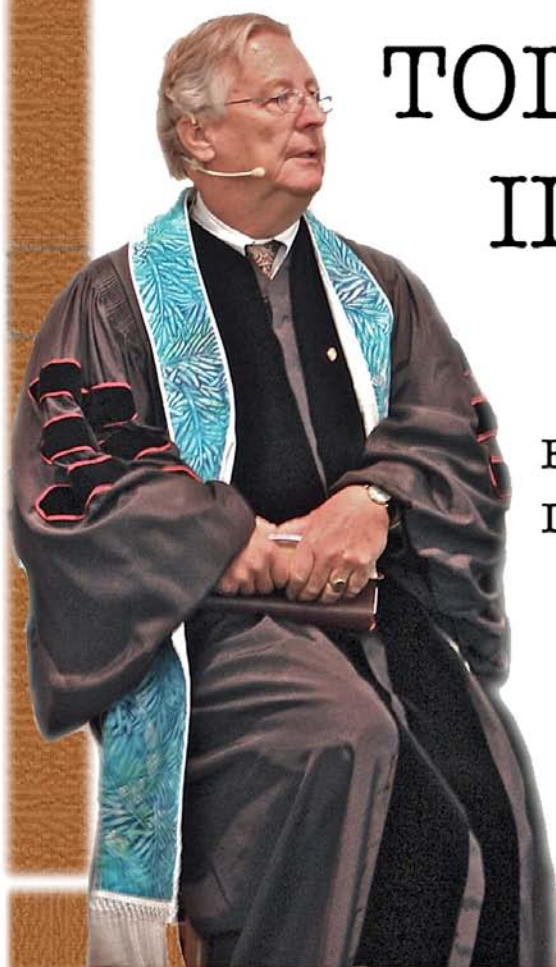


“STORIES I HAVE TOLD” II



By
Frank Leeds III
D. Min., S.T.M.

Book 2



Foreword

I think it is known as the "ripple effect". A stone is cast into the lake and the ripples continue to roll across the water. **Jewel and Walter Jacques** were the stone throwers with their pleas to have these stories put into writing so that they could be shared with a larger audience. The results of that was the little publication of "Stories I Have Told" which, when finished, was used as a fundraiser towards a youth mission trip. It was also freely distributed to various people who are no longer able to attend church due to health restraints.

My part in all of this was the easy part. The stories are all in my head and so it is like a spring cleaning of the mind. I just had to put it on paper. Putting it all on paper is one thing, having it free of spelling errors, looking presentable, adding pictures, and then getting it ready and in the proper format for the printers is a different story.

Sally Priest and **Ron Priest**, have been most helpful to me for many years in the creation of various slides and projects to help illustrate my sermons, freely give of themselves as my personal photographer and collaborator. The Priests and I would readily agree, we do our thing and then turn it all over to Corbi Bottichio who is the producer, does the Table of Contents and the end product becomes her reflection.

Methodists are big users of the term "Gifts and Graces" meaning that we all have our parts to offer. This little booklet, "Stories I Have Told II", is just one more example. As mentioned in the first "Stories I Have Told", like a good joke, a good story need never be explained. Like a good joke, timing is everything. The right story, told at the right time, by someone who loves you, is a thing of POWER. It can lighten a day, wipe away tears, alleviate fears, grant encouragement, give hope, and shed enormous light.

To the congregation at Oakhurst...Thank you for listening.

Frank Leeds III

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Big Mistakes!

The story is told of the inventor of the chess game. Upon completion of the creation of the game, the inventor takes it to the King. The King is so impressed with the game that he says to the creator, "You may take any piece from my jewelry collection as a reward." The inventor is a little put-out with the King's patronizing attitude. Thus, he says to the King, "I would prefer something a little more humble. How about if you give me one grain of rice for one square on the chess set, then double it for the second square, then double it again for the third square, etc?"



The King immediately jumps at the chance to take advantage of this foolish request. He calls in his servant and asks for a bowl of rice to be brought forward. When the servant approaches the chess set, he puts one grain of rice on the first square, two on the second square, four on the third, eight on the fourth, etc. Much sooner than expected, they need to bring in more rice. It doesn't take long before they call for the mathematician and they realize that by the time they get to the 64th square, it will amount to more rice than the entire world can produce. It comes to billions of tons of rice.

We all make mistakes - some are larger than others.

Good Ideas

The State of Washington did something that I loved when I first heard of it. They installed scores of large windmills on the wind-swept farmlands for the making of electricity. People like me cheered them on. What a great way to make electricity by using the wind rather than coal or oil!

However, on my last trip to the State of Washington, I was saddened to learn that bats had been dying by the thousands because of the windmills. They are not running into the windmills but rather, when they fly through the sudden change of air pressure, the drastic change of air pressure collapses their lungs and they die instantly.



I have never been all that fond of bats, but bats eat about 1400 mosquitoes a day plus other types of insects that are harmful to plants. Without the bats, the farmers will have to use pesticides to protect the plants that the bats protected. Thus, having the windmills may be making the situation worse than it was.

Good ideas are not always as good as we had hoped.

Blind Courage

(a Bill Irwin story)

Bill's father was a physician from Alabama. Bill was raised to live a "perfect" life and every time he did something less than perfect, he was beaten.



A Biblical word does not mean the same as it does in English. Perfection is a toxin to the soul. There is nothing more destructive to the human spirit than the self expectation of perfection. Using the English word, it is trying to steal from God something that only God can possess.

Bill ended up with four failed marriages, a five packs a day smoking habit, and an alcohol dependency. As his eyesight began to fail, he became a one-eyed man trying to be perfect. Bill taught chemistry and owned a toxicology lab. When he was left in total darkness, he had to sell the lab but could still teach a little...when he was sober. He managed to get a seeing-eye dog who was trained with reward and praise.

One night, Bill received a call for help from his son. This was something no one in the family ever did. One was not allowed to admit that one needed help. The son was addicted to cocaine and was in a program to help him with this addiction. The program called for the father and mother to come to the clinic for a week and spend it with his son. Bill agreed to do that and when he got there, he quickly learned two things:

- No alcohol was allowed - Bill depended on it.
- Smoking was only allowed at certain times of the day - Bill was used to 100 cigarettes a day.

The son was in the program for 28 days, and when he received his pin for sticking it out for the 28 days, Bill stood and announced, "My name is Bill and I am an alcoholic." When he did not know what to do, he chose HONESTY...and it changed his life. Honesty brings change. Change, big or small, is a kind of personal miracle and to experience the miraculous is to transcend all other human experiences.

Over the next three years, Bill stopped drinking, got a new seeing eye dog, decided to hike the Appalachian Trail, and became a Christian. The Appalachian Trail covers 2,168 miles from Springer Mountain, Georgia, to Mount Katahdin, Maine. This story is told in Bill's book called *BLIND COURAGE*.

Continued:

When people told him that a blind person could never do this, he would tell them that his biggest concern was his dog. His dog was trained in New Jersey. Bill came from Alabama where the word "rest" was a two syllable word...but the dog would get use to it.

The press eventually heard about this feat and began to follow him. On Oct 24th, Bill and Orient stood on top of Mount Katahdin in Maine—a nine month journey.

The lesson, Honesty, can put you on a different path. When you have your back against the wall, what you do, when you do not know what to do, is to simply be honest about your situation.

Hurricanes and Ants

In anticipation of an approaching hurricane, my wife and I volunteered at the local retirement center to assist as needed throughout the night. We were given a room on the sixth floor with a mattress on the floor for us to sleep on. When I awoke in the morning, I grabbed my pants off the floor where I had left them the night before and quickly put them on. I soon found myself jumping around like a mad-man. Fire ants had managed to crawl up the tree in the yard to the top branch, onto the balcony, into the apartment, and into my pants that were on the floor.

My pants were full of ants; leaving me to be their main meal of the day. I was bitten severely and spent a fair amount of time in the shower trying to get rid of them. It may sound funny now, but I was one bruised and welted-up guy.



We told our story to our friends Jim and Pam Wedlake. Pam found it so funny that she in turn shared it with other people. After hearing it, one of the 'other people' came to Pam and said, "I saw a pair of underwear in the store that was called "Ants in Your Pants" and it had pictures of little ants all over the underwear. Pam asked, "Where? I will go buy them." The other said, "Pam, you can't go buy underwear for your pastor." She said, "Watch me!"

The next day, I was presented with "Ants in Your Pants" underwear. When the story was retold in my presence at a restaurant several weeks later, I happened to be wearing that underwear. It was discrete of course, but everyone at the table was shown my fancy pants with the ants!

Do It Anyway

*People are often unreasonable,
Illogical, and self-centered;
Forgive them anyway.*

*If you are kind, people may
Accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;
Be kind anyway.*

*If you are successful, you will win some
False friends and some true enemies;
Succeed anyway;*

*If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;
Be honest and frank anyway.*

*What you spend years building,
Someone could destroy overnight;
Build anyway.*

*If you find serenity and happiness,
They may be jealous;
Be happy anyway.*

*The good you do today,
People will often forget tomorrow;
Do good anyway.*

*Give the world the best you have,
And it may never be enough;
Give the world the best you've got anyway.*

*You see, in the final analysis,
It is between you and God;
It was never between you and them anyway.*

Mother Teresa



HEBREWS OR BE YE COFFEE

(a Richard Yerby story)

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved, a new one arose.



Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first pot she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil, without saying a word.

In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me what you see." The daughter replied, "Carrots, eggs, and coffee."

Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. The mother then asked the daughter to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard boiled egg.

Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma. The daughter then asked, "What does it mean, mother?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity: boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile - its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.

"Which are you?" she asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity? Do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength?

Continued:

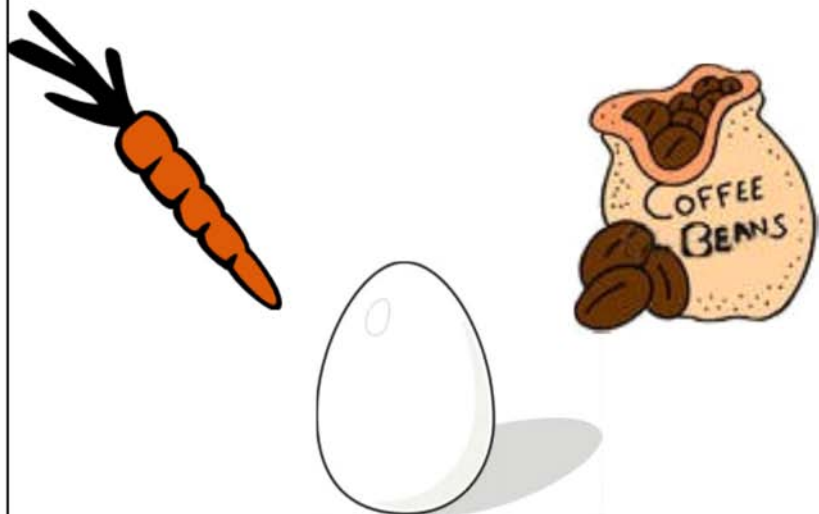
Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Do I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, do I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same but, on the inside, am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you.

When the hour is the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate yourself to another level? How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?

May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human and enough hope to make you happy. The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their way. The brightest future will always be based on a forgotten past. You can't go forward in life until you let go of your past failures and heartaches.

When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling. Live your life so, at the end, you're the one who is smiling



Symbiotic Fungi

Horticulturist nor an arborist, I am not. But having read a little about symbiotic fungi, please consider the following. It gave me a new perspective on trees, life, and people.

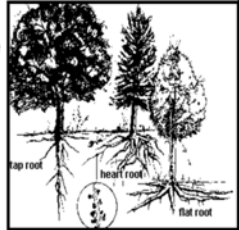
Until I read the article, I had a tendency to look at trees as individual trees and a forest of trees as a 'large bunch of trees—individual trees'. Trying to keep it simple, this is what I learned.

Assume you have just three trees, growing close together. The tree on one end is near the water and the one on the other end is facing the sun most of the day. The one in the middle gets more sun but less water than the tree located close to the water and more water but less sun than the one that is further from the water and in the sunshine all day.

Beneath the surface of the trees, symbiotic fungi grow and attach themselves to the roots enabling them to grow from tree to tree. If the tree in the sun gets too much sun, and the tree in the shade gets too little, then the fungi takes the sunshine from one tree and gives it to the one that has less. Likewise for the water. The fungi regulates not just the one tree but it regulates the community of trees to insure that all get the benefits of both sunshine and water.

Does this make you think of the church community? If you can think of a better illustration, please let me know.

We grow by the gifts and graces of others.



The Fugitive

One day, a young fugitive, trying to hide himself from the enemy, entered a small Jewish village. The people were kind to him and offered him a place to stay. But when the soldiers looking for the fugitive asked where he was hiding, everyone became very fearful. The soldiers threatened to burn the village and kill every man in it unless the young man was handed over to them before dawn. The people went to the Rabbi and asked him what to do. The Rabbi, caught in the dilemma whether to hand over the boy to the enemy or to have his people killed, withdrew to his room, took the Bible and started to read, hoping to find an answer before dawn.

After many hours and as morning broke, his eyes fell on the words: "*It is better that one man dies than the whole people be lost.*" Then the Rabbi closed the Bible, called the soldiers, and told them where the boy was hidden. The soldiers then led the fugitive away to be killed. There was a feast in the village because the Rabbi had saved the lives of the people. But the Rabbi did not celebrate. He stayed in his room with a deep, sad feeling pervading him. At that moment, the prophet entered and asked, "Rabbi, what have you done?" The Rabbi said, "I handed over the fugitive to the enemy." The prophet said, "*But don't you know you have handed over the Messiah?*" "*How could I know?*" replied the Rabbi anxiously.

Then the prophet said, "*If, instead of reading your Bible, you had visited this young man just once, and looked into his eyes, you would have known.*"

Tsunami

I believe we all remember the great tsunami that hit the shores of Indonesia and caused such devastation, both to human life as well as property. It was a wave of disaster and was reported in all of the major newspapers and TV stations around the world. Through it all, the most interesting part of this story to me was reported a week or so later. It was a small article on the back pages and brought to my attention by my son.



Off the coast of Indonesia, there were two islands basically identical in size and topography. It was assumed that, given the size of the tsunami, both of these islands would be totally destroyed. When rescue teams were finally able to be sent to these islands, the first island they went to was as expected. The people were all dead and their homes were destroyed and washed away.

There was no reason to expect anything different at the second island, but when the rescue team arrived, they discovered that the people were all safe and busy rebuilding their homes and getting their lives back in order. The rescue team was shocked. How could this possibly happen? How can two islands, in the same situation, go through the same Tsunami with one island destroyed and the other one busy rebuilding? The answer will surprise you. You will never guess it. What saved them? I dare say you could contemplate this all day and not come up with the correct answer.

They were saved by a story. These people possessed a story that was passed down from generation to generation. It went back so many generations that no one knew when the story started. Would you like to hear that story?

Ever since the beginning of time, the ocean and the land have been battling over the coast line. The war is non-ending. Whenever you see the ocean retreat away from the shoreline, warn everyone and run for the top of the mountain because the battle is about to begin.

A rather brief story, but when the first person on the second island saw the ocean begin its retreat from the shoreline, everyone knew to run for the hills because the battle was about to begin. They did just that, and no one was injured on this island. They were saved by the story.

We too have a story to tell to the nations
That shall turn their hearts to the right
A story of truth and mercy
A story of peace and light

One Spirit

One day a lady in our church, Ann Seal, asked me to please make a hospital call on a lady that had visited our church on several occasions but who had no family in the area. I made the call and upon talking with the woman, was informed by her that she had the best pastor in the whole world, but when she heard me preach and listened to my stories, it could have come from her pastor that she liked so much. She said her church was probably the smallest in the world but how privileged the church was to have such an outstanding pastor. "I am telling you," she said, "you two have been cut from the same cloth. The voice of the Lord that speaks through him is the same that speaks through you." It is really great to hear someone like their pastor so much, and I was pleased that I reminded her of him.

I then asked her where she was from and she told me Maine. I have dear friends [Wayne and Gloria Antworth]—more family than friends—that have a summer cottage in Surrey, Maine, where my wife and I have been many times. That is my reference point, so I asked her if she lived anywhere near Surrey. She said, "Oh, I do not live in Maine anymore. I was born there, but we moved to Vermont a number of years ago." Now, I know only one family in the state of Vermont. I had a philosophy professor in New York with whom I studied *The History of Philosophy*, *The Philosophy of Science*, and *Existentialism* to name just a few. His son had a rare form of leukemia and he moved to an old farm in Vermont. Boston had special services that he could get for his son and he became a professor at Boston College or another major university. He needed to have access to the health care he could get in that area.

He and his wife have been to our home in New York City with our friends the LaCrosses and we, in turn, have spent a weekend at his farm in Vermont. I have not seen him in about 40 years. Anyhow, I asked her where in Vermont she lived and she told me *Tunbridge*. Excitedly, I said, "I know someone in Tunbridge. Does the name, David Wolf, mean anything to you?" "DAVID WOLF," she shouted, "that is the pastor I have been telling you about!"

I never saw this woman again and I do not remember her name. Perhaps she moved back to Vermont. It was not that I knew someone that she knew that made this story special. The woman identified a spirit that she recognized and put the two together without having the slightest idea that our paths had crossed.

Perhaps you have an explanation to it all...



Donald Bosch, MD

Dr. Donald Bosch is a surgeon who graduated from the University of Iowa and did various residencies in New York and New Jersey. Rather than a lucrative practice of medicine in the US he went to the Middle East as a medical missionary. He and his wife learned Arabic and then went to the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr. Bosch operated a 10-bed hospital and was the only surgeon for 1.5 million people. He often saw 200 people a day and did as many as 10 surgeries a day...and without electricity much of the time. One of the babies that he delivered was the sultan's son and, in time, he and the sultan's son became friends. The sultan did not want to develop their oil and did not want his people to be educated. He feared, if they were to become educated, he would be thrown out as the sultan.

But the doctor encouraged the son to get his education and encouraged him to dream of all that he could do for his country. The son then went to school in England and when he returned, he became the new sultan and called for Dr. Bosch to design a health care system for the entire country. The initial plan called for one major medical center surrounded with 10 smaller hospitals throughout the country and tied together with a helicopter.

When Dr. Bosch retired as head of the medical center in 1983, the country had been so impressed with him, they requested that the Reformed Church of America find them a new administrator for the medical center to replace Dr. Bosch. They were looking for an unusual combination. They wanted not only a hospital administrator but also someone knowledgeable about multicultural management as they now had various nationalities in their country.

My doctoral work was in the area of "Culture and Personality Development and its Affect on Multi-Cultural Management". The Reformed Church called me and I went for an interview in New York City at 475 Riverside Drive. Its popular name is "The God Box". All of the major denominations are located there. The bottom line ... this position would make me the health czar of the country ... the perfect job for me!

Prior to sending us to Oman to visit the medical center, they wanted to get rid of any objections we might have. At dinner one evening, Ginny asked about the weather to which they referred to winter as 'sweater days'. Ginny, who does not like the heat too much asked, "How many 'sweater days' did you have last year?" And they said, "Almost 7." The country averages 4 to 7 a year. They also offered Ginny a teaching job in the elementary school and informed us that the school system only went to 6th grade. With that statement, all of the lights started going off.

Continued:

Our children were in 3rd, 4th, and 7th grades. "What about our children?" we inquired. "Not a problem," they assured us, "we will send your children to any school in the world. There are some great schools in India and Switzerland that you may want to choose. The choice is yours. We will send them anywhere you want!" Can you feel the tension? I really wanted this job! We were given a week to decide.

We went home, looked at our kids, and tried to imagine sending them off to India, or Switzerland... We were taken out to dinner again, but we had to turn it down.

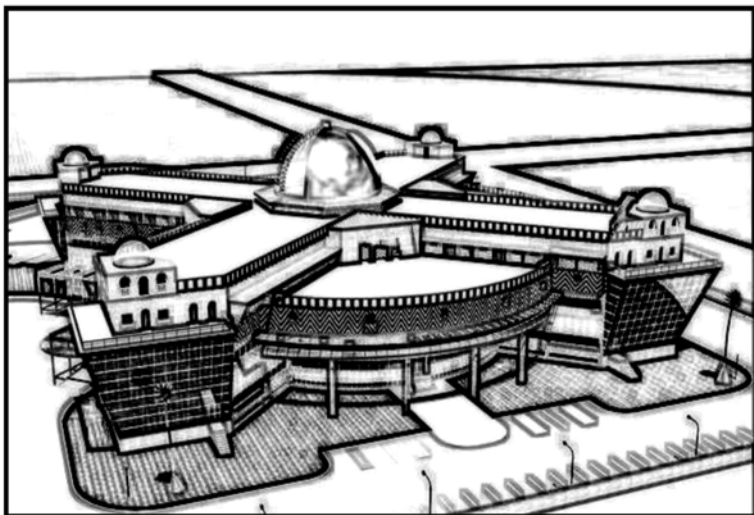
As a follow up:

I was most pleased to learn that the hospital has been rated the 8th best hospital in the world.

But more significantly, guess what country has been rated #1 in the world as having the finest health care delivery system?

To the Sultanate of Oman, **Quboos bin Said**, I tip my hat and I say to him, "You did an excellent job!"

To Donald Bosch, MD, who designed this entire system and continued to do so for 25 years after he retired, I hold that up as the finest example of Stewardship that I personally know. I was introduced to him, but he would never remember me. I sure remember his work and I feel great to see the influence that this one life has had.



Mozart

Gregorio Allegri [1582-1652] composed the *MISERERE* for the Choir of the Sistine Chapel. Knowing the church had music of exceptional appeal, the church heightened its reputation by keeping the manuscript a closely guarded secret. When 14-year old Mozart heard the music, he went home and 'merely' wrote out the music by memory. Since then, Allegri's *MISERERE* has become one of the most popular examples of unaccompanied sacred music.



Psalm 51

Mozart went into a pet shop one day and while whistling a tune he was working on, a starling bird whistled the tune back to him. Mozart immediately bought the bird. He and the bird bonded and the bird would often sit on Mozart's shoulders while he was composing.

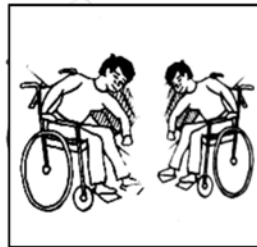
While whistling a tune for a new composition, the bird missed three of the notes to the theme. Mozart tried several times to get the bird to do it correctly, but the bird could do a G# but not a G major. When he realized the bird could not do it, he changed the music to match the bird's attempt and that is how he wrote his piano concerto in G Major.

We All Have Our Leanings

While visiting one of our church members * in the hospital, I found him sitting in a chair, looking rather uncomfortable as he was leaning quite heavily to one side. When the doctor came into the room, he immediately noticed the situation and went to the patient (church member) and said, "We need to straighten you up." The patient replied, "*Doc, you do not know the half of it. I have been sitting here embarrassed to death and fearful that one of my friends would stop in to see me and find me sitting like this. I do not mind that I am leaning but, please, if I must lean, make sure I am leaning to the right. I am a right winger you know and I do not want to be seen ever leaning to the left.*"

*Brigadier General Albert Redman

**Morality is not doing something that is wrong...
Character is doing something that is right.**



Hats Off To Teachers

Mrs. Benedushi taught in the Detroit school system. After calling on different students and asking them questions about what they knew about Abraham Lincoln, the first student said he had a beard, the second said he was the 16th President of the US, etc. Mrs. Benedushi then said to the class, "I think I hear a mouse. Can any of you hear a mouse?" Some students began screaming, a few jumped on desks. When she got the class quieted down, she said, "Steven Morris, can you hear the mouse?" There was a long quiet pause before he said, "Yes teacher, I hear it - it sounds like it is in your trash can by your desk." The teacher went to the trash can and removed a piece of paper and, sure enough, just where the teacher had put it before the class arrived, was the mouse.



You see, Mrs. Benedushi put it there on purpose knowing full well that probably only one student in her class would be able to hear it, specifically, Steven Morris. Steven was blind. He knew very well all of the things in life that he could NOT do, and Mrs. Benedushi wanted him to know what he COULD do that others could not - Steven could hear extremely well.

As he went home from school that day, Steven's walk was different. He listened to all of the sounds of the traffic. Later, he tapped his hands on the table. He began to play the drums. He picked up a harmonica and began to make sounds. He started to play the piano. He started to write music, to compose music, and to take all of his pain and turn it around through his music.

Steven went from that knowledge to creating, composing, and playing music. He has won 25 Grammy Awards and credits his teacher's **kindness** in setting this up so that he learned first-hand that he could do things no one else in his class could.

The name, Steven Morris, may mean nothing to you, but you have probably heard of him via his stage name --- Stevie Wonder. He credits his teacher's kindness and her setting him up to learn what he could do for any success he has achieved.



Comma Stories

Having a philosophical background before studying theology and having studied Spanish, I really had little to no interest in learning additional languages ... never mind both Greek and Hebrew. The study of these languages, however, gave me an added appreciation for the little things—like **the comma**.



Following are the COMMA STORIES:

Before the age of the telephone, a woman went on vacation to Europe. While there, she found a diamond necklace that she really liked. She then sent a telegraph to her husband in the United States which read, *"I have found a diamond necklace that I like. It is xcts and cost \$x. May I buy it?"* Her husband wrote out a telegraph that he gave to Western Union to send back and it read, *"No, price is too high."* When she received the telegraph, it read, *"No price is too high."* She bought the diamond necklace. The husband was furious at Western Union and sued for their mistake. Western Union paid for the necklace all because of the missing comma.

On occasion, I have seen the hymn **"God Bless Ye Merry, Gentlemen"** have the same problem. When the comma is left off, the hymn is about God's blessing to merry gentlemen. With the comma in its proper place, then the hymn is about God's blessing of gentlemen with merriment. Merriment is the blessing that is being offered.

The book of Isaiah has an often quoted verse around Christmas time that plays a significant role in Handel's **Messiah**. In ancient Hebrew, the comma did not exist, so the verse is written without them. The verse reads, *"His name shall be called Wonder Counselor Mighty God Everlasting Father Prince Peace."* Translators put the commas where they think best. This is not a question of right versus wrong but rather a question of knowing the best way to translate it. If you are familiar with Handel and the King James translation, you may be adding commas as you sing to yourself, *"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."* In this translation, the eight words become five titles. If you are reading a more modern version, you will probably read it as, *"His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."* Here the eight words are reduced to four titles. I, too, would reduce it to four titles, but my first title would be *"Wonder Counselor,"* meaning the one who counsels on the Wonders of the universe.

The lesson: **Commas have power. [,]**

Good Biblical Words

(That Often Get Mutilated)

Sin is one of the words that never or rarely gets used in some circles and over used in others. It is one that is often tied to particular things, events, or anything not pleasing to a particular culture. It is one of the reasons why the Reformers put the accent on the singular word 'sin' rather than the plural 'sins'. Sin is an archery term. When one shoots at a target, one either hits it with a bulls eye or misses it. The miss is called an *amartia* or a sin. Today we use the expression, "He just doesn't get it." Or we may say of someone, "It went over his head" or, "It went right by me." You missed it! When one fails to become what one was intended to become, it is a sin. The target was missed. I am a fan of Martin Luther. After trying to confess all of his "sins", Luther simply gave up. He understood that it was all about hitting the target with his entire life [sin] - which he had failed to do. But the love of God got to him anyhow, so he lived by faith.

Holiness is another one. Without going into too much detail, when you watch your next fall ball game, just remember that when the game is over, the most valuable player is not the one who never got off the bench and who is sitting there with the cleanest of hands and the clean uniform, it is probably the dirtiest of players who looks like he has been through the wringer. Think about it.

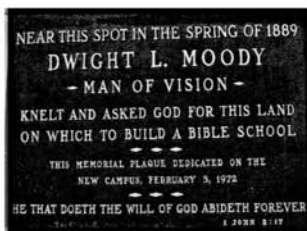
Meek: Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek..." The word *meek* is a horse term. Horses by nature are scared to death of fire. When used in the military, however, they are often used at night. When a horse was trained enough to take his queue from his master and not his nature, it was possible to walk in front of a horse carrying a torch. When the torch was passed in front of the horse and it did not move, the horse was declared to be meek.

Perfection: This is a beautiful word. There are a few words in the scriptures that are translated as perfection but none of them are about being flawless. They are about mending, repairing, making things right, fixing what is broken, and completing the task that one has begun. When Jesus said, "Be ye perfect as your father in heaven is perfect," he was telling us to live our lives, fixing what is broken, repairing what is damaged, healing the broken hearted, etc. As in holiness, it is not about sitting on the bench for fear of getting your uniform dirty.



Henry Parson Crowell [1855-1943]

Perhaps some of you are from Chicago. But even if you are, I doubt that you know that Henry Parson Crowell's legacy is significant. Henry's father died of TB when he was a teenager and he also lost two brothers to TB. When his father died, Henry inherited \$27,000 which, in the 1870 era, was a lot of coin. About the time of the GREAT CHICAGO FIRE, Henry, himself, contracted TB. His doctors recommended that he go out west for better air, so he went to Montana and bought a ranch. After 7 years, he was declared to be cured and returned to Chicago.



He invested some money in a partnership with a gentleman who wanted to make stoves out of sheet metal. Up until this point, people used wood-burning stoves that were made of cast iron. Frank Druyer ran the shop and Henry was the investor and Chairman of the Board. But Henry was looking for a company that he could purchase and manage himself.

He ended up purchasing a little bankrupt "grain" company. In those days, grain and everything else was sold in barrels. The barrels went to the stores and individual families would go to the store and purchase so much flour, wheat, oats, etc. Once he had control over this company, he changed everything. He repackaged the business, dressing up 5 gentlemen in Quaker clothes and putting them on a train from Chicago to Seattle. Each time the train stopped, his team of people would step off the train and pass out boxes of Quaker Oats to everyone on the platform. He also hired school children to pass out samples in their community. After awhile, everyone in the country heard of and was purchasing **Quaker Oats**. He did the same with flour and people started to purchase his **Aunt Jemima** pancake mix. His company became very successful, growing very quickly too quickly.

In his Presbyterian church one Sunday, they had a guest preacher from Chicago. The preacher was D.L. Moody who was the one who, after the Great Chicago Fire, tried to take care of some of the people. When a professor from the University and Pastor Moody would gather the homeless youth together to feed them, etc., the issue became, "what to do with them after they were fed?" **Teach them!** was the answer. Teach the poor to stand with the poor and to teach others the Bible. Anyhow, Moody came to his church and made two declarations that hit Henry Crowell between the eyes as if Henry were the only one in church that day.

The first was a statement: Moody said, "***The world has yet to see what God can do with, for, and through a person who is wholly consecrated to Him.***"

The second was a question: He asked, "***Do you ever think BIG things for God?***"

Continued:

Now, that statement and question haunted Henry Crowell and so he went to Moody sometime later and asked, ***“What big things do you want to do for God?”*** and Moody responded very quickly, ***“I want to see a place where the Bible can be taught...a school where the youth of our world can come from all over and learn the word of the Lord. I want to reach the poor, to stand in the gap and help the poor.”***

Crowell said to Moody, ***“Leave my name out of it, and I will do that. I may not be able to do it by myself, but I will get some of my friends and we will build you a school.”*** Moody said, ***“So there is no misunderstanding, the school I need to have built needs to be for people who come from the other side of the tracks. These will be people who will have no money to go to school. The school will have to be tuition free.”*** Whatever Crowell thought the cost was going to be, it would not be yea high but high, high, high...and ongoing. There would be no end to it.

Henry went home, got down on his knees, and made this pledge: “Lord, help me keep my company alive and I will give to Your work 70% of all that I earn.” Henry was having trouble with Quaker Oats. It was growing too quickly and this commitment he had made to the Lord and Moody was threatening to undo him. In real estate transactions, people call this, “BUYERS REMORSE”. I want you to feel that for a moment. In these cases, the more you have, the more you have to lose. **Feel it!**

In the middle of this financial crisis, a gentleman called on this little stove company that he had a major partnership in. Now picture this, this was a really tiny company and the gentleman says, ***“I am here to solicit the right to sell your stoves.”*** That is really an unusual request and so they ask, “Why would you want to do that?” The man said, “My employer is in the oil business and one of the bi-products of our refinement is kerosene. We have tanks full of this stuff and we do not know what to do with it. But it works great in your stoves. If we sell your stoves, people will purchase our kerosene.”

“Who is your employer?” they asked. “John D. Rockefeller and the Standard Oil Company,” the gentleman replied. “And how many salesmen do you have?” “We have 3000 salesmen that are willing to go to work today.” As you can guess, the stoves sold as quickly as they could make them and the money came gushing in...and so, the Moody Bible Institute was built.

Moody is the largest property holder in the City of Chicago and has been tuition free since its inception in 1886. The Lesson: **He was not rich and thus became generous. He was generous and then became rich.**

I AM FINE

There is nothing whatever the matter with me,
I'm just as healthy as I can be.

I have arthritis in both my knees,
And when I talk I speak with a wheeze.

My pulse is weak, my blood is thin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.

I think my liver is out of whack,
I have a terrible pain in my back.

My hearing is poor and my eyes are dim,
Most everything seems out of trim.

The way I stagger sure is a crime,
I'm likely to fall most any time.
But all things considered, I'm feeling fine.

Arch supporters I have for both my feet,
Or I wouldn't be able to walk down the street.

My fingers are ugly, stiff at the joints,
My nails are impossible to keep into points.

My complexion is poor due to dry skin,
But I'm still awfully well for the shape I'm in.

My dentures are driving me crazy; I'm restless at night,
And when I get up I'm simply a sight.

My memory is failing, my head's in a spin,
I'm practically living on aspire.
But I am awfully well for the shape I'm in.

The moral of this tale I unfold,
That for you and me, who are growing old,

It's better to say, I'm fine with a grin,
Than to tell anyone of the shape we are in.



The Rime And The Thaw

The following story is based on the classic poem, "*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*", by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834):



The late physicist, Carl Sagan, once wrote that "*The cosmos is all there is or ever will be.*" Others have simply been mystified by the "*reality of the Invisible workings of the world*". One such man was Coleridge who was considered one of the two great seminal minds of England. Coleridge is only one man and this is merely one man's story. The poem is too long for me to share in its fullness, but I will do my best to put it into a shorter story form. After the story, I will explain why I tell this story...and hope that those of you who enjoy reading may consider this poem as one that is worth your time. As with biblical wisdom literature, if the shoe fits -- wear it. If not, perhaps you will learn from it in the future.

Two key words:

Rhyme (which is *not* used in this story) is a term for two words having a corresponding sound. This is not to be confused with the following which is the title of both the poem and the sermon.

Rime is the frost that builds up over time and becomes heavier with each passing day. Like the rest of us, Samuel Coleridge was fascinated by the fact that there are times we make decisions and follow through with them and, at other times, we decide to do something—yet nothing works out as planned. By the time his life on earth was over, he was convinced there were more things going on in life than we could possibly imagine. You may or may not think the same about your life. In his eloquence, he explains it as follows:

"I really believe that there are more invisible than visible Natures in the universe. But who will explain for us the family of all these beings, and the ranks and relations and distinguishing features and functions of each? What do they do? What places do they inhabit? The human mind has always sought the knowledge of these things, but never attained it. Meanwhile I do not deny that it is helpful sometimes to contemplate in the mind, as on a tablet, the image of a greater and better world, lest the intellect, habituated to the petty things of daily life, narrow itself and sink wholly into trivial thoughts. But at the same time we must be watchful for the truth and keep a sense of proportion, so that we may distinguish the certain from the uncertain, day from night."

"We know the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual... I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not. I do what I do not want to do..."

Continued:

Now, for the story:

I am new around these parts and I have never seen the coast before. I and my friends came for a wedding to which I am in the wedding party. The wedding is to be held at the church right there on the hill. As we were entering the church, I got a glance of the sea and this beautiful harbor. I just had to go take a look.

I sat on this stone bench looking out over the harbor. Next to me was a bearded sailor who reached out and grabbed me by his skinny weak wrist. "Unhand me, you old goon," I said. I tell you this so you know it was not the strength of his hand that held me there but, rather, the strength of his voice and the twinkle in his eye as he told me his story.

As the harbor was cleared, the people cheered as we raised the sail that fine sunny day. I yelled to the helmsman, "10 degrees port!" and the wind slowly caught the sail and, slowly, we moved away from the quay. "20 degrees more!" I shouted, and off we went zig zagging through the harbor that the Harbor Master had cleared. We continued to tack until we were clear of the harbor and hit the open sea.

"All sails up," I said, and we continued to raise one sail after another until all sails were filled with the wind, and we were off - speeding along under the gentle breeze and the fair sky. We traveled day and night until we reached the equator. It was hard to imagine a finer sailing time.

Then, all of a sudden, things began to change. The winds picked up speed, too much speed. We began to lower the sails and I yelled to the helmsman, "20 degrees starboard!" Nothing happened, so I yelled louder, "20 degrees to the starboard!" And still nothing happened. I had no control over the helmsman and he had no control over the ship. The winds simply took us where they wished.

As the winds continued to howl and the waves became higher and higher, the temperature dropped, and it became colder and colder. Pretty soon, we were freezing. As the waves continued to crash on the ship, the water would spray and freeze. We were all coated with Rime. Our arms became almost too heavy to lift, but we had to lift them to chop the ice off the ship before the weight of the ice capsized us. So, we spent our time chopping ice off the ship and off ourselves as we feared the worst. This went on day in and day out as we went, not where we wished, but wherever the winds took us. We were all sure we were about to die.



Continued:

Suddenly, we could feel a slight break in the wind and a large bird flew by. It was the first sign of life we had seen in a long time. The next day, the winds calmed a little more and this large albatross sat on our mast for awhile before flying away. It returned each day and, with each day, the winds calmed a little more. Finally, we were able to turn the ship around.

One day when the bird returned, I looked up at the bird and I looked at the cross-bow that I kept by my side. I do not know why I did it, but I took that cross-bow, aimed it high on the mast at the bird, pulled the trigger and shot that bird. As the bird fell to the deck, all eyes turned to me. They did not have to say anything, but I am sure you all know that look. If looks could kill, I would be dead. I had killed the only ray of hope to have entered our lives in a long time. I had killed their pet. I had destroyed an innocent. That dead albatross was hung around my neck, and I was burdened down with guilt and shame. I had no idea why I did it.

I went to the side of the boat and looked out over the sea and noticed all of the ugly creatures swimming by. I had never seen such ugly things in my life - the sea was full of ugliness. From the stares of the men who continued to give me "that look - you know that look" to the ugly creatures in the sea, all was hopeless.

There was water, water everywhere, and all the boards did shrink. Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink.... and, in despair, I bowed my head. "Oh Lord," I cried, "who can deliver me from this albatross that hangs around my neck?" With that, the weight of this bird dropped to the bottom of the sea. I went to the side of the ship again and looked around, "Whoa, look at all the beautiful creatures in the sea. I have never noticed that before. Look, they are red and blue, silver and black, gold and green. Such a variety!"

If you were to look at us, you would say we were a painted ship upon a painted sea ... nothing moved. For days, we just sat in one spot. Then slowly, very slowly, the breezes returned and off we went going further north. Off in the distance, I saw a hill and on the hill I saw a church. "Is that the church? Is that my own country?" We steered the ship into the harbor from which we had come and the Harbor Master was there to greet us and His Son was with Him. As we coasted up to the quay where our journey had begun, the ship sank, but the Son reached out His hand and grabbed mine as the ship sank to the bottom.



Continued:

As the ancient mariner finished his story, the church bells rang out and the wedding party all exited the church. I turned and the ancient mariner was gone. So, there I sat. None of my plans for today and the wedding had worked out for me, but I sat there a much wiser man.

I tell you this story because there are times in our lives when we say to the helmsman [or our own body], "Do this or do that", and it does. When this happens, our Lord says to us, *"I know, that is why I came, take my yoke upon you and follow me."* There are times when we say to the helmsman of our life, "Do this or do that", and absolutely nothing happens. Our own bodies will not even obey us. The control is gone and we simply get blown wherever the winds wish to take us. When that happens, our Lord says to us, *"I know, that is why I came, take my yoke upon you and follow me."*

There are times in our life when we really do something STUPID and we may not even know we did it. I/we get the look. You know the look. The look that says, "How could you, after all we did for you, etc, etc?" You know what it is like to have that albatross around your neck. If you do, the Lord says to you, *"I know, that is why I came, take my yoke upon you and follow me."*

Perhaps you know what it is like to have that albatross fall from your neck and into the sea, and to then see all of the beauty around you. If you do, you will understand what our Lord says when He tell us, *"I know, that is why I came, take my yoke upon you and follow me."* Perhaps you can see your life coming to its end and your ship is about to sink. When the Son reaches out His hand for you to take, you will understand what He means when He says, *"I know, that is why I came, take my yoke upon you and learn from me."*

As you journey through this gift we call life....follow....follow....follow....



What is in Your Wallet?

Arnold Fine was walking down the street one bitterly cold day when he stumbled upon a wallet on the street. It had six dollars in it and a crumpled-up letter that obviously had been carried around for many years. The letter was dated 60 years earlier and began:



"Dear Michael"..... the letter ended a romance because of a parent's demands. The last line promised, ***"I will always love you, Michael"***, and was signed, ***"Yours, Hannah"***.

There was no ID in the wallet, so Fine was unable to return the wallet to anyone, but was, literally, haunted by the fact that someone had carried this letter around for over 60 years. He would take the letter out and read it over several times. Then he decided to try to contact Hannah whose address was still legible on the letter. He finally retrieved a phone number, but when he called it, he was not surprised to discover that Hannah's family had long ago moved out of that house. However, the new owner of the house informed him of the nursing home where Hannah's mother had moved to.

He pursued it still further and called the nursing home, but learned that Hannah's mother was no longer living. When he told the nursing home what he was doing, and why, they gave him the address and phone number they had on file of Hannah as the next of kin. He traced that number down and learned that Hannah was now in a different nursing home herself.

He was able to get the name of that nursing home and the phone number. He called the number and ***"yes"*** they confirmed that Hannah was indeed a resident there. As soon as he could, Fine decided to visit the nursing home and try to talk with Hannah. As planned, the director of the nursing home met Fine at the front door and an escort took him to the 3rd floor where Hannah was pointed out to him. She was with a group of people watching TV. Fine introduced himself to Hannah and explained how he had found the wallet, etc., and pulled out the letter and asked Hannah if she indeed was the one who had written it.

"Oh yes," said Hannah, ***"I sent this letter to Michael because I was only 16 years old at the time and my mother refused to allow me to see him anymore."*** ***"He was so very handsome,"*** she said. ***"He looked like Sean Connery."*** Fine could see the joy in her face and the twinkle in her eyes as she spoke of Michael.

"Michael Goldstein was his name," she said, ***"and if you ever see Michael, please tell him that I think of him all of the time and that I never did marry. No one I ever met ever measured up to him. I compared everyone to him and they all came up short"...*** and then she brushed the tears from her eyes, revealing the love for Michael was still as strong as when she had written the letter 60 years before.

Continued:

Fine thanked her for meeting with him, and then he left. When he got to the front door, the security guard asked him about his visit. He told the guard his story about the wallet and letter and ended by saying that, at least now, he had the name of the one who had owned the wallet-- **Michael Goldstein**.

"Goldstein," said the guard, **"We have a Michael Goldstein on the 8th floor."** With that news, Fine ran to the elevator and went to the 8th floor where he asked for Michael Goldstein. When they directed him to an elderly gentleman, Fine went to him and asked, *"Have you lost a wallet?" "Oh yes, I lost it the other day when I went out for a walk."*

Fine handed him the wallet and asked, **"Is this your wallet?"** Michael was simply delighted to see his wallet again and expressed his gratitude repeatedly until Fine interrupted him. *"I have something to tell you,"* Fine said. *"I read the letter in your wallet."* *"You read my letter?" "Yes, I did,"* said Fine, *"and I have something else to tell you. I think I know where Hannah is."*

Michael grew pale and quiet. *"You know where she is? How is she?" "She is fine and just as beautiful as she was when you last saw her."* *"Can you tell me where she is? I would love to call her. When I received this letter, my whole life stopped. I never married because I never stopped loving her."* *"Come with me,"* said Fine, and he took him to the elevator and they went to the third floor.


By this time, the director of the building had been informed, via the security guard, and he had joined them as they entered Hannah's room. The director was the first to speak and said to Hannah, *"Hannah, do you know this man?"* She adjusted her glasses to give him a closer look when Michael spoke up and said, *"Hannah, it is Michael".* She stood as he walked over to her and they embraced for as long as they could stand. They then sat down, held each other's hands and cried. With that, the director and Fine slowly stepped out of the room.

Three weeks later, Arnold Fine received a letter inviting him to attend the wedding of Hannah, age 76, and Michael, age 78.

This true story ends with the words of Arnold Fine, **"How good the work of the Lord is", Readers Digest circa 1980s.**

Just be yourself....

Everyone else is taken.



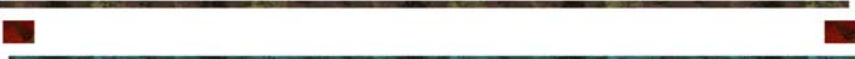
Stewardship

This is a story about Paul and Marilyn. It is not a story I read about, but a story about people that I know. Paul had no money as a child, but he liked to draw and sketch, and decided that he wanted to be an architect. In his town, there was a technical high school (like Pinellas County's PTEC) where one could learn construction. At this school, students would erect small buildings, do the wiring, plumbing, heat and air, etc, thereby learning all of the trades.

When Paul graduated from this school, he went to the University of Michigan to be an architect. During the summer, he worked at a lumber yard putting the lumber on trucks that were being sent out to various construction sites. While doing this, two things developed. He had a growing concern about becoming an architect. He realized that the only people who hire architects were people with money and he did not have any, nor know of people who did. He saw a piece of property that he liked and got itchy to design and build his own home.

He had designed some homes on paper, but wanted to make those drawings a reality. He did not have money for the land and he did not have the money to build the house. He shared his dream with some friends and some agreed to loan him a little money. At the end of the summer, he approached the lumber yard where he worked and told them he wanted to build a house and asked them if he could take the lumber necessary and pay them back when the house was sold. They immediately said, "No, we do not do business that way." His response was, *"Yes you do. You have people that pay you in 30—60—90 days and some take even longer. You have lumber that will sit on your land all winter and you will sell it in the spring. Let me have it instead and I will get started on my house right away, and you will have all the lumber for the house sold by the same time."* They agreed, so he now had the material to start the building and with the help of a few friends, he purchased the land.

At the same time, he decided to marry a young lady (Marilyn) he was dating who attended the same church he did. The issue when they got married was, "How much should be given to the church?" His parents, who had very little, always gave 10% and his mother practiced "envelope accounting". This was a very common practice in years gone by. People simply had envelopes - about a half dozen of them with labels - *church, rent, food, electric*, etc. The husband would be paid in cash, come home and give it to the wife who in turn would then put the correct amounts in the envelopes and pay the bills from there. When she did that, she would always say to him, ***"You will never be able to out give the Lord"***.



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So, even though he did not have a salary, Paul and Marilyn pledged 10% to the church. Paul finished the house, sold it, paid off the people who loaned him the money, paid off the lumber yard, and had a little money left over to build a second house. When the year was over and they faced the "pledge to church" question again, they decided that they had survived the 10% tithe, so they decided to make it 11% the following year.

After building several homes, he decided to build an apartment structure and in the next few years, they added a percentage to their church pledge every year. By the time they had been married for 5 years, they were giving 15%.

After a few years, three gentlemen came to see him with this story. The 3 of us cannot get along. All we do is fight. Here are our plans, the deed to our property, and the architectural drawing, zoning, permits, etc. We want you to buy us out for what we paid for this. He does just that but, in his mind, he says to himself, "Look what the Lord just gave me."

He builds this project which is very successful and, in its success, he does not say, "Look what I did," but rather, "What does the Lord want me to do with this?" I could tell you many stories that follow from this, but I have selected just one little one,

THE BILLY KIM STORY:

Billy was a house boy for an American soldier during the Korean war. When the war was over, the soldier brought Billy back to the USA with him. Billy worked for the soldier for a few years until he became a teenager. The soldier did not know what to do with him, so he dropped him off at a live-in school in South Carolina and paid for Billy's first year or so. The first Christmas at the school, everyone went home, but Billy had no home to go to so his roommate took him to his home in Ohio.

The next Christmas, the Ohio family asked their son if Billy would be coming home with him. He said, "No, Billy has become a Christian and he wants to stay in South Carolina and preach on the street corners." That was so unusual that the Ohio family took an interest in him and discovered that Billy was determined to go back to Korea and preach. The Ohio family shared this information with Paul one day and the two families decide to help Billy finish his education so he can go back to Korea to preach. Billy did go back and created a church which became extremely large and that church started other churches. Today, the name of Billy Kim is as popular in Korea as Billy Graham is in the USA. More on this story to come.

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A few years later, the City's Chamber of Commerce came to see Paul. Right in the middle of this small town, a well known tire company bought a significant corner piece of property to build a tire store there amidst these nice shops. The Chamber said, "We do not want to look at the back end of cars in the middle of our little town - please build something nice there." So, Paul developed a plan, even though the land belonged to someone else. The Chamber loved the plan, went and talked to the tire company and told them they did not want them there. To make a long story short, with help from the Chamber, Paul was able to develop a building that the City loved. He said, "Look what the Lord has given to me. How can I use this for God's glory?"

I could tell you story after story about how this was done but, for times sake, let me go back to the story of Billy Kim from Korea. Paul doesn't loan any money. If you are looking for money, he will send you to the bank. But one day, someone came to see him and said, "I am desperate for money (as I recall, it was \$40,000) and I need it now."

This gentleman owned a few motels and he was buying one and selling one, and the closing was set for the same day. The one he was selling did not close that morning for some reason and the one he was buying was that afternoon. He could get a loan from his bank, but he could not do it that quickly. So, Paul gave him the \$40,000, and not too long after that, he got his money back along with a stock certificate. In appreciation, the gentleman insisted that he accept the certificate of stock in his little motel. A few years later, the gentleman returned and handed Paul a check for \$80,000. Once again, Paul said, "Look what the Lord just gave me - how can I use it for God's glory?"

So, Paul calls his friend in South Korea who now has a huge church. He says to Billy, "How are you doing?" Billy says, "Great, we are about to build the first nursing home in Korea. We have all the plans, the church is excited about it, now all we need is to purchase the land. As soon as we have that money we will start." Paul asked, "How much is the land?" Billy said, "\$80,000." Paul told Billy to buy the land and that the check was in the mail.

It was about 25 years ago when they built that nursing home. About 5 years ago, Billy called Paul and said, "We are selling the nursing home and are going to build another one. Land has become so expensive that we have to build it further away from the church. Paul asked how much they were selling the old one for. Billy said that the buyers were paying \$8 million but were going to tear down the nursing home as they only wanted the land.

Continued:

Billy is now retired. South Korea is now one of the most successfully managed countries in the world and it has prospered. You cannot find anyone in South Korea who does not know the name of Billy Kim. Korea now has some very major corporations: Hyundai and Samsung, to name just two. The heads of these corporations attend Billy Kim's church.

The little corporation that Paul and his friend from Ohio set up to send Billy to school and to support him for a number of years is still in existence. Billy had them stop sending him money years ago and now **he** sits on the board and sends money. They now work with missionaries in Southeast Asia.

Paul's wife, Marilyn, died about 3 years ago. When she died, they had been married for 55 years. Every year of their married life, they added at least 1% to their annual giving. After 55 years of married life, their donation level was at 90%. Today, Paul will tell you that the Bible and his mom were right. It is not possible to out-give to the Lord. The more seeds I spread, the greater the harvest.

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted....Ecclesiastes 3:2

It's Not Possible
To
Out Give The Lord

The Lord's Prayer

Over the years, I have often been asked, "Why do the Catholics not finish the last line of The Lord's Prayer?" Here is the answer:

When the Catholics translated the Scripture for the Vulgate translation, it was done by St. Jerome. At that time, the oldest known manuscripts did not have the line: "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever."



Many years later, when the King James translation was made, the oldest known manuscripts contained that last line, so Protestants included it in their prayer. There are many rules of translation but one of them is, generally, the oldest manuscript wins. Thus, the King James ends the prayer with "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever."

For a number of years, I was rather critical of the Catholic church for not changing it, but I certainly understand TRADITION with all of its vices and virtues. I am no longer that knowledgeable about manuscripts, but I have seen this change a few times in my lifetime. The last I knew, the oldest manuscript did not have that last line in the prayer. But of course, we stick with the tradition we know.

Did a scribe leave that last sentence off as he was copying the Scripture, or did the Scribe get carried away and add a line? Regardless, the amount of scholarship that has gone into gathering the latest manuscripts is impressive. There is not a word, a letter, a punctuation mark that has not been analyzed to the fullest, and the Scriptures stand strong.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and for correction.

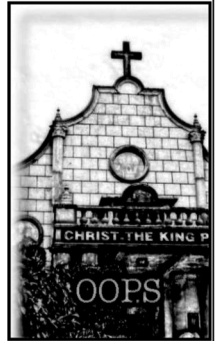
Interpretations

While driving my little VW convertible with the top down, I stopped at a red light next to a pick up truck when the driver yelled out the window to me, "Sir, I am from Virginia and I can read, but for the life of me I cannot figure that out. Can you tell me what that sign means across the street?" I looked up and scanned the signs and knew immediately what his problem was. The sign read "PRESSED CUBANS". I then explained to him that a pressed Cuban was a popular sandwich in Florida and that we do not send Cubans to the dry cleaners for a pressing. We both had a good laugh.



Rev2B

Before working on a research project for the University of Colorado Medical Center, I was an orderly on the psychiatric ward. I was also a seminary student at the time and the staff would tease me and referred to me as Rev 2B.



Throughout the year, I would get comments in the hallway from nurses, or there would be notes in the charts to have "Rev 2B tell Christ the King". Whenever asked about whether or not I informed "Christ the King" about a certain patient, I always responded positively.

At the end of the year, I was leaving this job in order to get married and would be gone for a month. There was not a place for them to send my check, so I requested that they simply hold it and when I returned, I would pick it up. When I did, I was told my check was being held in the personnel office on the other side of the hospital. As I drove over there, where I had never been before, I was shocked to discover that the name of the church next to the medical center was "Christ the King". For an entire year, I thought I was being teased only to discover that I was actually being asked to inform the church about one of their parishioners.

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There is an old Chinese Proverb that I like: The best way to build a tunnel through a mountain is to put 10,000 men on one side of the mountain and 10,000 men on the other side. You then yell "DIG". If they should meet, great ... you have your tunnel. If they do not meet, better still, you have two tunnels.

Past and Future

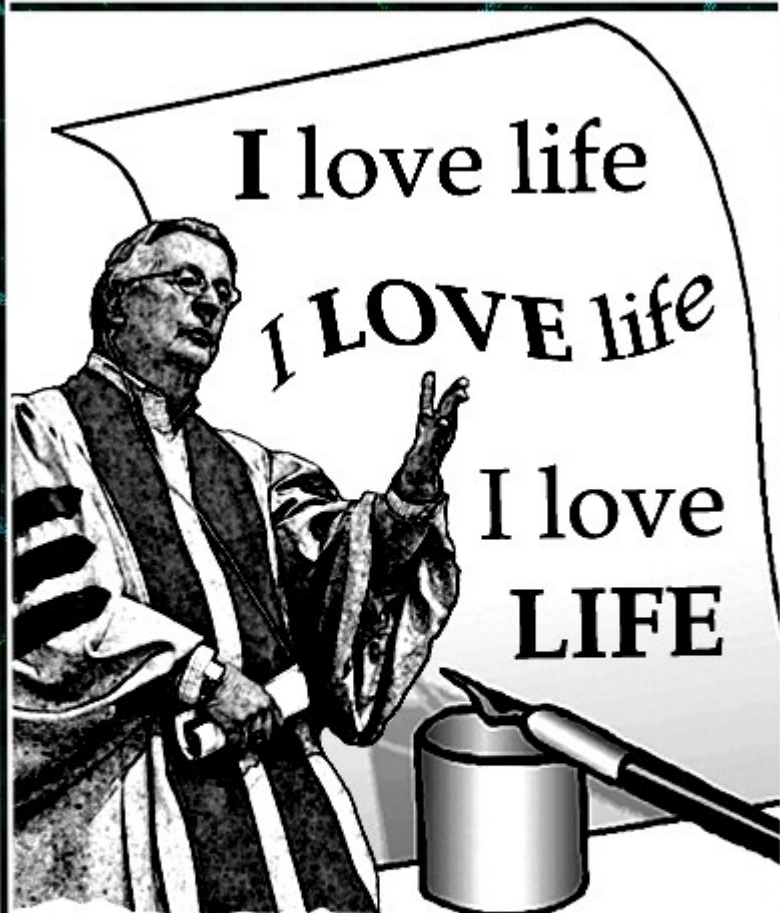
I am not sure the best way to study a language. Perhaps that is why I was not too good at it. My way was to put words on little cards and, while at work in the hospital (my employer during seminary days), I would carry those words around in my pocket. As I walked the halls or had a few moments, I would bring out my little cards and try to learn words.



One day, I pulled out a Hebrew word [Tomil] that I had translated "Past or in-front of." I figured I had made a mistake for it is obvious that if it were the "past", it would be "behind". I put that word card in a separate pocket. A little while later, I pulled out another word [Mahir] that I had translated "Future" or "behind" - Another mistake?

When I got back to school, I discovered that I did not make a mistake. This was no error. The ancient Hebrew looked at the past as being in front of you and the future as being behind you. Why, that is crazy ... is it not? The ancient Jew would then say to you, "Which one can you see?"

We see the past, but we are always blind to the future.



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