

VIGIL



“Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

~ I Peter 5:8

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Beyond These Walls**

BEYOND THESE WALLS—PRAYER **Tom Larkin**

Prayer is a vital part of our worship assemblies. Prayer enables us to approach the throne of the very one who can lift our burdens and satisfy our deepest needs. Prayer gives us an opportunity to unite our hearts in awe and adoration of our heavenly Father. But we must avoid the mistake of limiting prayer to the worship service. Prayer is intended to be a “without ceasing” practice, not a “at church only” activity. How sad indeed is that Christian who prays only at worship. Truly, such a practice deprives one of great blessings. As with any other part of our Christian life, we must take prayer beyond the walls of the church building.

Prayer in the worship assembly can be a powerful practice. After Peter and John reported to the church concerning the threatening that they received from the Jewish council (Acts 4:17-18), the church “lifted up their voice to God with one accord” (v. 24). Verses 31-33 record the results – “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken

where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.” This congregational prayer had great effect, but we must realize that, apart from the miraculous aspects of this account, we can enjoy the same effect in our personal lives if we take prayer beyond the walls of our assemblies.

We should take prayer beyond these walls because we are taught to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). The Bible underscores the importance of persistent prayer with the use of phrases such as “continue in prayer” (Colossians 4:2), “continuing instant in prayer” (Romans 12:12), “praying always with all prayer” (Ephesians

6:18), and “pray always and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). The parable that follows this last statement emphasizes the value of persistent prayer (v. 2-8). In a passage with a similar theme Jesus said, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (Matthew 7:11).

Prayer with other Christians outside the walls of our assemblies can strengthen and fortify us against the world. One might think that Paul and Silas would be distraught and in anguish having been beaten and imprisoned in Philippi though they had done no wrong. Yet, this is not the case. “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed” (Acts 16:25-26).

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EDITORIAL

Beyond These Walls

By Ronnie Hayes

Often Christianity is limited to sitting in a pew or to a few minutes closed up behind walls on Sunday and Wednesday. This is so tragic! How is the world supposed to see Christ in us if the only time we show an interest in Christ is behind closed doors? It is time for us to be more concerned about the lost, those hurting, and even those rejected. It is time for our Christianity to go "Beyond These Walls!"

Christianity is more than a name, it should be our life. Christianity is not a game we play when it is convenient for us. Christianity is who we are at home, work, and play. When the world looks at us what do they see? If we are truly Christians they see someone "Christ-Like." Our actions divulge what is truly inside. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee" (Proverbs 23:7). Christianity is much more than a nine to five job. Our life is different because we are governed by a unique set of rules. The Bible is our guide. These rules are to be written in our heart. The Hebrew writer speaks of the old law verses the new law and shows the difference. One of those differences was to be that the old law was written in stone (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:7) where as the new law is to be written in our hearts. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Hebrews 8:10). This passage is not

trying to say that the new law was not written with pen and paper because we know that is was (cf. John 20:30,31; Jude 3). The passage teaches the superiority of the new over the old in the fact that Christians will add the law to their heart! Citizens throughout the world are forced to live by laws they think are unfair. In these situations we find ourselves going through the motions or simply offering lip service but our hearts are far from it. Christians should understand, and openly accept the laws of Christ because they recognize the value of them. If this is not the case then it is a matter of hypocrisy. We don't obey simply out of duty (cf. Luke 17:10). Christians believe that Christ's way is the best way. If this is not the case then the world will see right through us. Our manner of life has to go beyond these walls!

As Christians we must let our light shine. Everyone has an influence. Christ said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Our choice concerning influence is not will we have one, but will it be good or bad? Paul encouraged disciples, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Look around and notice the eyes of all that are watching us. Recently I saw on the news a report of a local high school football program that was conducting a clinic for younger guys interested in playing. The coach said we want our players to see what it feels like to coach, but more importantly, we want them to recognize that they are being idolized by all of the younger players. What an influence! Influence is a powerful tool. As Christians we can influence others to

obey the gospel of Christ. Christ said, "... Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16). Peter speaks of the influence of a wife toward her husband. "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives" (1 Peter 3:1). Many mates have been led to Christ through the influence of a godly husband or wife. Sadly, influence can keep someone from obeying the gospel. When a weak Christian attends worship sporadically or acts in a fashion which is not Christ-like their influence can be detrimental. May we allow our influence to glorify God.

The true love of a Christian should be apparent. What we love will be seen in how we spend our money, time, and talents. Do we use these things for the glory of God? Christ said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). As Christians we have to learn to prioritize. Christ has to be first in our lives (cf. Matthew 6:33). What is truly important in our lives? Some spend their time seeking fortunes. As Christians we are warned of that danger. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). We are also warned that the "...love of money is the root of all evil" (cf. 1 Timothy 6:10). What we love will be seen!

Does our Christianity go beyond the walls of a church building? If it doesn't there is something terribly wrong!

BEYOND THESE WALLS IN SERVICE

Chance Hicks

“Enter to worship; Leave to serve.” The preceding sign can sometimes be seen hanging in the foyers of various church buildings. This sign serves as a great reminder when you are entering the building that you are entering to worship the Father in spirit and truth (John 4:24). It is also a great reminder when leaving the building that it is our responsibility to serve all who are beyond the walls of the church building. Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia concerning the Christian’s responsibility to serve others, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13). He later wrote our responsibility toward all men, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10). Why should we desire to go beyond these walls in service to those around us?

Because of the Desire of Jesus

In the race of life, the Hebrews writer encourages us to look unto Jesus as our example (Hebrews 12:1-2). Peter records that the steps of Jesus are those which we should follow in our lives (1 Peter 2:21). What was the attitude of Jesus in regards to service to His fellow man? When you investigate the life of Jesus recorded in the four accounts of the Gospel, you will find that His constant desire was to be a servant to anyone who was in need. When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion providing for their physical needs by healing their sick and providing for their spiritual needs by teaching them concerning the kingdom of God

(Matthew 14:14; Mark 6:34). When He encountered those who were lame, blind, and demon possessed, He took the time to heal them and to cast out the demons. Jesus spent His time upon the earth as servant to all men. He summed up His desire upon the earth in these words, “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). The reason Christ came in the flesh was not for His own benefit, but He came that He might lay down His life to provide life for those who would obey Him! The desire of Jesus was truly to serve, to sacrifice His life for the benefit of those around Him. If we are going to be like our Master, then we must go beyond the walls in service to those around us. We must be willing to sacrifice of ourselves, of our time, of our energy, of our possessions to benefit those around us in need.

Because of the Day of Judgment

The Scriptures are crystal clear concerning the coming Day of Judgment. Consider the following passages: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10); “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14); “And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Matthew 25:32). In the great judgment scene that Jesus depicts, the sheep are on the right hand, and

the goats are on the left. The sheep are ushered into life eternal (Matthew 25:34, 46), while the goats are cast into everlasting fire (Matthew 25:41, 46). What was the difference that determined whether one was categorized as a sheep or a goat? Service to Christ by serving our fellow man is that which determines whether we are a sheep or a goat. The sheep were those who fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, took in the stranger, clothed the naked, and visited the sick and imprisoned. In serving the least individual in these areas, they were ministering to Christ (Matthew 25:40). The goats, on the left hand, had the same opportunities in life to serve their fellow man in the same areas. However, the goats gave no meat to the hungry, gave no drink to the thirsty, did not take in the stranger, did not provide clothes for the naked, nor did they visit the sick and imprisoned. When these failed to serve their fellow man, they failed to serve Christ (Matthew 25:45). The great divider on the Day of Judgment is whether or not we have sacrificed of ourselves to serve our fellow man. We should go beyond the walls in service to our fellow man because it will determine our eternal destiny! If we want to be invited into the eternal kingdom of God (Matthew 25:34), then we must be obedient to the Gospel and give our lives to serve those around us as we have opportunity.

This Sunday as you leave the building after worshipping God look for opportunities to be like the Christ in service. If we will develop the desire to serve, God will provide the opportunities. May we endeavor to serve one another by love!

BEYOND THESE WALLS IN WORLD EVANGELISM

Billy Bland

What if you, in your mission contribution could help spread God's Gospel into China, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore and many other places in the Far East? Such an opportunity does exist right now and it needs your support.

Four Seas Bible College is located in Singapore and is training men to be preachers and teachers of the Word (2 Timothy 4:2), as well as women to be effective Bible class teachers to women and children. A wonderful opportunity exist for the Lord's church to reach precious

souls in the Far East and around the world. Singapore is a multi-cultural, multi-lingual city where English is the common language. People can come to Four Seas College from China, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, etc. to be trained as Gospel Preachers and teachers. What an open door for us to reach much of the world with the pure Gospel. Will you help? Please mail contributions to: Coldwater church of Christ c/o Far East / World Evangelism, PO Box 437, Senatobia, MS 38668.

FOUR SEAS BIBLE COLLEGE

Curtis Cates



Standing behind the faculty and guest (seated), are students from **China, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and even Viet Nam.**

My first journey to Singapore was in 1986 with Brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr., whom I had been privileged to meet at the World Evangelism Clinic Pinellas Park, Florida, in 1960 (at age nineteen). Needless to say, he had a profound impact on my life, from that time onward, I

have been keenly interested in and have promoted Four Seas College and the work of the devoted and faithful brethren in Singapore.

Four Seas college is located in a very strategic part of the world and is doing a tremendous work in educating dedicated men and women in the Far East to carry the pure, primitive Gospel to the teeming millions, yea billions in their own countries and beyond. Brother Billy Bland, who very enthusiastically and skillfully coordinates the wonderful Far east/World Evangelism work, serves as Chairman of the Board of the college. It has a superb administration, faculty, and staff. Having closely

observed its vital work for a quarter-century and having been privileged to have taught some classes in Four Seas, I give this critical vital and valuable institution my fervent, full endorsement and encourage faithful brethren everywhere to rally to its support. Curtis A. Cates, Co-Chairman, Four Seas College; and Director Emeritus, Memphis School of Preaching.

There are several books and CD's available by **Franklin Camp** and **Bobby Duncan**. For more information, see our website, www.acoc.org, or call Brother's Inc. at 205-674-5659, fax to 205-674-5678 or our email address is: acofc@adamsvillechurch.org.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Garland Elkins



Four Seas Bible College meets in the 3rd floor of this building in the Jurong area of Singapore.

A number of years ago it was my privilege along with others to travel with Brother Ira

Y. Rice, Jr., to the Far East to do

mission work. I spoke on a lectureship in the Philippines, and then I preached in a city-wide gospel meeting in Singapore; then I spoke to the graduation class of the Four Seas Bible College. I preached for the two congregations in Singapore and also I spoke on a lectureship in Southern India. If I remember correctly there were 1934 responses to the gospel during that period of time. Sadly, Brother Rice passed away in an automobile accident, and we suffered a great loss.

However, brother Rice always had emphasized that the work in which he was engaged was the work of the Lord, and so it continues. Brother Billy Bland has made missions trips with Brother Rice and worked with him in numerous other ways; so therefore, it was the proper thing for Brother Bland to continue the work that brother Rice had begun.

Brother Bland is married to Terry and they have two children (one deceased). They have three granddaughters, Brother Bland serves as an elder at the Coldwater congregation; he is an instructor in the Memphis school of Preaching, and Administrative Dean of MSOP. He is a faithful and able gospel preacher and a dedicated Christian. He is qualified to do the great work in which he is engaged.

The church for which I preach, the Stanton church of Christ, recently contributed \$1000 to the Far East/Word Evangelism work. I urge brethren everywhere to assist this work with your prayers and money.



Tim Hayes, while on a mission trip to Singapore and Malaysia, taught a course in Four Seas Bible College.

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me I heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20).

VIGIL is published under the oversight of the elders of the Adamsville Church of Christ, **Ronnie Hayes**, Editor, and **Chance Hicks**, Associate Editor. You may go to our website www.acoc.org to read and download archived issues of *Vigil*.

BEYOND THESE WALLS WITH EVANGELISM

Dale Hubbert

The church of Jesus Christ began in a powerful way without a single piece of real estate.

Church buildings are not always the best or most effective place for all forms of evangelism. A careful examination of methods then and now would reveal the need to go “beyond the walls” of our church buildings with the gospel. If we would seek to add to our numbers and even dare to dream of multiplication among Christians then we must not limit the teaching of the good news to the inside of church owned facilities.

In order to be effective in the communication of the gospel it will be needful to maintain the proper attitude. Evangelism must become the goal, vision, desire, and responsibility of every member; not just preachers and missionaries who serve on “foreign soil”.

What would happen if every member left the church building each Sunday with a plan in mind to share the gospel that week? Most of those who need the gospel will not be in church buildings on Sundays and Wednesday nights. Many will be people in our families, those we see at work, and those we see at the store or ball park. Jesus was one who went to the people far more often than waiting for the people to assemble in a building.

John Denney included in a personal evangelism workbook the following statement, “Evangelism operates best when each individual believer sees the opportunities for sharing Christ in his everyday affairs, and develops a lifestyle that responds in Christian love to the needs of those about him.” His instruction manual follows with, “Evangelism thus becomes not

something that you do but something you live.”

How can we become effective at evangelism? We do it the same way we become effective at anything else. There must be a passion (Luke 19:10). There must be a willingness to learn all we can about what we are seeking to do (Titus 3:14). The apostles followed Jesus for three years learning how to evangelize (Matt 4:19). We must be willing to invest our time and energy (Matt 28:19). There must be a true love for lost souls (1 Corinthians 9:22).

A very effective form of evangelism begins within different walls – the home. Fathers and mothers are the most effective teachers of young and impressive minds (Ephesians 6:2). It should come as no shock that many of those that obey the truth come from homes where God is taught and revered (2 Timothy 1:5). It should neither be unusual to find what sadly happens to many children who get no teaching at home and are only exposed to spiritual teachings at the church building. They are more likely to never become a Christian or become unfaithful later in life.

One of the most effective ways to be evangelistic is to be a good example. Paul encouraged others to follow him as he was following Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). Timothy was urged to be a good example of the believers (1 Timothy 4:12). Example alone will not save but a good example is often a great door opener. A bad example can sometimes keep a door closed to what might have been an otherwise good opportunity to study.

House to house and door to door was a focus of the early Christians’ outreach (Acts 5:42). “Cottage meetings” is a term that has become outdated or unknown for many in the church. Not that many years ago the church of our Lord was experiencing significant growth because faithful brethren carried the gospel to the “cottage” of their friends and neighbors. That form of evangelism will still work today.

The story of Jesus can be shared without leaving one’s house. Computers today offer many ways to communicate the gospel all over the world at little or no cost. Many will be in heaven because of Bible Correspondence Courses. Those who may have physical limitations have increased heaven’s roll by effectively using these studies. Only heaven knows the numbers of souls that have been taught by Jule Miller filmstrips, VCR’s, and DVD’s. The Fishers of Men program is simple and powerful in revealing life changing truth. Others have combined various resources and their own personalized plans for best reaching the fields white unto harvest (John 4:35). The method is not nearly as important as finding what works best for you and doing it!

We do the Lord and the church a great disservice if we limit evangelism to the sermons and bible classes presented inside our meeting houses. May God help every member of the kingdom to personally and diligently seek to proclaim repentance and remission of sins (Luke 24:47) beyond the walls of the church building.

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BEYOND THESE WALLS WITH EDIFICATION

Tim Hayes

Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do (I Thessalonians 5:11).

The word “edify” is used in two different applications in the Bible. One manner in which it is used is in the physical building of a building. The second way in which the word is used is to promote growth in Christian wisdom, affection, grace, virtue, holiness, blessedness; to give one strength and courage. It is the second usage that we will examine in this study.

One of the greatest acts that a child of God can perform is that of edification of the saints. Satan seeks to destroy the child of God: *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8).* The world works to wear down the child of God: *And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked (2 Peter 2:7).* Paul reminded the children of God to continue to build up one another. God commands His children to edify one another. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers (Ephesians 4:29).* Edification for the Christian is not a suggestion but it is indeed a command of God. Edification is an action that will greatly benefit those who are edifying and those who are being edified. *“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. (I John 5:3).* The commands of God given to mankind greatly benefit mankind and the command to edify is no exception.

The children of God edify one another through worship to God. God is to be the object of worship but the saints are also to consider each other as they come together to worship.

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching (Hebrews 10:22-25).

Each child of God should ask the following questions of himself: do I encourage or discourage others to worship God; am I an asset or a detriment to others as they worship God? Let us never fall into the category of Hophni and Phinehas who caused men to abhor the offering of the Lord (I Samuel 2:17).

Children of God edify one another through song. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (Colossians 3:16).* In worship service Christians sing to the Lord but in doing so we also have the opportunity to build up each other. Songs remind the child of God of many blessings enjoyed in Christ (Ephesians 1:3): hope, grace, peace, joy, forgiveness, salvation and Heaven. These are only a few of the blessings with which the saints are blessed but these and others serve to build up the child of God.

The word of God edifies the children of God. *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the*

word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified (Acts 20:32). Paul left the elders of Ephesus with the word of God which he said would build them up. God has never left man without hope and this hope is presented in every word, of every verse, of every chapter, of every book of the Bible. The world says there is no God; the Bible says there is a God that loves us (John 3:16). The world says that we are alone; the Bible says that God will never leave nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). The world says there is nothing better than this world; the Bible says the best is yet to come (2 Peter 3:13). The world says death is the end; the Bible says death is a doorway to eternal life (2 Timothy 4:8).

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Colossians 3 :17). There are many great examples in the Bible of those who edified others. One who normally comes to mind is our brother in Christ, Barnabas. Barnabas was the brother who befriended Saul when many others shunned him (Acts 9:26). Barnabas brought Saul to the apostles and defended him and encouraged him (Acts 9:27). Barnabas brought Saul from Tarsus to Antioch from whence they began the first missionary journey (Acts 13:2). Barnabas worked for the cause of Christ as he also encouraged and built the apostle Paul.

Let us as children of God strive to edify on another.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Beyond These Walls -Prayer – Tom Larkin ----- continued from page 17

Prayer enabled them to overcome the wrong done to them.

We should take prayer beyond these walls because God intended for prayer to be a vital part of our personal lives. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:6). Prayer in private was a regular practice of our Lord. “And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mark 1:35). “And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone”

(Matthew 14:23). On the night of his betrayal, Jesus took his disciples “unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder” (Matthew 26:36).

Taking prayer beyond the walls of our assemblies in this way allows us an opportunity to commune with God. Again, this was the practice of our Lord. “And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12). “And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone” (Matthew 14:23). Such times of prayer can help us avoid and overcome temptation and realize our duty to God. Jesus warned Peter

that Satan desired to “sift him as wheat” (Luke 22:31) and encouraged him along with the other apostles to “pray that ye enter not into temptation” (Luke 22:40). But instead of praying, Peter slept. What bitter tears he could have avoided by giving heed to the Lord’s warning to pray instead of sleep (Luke 22:62). What sin can we avoid in our lives by taking prayer beyond these walls?

Even though prayer within the assembly is important and helpful, it is when we take prayer beyond the walls of our assemblies that we receive the fullest that it has to offer. Let us be attentive to our opportunities to take prayer beyond these walls.

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