

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

For whom would you die? Without flinching I can tell you I would die for my wife and my children. I would die for my family and for their families. I have some very dear friends for whom I would give very serious consideration to die in order to protect them. And we all think we would; but, when the time came, what would we really do? Hear the words of the Apostle Paul: *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:6-8).

Prior to being nailed to the cross, Christ had already endured 15 to 18 hours of sleepless, agonizing, physically tormenting, mentally exhausting pain and persecution. A crown of thorns was plaited and placed upon His head and pummeled into his scalp with a reed. He was blindfolded, slapped, spat upon; then, with ridiculing cries from His malicious mockers, Christ is taunted to prophesy the identity of those who are His torturers.

He is beaten across His outstretched back with the whip and with whatever objects were on the ends of the scourge; His back and sides were lacerated with every powerful blow from the Roman soldier. Do not be misled to believe Christ was beaten with thirty-nine stripes. That was a Jewish custom. This is a Roman punishment, and our Lord was beaten without mercy to the point, no doubt, that His shoulder blades looked like white caps in a sea of blood (from the pen of Brother G.K. Wallace). His bruised and battered body quivered from the excruciating pain delivered with every blow.

When we pause to consider the seriousness and the severity of the sufferings of Christ then, how some brethren respond to that sacrifice, it is more than I can follow and fathom. Yet, week after week we are forced to behold the unmitigated selfishness and folly of a few who fail to faithfully fulfill their God-given responsibility-whether it be a forsaking of the assembly or a default of duties as defined by the Word of God.

I would ask you to remember that our Lord displays His love for us before He even comes to Calvary; but, the old rugged cross was His death. This terrible, awful price was paid for my sins in love; a love which is not deserved, but a love which reaches all men (John 3:16; Titus 2:11-12), a love which deserves and demands obedience (II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Hebrews 5:9).

Isaac Watts wrote a song which suggests the proper response:

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my Lord;
All the vain things that charm me most
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Lennie Reagan Coldwater, MS

What Difference Do You Make?

Albert Einstein. Adolf Hitler. Margaret Thatcher. Osama Bin Laden.
Thomas Edison. Louis Pasteur. Ted Bundy. Abraham Lincoln. Clara Barton.
Winston Churchill. Barton W. Stone.

There are thousands of names of people who have made a difference in
this world. Some have made a difference for good. Others have made a

difference for evil. What about you? What difference are you making?

It is very easy to feel insignificant. It is also easy to let the precious moments that God has given to us slip through our fingers like sand in an hourglass. The Bible says this of our life: "... *For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*" (James 4:14). Knowing this, what will you do during the short time you are here? When your eulogy is read, what will it say? What will others be sharing about your life and your effect upon the world?

Do you remember Dorcas? In Acts 9, this godly woman has passed away and there are many widows standing around crying and showing Peter the clothes that she had made for them. Her life had made a difference for good in so many lives.

In the nightly news, we have seen the evil that people can do. One or two snipers, people with no regard for human life, have decided to se their lives terrorizing and killing people. What a horrible, evil waste of life! How tragic that anyone would choose to live their life in that despicable manner.

Many people live their entire lives not being particularly good or evil. They simply go through life seeking their own pleasure and happiness with little concern about the opportunities that they have to do good. Certainly this should not be the path that the Christian takes. Instead, we are to look for opportunities to teach the Gospel, encourage one another, be benevolent to those in need and to make a difference for Christ. He is our example. He taught us how to live in this life and make a difference. Jesus Christ. The name above all names that evokes the imagery of a life best lived. What about you? Will your life make a difference?

Mark Young

Christian Living Letting Our Lights Shine

Once upon a time a little candle stood in a room filled with other candles, most of them much larger and much more beautiful than she was. Some were ornate, and some were rather simple like herself. Some were white, some were blue, some were pink, some were green. She had no idea why she was there, and the other candles made her feel rather small and insignificant.

When the sun went down and the room began to get dark, she noticed a large man walking toward her with a ball of fire on a stick. She suddenly realized that the man was going to set her on fire. "No, no!" she cried, "Aaaagghhh! Don't burn me, please!" But she knew that she could not be heard and prepared for the pain that was sure to follow.

To her surprise, the room filled with light. She wondered where it came from since the man had extinguished his fire stick. To her delight, she realized that light came from herself.

Then the man struck another fire stick and, one by one, lit the other candles in the room. Each one gave out the same light that she did.

During the next few hours she noticed that, slowly, her wax began to flow. She became aware that she would soon die. With this realization came a sense of why she had been created. "Perhaps my purpose on earth is to give out light until I die," she mused. And that's exactly what she did.

God created you and me to produce light in a dark world. Our purpose on this earth is to let our lights shine so that God may be glorified (Matthew 5:16).

Wayne Rice

Don't Hoard the Truth!

The day of Pentecost saw some 3,000 obey the gospel as the church of our Lord was established in Jerusalem (Acts 2:41). As faithful and bold preachers continued to proclaim Christ (Acts 2:42), the church grew, *"and the number of the men was about five thousand"* (Acts 4:4). Even in the face of physical persecution, the apostles persisted in the divine commission (Mark 16:15). The Bible records a concise but sterling commendation of these early soldiers: *"And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ"* (Acts 5:12).

As fierce opposition and tribulation was brought to bear against the church (Acts 8:1), it is remarkable to note that *"they therefore that were scattered abroad, went about preaching the word"* (Acts 8:4). On we could go, considering numerous examples of the evangelistic fervor possessed by the Lord's people in the first century; in these brethren we see several attributes we would do well to imitate:

They were determined (Acts 5:29).

They were obedient in carrying out the Lord's command (Matthew 28:19-20).

They were zealous of good works (Titus 2:14).

They were bold (Acts 4:13).

They were forthright and uncompromising in their message (Acts 3:19).

Our age sees the faithful brethren and congregations in a small minority and under siege, not unlike the opposition encountered by the faithful few in the first century.

Immorality and decadence seep the nation, leaving a multitude of broken homes and damaged lives in their paths. Liberalism rages like a wildfire in the church, leaving a legacy of division, error and damnation. What shall we do? Throw up our hands in despair and spend our time contemplating the "good old days" when we were the fastest growing religious body in these United States, and when most brethren held steadfastly to sound doctrine? Certainly not! We agree our line of defense against liberalism and false doctrine should include a good offense.

militantly seeking to win souls to the Lord through the spread of sound doctrine.

It is a tragic fact that some doctrinally sound congregations of the Lord's people have put evangelism on a back burner and lost sight of their God-given marching orders. Lest you think we create a straw man with which to do battle, consider these examples and see if they do not sound familiar:

(1) One man, speaking for others in the congregation, said that personal work was pointless because the Jehovah's Witnesses had already been in the community and prejudiced the town against religion. Consequently, neither the congregation nor the majority of its members would try to win souls. Instead, they wanted to grow solely by means of having other Christians move into the community. Needless to say, the church there is dwindling in size and spirit! It ought to shame us to know that propagators of error are more dedicated to the spread of damnable doctrines than some of us are with the truth!

(2) Some congregations build a tremendous edifice and call that evangelism. In one congregation, a brother was quoted as saying, "They all know where the building is--they can come if they want to." Such an attitude may, unfortunately, be more widespread than any would care to imagine.

(3) Still another congregation, when asked about their evangelistic efforts, proudly pointed to the fact that they owned an entire set of filmstrips for just such work. Of course, it was not mentioned at the time, but not one person knew how to use the filmstrips; they had collected dust for years, and sadly, few cared!

Space will not permit us to continue, but many preachers will tell you that a host of members consider their evangelistic responsibilities to be fulfilled 'by proxy' when the church supports a missionary and pays a preacher "to do their work for them". And yet, we remind you that the preacher can no more do your work for you than he can stand and answer for you in judgment! Some are continually waiting for a new *program* to start, but the New Testament records that Jesus put it into operation centuries ago, and the most effective program will be each and every Christian making determined and militant efforts to reach his neighbor, coworker and relatives with the gospel message. Will they all accept it? No, but our charge is to give them the opportunity, and let God give the increase (I Corinthians 3:7).

It is not enough to have the truth; let us not be spiritual hermits and recluses. Instead, let us share the truth, realizing that truly, "The Gospel is for All"!

Lynn Parker

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The Church Is on the March

WHEN... leaders spend much time in meditation and prayer making plans for the growth of the church. Definite and challenging vision is a must if work is to be done!

WHEN... the members are diligent in praying for the church leaders and persistent in carrying out even the smallest details of the revealed ideas and plans for doing the work of the church.

WHEN... church leaders feel a genuine concern for every soul under their care and members feel close to the leaders.

WHEN... we feel a personal responsibility for the welfare and good reputation of every brother in Christ and will protect him with the same love Christ had toward the church--giving Himself for it.

WHEN... Bible school teachers, realizing they are "second parents" to the young and examples to the older, prayerfully prepare and live the lessons.

The church is on the march when LOVE is the motivating force. Having a real love for God and man will give any congregation the needed impetus to move steadily forward. Christianity will no longer be a "burden" but will remove any obstacles in an onward drive to greater heights in God's service.

John H. Alley

The Mission of the Church

BE SURE TO fill out your attendance card and mark whether you've met this week's challenge. Also mark whether you were present for Bible study this morning. For the evening service, fill out one card for the family, indicating which members are in attendance. Thank you for your cooperation in helping us "watch for your souls" (Hebrews 13:17). -the Elders

Could you easily discover the mission of the church by looking around you at the "church" in your community? What's it all about? Some might get the idea that the mission of the church is to cater to the desires of the people. Facilities are built to conveniently offer everything under one roof like the local mall or the YMCA. The message from the pulpit has been packaged in an effort to remove any offense and to be as accommodating as possible. J.I. Packer calls this new trend "hot tub religion".

If that's an appropriate designation I, for one, am all for pulling the plug in the hot tub. Friends, the real mission of the church is not to make people happy, but to make them holy. Not to offer recreation, but reconciliation. Not to encourage people to seek therapy, but to seek authority. People should not be more acquainted with the 12 steps to recovery than they are with the steps to salvation.

It's time we quit trying to make the church "relevant" to a worldly, secular society. Let the church be the church. The true measure of a church is not in slick marketing techniques, but in Biblical faithfulness. Please don't forget the real mission of the church!

Steve Higginbotham
"Religious Reminder" Waterson Trail c/C Louisville, KY

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The Secret of the Bended Knee

Have you ever watched a bird sleeping on its perch and never falling off? How does it manage to do this?

The secret is the tendons of the bird's legs. They are so constructed that when the leg is bent at the knee, the claws contract and grip like a steel trap. The claws refuse to let go until the knees are un-bent again. The bended knee gives the bird the ability to hold on to his perch so tightly.

Isn't this also the secret of the holding power of the Christian? Daniel found this to be true. Surrounded by a pagan environment, tempted to compromise with evil, urged to weaken his grip on God, he refused to let go. He held firm when others faltered because he was a man of prayer. He knew the power of the bended knee.

From sleeping birds we can learn the secret of holding things which are most precious to us -honesty, purity, thoughtfulness, honor, character. That secret is the knee bent in prayer, seeking to get a firmer grip on those values which make life worth living. When we hold firmly to God in prayer, we can rest assured He will hold tightly to us.
Rollin S. Burhans

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Why Sit Near the Front?

As most of you know, if you are not early to worship, you will likely fail to find a vacant pew in the back of the auditorium. Yes, in the church, there is an unwanted practice of spreading out and filling the back pews, leaving only the front pews vacant. Why? I have come to the conclusion that you will not be motivated to sit near the front until you are first convinced of the value. Here are five reasons why you should sit near the front:

1. Because it is considerate of others!

a. Visitors and those who come in late want to be seated as quickly as possible.

b. It is quite embarrassing for them to have to walk to the front of the auditorium in order to find a seat.

c. Furthermore, brethren, it is possible that such a practice has caused many individuals, not wanting to be embarrassed, to forsake the assembly!

2. There are fewer distractions during worship.

3. The singing is more enjoyable!

4. The preaching is better!

a. If for no other reason, certainly for Reason #2!

5. It makes a statement about your interest and involvement in worship!

Question: When you purchase a ticket to a concert, the theater or a sporting event, do you ask for the seats farthest away?

Question: When visitors come and see rows of empty pews in front, what impression does that make of our interest and involvement in worship?

Let me challenge you to move to the front just one time and see if you can tell a difference in the meaning of your worship. Friends, the best seats are always at the front!
(edited)

via the "Eisenhower Edifier"

Where Was God?

We live in a world of uncertainty. Tragedy can strike at any moment. Bullets fly, and an innocent bystander dies; a tire blows out on a highway, and someone's father and husband is suddenly taken; hijacked planes are slammed into civilian targets, and thousands die; the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated over Texas, leaving spouses and young children alone and without answers. I remember last summer when a bus transporting children to a church camp crashed into an overpass support in Dallas, killing the driver and four kids. One of the parents asked in frustration, "Why would God take these kids while they were on their way to glorify Him?" People demand to know. Where was God?

The answer is more simple than comforting. God did not make it happen. While it may be comforting to believe that God designs tragedy to serve a higher, more noble purpose, it is not theologically honest, God's greatest gift to humanity is free will. Adam and Eve ate the fruit because they chose to, and so it has been since then. Life is a series of choices, and every choice we make, no matter how small, has consequences - some good, some bad. God does not make choices for us. It is tough to accept and live out the full implications of believing in free will, but ultimately it is most fulfilling. The bus crashed because the driver could not control his vehicle, the shuttle disintegrated because NASA engineers had no contingency plan for damaged heat shields, civilians die because terrorists choose to be murderers, and tires blow out on the highway because drivers do not check the air pressure before leaving home. Out of His great love for us, God refuses to control us like puppets. As beings of power, intelligence, and love, we are made or unmade by our own decisions.

So where is God when tragedy strikes? He's right there, mourning with those who grieve because His perfect creation has been corrupted by sin and because humanity is still subject to the curse of death.

Charles North (edited)

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Mike's Message

"Getting to the Top"

It has been said that, "getting to the top is a delusion." I agree. There is no top. No matter how high we rise, no matter how far we climb, there are infinite distances above. There is always another mountain. There is always another hurdle.

In reality, to be "on top" is not a position at all. It is a state of mind. It reflects two basic attitudes.

First, to be "on top" reflects humility. When the mother of James and John came to Jesus requesting that her two sons be placed, "*one on thy right hand and the other on the left, in thy kingdom*" (Matt. 20.21b, KJV) she was asking for her sons to be placed in a position above the other apostles. Jesus responded to the indignation of the other apostles. "*Whoever wishes to be*

great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave" (Matt. 20:26-27, NASV). Jesus says, be humble.

Second, being on top is learning to be content in whatever condition you are in. The apostle Paul says, *"I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content"* (Phil. 4:11). When Paul made this statement he was in a Roman prison. As Paul faced the end of life it is obvious that he felt "on top". He confirmed, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of*

righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge, will award to me on that day" (2 Tim. 4:7-8a, NASV).

We must all strive for humility and contentment, and then we can feel "on top" no matter what position we hold, or what condition we are in.

Mike Rogers

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Something to Remember Come Sunday!

As Christians, public worship is one of our greatest privileges. Every week we are blessed to assemble and openly adore God by *"offering the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of the lips, giving thanks to His name"* (Hebrews 13:15). In fact, in this one verse of the Bible, we can learn the following:

First, worship is a concession. It is a time in which we are blessed to "sacrifice". We sacrifice (a) our feelings--in the songs that we sing, (b) our independence--by entrusting our cares to the process of prayer, (c) our monies--via the sacrificial giving of our means, (d) our interests in everything else--when we pause to remember the death of God's dear Son as well as (e) our thoughts--to a careful study and proclamation of God's Word. We also sacrifice our preferences and the dictates of culture by yielding to the specifics of God's precepts for worship. In worship we sacrifice!

Second, worship is an expression. It is a time of praise. One of the main words translated worship, *proskuneo*, means "to kiss toward". It implies--respectfully--"the blowing of a kiss toward God." Worship might thus be defined as, "the sacrifice of our feelings to God." In worship we are blessed to pause and express the depth of our love and the breadth of our appreciation to God, our Redeemer!

Third, worship is a confession. Instead of the words "giving thanks to His name," some translations more accurately read, "which make confession [literally, 'which say the same thing'] to his name". For example, in worship, we say what God says about His majesty, His greatness and His authority.

Thoughts such as these remind us that our times of public worship are the happiest, yea, greatest hours of our week and... well, that's "something to remember come Sunday." Dan Winkler

Do We Make God Suffer?

In Acts 13:18 we read in the KJV, "*And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.*" The ASV reads, "*And for about the time of forty years as a nursing father bore He them in the wilderness.*" The NIV reads, "*He endured their conduct for about forty years in the desert.*" One reason for the difference in the various translations is that, in the best manuscripts, there are two different words, so close in spelling that they differ only in one letter. Barnes says, "But instead of this word [etropoforeesen, grk 5159] to bear with, many MSS read [etrofoforeesen], 'he sustained or nourished.'" The word "etropoforeesen" means something like "He put up with them." The word "etrofoforeesen" seems to signify that He bore them about as a nurse cherishes a child. Even in English, we can see that there is a slight difference in "He bore them" or "He bare them" and "He bore with them." The first signifies that He carried them, but the second suggests that, although He may have carried them, they were a burden to Him.

There is little doubt that both of the ideas are true, for we find in Numbers 14:22, "*Because all those men which have seen My glory and My miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice.*" The same thought is expressed in various other Scriptures, so we know that the Lord "suffered" them or "put up with their sinful ways" in His longsuffering love.

It may seem more likely in this passage that Paul is emphasizing at the beginning of his discourse the tender love of God for them rather than the fact that He had to put up with their hateful, rebellious ways. However, it really does not matter which word he used here, for he later reminds them of their sinful rebellion.

My point in starting this article was that I was intrigued by the idea that, in all cases, God bears us as a loving father would carry his stumbling child, for we often stumble. However, he also "bears with us" when we not only stumble, but when we deliberately walk away from Him. That is, He often "puts up with us"--gives us time and opportunity to repent and come back. He may have to let us suffer some hardship, affliction or loss to realize what we have done, but He is still "*long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish*" (II Peter 3:9).

My hope is that we will live in such a fashion that God will not need to "put up with" or "bear up under" our sinful rebellion, but will simply bear us in His arms as a living human father might, binding up the wounds that have been caused by our stumbling into the briars by the wayside or stumbling over the "stumbling stones" that may have been put in our way.

T. Pierce Brown
via "The Edgewood Bulletin"

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Finding What He Looked For

Jim Smith went to worship one Sunday morning. He heard the song leader miss a note, and he winced. He saw a teenager talking when everybody was supposed to be bowed in prayer. He felt like the usher was watching to see what he put into the offering plate, and it made him boil. He caught the preacher making a slip of the tongue five times in the sermon by actual count. As he slipped through the side door during the closing hymn, he muttered to himself. "Never

again! What a bunch of clods and hypocrites!"

Ron Jones went to worship one Sunday morning. The congregation sang "*A Mighty Fortress*" and he was thrilled to the majesty of it. He was glad to hear that the church was sharing in a special offering for the mission work in Nigeria. He especially appreciated the sermon that Sunday -it answered a question that had bothered him for a long time. He thought as he walked out the doors, "How can a man come here and not feel the presence of God!?"

Both men went to the same congregation on the same Sunday morning. Each found what he was looking for. What will you be looking for on Sunday?

via "On Line"
State Street c/C
Bristol, VA

The "Dueling Dozen" in Tanzania

David Wasonga
ACSOP
P.O. Box 12163
Arusha, Tanzania

I am David Otieno Wasonga. I was born in the year 1975. I come from Western Kenya, Siaya District. I was brought up from a Christian family. I started my education in the year 1983; that is when I joined pre-primary school.

While in a primary school, that is when I know the true church from one of my teachers by them, called Joseph, who was a member of Ahono Church of Christ. As for me personally, I became a Christian in the year 1995 when I was in Form One at a school called Uranga High School. I was baptized by one of our members from the western region called Wilson Outa. As for now I am a member of Ahono Church of Christ as a preacher.

I joined Form One in the year 1995 and finished in the year 1998. Since the system of Kenya is 8.4.4 system, my parents never managed to take me in any college. This was due to financial problems. I passed with Div. III.

After my forth [sic] form I stayed at home helping our local church preaching the gospel for them. We received a letter from Arusha Church of Christ requesting one to come and take the course. Later in the month of March, 2003, I received the invitation letter to join Andrew Conally School of Preaching. I was glad and all the church were happy. This clearly indicates that we should thank God and His Son Jesus

Chr

Your son in Christ,

David Otieno Wasonga
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The Empty Pew Speaks

What can an empty seat "say"? Well, we can't hear it, but the message is loud and clear. If we have been blessed with good health and, if we are not at our seat when the saints come together, we may be saying, "Sorry, but I have found something more interesting and dear to me than my life as a Christian."

Paul knew what it was to have empty places around him. He wrote to Timothy, "*At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge*" (II Timothy 4:16). In that same chapter Paul mentions that Demas had forsaken him because he loved the present world.

Is the empty seat a sign of forsaking the Lord? We are commanded, "*not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is...*" (Hebrews 10:25). How many times can we miss assembling with the saints before it can be called "forsaking"? We should be careful that we "say" the right things always, lest we send the wrong message to those who watch us.

"What Does the Bible Say" "Life Lines", Beckley, WV

The "Dueling Dozen" in Tanzania

Julius Nyamwaya
ACSOP
P.O. Box 12163
Arusha, Tanzania

Dear Sponsor:

"It is most and wonderful gift that you have given me in order to study in this school. May I say that without your effort I could not been even near the school. Thank you so, so much.

"May God who is full of grace add unto you more blessing upon your life and the entire family of your. Without forgetting how you work hardly for him. God bless.

Yours in Christ, Julius O. Nyamwaya"

Julius was born in 1973 in Kisumu, Kenya and has studied at the Kenya School of Mass Communication. He has experience as a driver, piano technician, has some computer knowledge and a diploma in journalism and political science. His family lives in East Krano in Kisumu and Julius is

responsible for taking care of them. He became a Christian while working as a reporter for Daily Nation News. He met a young boy who gave him a couple of tracts which led to his coming to Arusha to study the Bible. "Now I know Christ, and the rest of my life I laid down to be used by Him."

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Read, Study, Meditate

The great British preacher, Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892), stressed the importance of studv to a group of preacher students. "The man who never reads will himself never be read." He

who cares nothing for the thoughts of learned men will never be asked for his own thoughts.

Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) rose every morning at 3:00 for Bible study. At 5:00am, he met with his family for an hour of morning worship.

T.W. Brents (1823-1905), a medical doctor and gospel preacher said, "The man who says he reads nothing but the Bible will read and understand very little of that."

Jesus frequently asked others about their reading: "*Have ye not read...?*" (Matthew 12:3); "*Have ye never read...?*" (Matthew 21:16); "*Have ye not read...?*" (Matthew 22:31).

A 1989 poll by the Barna Research Group revealed that 93% of Americans own a Bible. Recent surveys indicate that 41% never read the Bible (Wall Street Journal, Nov. 12, 1999).

Bible study changes lives. The translators of the King James Version (1611) wrote in the preface: "If we are ignorant, the Scriptures will instruct us; If we are out of the way, they will bring us home; If out of order, they will reform us; If in heaviness, they comfort us; If dull, quicken us; If cold, inflame us."

By spending 12 minutes a day one can read the entire New Testament in 90 days or the entire Bible in one year. Paul told Timothy, "*When thou comest, bring the books, especially the parchments*" (II Timothy 4:13). Doug Couch

Rules for Happy Living in 2004

Do you desire a "happy life" in the coming year? Follow these rules, and you will enjoy happiness that cannot be found in "things" of this world.

Count your blessings, not your troubles. Though we have problems in this life, we are still richly blessed. The plaque on the wall stated, "I grumbled and complained because I had no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet."

Live one day at a time. Regardless of what Satan may throw at you, it can be handled "one day at a time" (James 4:13-15). You can control and conquer if you will take on the obstacles one day at a time.

Learn to say "I love you" to those near and dear. Break the shackles and learned restraints and express your love and appreciation to as many as possible each day (Mark 14:3-6).

Be a giver and not a getter. Often, if you fail to get out of life what you want, it is because you are expecting to GET instead of GIVE (Luke 6:38).

Seek good in everyone and everything. Be a "good" seeker. Try hard not to be a "fault-finder". When faults are present, deal with them lovingly.

Pray every day. Always take time to express to God your appreciation for blessings and ask Him for guidance (Luke 18:1).

Do a good deed each day. The "grandest intention" is not as good as the "smallest

deed". Follow the Lord's example (Acts 10:38).

Watch your priorities. Keep the important things in first place (Matthew 6:33).

Fill your life with good. Throw away the "trash" from your life and replace it with good thoughts and deeds (Philippians 4:8).

Laugh and cry. Laughter is good medicine. A good sense of humor overcomes many "ills and problems" of life.

Learn to practice the happiness habit. Smile, and the world will smile with you (Philippians 4:4). Make up your mind to be "happy".

Let go and let God control your life. To find peace and happiness you must let God completely reign on the throne in your life. You must totally follow His will. It is for your good.

via South FL AV "Messenger"

The "Dueling Dozen" in Tanzania

Reginald Mongi
ACSOP
P.O. Box 12163
Arusha, Tanzania

My Dear School Sponsor:

I hope that you are fine. I am also fine. My name is Reginald Mongi, and I am the first born in the family of three sons and two daughters. I was born in 17th of March 1975 in Moshi and I am not married. I am a Chagga from Marangu. I am now living at Kimandolu.

In fact, my family was faithful in the Roman Catholic Church and I did my studies in Roman Catholic seminaries because I wanted to be a good Christian but I could not get direct answers from the questions I had about true faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, I decided to look for the truth outside the Roman Catholic Church. Lastly, I found myself in the true Christian church in Arusha last year on July.

In fact, I was preached and my many questions were answered. I repent my sins and confess Christ as the Son of God and I was baptized, and I was added in the church of Christ.

I am now one of the students of Andrew Connally School of Preaching in Arusha, Tanzania, East Africa for I have decided to know more about God so that I can preach the good news to every creature.

In fact, I would like first of all to congratulate you for your financial supports which you offer in this school. We now have good school building and enough materials such as books for our studies.

However, I would like to give thanks for your financial supports you offer to me which support me in my daily needs. Therefore, I promise that I will try my level best to study hard to

know many things about God. However, I wish to become a good preacher so that I may glorify God and preach the good news to every creature as Jesus Christ commanded us in Mark 16:15.

I wish you all the best in your activities and May God bless you in your Christian life.

Yours in Jesus Christ, Reginald Mongi