



George Washington

The American people—at least a majority of them—have breathed a collective sigh of relief. There are the dissenters, of course, even the demonstrators, but the major part of the populace was not willing to venture any further into the dark waters of socialism, secularism and permissiveness. As a result, instead of following indecisive, would-be leaders in the direction of European one-worldism, we have slowed the plunge to national disaster by staying the course for another presidential term.

I should not say we have done this; it seems evident that God has answered the fervent prayers of many of His people. We do not put our faith in man, but we are happy to have as head over our nation one that acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ and has enough confidence in the rightness of his decisions that he can stand upon them.

In Europe, President Bush has few friends in high places; indeed, America has few friends. And it is because, as one French official put it, Mr. Bush wears his religion on his sleeve. As a matter of fact, though, that is not the case. He doesn't flaunt it, but neither does he hide it. As he said in one of the debates, "It's who I am."

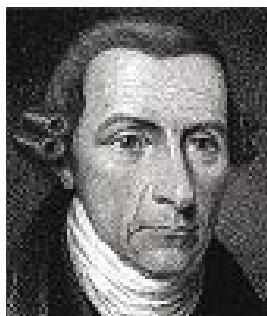
Perhaps the gross bleakness and immorality of the previous administration, which was much approved in Europe, forms such a dark backdrop that even the most modest light would appear as a beacon. At any rate, much of the world is offended by the appearance of Christianity in our national politics. And what's more, many in our own nation are offended that God is acknowledged in our public life.

But it is not true, as some would have our latest generation of school children believe, that America, from the beginning was not a Christian nation. It is true, of course, that not everyone in our nation are or were Christians, even in the beginning. However, although room was made for their liberty, theirs was not the preponderance of opinion. Everything about our laws and constitution were based on biblical truth with an acknowledgment of the God who inspired the Bible.

John Quincy Adams wrote: "The highest glory of the American Revolution was this; it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity...From the day of the Declaration...they (the American people) were bound by the laws of God, which they all, and by the laws of The Gospel, which they nearly all, acknowledge as the rules of their conduct."<sup>1</sup> He also declared, "So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society."<sup>2</sup>

Even some of our founding fathers who did not profess a personal relationship to Jesus Christ, and would not have described themselves as Christians in the personal sense of the word, proclaimed without reservation the importance of Christianity in government and public life. No other religion embraces the concepts of true Christianity. Benjamin Franklin wrote, "Whoever will introduce into public affairs the principles of Christianity will change the face of the world."<sup>3</sup>

In his address of September 19, 1796, given as he



Patrick Henry

prepared to leave office, President George Washington spoke about the importance of morality to the country's well-being: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports.... And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion."<sup>4</sup>... "Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a Nation with its virtue? We ought to be persuaded that the propitious smiles of heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which heaven itself has ordained."<sup>5</sup>

So important to George Washington was moral behavior that it is reported that he deplored what he considered the foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing.

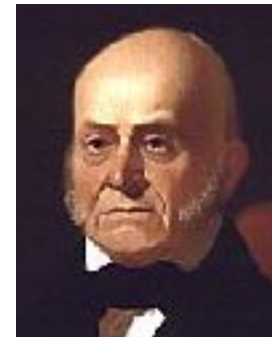
Such was the mindset of the men who launched our nation and set its course to becoming the freest and most prosperous nation in world history. It is the legacy of these men that has elicited God's blessing upon us. But it was inevitable as time went by, that there should be erosion of this nobility, which puts in danger, both the freedoms and the prosperity that God has blessed us with.

Men in the highest office of the land have perpetrated attacks on our national sense of morality. When Bill Clinton was recently interviewed by Dan Rather on Sixty Minutes, his reaction to a question about the Monica Lewinsky affair was, "don't go there. I made one mistake."

But it is not a mistake if it is done on purpose and forwards one's agenda. The agenda is anti-Christ. It is being promoted by such organizations as the ACLU, who attack all Christian values, even declaring God's Ten Commandments unconstitutional, while upholding the rights of all non-Christian religions. Biblical foundations are the targets of the adversary. An early American lawyer and renowned patriot, however, saw it quite differently. Patrick Henry wrote, "It can not be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians, not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ!"

There is no question that religion shapes the philosophy of those who practice it or are even influenced by it. It is evident from history, ancient and modern, for example, that Islam generates violence and religious fanaticism—conversion by the sword. Catholicism, where it has flourished as the dominant influence, has historically produced ignorance, superstition and poverty. Hinduism, in its land of origin, India, has produced poverty, despair and a caste system that defies remedy.

People from every corner of the globe look across the seas and envy America. They want what we have, but fail to understand what produced it—even homegrown Americans fail to understand what has given them such privilege. They want the fruits of the Gospel of Jesus Christ while, at the same time, hating its principles and practicing the religion that produced poverty and bondage in the land from which they fled. But it is these things that are protected and advocated, while biblical Christianity and the tranquility, justice and morality that it produces are under attack from within and without.



John Quincy Adams



Benjamin Franklin

## America's Reprieve

by Dick York



## Why Make Disciples?

I believe there is a need to address this subject. The need is obvious due to the lack of people who are engaged in this very important activity. We hear a comment once in awhile of the importance of discipleship, but things go on as before. Discipleship seems to be just a lofty idea that no one is expected to take seriously.

**I trust you will take this seriously!**

First of all, we need to make disciples because Jesus commanded us to do so. Jesus emphasized the importance of this when He asked Peter; “Peter do you love me?” three times He asked Him this question and three times He told him to feed His sheep. It appears that Jesus thought that if we love Him we would demonstrate this love by feeding His sheep. When people are hungry they need to be fed and they are not particular about who feeds them. In my last article, Gideon’s Army, I spoke of the prophecy of Amos 8: 11 “**Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.**” That day has come and there are a great number of people saying; “We need the word of God.” The commandment to go and make disciples in all nations is echoing in the empty hearts of the believers who have stopped their ears from hearing the cries of those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Jesus said; “If you love me keep my commandments.”

We need to make disciples because this is the way that Jesus will build His church. Many

ministers of the Lord are working hard. They are bringing many sinners together and they believe that they are building the church.

We could compare them with a young man who wants to be a mason. He wants to build a stone building. He starts by gathering stones, all kinds of stones, big, small, ugly and of many different shapes. He brings them to the building site and he labors for many days putting them into a large pile. Then he looks at this big pile of ugly shapeless stones and he says, “Look at my stone building.” Is this pile of stones a building? Far from it! The stones need to be shaped and placed by the master builder.

To better illustrate this let’s look at how Solomon was instructed to build the temple of God. “**And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.**” The building was built quietly and effectively, because everything had been prepared prior to bringing it to the building site. The costly stones had been chiseled and shaped, the timbers all cut to fit. Anyone passing by would have been greatly impressed and amazed to see this magnificent temple being built so orderly.

Compare this with the Church today. We have far too much noise in the Church, complaining, murmuring, backbiting, fighting, jealousy, strife and division upon division. If only, we would take heed to the voice of our master builder and work in the way that He has instructed us. It seems that few have ears to hear what the Spirit of the Lord is saying. Hearing is the same as obeying. In

the Russian language the word for hearing is the same as the word for obeying. When we truly hear His word is when we then follow Him and learn of Him and become His disciple.

The need for laborers is great. So is the need for the shaping of the stones by chiseling away the unbelief and hardness of heart with the word of God and prayer. We have many that are willing to lead, that is, to be up front in the limelight. But we cannot truly lead others into following our Lord Jesus unless we are denying ourselves and taking up our cross and following Him ourselves. The best leader is the best follower.

Who wants to work in the quarries where they are not known, caring for the burdens of others and listening to their problems? Only those who are strong in the grace that is found in Christ Jesus can lay down their lives as Paul did in Colossians 1:28-29 “**Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.**”

Many are wondering why we do not see more manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit as there were in the early Church. The gifts of the Spirit are tools that are used in the building of the house of God. Tools are of no use for those who are not laboring in the building of this spiritual house. The one who denies himself will learn of Him and develop the gifts that are needed for the fulfillment of the ministry to which he is called.

Many desire gifts for the wrong reasons. When we make disciples that are following after God all of

the gifts of the spirit will follow them. That is, all the gifts follow them, not that each one will have all the gifts. Today we have a lot of people following after the gifts and miracles, but not after God. Let us look unto the author and finisher of our faith laying aside every weight and the sin, which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. We have a race to run—a work to finish. Many have never entered into this race. They are very weak and in great need and are hungry to the point of having no appetite for the Word of God.

They are like the disciples who left Jesus at the well and went on looking for meat to eat. While they were gone Jesus evangelized the Samaritan woman who came to the well for water. After hearing the good news she then went to her village and reported the good news. Then the whole village came out to hear for themselves the Words of Life. When the disciples returned they offered Jesus meat to eat. He said unto them: “**I have meat to eat that ye know not of.**” He went on to explain, “**My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.**” John 4:32 & 34

Whenever the child of God enters into the work of God, great grace is given to sustain Him. Meat makes us strong. Nothing will make you as strong as doing the will of God and having the vision of the work of the Lord completed; so that the Lamb of God may receive the reward of His suffering.

We will continue to look into Why We Make Disciples in our next issue.

### continued from page 1

The fruit cannot long remain when the root is destroyed. The benefits of the Gospel that our forefathers advocated cannot long be enjoyed if the foundations are abolished.

Beholding some of the priorities of today's Americans, one may be hard pressed to see much of the fruit of the Gospel in what one sees. The promotion of immodesty and immorality by Hollywood, which dominates our media; the greed and vulgarity that rules our professional athletes who captivate the imagination of our youth: these are the tools of the adversary. These are evidences of moral declension. These are not evidences of the liberties that define our freedom, but of the bondage of sin and depravity that is being foisted upon a nation that is approaching the twilight of its waning glory. While all of this is going on, as darkness is descending, there is a growing and appalling ignorance of American history and of the Word of God upon which was based all of our laws and the principles that produced the greatness of our nation. Many of us who are Christians have been

playing the part of the proverbial boiled frog. Our tolerance for the gradual deterioration of our moral fabric has increased incrementally.

Suddenly we awakened to find ourselves faced with, not only abortion, to which we have become accustomed, and sex education in our schools, which has made teen-age virginity increasingly rare, and the promotion of homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle, but even the prospect of same-sex marriage. Also we faced the prospect of living under an increasingly leftist government that would reject our basic principles of godliness.

Believers not only voted, they resorted to prayer. Everywhere across the land prayer meetings sprang up specifically to pray for God's help. It is evident that our nation is facing a crisis. We were at the edge of the abyss and could have gone over. But God has answered prayer. God told Jeremiah, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."<sup>6</sup> To Israel God said, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from

their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."<sup>7</sup>

But the crisis is not over. The enemies of the Gospel have not gone away. America is not Israel. God will preserve Israel because of His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But, as Abraham Lincoln once inferred, God will be on America's side only as long as America is on His side. We who are God's people by faith and are called by His name must continue to humble ourselves, and continue to pray and seek His face, and turn from our own ways.

There will be a day when all the nations will turn from God including ours. We know that from the Scriptures. But apparently that time is not yet. God has given us a reprieve. He has placed in high office a man of principle that acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ. If the man is not perfect, the Lord Jesus is. It is Him that we trust. We have a commission from the Lord, which the apostle Paul articulated in I Timothy 2: 1-3: "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all

men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior."

We also have a responsibility to let our light shine that we might dispel the darkness that has befallen our society. It is time for us to eradicate the ignorance of God's word by preaching it and teaching it by our words and our example. We cannot expect change from the top down without influence from the bottom up. We are not talking politics, but the facilitating of our mission as believers. It was the influence of the Gospel that initiated the good that our nation has exhibited in the past. It is only the Gospel that will restore it in the future.

(Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> John Wingate Thornton The pulpit of the American revolution 1860 (reprint 1860;1970) p.xxix

<sup>2</sup> Octavius Winslow, Morning thoughts 1861

<sup>3</sup> A letter to the Ministry of France dated March 1778

<sup>4</sup> George Washington's farewell address 1796

<sup>5</sup> George Washington's first inaugural address

<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah 33:3

<sup>7</sup> 2 Chronicles 7:14

## A word of Introduction

**Nathanael Abimbola**  
(page 4)



**Joseph Babarinde**  
(page 5)



**Samuel Oladele Deji**  
(page 7)



As most of our readers probably know, Jack Ring and I first traveled to Africa in 1979 to determine why we were getting so many requests for Bible teaching tapes from the country of Nigeria. That was the beginning of a fruitful ministry and a wonderful association with many faithful African believers. In 1980, at the request of some of those brothers, we returned with a team. In 1981, three Nigerian brothers came to Bend, Oregon, to attend a missionary training session. They returned to Nigeria to evangelize and to reach out to tribal groups that were without the knowledge of God's Word. Ethnos Christian Mission was born. In 1983, a missionary team of three families from Oregon joined with them to begin a missionary training program in Nigeria. Since that time, over 150 missionaries have been trained, and several unreached tribes have received the Word of God. Many churches have sprung up among them.

From time to time we publish

communication that we receive from Nigeria in this Update. Brother Moses Osho, whose articles you have read in these pages a couple of times, and Brother Samuel Oladele Deji, are officers in Ethnos. Moses is the Executive Director, while Samuel is the Director of the Missionary Training. We have asked these men to contribute information, news and articles on a more regular basis that we might be better informed about the progress of that indigenous work.

In response, Samuel has written an article about how God tries our hearts. It appears on pages six and seven and I would like to direct your attention to it. Also, on page four is a letter from Nathanael Abimbola. He was a student in the Missionary Training Program when Larry, Jack and Roger were with them in the 80s. He is now the Field Director for the Mission and is directly involved with the work in the new tribes. In his letter, he makes mention of the village of Baaki, which

**Dick York.**



he refers to as the "idol-tree village." Some of you may remember that he told us in a letter a couple of years ago that he had come upon a village where the people knew nothing of the Gospel, but they worshipped the spirit of a large tree in their village, praying to it and making sacrifices. There is now a growing church in that village, and Nat's daughter is spending her time teaching the children of Baaki, while she waits to gain entrance into a university.

Now that you know who these folks are, please read and enjoy their articles. And then pray for them.



The Ivory Coast government created international news in November when it began a military offensive against the rebels in the country. The small Ivory Coast air force flew over the French and UN peacekeepers to strike the rebel positions. Two days into the offensive an Ivory Coast war plane attacked a French base killing 9 French soldiers and an American aid worker. The



**Jerry and Cherry Skiles**

French military responded a few hours later by destroying the air force on the ground. This French military action threw the young political supporters of the Ivorian President into a frenzy. In two days the young patriots, as they are called, rampaged through the capital city destroying French businesses, looting homes, raping women and burning schools. While the hostility was directed toward the French the mobs assumed any one white was French. The white population and other non-Ivorian populations were very vulnerable as the government-controlled media fanned the flames of hatred. During this collapse of order the three-thousand-plus prisoners broke out of the Abidjan jail and disappeared.

Most of the Embassies strongly recommended their nationals to leave. During the following week almost 9000 Europeans and North Americans left the Ivory Coast. Due to the instability, the majority of Christian mission personnel also left. They had time and opportunity to gather only the most essential personal possessions.

A calm—only a veneer of stability—has returned to Ivory Coast. The hostilities that have created the divided nation still remain. Currently, efforts are continuing for a political solution

to the country's problems. All parties want peace but neither side shows any confidence in the goodwill of the other.

In my experience Africans are some of the most amiable, hospitable people in the world. It saddens me to see a few bad people destroy communities while the majority of the population is victimized by the actions of renegades.

I remember seeing a young African child of 5 or 6 years attack his Mom with a large rock, forcing her to flee to the safety of her house while other adults in the household looked on and allowed, even laughed at, this unruly behavior. I reflected how this young boy who had been nursed and nurtured by his Mother was now attacking her with violence. But I have also seen parents and siblings respond to unacceptable behavior in an equally unacceptable manner when they correct with vengeance using violence that causes me to shudder.

I am confident that Africa will survive. I have been surprised in my years of association with Africa at how resilient and persevering her people are. The current trend in international dealings with Africa is to give her room and the liberty she deserves to choose her future for herself. I believe she will right herself in time. Cherry and I continue to want to help, as we are able, to see the people of Africa be all that God wants them to be.

In January I will be traveling to Nigeria to minister to a Nigeria mission organization associated with SFMI that is training Africans for the work of establishing the Church in unreached areas of the world. Ben Rawls will be traveling with me. He is a friend who helped construct our tribal home in Ivory Coast. When we finish our ministry in Nigeria we will travel to Burkina Faso where we hope to encourage the work with the Loma and Loron believers. We appreciate your prayers for God's leading and His protection.

Jerry also included with his Ivory Coast report, a brief biography of two significant Christians in the Loma tribe. Busi, the first convert to Christ, and Zaki, a real disciple who matured and went on to have a significant ministry until his early death. We must pray for Busi, and we can rejoice with Zaki.



**Busi** was born about 1966. Shortly after the Skiles arrived in the village, her family asked for help as Busi had been sick for days. The villagers had done all they could for her. When the Skiles went to see her she was unconscious. The Skiles wanted to take her to the hospital but her family wanted them to ask God to help her because they said she was demonized. God demonstrated His power by raising her up miraculously. She was the first Loma to respond to the Gospel that the Skiles are aware of. She was baptized 12/15/1996

She is married to an elder in the village who is one of the leading spiritual leaders of the Loma traditional religion. At present she is no longer attending meetings.



**Zaki** was born about 1964. He died 10/2003. Zaki first became aware of the Bible while working on a coffee plantation in the southern part of Ivory Coast. He rejoiced greatly to be able to hear the Gospel message spoken to him in a language he understood and received it with gladness when he returned to his Loma village. He

was baptized 12/1996. He was a key man in the Church, helping to develop lessons, and teaching materials and translating portions of scripture until his premature death.

He married and had a child before he went home to be with the Lord.

Nat Abimbola is a man, who, many years ago, went through the Nigerian missionary training program, and is now field director for Ethnos Christian Mission. Larry and Christa Montgomery, along with Jack and Jennifer Ring and Roger and Jane Bagley pioneered that work together with Brothers Samuel Oladeji and Moses Osho. We are happy for the continuing close association that exists. Brother Nat wrote the following letter to Larry and Christa. Ma and Pa is a term of endearment.

Dear Pa and Ma,

“Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We praise God for what the Lord is doing to His Glory in our lives.

“When I was ministering at the Condemned Prisoners’ cell in Abeokuta prison, the Lord asked me to minister on John 8:31-44 to the condemned inmates. A word of knowledge was pronounced that some will be delivered from the physical condemnation they are in and that they will be freed from the condemned cell. To the glory of God, many were delivered and set free spiritually. To the glory of God, on October 1st eight people were set free from the Condemned cell, four to the outside world and four to the main yard.

“On the 16th of October, “A day with Missionaries; Missions Awareness Programme” was held in Ogbomoso town by the Ogbomoso *Christ Investors for Church Service*. Brother



Timothy Olonade spoke on the Role of the Church and Mission Agencies in Mission, while Bro. Moses Osho coordinated the pro-gramme. I led two brethren from Baaki (the idol tree village) to talk about their

testimony in Christ. They also sang in Eegun dialect for the audience. It was a refreshing time as everyone had a fresh insight.

“Please, do remember to pray for the survival of the True Church in Nigeria. In this period of economic crisis, widespread corruption, and enslavement by some select group of people, there is a lot of stress and disturbances. The work is progressing by His Grace.

Also, collective prayers of the brethren have been answered concerning Mrs. Ola Deji (who has been sick for many years). Night vigils were held for and with the family and praises be to God, fourteen years’ bondage was loosed and she has recovered. Praise the Lord. By the grace of God, we believe that she will never return back to the bondage in Jesus name, Amen.

“We covet your earnest prayers for a good four-wheel-drive for outreach to the fields.

“Do continue to pray for our daughter. She is still going to Baaki as teacher for the children there. We are still praying and waiting for her admission back to school. My family sends their heartfelt greetings.”

In His Love and Bond,  
Nathaniel Abimbola.

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Mike and Faith Ball, with their family spent many years in Mexico as missionaries. They have been back in the USA for the past couple of years, during which time Mike has taught in Frontiers School of the Bible, worked on a job and made a couple of trips to Kenya, East Africa. He has just returned from his most recent two-week trip, and is now ready to return to Mexico. Here is his latest report.

I don’t have much to add to my mid-trip report, but do want to let everybody know that I am home. Bill and I had a great trip. God gave us plenty of opportunity for teaching, about four hours every day except for Saturdays.

The second week we were teaching out in the bush to a small group of men and women. Some had to travel a couple of hours on foot to the meetings, which were held outside in a grove of trees with a bunch of big rocks to serve as seats. We enjoyed the time there more than in town even though there was no electricity, toilets nor “running water”. Actually there was running water. It rained every day and the water “ran” down the roof into the gutters and into the barrels that provided water for cooking and washing.

Actually it was because there was no electricity that it was a better time of teaching. They were not able to have any loud music, which normally precedes and follows the teaching sessions. So the atmosphere was more conducive to them hearing and retaining the Word. The last day there, three men were baptized in the nearby river. These were already planning to be baptized and wanted to wait for us so that we could baptize them. We thought it best not to do this and encouraged the very young pastor to baptize. He was very excited to do it. Over all, our time in Kenya went very well. Thank you all for praying for us and our families.

We are now busy getting ready for our move back to Mexico.

We are so thankful to the Lord for His gift to us of a van. We began looking for one the day after I returned from Kenya. Our old van was making a terrible noise under the hood when Faith picked me up in Denver. A friend of ours, who lives nearby, was willing to sell us his 15-passenger van for \$ 5,000. It is a 2000 model Dodge with high mileage but motor and transmission with 40,000 miles. We thank God!

Mike Ball



## Steve Montgomery’s Column



### THE GOD OF VENGEANCE

David, in Ps. 94, calls on the Lord, the God of vengeance, asking him to show Himself. As judge of all the Earth, give the proud their due. David is grieved because the wicked, instead of being fearful or experiencing God’s judgment, seem to be rejoicing, succeeding, enjoying themselves.

Who are these wicked? Their description is laid out for us:

- ✓ They speak hard words
- ✓ They attack and break down God’s people.
- ✓ They keep the needy from the way of life.

And they expect no consequences to come to them.

David, however, knows the Lord as the Judge of all the Earth, and therefore asks Him to exact vengeance on them for their actions. He decries their foolishness in thinking that the One who judges the nations will not consider what they are doing. He seems to be saying, “It’s time for vengeance, Lord!”

So what is the vengeance He will exact upon them? Verses 12 and 13 tell us:

“Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law;

That thou mayest give Him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.”

God’s first work in administering vengeance is to correct, to instruct, to draw toward repentance. What a glorious vengeance this is! Those who have been denying and defying the Lord are brought to see Him as He is: the Mighty, True, Faithful

and Merciful God. Such glorious vindication, when He brings those who have ignored and opposed Him to recognize, acknowledge and submit to Him!

In Matt. 5:44, the Lord Jesus speaks of this when He instructs us, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

Here, then, is a vengeance far higher than the “eye for an eye” of Moses’ law! And a far more powerful vengeance, also. Paul says that the convicting power of the Holy Spirit over those who receive blessing for cursing is like hot coals poured on the head.

The advance of the Gospel in the Highlands is not happening unopposed. Entrenched religion and entrenched religious leaders fight the Gospel at every turn. With the power of the press, influence in the government and the ear of the multitude, they speak hard things, mock the Good News, beat down the Christians and rush to keep the needy from the way of life, from hearing and believing the Bible.

There will be a final reckoning, and there are serious consequences to what they are doing. God not only corrects and instructs; He is also digging a pit for those who refuse to hear Him. The bottom line (vs. 14) is that God will

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not abandon His people, nor leave helpless His inheritance.

Yet the God of vengeance seeks first to apply that vengeance which most clearly shows the fullest view of His character. He wants to bring them to repentance, brokenness, rest and life.

And in that, we can have a part.

In verse 16 of this Psalm, David asks, “Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? *or* who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?” Spanish gives a slightly different flavor to this verse, changing “for” to “with”: “who will rise up with me against the evildoers?”

David is recruiting fellow laborers.

So are we.

We invite you to join us in praying for the Jalisco Highlands, and specifically for the religious leaders (both the professional religious leaders and the non-professional). Pray they will be drawn to Christ. Pray that their work to stop the Gospel will be impeded. And pray for the believers in the Highlands, that we would be clear, bold and uncompromising in our message, while at the same time gracious toward those that oppose the Good News.

Verse 17 states, “Unless the LORD *had been* my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.” If we here do not have the Lord’s help, we will easily be overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of the opposition and end up silent, keeping our message to ourselves.

The six states that make up the Circle of Silence are hearing the Gospel. God is raising up intercessors and workers.

In the heart of that Circle, the Jalisco Highlands is beginning – only just beginning – to feel the impact of the Good News.

Stand with us, that the God of vengeance would avenge Himself and His message here by bringing many to Christ, even among the most religious.

Thank you,

Steve and Linda Montgomery



**A view of Atotonilco from Steve's house**

**November 5 to 7 in Atotonilco** we held a Bible Conference, the first conference that the congregation here has sponsored and one of the first of its kind in the Highlands. The conference far exceeded our expectations:

**ATTENDANCE:** Just one week before the event, we were wondering if enough people would attend to justify having rented an entire hotel. We were hoping for 120 people. The attendance was 250. Brethren came from Guadalajara, La Barca, Arandas, Aguascalientes and Manzanillo. The church in Loreto, Zacatecas hired a bus to bring 50 people!

**EXPOSITION:** Dick York spoke on “The Seven Churches of the Apocalypse”, and the sessions were challenging and edifying. Among so many new believers, the presentation was appreciated for its clarity and practicality. Dick touched on themes like the importance of the local church, the



**Some of the music was provided by these musicians. Jose Luis, on the guitar was saved as a result of a similar conference almost twenty-five years ago.**

value of our personal testimony and that of the congregation, the centrality of Christ and His work for us and in us.

**PARTICIPATION:** Brethren here took on responsibilities with enthusiasm and a high degree of success. One brother commented, “Now we know what it takes to put on a conference. I didn’t know there was so much involved!” Then he added, “But now that we’ve done it, with the Lord’s help, we can do this

again!”

On Sunday, we celebrated an open meeting around the Lord’s table. We had scheduled an hour for the time, but

it stretched into almost 2 hours as brethren shared scriptures, testimonies and songs. Not one minute was boring or taxing, as the Lord ministered to us individually and as a group.

**PROVISION:** Though more than twice as many attended as we anticipated, we saw the Lord multiply the food and miraculously

provide housing. The day before the event, as we spoke with the man who rented us the meeting place, we realized that we were renting not only (as we thought) the building where we held the teaching sessions and ate, but he was also including the adjoining building and lawn area, doubling the room for children’s classes and providing additional sleeping area, which, as it turned out, we sorely needed. Through generous free-will offerings we were able to cover all the expenses and give an offering to the

speaker.

**FRUIT:** Three weeks after the conference I was able to visit the Christians in Loreto. They were enthusiastically sharing the things they had learned and the experiences they had at the conference. They are now hoping to organize a conference in their area!

Nancy, the mother of a teen who has accepted the Lord, came to the conference and has subsequently been meeting with us. It appears she is near to trusting the Lord.

The men of the church, encouraged by seeing the results of their service in this event, are taking more responsibility

in the life of the church.

Thank you for your prayers. What we experienced in this conference is fresh evidence that the King of the saints truly does “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”.

Steve and Linda Montgomery, Ed and Abbie Drysdale



**Marcial and his wife Josefina are both blind, but it is largely through their faithfulness that the church at Loreto has been established. four years ago there was nothing there but hostility to the Gospel and those who brought it. Now over 50 believers have come to the conference from that young church.**

## WHEN GOD WANTS TO KNOW ALL THAT IS IN OUR HEARTS

By Samuel Oladele Deji

This world is advancing every day, in Science, technology and social life. There are many departments in our Universities that did not exist many years ago. Education is advancing. Knowledge is increasing. Cults and the occult are advancing too. All these claim to dispel mysteries. However, with all the advancement of knowledge, one thing remains difficult to know—very difficult indeed—that is the heart of man.

Many years ago, a politician in Nigeria said “If you are taking a dog to the farm, and the dog has turned back, it will not be difficult to know, because you no longer see it. You know it has returned home. But if it were a man who for three years has turned back from following you, you will not know, because although physically he appears to be following, in his heart he has become your opponent.” The heart of man is deceitful. But God, in His wisdom, has designed a way to test the heart of man, that He may know all that is in it.<sup>1</sup>

The Gnosis of God: Proverbs 15:11 God knows everything. Even the depth of hell and destruction is not hidden from Him. By His infinite knowledge He knows every thought of man, even those that have not yet generated in him.

God told Samuel the prophet in the course of his assignment of choosing a king for Israel, “For the Lord does not see as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart”<sup>2</sup>. Solomon the king of Israel in his prayer while dedicating the temple, appealing to God to answer the prayer of the people said, “hear from heaven your dwelling place and forgive. And give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart you know; for you alone know the hearts of the sons of men”<sup>3</sup>

God knows the secrets of the heart. However for God to know practically and to show man his own heart, he designed some ways.

### 1. He May Lead You to the Wilderness; Deuteronomy 8:2:

“And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandment or not”

We were not told that the seventy souls that came with Jacob from Canaan to Egypt came through the wilderness, nor did they spent 40 years in their journey. But God decided to take his children through the Red Sea and the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan to know all that was in their hearts. Witnessing the miracle that God performed to deliver them, would somebody watching them not assume that they loved and trusted God? God, too, observed them. But God, all wise, to prove their heart and the genuineness of their love, took them by the way of wilderness where there was no express road, things were not smooth. God led them through the wilderness where they would face hardship, where there were no social activities and enjoyment, where the future was not certain.

A Christian’s Wilderness today is a spiritual one. It is when things are not going smoothly, when tomorrow is not certain, when things look dark. At this particular time, God will watch our hearts to know if truly we love and trust Him. Several things may go on in our hearts such as complaint, murmuring, and accusation, doubting God; or, on the other hand, a complete trust in God; casting all our cares on Him. A matured eye would see God even in cloudy times. Many of us, like the Israelites did, have a seemingly perfect heart with God only when things were going well.

### 2. He May Suffer You to Hunger; Deuteronomy 8:3,16:

“So he humbled you and suffered you to hunger that He might test you, to do you good in the end.”

Hunger means prolonged lack of food. God, who did supply their food in the wilderness, withheld it for a certain length of time to know what was in their hearts. The deceitfulness of flesh controls the mind so that one

finds it difficult to know what is in his heart. But God, in His wisdom, can humble the flesh by hunger. God may use it to reveal what is in our minds.

When God humbles one by withholding provision, even though one has made every effort to provide for oneself, it is difficult to bear. It quickly reveals the heart of a man whether he loves God because of food or he really loves him; whether his life is all about food or about the word of God. Jesus told a multitude seeking Him, after they have been fed, “You seek me because you ate of the loaves and were filled”<sup>4</sup>. Could this be true of your heart also today? If God should humble you through hunger today, what would your heart say to God?

### 3. The Sign of False Prophet; Deuteronomy 13:1-3:

“If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams and he gives you a sign or a wonder and the sign or the wonder comes to pass of which he spoke to you, saying let us go after other gods which you have not known, and let us serve them, you shall not listen to the words of that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

This is another way God uses to know our hearts. It seems unbelievable, but it is true. God allows false prophets to test the genuine love of His people, especially those who follow after signs and wonders. Miraculous, signs and prophecies today are not genuine proofs of spirituality, even if they come to pass. Satan, too, uses, signs, wonders and magic to lead people astray. Jesus said, “You shall know them by their fruits,” not by their works. Therefore the life a person lives is the test of his knowing God, as he relates with all kinds of people in love, truth and righteousness. Also as he reacts to day-to-day circumstances with faith, hope and humility. Even when a prophet prophesies and it comes to pass, that is not reason enough to follow him. But we should

observe the example of his life.<sup>5</sup>

We are living at the end of the age and are witnessing new things and many voices in Christendom. Perhaps God allows these things to separate the remnant-people of faith—people of Godly principle who will not bow to the pressure of the multitude, but remain faithful to the truth—those who have the same vision for God when they are alone or in the midst of a crowd. Miracles do not move them, but a life lived in righteousness does. John the Baptist did no miracle, yet Jesus commended him that no prophet born of a woman was greater than he. Are you willing that the Holy Spirit should fashion the life of Christ in you, or are you wanting miracles? Miracles will end, the life of Christ is eternal.

### 4. God may Withdraw Himself from Man; 2 Chronicles 32:31:

“However, regarding the ambassadors of the prince of Babylon when they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was done in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.

This is the same Hezekiah that, when he received a threatening letter from Sennacherub, went to the temple, spread the letter before the Lord, imploring God and trusting him to speedily act to deliver his people.<sup>6</sup> However, that was early in his reign. As he continued to do good God prospered him militarily and economically because he loved the Lord God of his fathers. However, later in his reign, when the king of Babylon sent ambassadors to him, there was no word from God by prophet or dream concerning their arrival. Nor did Hezekiah seek the Lord’s counsel. One would expect Hezekiah to inquire of the Lord concerning his visitors. But Hezekiah, perhaps to demonstrate his superiority, began to show his visitors all the treasures and secrets of the kingdom, not knowing that they were spies. God withdrew from him.

Sometimes, when we are faced with circumstance, we expect God to alert us somehow before we enter into the problem. What is expected of you?

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Oladele Deji



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God waits for you to demonstrate your energy to seek his counsel and trust him for guidance. Any time we proceed without seeking God, it reveals to him who we are and how much we love Him. When God withdraws from you on occasion, it is not to punish you, but to test the state of your mind. Will you do things on your own or let God do it for you?

5. God May Give Abundance to Test our Hearts; I Timothy 6:17-19; Luke 12:15-21:

“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty not trust in uncertain riches but in the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

If God provides financial abundance for you today what will he find in your heart? Money and possessions are a good barometer to test our mind. Money can quickly change a person. Trust in money produces pride in man. An example is the parable that Jesus told in Luke 12:15-21:

“And He said to them, Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. Then he spoke a parable to them, saying the ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself saying what shall I do since I have no room to store my crops? So he said I will do this I will pull down my barns and build greater and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, soul, you have many goods laid up for many years, take your ease eat, drink and be merry. But God said to him, you fool this

night your soul will be required of you, then whose will those things be which you have provided. So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

Blessed are the people in whom money cannot arouse pride. Many people who are humble in poverty, if money comes will display haughtiness.

The only reason of abundance is that you may share. But when money becomes a treasure rather than a medium of exchange, it fills our hearts with foolishness. When God sees our hearts and knows that we are building our security around money, we render ourselves useless before Him. When money becomes treasure, it will produce in us covetousness, desire to have more, which is a serious sin.

**6. God May Promote a Man; Psalm 75:6:**

When God wants to know what is in your heart, He may promote you to a high position. When God promotes you, what will he find in your heart, pride or self-esteem? Sometime when people unexpectedly find themselves promoted to high position, their minds is that it is their power, education or ability that promotes them, instead of giving God the glory. Promotion is good but blessed are those that promotion does not puff-up.

(  
Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Proverbs 17:3

<sup>2</sup> I Sam. 16:7

<sup>3</sup> 2 Chro. 6:30; Psa. 44:21

<sup>4</sup> John 6:26

<sup>5</sup> Heb. 13:7

<sup>6</sup> II Kings 19:14-37

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