



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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SALVATION BY GRACE PERPETUATED THROUGH PRESERVATION AND PERSEVERANCE

Part II

Perseverance

By Wayne Camp

“The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger” (Jer. 17:9).

In our previous lesson we considered the preservation of the saved. In this one we will consider the other side of that doctrine which is called perseverance. The grand mark that distinguishes true believers from false professors is their persevering attachment to Christ. There are hearers who may be classed as **“stony ground hearers”** who eagerly receive the word but have no root in them and at the first sign of opposition they wither away. They have not believed to the saving of the soul and will draw back into perdition (Heb. 10:39).

A few years ago I wrote a manuscript on the subject of perseverance. A friend borrowed it to preach in a Bible conference in Missouri. To his and my surprise there were a number of brethren who objected to the subject. They felt that it might cause folk to question their salvation. Are we not commanded to **“give diligence”** to make our **“calling and election sure”** (II Pet. 1:10)? Did not Paul exhort: **“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith”** (II Cor. 13:5)?

If this study of perseverance prompts you to make a solemn, self-examination of your experience and life to see if yours was truly a case of graciously wrought salvation then one of its purposes will have been accomplished. Do

you have a persevering attachment to Jesus Christ? Is your assurance based on an experience alone, or is there a fruitful life that assures you that you are truly a new creature in Jesus Christ. Is your faith and on-going, persevering faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you now believing on him?

THE DEFINITION AND NATURE OF PERSEVERANCE

To help clarify this gracious aspect of salvation it is necessary to define what is meant by the perseverance of the saints. We will define it negatively and positively.

PERSEVERANCE DEFINED NEGATIVELY

When we declare from the word of God that true believers persevere we are not saying that saints are not tempted. Our Lord, was himself tempted yet without sin (Matt. 4:1; Lu. 4:2). **“We have not a high print which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”** (Heb. 4:15).

We all face temptations daily. We may, as will be discussed further in a moment, give in to that temptation as many saints have and do. But God provides a way of escape (I Cor. 10:13) and the truly regenerate will eventually take it.

It should also be pointed out clearly and with

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EDITOR'S ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBERS AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES

The editor, Eld. Wayne Camp, may be reached at the address given above, or at his home address. His home address is: 2065 Tompkins Lane, Millington, TN 38053-5107.

Church Phone at Home: (901) 876-5015

Church Phone: (901) 357-0215.

E-mail address: RWcamp@cris.com

Visit our Home Page on the Internet

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Biblical evidence that perseverance does not mean that children of God do not sin. Those who claim to live without sin deceive no one but themselves. ***"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us"*** (1 Jn. 1:8). While the justified stand before God as though they had never sinned, God's word still declares that ***"there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not"*** (Eccl. 7:20).

David, a dearly beloved saint of God, fell into

awful sin. He lusted after another man's wife and took her and committed adultery with her. He then initiated a cover-up conspiracy that ultimately ended in the murder of Bathsheba's husband. He continued in impenitence and cover-up for months before finally repenting and confessing his sin to God. He had no peace of mind and heart while in a state of impenitence but he was still God's child and eventually he repented, giving evidence that the child of God cannot go on sinning without severe chastening at the hand of God.

Peter denied Christ three times and cursed but he did not go on the rest of his life in such a practice of sin. God brought him to repentance. A true child of God who does not repent endangers his physical life. God has delivered his children ***"unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"*** (1 Cor. 5:5).

PERSEVERANCE DEFINED POSITIVELY

From a positive standpoint there are several important things that perseverance means.

It means that a truly regenerate believer cannot persevere in the habitual practice of sin. The person to whom sin is a way of life is simply proving that he has not been born of God. ***"He that committeth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God neither he that loveth not his brother"*** (1 Jn. 3:8-10).

Much error and confusion have come out of a misinterpretation of these verses. They do not teach that a born again person cannot and does not commit acts of sin. Dr. A. T. Robertson wrote:

One may argue plausibly that we have linear action (the habit of sin) presented in I John 3:6 **(See Perseverance continued P. 6, Lft. Col.)**

EDITORIAL

THE KIND OF OLD LANDMARKER I AM

(Eighth in a Series)

Our witness list continues to increase with many yet to be called. I keep reminding all who read these pages of the almost unanimous testimony of Landmark Baptist past and present to the strictly local nature of the church. Even those who held that eventually there would be one body composed of all the saved, still held that in its present state, the church is a local, visible assembly—an assembly that really assembles in a given locality. Once more, I want to review the testimony of the witnesses called thus far:

WITNESS 1: James Robinson Graves

"The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place."

WITNESS 2: Elton Wilson

"How local is the local church? IT IS LOCAL ENOUGH TO ASSEMBLE. How local is the local church? IT IS LOCAL ENOUGH TO OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER."

WITNESS 3: H. Boyce Taylor

"Our first reason for contending that the word *ekklesia* never means any thing but an organized and an assembling church is that the Lord Jesus, who is the author of the Book of Revelation, uses the word *ekklesia* 20 times in Revelation and every time He uses it, He refers to a local organized and assembling church."

WITNESS 4: Eld. Milburn Cockrell

"In order to have a church, baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time." "Twenty times the word church is used in the singular number, and it points to a church which meets in a certain place."

WITNESS 5: ELDER CURTIS PUGH

"New Testament usage, secular usage and the Septuagint usage of the word "ecclesia" indicate it was only and always used of an organized, congregating body of people in a given locality."

WITNESS 6: ELDER BUEL H. KAZEE

Just *one church in one locality* sent some messengers to *another church in another locality* for the purpose of counsel on a problem in which they had a mutual interest. They all went back to their respective churches.

WITNESS 7: ELDER BRUCE ALLEN

". . . an *ekklesia* is literally an assembly of people called out to a *particular place* to perform some particular business, and that in its Christian application it means an assembly of believers *called out to worship in one place together.*"

And now I call,

WITNESS 8: Elder Joe Wilson

These three things: 1. Locality. 2. Visibility. 3. Organized for a purpose inhere in the meaning of the word. A true "ecclesia" cannot exist that does not have these three ingredients.

My dictionary says that the word "*locality*" speaks of "a particular spot, situation, or location." (c)2000 Zane Publishing, Inc. and Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. All rights reserved." If, indeed, "*locality*" inheres in the word "*ecclesia*," then there can be no true New Testament type of ecclesia that meets in two or more locations. Please note the definition of "*locality*" refers to a single and "particular spot." It means a single location, not two or more locations as some apparently believe and would have us believe.

Bro. Wilson says that "*locality* . . . inheres in the meaning" of the word ecclesia. That being true, then a true New Testament ecclesia can only assemble in one locality at a time and cannot regularly assemble in two or more localities.

In an article called *Brief Studies on the Church*, Bro. Joe Wilson wrote, The body in this verse [I Cor. 12:13, RWC] is any, each,

and every true Baptist church. It is not the universal invisible church, for there is no such thing in the Bible, and anyway, a body cannot be universal and invisible, but must be local and visible. (*The Baptist Examiner*, June 18, 1983, P. 7).

Bro. Wilson says that the body in I Cor. 12:13 is any, each, and every true Baptist Church. Then he adds that a body cannot be universal and invisible, but **"but must be local and visible."**

This affirms what I have been saying from another standpoint. A church cannot be truly local and visible while it assembles in more than one separate assemblies in more than one place. One **PART** of the body is local and visible in one place. But, will be invisible to another **PART** of the body that assembles in another place. A body that is tempered together (**1 Corinthians 12:24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked.**) cannot meet in two or more places any more than "The Methodist Church" can assemble in more than one place and be a local church.

The Roman Catholic Church claims to be universal and visible. Each separate assembly is simply a "branch" of the one "Holy Catholic Church" according to their interpretation of the matter. This claim of the papacy is little different than the claim that a Baptist Church makes when it claims to be a true New Testament ecclesia, a local visible New Testament church when its body is divided into two or more parts meeting in two or more locations.

I fully agree with what Bro. Wilson has said. A church is a body and **"must be local and visible."** Need I remind you, Dear and Kind Reader, that to be local a church must be "of," or **"relating to, or occupying a particular place."** It must serve "a particular limited district."

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Again, Bro. Joe wrote,

Where the lexicographer sticks to his assigned

and proper task of defining words, he will give to "ecclesia" the meaning that demands local, visible, and organized for a purpose as the only meaning of the word. These three things: 1. Locality. 2. Visibility. 3. Organized for a purpose inhere in the meaning of the word. A true "ecclesia" cannot exist that does not have these three ingredients.

No one will argue with this. Jesus uses the word in harmony with its meaning involving locality, visibility, and organization for a purpose.

There is but one kind of church in the Bible; local, visible, and organized for a purpose. (*The Baptist Examiner*, Eld. Joe Wilson, April 4, 1987, P. 2).

Need I remind the reader again that Bro. Joe makes no reference to a church being a New Testament type of ecclesia if it is divided up into two or more bodies meeting in two or more localities. He says that "locality" inheres in the word ecclesia and I have shown that "locality" is singular and refers to one particular location.

The Roman Catholic church holds to the universal, visible concept of the church. Rome is central and all the various assemblies scattered across the world are mere branches of the one church. Landmark Baptists have long denounced this theory as unscriptural. With almost unanimous voice we have said that such a monstrosity, even if it taught the truth, could not be one church. This branch-theory is contrary to the meaning of the word ecclesia.

Sadly, however, many continue to this day practicing something very similar to the Roman Catholics, except on a much smaller scale. Churches, claiming to be strictly local churches, may have one or more groups of its members who meet in a separate locality but maintain membership in the sponsoring church.

AN EXAMPLE TO CONSIDER

The Landmark Baptist Church that meets in Pumpkin Bend, Tennessee, sends a missionary to Africa to start a work. He preaches the gospel and baptizes 10 people. He has an assembly of baptized believers who meet in an African village and never see the Pumpkin Bend congregation but are still considered to be members of it. The folks in Pumpkin Bend never

see the members in Africa but they consider them to be members of the Pumpkin Bend ecclesia. After a time, the Pumpkin Bend assembly sends another missionary to the Philippines. He soon has two groups of baptized believers who assemble in two separate Philippine villages. But, these folks in this group are said to be members at Pumpkin Bend though they never see nor assemble with the folks at Pumpkin Bend.

Now, here is what you have. You have the main assembly in Pumpkin Bend claiming to be a local, visible, New Testament type of ecclesia. Yet, they allegedly have a part of their body that assembles in Africa, another that assembles in a Philippine village, and another that assembles in yet another Philippine village. There are four assemblies in four places that never assemble together for a service. But the Landmark Baptist Church of Pumpkin Bend still claims to be a local, visible, New Testament type of ecclesia. How can this be? It does not meet in one locality; it meets in four different localities. It is not one assembly; it is four separate assemblies.

Bro. Milburn Cockrell has written, "In order to have a church, baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time." Under that limitation, Landmark Baptist Church at Pumpkin Bend cannot be a church, a true New Testament type of assembly.

Bro. Curtis Pugh has written, "New Testament usage, secular usage and the Septuagint usage of the word "ecclesia" indicate it was only and always used of an organized, congregating body of people in a given locality." If, as Bro. Pugh says, the way the word ecclesia is used in the New Testament, in secular writing, and in the Septuagint, it "only and always" is used of an "organized, congregating body of people in a given locality," then Landmark Baptist Church of Pumpkin Bend fails the test for being a New Testament type of ecclesia for it does not congregate "in a given locality" but meets in four localities.

Bro. Elton Wilson said of a true church, "How local is the local church? IT IS LOCAL ENOUGH TO ASSEMBLE. Is the Landmark Baptist Church of Pumpkin Bend "local enough to assemble"? No! In fact it never assembles in

one place. Due to distance, it will likely never assemble.

According to that Old Landmarker, J. R. Graves, "The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place." This again disqualifies the Landmark Baptist Church of Pumpkin Bend to measure up to the New Testament standard. According to Bro. Graves, "The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place." Does the Landmark Baptist Church of Pumpkin Bend, TN, "assemble in one place"? Never. It assembles in four places and never assembles in just one place so it fails the requirement that it is "required to assemble in one place" to be a New Testament type of assembly. It is more Roman Catholic-like than it is New Testament-like in its nature.

Bro. Bruce Allen wrote, ". . . an ekklesia is literally an assembly of people called out to a particular place to perform some particular business, and that in its Christian application it means an assembly of believers called out to worship in one place together." Do the members of the Pumpkin Bend-Africa-Philippine "church" "worship in one place together"? Never! It does not assemble in a "particular place" and the members never "worship in one place together."

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH NEVER HAD THIS PROBLEM

When the church in Antioch sent forth Paul and Barnabas with Silas later taking the place of Barnabas they never had this problem. When they sent forth Paul and Barnabas to the work to which God had called them, they never had the problem of having members assembling in several different places. Paul and Barnabas went from place to place preaching the gospel, when they had converts and baptized them they organized a church, not a mission. All that Paul ever took care of were churches. **2 Corinthians 11:28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.** He compared each and every New Testament church to a human body that was tempered together. **1 Corinthians 12:24**

For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. If one of my arms is in Africa, and one of my legs is in the Philippines, and another part of my body is in another place in the Philippines, my body is not tempered together but is torn apart. Folks who never assemble together in the same place to worship are not tempered together in one body, they are divided into severed body parts.

The imaginary "church" that is located in Pumpkin Bend, and one African village, and two different Philippine villages is not a "tempered together" body; it is a separated asunder body. According to our witnesses, it does not qualify as a New Testament type of ecclesia.

As one witness has unequivocally stated, "In order to have a church, ***baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time.***"

That, Dear and Kind Readers, is **the kind of Old Landmarker I am.** I also hold that, "In order to have a church, ***baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time.***" Yes, that is the kind of Old Landmarker I have been for more than 30 years and **that is the kind of Old Landmarker I remain!**

—Wayne Camp, Editor—

(PERSEVERANCE, Cont. from Page 2)

as in 3:4 and 3:8 where the idea is plain in the clause: ***'For the devil sins from the beginning'*** (Lineal-progressive present indicative active). He is a continual sinner. Now in I Jn. 3:9 John says of the man who is begotten of God: ***"and he cannot go on sinning (as a habit like the devil) because he is begotten of God!"*** The English rendering "He cannot sin" fails to note that it is the present infinitive here and not the aorist. John does not say that a child of God is not able to commit a single act of sin as the aorist infinitive would mean. (*The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, p. 100).

Dr. Robertson was, for many years, professor in Greek at the Baptist Seminary in Louisville, KY., and was a Greek scholar of

world renown. He says that the idea in these verses is the habitual, uninhibited practice of sin. The child of God cannot habitually practice sin as the devil has been doing from the beginning.

Perseverance means that those who are truly Christ's sheep follow him. Jesus declared: ***"They follow me"*** (Jn. 10:27-29). He did not say: "I hope they follow me." He said: ***"They follow me!"*** The sheep of Christ, when called out of this world of sin by divine grace, follow Christ in the path of service that he leads. When they fall into sin, they will not remain permanently in that sin for they cannot habitually practice sin. A sow enjoys wallowing in the mud; a sheep may get into the mud but is very unhappy there. A mere professor, like a sow, may return to and enjoy wallowing in the mire of sin that is part of this world. The child of God may fall into terrible sin but he will not be happy, nor will he remain in the habitual practice of sin.

Perseverance means that true disciples continue in the word. They love it, study it, and obey it. ***"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed,"*** declared Jesus to some folk who professed faith in him. As he continued to speak to them their unregenerate condition was quickly manifest. In verse 37 he charges them: ***"My word has no place in you"*** (Jn. 8:37). A little later he charged: ***"Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth"*** (Jn. 8:40). Again he said to them: ***"Ye cannot hear my word"*** (Jn. 8:43). A little later he says: ***"He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God"*** (J n. 8:47). It is clear from this passage that the true believer, the ***"disciple indeed,"*** continues in the word of God. Those who habitually disobey or rebel against the teachings of the word of God are simply manifesting that they do not belong to the Lord: they have not been regenerated. The true disciple may stumble but he does

not constantly rebel against the word of God.

THE SOURCE OF PERSEVERANCE

Man is incapable of perseverance by his own willpower and inclination. ***“The way of a man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23)***, Since man does not have the ability to persevere in his life for Christ we must look for power from an outside force. It will not be found in friends or family. It will not be found in the preacher or the congregation, though God does use them as one of his many instruments in causing us to persevere. As with every, other aspect of salvation we are dependent on God for persevering grace.

TO WILL AND TO DO

How can we will and do the pleasure of God? Do we, of ourselves, have the ability to fulfill the laws and work of God? We cannot boast of our service to God ***“for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13)***. The fact that it is God working in the saved to do his pleasure and will is encouraging and humbling. It is encouraging because God is always faithful in fulfilling that which he has commenced. He who has regenerated and justified us can be trusted to cause us to persevere. What he has begun he will perform until the day of Jesus Christ. ***Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*** It is humbling because all that we have, all that we are, and all that we do in the service of God must be traced back to God working for and in us. The spring from which all good works and all faithful service flow is the grace of God.

When a child of God starts to fail in his service and perseverance God works in another way to bring him back to faithful service. He has assured the perseverance of his covenant children in words that run thusly: ***“I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall***

not depart from me” (Jer. 32:40). God has promised his Son that he will be faithful to their covenant and when his children forsake his laws and do not walk according to his statutes he ***“will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes” (Psa. 89:32)***. ***“The Lord shall judge his people,”*** wrote Paul (Heb. 10:30). He then added: ***“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (V-31)***. There is ***“a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation”*** for those children of God who willfully sin (Heb. 10:27). This fear, this reverential awe, of God has the effect of causing us to seek closer fellowship with God and causes the erring child of God to return to faithful service for God.

God orders the steps and establishes the goings of his children (Psa. 37:23; Psa. 40:2). With all of these Divine forces at work it is easy to see why the child of God cannot continue for long in sin. God will either bring him in line or take him home. There is a sin unto death that can be committed by the child of God (I Jn. 5:16). Moses was killed and did not get to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. Many of the Corinthian congregation were “weak and sickly” and “many” more were asleep (dead) because of their conduct at the Lord’s table (I Cor. 11:30). Fear of chastening and physical death will often bring the wayward child of God into line and cause him to persevere.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PERSEVERANCE

We have already considered the fact that God’s chastening is one of the means that he uses to accomplish the grace of perseverance in the lives of his saints. He chastens us ***“for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness” (Heb. 12:10)***.

He also accomplishes his work of perseverance by causing his children to really comprehend that he is truly their Father. ***“Ye have received the Spirit of adoption,”*** wrote Paul. ***“whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15)***. ***“Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father” (Gal. 4:6)***. Again Paul

wrote: ***"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God"*** (Rom. 8:16). This constant witness of the Spirit in our hearts always reminding us that we are the children of God is very effectual in causing God's children to persevere.

The Holy Spirit indwelling the child of God and bearing witness with our spirits also produces certain fruits in our lives. The love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, etc. that are so essential to a persevering godly life are produced by the Holy Spirit. In addition to producing fruit essential to persevering in God's word and will, the Holy Spirit also causes the children of God to crucify the flesh with its lusts (Gal. 5:24). We must war constantly with the flesh and ***"bring it into subjection"*** if we are to persevere (I Cor. 9:27) this we can only do through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Word of God is another instrument that he uses in accomplishing our perseverance. His word is living and powerful and rebukes us when we have sinned. It warns us to examine our lives and be certain that we are not merely professors (Heb. 4:12; Matt. 7:21-23).

The word of God also has a cleansing affect on our lives helping to accomplish perseverance. Jesus said: ***"Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you"*** (Jn. 15:3). David asks a very important question and then answers it. ***"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word"*** (Psa. 119:9). Jesus prayed: ***"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth"*** (Jn. 17:17). Certainly God uses his word as a very effective instrument in causing the saints to persevere.

CONCLUSION

In a conclusion let me remind you of the raven and the dove which Noah sent forth from the ark. The raven was sent forth first. Due to his ravenous nature, he found exactly what he wanted in the putrefied bodies that floated on the waters. He never returned to the ark. A dove was sent forth but found nothing to suit its nature so it returned. The false professor can go

out into the world and be perfectly happy and satisfied with the sinful pleasures of the world. He is like the dog that eats its own vomit or the washed sow that returns to wallowing in the mire.

The child of God may go out into the world. He may fall into sin but he cannot be happy there. He will be miserable in the midst of the greatest pleasures sin has to offer. He will either return to the Lord or the Lord will take his life. God will not allow one of His children to go on forever in a habitual practice of sin. He will do whatever is necessary to cause us to persevere.

VATICAN WORKS TO CORRECT SEXUAL ABUSE OF NUNS BY PRIESTS IN MISSIONARY LANDS

From Louisville, KY diocesan newspaper THE
RECORD, 3/29/01

By John Norton

Catholic News Service

The Vatican has acknowledged the problem of sexual abuse of nuns by priests in some missionary territories and said it was working with bishops and religious orders to correct it.

Following the March 20 statement, missionary officials and senior members of religious orders said the dimensions and geographical extent of the sexual abuse were largely unknown and complicated by sometimes overlapping issues of cultural practice and failure to live celibacy vows.

They also said instances of sexual abuse and misconduct did not paint a complete picture of the church in Africa and elsewhere. But the acknowledgment drew attention to long standing concerns that the African church's rapid growth has not been accompanied by adequate formation or commitment.

Joaquin Navarro-Valls, papal spokesman, said that "some negative situations" should not obscure the "often-heroic faithfulness of the great majority of men and women religious and priests."

He said the problem "is restricted to a limited

geographical area," which he did not identify, and said the Vatican was addressing it through the dual approach of formation of persons and of solving individual cases."

His statement came in, apparent response to a mid-March article in the National Catholic Reporter, a U.S. weekly, which asserted that sexual abuse of religious women by priests, including rape, was a serious problem, especially in Africa.

The article cited five internal church reports, several of which were presented at the Vatican, written between 1994 and 1998 by senior members of women's religious orders and a U.S. priest.

The article said some Catholic clergy have exploited their financial and spiritual authority to gain sexual favors from nuns, a situation facilitated by cultural subservience of women in some regions.

In Africa, where HIV and AIDS are rampant, young nuns are sometimes seen as safe targets of sexual activity by priests and other males, it said.

The reports cited did not name alleged abusers or victims and only once named a country-specific incident: a bishop in Malawi who dismissed the leaders of a diocesan women's congregation in 1988 after they complained that 29 sisters had been impregnated by diocesan priests.

In a joint statement March 21, the two main associations of men and women religious respectively, the Union of Superiors General and the International Union of Superiors General underscored their awareness of the problem and said they were taking concrete steps to address it.

Sister Rita Burley, superior general of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and International Union of Superiors General president, said the steps included tougher standards for admission into religious life, a focus on human development in formation, and resolution of specific cases of abuse.

The unions' statement said the great majority of the church's 1 million nuns and 200,000 religious men faithfully and courageously witness the Christian message, a reality "which often in today's world 'never makes news.'"

The two main associations of U.S. religious—the Conference of Major Superiors of Men and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious—said they were "deeply disturbed" by the reports of sexual abuse by priests.



THE CHILDREN'S CENTER

Chiang Mai, Thailand

Pictured above are the boys who live at the Children's Center in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Also, the two ladies who work at the center. Their husbands are with them. Also, Bro. Anond Phoothaptim is pictured on the right by one of the ladies and her husband. The building behind them is the La Hu style building in which the boys live. This building is built up high because there were some concrete pillars in the ground that could be used in the structure. This also makes such buildings cooler at night because the air can move under as well as through the building.

Pictured next are the girls who live at the Children's center. The ladies who work at the center, their husbands, and Bro. Anond are across the back. This was taken beside the house that is located on the land and in which one of the couples, possibly both, lives as they watch after the children. A house for the girls similar to the boys' has been built behind the frame and masonry house in the picture below. This place was rented while the editor was there in March but the second lady had not been employed at the time so I am not sure if she and her husband also live on sight. Her principle duty is to cook for the children. The husbands of these two ladies have other jobs but help out

around the center as well.



This house is also being used as a place for Bro. Anond to teach the pastors and others who come monthly. The number of pastors and others who come for these monthly Bible studies has grown to the point that there is not room at Bro. Anond's house for the classes.

This is only a temporary location for the children's center. It was rented for only six months since land for the center is being purchased. In fact, I hope that I can report the purchase of this land as early as the next issue, or, at least the June issue. As soon as that land is purchased, the La Hu style buildings will be moved from the current location and reconstructed on the new location until more permanent buildings can be built. A house will also have to be built for the caretakers.



Above is a picture of the house to which I have referred. The children had not all moved here when this picture was taken. Some of the older ones were over helping to clean up and

get ready for the move. The man to my right is the husband of the lady who is in charge. He was helping the children with the cleanup. On my immediate right is one of the older girls. She is very helpful with the work and with the younger children.

This children's center is not the most important aspect of the work in Thailand but because of the things that are happening there, I wanted to focus on it this month. As always, the most important aspect of the work is the preaching of the gospel, the baptizing of converts, and the establishment of churches. That is progressing very well and I will deal with it more in future issues.

Here is another view of the house with Bro. Anond and one of the older children in front of it. They were not aware I was taking the picture.



THE PURPOSE OF THE CENTER

The purpose for which the center was originally started was the teaching of the Hill Tribe children the Thai language so that they could go to school in the Thai schools. It has developed beyond that original purpose as time has gone on.

Sometimes the parents of children in the villages get involved in the drug traffic. When the police arrest them, the police do not worry about their children but just take the parents off to jail and then prison and leave the children to fend for themselves, wandering from house to house for their food. In other cases, parents may both die from disease and the children are left to themselves. In one village where Bro. Anond hopes to start a new church, I saw four

children—three boys and one girl of about three years of age—who were wandering around naked. There was also a boy who was a little older who was clothed but I could tell he was a brother of one of the naked children. I asked Bro. Anond why these children were not clothed and he told me their parents had been taken away to jail and then prison for dealing in drugs.

Bro. Anond said, “I compass them,” meaning that he had compassion on them. Some of these orphans and abandoned children are taken in and live at the children’s center. At the present time there are 36 children in the center. The number has grown since the pictures shown in this article were made.

It would not be much of a testimony for him or the Lord’s churches in those villages if no concern for these children was shown. Jesus said, ***“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me”(Matthew 25:35-36).***

The righteous asked, ***“Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?”***

Jesus answered, ***“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.***

Through the various churches who are supporting this work, Bro. Anond is able to do these things. He has taken in naked children and clothed them. He has taken in hungry children and fed them. He has taken in these strangers and orphans and given them a place to live. I have observed him in these villages and two things are very obvious. He is loved by the children and he loves them.

In the village where I saw the naked children and where he has been preaching the gospel when he could, there is a family who has a room in which he sleeps when there. All the small children of the village go and lie on the floor and

sleep in the room with him. I have watched him as he treats the sick and hurting and he did not lie when he said of the children, “I compass them.” He truly does have compassion on these children as well as their parents.

He has not only fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and taken in the homeless children, he has visited their parents in prison. One morning each month, he goes to a men’s prison and preaches the gospel. In the afternoon of the same day (usually) he goes to the women’s prison and preaches there. There are some who have been converted in these prisons who are now out and members of some of the churches.

In October, 2000, Bro. Bill Lee, Bro. Anond and I visited a large men’s prison and large women’s prison and preached. In the picture below, we were just leaving the men’s prison.



I am so thankful that the Lord, in his marvelous providence, has permitted me to have a part in this work. I am grateful that he has moved upon the hearts of Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church to send me to Thailand two times, even though it costs a good deal of money and means I will be absent from the pulpit while I am away. I am so thankful that Bro. Bill Lee asked them to send me with him, his wife, and Bro. Jack Green last year.

In my life, God has given me many opportunities of service. I have been blessed to preach many meetings. I have been given the opportunity to preach in many Bible conferences. I have pastored churches 40 years of my 43½ years in the ministry. I have seen many make professions of faith and have baptized many. I count the privilege of working in and supporting this work in Thailand among

God's best of blessings in my life.

I think of what Paul said long ago. **2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.** This work is not perfect, but it is of God and its success is dependent on God. I am glad I have the opportunity to be just one of those earthen vessels he is using in the work.

I am also very grateful that the Lord has moved and is moving upon the hearts of other pastors and churches to have a part in this work. May God bless all of you for you help.

—Wayne Camp, Editor—

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Bouquets and Brickbats

WWW: To whom it may concern; We Catholics believe in the death, resurrection of Christ, We use eggs or rabbits as a Symbol of new life on Easter, for Christ gave us a new life due to his dying and rising that defeated Satan,your twisted remarks you people spead that we have pagan worship is anti Catholic .made up lies.you will be judge what you say against Christ Church on earth. if you are with out sin, cast the first stone, without the Catholic church preserving the scriptures down through the Centuries you would have no truth of Christ. there is one Church that as the Holy Spirit of full truth, not thousands of Christian Churches who claim to have the spirit of truth and cannot agree on Scripture amongst themselves. the Holy Spirit is not divided, Christ as one true Church and it was here 1500 years before you came along. For Christ said hell will not prevail against his one true church, But you other none Catholics think your church is sinless, and Christ said, What ever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, what you lose on earth will be loosened in heaven.This Athority was given to one Church, not those who came 1500 years and later,and history proves who Christ Church is , as well as the early Church fathers. PEACE BE WITH YOU; HAPPY EASTER!

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