



CROSS CURRENTS INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

VOL. 38 NO. 2

February, 2008

Our dear Prayer Supporter,

Dorothy and I have just returned from a Missionary Conference where I was invited to teach the Bible with a missionary emphasis. Y.P. Yohannan, Founder of “Gospel for Asia,” was a fellow-speaker. His passion for the dying souls of men, and his challenge for us all to face 2008 with intensified intercession; the sacrifice of time and money; and active witness—with the purpose of bringing people to a saving knowledge of Christ—penetrated both of our hearts. Please pray with us that the ministry of CCIM in 2008 will proceed fervently and fruitfully to the praise of His Glory.

Y.P. also reported on the exponential growth of churches being planted in India and how such growth is accompanied by severe testing and trials. He then quoted the words of the Lord Jesus who said to His disciples that He would send them forth as: “Sheep in the midst of wolves.”

This reference reminded Dorothy and me of another Missionary Conference held ten years ago. At that time we ministered in New York City with significant blessing. Our following monthly Prayer Letter was on the theme of “Sheep in the midst of Wolves!” And today, this theme is even more applicable!

The goal of the Church was never meant to be a gathering of believers with the purpose of finding like-minded friends. The example of the Church, as recorded in the book of Acts, demonstrates the fellowship of believers as they were built up in their faith and then mobilized for spiritual warfare in a Christ-rejecting world. When persecution struck Jerusalem, the devil’s breath fanned the flames of the Gospel: *Therefore, they that were scattered abroad [laymen] went everywhere preaching the Word* Acts 8:4.

Sheep in the Midst of Wolves!

*Behold, I send you forth as sheep
in the midst of wolves.*

MATTHEW 10:16

With penetrating insight, R. Arthur Matthews writes in his book *Born for Battle*, “The thing we need to be afraid of today is that the spirit that produces world trends should invade Christ’s mighty army and argue us off the offensive into a compromised co-existence with the world’s attitudes—so that we end up just like the world, taking lessons in French and practicing detent.”

After having served the Lord Jesus throughout his life-time

of severe testing and suffering as a missionary to China; in January of 1978 Matthews was told he had the rare and fatal disease known by laymen as Lou Gehrig’s disease. Though he went to be with his Lord in July of the same year, when he heard of the serious diagnosis he wrote: “I am sure the devil counted on this diagnosis as something he could use to persuade me that my active service in God’s army was over and that I should hunt up a clover paddock and enjoy what was left of life . . . But in 1978, instead of scouting around for a luscious clover patch in which to get fat and lazy, I have concentrated my thinking [and intercession] on the mighty victory at Calvary and the implications of this for the Christian—for me.”

Today, it appears that many Christians scurry for their own luscious clover patch to avoid any meaningful or sacrificial involvement in the end-time battle for the souls of men.

It is difficult to imagine anything more foreboding than a defenseless sheep being found in the middle of a pack of wolves. But, when the Lord Jesus sent forth His disciples to preach, that was exactly the somber warning He gave. How slow we are to learn, and how readily we forget that you and I are commissioned by the Lord Jesus to be sheep among wolves.

However, in Matthew chapter ten, the symbolism of a sheep among wolves was not left to the hazy imagination of a metaphor. The Lord Jesus quickly explained to the disciples that the consequences of His serious mandate would involve a willingness:



TO BE APPREHENDED: *Men . . . will deliver you up to councils* v.17A



TO BE MUTILATED: *They will scourge [flog] you . . .* v.17B



TO BE BETRAYED: *Brother shall deliver up brother to death . . .* v.21



TO BE MALIGNED: *If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?* v.25



TO BE WARRIORS: *I am not come to send peace, but a sword.* v.34



TO BE THE CATALYST OF POLARIZATION: *I am come to set a man at variance against his father [and etc.] . . .* v.35

This surely encourages us all to remember how God describes an ultimate victor in spiritual warfare. In Revelation 12:11, we read: *And they overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb, [the cleansing of the Lamb] and by the word of their testimony; [the confession of the lip] and they loved not their lives unto the death [the consecration of the life].*

A martyr is not only made at the time of a life or death crisis, but the martyr's mind-set is determined at the foot of the Cross. When at the Cross I reckon my self-life to be crucified with Christ; the lust of approbation (man's approval) dies, and biblical convictions will prevail even though they conflict with our current humanistic culture and value systems.

It is always a joy to meet believers in whom the Christ-life has replaced the self-life: Their witness for Jesus is visible, verbal and vibrant! *But you shall receive power (ability, efficiency and might) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be MY witnesses* ACTS 1:8. AMP.

As John Stott said in England, "The Gospel is reasonable, and the Gospel is relevant, but the Gospel is never respectable. And the reason why Christians are so powerless is because they are so respectable." During His lifetime, the Lord Jesus either attracted or antagonized people but He never neutralized them!

In Ephesians 6:14 we are told that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. Therefore, let us not blunt the sword by compromising the Word in an effort to be contemporary! As on the Day of Pentecost, so today, before there can be a radical conversion, there must be the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin.

Loyalty in the Lions Den

The prophetic scriptures are very fascinating as we eagerly anticipate the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. But when we read the book of Daniel, let us beware of exclusively focusing upon the power sequence of successive Gentile empires to the neglect of the significance of the "lions den" and the "fiery furnace"!

In these days, news comes to our desk with heart-rending regularity of increasing numbers around the world of faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who have been "Apprehended," "Mutilated," "Betrayed," "Maligned," and "Martyred." As present trends continue, let us not presume that we in the West will be immune from such severe testing as we proclaim Jesus to be the only Savior of people. Of course, as in the days of Communist persecution, there are those who choose to retreat to their own personal clover patch.

Notice it was "**in the Name of Jesus**" that the early disciples were forbidden to speak. Have you noticed that the News Media are willing to mention: "God"; "Prayer"; "Faith"; "Church"; "Pastors"; "Peace"; "Charity"; and "Love"? But seldom, if ever, do they refer to "JESUS" as the only Savior of the world. As believers, let us not try to avoid trouble by following the example of the modern Media!

It is only in the Name of Jesus that we can apply Bible truth to our peers. When confronting the Gay community, or the pornographic plague, or the theory of atheistic evolution, or the New Age agenda or the many other anti-truth practices and philosophies in our world today, we are expected to do so, not

from a coward's castle in a church of like-minded believers, but in the arena of the public marketplace. There the devil's wrath will soon be aroused and we will feel his breath from every quarter. So the question is posed—"Are we really prepared to buck the trends with the '*sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God,*' and take the consequences?" Could it be that many respectable Christians hope that the clover patch will save them from such discomfort!

Not so with our Lord Jesus Christ! Without hesitation, He endured every suffering about which He had warned His disciples when He sent them out as sheep among wolves. It was this suffering that paved His path to the Cross and His eternal Throne!

Behold a Throne was Set Up in Heaven

And I beheld and, lo in the midst of the throne—stood a Lamb as it had been slain . . . REVELATION 5:6. Here we see the Lamb of God is dignified by His own indignity—a *lamb as it had been slain*—is now in the middle of the Throne! Poor wolves! Unknowingly, the very "wolves" who had callously despised and cruelly crucified the God-Man, Christ Jesus, in so doing, had cleared the way for Him to sit upon the Throne of the universe! And the consequence for the wolves was solemn indeed.

Yes, the day is coming soon when: *The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, [shall hide] themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains: and say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?* REVELATION 6:15-17.

Through the Apostle Paul, the Spirit of God exhorts us all with these words:

*Thou therefore endure hardness,
As a good soldier of Jesus Christ . . .
If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him:
If we deny Him, He also will deny us.*

2 TIMOTHY 2:3,12

It is tragically possible to deny the Lord Jesus by silence as well as by speech. But be encouraged, in an humanistic age, if we identify with the despised and rejected Jesus of Nazareth and that leads to our social or professional rejection then, wonder of wonders, by God's grace one day we shall reign with Him!

The ultimate conquest makes the immediate conflict so gloriously worthwhile. Let us remember the words of Wendell Wilkie after failing in the elections against Franklin D. Roosevelt: "I would rather lose a battle in a cause that will inevitably succeed than I would win a battle in a cause that will inevitably fail."

With love and many thanks for your fellowship in the Gospel,
In His victory,

