called them “hypocrites” and in our text from Luke He addressed them similarly.

Webster's Dictionary defines a hypocrite as “a person who pretends to be what he is not; one who pretends to be better than he really is.” The word *hypocrite* literally means “an actor.” And it is the business of an actor to play a part which in real life he does not live up to in the least.

It is very easy to condemn hypocrisy in others and to completely ignore the fact hypocritical tendencies and characteristics exist in our own hearts. Hence, in studying this lesson it would be practical to pray: “Search me, O God, and know my heart, and see if there be any hypocrisy therein, for Thou desirest truth and transparent reality in the inner man.”

1. *The Hypocrisy of the Pharisees.* When the Pharisee

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD



with whom Jesus dined was shocked because Jesus ignored the traditional Jewish ceremonial washing, Christ took advantage of the occasion to lay a number of charges against these self-deceived men.

(a) They were strict in observing rules to avoid supposed outward defilement, but at the same time were guilty of greed, extortion, and other wickedness which defiled the inner man. In verses 40 and 41, Christ reminded them the God who made man sees not only his external appearance but what he is on the inside, *The Amplified New Testament* gives a good rendering of the difficult verse 41: “But [dedicate your inner self and] give for donations to the poor of those things which are within [of inward righteousness] and behold, everything is purified *and* clean for you.” True righteousness is *put in* by the Holy Spirit and not *put on* by human effort. Again, the only true external righteousness is that which is the *outflow* of the righteousness *inwrought* by the Spirit of God.

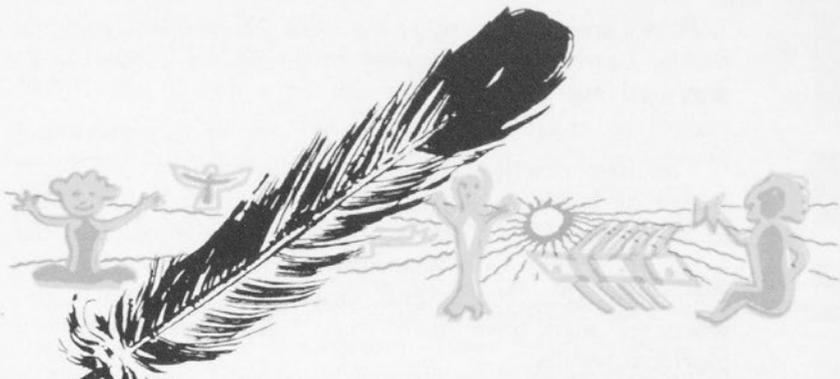
(b) They were guilty of great sins of omission. The Pharisees were so careful about their tithing they tithed even the spices and seasonings! For this Jesus commended them, thus endorsing tithing—“these ought ye to have done.” But He condemned them for neglecting what was infinitely more important—justice and the love of God! Many lessons are evident here: (1) Legalistic religion is more concerned with not doing wrong than with doing that which is positive righteousness. (2) No amount of external religious acts will atone for internal wrongness. It is much easier to put ten dollars in a collection plate than right a wrong or confess a sin! (3) Over-scrupulousness in religious matters may indicate the toleration of internal unrighteousness!

(c) They were guilty of pride, vanity, and self-seeking (v. 43). Those who define holiness mainly in terms of external rules which are not difficult to keep easily become proud, self-satisfied, and anxious to obtain recognition from men. Conversely, those who have a truly Biblical concept of holiness with its great moral obligations, find themselves coming far short and are thus driven to an attitude of humility.

2. *The Hypocrisy of the Hearer* (James 1:22-25). James speaks of the possibility of self-deception in connection with the hearing of sermons. But how is this possible? It is done by supposing a head knowledge of the Word is meritorious even though not accompanied by holiness of heart and life. Hearing the truth is no substitute for living it!

3. *The Hypocrisy of the “Religious”* (James 1:26, 27). James declares a man may “seem to be religious,” without actually being religious. He states three very important expressions of true religion: (1) *a controlled tongue*; (2) *divine love*, evidenced by genuine concern and practical action in behalf of those in need; (3) *holiness of heart and life*. The implication is that those who profess to be religious, or as we say “spiritual,” but lack in these essentials, are hypocritical and self-deceived.

Honesty with ourselves and with God, a willingness to face up to one's inconsistencies, simple faith in the cleansing power of the blood of Christ, and continual dependence upon the power of the indwelling Spirit, will keep us from the sins of the Pharisee including hypocrisy! ◀◀◀



CAMP MEETING - INDIAN STYLE



INDIANS LOVE CAMPING. THEY ALSO LOVE CHURCH meetings, and when church meetings are combined with camping their joy is complete.

During the past summer hundreds of Indian Christians rolled their blankets, packed their cooking utensils, and headed for the nearest Assemblies of God camp meeting. The 30 Indian camps were scattered all across America, from Arizona to Minnesota and from the Carolinas to California. None of the scores of camp meetings held by their white brothers during the past summer was more mightily blessed of God than these gatherings of Indians which were held under the blue canopy of heaven in some places, and under crude *brush arbors* in others.

The largest was the two-week Apache Camp at Lower Cedar Creek, Arizona, on the Fort Apache reservation. People from five Indian missions attended this camp. Sunday school attendance totaled 356. Approximately 500 campers lived in their hand-made tents and crudely built shades. They attended the meetings faithfully despite the blowing sand in the canyon.

Before the meetings began, the missionaries had a work day to get the grounds cleaned up. The Indians built *wickiups*, as their family huts are called. Some made benches for the worshipers. Others kept busy painting buildings or hanging the lights on poles and trees.

It was hot at camp. Temperatures ranged from 100 to 117 degrees on the desert. One missionary said: "The weather was hot; dust and dirt were everywhere. Flies, bugs and scorpions were in abundance. But the blessings of the Lord far outnumbered all the inconveniences."

How the Indian people love to sing gospel songs and

to pray and worship the Lord. Although they seldom hurry to services, they are loath to leave the church once they get there. Many were filled with the Spirit during the camp meeting.

Bible classes were held during the day, both in English and in the Indian languages. At night there was a strong emphasis on evangelism—for some of the Indians who came to the camps were unconverted—and several hundreds (including boys and girls) sought Christ for salvation. Many heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus for the first time.

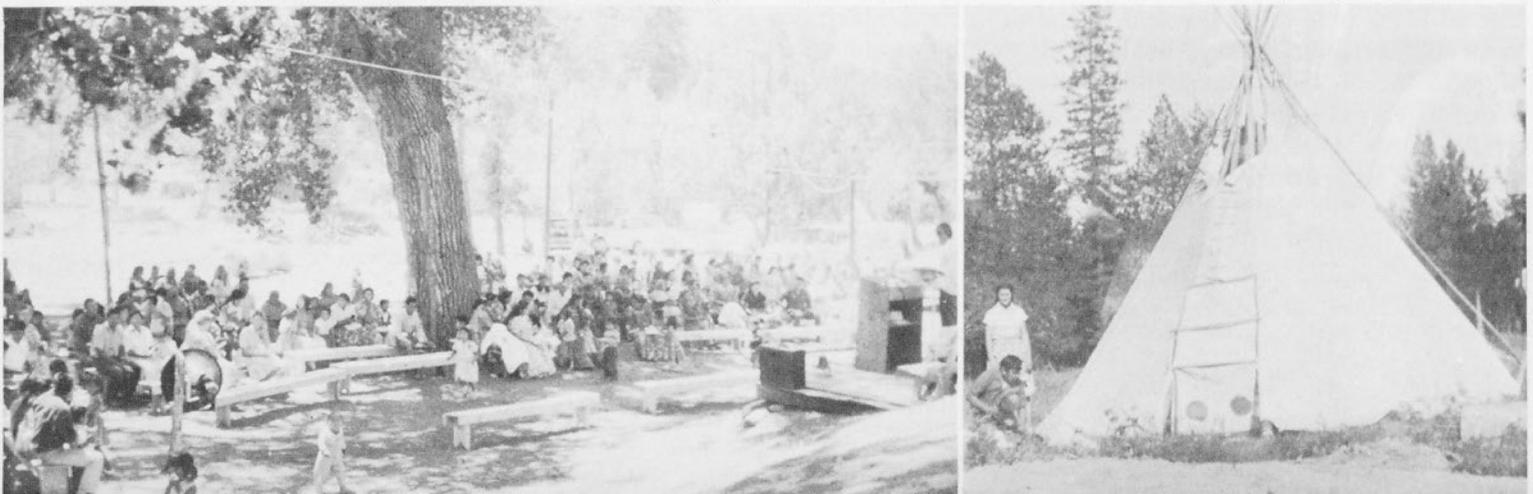
At one camp, a medicine man came to the altar for prayer. (Medicine men are influential leaders in their tribes, and conversion is a rare thing among them.) Hundreds were baptized in water at the conclusion of the camps. In a baptismal service at Kayenta, Arizona, 25 were immersed and there was great rejoicing when several Indians gave up their idols, throwing them in the river.

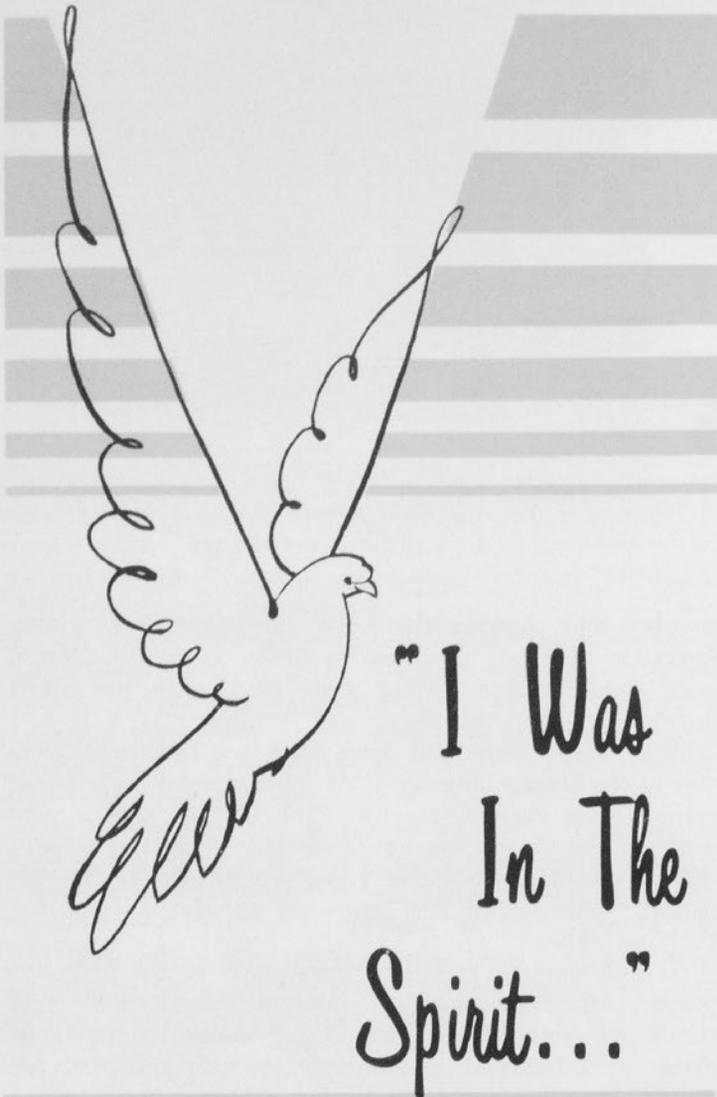
The fellowship enjoyed between services was precious to the Indian believers. They cooked outdoors using open fires or improvised stoves. The menu usually included chili, frijoles (dry beans prepared in any form), popovers—and of course tortillas. At some camps the Navaho people butchered sheep as a special treat.

Now the camps are over for another year, but the blessings of Christian fellowship and spiritual inspiration remain in the hearts of the Indian believers. Revival fires that were kindled at camp meeting continue to burn in the Indian assemblies.

BY RUTH LYON

While some Indian camp meetings are held in a shaded outdoor area, others are held under temporary "brush arbor" shelters such as the one shown above. At right an Indian erects a typical wigwam which will be a missionary's home during camp meeting.





By
J. ROBERT ASHCROFT

HOW DOES A MAN FEEL IN THE SPIRIT? HOW DOES a man see in the Spirit? How does a man hear in the Spirit? What does a man know when in the Spirit?

These are vital questions. The answers are also valuable to those who are interested in the life of the Spirit. We need not linger always in the dark on this engaging subject. Before God closed the written revelation—His Word to us—He included the Revelation! From it great eternal truth is gathered. It is as though we are given one great and grand picture of the rich life in the Spirit before the Book closes.

J. Robert Ashcroft is President of Evangel College, Springfield, Missouri, a liberal arts college operated by the Assemblies of God in the U.S.A.

It is a man who writes. He says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Any day in the Spirit is the Lord's day, and every Lord's day can be a day in the Spirit.

"I . . . HEARD!"

The first reaction reported by the man in the Spirit is that he heard. At once we conclude there is something to hear when in the Spirit. Adam heard the voice of the Lord, indicating God has spoken to man from the beginning of time to the end, from Adam to John! And whenever men have heard the Voice there have been glorious results.

Sometimes men have been confused about the Voice. John says it was a voice like a trumpet. Those who were with Paul thought they heard thunder. The prophet heard a still, small voice. It would not be surprising to learn of other human reactions in those who hear the voice of the Lord.

What we hear is more important to us than how we hear! John received a message which included instruction. Of great interest is the specific nature of the guidance. He was told to write . . . but let us observe further before accounting what he was to write.

"I SAW . . ."

The second observation is that John saw. So, those who are in the Spirit see! This recalls to mind the ancient prophets who were called "seers." They saw what others seemingly did not see. This sight was penetrating, profound. Any reading of these reports of men who were in the Spirit reveals that these men saw meaning in human experience which the naive could not comprehend. They saw in history what the casual observer could not see. They saw in the elements what could not be seen by normal vision.

John saw something so valuable that he was commanded to write the things which he had seen. They were things in history, and of the present, and of the future. Observe further before counting the things which John saw.

"I FELL . . ."

Man reacts to the presence of what he hears and sees. John fell. Paul fell. Paul was made blind. He lost normal vision while getting spiritual vision. Such is a lesson. If one is to see things in spiritual perspective, he often has to lose the natural perspective. John fell as dead. The Spirit experience is earthshaking. It is life-changing. One could hardly expect to be the same. John felt a hand on his shoulder. So, in the Spirit there are those dimensions of experience which lift up life to the sublime.

There are other reactions to the Spirit to be observed in Revelation. There is only space to observe the above by way of suggestion. But here are the things which were seen, heard, and felt.

A VIEW OF JESUS

How does the man of the Spirit understand Jesus today? That understanding is best conveyed by John in a variety of pictures. The ancient of days, the victorious rider, the King of kings . . . His name . . . His purpose . . . His power; in all of these symbolic pictures is conveyed the reality of the nature of God.

A VIEW OF HISTORY

The view of history is seen as a prophetic history of the church. Through the insights revealed to John are

the plumbless depths of wisdom on human history. Few of us see fully its strategic importance.

A VIEW OF HEAVEN

While John in the Spirit is given a depth of understanding about the world, a door is opened in heaven. What did he see? So much; but most important, he saw that while the Church has its vicissitudes, Jesus is on the throne!

A VIEW OF THE FUTURE

The knowledge of the man in the Spirit is other than that of the man of the natural. There is no time factor to the Spirit. There is no distance or space to the Spirit. There is no death to the Spirit. Here is the eternal. No wonder there is no sun, there is no death. In the Spirit none of these is needed or possible. The Spirit's view and knowledge take us out beyond these elements. Yes, the eternal includes what we call future! In the Spirit we can see a new heaven, a new earth... evil destroyed, sickness banished, death ended! The side effects of the life of the man in the Spirit is to lift him above and beyond all the normal pettiness and disturbances of the natural, carnal man.

HOW IT MAY HAPPEN

John was carried out in the Spirit! All of us may not be carried out in the way John was, but there are some magnificent guidelines here. Look:

1. John was alone. To receive great blessings such as this often takes seclusion, where we can see and hear from God.

2. John was a believer. He had been with Jesus and learned of Him.

3. John was close to Christ and had learned of His love. He wrote deeply about the love of God.

4. John was "in" the Spirit—in the truth, faith, and love. These are the avenues by which we are baptized in the Spirit and see, hear, feel.

Gordon Cooper spent 34 hours in space. Immediately upon his return he was asked questions: what did he see, what did he hear, what did he feel? All of these things were carefully measured and recorded. It took great thrust to put him into space, great care to train, and great cost to achieve such a magnificent feat.

The challenge is ours to do the same in the Spirit as the astronauts have done in space. ◀◀◀

In Christian experience, the gifts of the Spirit never should be divorced from the fruit of the Spirit.

The Most Excellent Way

By WILF R. KLINGSPOHN
Canada



EVERY SINCERE GOD-FEARING CHRISTIAN HAS WITHIN him a divinely inbred longing to attain to the highest standard of spiritual excellence. This was the experience of the Psalmist. Overwhelmed by the intensity of this desire he cried, "My heart breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times." It was also the experience of Paul. Upon enumerating his qualifications with respect to the legal righteousness of the Law, he wrote to the Philippians, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

Such, we believe, is the experience of every genuinely Spirit-born believer today. John declared in his first epistle, "He that saith he abideth in him [Jesus] ought himself also so to walk, even as he [Jesus] walked." Surely these words imply the necessary presence of a longing within the heart of the true Christian who will content himself with nothing less than the highest possible attainment in spiritual excellence.

LOVE IS NOT GREATER THAN THE GIFTS

While all may long for such excellence, all are not agreed on what constitutes that excellence. A great controversy erupted with the dawn of the 20th-century Pen-

tecostal revival. Those who received the infilling of the Holy Spirit began to contend that the greatest spiritual excellence is attained through this experience and the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit. Contrariwise, those who rejected this concept maintained that love is the most excellent Christian way—the highest of spiritual manifestation of all. Over 60 years have elapsed and the controversy still remains.

Biblically there are no grounds for such a controversy. The Scriptures are clear and decisive. A thorough and unbiased examination reveals that neither love nor the gifts of the Spirit constitute the highest form of spiritual excellence when one is separated from the other. Rather it is their combination that produces spiritual excellence of the first degree.

All too frequently the 13th chapter of First Corinthians is wrenched from its context to teaching something other than God (or Paul) intended, or else its constructive teaching is overlooked altogether. Paul does not teach in this passage that love is the greatest of the Holy Spirit's gifts (*charismata*) as many claim. Love is not a gift of the Holy Spirit at all. It is the *fruit* of the Holy Spirit. (Compare 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 with Galatians 5:22, 23.) The fruit of the Spirit is an expression of the very nature and character of God, while the gifts of the Spirit reveal the personality of God in supernatural

Wilf R. Klingspohn, an evangelist, is an ordained minister affiliated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

MEET DAUNTLESS DIMVIA OF UPPER VOLTA

HE WAS CALLED ZOUREGEMA SALOU AT BIRTH. HIS PARENTS gave him this name because they thought the fetish "Zoure" had accepted their chicken sacrifices and given them this son.

Zouregema had a serious illness when he was very young, and it left his right arm small and underdeveloped. His people, who lived in fear of their fetishes, claimed that as a tot he had climbed on a fetish altar and touched the sacred objects. For this, they said, he must carry his handicap through life.

In 1923 the gospel reached Yako, Upper Volta, and Zouregema was one of the first converts. When he became a Christian he wanted to take a Christian name, so he chose "Dimvia" which means, "The King Lives." Thus he honored the King of kings who had given him a new life.

As a young Christian he attended classes at the mission school, learning to read and write, and hiding the Word of God in his heart. He overcame his childhood disability by using his left hand and his feet. Through leatherwork he found a way to support himself. Then, when he finished school, Dimvia went with a national preacher named Zapa (meaning Leather Craftsman) to an important town called Gourcy. For four years they preached throughout the area and saw many souls won to Christ.

After another short stay in Yako, Dimvia went to Zoula in the Koudougou district. The people of Zoula were of a different tribe than Dimvia, but God was already working there. The local chief built a house for Dimvia in the royal courtyard and helped him begin 14 years of fruitful ministry.

In this new position Dimvia again faced crippling handicaps. One was the language barrier. Zealous to preach to these people, he suffered the frustration that

new missionaries experience. He had a message, but not the language to convey it to the people. And with the language he had to learn different tribal customs.

Dimvia received another severe setback when a member of the chief's family who had been saved turned his back on Christianity. This man had forsaken everything to serve the Lord. He had left his fetishes and native beer and testified in the marketplaces. His fall meant the fall of many others. For a time it seemed that Dimvia had nothing left.

In 1949 Dimvia was filled with the Holy Spirit and had a very impressive vision. He began to develop as a leader among his brethren. Three years later he was called to pastor the church in Koudougou, an important commercial center. God has blessed the church and it is now the largest in Upper Volta, with a Sunday school of over 400 members. The present building, seating up to 1,000 people, was built largely by donated labor. Very little missionary money went into the project. The building was dedicated debt free in 1958.

Dimvia became presbyter of his section in 1955, and at the first official meeting of the Assemblies of God in Upper Volta he was chosen as the general secretary. He has risen above his physical handicap as well as many social and spiritual obstacles. His love for the Lord, his stand for the truth, and his good judgment have made him a blessing to people throughout Upper Volta.

—by Howard L. Fox, missionary to Upper Volta



Dimvia ("The King Lives"), a dauntless preacher of the gospel.

operation. To fully appreciate what the apostle says about the gifts of the Holy Spirit one needs to clearly understand this distinction between fruit and gifts.

NOT MORE EXCELLENT, BUT MOST EXCELLENT

Paul concludes the 12th chapter with these words: "But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." Another translation renders the latter part of this verse, "And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you." Not a *more* excellent way than that which they were pursuing, but a *most* excellent way—the superlative state of spirituality in which all are enjoined to walk.

Observe very carefully that it was the divorcing of the fruit from the gifts that prompted Paul's severe condemnation. In no way does He incline to discourage the continued manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit. He rejoices in the Corinthians' zealous pursuit of the gifts and commends them on their enrichment (1 Corinthians 1:4-7), so that they came behind in no gift. What really

concerns him is the lack of love, the fruit of the Spirit, in their lives. To be effectual, the manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit must be interwoven with love. Failing that, their exercise is without lasting profit.

His extensive elaboration on the virtues of love throughout the remaining verses of the 13th chapter in no way depreciates the value of the gifts of the Spirit. Nor does it demonstrate the superseding excellence of love. Rather, he seeks to impress believers with the steadfastness that pervades one's life and testimony when both are present. To interpret these verses otherwise is to disregard their contextual setting in the New Testament.

That the fruit of the Spirit in itself does not constitute the most excellent way is clearly portrayed throughout the New Testament. Peter summarized his Pentecostal sermon (Acts 2) with these words: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Most certainly he implies

a further spiritual excellence in this experience (distinct from conversion), which is needful in our quest to attain to the most excellent way.

POWER ACCOMPANIES THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

When one receives the gift of the Holy Spirit as the disciples did at Pentecost, and as Cornelius and his household did (Acts 10:44-46), one receives the Holy Spirit in a dimension of radically dynamic spiritual power. In regeneration all believers receive the Holy Spirit and His presence is attested by the manifestation of His fruit (Galatians 5:22, 23). The disciples received the Holy Spirit in regeneration on the resurrection day (John 20:22). Jesus' act of breathing on them and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," constituted more than a mere anticipation of Pentecost. The tense of the verb "receive" (aorist) does not refer to a future event but indicates immediate reception. By the act of breathing God conferred life upon Adam. On the resurrection day Jesus breathed upon the assembled disciples and conferred spiritual life (regeneration) on them. Furthermore, in the Genesis record God gave man dominion over the created sphere after breathing life into him. So too, after Jesus breathed spiritual life into His disciples He gave them dominion in the spiritual realm (John 20:23).

In the upper room, before Pentecost, we see evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. The record says they "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." On the Day of Pentecost, however, they entered into a new and supernatural dimension of power as attested by the subsequent manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit.

THE GIFTS ARE INDISPENSABLE

Scripturally, it is impossible to deny that the gifts of the Spirit are essential in our pursuance of spiritual excellence. This fact is emphatically affirmed by Peter's words: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." That this verse pertains to the Pentecostal experience of Acts 2:4 is substantiated by the close contextual relation between the gift (Acts 2:38) and the promise (Acts 2:39) of the Holy Spirit. The thought is literally: "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, because to you is the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit." Jesus, in announcing the coming of the Pentecostal baptism in the Holy Spirit." (Acts 1:4, 5).

Peter also described the scope of the Pentecostal experience when he said: "For the promise is unto you [the assembled multitude], and to your children [descendants of the assembled multitude], and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." God is still calling mankind to Himself in the present century. Therefore the promise is still in effect. This fact scholars cannot deny in their attempt to "dispensationalize" the Pentecostal experience out of the church today. God has purposed that His church should experience and manifest *both the fruit and the gifts* of His Holy Spirit.

To diligently exercise ourselves herein is to attain the most excellent way—the superlative mark of Christianity in experience and service. ◀◀◀

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how long does it take to be saved?

By JAMES M. BRYAN



HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE A PERSON TO GET SAVED? IS conversion instantaneous or gradual? Your answer to this question may determine your response to God as an unbeliever, or as a Christian.

If you consider salvation the work of an instant, you will stress revival, evangelism and personal work. If, on the other hand, you consider it a gradual work, you will press for more Christian education, improvement of living conditions, and the social gospel. Notice what some outstanding Christian leaders have had to say about the matter.

Charles G. Finney, lawyer, evangelist, college president of the last century: "So far as I have had opportunity to observe, those whose conversions are the most sudden have commonly turned out to be the best Christians. I know the reverse of this has often been held and maintained. . . . But the Bible gives no warrant for the supposition. There is not a case of protracted conviction recorded in the whole Bible. All the conversions recorded there are sudden conversions." (*Revival Lectures*, p. 363.)

Henry Ward Beecher, orator, editor, pastor: "Men do become good gradually. But they never begin gradually. This is instant and decisive."

The New Testament illustrates the truth that conversion occurs quickly when a person believes. To the thief who hung on a cross beside Jesus and asked, "Lord, remember me," Jesus said, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). To Zacchaeus, the tax collector who climbed into a tree to see Jesus as He passed, Jesus said, "This day is salvation come to this house" (Luke 19:9). Of the publican who prayed a simple seven-word prayer of repentance, "God be merci-

ful to me a sinner," Jesus said, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified" (Luke 18:14).

In Acts 8:27-39 we read the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. Philip joined this man in his chariot as he was reading the prophecy concerning Christ from the Book of Isaiah. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." Shortly thereafter, upon the eunuch's confession of faith in Christ, Philip baptized him.

Saul of Tarsus was converted in a moment of time as he journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus. He saw a light, heard a voice, and in submission said, "Who art thou, Lord? . . . what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:1, 6). Years later when the jailer at Philippi asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." It does not take long to believe and to trust.

When we obey God by repenting of our sins and asking Christ to save us, He effects the inner change we call the new birth. This new life is not the result of education, even religious education. It is the gift of God. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

You cannot recommend yourself to God by self-improvement. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags . . ." (Isaiah 64:6). But you can come to Christ, who has promised never to cast you out (John 6:47). If you will put your trust in Him today, you may know the joy of sins forgiven, peace with God, and the assurance of acceptance—all in a moment of time. ◀◀