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John Edgell

## Our Sinful Silence

Rev. Les Lofquist

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am frequently asked, "What is your assessment of IFCA International? How are we doing elsewhere in the country?" I always say the same thing. We are doing well, in so many places at so many things. When I look over our Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals Statement, I realize the growing effectiveness in our ministries and I am grateful. However, our lack of effectiveness regarding one of our seventeen values and goals has me concerned. Based upon my travels and observations over the past thirty months, I believe we need the most improvement in achieving what we say we value in "Evangelistic Zeal." This reads:

*"We, being compelled by the love of Christ, are committed to the passionate proclamation of the Gospel to all people because all men apart from Christ are lost and face the horrors of eternal judgement."*

I find that to be such a powerful statement. Read it again and ponder its gravity. Then consider the implications in your own life.

## WHAT WENT WRONG?

In my adult life, I have been very much aware of the battle raging over the truth of the Gospel. The concerns are real and the stakes are high. But have we been so preoccupied with defining the Gospel (which is important) and defending the Gospel (which is also important) that we have neglected declaring the Gospel (which is tragic)? I just have not seen many IFCA churches or pastors zealous in evangelism, passionately proclaiming the Gospel. We know cognitively the reality of the horrors of eternal judgment, but the passionate zeal we value is somehow disconnected from our knowledge.

This wasn't always the case in our history. In fact, the 1930 IFCA Constitution (Article III) clearly states our organization's purpose:

*"The object of this organization shall be to promote fellowship among God's people of like precious faith; to put forth every possible effort to disseminate the gospel; and to proclaim the whole counsel of God. This organization shall not only be thoroughly evangelical but it shall also be aggressively evangelistic."*

It's pretty clear what the founders of IFCA intended regarding evangelism. So what went wrong? How did we become unaggressively evangelistic? The man most closely associated with our beginning, Dr. William McCarrell, was himself a zealous evangelist even as he pastored a thriving urban church in the Cicero, Illinois of Al Capone's day. In fact, according to written records I have seen with my own eyes, Cicero Bible Church's "Fisherman's Club" distributed over 600,000 Gospel pamphlets and Scripture portions in one ten year period. Testimonies abound regarding Billy McCarrell's pockets bulging with evangelistic literature, handing out the truth to people on trains, in hotels, restaurants, and on the street. Are we "aggressively evangelistic" today? Do you have the kind of "evangelistic zeal" as demonstrated by Billy McCarrell? Having defined the Gospel and defended the Gospel, how well have you declared it?

Yes, I am concerned about all the bad theology in much that is called evangelism. Many today water down the truth for the purpose of identifying with "the unchurched," mingle in the perverting influence of pop-psychology, manipulate emotions and call for unbiblical responses, then justify it all with a pragmatism based on the large number of "converts" (most of whom do not seem to last longer than a few weeks). All of us in IFCA International would agree that more of that is not needed!

## **WHAT IS NEEDED?**

What is needed in our churches is a passionate proclamation of God's holy and righteous character and man's depravity and lostness and condemnation and God's free salvation through faith alone in Christ alone. We need to reflect what the New Testament says about the Gospel:

- Preach it (1 Cor. 9:16)
- Demonstrate it (Phil. 1:27)
- Guard it (Gal. 1:6-8)
- Defend it (Jude 3)
- Suffer for it (2 Tim. 1:8)
- Don't be ashamed of it (Rom. 1:16)

Like the Hebrews of Paul's day, there are many today "that have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2). These people are "ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). That righteousness is found in Christ alone (Rom. 10:4) and not in the false understanding of the Gospel in Paul's day or ours. But what is the antidote to a false understanding of the Gospel? It is a biblically defined Gospel faithfully declared (Rom. 10:5-17). It is an understanding that there is no salvation apart from Christ and no salvation message apart from preachers: "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14). Those words in Romans 10:14 mean that we must not minimize the role human agents play in the overall process of the

salvation of a soul. Salvation is God's work. But spreading the message of salvation is our work. The lost sinner needs to hear the Good News in order to know of his desperate condition. And God has ordained His children to share the message. Why don't we?

## **ARE WE OUT OF BALANCE?**

Ephesians 4:12 instructs gifted leaders to equip "the saints for the work of ministry." That is one of the foundational texts in all the Bible describing the role and function of leaders in the church. But it appears to me that many in IFCA International misread this passage and apply its truth only to pastors and teachers instructing believers. We do a good job of teaching other believers. But I think we are out of balance. We must not overlook the fact that evangelists are also to be equippers (v.11). How many of our churches have identified the evangelists in their assembly and commissioned them (or even hired them) to motivate and instruct and organize their church to be more evangelistic? This would be good for your church to do if you have not done so already.

Also, pastors, remember that you are commanded to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:5). Pastors cannot ignore this command, nor rationalize it away (which is all too often the response when we are confronted with this text). Pastors, are you out of balance? Are you part of the reason why our churches are not more evangelistic? Evaluate your life and ministry and make the biblically mandated changes. Because in the final analysis, we are called to defend and declare the Gospel. Anything less is a failure. How will our churches respond in 2002 to God's command to evangelize? This year, how will our pastors respond? May it not be with sinful silence.

## **Relational Evangelism** **Keith Miller**

Consider again those penetrating final words in Acts 1 from our Savior as He is about to ascend back to the Father, "...and you shall be my witnesses...." Doctrinally, there is no choice. The necessity to evangelize is an imperative for the Church for all time. It is one of those constants, one of those functions absolutely mandated in the Word of God.

Being a Christian, by the very nature of that being, demands that Jesus is proclaimed as the way, the truth, and the life! There is no other message, no other name, no other way for sinful man to approach a holy God! That exclusivity necessitates ceaseless activity in the proclamation!

What growing, vibrant believer, in love with the Savior, would not like to witness more for Him? What believer has not felt guilty for failing to seize an opportunity to share even a word with a lost individual? Most Christians want to witness; the desire to please the Lord in winning the lost is there. Yet for many, fear grips the heart, and silence rules. The fear of rejection, of saying the wrong thing, keeps them from saying anything. This destructive ambivalence plagues the Church, paralyzing believers to the point of ineffectiveness, and strategic impact into a lost world is stifled. Is there a way out of this quandary of ineffectiveness?

Assuredly, the function itself is unchanging, but what about the form? How is evangelism best accomplished? Though other effective forms are possible (including evangelistic literature), there are three key avenues on this journey to effective communication of the good news, each with solid biblical precedent.

These are proclamational, confrontational, and relational evangelism. It is the premise of this article that all three forms are valid expressions for outreach, but that the relational/friendship model has a decided edge for effectiveness and the potential involvement of many more believers. The three models will be compared and contrasted, with emphasis on the relational/friendship.

Convictions vary among godly men as to the best way to accomplish the task of communicating the message. Usually, the stronger the gifts enjoyed by someone, the stronger that individual is as a proponent of a certain method. The accomplished proclamational evangelist considers that method highly effective, and with good reason. Evangelism through preaching has strong scriptural support (Stephen, Peter, Paul), and it works well for him. Certainly, the biblically sound pastor is wise and obedient to integrate some evangelistic preaching into his calendar on a consistent basis, I Tim. 4:2-5.

Since few are gifted at public speaking, it is obvious that most Christians will never be directly involved in the communication of the message through preaching. They can certainly participate indirectly as those who pray for the lost and invite them to the church, conference centers, etc. to hear the preaching by the evangelist. A scriptural precedent is the apostle Andrew who was frequently bringing people to meet Jesus, John 1:41-42; 6:8; 12:2-22, though not always in a large group setting.

The other two methods to be considered do not involve public speaking and should conceivably involve more people. No doubt it is best to avoid a strict dichotomy between the confrontational and relational models, yet for the purpose of this article confrontational evangelism is that which finds a way to communicate the Gospel to a non-acquaintance. Essentially this is a "cold door" approach, perhaps an actual door-to-door experience or engaging in conversation with an unknown someone in a shopping mall or while flying on an airliner. Opportunity is sought for the turning of the conversation to spiritual things, and the person is confronted quickly with his lost condition and pointed to the Savior as his only hope of eternal salvation. Depending on the progress in the presentation and the response by the individual, an immediate decision is sought.

Approached tactfully and prayerfully, and with the necessary work of the Spirit, this method does work well.

Jesus with the Samaritan woman, John 4, Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts 8, and Paul with Lydia, Acts 16, are among the several examples from Scripture that could be cited.

Note an interesting contrast between two authors, both of whom prefer the model with which each is most comfortable.

"Confrontational/intrusional" is the term used by Joe Aldrich in his *Life-Style Evangelism* (p. 78) for the same method referred to by Mark McCloskey, as "persuasive dialogue" in his *Tell it Often - Tell it Well* (p. 56). The reader can easily discern that the latter likes the method while the former obviously does not. Yet both authors recognize (Aldrich rather grudgingly and McCloskey with great enthusiasm) that this form also has excellent biblical support and can successfully involve many more people directly into the front lines of the battle.

The relational model, on the other hand, seeks out one's neighbors, colleagues in the workplace, clerks frequently met while shopping, fellow classmates at the university, anyone with whom a relationship can be developed, and searches for ways to build a supportive friendship over time in order to gain the individual's confidence. At some point in time the message is verbalized. The biblical evidence in support of this method is clear, Jesus Himself being a key participant. He spent enough time with those branded as "sinners" to distinguish Himself with accusations from the Pharisees as a "friend of tax collectors and sinners," Matthew 11:19; Luke 5:30, 7:34. See also Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:15-16.

Other instances in the book of Acts confirm the heart of the Spirit for this method as an obedient Paul builds people relationships leading to effective communication of the message. See Acts 18:1-5 and 19:8-10. The advantages of this method, also called lifestyle evangelism, are many.

Every Christian can find avenues of approach to befriend a neighbor. From changing a tire, to shoveling some snow, to babysitting their kids, the possibilities are plentiful. Consider the outreach potential of helping a young couple balance their budget, inviting coworkers over for a cookout, or encouraging your

teens to invite their friends over to hang out. Many different gifts of the Spirit - helps, hospitality, wisdom, even administration, to name several - can each be utilized as relationships are developed. Believers are commanded to express love to others in need.

Empathy with the needs of others is key, as with Paul in I Corinthians 9:22, "...I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means win some." Surely those active expressions of concern will aid in convincing the skeptical that there is something positively different about this "church going" neighbor. This is especially true in the current cultural context in America, where conservative Christians are viewed as anachronistic extremists, anything but mainstream society.

Obviously, with any method of evangelism there will always be those who, for whatever reason, are not genuine in their stated conversion and thus have not really come to faith. Yet with the relational model, there theoretically should be fewer who make insincere professions, since there is more time, over time, to explain carefully and precisely the need for genuine repentance and trust in Christ.

With a solid, caring relationship in place, there is no need for those "quicky," "say this prayer" forced decisions that lack sincerity. The opportunity for continued contact with those who do come to faith is another advantage of the relational model. Adequate follow-up is always an issue for evangelism. What better way to nurture the newly-born, than through those friends who were instrumental in the birthing process. This, combined with the effective mentoring of a disciple-making pastor within the local church context, could prove beneficial in the maturing process.

There are certain cautions that should be included in this discussion. Of major concern would be the well-meaning friend who is never quite finished in developing that relationship. He just never gets around to actually confronting the person with his lost, sinful condition and pointing to Christ as the answer. The bridges built must at some point be utilized in the crossing over with the full presentation of the message. Test the bridge; get out on the bridge; cross over the bridge! Showing love in that relationship setting is never complete without verbally sharing the message. It is true "Where love is felt the message is heard," but that message must at some point be spoken to be heard at all. A second caution would be concerning the zealous relationship builder who forgets the issues of overly exposing himself or his family to the temptations of a neighbor's ungodly lifestyle and begins to find erosion of his own ability to maintain biblical standards. A closely maintained walk with Christ would be essential in this matter. Lines must be drawn in advance as to the extent to which it is reasonable and prudent to enter into the life of the unsaved person. Children's activities with the neighbor's children would require the usual monitoring by watchful parents.

Biblically, there is nothing to contrast negatively about these three methods. Nor should they be considered in opposition to each other. All three are effectively used by dedicated believers. Indeed a combination of these three methods could be quite effective as they link together to form a Spirit-led confrontation of the lost individual. The relationship building Christian should be able to link effectively with church sponsored evangelistic efforts and find opportunities himself to reinforce the need for that individual to trust in Christ for salvation.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR READING:**

Life-Style Evangelism: Crossing Traditional Boundaries to Reach the Unbelieving World. Joseph C. Aldrich, Multnomah, 1981.

Gentle Persuasion: Creative Ways to Introduce Your Friends to Christ. Joseph C. Aldrich. Multnomah, 1988.

Tell It Often-Tell It Well: Making the Most of Witnessing Opportunities. Mark McCloskey. Here's Life Publishers, 1986.

Friendship Evangelism: The Caring Way to Share Your Faith. Arthur G. McPhee. Zondervan, 1978.

*Keith Miller is Chairman of the Pastoral Studies Program at Calvary Bible College in Kansas City. Prior to coming to CBC in 1994 he was in pastoral ministry for 21 years. He is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute, Calvary Bible College and Dallas Theological Seminary, Th.M, 1973; D.Min., 1990. He and his wife Pat have four children and two grandchildren.*

## **What Does Jesus Want Us to Do?**

**Paul Broman**

When a person truly believes in Jesus, God's Son, he immediately receives the Holy Spirit and becomes a "new creation", that is, he becomes a "citizen" of God's Kingdom (cf. Ephesians 1:13, 14; Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 3:20). He is no longer subject to a system of rules and laws, but is taught to "walk in obedience to the Holy Spirit" who lives in him (Galatians 5:16-18; Romans 8:14).

What does this mean? How are we supposed to live now? There are many instructions found in the New Testament in the letters to Christians that show us how we should live. More than this, Jesus himself showed us by his example how we should live. In his teaching, Jesus gave us some wonderful lessons, but his words were not many; it was by his example that he truly taught us how to live. And then he said, "Follow me!" (Not, as so many "teachers" now-days say, "Follow my teachings.") This is the way a true Christian teacher must talk. Six times in his writings the

Apostle Paul says, "Follow me, as I follow Christ; be imitators of me; follow the example you heard and saw in me," etc. In Matthew 23:3 Jesus warned us against those teachers who only say and do not do. Jesus truly taught us by his example how to live and how to die.

Where today do we see true teachers, disciples of Jesus, who are teaching others by following his example? One of the first things every new Christian feels very strongly is that he must tell this wonderful gospel to his friends and relatives, so that they will be saved from an eternal hell. Every newborn Christian has this strong urge that comes from the Holy Spirit. Jesus warned us that if we suppress this desire because we are ashamed of him, he will be ashamed of us (Luke 9:26). Often this is the first test of a new Christian's love and obedience to Christ. But as we continue to follow Jesus, our Lord as well as our Savior, we become conscious of the words he spoke just before he left this earth: "Go into all the world and tell this gospel to every person" (Mark 16:15; John 20:21; 11 Corinthians 5:19-20).

As we consider these words and realize our frightening responsibility to this lost and dying world, Jesus' example begins to take on a new and urgent meaning. "To all the world!" "To every person!" "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19 and 18:18. Also John 20:23).

"Tell this gospel to every person." How easy to understand! How clear the command! How grave the responsibility! Are we telling the gospel of Jesus' salvation, and his promise of eternal life, to every person around us? Jesus' last words in the New Testament are: "The Spirit and the bride [the church] say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life" (Revelation 22:17).

Notice carefully: We see no command or instruction here, or anywhere else in the Scriptures, about founding or building churches. Instead, we are told to make disciples, a vastly more difficult and daunting task. However, the salvation of men, that is, the work of bringing them to believe, is altogether the work of the Holy Spirit. Read John 6:44-45. Some people say that Paul "planted churches." He did not. But the Holy Spirit certainly did through the preaching of the gospel. Of course no person in the world could do what the Holy Spirit did through Paul on his missionary journeys. Paul went out to tell the gospel and God worked mightily to bring many people to himself.

God did not give us a method; he entrusted us with a message. God has told us to tell the gospel to everyone. As soon as the gospel message goes forth, as soon as we obey Jesus and tell the gospel, the Holy Spirit begins to work. That is why he came to the world after Jesus left: "...he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. In regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness because I am going to the Father where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment because the prince of this world now stands condemned" (John 16:8-11).

When the gospel is preached, the Holy Spirit works--immediately! That is his job; that is why he came. Everyone who has told the gospel as Jesus and Paul did knows the meaning of those words. When the Holy Spirit begins his work, many people become angry. Some, a few, believe and receive eternal life. And notice also: Jesus did not say, "Go and win souls," or, "Go and save people."

We repeat--his words were, "Tell the gospel [it is the 'power of God'] to every person." Jesus and Paul showed us how to preach the gospel: publicly and from house to house, that is, on the streets and to every person. But this sort of preaching is certain to bring opposition, scorn, hate and persecution, just as it did in those days. Is that not the main reason that the gospel is no longer preached in this way? It is so very much easier to rent a hall or a stadium, or to rent time on radio or television and talk to an audience which wants to listen--they'll even contribute money!--because they agree with the message. Only a true disciple of Jesus, like the martyr Stephen, would be willing to preach to an audience that, the Bible says, gnashed their teeth and stopped their ears.

One reason that it is hard to preach the gospel in public--on the streets and person to person--is that we must tell the bad news as well as the good news. We must, as in Romans 1, tell men that they are vile sinners, on the road to an eternal hell. When we say these things, the Holy Spirit can prepare them for the good news. Without the bad news, no one can truly appreciate the good news: that we have, through the blood of Jesus and his resurrection, forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Preaching the bad news brings the power and conviction of the Holy Spirit into our message, convincing men of its truth.

But to men who hate the light and suppress the truth by unrighteousness, this is an intolerable message, and they will, sometimes violently, try to stop it, claiming that they have a "right" not to hear, not to have these warnings "rammed down their throats". To those whom God has chosen, however, these warnings bring fear and repentance, and, when they hear the good news, true appreciation and joy. It is interesting here to meditate on the traditions of the early Church as to the fate of the Apostles of Jesus.

We are told that Peter was crucified in Rome upside down because he felt he was unworthy to die in the same manner as Christ. Andrew, his brother, it is said, was likewise crucified at Edessa. The book of Acts tells us that James, the brother of John, was beheaded by Herod. John was exiled on the Isle of Patmos, and horribly martyred by being thrown into boiling oil. Matthew was beheaded in Ethiopia. Thomas was thrust through with a spear in India. Simon, the Zealot, it is said, was crucified in Briton. Bartholomew (Nathaniel) was beaten and crucified in India. Philip was crucified at Hierapolis in Phrygia. Jesus' brother, James, was stoned and clubbed to death in Jerusalem. Contrast this with the acclaim and honor of many of today's "Christian" clergy, and try to discern the reason.

Surely it is not the world that has changed; rather it is that the hated message is no longer faithfully preached! History shows us that it was nothing other than the faithfulness and forbearance of Christians of bygone days who preached this hated message in the face of much persecution and opposition, that has purchased for us the right to publicly proclaim the gospel now. Today people call this right "freedom of speech." But it was those Christians who, sometimes at the cost of their lives, bought this right for us, and not only for us, but even for unbelievers to enjoy.

Somehow, tragically, much of the Christian church has substituted other goals and objectives for Jesus' simple words. "Christianity" has taken on the characteristics of the heathen "religions" around us: building up "membership", constructing "temples", making "adherents", performing ceremonies,



attending meetings, saying prayers, building schools and hospitals, establishing great organizations and denominations, etc. until today, "Christianity" has come to be merely another sect or religion. The world seemingly no longer realizes that Christians have been entrusted by God with a vital message - a message of life and death, and that our responsibility is to deliver this message to every person.

When the whole world has heard it, then, Jesus said, the end of this miserable age will come, and the Kingdom of God will be here! Hallelujah! We must not look at "results." The only result we seek is that the world hears and understands our message. The "results" must be left to God, who will add to his church those he has chosen "before the foundation of the world."

We certainly hope that the words we have written here will not be construed to mean that Christians have no need to gather together for encouragement, teaching, and remembering the Lord. This teaching is obvious throughout the epistles. Also, we would feel very misunderstood if some who read this would conclude that we have no desire to see men believe and be saved. The Bible is clear that God wants men to be saved. No, here we only desire to show that our work is the proclamation of God's wonderful gospel, and God's work is to give men understanding, and to build and establish his church.

And Jesus also left us that other command: "Make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19-20). How do we accomplish this? Jesus showed us how by his example. His example! In Luke 14:26-27, and in verse 33, Jesus said, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters--yes, even his own life-- he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple." These words make it difficult for us to believe that anyone can teach discipleship in a classroom.

It is true that we can teach many things without being a disciple ourselves: Surely we can tell the gospel without losing our own life. It seems very possible that we can teach many biblical truths without carrying a cross after Jesus. It is possible to pastor a church or to teach in a Bible school or seminary without being a disciple. And no doubt we can lead people to the Lord without giving up everything we have.

But there is one thing we cannot do without being a disciple ourselves: We cannot make disciples. We cannot teach another person to lose his life unless we lose our own. Here is one sphere of Christian teaching that can only be done by example - an example until death. Jesus showed us how to live and how to die. He truly taught us by his example. And he told us: "Make disciples of all nations." Not many Christians have followed his teaching here, nor his example. Because it costs one's life. Yes, we have many Bible lessons, and classes in churches and schools; many "correspondence courses" and study books.

But we do not see many disciples. Why? We do not write this to disparage or criticize the dedicated work of many Christians which has been done out of love for Jesus and his gospel.

We only want to point out here that it is not easy to obey Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations, and very few have done it or are doing it now. Here, then, is the teaching that Jesus left for us: tell the gospel to every person, and make disciples in all nations. This, if we choose to accept it, is the way Jesus wants us to live. And as the church, in these last days, slides swiftly down into the lukewarm, miserable, blind and naked Laodicean condition that will welcome the Anti-Christ, God will yet find a few disciples who will tell his gospel to the whole world before the end comes.

They will overcome Satan himself by "the word of their testimony, by the blood of the Lamb, and because they will not love their own lives, even unto death" (Revelation 12:11). To them, God says, "Don't be afraid. I am with you always." "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:1-2).

*Paul Broman has been a tentmaking missionary in Sendai, Japan for over 50 years. Married to a Japanese woman, they have 22 children (10 natural-born, 12 adopted). Paul will speak at the 2002 Annual Convention in one of the Men's "Special Features".*

## **Finishing - Second Career People**

**Jim Schmidt**

"Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4 For thirty-six years I have walked with and delighted in the Lord; the desire of my heart was to serve the Lord full time. I thought there were many reasons (excuses) for not doing that, among them being that I had a great job and made more than an average wage. Additionally, we had two sons that needed a college education that would take a lot of money. I did not have a college degree or a degree in Bible. We had a large mortgage. We had a lot of expenses for things we thought we needed. We were serving in our church.

This list of excuses could go on for pages. Isn't it great that we have our excuses but God has His way? We knew a missionary family in the Philippines, Dick and Gerry Walton, whom our church supported. Every four years they came to our town on furlough. We became friends with these folks. I envied their service and commitment, but that was for them. One summer their oldest son spent a couple of months in our town during summer break from college. He asked me to disciple him that summer. This was a real joy, and the next summer his brother did the same thing. When his parents came home, we really had mutual ground to fellowship. Dick asked me many times during the next twenty years to consider serving the Lord with his mission, SEND International. At those times I would go through my list of excuses.

When I was fifty-nine years old, the Lord decided I had used enough excuses. I was doing one of the activities I most enjoyed, playing racquetball, when I fell over backwards and tore the cartilage in my left knee. This required a total knee replacement. For over three years I had a terrible time because my body would not accept the new knee, and I could hardly walk. I had intended to continue my sales position until I was seventy years old, but because of my condition I had to retire. My physical activities were severely curtailed.

At that time the Lord brought Dick and Gerry Walton back into my life. With a big smile and a grin, Dick went to my wife and asked what excuse I would have this year. Just to satisfy Dick, I decided to go to the SEND International office in Farmington, Michigan, but with absolutely no intention of joining the mission. Again the Lord had different plans. After a day of meeting with many people in the SEND International office, I headed home secure in the thought that I had satisfied Dick Walton and also that the Lord could not use me in missions, especially with my knee problems and limited education. During the flight from Detroit to Philadelphia the Lord changed my thinking. He kept bringing to mind the story in the Gospel of John where Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love me, feed my sheep."

I heard the words, but I kept saying, "Lord that is what I told the youth group; that's not for me." He let me know it was very much for ME. By the time I arrived home, I was convinced. I told Dot I was sure SEND International could not use us as missionaries, but we had to apply and allow them to turn us down; and I was sure they would when they examined my education and experience. What I had not realized was that missions is now different. Mission boards now look at life experience, not just education. They are more than ever prepared to use "finishers," middle age people who want their second half of life to really count.

Finishers are people who are open to the adventure God may have for their lives outside of normal retirement. For example, agencies use Finishers as staff people to support field missionaries freeing them to focus on planting churches or whatever else they need to do to complete the Great Commission. I made my living in sales; the Lord is using that. I am now in the Church Mobilization Department with Send International.

My job is to call on churches and support their mission efforts. (JSchmidt@send.org) also I try to interest churches that have no direction in missions. Our department ends up wearing many hats; we spend many hours in short-term missions, arranging trips, training teams, and in many cases leading these teams. The Lord has allowed me to lead two construction teams to Russia, as well as vision trips to Japan, China, the Philippines, and Alaska. That sounds pretty active for a person who could hardly walk. Well, the Lord handled that also. My body finally accepted the knee, and I get around fine. I have limits on climbing steps, but that's no big deal. I think of my knee the way Paul thought of his thorn, as a delight. We also are involved in the Donor Relations Department, encouraging others to support missions financially. That is when it is nice to have a sales background. In the sixty-seven years of my life I have enjoyed many different things.

I have to say that I have never had anything that gives me more peace, joy, and the feeling of value than I now have. I know I am making a difference. My job description calls for approximately twenty hours a week; I find that this ends up closer to sixty hours a week, not because I am asked or instructed to do more, but because I enjoy it so very much. The Lord has blessed me with this opportunity to spend the later years of my life serving Him. He has met the desires of my heart, and I would recommend that others look into a second career that would take them from success to significance.

Many people have the desire to serve the Lord but, like me, think they have nothing to offer or that all missionaries are spiritual giants. Both of these ideas are wrong. Missionaries are ordinary people with the goal of reaching others for Christ as their main focus.

As far as nothing to offer, we all have something to give the Lord, and there is a role in missions that can fit everyone. We know people in their 80's that work as storeroom clerks. People in their 70's and 60's doing jobs that release others to plant churches, or save agency money that can be used on the field. Many people in their 40's and 50's are now second career missionaries, using the professional skills they honed in the market place. Never sell yourself short when it comes to service for God. He can use each of us in a way that will satisfy our hearts like nothing else. People in our age bracket are called "finishers." While we want to finish well we are far from finished. I prefer being called a second career missionary who is being blessed far beyond anything I could have imagined.

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." The Acts 20:24

*Jim is presently a Representative for SEND International. He took early retirement from the position of Northeast Regional Representative with Huntington Laboratories which he held for 34 years. He has been involved in youth work teams to Oklahoma, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Bulgaria, and Hard Rock, Arizona. Jim has led 23 short-term mission groups including a trip to Far East Russia and one to Partova, Russia. Jim and his wife, Dorothy live in Beesley's Point, New Jersey. They have two married sons and five grandchildren.*

## **The Impact of Literature on Evangelism**

**Glenn E. Dix**

Throughout the history of Christianity, God has used His written Word to reach souls for the Savior. In the parable of the sower, Jesus indicated that "...The seed is the Word of God" (Luke 8:11). Therefore in evangelism, our emphasis must be on sowing the Word of God for it is this, according to Isaiah 55:11, that the Lord promises to bless. He says, "...my word ...shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please...."

At Source of Light Ministries, God has blessed the many millions of Bible lessons and tracts which we have produced and distributed in our nearly fifty years of history. I have been blessed to witness all but the first two years of this spiritual fruitfulness. During the last few years, we have received 25,000 to 0,000 written decisions for Christ each year.

Others see the value of the printed page. The cults pour out their error with paper. Jesus said, "...the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8). One summer I took my family to New York City. It happened to be when the Jehovah's Witnesses had a convention at Yankee Stadium. Everywhere we went, these zealous peddlers of error tried to give us literature, which we refused. It finally dawned on me that what we took no one else would get, so in two days we accumulated a bushel basket full. I was ashamed of my pocketful of tracts. "You only really believe that which activates you."

At this writing, I am going to a missionary conference at Tennessee Temple University. It brings back memories of other conferences there. Several years ago, a student came to our booth and saw our Bible courses. He said, "Do you send these lessons to missionaries in Mauritius?" (an island off the coast of Africa). When I said that we did, he gave me an emotional bear hug and said that this was how he came to know Christ. His name is Guy Grenade. After serving as president of the Student Missions Fellowship, he returned to his country where he uses our Bible courses. At another conference, a lady told me that her husband was in prison when someone gave him our courses. He was gloriously saved. She squeezed my hand hard as she said, "I have a new husband and our children have a new daddy." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

Cam Thompson, who challenged the founders of Source of Light, was the Director of Pan American Testament League. It was responsible for distributing countless Gospels of John in many languages. God took him to heaven in 1961, but his widow, Dell, and Mel Sheppard, who is on loan from Source of Light, continue the ministry. Dell's brother, Lloyd Lyle, has a fruitful work at airports distributing Gospels of John and many of our tracts. When he offered a tract to a man, the man replied, "I have already done what it says on the back of the tract, I repented of my sins and asked Jesus Christ to save." When he told Lloyd where he found the tract, Lloyd said, "I put it there." Isaiah 32:20 says, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters...."

I am convinced that the seed of the Word of God needs to get out. Note well the question of Haggai 2:19, "Is the seed yet in the barn?" My friend, whether you are a pastor, missionary, or layman, make sure that the seed, the Word of God, is not still in the barn—that tracts, Gospels, and correspondence courses are consistently distributed.

## **OPERATION CRISSCROSS**

In Poughkeepsie, New York, a supporting church, which used an Associate School, had a visitation program called Operation Crisscross, made up of teams of two who went door to door on Saturdays. They had packets of Source of Light lessons for various ages. When they talked with each household, they offered the free Bible courses, which had test sections with the church's return address. One Saturday I met with twelve teams for prayer and strategy. The teams met friendly response and distributed many lessons. About a year later, I returned to speak in a morning service. As the pastor introduced me, he said that many in the church had been saved through the Source of Light courses. When he asked for those to stand, about fifteen stood. Then he said that there were many more in the Junior Church who had been saved.

## **ALWAYS SOMEONE**

In Niles, Michigan, Pastor Musselman, who was our printer's brother-in-law, opened a closed church. His method of contact was distributing our courses. During a Sunday school opening, they awarded certificates and I shook hands with the graduates. The pastor wanted me to meet a young couple who

were gloriously saved through our lessons. The young lady, Mrs. O'Brien, told me that she studied the lesson that the pastor gave her.

When her husband came home she asked him about the part about accepting Christ. He told her he had been confirmed in a denominational church and knew all about religion, so he offered to help her. As they read the part about personal salvation, he told her, "We both have to do this," and they were wonderfully saved. The pastor told me that both were vigorously enrolling relatives, friends, and business contacts in the courses.

Later, I met the husband, who was about twenty-eight years old. He said, "Brother Dix, if you help people to find God, do you think that you should be in church when they make a public profession, or when they are baptized?" I said, "yes, if possible." Then he said that they were saved in June and now it was September, and they had not taken a vacation all summer because there was always someone getting saved or baptized! I wish that some older Christians had that problem! We have thousands of prisoners enrolled in our courses. A letter came from a prisoner who wrote that the daughter of the man he killed came to see him in prison and gave him one of our lessons.

He could not believe that she could be so forgiving. He read the lesson and wrote that he had never read the Bible, or gone to church, or tried to pray. His letter indicated that he told God that he did not know if God could see him in his cell, but that if he could, he was sorry. Later lessons indicated that his life was changed. Praise the Lord! Another letter of counsel to a man on death row was returned marked "deceased" indicating eternal values. God is concerned for literature evangelism. Are you? For more information, write to Source of Light Ministries, 1011 Mission Road, Madison, GA 30650; email: solm@sourcelight.org, phone: 706/342-0397.

*Dr. Glenn Dix has served in missionary work with Source of Light Ministries since 1955. In 1964 he was appointed General Director of this worldwide Bible study ministry. Other duties have included writing for the missionary journal, The Reaper, speaking in churches and conferences in the US and traveling to other countries for evangelism, Bible teaching, and contacts for the Mission.*

## **Dealing with Change God's Way**

**Dr. Donald Fredericks**

In January, IFCA International President, Robert Graves, indicated in his letter to our membership that the proposed revised constitution will be distributed at the upcoming Annual Convention in Kalamazoo, Michigan. This allows for review in our regionals through the coming year and action on the document will take place in 2003, Lord willing. Over the years our fellowship has carefully and prayerfully approached various changes with an eye toward making our organization stronger and more effective in achieving our purpose and goals. As we prepare to consider the changes being proposed, it will be well for us to ask the question, "How does one best approach change in his personal life and ministry?"

Change is one of the many words describing the 20th Century. In the first half of that century my parents' generation experienced drastic changes in transportation, communication, family life, educational system, social environment, and in the realm of church doctrine and polity. They needed to make wise decisions in the midst of those changes. It is impossible to list here all the changes of the last half of the 20th Century that my generation has experienced, and I am sure that change will be the hallmark of the 21st Century as well. Just look at this past year of 2001!

Some changes come by our choice, but much of it occurs regardless of our ability or opportunity to choose. Many people handle change wisely and reap benefits; others struggle, making wrong decisions or none at all, which, of course, is a decision. My experience has revealed that people consider change in one of three possible ways: 1. One extreme way is to resist change with a passion, even considering it to be "demonic"; 2. The other extreme is to change with every new idea that arises which usually creates confusion and is nonproductive; 3. A third and wise approach is to strive for balance, always alert to

changes that are occurring around us and then make wise decisions regarding changes we should make to enhance our purpose and goals that will glorify the Lord of our lives and ministry. Local churches, missions, and other Christian ministries are frequently faced with both arbitrary and proposed changes. Books, tapes, videos, and other media flood us with challenges for change. Some changes can increase our effectiveness for God's glory while other recommended changes come with wrong motives. Some, perhaps, are recommended in all sincerity, yet are sincerely wrong for us and our ministries. It is marvelous to be able to look to the Omniscient One, our Lord Jesus Christ, who enables us to be overcomers in a changing world. He experienced this world. He is in communication with His Holy Spirit who indwells, empowers, and helps us understand our times in the light of His inspired Word. As children and servants of the Triune God we can evaluate change according to some guiding principles given in His Word. Using these principles will enable us to be proactive in implementing change for His glory. Consider with me some basic principles:

### THE PRINCIPLE OF GOD'S GLORY

God's glory must be first and foremost in all our decisions. Ask, "Will this change be to the glory of God, or is it self-serving?" John 14:14, Romans 11:36;15:7; 1 Corinthians 1:29-31; 10:31, and other Scriptures require that God be glorified. The following principles will support this one. God's glory! What a pure motive!

### THE PRINCIPLE OF PRAYER

Jesus said in John 14:13, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." James tells us (1:5) that if we lack wisdom, we need only ask of God and He will give it. Jesus also tells us that "men ought always to pray and not faint" (Luke 18: 1). Confusion and problems can be prevented if we only will take time to pray, seeking divine guidance. Prayer! What a blessed resource!

### THE PRINCIPLE OF SOUND DOCTRINE

The Holy Spirit has given us sound doctrine "once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) which cannot and must not be changed. That's final! No debate! We must measure change by the standard of God's Word. Changes which run contrary to the clear teaching of the Word of God in doctrine or practice must be emphatically rejected. "Speaking truth in love" will bless us and others when evaluating change (Ephesians 4:15; 1 Timothy 1: 10, 4:3; Titus 1:9, 2: 1). Sound Doctrine! What a secure foundation!

### THE PRINCIPLE OF BROTHERLY LOVE AND UNITY

The Lord prayed that we might be one (John 17:21) and gave us the new commandment that we should love one another as He loved us (John 13:34). These and many other passages forbid divisiveness and command the seeking of oneness among the brethren. Thus, changes that divide and confuse the body of believers must be avoided. This calls for clear understanding and patience on the part of all, producing unity. Unity! What a joyful virtue!

### THE PRINCIPLE OF GODLY WISDOM

We are refreshed with the words, "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17). In contrast, Colossians 2:23 warns of "a show of wisdom" which neglects honoring the body of believers and defines it as being of the flesh. James 3:15 expands on this kind of wisdom in an even more drastic manner with words like "earthly," "sensual," and "devilish." Wisdom! What a confidence virtue!

### THE PRINCIPLE OF HONESTY

The Scriptures declare honesty to be a characteristic of servant leaders (Acts 6:2; Romans 12:17; 11 Corinthians 8:21; 1 Timothy 2:2). Honestly evaluate proposed change with fellow believers. Honestly propose change you may deem wise. Honesty! What a comforting virtue! We have all witnessed the unfortunate consequences of the violation of one or more of these principles. As servants of our sovereign Lord we should not stubbornly resist nor thoughtlessly accept change. Rather, we should sincerely and prayerfully evaluate how best to glorify our Lord in the decisions we make in a world of change. He knows the changes we face, and James 1:5 guarantees divine wisdom for those who ask. He alone can help us make wise decisions, thus, decisions that will reap eternal fruit.

*Dr. Donald Fredericks is the past President of IFCA International. He is the Cofounder and Director Emeritus of UIM International (missions among Native People of North America since 1956). He has been an IFCA International member since 1952.*

## **Is Evangelism Getting People to Make a Decision?**

**Dr. Richard I. Gregory**  
**VOICE MANAGING EDITOR**

When I was a young pastor we used to take our young people down to the New Jersey shore to do soul winning. I remember, even as a pastor, how apprehensive I was about approaching a person, invading their privacy, and telling them how they could be saved. We had instructed them to take them down the "Romans Road" and try to get them to pray the sinner's prayer. Sometimes I think that people agreed to "pray the prayer" just to get rid of us. Maybe I am being somewhat cynical, but we saw no visible enduring fruit from that approach. I suppose that the greatest gain from those exercises was the growth we saw in our young people in their willingness to verbalize their faith. However, I sometimes wonder whether they were learning to genuinely introduce people to Christ or to follow a formula to get people to "make a decision" by agreeing with them. Trying to teach people how to fulfill the responsibility given to believers by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 is a major undertaking. The Lord gives some specific assignments to us in this text. He informs his disciples that it is their responsibility to make disciples, to baptize them and teach them to be obedient to all that the Lord commands. That is a tall order and it is no wonder that they gathered in Jerusalem waiting for the promised Holy Spirit to enable them. They would soon be faced with a monumental task, for multitudes of people were soon to be saved. The believers in Jerusalem found out that true evangelism is not just trying to get one into the Kingdom, but it includes discipling people both before and after they are saved as to who Jesus is and what believing in Him entails. I think the key is centered in what one presents to people as the Gospel. Let's take the apostles as an example.

When Peter preached following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, his message was centered on Christ, not on the people. When Peter and James were confronted by the lame man in Acts 3, they presented him healing in the name of Jesus Christ and later in the chapter in Solomon's porch he again explained that it was faith in the name of Jesus that made the man whole and concluded his message with "Unto you first God, having raised up Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." When Peter was called before the Sanhedrin concerning this he answered, "Be it known to you...that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth...does this man stand before you whole...neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Note the message was centered on Jesus. Later, after being told not to preach and teach in the name of Jesus, the disciples "daily in the Temple and in every place, (they) ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:2, "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Paul tells the Romans that "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the message concerning Christ." The Gospel is the message about Jesus Christ's death, burial and resurrection. It explains how He paid for our sins once and for all upon the cross. In 1 Corinthians 1:18, Paul tells us it is the message of the cross that must be shared. "For the preaching (message) of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God."

Evangelizing is not about escape from hell or about solving problems and making life easier. It is about sharing the majesty of Jesus Christ. So much of what is called evangelism is man centered both in its message and its solutions. Before one can effectively share his faith, he must have awesome personal trust in the majesty of his Savior. It is not just sharing facts about Jesus Christ, it is sharing Christ. Genuine faith is not merely believing facts about Jesus Christ. It is bowing before the Lord with a sincere trust in His person and having confidence in His qualifications and ability to save one to the uttermost. It is just not praying a prayer or agreeing with some verses. That may be the avenue whereby faith is exercised, but it is possible to conform to a process without genuine faith and consequently without genuine results. To convince one to make a decision without understanding what genuine faith is to promote false security without a personal relationship with Christ. In my experience as a pastor, I have dealt with many who made some kind of decision but who lacked genuine faith.

It is important that in any form evangelism may take, those who are the object of one's witness must be introduced to the majesty that is in Christ Jesus. One's faith must not be in his prayer but in the person and promises of Jesus Christ. If the Apostles thought it was important to centralize their messages on Him, must we not do likewise? Training people to make disciples necessitates training people to "know Him and the power of His resurrection." Christ Jesus must be presented as qualified and able to save before people are challenged to "make a decision" to become a believer. It is the challenge of every pastor to seek to train his people in knowing Christ if he expects them to share Christ. Only then will the flock begin to fulfill the responsibilities of Matthew 28:19-20.

• **IFCA International has a brochure called "Saving Faith" that is available through the Home Office.**

## **CHAPLAIN'S DIARY**

### **MINISTRY AT SEA**

**LT Tim Gault (CHC, USNR)**

*The following account of ministry by our Navy Chaplain Tim Gault is taken from an email sent me. On his first tour of duty as a Navy Chaplain he is assigned to Destroyer Squadron 28, Norfolk, Virginia. In that ministry he serves several destroyer crews.... Warren Dane, Director of Chaplaincy, Ch, Lt Col, USAF (Ret.)*

In late November one of my ships (USS PETERSON) lost two sailors in a tragic incident as she was conducting a boarding & search of a merchant vessel. One body was found and another remains missing. Services were conducted aboard the ship and at home for these men. I believe both of the men were believers and are now with the LORD.

At the time of the incident, I was aboard another ship in another Area Of Responsibility (AOR) and unable to reach the PETERSON. Though the ship had a fleet chaplain and another senior chaplain aboard, the Captain and Executive Officer (XO) requested their ship's chaplain (me) be flown to this AOR to minister aboard the ship. I was so grateful to hear that word.

The XO told me it was a tremendous complement to me that the ship's company was asking for me during this troubled time. It was also an answer to my prayer. I was finally able to visit the ship--the ship that I had visited the most during workups. The captain told me shortly after arriving of his intention to keep the ship's mission readiness at a peak while healing the ship from the tragedy. About a week later, he said he was hearing something that had been missing for a long time--laughter. He was very pleased. Now the ship seems to have moved beyond that tragedy and is concentrating on other "things." I think I will be moving to another ship soon. But, just to think about what the Lord did here is a tremendous blessing.



I am so thankful now that I look back to our workups. Due to a conversation I had with Rear Admiral Fitzgerald, I was aware that he was very interested in the number of times I was able to get around to the various ships in the squadron. I wanted desperately to move to all my ships at least once. But, I got "stuck" on this ship for nearly the entire exercise. I simply could not obtain air assets to move to another ship. I even began to become a little downhearted about it.

I remembered a lesson I learned while serving as a pastor--to be grateful and obedient in the ministry that God gives me--wherever that is and whatever it is. So, I prayed about it and thanked God for the opportunity to minister on the ship. That night we had a Bible study and 45 people came out--including the Captain! A number of sailors told me that same night afterwards that they wanted to be closer to the Lord. I was so very much encouraged and praised God for it!

Now that I look back on those days (days which feel like they are long past) I see that God was also at work building relationships that I would need for these days. I bonded with this ship's company like no other ship (incidentally, a ship my staff doesn't really seem to like that much). They invited me to a number of ship's activities--softball, bowling, a wetting down (tea and cokes while I stayed), and their "Dining Out" (a very formal dinner event which only includes ship's company) just prior to the cruise. One guy even asked me to officiate his retirement ceremony.

These bonds with the crew forged relationships that allowed for immediately beneficial ministry when I came aboard. It is not that I am such a tremendously talented chaplain but God's foreknowledge and grace that brought this to be. Truly "My Father has been working..." (John 5:17a) and I have a double blessing as I have sown and reaped of the same field.

There are 3 young men on PETERSON that are considering the gospel ministry. After counseling them, two are beginning courses of study at Liberty University in the Spring via courses by extension. Another is considering courses at Bob Jones University in the summer. I am so very excited about these young men. Please pray for Billy Pierce, Brandon Dye, and William Lattin.

Praise the Lord!

**Tim Gault, LT, CHC, USNR  
COMDESRON 28**

*Please remember in prayer all of your missionaries in the military and civilian Chaplaincies as they touch the lives of men and women who may never darken the door of a church. If your church would like to help support financially the IFCA International Chaplain Commission in its missionary ministries please contact Mr. Tom Olson at the home office. 800-347-1840*

*There is a significant shortage in the missionary ministry of the military Chaplaincies. If you are interested in becoming an active duty or reserve military chaplain or serving in a civilian Chaplaincy contact me at...*

**Rev. Warren Dane  
10039 Thornbird Ct.  
Moreno Valley, CA 92557  
909-247-0410  
[chaplain@ifca.org](mailto:chaplain@ifca.org)**

**Women's Voice  
Being a Learner  
Eidene Anderson**

This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress (James 1:27). As Christians, we all are aware of the Bible's words for caring for widows. But how do we go beyond hearing and respond to James' call to action? Through the years our family has been led to care for widows in a variety of ways. My husband, David went to be with the Lord in October 2000. His home going has given me further thoughts about how to be helpful to widows and their families. Prior to David's death, we taught our girls that widows were special to God. They are to be treasured by us and given preferential treatment. When David was operating a construction business, the widows had first priority on his time and his schedule. They also received a reduced hourly rate. As a family we were available to listen, share God's Word, and care for their physical needs. Widows were included in family gatherings for holiday, birthdays, etc. Our girls treated some older ones as "Grandmas". We discovered each widow's area of expertise and were thrilled to gain from their knowledge. What wonderful mentors. They enjoyed opportunities to interact with each member of our family. Even though David had prepared us well for his death, we immediately found ourselves in a completely different place in life after his death. Here are some suggestions from our experience that may help you the next time you are called when someone's mate or loved one dies:

1. If there is an illness involved, stay close to the family during the illness. This puts you in a place of being able to continue caring for the family after the home going of their loved one. It is sad when people simply say, "If you need anything, give me a call."
2. Be warm and friendly. Overcome your own aversion to death and "not knowing what to say" with a sincere desire to get to know the widow and her family. God's power will be there to love them if your desires are right. Often the response after a death is to avoid the family. This is not what they need.
3. Take the initiative to call and visit. Often for the grieving person it is hard to put forth the energy to make phone calls. Keep the visits short unless you are asked to stay longer.
4. Do not assume everyone else is taking care of this grieving family.
5. Recognize tears are inevitable. Be compassionate. "Mourn with those who mourn." Cry with them. Let them cry. Be a support without drawing attention to their tears. God is not ashamed of their tears (Ps. 56:8).
6. Give appropriate, honest, specific praise of the one God has taken home. Praise God for their ministry, wonderful memories of them, things you learned from them, etc. This is a balm and encouragement to the family (Hebrews 10:25b). Give similar encouragement to those grieving as well (Jeremiah 29:11).
7. Get to know the children. They grieve also. Step in and help to fill the void of that parent that is now gone. God can use you to make a life-changing impression on a child at this time in their life.
8. Make space for the grieving family in your home and in your life (Ps. 68:6).
9. Decisions now need to be made without the help of the spouse, and this is a hard adjustment. Help by listening to them, thinking with them, being a sounding board and making referrals.
10. Care for their physical needs. Offer help in specific areas of expertise or find people who are willing to help. Keep checking back to see if the needs get met.
11. While each grieves in a unique way, it helps if you do not presume that you know more about grief than the one going through it. There is a great need for humility and respect to be shown to the one who is left to mourn.
12. It is better to just admit--"I honestly don't know the difficulty this must be for you." A platitude or pat answer is best left unsaid. Offer instead a passage of Scripture, a prayer and most important - your

presence. Keep in mind that some of the most godly women in churches are those that are widows. They have been taught by God how to cope with grief and to go on in life. They have learned to trust God at deeper levels than when they were married or single. There are special ways that a pastor can help the family:

- Make sure that the church is reaching out to them and making them continue to feel welcome. They may now need help in accessing a different group of people. Being a single adult is difficult.
- Help them find ministry opportunities that fit them. When a spouse dies, the ministry that they as a couple were in may not be appropriate for a single person to continue doing.
- Pray with them often.
- When a woman becomes a widow, protect her from those in the church who would want to take advantage of her singleness. This is awkward for the widow and is not something that she needs at this time of grieving.
- When visiting with the widow/er, speak often of heaven and the glorious hope of reunion that believers have. Show them passages from the Bible that will help with questions about suffering, death and eternal consequences.

My husband, David, gave me his last instructions: "Be a learner." Often that is the single choice that I come back to. Will I be a "learner" in this school of widowhood? God has promised "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Corinthians 12:9). It is only by His grace that I am sustained with a learner's approach to grief and the changes it has brought into my life and my families' life. To you the reader: Will you be a "learner" in caring for widows and the fatherless? I thank God for those who have been used by God in this hard time in my life.

*Eidene Anderson and her 2 daughters are currently living in Kansas City, Missouri so that the girls can attend Calvary Bible College. Continue to pray for this family as they make adjustments with God's strength. Note: If you would be interested in reaching out to widows in your church/neighborhood, write and request our IFCA International magazine for those who have lost a mate Chera Fellowship. See the ad on this page of this Voice magazine for further information.*

## **Church Extension**

### **A Chat with the First Director of NICE**

**John Edgell**

Henry Boyd, the first director of NICE, will be 97 this spring. He lives in a Christian retirement center in the Seattle area. He is slowing down, but his mind is sharp. I thought you might find enriching this cross-section of a conversation I had with him this last December. The other day I braved the Seattle traffic to visit Henry Boyd, the first director of NICE. We spent an hour and a half chatting about life. Well, I listened, asked a few questions, and Henry shared a bit of his life with me. Did you know that he was quite a basketball player in his high school days? But we didn't talk much about that. Here is some of what we did talk about.

At one point I asked, "Henry, what most influenced the direction of your life?" Without a moment's hesitation he answered, "My mother's prayers." Henry explained that he was a wayward son, and it was his mother's prayers that turned his heart back to the Lord. "What was your greatest accomplishment?" I asked. Again, without hesitation he answered, "Planting churches in rural areas." Then he explained that the significance of church planting was the privilege of having an impact on people's lives, and told me about some of those people. "What advice would you give a young man thinking about going into the ministry?"

A tear came to Henry's eye. "Get a good education." He explained that he only had a year and a half of Bible school training (BIOLA), but wished he had had more. He felt that with further education he could have been even more effective in ministry for the Lord. "What was your biggest disappointment, Henry?" "My life before salvation, but we won't talk about that." Then he explained how thankful he was for the grace of God. Of his time as mission director, he chuckled and said, "Oh, I was just a chore boy." We talked about ministry a bit, and then Henry commented, "You know, the only thing that limits a person's ability to minister is his heart. You've got to have a heart for the Lord."

I thanked Henry for sharing with me, and for the privilege of being his friend, and walked away from our chat deeply blessed. Yes, thank you, Henry. Thank you from all of us for your heart and your life.

*This year of 2002, IFCA Church Extension celebrates its 50th Anniversary of formal ministry within our fellowship. During this year we will share a number of articles that revolve around some of our own church planting founders. These men are Christian heroes within our fellowship, and we trust that their lives and testimonies will bless the readers of Voice Magazine this year. Let us take you to the Pacific Northwest. Brother John Edgell recently interviewed Henry Boyd, first director of Northwest Independent Church Extension. Thank you, John, for sharing with us.*