From Uplook, 1998

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It's Time (January 1998)

From Uplook, January 1998. Editorial.

If we could see God's clock, what would it say?

Obviously time is a relative commodity: a half hour in a hammock on a Saturday afternoon is hardly the same as a half hour in the dentist’s chair. We call someone in Europe late on a Saturday night; they are already into the new week. Or we stand under the stars and watch them as they were long ago, not as they are tonight. But more than that, the flow of time itself seems to be speeding up. Like a stream cascading increasingly downward until it pours itself into the ocean of eternity, it seems the rate of descent of our sinful world increases the rapidity of time’s passage.

In the early chapters of human history, the patriarchs moved from century to century with hardly a ripple. A 2500 BC camel looked pretty much like a 2000 BC camel. A double-wide, matrimonial-size tent in Abram’s day could have passed for the tent that Moses used 500 years later.

With the arrival of world empires, time swept the nations along at an ever increasing rate. Within the span of a few hundred years at most, everything changed. Literature, language, architecture—the tides of conquest brought new cultures. But eventually God would say, “Thus far and no further,” and the proud wave would crash on some enemy’s shore, leaving behind only a few broken remnants of its glorious past.

By the time of the dominance of European monarchies on the world stage, everything was replaced during the

lifetime of one ruler, perhaps five or six decades. If you know your stuff, you can distinguish a Louis XIV table or an Elizabethan dress or a Victorian novel. Yet even then, societies remained relatively stable.

When we think of our own century, each decade marks a world of change. The Roaring Twenties. The Dirty Thirties. The War Years. The Prosperous Fifties and the Baby Boom. The Angry Sixties with venerable institutions swept away in the floodtide of rebellion. The Seventies saw the beginnings of the Information Age, a portent of what lay ahead. Our world (the Global Village) now has the finest of communication systems—with virtually nothing worth saying. The Eighties and Nineties have fast-forwarded by us, and now we stand at the threshold of a new millennium.

Those who dare to look ahead can hardly keep from being overcome with time-sickness. Like motion-sickness, it is a violent reaction to the constant unsettling movement of things. “Modern man,” someone observed, “is staggering between Vanity Fair and Armageddon.”

So what time is it on God’s clock? U Thant, head of the United Nations in 1969, said he thought the world could only make it another ten years. Obviously we’re living on borrowed time (2 Pet. 3:9). But what time is it?

It is time to take sin seriously. “The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God” (1 Pet. 4:17). As the world’s standards plunge into deeper darkness every day, we must realize the danger—that our own standards, while remaining a respectable distance above the world’s, would make us more like Lot than we care

to realize. He thought he was doing a good thing by offering his daughters to the men of the city!

It is time to take our responsibility seriously, “high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Rom. 13:11). How much there is left to do! “You cannot kill time without injuring eternity,” wrote Thoreau. It’s no time to faint.

It is time to take the Lord and His claims seriously. “Sow to yourselves in righteousness,” cries the Lord, and “reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you” (Hosea 10:12). Have we been crying for the rain but have failed to break up the fallow ground, exposing our dry condition to heaven? If we do not love Him as we should, tell Him so. Ask Him to woo you as He said He would do to Israel. After all, His secret name is Love.

Paul wrote, “Brethren, the time is short.” Now it’s two thousand years shorter than that. It’s time, all right.

The Scourge of Spiritual Pride (January 1998)

From Uplook, January 1998. Article.

Obviously it is necessary in an issue like this to raise to all a solemn warning against spiritual pride. It is the worst of all prides for it masquerades as its nemesis, humility. How the Lord hated it, for it hid from men their true selves, and so robbed them of enjoying His grace.

The gospel leaves nothing for pride: we were prodigals, rebels, sinners at best. What we have now only came to us because He became poor.

The Church—as our Lord designed it—is death to spiritual pride. Its leaders are bond-slaves; its emblems are bread, wine, and a watery grave (all pictures of death). Its watchword is, “Not I, but Christ”; its instrument is a cross; its message to the world but weakness and folly; and its Commander was a carpenter by trade.

All that the Church knows has come by revelation, not intellectual prowess. All that it does, it accomplishes by gifts (the very name giving evidence that there is no room for pride). In much weakness we carry on. All that we possess is simply held in trust as a stewardship. And our everlasting song will begin, “Thou art worthy, O Lord.”

We should not, however, confuse pride with true gratitude. Pride takes credit for the discovery; gratitude gives the Lord all the glory—and enjoys His gifts to the full.

Whachyagointadoaboudit? (February-March 1998)

From Uplook, February-March 1998. Editorial.

That’s the big question

I’ve never read Looking Homeward, Angel by Thomas Wolfe, but there is a line from it in one of my books of quotations. Harry Tugman (whoever he is) is asking Luke where he is presently stationed. The response goes like this: “At the p-p-p-present time in Norfolk at the Navy base,” Luke answered, “m-m-making the world safe for hypocrisy.”

Luke hardly needs to have bothered. The world is obviously a safe place for hypocrisy—it’s everywhere. Washington has honed it to a fine art; hypocrisy is an indispensable tool of the trade for the majority of politicians. Madison Avenue advertising is forever manufacturing mirages to tempt the world’s desert travelers to another imaginary oasis. And Hollywood makes billions on it; in fact that’s where the word had its origin—in the world of the actor.

The word hypocrisy is merely the Anglicized form of the Greek hupokrisis. At its root it means a reply, but the word became associated with acting, probably since the Greek actors spoke in dialogue. Hypocrite then came to mean “one who affects virtues or qualities he does not have” (Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary).

For those who attended the recent Rise Up & Build conference in Dearborn, this issue of Uplook includes memories of some of the ministry available there. For

those unable to attend, this is a sampler, and after tasting, you may want more. We weren't able to capture the sweet fellowship for redistribution, or bottle the out-of-this-world singing, but there are tapes available of almost all the sessions. We hope you'll avail yourselves of these.

And what does that have to do with hypocrisy? The link is found in the question at the head of this article. Whachyagointadoaboudit? Will we really benefit from such an outpouring of divine truth or will we only seem to be changed? May our prayer be borrowed from Amy Carmichael: "Lord, make me what I seem to be."

Obviously all the time and effort and prayer and expense and travel was not intended to produce a mere impression of spiritual vigor. We want the real thing.

The Lord Jesus addressed hypocrisy more than anyone in the New Testament. In fact, He is the only one in the 27 books who called anyone a hypocrite (Paul, Peter and James refer to hypocrisy). He mentions it 20 times, mostly in Matthew (never in John). Here are some of them:

1. A public display of spiritual activity (almsgiving, prayers, and fasting) to receive the praise of men (Mt. 6:2, 5, 16). Not that you never perform public ministry, but that you don't do it for men's approval.

2. Dealing with others' faults while pretending not to have any yourself (Mt. 7:5). This is the illustration of the mote and the beam (or the sawdust speck and the 2x4). You are not a hypocrite for trying to help a fellow Christian with a troublesome speck in his eye, but for pretending that you are an expert and have no troubles yourself.

3. Appearing to take the things of God seriously while actually using such to justify a selfish lifestyle (Mt. 15:4-9).

4. Feigning interest in the will of God for the future while having no interest in practically doing God's will in the present (Mt. 16:1-4).

5. Professing God as the supreme Master in your life while having other loyalties that take precedence over Him (Mt. 22:15-22). The Lord's illustration of the coin showed that there generally is no conflict between responsibility to government and to God.

6. Matthew 23 has a string of woes against hypocrites (vv. 13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29). These include: professing to represent God while being an impediment to others in coming to Him, using long public prayers as a disguise for selfish living, being fussy about little things but ignoring the big issues, being fastidious about outward appearance but not about inward reality, and being critical of older generations while repeating their sins.

7. Saying that you believe in the coming of the Lord but living as if it will never happen (Mt. 24:45-51).

In a world full of phonies, God help us to be realies. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

127 Years Ago (February-March 1998)

From Uplook, February-March 1998. Article.

One of the first North American Assembly conferences?

The premiere issue (Jan. 1881) of The Barley Cake, the first North American assembly magazine, announced the fifth Hamilton, ON, conference. By inference the first was held in 1877.

Assessment of the conference, in the direct style of the editor, Donald Ross, followed in the February issue:

“A considerable number of Christians from the province were gathered together, including a few from the States, and, on the whole the meetings were larger than on any previous occasion. Many came with great expectations, and were not disappointed. They returned home saying: ‘This is the best Conference we have ever been at.’ Others who were away in heart from the Lord and knew it not, but imperfectly, if at all; have discovered where they were, and returned to Him from whom they wandered. Others, again, who were neither simple, nor humble, but nursing and cherishing something or other, that could not bear the searching Word of God, instead of being blessed and refreshed, have been fighting every inch of their ground, and have suffered an incalculable loss for the present, and possibly far-reaching into the future. It is an awful thing to be in a condition where God cannot bless His own.

“Sometimes the Word of God was in great power, searching and trying, but at the same time leading forth into the life and liberty of God. The cleansing and the

feeding were going on together. ‘How good is the God we adore.’

Following this pointed review, the editor discusses the merits of an open platform over the arranged form, suggesting that unless ministry is prepared the day of the conference, like the manna, it will breed worms and stink! He then continues:

“The Saturday afternoon meeting was directed to reports about the work of God, and exceedingly interesting. Conversions all over, and there were calls for laborers in the Gospel from many quarters, as the country is opening up for the truth. There are, however, but few laborers to enter on the field. Some are not in a condition of soul for the work, and some are enamored with the fair prospect of money-making, and go in for that, while the largest number seem never to rise higher than their surroundings, and of course, some have no special gift for the work, for God did not mean that the whole body should be a mouth, though generally the lack of laborers is the result of low Spirituality…

“The last Gospel Meeting was held in the ‘Grand Opera House,’ a newly erected building, which holds 1500, but that evening between extra seats and standing, there would be, no doubt, between 1800 and 2000 people. The rush was such, the doors had to be closed up twenty minutes before the time. Hundreds on hundreds returned home, and many remained on the street in the frost and snow, and were addressed under the canopy of heaven. Several have professed to receive Christ in that last meeting. An intimation was given that a similar meeting would be held on the following Lord’s day evening in the same place, which also was crowded.

Mr. Ross concludes: “These Hamilton Conferences have been a very great blessing to the Lord’s people, and doubtless they shall continue so, as long as there is liberty to preach all God’s truth unreservedly, but should there ever be an effort made to select truth, and speak only such things as may suit ‘ears polite’ or half-hearted, or crooked Christians, then at once the power is gone. The Lord keep His saints feet; and encourage the downcast, raise the fallen, etc., through His own sent servants.”

Multiple Names & Titles of the Lord Jesus (February-March 1998)

From Uplook, February-March 1998. Chart.

Hence and forever from my heart I bid my doubts and fears depart, and to those hands my life resign which bears credentials so divine. —Isaac Watts

Author and Finisher of faith (Heb. 12:2)

- —of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9)

Beginning (Col. 1:18)

- —of the creation of God (Rev. 3:14)
- —and the end[ing] (Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13)

Begotten

- First B. of the Dead (Rev. 1:5)
- Only B.
- of the Father (Jn. 1:14)
- Son [of God] (Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:9)

Bread

- B. from heaven (Jn. 6:32, 41, 50)
- B. of God (Jn. 6:33)
- B. of life (Jn. 6:35)
- living B. (Jn. 6:51)
- true B. (Jn. 6:32, 35)

Chief[est among ten thousand] (Song of Sol. 5:10)

- —C. Corner Stone (Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6)
- —C. Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4)

Firstborn

- —F. among many brethren (Rom. 8:29)
- —F. of every creature (Col. 1:15)
- —F. from the dead (Col. 1:18)

God (Jn. 1:1; Mt. 1:23; Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:8)

- —Bread of G. (Jn. 6:33)
- —Chosen of G. (Lk. 23:35)
- —Christ of G. (Jn. 12:34)
- —Gift of G. (2 Cor. 9:15)
- —Glory of G. (Isa. 60:1)
- —G. my Saviour (Lk. 1:47)
- —the Mighty G. (Isa. 9:6)
- —my G. (Jn. 20:28)

Greater than...

- —Abraham (Jn. 8:53)
- —Jacob (Jn. 4:12)
- —John the Baptist (Mt. 11:11)
- —Jonah (Mt. 12:41)
- —the temple (Mt. 12:6)

- —Solomon (Lk. 11:31)

Head (even Christ) (Eph. 4:15)

- —H. of all principality & power (Col. 2:10)
- —H. of the Body, the Church (Col. 1:18)
- —H. of every man (1 Cor. 11:3)
- —H. of the corner (Ps. 118:22; Mt. 21:42)

Holy One [& the Just] (Acts 2:27; 3:14)

- —H. of God (Mk. 1:24)
- —H. of Israel (Isa. 41:14)

I AM (Jn. 8:24, 58)

- —I am the Bread of Life (Jn. 6:35)
- —I am the Light of the World (Jn. 9:5)
- —I am the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:11)
- —I am the Door (Jn. 10:9)
- —I am the Resurrection & the Life (Jn. 11:25)
- —I am the true Vine (Jn. 15:1)
- —I am the Way (Jn. 14:6)

King (Zech. 14:16)

- —K. of the daughter of Zion (Jn. 12:15)
- —K. of glory (Ps. 24:10)
- —K. of Israel (Mt. 27:42; Jn. 1:49)
- —K. of the Jews (Mt. 2:2; Mk. 15:2; Jn. 19:19)
- —K. of kings (Rev. 17:14; 19:16)
- —K. of peace (Heb. 7:2)

- —K. of righteousness (Heb. 7:2)
- —K. of saints (Rev. 15:3)

Light (Jn. 12:35)

- —great L. (Isa. 9:2)
- —L. to lighten Gentiles (Isa. 42:6; Lk. 2:32)
- —L. of men (Jn. 1:4)
- —L. of the world (Jn. 9:5)
- —true L. (Jn. 1:9)

Lord [& Saviour] (1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Pet. 1:11)

- —L. of [over] all (Acts 10:36; Rom. 10:12)
- —L. of both dead & living (Rom. 14:9)
- —L. of glory (1 Cor. 2:8)
- —L. of lords (Rev. 19:16)
- —L. of peace (2 Thess. 3:16)
- —L. of the harvest (Mt. 9:38)
- —L. of the Sabbath (Lk. 6:5)

Man (Jn. 19:5; Acts 17:31; 1 Tim. 2:5)

- —M. of Sorrows (Isa. 53:3)
- —M. Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:5)
- —Second M. (1 Cor. 15:47)
- —Son of M. (Mk. 10:33)

Prince [& a Saviour] (Acts 3:15; 5:31)

- —P. of Peace (Isa. 9:6; 2 Thess. 3:16)
- —P. of the kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5)

Seed

- —S. of Abraham (Gal. 3:16, 19)
- —S. of David (2 Tim. 2:8)
- —S. of the woman (Gen. 3:15)

Shepherd

- —S. & Bishop of souls (1 Pet. 2:25)
- —Chief S. (1 Pet. 5:4)
- —Good S. (Jn. 10:11, 14)
- —Great S. (Heb. 13:20)

Son (Isa. 9:6; 1 Jn. 4:14)

- —of Abraham (Mt. 1:1)
- —S. of David (Mt. 9:27; 15:22; 20:30)
- —S. of [the living] God (Mt. 4:3, 6; 16:16)
- —His dear S. (Col. 1:13)
- —His own S. (Rom. 8:32)
- —My [Beloved] Son (Ps. 2:7; Mt. 17:5)
- —only begotten S. [of God] (Jn. 1:18; 3:16)
- —S. of the Blessed (Mk. 14:61)
- —S. of the Highest [Most High] (Mk. 5:7)
- —S. of the Father (2 Jn. 3)
- —of Joseph (as was supposed) (Jn. 1:45)
- —S. of Man (Mt. 16:27; 20:28; Lk. 6:5)
- —S. of Mary (Mk. 6:3)

Stone

- —Chief corner S. (Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6)
- —living S. (1 Pet. 2:4)
- —S. of stumbling (1 Pet. 2:8)

Word (Jn. 1:1)

- —W. of God (Rev. 19:13)
- —W. of Life (1 Jn. 1:1)

Sweet Water Spring (April 1998)

From Uplook, April 1998. Editorial.

A little member—big trouble or big blessing

I suppose we've all had to learn the hard way that we carry a potent force with us everywhere we go. Some of the time it lies there inert, seemingly harmless. As harmless as a venomous snake in the grass, says James (3:8)! Philip Burrows Strong captures the wisdom of the ancients regarding the tongue in poetic form:

> *"The boneless tongue, so small and weak,*
> *Can crush and kill," declared the Greek.*
> *"The tongue destroys a greater horde,"*
> *The Turk asserts, "than does the sword."*
> *While Arab sage doth this impart:*
> *"The tongue's great storehouse is the heart."*
> *The sacred writer crowns the whole,*
> *"Who keeps his tongue doth keep his soul."*

Intelligent speech is one of the faculties that marks us out, with the angels, as special creatures of God. True, higher animals communicate with each other in a limited way, but we have can express thoughts through spoken words. In this way it is possible to use our members (and this one in particular) as instruments of righteousness or unrighteousness (Rom. 6:13).

How sweet is the water that can flow from a consecrated tongue! How soul-saving is the gospel river to a dying son of the dust. How refreshing is encouragement to a parched life. Think of Hannah's prayer of gratitude (1 Sam. 2), and David's songs of delight in God, and Paul's classic intercessions for the saints. But how bitter the

springs of hatred and malice and petty jealousy. I can almost catch the hard, metallic aftertaste in the back of my throat as I write these words.

James, in speaking of the tongue, portrays it as a bit in the horse's mouth so it might be used to bring the whole body to obedience (3:3). It is like a ship's helm, that responds to the control of the captain and, though small, can bring great changes, in spite of contrary forces (v. 4). Or it can be like a little spark which causes a forest fire that rages out of control (vv. 4-5), or a poisonous snake inflicting its deadly venom on the unsuspecting (vv. 7-8). It can bear fruit, but only the kind of fruit that grows from that particular kind of root. The kind of words we sow are the kind of words we reap (Lk. 6:38; Mt. 5:7).

Then James throws us a curve. He writes: "Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men…Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing" (vv. 9-10). But he continues: "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" (v. 11). The answer is obviously, No. Sweet and bitter water can't come out of the same spring. But can't blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth? That's just the point! When you mix sweet and briny water, what do you get? Some of both? All sweet? No. The bitter water spoils the sweet. So with our tongues. The attempted blessings are ruined by the bitterness. May the influence that flows from our lives be sweetened by the river that unceasingly flows from the throne of God.

We had decided to gather an Uplook on worship—the highest use of the tongue—some time ago. It happened to coincide with receiving the responses to our renewal

notices. Almost all of the mail was very encouraging, and we are deeply grateful for your constructive suggestions, kind words, practical fellowship, and prayers.

There were some others of a different flavor, of course. We expect that. We know it goes with the territory. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address was dubbed by the Chicago Times, "silly, flat and dishwater utterances." Beethoven had his playing described as "noisy, unnatural, over-pedaled, and confused." A bit like one or two letters I received, except mine were not so gentle.

Yet we should learn from such rebuke. We are not always sure it is a friend who is wounding us (Prov. 27:6), but anything that humbles us is good for us. It gets us moving in the right direction (1 Pet. 5:6). British statesman Edmund Burke said, "He who opposes me and does not destroy me strengthens me." We do find the chastening a little easier to take, however, when we know that the person correcting us cares for our spiritual well-being.

For some reason, I'm reminded of General George Patton's remark, "All my life I've been shot at. Often by the enemy." Watch how you use your weapon.

The Geometry of a Circle (April 1998)

From Uplook, April 1998. Article.

My grandparent's generation met in a circle to break bread. Or did they?

When I was a boy, we always sat in a circle to remember the Lord. Or at least they sat in the circle—I was not in fellowship so I sat "at the back" with those who had not been received by the assembly.

There was a definite "in" and "out" to the assembly in those days. And we knew who was in and who was not. Not being "in" placed you in the seat of the unlearned where you could observe without participating. Let me tell you what I observed.

First, I noticed that the circle was not a circle, or so it seemed to me. It looked very much like a square. A circle, after all, as Webster defines it, is "a closed plane curve every point of which is equidistant from a fixed point within the curve."

But perhaps those old-timers weren't wrong. They were not talking about the location of their chairs, but the location of their hearts! And their hearts were all equidistant from the Center after all.

I also noticed the reverence of those in the circle. As they took their places (usually fifteen minutes or more before the meeting officially began), they sat silently reading their Bibles, or with their eyes closed in meditation. They even tip-toed to their places across the linoleum floor. Reverence was the word that came to

mind. I sensed I was sitting in the anteroom of heaven, looking in.

I remember the eloquence of the men who prayed. It was not false piety or put-on. Most of the believers in my local assembly were blue-collar workers; many had not been educated past eighth grade. They may not have been familiar with the classics, but they knew their way around the Word, and they knew their way into the Holiest.

I remember the singing, a little slower than I would have paced it, but heartfelt and real. I remember the tears, too. Working men with calloused hands and tender hearts would break down, then sit down, unable to finish their prayer. I can't forget those memories.

That's one reason I and my family gather with other saints around a table with bread and wine each week to remember Him. And in the center is our Lord.

A Picture Gallery Par Excellence (April 1998)

From Uplook, April 1998. Chart.

Christ is portrayed in every hue of the universal palette. (By no means an exhaustive list!)

Mysterious

- The Name Only He Knows (Rev. 19:12)

Relationships

- The Son. Who called Him that?
- God the Father (Mt. 17:5)
- The Spirit through the Word (Mk. 1:1-11)
- The Lord Jesus Himself (Jn. 10:36)
- Gabriel (Lk. 1:35; 2:11)
- John the Baptist (Jn. 1:34)
- The disciples (Mt. 14:33)
- Paul (Acts 9:20)
- Martha (Jn. 11:27)
- His executioner (Mk. 15:39)
- demons (Mk. 3:11; 5:7)
- The Babe (Lk. 2:12)
- The Young Child (Mt. 2:20)
- The Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5)
- The Bridegroom (Mt. 9:15)

- Firstborn among Many Brethren (Rom. 8:29)

Astronomy

- The Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2)
- The True Light (Jn. 1:9)
- The Morning Star (Rev. 2:28)
- The Day-spring from on High (Lk. 1:78)

Botany

- The Root & Offspring of David (Rev. 22:16)
- The Branch (Zech. 6:12)
- The True Vine (Jn. 15:1)
- The Corn of Wheat (Jn. 12:24)
- A Plant of Renown (Ezek. 34:29)
- The Rose of Sharon (Song of Sol. 2:1)
- The Lily of the Valleys (Song of Sol. 2:1)
- A Bundle of Myrrh (Song of Sol. 1:13)
- A Cluster of Camphire (Song of Sol. 1:14)
- Firstfruits of Them that Slept (1 Cor. 15:20)

Language

- The Word (Jn. 1:1)
- The Alpha & Omega (Rev. 1:8)

Zoology

- The Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29)
- A Worm, and No Man (Ps. 22:6)
- The Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5)

- Sparrow Alone on a Housetop, Owl of the Desert, Pelican of the Wilderness (Ps. 102:6-7)

- Sheep Before her Shearers (Isa. 53:7)

- Hind of the Morning (Ps. 22, title)

Geology

- Stone Cut out without Hands becomes a Mountain (Dan. 2:34)

- The Stone of Stumbling & Rock of Offence (1 Pet. 2:8)

Ideals or absolutes

- The Way, the Truth, the Life (Jn. 14:6)

- The Image of the Invisible God (Col. 1:15)

- The Brightness of His Glory (Heb. 1:3)

- The Wisdom & Power of God (1 Cor. 1:24)

- Fullness of the Godhead Bodily (Col. 2:9)

- The Same (Heb. 1:12)

Architecture

- A Nail Fastened in a Sure Place (Isa. 22:23-24)

- The Builder (Heb. 3:3)

- A Sure Foundation (Isa. 28:16)

- Head(key)stone of the Corner (Ps. 118:22)

- The Temple (Rev. 21:22)

- The Carpenter (Mk. 6:3)

- His Flesh the Veil (Heb. 10:20)

- The Door (Jn. 10:9)

Royalty

- King of kings & Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16)
- The Judge (Acts 17:31)
- A Scepter out of Israel (Num. 24:17)
- The Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45)
- The Head (Col. 2:10)
- The Chiefest among 10,000 (Song of Sol. 5:10)
- A Governor (Mt. 2:6)
- Ensign of the People (Isa. 11:10)
- A Prince & a Saviour (Acts 5:31)
- A Governor (Mt. 2:6)

Geography

- His Countenance as Lebanon (Song of Sol. 5:15)
- Shiloh (Gen. 49:10)
- The Shadow of a Great Rock in a Weary Land (Isa. 32:2)
- King of Salem (Heb. 7:2)
- Showers that Water the Earth (Ps. 72:6)
- The Nazarene (Mt. 2:23)

Culinary

- The Bread (Jn. 6:33)
- The Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7)

Military

- Captain of Jehovah’s Hosts (Josh. 5:14-15)

- The Almighty (Rev. 1:8)
- The Captain of Salvation (Heb. 2:10)
- The Deliverer (Rom. 11:26)
- The Battle-Bow (Zech. 10:4)
- A Polished Shaft (Isa. 49:2)
- Head of all Principality & Power (Col. 2:10)

Medicine

- The Great Physician (Lk. 5:31)
- A Balm in Gilead (Jer. 8:22)
- A Quickening (Life-giving) Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45)
- The Healer God (Mt. 8:7)

Official

- The Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14)
- The Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5)
- The Daysman (Job 9:33)
- The Intercessor (Heb. 7:25)
- The Consolation of Israel (Lk. 2:25)
- The Surety (Heb. 7:22)
- The Forerunner (Heb. 6:20)
- Redeemer (Isa. 59:20)
- Minister of the Sanctuary (Heb. 8:2)
- The Propitiation (Mercy Seat) (Rom. 3:25)
- The Testator (Heb. 9:16-17)
- The Amen (Rev. 3:14)

- The Author & Finisher of Faith (Heb. 12:2)
- The Faithful Witness (Rev. 1:5)

Little People? (May 1998)

From Uplook, May 1998. Editorial.

How much do we really matter in the grand scheme of things?

Paul the Apostle states: “They measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Cor. 10:12). In other words, human standards of measurement are away off. The cosmic view of our world helps to realign our thinking, as David noted when he viewed heaven’s lighthouses on the shoreless seas of interstellar space: “When I consider Thy heavens…what is man?” (Ps. 8:3-4).

At the recent Olympics in Nagano, Japan, gold medals, the world’s applause, and million-dollar endorsement contracts went to those who defeated their competition by thousandths of a second. One would not minimize the dedication, skill, and daring of skaters who jump several feet into the air and spin several times while doing it. But it ought to be remembered that the feat was accomplished on a planet which our Lord keeps spinning on its axis at about 1,000 miles per hour. Earth is also travelling around the sun at 66,600 miles per hour, covering 595 million miles around the sun in one year.

But our whole solar system is also hurtling through space. The Milky Way, the flotilla of stars in which we travel, is itself spinning around its center at 558,000 mph. (Even so, it is estimated that it would take our sun about 250 million years to make one circuit.)

Enough to give you a severe case of vertigo! But it doesn’t, of course. People who can’t stand the movement

of a boat gently rocking at quayside, fall fast asleep on a bed that is rotating, spinning, and hurtling through space at breakneck speed.

It should be a little humbling at least that, from a hundred miles out in space (a mere baby step), you could not tell the difference between a world-class skier making a record-breaking jump off a mountainside and a flea jumping onto your pet's fur (a 1/8 in. flea is able to jump 13 in., the equivalent of a 6 ft. man jumping 624 ft. from a standing start!).

Yet for all this, the infinite God takes us very seriously, far more seriously than we take ourselves and others.

He did, as David says, visit us. He was made of a woman, partook of flesh and blood, was made like His brethren! He not only came into our Lilliputian world, He came into humanity itself. But more, He lived in poverty, worked in a lowly trade, then lived the life of the homeless (with nowhere to lay His head), and allowed Himself to be belittled by these little creatures of His so that they "esteemed Him as being nothing."

That, however, is not the end of the story. Instead of blasting the whole planet to a cinder, the Great One by way of the cross has "made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12-13). So the next time you are tempted to belittle one of His little ones, remember who they really are:

1. The recipients of divine life at the incalculable cost of the death of the Son of God, the greatest price ever paid for anything (Jn. 3:16-17).

2. Members of the royal family of heaven, the future administrators of the universe (1 Cor. 6:2-3; Rev. 22:5).

3. The repositories of every spiritual blessing that heaven can boast (Eph. 1:3).

4. Engaged to the most wonderful Man in the universe, to be the object of His loving attentions forever (Rev. 19:7). Over this story, and this alone, it can be written: “And they lived happily ever after.”

5. The object lessons that God uses to teach the unseen spirit world that He really does know what He is doing (Eph. 3:10).

6. The inheritors of the kingdom. “Fear not, little flock;” said the Good Shepherd, “for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Lk. 12:32).

7. Confidants of heaven (Eph. 1:9), friends of the God of the Ages, with unlimited access to His throne room.

Little people in the family of God? Not in His eyes! Dare I quote these words? The least of His saints are included in that number who are “the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:23).

A Bite at My Heart (June 1998)

From Uplook, June 1998. Editorial.

It’s one thing to taste the past, but wait till you taste the future!

It was 1968. My dad was making his first visit “home” to Scotland after a 23-year absence. As a family we were able to join him on his journey down Memory Lane. A few things had changed. We stood on a knoll at a place called the Green Knowe, and looked down on what had been the enchanted meadows of my father’s childhood. Obviously he would have to rely on happy memories, because the present reality was a sprawling parking lot, a garbage-choked stream, and a tenement building.

But some things seemed to have survived the years. The sheep-dotted hills. The seaside at Largs; even the same family renting boats to young boys wanting to try their hand at fishing in the Firth of Clyde.

And there was Shawlands Academy in Glasgow, where Dad spent his boyhood school days. We could tell it meant a great deal to him to be back there. We weren’t privy to all that swept through his mind as we stood before the somber gray buildings. But he did let us in on one happy memory of those far-off days. We got to taste the past. Well, sort of.

The Ice Cream Slider. That delectable way of transporting ice cream down the gullet between two thin wafers (2x4 inches) and upgraded to a Double Nugget when married to marshmallow and dipped in chocolate. The slider is a common treat in Scotland, we

were informed, as my father led us around the corner from the school. Let's see…yes…it's still there!

We felt the mounting excitement as we made our way along Pollokshaws Road toward a little, nondescript news agent. "This shop's sliders had the best ice cream. It was on my way home from school." For two pennies little boys could cover a day of endless facts, tests, and flint-strict teachers with a cool, refreshing, slider.

We all had to have one, of course. And soon we were standing outside again in the sunshine, each with a slider—the slider of all sliders—in our hands. Dad was still in the shop paying for this piece of history (and no doubt reminiscing about the good ol' days with the clerk).

We couldn't wait. The ice cream was starting to melt. I took a lick. Wha-a-at was that?!

I had always questioned if you could trust the taste buds of a nation that relished hot bone marrow on bread, blood pudding, the lining of a cow's intestinal tract—who had exalted the sheep's stomach to a national monument. Now I was having it confirmed. The slider was awful! We were all finding it out at the same moment, just as my smiling dad was stepping out expectantly, wondering how we were enjoying this taste of his childhood.

If this was a taste of his childhood, he had had a rough time! He wanted to know what we thought. How was it? What could we say? It was hard enough to turn our warped lips into a smile.

Fortunately, he couldn't wait for an answer, and tasted his own. It was not a pretty sight. He looked at the treat

as if it had slapped him. Defrauded him. Stolen from him. The things were gritty and sour. Something had gone wrong.

Later we had some sliders that had not spoiled, and they were delicious. But it wasn't the same. The moment had been lost; nostalgia had been forced into reality. Welcome to the real world. Things can go sour over time.

Taste is obviously more than information travelling from our receptor cells along our glossopharyngeal nerve to our brain. There are taste buds of the soul, too. Memory. Imagination. Esthetics. Conscience. With these we taste experience.

Some tastes in life are acquired. "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:8). "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Ps. 119:103). He and His Word will never turn sour on you. And if it's good now, what will heaven taste like?

It's good to remember the sweetness of our spiritual youth, the happy times in the first blush of our Christian life. You may not be able to go back, but you can go on with the sweet memories of God's unfailing goodness.

For Love of a Soul (August 1998)

From Uplook, August 1998. Editorial.

The river that flows from the very heart of God

Quite a few of the Little Rock team enjoyed the hospitality of the Lord's people en route to the outreach there. We were reminded of the words of John, who at the same time spoke of the Lord's workers who "went out for the sake of the Name, taking nothing of the Gentiles" (3 Jn. 7) and of the believers helping the Lord's people on their way "after a godly manner," or "worthy of God" (v. 6), that is, the way you would treat God if He came to stay at your house. We saw love at work in preparing rooms, serving meals, cleaning up afterward, even giving us gifts of fellowship! Who else but the Lord's people would do such a thing?

Their motive was evident. They were doing it for the same reason we were going to Little Rock: "for the sake of the Name." It was the love of Christ that constrained them. Although their labor was obviously sacrificial and costly, it was also obviously a joy, a labor of love. Like the observation of Sheba's queen, we also note, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants" (2 Chron. 9:7).

But as we sat at breakfast in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, Bob and Jane Clark, our hosts, told us of the love story behind the one we were enjoying.

Jane had grown up in Arkansas and had been saved at a "revival" but had been untaught. She didn't know she should not marry an unsaved man—and she did. He was called one day to fix a well at a retirement home in

nearby Marble Hill. The well pump was the most stubborn one Bob had ever faced. He had to return time and time again—and each time he did, Miss Minna Jean Bollinger “gospelled” him. She gave him coffee, mixed with a generous dose of Good News. She put tracts in his pocket, and sent prayers after him, as he disappeared down the road. No one would suspect her of sabotaging her own well to encourage his return visits, but Someone seemed to be doing it!

Meanwhile Jane kept prodding him to find out who these people were. She liked those tracts, and the interest these people were showing in her husband. But their answer—“We’re just Christians, meeting in the Lord’s name”—led her to believe they were Jehovah’s Witnesses or something. And this bit about living by faith? Bob had heard that before! He wondered if he would get paid. But he received his payment on schedule, and concluded, “These people really do live by faith.”

As they made their way to Marble Hill for a Bible study, Bob remarked to Jane, “We’re not going to make a habit of this; I don’t want to miss my Gunsmoke.” But Bob was saved the second week, and has missed a few Gunsmokes since then. And all because someone loved the soul of a repairman for Christ’s sake.

But the love story doesn’t start there. How did El Nathan Home end up in the hills of Missouri? For the love of elderly saints—for the sake of the Name. And before the Bollingers was Sister Abigail, Abigail Townsend Luffe, who received the saintly benediction of George Müller, who was led to the Lord as a wild-living college student by those who saw beyond his lifestyle to

his lost soul. Nor does the river of love begin there. We may follow it back through church history to the apostles who went out for the sake of the Name. Back to Calvary, to Nazareth, to Bethlehem, to heaven itself, back to the heart of God.

For love of a soul, for love to the saints, for love of the Master, the people of God carry on. Nothing else would carry them through—through the bone-wearying labor, through the opposition of the enemy and unfair criticisms of brethren, through sleepless nights and disappointments, through the dark night of our pilgrimage “until the long dawn appears.”

But such love is enough. “Love never fails” because its headwaters are in God, the God of love, who “faileth not.” The great love story flows on. This desert world, parched for love, desperately needs a drink from this refreshing supply. “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost … given to us” (Rom. 5:5).

Tools of the Trade (August 1998)

From Uplook, August 1998. Article.

The good seed is the Word of God. But how we present the message is key, too.

We were deeply grateful for the generous investments made in the Little Rock outreach by individuals and groups who helped provide literature for the work there. Three should be mentioned:

• The first real encouragement was from a brother in Florida (who wishes to remain anonymous) who traveled from one coast to the other and gave a $1000 gift to help with the advertising. He had already researched the dominant newspaper in Little Rock, and had a brochure with the salient information. This money was used to place 36,000 flyers in the Friday newspaper that covered all of West LR. The flyer was identical to posters placed in 1,000 store windows, but on slightly lighter paper. Using the by-line “Good News, Little Rock” (used on all our materials), it asked a series of pointed questions, invited all to the evening gospel outreach, and concluded with a Bible verse (Rom. 1:16).

• The 10,000 “Seed Sowers” texts, full color and suitable for framing, were extremely well received (contact Seed Sowers at Box 775, Portage la Prairie, MB, Canada R1N 3C2 or at Box 10834, Cedar Rapids, IA 52410-0834). They came with a “John 3:16 Owner’s Manual” and a clear plastic bag with a “door handle hole” in it. Seed Sowers will also give a reply card for each pack, but we chose to include our own, with places to check for a free Bible (for inexpensive Bibles, you may contact Uplook

Ministries at 800-952-2382), a Bible correspondence course ("What the Bible Teaches" from Emmaus Correspondence Courses, 2570 Asbury Rd., Dubuque, IA 52001-3044. Phone 888-338-7809 e-mail: maustin@emmaus1.edu), and an offer of a home Bible study (several responded to this and are presently involved with the Hellers in a Bible study).

• We were also given 10,000 Gospels of John, a translation similar to the New King James (also overseen by brother Art Farstad) donated by Absolutely Free, P.O. Box 2, Glide, OR 97443.

The attractive paperbacks begin with the reason for the Gospel of John and conclude with an explanation of the plan of salvation.

Also included in the pack distributed door-to-door were two tracts. The first was a gospel explanation with a cover that matched the posters and newspaper flyers —"In a world full of bad news, isn't it great to hear good news?" This included an invitation to the evening gospel meetings at Hall High School.

The second tract, "A Word of Explanation," asked the question: "Is it possible to meet as a New Testament church today?" This explains some of the more prominent characteristics of an assembly. We distributed thousands of the Gospel Folio Press Campus Tracts, including: "Why Christianity Can't Compete," "Seven Campus Fables," and "Jesus Couldn't be the Messiah… Could He?"

Concert-goers and the attendees at a martial-arts convention responded readily to the "Life & Death" calligraphy on the business-card-size tract. It included a

full quotation of Romans 6:23, a short explanation of the meaning of the verse, and a contact name and number.

Elsewhere in the magazine you are introduced to Joyce Barinowski's gospel pins, based on the Wordless Book. Five faux jewels glued to the pin represent—by the color of each stone—the various aspects of the gospel. This tract was especially prepared to repeat the lesson for those who had received a pin. Attractively presented, they were popular on the campus.

The noon hymn sings were profitable times to contact people in a non-threatening environment. We had city permission to put on these sings in a riverside pavilion. We invited people mostly by word of mouth and through the posters placed in storefronts in the downtown area.

The hymn books contained great gospel hymns, ideal for the evening meetings, but a separate sheet of well-known hymns (Amazing Grace, Love Lifted Me, etc.) was handed out at noontime.

Every evangelical church in the city (and probably some that were not, approximately 100 in all) received a letter signed by John and Bobbie Heller. It informed these congregations of the purpose of their moving to the city, why we had come to help them for the week, the intention to start a simple assembly through evangelism —not sheep-stealing, and the stated belief in local church discipline. This meant that if anyone came to fellowship with them, contact would be made with their former church. This was to have everything aboveboard in all dealings with the Christian community.

The letter concluded: "We do not see ourselves as in competition with any local churches seeking to lift up the Lord Jesus. We trust that we may have fellowship

with you as opportunity allows.” The New Testament assembly tract was included.

Lessons to Learn

1. We needed a command post throughout the day so those needing further areas to visit could be redirected and refurbished. We were all so busy with our tasks, it was noon (or supper!) before we saw each other again.

2. Time would have been saved if each team on the doors had someone to drop them at their immediate area and circulate among the team members with cold water and more literature.

3. The “high rent districts”—upper middle class—were quite discouraging with little positive response. However, some have said these areas, while not giving a high percentage response, sometimes yield more solid believers in the long run. Perhaps a different approach is needed for those areas.

4. Free distribution of water and juice on campus was a definite plus; as were lunches to some of the homeless downtown. “Love never fails.”

5. Perhaps the team for preaching the gospel should come in the week following the door-to-door work. People were being invited for the first time on the last night of the meetings! We had the feeling that we were stopping the gospel effort just when we were starting to get good attendance in the evenings.

The Tree (September 1998)

From Uplook, September 1998. Editorial.

It took the blow for me

This past week I was visiting in the Iron Range of the Minnesota northwoods at Storybook Lodge Christian Camp. Each day at mealtime, in an effort to shrink the growing evidence of my lack of exercise, I took a four-mile walk along the highway towards the little town of Biwabik.

At the junction of the camp road and the highway is the ball field. And looming over the third baseline is a majestic white pine, topping out at over one hundred feet. Uncle Ben Tuininga estimates its age at approximately 150 years. It was a sapling at the time of the Civil War.

Thursday evening, in lieu of supper, I decided to take a shorter walk than usual. Storms had been forecast for the area and, as I headed down the gravel road toward the highway, I could already hear rumblings just across the lake. I quickened my pace.

I had just cleared the backstop and the white pine beyond it when I looked straight over my head. Still blue sky. Maybe I wouldn't get wet after all.

Then it happened. An ear-deafening roar was followed by a mighty rending of wood. The majestic white pine, thirty yards from where I stood, had taken a direct hit. I found myself flat on the ground.

In the dining hall, a moment before the explosion (so loud that one of the staff thought a plane had crashed),

several observed a fireball hurtling through the trees. One woman thought, “We’re being fired on!”

Later, a member of the camp board scaled the tree to its midpoint where he found a hole, badly charred, blown right through the trunk. The trunk is split almost the whole length from root to crown. It’s unlikely the behemoth will survive. More’s the pity.

It is not the first tree, however, that took a death-serving blow for me. Half a world away, and two millennia ago, outside old Salem’s gate, another tree stood upright, awaiting the blow. Already stripped of its bark, its branches sheared off, severed from its life-giving roots, its ultimate indignity—this symbol of life—was to be pressed into service by heartless men and made an instrument of the goriest of deaths.

If only that were all. Other trees had been so abused before; untold thousands of them standing as a grisly memorial, a veritable forest to the ruthless inhumanity of humanity. But there was more, infinitely more.

It was true that a Man was destined to die outstretched and spiked to this particular tree. But what a Man! This was the Man who made the tree, who sustained its life, who set the hydrologic cycle in motion that watered it, who hung in space the planet on which it grew, who spread the thin, blue mantle of air around its bosom.

But more. This Man gave life to the men who nailed Him thereon. He gave them the intelligence to smelt the iron for the ax and the adze, the nails and the hammer. He gave them the ability to speak, to speak the blasphemies they hurled in His face with their spittle. As they tried to extinguish His life, He sustained theirs. All their attempts to stop that mighty heart from beating out life

—and love—failed. What men did not, could not see in the awful shroud of darkness was the blow taken by the tree. It is true that the Man upon the tree took more blows there than we could ever know. Enough blows to satisfy the claims of divine justice. Enough to set believing prisoners free. Enough to open heaven and vanquish hell. But the tree also received a blow which we must never forget.

In spite of the nails in His own hands, the Man who was Nazareth's carpenter and earth's architect wielded a hammer of His own: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:13-15).

That was the tree that took the blow for me.

Who Really Writes History? (October 1998)

From Uplook, October 1998. Editorial.

Our toughest challenge: seeing history as God sees it.

We know how difficult it is to see things as they really are. Ophthamologists tell us that our eyes actually see everything upside down. Our brain then turns the information rightside up. And what we call a blue shirt is really everything but blue. Every other color is absorbed; blue is “rejected,” or reflected from the shirt. Objects which we call solid—tables and concrete blocks and your body—are mostly space, approximately the same proportion of space to matter in as the vast stellar world around us.

But it is not only the material world that is difficult to perceive aright. How easily we can be fooled by circumstances and people and our own deceitful hearts. We are warned in Scripture against “the deceitfulness of riches.” We are told to not look at “the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen.” Even a cursory comparison between history as recorded by men and that in the Sacred Record shows a remarkable divergence of views. We could almost conclude that we were reading two different stories. Almost, but not quite.

As much as men would like to powder and paint the disfigured visage of fallen humanity, both holy and profane history agree on this: man is incorrigibly sinful. Conflict, sorrow, wars, corruption, rebellion are the rule, not the exception. The present painful chapter in the story of the American presidency is only the latest

example to remind us of the corrupting influence of power—and the relentless link between action and consequence. As Senator Robert Byrd (D-W. Va.) assessed the deepening crisis at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, “There is no question but that the president, himself, has sown the wind, and he is reaping the whirlwind.”

All that men write, in spite of their best efforts, is written in the sand. Only God can write in the unchanging bedrock of eternal truth. I heard today that the wax figure of baseball great Roger Maris is being melted down to be made into the likeness of record breaker Mark McGwire. But his image will be set in the same malleable substance. And it’s only a matter of time….

Not only is man’s history flawed by sin and warped by our fragmentary perspective, it is transient at best, and misses the real story entirely. While recording in graphic and endless detail the wars through the ages, secular history takes no account of the Real War. The chronicles that men write tell of victors and losers, but never mention the True Champion, the Victor of Calvary’s Hill. They write of kingdoms that evaporate with the morning dew, yet leave unnoticed, unheralded, The Kingdom which shall never have an end.

Men’s history books are severely edited, amputated, eviscerated. None of the great days in history are found in the books that men publish. Creation isn’t there; it’s treated as a religious myth. The Fall isn’t there; man is getting better, isn’t he? (Now there’s a myth!) The confusion of languages at Babel, the Flood, the call of Abram, the giving of the Law, the Incarnation and the

Transfiguration, the Resurrection, the Birth of the Church—none of them make it by man's reckoning.

[A passage here could not be read in the PDF.]

…because the great days in history are the days when God entered this world and forever changed its course. History. We all have our part to play. And though we would not want to minimize the human government that is ordained by God, I dare say that in the end the work of a Christian mother or an assembly elder or a personal evangelist is far more significant than a president or a king.

Our part in history is often called biography. But we who watch it happen one day at a time call it life. How the passage of time fools us. It can lull us to sleep. "Brethren, the time is short" (1 Cor. 7:29). The Bible warns us that things do not "continue as they were from the beginning." We all have a place in history, designed beforehand by God Himself (Eph. 2:10). Then let us redeem the time (Eph. 5:16). "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11).

Giving Away the Bride (October 1998)

From Uplook, October 1998. Article.

Who gives this woman to be married to this man? I do.

Two monosyllables. Three letters in total. Why were they so difficult to say? I was “giving away the bride” and it was one of the hardest things I’ve ever had to do. Don’t misunderstand. I was very happy with Beth’s choice of a husband. It was a delight to be involved in such a marriage: two devoted souls united in the desire to be living sacrifices for the Lord. What was my problem? I hadn’t faced the same feeling when my son was married a few years ago.

My mind went back to the dawn of human history. The story really begins with a wedding in a garden, and ends with one, too—in a palace in a land called heaven. On both occasions, the Father is the One who gives away the bride. As I read these two accounts in the first and last books of my Bible, I began to understand how momentous it was for Crawford and Beth to say, “I do” to each other. But I also understood why it was so hard for me to say it first.

When our son, John, was married, he became the head of a new home. I didn’t “give him away.” But standing there with my firstborn daughter all in white, radiant in love, I was removing her from the place God had put her, under my headship. I was being asked to give her over to a new head, and I felt my side wounded as surely as Adam’s was.

Beth took a new name on August 22. She is now Mrs. Elisabeth Paul. Eve did the same thing when God called

their name “Adam.” The Bride also bears Christ’s name and we remind ourselves of it every time we pray. We are Christ’s ones—Christians—because we belong to Christ. It wasn’t easy to give my daughter away, but I better learn to deal with it. I have four more daughters to go. Unless the other Wedding Day comes first.

The Devil's Trapline (November 1998)

From Uplook, November 1998. Editorial.

Snap! Another one caught!

What would you think of a liege lord who, being repeatedly attacked by an enemy at a weak spot in his defenses, failed to move his troops into the gap? Why does the devil keep using the same tactics against us? Because they work! Why alter your strategy when it is devastating your foe?

The adversary mounts four weapons against us, snares on the devil's trapline, as recorded in Colossians 2:

1. "In [Christ] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words…I am with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ" (vv. 3-5).

Eastern Mysticism still is a real danger to the people of God. It is a false view of the heart—that I can trust my feelings to lead me. A prominent segment of evangelicalism is led by emotion. Yet our hearts are "deceitful"—how easily they fool us.

The solution? Christ! In Him are hid all wisdom (sophia, insight into the true nature of things) and knowledge (gnosis, information acquired so as to make a right judgment). The Word combats men's enticing words. The result? Biblical order and steadfastness.

2. "As ye have therefore received Christ…, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith…abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest

any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (vv. 6-9).

Greek Intellectualism posed another danger to the early Church, as it does to us. It is a false view of the mind. Of course Christians should be marked by intelligence, where the mind is servant. But with intellectualism, the mind is king. Men's philosophies tend towards vain deceit, man-made traditions, and worldly thinking.

The solution? Christ! In Him the fullness of the Godhead dwells. All truth finds its source in the One who is the Truth. He is truth in 3D—living, breathing, functioning truth in the real world. Notice the rich benefits: rooted, built up, stablished, abounding with thanks (v. 7).

3. "And ye are complete in Him…in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands…buried with Him in baptism…risen with Him… And…blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us…Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink…or of the sabbath: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (vv. 10-17).

Jewish Legalism finds in man an ally in its quest to find acceptance with God based on performance. A false view of the will, it assumes that I can resolve myself into righteousness. The devil is resurrecting this tactic as many overcompensate for the careless living we see all around us. There is a growing emphasis on physical circumcision as a ritual, dietary schemes (not for health reasons but as spiritual placebos), and dress codes which move one up the ladder of spiritual superiority. Much of this is based on fabricated "principles" drawn

obtusely from Old Testament passages. But like modern art, “anything can become anything else” in the process. There is no consistent Bible hermeneutic in this scheme.

The solution? Christ! Why grasp shadows when you can embrace Him? (v. 17). Legalism is not obedience to Christ; it is imposing man-made standards as divine law. Any externalizing of Christianity leads to Phariseeism, and it is impossible to be a consistent Pharisee.

4. “Let no man beguile you…intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the body…increases with the increase of God” (vv. 18-19).

Western Asceticism is a false view of the body. Assuming material things are inherently evil, this trap offers retreat from the world, but it is too late. The world has a co-conspirator already lurking in our hearts (1 Jn. 2:16). Neglecting the body ends up feeding the flesh.

The solution? Christ! We are joined to every other member of the Body for mutual growth when we hold our common Head. Instead of being puffed up by spiritual pride, we grow up by spiritual life in the Lord Jesus.

Real Snake Handling and Other Survival Tips (November 1998)

From Uplook, November 1998. Chart.

The tri-triple threat against the people of God

- 1. The WORLD: The place where people are trying to be happy without God; the great POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, and RELIGIOUS system constructed by fallen mankind as a substitute for GOD. The world is always opposed to the FATHER because they are interested in the same thing—our AFFECTION: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the LUST of the FLESH, and the LUST of the EYES, and the PRIDE of LIFE, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 Jn. 2:15-17).

- 2. The FLESH: Man’s nature, corrupted by sin; the HEART does not naturally LOVE God, the MIND does not naturally KNOW God, the WILL does not naturally OBEY God. Though the Christian is no longer “in the flesh,” it is possible to “walk after the flesh” (Rom. 7-8), providing a fifth column traitor within the gates who conspires with Satan to continue the long war against God. The flesh is opposed to the SPIRIT because they are interested in the same thing—our ACTIONS: “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh [fights] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the

other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:16-17).

- 3. The DEVIL: The arch-fiend who in the last great conflict will form a triumvirate of evil with the Beast (Antichrist) and the False Prophet. The Devil will put himself in the place of the Father (see Jn. 8:42-44); the Antichrist obviously in Christ's place; and the False Prophet mimics the Holy Spirit who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. He even has a false "bride," the "Mother of Harlots." The Lord Jesus is always opposed to the devil because they are interested in the same thing—our ALLEGIANCE: You either follow the false god of this world or the true God as revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ. "…The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4).

> *"Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ"*
> *2 Corinthians 2:14*

Some Old Testament examples

- 1. Moses was given three object lessons at Horeb (Ex. 4). He had victory over the serpent through the courage of faith: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7). He had victory over the corrupt flesh by full disclosure: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn. 1:8-9). And he had victory over the parched earth through the water and the blood: "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by

whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14).

- 2. The three battles of Benaiah (2 Sam. 23:20-21). Like the two lion-like men of Moab (like the roaring lion, but Moab points to the flesh), the flesh has two extremes—think you're wonderful, or terrible, both are self-occupation. The lion was defeated in a pit (no quarter) when it was slippery underfoot. The good looking Egyptian (the world) was defeated with his own spear. We must resist the devil and fight the flesh, but just leave the world alone. It is passing away and has the seed of its own destruction already in place. So Benaiah was "more honorable."

Tricks from the devil's bag

- 1. The MIN-MAX trick: While a Christian contemplates sinning, the devil minimizes it. You are told that the sin is of little consequence. It won't hurt anyone (go to the Cross and dare to say that!). Then if the believer yields to the temptation, the enemy maximizes it. How can you be a Christian and do such a horrible thing? he asks. No use for you to pray. (He doesn't mind quoting Ps. 66:18—"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.") You keep doing the same sins over and over, he says. A truly repentant sinner would forsake his sin. No use you confessing it; it's just a sham, he says. The solution? Turn the tables on the devil. See sin-to-the-max before you yield. Think what it did to Christ, what it does to your joy and confidence toward God, what it could do to your testimony, and will do to your character. Sin is never "min."

- 2. The OUT-IN trick: You've been a very good boy, says the seducer. You have resisted this temptation for

several days (or weeks). But of course you can't do this for ever. Sooner or later you will have to give in. So why don't you do it and get it out of your system, he tempts. But is that true? No! You don't get it out of your system, you get it into your system. You become a slave to it. The solution? Remind yourself that the Lord doesn't ask us to resist the temptation forever. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Mt. 6:34). But His grace is sufficient to get us through the day as well (2 Cor. 12:9). Every morning a fresh supply of daily mercies awaits me to be applied to the daily need. And if the Lord can get me through this day, I am confident He can get me through every day.

- 3. The BACK & FORTH trick: We are pendulum people. How difficult it is to have a balance. Most error, after all, is truth, but truth out of place or out of proportion. All grace and no truth is limpid sentimentality and leads to Corinthianism. All truth and no grace is hard, unfeeling Galatianism and leads to spiritual pride of the worst kind. When we turn from one sin, how quickly we can be ruthless with those still entrapped by it. If we excuse our sin, how easy it is to accuse serious Christians of being legalists when in fact they are simply being obedient to the Lord. The solution? "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Balance is Christlikeness.

Born on the Mission Field (December 1998)

From Uplook, December 1998. Editorial.

Laboring among the Naidanac and Nacirema tribes

I was born on the mission field. As an MK, I had the opportunity to observe up close the Naidanac (nay-da-nak) tribal group among which my parents serve. Many of them are nomads, foraging for areas with greener grass, which always seem to be at some distance from their homes.

Their tribal dress changes with the seasons, both male and female using often lavish clothing in the mating process. The females rather than the males are known to paint their faces in an attempt to attract the more desirable males, a tactic that is often counterproductive.

Animal skins are utilized for foot wear, belts, and sometimes for outer garments. Other clothes are ingeniously made from secretions from worms, and a fibrous ball from a plant grown in southern climes.

The Naidanac domiciles are something to behold! Not only does the hut contain separate compartments for sleeping (on pads often stuffed with the plumage of domesticated birds), eating, and other living quarters, they also have a separate room for their carriages, including hundreds of horses to pull them!

Their eating habits are eclectic, drawn from many tribes with which the Naidanacs have made contact. This includes Nailati flat bread, wagon-wheel shaped, covered with coagulated milk curd and other thinly

spread foods. And many of the tribe travel some distance from their homes to find what they call “red-meat” although it has been cooked by others some time before it is eaten. This “red-meat” is often consumed with thin slivers of tubers which have been fried in oil (a very unhealthy diet). All is washed down with a dark liquid made with a stimulant extract from the kola nut.

Although many of the Naidanacs profess not to worship any god, they secretly keep idols hidden in various caches. Quite often their worship includes acquiring images of their queen engraved on small multi-colored slips of paper. These they use to barter for other idols of various sizes and shapes, one of the most desirable being made of metal, and crowned with a three-pointed star on its nose. This goddess is called in the native tongue, “Mercedes, the protectress of the journey.”

Their music is a curious blend of weird noises—banging, screeching, and grating sounds, accompanied by native grunts and groans similar to those made by the Naidanacs when in great pain. The verbal noises are supposed to mean something, but we have not been able to decipher enough to make sense of any of it.

We have seen a shocking decline in moral standards among these people in the last few years. For example, unlike even the most primitive groups in jungle settings far from what we call “civilization,” the Naidanac tribe has for some years been killing their young! Our pleading with them seems to fall on deaf ears. They also imbibe large quantities of stupefying drinks to deaden the pain they obviously feel in their godless condition.

There is a bordering group similar to the Naidanacs, although they are a much larger tribe. I have left my

parents' field of service to serve among these Naciremas (nak-a-ray-ma), as they are called.

How can we reach these people, so different from us? What training can prepare us for work on such a mission field? How can we make them understand the story of the Saviour's love for them? Some are going to other fields, but who will show compassion to these needy souls? Such questions are vital as the time draws near when we shall give account to the Master for our service.

Perhaps you do not think these tribes are as backward as I suggest they are. But anyone familiar with them will agree that most of them desperately need the gospel, presented to them in a way they can understand. It is of little use if we communicate in our Christianese dialect. Multitudes are dying in the dark, here on our own shores. Many children are growing up in North America never having held a Bible in their hands. Yes, this is the home of the Naidanacs and Naciremas. And everyone here is either a missionary or a mission field.

Nobody’s Interested (December 1998)

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“But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul” (Deut. 4:29).

“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God” (Rom. 3:11).

Who were those wise men that traversed the road to Bethlehem two thousand years ago?

We do not know. We only know that they came seeking the King, and that they have kindred souls today. Some take the words of the Psalmist (14 & 53) quoted by Paul in Romans 3:11 as the only word on the subject of seeking, and conclude that God must do all the seeking or men will never be saved. But the Bible is more than one verse, even though the verse is quoted twice.

Five hundred years before David, the Lord prophesied Israel’s future to them, and spoke of a time five hundred years beyond David when the tribes would at last turn again to the Lord in their distress. Scattered among the Gentiles, serving gods that are the work of men’s hands, at last they would cry to Him and discover that “the Lord thy God is a merciful God.” If they then would whole-heartedly seek Him, they would find Him.

Is a promise like this only for Jews in diaspora? Hardly. In Acts 15:16-17, Peter quoted Amos 9:11-12 to convince his brethren that the restoration of Israel was intended to stimulate the Gentiles to seek the Lord, too. And in Acts 17, Paul preaches to the Athenians that God uses

the events of history to stir “all nations of men…That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us” (vv. 26-27).

Of course God must take the initiative. But He has! Whether by beneficence (Rom. 2:4) or by tragedies (Ps. 107), through creation (Rom. 1:20) or providence (Acts 17:28), by a star in the sky or the witness of a friend, God is agitating, stimulating people to seek Him. And if wholehearted in their search, He promises that they will find the One who all along has been seeking them.

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