

# REFLECTOR

VOL. 52, No. 6

*"Holding Forth the Word of Life"*

June 2006

**THE BEST COMMENTARY  
ON THE BIBLE IS THE BIBLE!**

**A wonderful week in Kenya  
teaching pastors in the  
East Africa Bible Institute**



**130 Prayer Seminar Workbooks Used with Pastors**

## **Help in witnessing**

Jesus said to pray for laborers to bring in the harvest, which is already white. See the article on page four on why some Christians never witness. In July, we will provide instruction on how to develop your personal testimony to use in witnessing; in August, how to use a passage of Scripture to bring someone to Jesus. You can have help in speaking in His name!

## **And now Peru**

Thank you for giving to the Lord to enable us to provide prayer seminars in Peru May 31-June 15. Seminars are scheduled for Lima, Piura, Tingo Maria, Iquitos, and churches along the Amazon River (traveling via boat). Evangelistic services will be conducted in the evenings. Pray for traveling safety, for the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and for much fruit.

**EZRA: A MODEL FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**

**"For Ezra prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it; and to teach [it] in Israel" (Ezra 7:10).**

## Perspectives

Ezra used the king's favor not to advance his own course, but the work of God. With the king's permission, Ezra led a second return to the Holy Land. This group, much smaller than the first group, included Levites recruited to aid in re-establishing worship. Preparations for the journey were spiritual (**Ezra 8:21-23**) and physical (**vv 24:30**). There are many needed, practical lessons that can be learned by studying Ezra carefully and prayerfully.

### Shocked

On his arrival in Jerusalem, Ezra was shocked and dismayed to learn that God's people who had returned earlier had not faithfully obeyed the Word and had intermarried with the heathen, action which threatened God's blessing (**9:1-4**). Ezra knew that this was the very sin that had led to Israel's being carried away into Babylonian captivity. Here they go again! What a mess! God's Word was clear (**Deuteronomy 7:5**: "nor shall you make marriages with them"). His personal remorse and repentance called the nation to acknowledge its sin (**vv 5-15**). He rent his clothes, pulled out hair from his head and beard, and sat down appalled (**v 3**).

### Real praying

Then Ezra fell on his knees and stretched out his hands toward heaven (**9:5**). "O, my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God; for our [not "their"] iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up into heaven" (**v 6**). Israel's sin was without excuse ("what shall we say after this?" **v 10**). God's grace and mercy were the only hope.

### Repentance and confession

Ezra's prayer for the nation, in which he confessed national sin, deserves meditation and emulation among the people of God today. Their unlawful marriage relationships had to be annulled lest the influence of pagan gods draw the people away from the one true God. There was a sense of urgency to deal with the

known sin. Revival began to sweep the nation and sin was confessed. Biblical confession not only includes an acknowledgement of the wrong committed, but forsaking the wrong conduct.

### Reformation

Repentance led to reformation. Ezra's godly concern made a difference. Often there are no easy, comfortable solutions. The consequences of disobeying God will surpass even the sorrow of disbanding families. The people then separated themselves from the ungodly unions and purposed to live for God (**Ezra 10**). A glooming heavy downpour of December rain provided an appropriate setting for the painful, but necessary ordeal. Ezra prayed, confessed, wept, bowed down before the house of God and the people assembled (large congregation of men, women, and children) weeping bitterly also (**v 1**). Minds were changed (repentance) and specific confession followed (**vv 2-3**). There was a determination to straighten out the problem.

Though the cure was painful beyond words, God found pleasure in the nation's prompt and wholehearted confession.

### Lessons for today

One of our problems is that we are not shocked at the open sin around us. There is no effort to bring ourselves into conformity with God's Word. We, too, need to follow the Word of God, even when discipline is the order of the day. We need leaders like Ezra who will lead us to see the error of our ways. God's people will be stirred by the godly concern of their leaders and will respond accordingly. When Ezra read and taught the Scriptures to the people, there was a great, sweeping revival.

We are instructed not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers (**2 Corinthians 6:14**). It is time for us to become serious in following the Lord. Christians (whose goal is to serve Christ) cannot walk in harmony with a non-Christian (whose goal is to serve self).

Surgery is never pleasant and radical surgery often scars. But when the choice is surgery or death, most folks choose surgery. To avoid need for radical surgery, Christians would do well

to have regular "checkups" (Galatians 5:19-23).

### **Preaching about sin**

During our time in Kenya, an individual was deeply moved by the teaching on getting clean before God by dealing with personal sins that are offensive to God and keep Him from hearing our prayers. David declared: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). "Regard" means that a person knows there is sin, but does not deal with it directly. The Kenyan brother asked, "Why is it that we hear so little preaching about sin in our day when sin among believers is rampant?" Whether your preacher preaches about sin or not, you need to consider your own life. David's prayer could very well be the model that we follow in seeking cleansing from our sins. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).

In order for a person to receive God's favor, he must repent (change his mind about the sin in which he is involved), confess, and forsake the known sin.

Yours in Calvary love,

*J. Gordon Henry*

Get in the habit of dealing with God about everything. Unless the first waking moment of the day you learn to fling the door wide back and let God in, you will work on the wrong level all day; but swing the door wide open and pray to your Father in secret, and every public thing will be stamped with the presence of God.  
-- Oswald Chambers

To pray is nothing more involved than to open the door, giving Jesus access to our needs and permitting Him to exercise His own power in dealing with them. -- O Hallesby

*That God in all things may be glorified  
through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 4:11)*

### **Sermons We See**

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day,  
I'd rather one should walk with me than merely  
show the way.

The eye's a better pupil and more willing than  
the ear;

Fine counsel is confusing, but example's  
always clear;

And the best of all the preachers are the men  
who live their creeds,

For to see the good in action is what everybody  
needs.

I can soon learn how to do it if you'll let me  
see it done.

I can watch your hands in action, but your  
tongue too fast may run.

And the lectures you deliver may be very wise  
and true;

But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what  
you do.

For I may misunderstand you and the high  
advice you give,

But there's no misunderstanding how you act  
and how you live.

Edgar A. Guest

### **Introducing MAGGIE GRACE PRIBBLE, our first great-granddaughter**



The proud parents are Brandon and Jeanne Pribble. Maggie was born April 29 while her great-granddad was eagerly awaiting word in Kenya. Maggie is four hours old in the picture.

"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is His reward" Psalm 127:3



## Why some never witness

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

For the Christian and for the Church, the mandate to witness given by the Lord Jesus Christ just prior to His ascension is one of the most important ones that we have. We are to be witnesses. **Success in witnessing is sharing the Gospel and leaving the results up to God.**

**Leading people to the light.** A missionary physician in one of China's hospitals cured a man of cataracts. A few weeks later forty-eight blind men came to him from one of China's wilds, each holding a rope held by the hand of the man who had been cured. He had led them in this way, walking in a chain 250 miles to the hospital.

Are we among those who can say, "Once I was blind, but now I can see" (John 9:25)? It would be well for us to be rightly affected by this priceless experience. The multitudes may appear indifferent to their lost condition, but let not their apathy discourage us, for many are fumbling blindly after light. It is our happy mission to tenderly and tirelessly seek them. We must be willing to lead others to the light.

They will not come, they must be brought. They will not seek, they must be sought. They will not study, they must be taught.

What are the reasons some Christians never witness? Many cannot witness for Christ because they do not know Him. One of my interests over the years has been evangelism and I have studied myriad aspects of this area. I have discovered several reasons for the silence of those who claim to be Christians and who are members of our churches.

**Preoccupation.** Some Christians are so busy that they do not have time to witness. They devote their best time and energies to civic clubs, community functions, school activities, and leisure pursuits (sports, watching television). They have no time left for

witnessing. Further, strangely enough, some church members have substituted activity in the church organizations for witnessing. They fail to realize that even preaching, teaching, singing, praying, studying, typing, reading, and visiting cannot take the place of Christian witnessing.

**Lack of knowledge.** Many Christians excuse themselves from witnessing simply saying, "I don't know how to witness." Many Christians are discouraged because they feel they must memorize dozens of Scripture passages and master techniques developed by someone else before they can witness. This is a misunderstanding that we must correct. Basically, a Christian witness is one who tells what he knows firsthand about Jesus Christ. The Christian witness shares the good news about Christ from a personal point of view. Of course, a knowledge of the Scriptures will help in witnessing. However, a knowledge of the Savior, through personal encounter, is basic to witnessing. We will share practical suggestions related to witnessing in the next two issues.

**Too embarrassed.** Some Christians never witness because they are too timid or embarrassed. They are too self-conscious to talk to someone else about Christ. The Christian must remember, however, that he cannot witness for Christ and be accepted by everyone. There must be a difference between the Christian and the lost person before the witness is effective. Many Christians are too embarrassed to witness because their actions have spoken more loudly than their words.

**Poor theology.** Some never witness because they do not really know the truth about being lost and being saved. Somehow we keep telling ourselves that the lost are not really lost. A sound theology will help us to understand what it means to be without Christ. Every Christian should witness and there is no more demanding priority and no greater promise to witness. The Holy Spirit will help you. If your life is already a witness for Christ, your words will be! They will spend eternity in separation from God unless you and I tell them what we know about Jesus Christ.

## How to pray

**Open the Bible and read yourself full.** Let every word become a part of your life. It is the nourishment you need for building a godly life; it provides you with a spiritual vocabulary for talking to God; and it is the true point of all prayer.

**Sit quietly in the presence of God.** Let your heart seek its place in His fellowship. Remember, "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

If we expect God to hear us, then we must **be willing to hear Him.** One of the great tragedies of the Christian life is that God is near but we do not hear Him. Job put it: "He goeth by me, and I see Him not; He passeth on also, but I perceive Him not" (Job 9:11).

In prayer **the last thing of all is speaking.** When we have read God's Word, when we have waited in His presence, and when we have heard the whispering of His spirit, then, and only then, are we ready for true communion with God. "Call upon Me, and I will answer thee" (Jeremiah 33:3).

## Criticism

If what they are saying about you is true, mend your ways. If it isn't true, forget it, and go about the business of serving the Lord.

H. A. Ironside

## A Word

A word is dead  
When it is said,  
Some say.  
I say it just  
Begins to live  
That day.  
Emily Dickinson



## **Overheard in an Orchard**

Said the Robin to the Sparrow:  
*"I should really like to know  
Why these anxious human beings  
Rush around and worry so?"*

Said the Sparrow to the Robin:  
*"Friend, I think that it must be  
That they have no Heavenly Father  
Such as cares for you and me."*

"Look at the birds of the air, for they never sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" **Matthew 6:26**

## Three Gates

When you are tempted to reveal  
A tale to you someone has told  
About another, make it pass,  
Before you speak, three gates of gold.

These narrow gates: First, *IS IT TRUE?*  
Then, *IS IT NEEDFUL?* In your mind  
Give truthful answer. And the next  
Is last and narrowest, *IS IT KIND?*

And if to reach your lips at last  
It passes through these gateways three,  
Then you may take the tale, nor fear  
What the result of speech may be.

From Arabian

**AS YOU LIVE FOR CHRIST DAILY,  
LET YOUR WALK TALK AND  
YOUR TALK WALK.  
Pastor Royal Blue, Redding CA**

## Be Careful What You Say

In speaking of another's faults,  
Pray don't forget your own.  
Remember those with houses of glass  
Should never throw a stone;  
If we have nothing else to do  
But talk of those who sin,  
Tis better we commence at home,  
And from that spot begin.

We have no right to judge a man,  
Until he's fairly tried;  
Should we not like his company,  
We know the world is wide.  
Some may have faults and who has not?  
The old as well as the young,  
Perhaps we may, for aught we know,  
Have fifty to their one.

I'll tell you of a better plan,  
And find it works far well,  
To try my own defects to cure,  
Before of others tell;  
And though I sometimes hope to be  
No worse than those I know  
My own shortcomings bid me  
Let the faults of others go.

Then let us all, when we commence  
To slander friends or foe  
Think of the harm one word may do  
To those we little know.  
Remember, curses, like our chickens,  
Sometimes "roost at home."  
Don't speak of others' faults  
Until we have none of our own.

Our faith in prayer can be  
no passing attitude that changes  
with the wind or with our own feelings and  
circumstances; it must be a fact that God  
hears and answers, that His ear is ever open  
to the cry of His children, and that the power  
to do what is asked of Him is commensurate  
with His willingness.

**E. M. Bounds**



## NOTES from my BIBLE

*Note 1026.* You can do better than you think; you can do better if you think; you can do better, don't you think?

*Note 1027.* It is good to be wise; it is wise to be good.

*Note 1028.* A wise man thinks what he says; a foolish man says what he thinks.

*Note 1029.* He is a wise man who knows what not to say.

*Note 1030.* God is for us; that is good; God is with us, that is better; God is in us, that is best.

## DOORKEEPER REPORT

April 16--May 20, 2006

	# Gifts	Amount
Regular	44	\$3,010
Peru	35	2,814
Total	79	\$5,824



PLANNING FOR SEMINARS IN  
WESTERN KENYA/THE CONGO  
November-December 2006



## International

Since 1985, JGHM has had the privilege to conduct prayer seminars in other nations. We have worked, basically, with the indigenous church. There is little, if any, practical teaching available on the Christian life, including the area of prayer. Many who attend the seminars do not even have Bibles. We provide a prayer seminar workbook, usually in the language of the people. It is thrilling to see the look on the faces of people as they receive their copies.

### Kenya

Seminars were conducted in Kenya, an East African nation with 34 million people, April 27—May 15. I worked hand in hand with the Baptist Mission of Kenya and the leaders of the Baptist conventions of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, touching one of the largest number of pastors that we have ever reached in any nation.



Working with Dr. Jim Britt (GA) and his associates, one week was given to the East Africa Bible Institute (EABI) teaching a course on the purpose and power of prayer. Over 100 prayer seminar workbooks were utilized with the pastors attending from Kenya, The Congo, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda. Eight days were spent with four churches in the Nairobi area: First Baptist Church, Ruiru; Wendani Baptist Church; Faith Baptist Church, Dandora; and, First Baptist Church, Kasarani.

In addition to the prayer seminar, I shared the evangelism clinic in each of the churches. While the venue was demanding, it was thrilling to see the reception given to the Word of God in each place. Never have I had any

stronger impression that the message was getting through (almost sentence by sentence) and many planned to put into their own lives things they were learning, with the commitment to share with others (family members and folks in their churches).

### Materials make the Bible come alive

One pastor shared: "Kenya needs a lot of prayer work if our nation is to be healed. Our country needs healing. What you have done is to teach us how we can mobilize prayer warriors and train them in their vital work. Your materials make the Bible come alive."

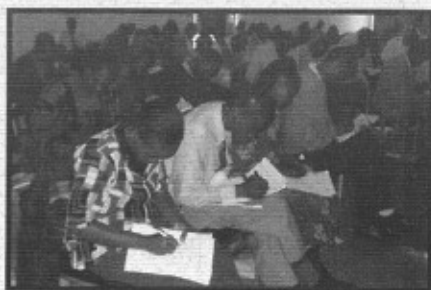


EABI Faculty—Dr. Henry, Dr. Britt, Dr. Wider and Mr. Pear

Pastors, including those who attended the EABI course, shared in writing what God had taught them during the prayer seminars and the steps that they planned to take to implement truths and approaches that they had learned.

### Thanks for your partnership

We praise God for the international phase of our work. Only through the prayer and financial support provided by our partners could we continue this work. Someone has said that anyone who wants a special blessing should do something for someone who cannot return the favor. Only in eternity will we be able to see fully the results of the seminars in other countries.



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Martin Sakari interpreting the prayer seminar  
in Swahili for pastors at EABI

## A full venue in Kenya

April 27-May 16, 2006

### Preaching/Teaching/Consulting

▪ Sermons	3
▪ Course on Prayer	1
▪ Prayer Seminars	4
▪ Evangelism Clinics	3
▪ College Chapel	1
▪ College consulting	2
Miles Traveled	16,664
Air	15,836
Ground	610

### Ezra, the teacher

One of my favorite persons in the Bible is Ezra, "a skilled scribe in the law of Moses, who had the hand of God upon him" (**Ezra 7:6**). He was a teacher. His godly lineage is traced back to Aaron, the first priest (**vv 1-5**). Life in exile, of course, excluded temple service for this would-be priest, and so he devoted himself to the study and teaching of God's Word (**v 6**). Tradition claims that Ezra founded synagogue worship in the days of captivity. Without the temple, the scattered Jews needed a place of worship. Each community then established a place for worship and instruction. After the Jews returned to their homeland, the synagogue continued at home and in other lands where the Jews were scattered.

Ezra led a second return to the Holy Land fifty-seven years after the temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem. His burden was to lead the nation of Israel in returning to a proper form of temple worship. His ministry was predicated on personal study and obedience to God's word as an example for the nation to follow. Any teacher would do well to emulate Ezra (**v 10**). HEART PREPARATION surely includes a willingness to obey the Word once one understands it. It would be hard to make God's truth speak to others until it has first spoken to you. My personal commitment is to pattern my teaching ministry after Ezra.