The Christian Courier



Send all correspondence to 17103 Bixby Avenue, Bellflower, CA 90706

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"O SEND OUT THY LIGHT AND THY TRUTH: LET THEM LEAD ME; LET THEM BRING ME UNTO THY HOLY HILL, AND TO THY TABERNACLES." (Psalm 43:3)

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SING AND BE HAPPY

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once noted, "The human voice is the organ of the soul." The voice is a reflection of our emotions, our thoughts, and sometimes our actions. When we are depressed we don't cheer for joy. When we are happy we don't mumble words. Statistics show that, as humans, we like to sing. It might be in the shower, alone in the car, or in our rooms.

The stage for this study is the worship service. I have had a concern for years concerning the singing. Many times I would be sitting in church and the singing would be awful, not because it sounds bad, but because no one was into it. Is it because the service is too early and we aren't awake? Or, has apathy set in? Psalm 100:2 says "come before his presence with singing." Where is his presence? Let's look to Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Are we not taught to make melody in our hearts? Ephesians 5:19.

I have found that singing sets the tone for the sermon. If the singing is uplifting and moving, we are more excited about

receiving the "engrafted word", James 1:21. Conversely, when the singing is not uplifting and not from the heart, it depresses everyone! We don't have to have golden voices (I certainly do not). When we all work together, others jump in, Isaiah 52:8.

What is singing for? One reason is to sing praise - Psalm 95:1. We should praise the Lord in each and every way possible. Another reason is to express our happiness, James 5:13. When people visit our congregation and hear a low murmur in our singing, they probably will not return. Especially someone looking for church. Someone ignorant of the scriptures will be lead to the digressive congregations where they pride themselves in their music and instruments. Is it that we are not happy? If so, we had better get it worked out. Maybe we don't sing because we don't know why we are singing. I Cor. 14:15 says to sing with understanding. Perhaps that is the underlying reason. I know I didn't get into singing until I realized its importance. If that is the case, I would encourage such a person to study II Tim. 2:15.

The next time you are in worship service, realize that there may be someone who needs uplifting, so... SING... and BE HAPPY!

Submitted for the consideration
of my brothers and sisters,
Brian J. Ross
Baron Church of Christ

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"FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON" (John 3:16)

Many people in the religious community today believe that through Christ Jesus, forgiveness comes to them automatically, regardless of the condition of the spirit they choose to remain in while they ask. There are people that believe Jesus Christ completely shoulders the responsibility for their sins, regardless. I hope I can show you in this study how forgiveness from God is a gift and how it comes to us conditionally.

From the beginning of time God has commanded obedience from men and women. It has always remained mankind's choice whether or not they would obey God or themselves. Through God's great

mercy and love, he gives to mankind a means of reconciliation between he and man through the sacrificial system beginning under the Old Testament covenant. This was a gift from God, where the death or "blood" of the animal was accepted by God as a substitute for the death (Ezek. 18:20) that the sinner deserved. God explains, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls" (Lev. 17:11). However, because God's justice could not be served through the "blood of goats and calves", Jesus Christ became the substitute for mankind's deserving death where "He entered the Most Holy Place once" and for all, "having obtained eternal redemption" for us (Heb. 9:12). This fulfilled the first necessary requirement towards God's forgiveness. God for his part gave the means of atonement through the sacrificial system: men and women were expected in times of old and are today to do their part toward receiving forgiveness from their God. This includes man coming to God's sacrifice in a spirit of repentance and faith (Mark 1:4, Acts 10:43, James 5:15).

The term used for repentance in the Greek and Hebrew language is "metanoia"; meaning compunction, guilt, and reformation by another's decision. Hence, the original biblical language defines repentance as one's conversion associated with "godly sorrow" for their sin. It is a feeling of remorse for one's past conduct and a turning from sin toward God in obedience.

Even the people during the Old Testament age had to identify with the animal being slain, because of their sin, in a personal way. They were first required to lay their hand upon the animal's head, which symbolically represented the transfer of their sin and guilt to the sacrificial victim. Secondly, the slayer was required to kill the animal in such a way that signified his conscious involvement in the death of the animal for his offenses against his God. You can read about this complete ritual in Lev. 1:4-17.

The point here, is people were required to recognize the seriousness of their sin against God. People today are expected to recognize the seriousness of their sin, and this recognition is associated with repentance. We see this kind of humility as Peter preached to the Jews of their involvement in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. When the Jews heard all this, "they were pricked in their hearts" and asked what they should do (Acts 2:37).

Each of us have a personal responsibility toward receiving forgiveness from God. This is that we must approach God in a spirit of sincere repentance and obedient faith to Jesus Christ and His teachings. We are to repent and obey, period. Jesus Christ promises, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

Many people use Christ as a license to sin and fail to understand God's stipulations toward atonement with him. There are people that continue in a "sin" and believe they have forgiveness if they ask God for pardon. The apostle Paul clarifies, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." (Rom. 6:1). He continues, "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Heb. 10:26). A continuing wilful sin can refer to even grudges against one another. Jesus Christ warns, "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:15). In forgiving, we show our repentance. Luke councils "Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Luke 3:8). This simply means, obey God. By the changes in our way comes evidence of the changes in our heart. Don't frame excuses to say "We have Abraham". God can effectively secure his own honor and interest without us. If need be, He can raise a church out of the most unlikely: children of Abraham even out of stones. Forgiveness carries a responsibility of mercy and grace. It does not come in an automatic or mechanical way. God has done his part in giving his only begotten "Son" through His sacrificial system; our part is to come to Him in a spirit of repentance for our sins and obedient faith in Jesus Christ.

In closing, God summarizes best of all, "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" (II Chr. 7:14).

Grace be with you all,
Steven B. Coody
Oklahoma City, OK

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"AS COLD WATERS TO A THIRSTY SOUL, SO IS GOOD NEWS FROM A FAR COUNTRY." Prov. 25:25

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SAN PABLO, CALIFORNIA

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our prayers are that everyone is in good health, physically and spiritually.

We are happy to report that Sister Bonnie Bryant is improving nicely, thanks to the Heavenly Father through your prayers. She grows stronger every day and has been able to attend services the last two Sundays. She gave us quite a scare.

We are happy to report that Brother Larry Bergman was baptized into the body of Christ on the 5th of September. Brother Larry is a co-worker with Bro. Louis Glynell, who had the privilege of officiating. We are real happy for Brother Larry. He had no previous study in the Bible, and it is all new for him. He is studying with us on Thursday night Bible study. Pray for Bro. Larry and all the other new "babes" in Christ.

Please continue your prayers for others that need them. Brother Gene McKinney still has back problems and has been off work for quite some time now. Sister Lola Mae Prado will be going into surgery soon for a hysterectomy. Sister Lola Mae has recently adopted her niece, Sister Deanna, and that was finalized one week ago. Sister Deanna was baptized at the age of 9 years and is a faithful member growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. Sister Cooper's granddaughter, Katherine Ann, just had surgery (hysterectomy) and is slowly getting better. She has diabetes. Please pray for her. Our visitors have been Brother and Sister J.D. and Fern Logan; Brother and Sister Eric and Lori Harper. Brother Eric blessed us with a very good sermon. Sister Martha Wyatt has come back to meet with us. She attended with her daughter, Patty and her son. We are thankful for their return.

Sister America Aguilar wrote us a letter from Costa Rica, and we finally learned that she and her family were not injured in the large earthquake they had there a few months ago. Sister America came to San Pablo from Costa Rica, and met with us while she was here (approx. 8 months). We sure miss her and we miss

trying to translate the Bible to her. She is well versed in the word of God. Pray for her and her family, and the church there. Pray for unity in the body of Christ.

Yours in Christ,
Homer Bryant

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BARON, OKLAHOMA

Greetings to all:

We had a wonderful trip to Washington since last writing. We enjoyed very much being with the Selah congregation. We also enjoyed being with the Yakima congregation who attended the meeting except for their regular Wednesday night services. We met a lot of dear christian friends that we knew and a lot of new ones for the first time. It gives a person a big lift to see so many other christians striving to do the Lord's will.

At this time we are looking forward to our trip and week-end meeting to Duncan, Oklahoma the first week in October.

We had only been home from Washington one week when our son, Brett, came down with appendicitis. We had to rush him by ambulance to the hospital. He had surgery August 14th. He had to miss 8 days of school but he has gotten caught up on that now. He is doing fine now; thanks be to God for all the prayers answered.

We had a very good Labor Day week-end meeting here at Baron. We had a house full almost every night. We had 3 good speakers: Bro. Paul Auslam on Friday night from Goshen, Ark.; Bro. Dan Teague on Saturday night from Duncanville, Texas; Bro. Leroy Mullens from Randlett, Oklahoma; and Bro. Dan Teague again on Sunday night. We had a hay ride after church on Sunday night and a wiener roast. Everyone seemed to enjoy it very much. We also had one big evening meal at the lunchroom each day. We had visitors from Goshen, Arkansas; Bohannon Mountain, Arkansas; Randlett, Oklahoma; Pleasant View, (Stilwell) Oklahoma; Broken Bow, Oklahoma; Duncan, Oklahoma; and Duncanville, Texas.

We have a new granddaughter born to Don and Sheila McReynolds on July 22nd. Her name is Aerial Dawn who weighed 7½ lbs.

We also had a wedding on September 19th. Our granddaughter, Angela Ross, was united in marriage to Eddie Martin.

We invite anyone coming to this part of the country to stop and worship with us and visit in our homes.

With Christian love
for the Baron congregation,
Jim Brown

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DELTA, COLORADO

Dear Ones in Christ:

Our Colorado Big Spruce Camp Meeting was a great success in July. We had many wonderful speakers that stirred up our pure minds with God's wonderful word. The lessons were all very uplifting and lots of spiritual food.

The singing was great and the fellowship we had one with another is something we will cherish a long time. There were two baptized in the creek under the Big Spruce tree at the camp. Sister Tresa Wilkerson of Cedaredge, Colorado and Bro. Mike Lewis of the Valley View congregation at Duncan, Oklahoma and several came forward for the prayers. We appreciate the effort of everyone, the long distances you travelled to be here. Thanks for the help in the kitchen, dining hall, church, camp grounds, dorms and for everything.

You young people were great to help us - thank you. Also, thanks to all of you older ones. We appreciate all of you.

There was endless time spent discussing the Bible, and singing during the day and after services in the evening. It was a very successful spiritually uplifting camp meeting.

We pray that you all can be with us next year. The date will be June 27th through July 5th, 1992. Mark your calendars now and plan your vacation for the Colorado Big Spruce Camp Meeting in 1992.

God bless you all,
Happy Hallow Church of Christ
P.O. Box 702
Cedaredge, CO 81413

BOHANNAN MOUNTAIN, ARKANSAS

Greetings!

Sister Fancy was in the hospital, she is back in Church, doing just fine for 80 years of age. Thanks for everyone's prayers for her.

Our summer is ending back here in the Ozarks, it is still hot weather - but liveable. School is about to start and all the kids will be busy.

The four day meeting in Broken Bow, Oklahoma had good attendance. Brother Jerry McCay did the speaking. He is a very good speaker. My wife attended the meeting with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Roberson.

We will appreciate anyone coming our way to stop and worship with us at the Bohannan Mountain congregation. Contact Bro. James Vanderpool at 442-4834 or me at 521-5185.

Yours in Christ for the
Bohannan Mountain Church,
Melvin Daniels

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WATERFORD, CALIFORNIA

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

It has been awhile since I have written to the papers. Let me start by thanking the Yakima congregation for the opportunity to help hold their meeting this summer. It was both an honor and an experience I shall never forget. It was fitting that I held my first meeting at this congregation for the people that so richly loved me for so many years and I consider a big influence in my commitment to become a member of the church. They showed me that life and its joys are truly found in the love of Christ and for each other. They nurtured and loved me many years before I became a member of the Church. Words cannot express the love in my heart for these people, nor would it be fair to single out any one person. I don't believe that we ever really stop growing in God's word, that it is a continuing

process and a lifetime of study learning and faith. As for sharing the meeting with Bro. John Bedingfield. He is well versed in God's word and I know there is much work I need to do to continue to progress my speaking ability. Certainly Bro. John is a good measuring point of what a speaker should be to the betterment and growth of the Church.

For those of you that I met for the first time and for those I feel I have known all my life I want to thank you for your patience, consideration and encouragement you gave me all through the meeting. To those of my own congregation who travelled far to be with me my deepest gratitude and love. If I have left something out please forgive me for it has only been lost in my mind but not my heart. I will strive to become stronger in my speaking ability and would finally like to say God bless each and everyone of you.

Love to all,
Ken Williams
Waterford, CA

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SELAH, WASHINGTON

We are pleased to share with you the spiritual success of the gospel meeting sponsored by the Selah congregation. We are indebted to the christian efforts of Bros. Jim Brown, Brian Ross, A.J. Way, and Brett Brown; and of Sisters Ruby Brown and Beverly Ross. Brothers Jim and Brian alternated speaking times throughout the week. Bro. Jim contributed his experience and wisdom as a seasoned christian. Bro. Brian contributed the enthusiasm of a young and capable soldier for Christ and an inspiration to those around him. Both presented sound doctrine to further commit each of us to the cause of Christ. The success of the meeting was increased by the tireless efforts of Bro. A.J. (Bellflower) and Bro. Brett (Baron), who worked on an individual basis with many of our young adults. The personal work and Christian influence of our sisters Ruby and Beverly enriched the experience of our common bond through Christ. We genuinely appreciate all of their efforts and hope that their fulfillment was as abundant as ours.

In a meeting setting, we must acknowledge that success is a

combined effort of all who attend. Many influences bring about a change of attitude, whether it be a potential convert or a Christian in distress. As a result of combined efforts, we are happy to announce the baptism of Shannon McGuire and of Tara Ross (daughter of Bro. Dan and Sis. Alyce Ross). We also witnessed many who were encouraged and asked for strengthening through prayer. Those committed to the will of God are the strength of the church.

Many visitors attended the services and listened to the messages of our guest speakers. We thank all those who attended from these congregations: Bellflower, Cedaredge, Glennwood, San Pablo, Seattle, Yakima, and Yuma.

During this meeting we experienced a different approach to edification. Each weekday we had a seminar with a prepared leader and a topic. The presentation was given and questions and comments were invited. Monday: (females only) Duties of a Christian Wife and Mother - Sis. Dorothy Sage/ (males only) Duties of a Christian Husband and Father - Bro. Robert Farley. Tuesday: The Lord's Supper - Bro. Howard McCay/ (females only) Making the Loaf - Sis. Betty McKinney. Wednesday: Organizational and Communicative Skills - Bro. Dan Ross. Thursday: Community Work - Bro. Ellis Forsman. Friday: Instrumental Music - Bro. Jim Brown. We were very pleased with the results of each seminar and feel that there was a lot of helpful information to be gained.

Again, THANKS to all who participated and attended this first meeting sponsored by the Selah, Washington congregation. I Cor. 3:5-9 "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his labor. For we are laborers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

For the Selah congregation,
Bro. Dan Ross

BELLFLOWER, CALIFORNIA

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

We hope all the brotherhood is doing well. We have a few aches and pains, but for the most part we are doing well.

Bro. Al Way is scheduled to go for an outpatient surgery on his back on October 11th. Please pray for him that this will cure his back pain.

Sister Myrtle Lee Clouse had to miss services one Sunday due to illness. She doesn't feel real good any of the time so when she misses a Sunday, we know she must really be sick. Please keep her in your prayers.

Martin, Tayna, Jeffrey and Kindra Brockman and Gerald, Natalie, and Monica Brockman were gone one Sunday. They were once again up north visiting the Chico congregation.

We also have some sad news to report. Our dear Sister Kate Lewis passed away on October 2nd. She was 96 years old. She has been in a nursing home for several years and the last few years she was not able to recognize anybody. We are very saddened by her passing, but we also realize that she is in a much better place.

That is about all of the news for now. Please keep us in your prayers. Anyone that is in this area, please stop in to visit and worship with us.

In Christian love,
Mark Perigen

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MY CONSTANT PRAYER

Lord, today I pray for others who seem less blessed
that I that in your love and mercy you will heed
their deepest cry.

For those depressed and lonely, please be their constant
guide and show them they are not alone for you are
by their side.

For those in pain and body, Dear Lord please make them whole and those in doubt increase the faith; reveal their glorious soul.

Feed those who live in hunger; house those who have no home, and free this world from hatred - show us we all are one.

Dear Lord, thank you for listening and answering this prayer. This world seems less frightening just knowing you care.

By Susie Treat

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GOSPEL MEETINGS

Duncan, Oklahoma	October 4-6	Jim Brown
Randlett, Oklahoma	November 1-3	Guest Speakers
Delta, Colorado	July 4-12, 1992	Camp

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EDITOR'S NOTE

As you may have noticed, some of the meetings have been cancelled. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused. There was a misunderstanding, as these meetings were only being discussed and nothing was finalized. Please accept our apologies and correct your calendars. Thank you.