

FAITH AND VICTORY

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Heart Garden

By Bro. Carlos Doolittle

Seeds of Influence

"A sower went out to sow his seed..." Luke 8:5. In this parable, tiny seeds broadcasted by a grain farmer are likened to the effects of an anointed sermon on an audience. Have you ever planted any seed and watched and waited for it to grow?

I am thinking of the influence that we have on others, and the influence that others have on us. If my thoughts, attitudes, and actions are the "plants" growing in my heart, I wonder what seeds I am distributing to others around me. If I've been carefully tending my heart garden, apprenticed under the Master Gardener, I should certainly have some experiences, some blessing, some comfort—a testimony to share. "[God] comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, with the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." II Corinthians 1:4. He provides us many experiences to perfect, stablish, strengthen us, but we must not think

for a minute that He is only working for the good of our own souls. He would use us to bless others.

But then, I'm sharing seeds, whether I intend to or not. Most of the seeds a plant produces sprout and grow right where the flower bloomed (more of the same right in my own heart garden), but some of them fan out into nearby hearts. My family and acquaintances will be influenced by my choices, either for good or for bad. Probably, at best, there will be some of both.

Water, wind, and animals carry seeds from place to place. There is a gentle swell that runs through the front yard of our former home. It carries run-off water to the cross drain under the highway. After a heavy rain, we had our own swollen stream. The water running across the ground carried seeds from nearby areas and deposited them in our yard. It also carried seed from my fairly weedy turf and from our flower gardens on its way to the pond across the road.

Flowing water reminds me of how far words can travel. Once spilled, communication is impossible to fully retract, and it carries in it the essence of what is growing in my heart—seed of the fruiting things, ready to grow somewhere that it lodges. "...For the tree is known by his fruit....Out of the abundance (Greek, "overflowings") of the heart, the mouth speaketh." Matthew 12:33-34. Think of how a rumor spreads from heart to heart. Of course, a "good report" can, too. We are sharing our life perspective in

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comments on the weather, instructions to a child, responses to a problem—even silence. Lord, help me.

Water reaches far, but winds of change may reach farther and wider. **Peer pressure** can serve for good, but at best, it is unsteady like the wind. Most valuable seeds are too weighty to be distributed that way. My choice to do right must not be because others are doing it. If I am willing to measure myself by others, I'll be as influenced by what they do—or do not do, as by what they say. Some thistle-like, invasive species may float in on the breeze. While the political and cultural climate around me is swirling with murmurings, whirling with questions, and blustering with indifference, a seed of doubt or double-mindedness may settle down among the treasures of my heart garden...because others are doing this...or because they are not doing that. It helps to realize that my own perception of myself determines who I consider to be my peers. It can be an eye-opening way to see what my values are—reflected in my associates and inspirations. Who are your peers?

Our human associations are naturally so deep and meaningful. Living in the shadow of a solidly settled Saint's example can be a real advantage—just as the winged seeds of a maple ride the winds to settle nearby and maples grow in the area long after the first tree is gone. However, bad influences seem to be even more prolific, like fluffy thistle down. It takes especial diligence to get at a prickly thistle, but since I know that we each influence each other, I must diligently attend my own piece of ground and remove any evil or careless influence before there are fields of it around me.

Animals, especially birds, are also vectors of seed dispersal. In the parable, those birds gobbling up seed by the way side would also be depositing seeds from their full range of diet. Bird droppings are one reason fence rows so quickly re-grow with weeds of a given area. In the Scriptures, birds sometimes represent foul **spirits**. A few years ago, the Lord interrupted me while listening to the message on Sunday morning to show me that my reaction to the sermon was being influenced by a foul spirit. I was so thankful for His intervention, and it turned out that the sermon was part of an answer for which I had been praying. If that bird had stayed to gobble up that seed, I would have missed some of God's Word to my heart, and I

would have been left with a negative attitude in its place. I nearly shuddered as I realized that spirit had been hanging out on the fence for several Sundays.

Some seed sprouts readily. A smile begets a smile; a harsh word—a hasty, hot response. But sometimes, we must wait and wait. Don't lose hope. Seeds are designed to endure adverse conditions. The Maker designed many seeds to endure the harshness of winter. Some rare wildflowers germinate exclusively in the charred remains of a fire, perfectly timed to receive the sunlight when the jungle of forest or the tangle of grasses has been scorched away. Other seeds must pass through the digestive tract of an animal or be physically scarified to break down the protective seed coat. Is a nearby life scorched barren or a harsh reality chilling some soul? God may yet have need of the seed in the soil of that heart—even if the heart be my own!

Quite a few years ago, a sister in our congregation had to have a new septic system installed at her home. The work scarred her neat yard with bald, red clay, but to her surprise, old-fashioned pink petunias began sprouting there in the clay. She had lived there for many years and was not aware of petunias ever having grown in that area. She testified of the blessing that it was to her. She enjoyed them for a long while. Perhaps God performed a miracle, or perhaps He planned ahead.

The Root of the Matter

Is it your lot to garden by a weedy spot? Beware. Not all plants require the seed and germination process to propagate themselves. They'll just as gladly run a vigorous root right under your fence. I remember a hedge of elderberries that I planted at our previous home. I transplanted them from the side of the road for a seasonal screen between two backyards, anticipating their lacey blooms in early summer, and counting on elderberry jelly. I know how invasive elderberries can be in our climate. After harvesting the first round of fruit of the summer, I would crop back the vigorous plants severely to remove the remaining berries before they could be dispersed in the area. I may have grown those plants on that fence for about three years. Then, I decided to cut them down.

Even after that time, I continued to remove elderberry sprouts from nearby. The sprouts

were not wimpy seedlings. They were vigorous sprouts from well-established, running roots, and they weren't all on my side of the fence. The residents of those homes may still be fighting elderberries on that fence. They could just blame the birds, but I know better.

God's Word compares an attitude to this root. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of **bitterness** springing up trouble *you* and thereby many be defiled..." (Hebrews 12:14-15.)

Bitterness has a way of attacking—and feeling attacked by, personalities or circumstances that merely resemble the original offender or offense...“and thereby many be defiled.” Unsuspecting or bewildered onlookers may not be able to sense the emotional connections between apparently unrelated circumstances. “The heart knoweth his own **bitterness**; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.” Proverbs 14:10. The above-ground qualities of bitterness may be so carefully managed that others may never be able to make the connections of “why.” Layers of instinctive self-defense may cover the root of the matter.

But, if the root remains, others around me will feel the effects. Disguising the bitter truth, explanations that I give for my decisions and actions may be only “fifteen-percent reasons” ...a pretext here...a guise there. Even our own hearts can deceive us—justifying our actions and disregarding our motives. Lord, help us to go deeper.

The spirit of bitterness can certainly be scattered by the fowls, but what about those hearts closest to me—spouse, children, siblings, best of friends. If we include them in our schemes to defend ourselves or attack them for their similarity to “the one who hurts me,” they may find roots of bitterness maturing in their own lives, ripening at an alarming rate.

“These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth (Hebrew: also “stretch out” or “shoot forth”) discord among brethren.” Proverbs 6:16-19.

A blessed influence on others really has less to do with managing the seed dispersal and more to do with care of what plants are actually growing in my heart. Am I simply safeguarding my reputation, or am I cultivating my character to be “rooted and grounded in love”? (Ephesians 3:17.) “Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine figs? ...For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” James 3:12,16-17.

“And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” James 3:18. Let's forgive...and be forgiven.

Sharing Seed Thoughts

In a seed, there is life. “...Whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the **gospel**; which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and **bringeth forth fruit**, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth...” Colossians 1:5-6. In the Colossian saints, this seed of the Gospel had born faith, love and hope. The Apostle Paul went on to write, “For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being **fruitful** in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God...” Colossians 1:9-10.

I have spent very little effort collecting and saving seed, but I'm trying to learn. Growing hybrid varieties of plants usually involves buying another seed packet for the next year. But, when the Scriptures were written, most of the Jewish farmers probably saved the seeds of one crop to be the starting point of the next, just as the American pioneers did.

Our modern hybrids were mostly developed for pack-and-ship markets where the money flows. Uniform fruit size, toughness for handling, and perfect coloration have been selected in the hybridization rather than superb taste and excellent nutrition. It has to look good to sell, you see. There is a growing interest to reconsider the “heirloom” varieties that were

(Continued on page six.)

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This publication teaches salvation from all sin, sanctification for believers, unity and oneness for which Jesus prayed as recorded in John 17:21, and manifested by the apostles and believers after Pentecost. By God's grace we teach, preach, and practice the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ—the same gospel that Peter, John, and Paul preached, taught, and practiced, including divine healing for the body. James 5:14-15.

Its motto: Have faith in God. Its object: The glory of God and the salvation of men; the restoration and promulgation of the whole truth to the people in this "evening time" as it was in the morning Church of the first century; the unification of all true believers in one body by the love of God. Its standard: Separation from sin and entire devotion to the service and will of God. Its characteristics: No discipline but the Bible, no bond of union but the love of God, and no test of fellowship but the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

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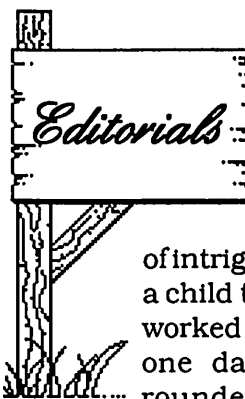
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"Though ye have lien among the pots, *yet shall ye be* as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." Psalms 68:13.

There is a certain amount of intrigue that lingers in the mind of a child toward stories of people who worked and lived in poverty and who one day found themselves surrounded by beauty, honor and wealth. While one could name a number of secular childhood stories that could be described in these terms there are also a number of Bible stories that show how God's favor has elevated people of low estate into places of honor. Consider for instance the life of Joseph, Daniel, David, Esther, Ruth, Deborah and Mary—people who were despised and in the lower echelons of society that were eventually given places of respect among their peers. In each of these lives it was the presence and favor of God that brought them out of their low station in life. The place that each of these achieved could not have been accomplished independently of the Lord's blessing. In light of this knowledge it truly shows the wisdom of those who seek the Lord first in their lives.

The verse listed above has an appealing beauty that has the potential of ministering a rich blessing to one's soul. The structure of the verse is broad enough that it could be adapted to many interpretations, but all of them illustrate the gracious favor of our Heavenly Father toward the plight of mankind.

Notice this comment contained in the *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*: "Though ye have laboured and lain down between the brick-kilns in Egypt—a poor, enslaved, and oppressed people, yet ye shall gradually rise to dignity, prosperity, and splendour; as a dove, which has been defiled with dirt, disordered, and dejected, by washing herself in a running stream, and trimming her plumage, gradually recovers the serenity of her disposition, the purity of colour, and the richness and varied elegance of her appearance." The miraculous deliverance that God gave to the children of Israel is a beautiful symbol of what He wants to do for each soul who has been enslaved by satan and stained by the defiling things of the world. Is there hope for a person in such a helpless state? Yes, great hope!

God offers freedom from the bondage of sin and He has sent His only begotten Son to open a cleansing fountain for sin and uncleanness. This great blessing is freely offered to mankind. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.

Adam Clarke has a different application of this scripture. He states, "The prophet is supposed here to address the tribes of Reuben and Gad, who remained in their inheritances, occupied with agricultural, maritime, and domestic affairs, when the other tribes were obliged to go against Jabin, and the other Canaanitish kings. Ye have been thus occupied, while your brethren sustained a desperate campaign; but while you are inglorious, they obtained the most splendid victory, and dwell under those rich tents which they have taken from the enemy; coverings of the most beautiful colors, adorned with gold and silver."

One of the hardest things for some people to do is rejoice at another person's prosperity. When these folks are in the presence of someone who has joy over an accomplishment or possession, they invariably have to interject a barb to detract from the sweetness of their joy. An attitude like this should be guarded against for it is not becoming for God's people to be this way. However there are times that we have to deal with the fact that it seems others are prospering so well and doing such great things and we seem to be left with the unrelenting menial chores of household duties day after day. Unless one, by faith, can grasp hold of a deeper meaning to life, the monotony of the day to day routine will take the sweetness out of the soul. This verse is a powerful promise to claim for your own. God judges righteously, and those who are faithful in the little things will be handsomely rewarded. When one learns to trust their hopes, dreams and ambitions into the hands of their faithful Creator, they find a sense of serenity comes over their spirit that gives them power to continue living where they feel that He would have them to be.

In 1912, Ina Duley Ogdon was invited to be a Chautauqua Circuit speaker. It was considered a great honor to be included in these traveling seminars and Ina was thrilled to receive this invitation and felt it was a way she could witness for the Lord to thousands of

people around the country. But as she was preparing for her departure, her father was seriously injured in an automobile accident and the responsibility for his care fell on her shoulders. Though keenly disappointed, she surrendered her plans to God and determined to be a blessing where she was. She might not be able to be the blessing she envisioned to the thousands who would attend the traveling seminars, but she could minister to one—her father and others she was around. During the period of her father's convalescence she wrote these words: "Do not wait until some deed of greatness you may do, Do not wait to shed your light afar, To the many duties ever near you now be true, Brighten the corner where you are." This poem was later set to music and has been a tremendous blessing to millions of people.

One day a certain scribe came to our blessed Savior and expressed a desire to follow Him. Jesus replied, "... Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Luke 9:58. As Jesus traveled around preaching and ministering to the people He obviously spent the night in many different ways, depending on what was provided for Him, perhaps staying with someone or even sleeping in the open outdoors of the countryside or in the mountains. While this was a great sacrifice, He also used this time to be close to God. Today we still enjoy the rich blessings that came from Christ's ministry when we read the New Testament writers, for they wrote of those things that they saw and heard.

God's people are still called on to go through hard and difficult times, but in the midst of these struggles God has promised to be there to give grace and strength. And we know that He will never forget the labor of love that has been expended for His sake. The reward for those labors may not come in this life but the hope of a child of God reaches into eternity.

There have been those who have lived many years before our time but the fruit of their labor still blesses us today. Some of those efforts occurred while they were going through hard, trying times locked into a prison cell. Apostle Paul wrote several of his epistles from prison, John's Revelation was written while he was in exile; John Bunyan wrote *Pilgrims Progress* while in Bedford jail; Martin Luther translated the Bible into German while locked up in

Wartburg castle; some of Madame Guyon's deep spiritual experiences and sweet poems were fruit that matured as a result of her long imprisonment.

We know that God is faithful and He will never forsake those that trust in Him. One day, He will allow His glory to shine upon His people in its rich fullness and the struggles they have endured will be forgotten for the joy of being with Him forever in Heaven.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey
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Heart Garden

(Continued from page three.)

grown and shared between neighbors because they tasted so good and were hardy growers. (We just ordered some heirloom seeds ourselves.) Seed-to-seed gardening requires carefully guarding a pure seed supply. I'm glad somebody kept those seed strains alive, continuing to grow them when "nobody else" was. Maybe it's my turn now.

God's way really is best. The truth of the Gospel is full of flavor—the adventure of whole-hearted consecration and service, life more abundant. The truth is very nutritious to our souls—eternal life. And, it bears in it the spiritual seed to produce more of the same in other hearts. May those who come behind us find us faithful. As one song says, "Let us run the race, not only for the prize. But, as those who've gone before us, let us leave to those behind us the heritage of faithfulness passed on through godly lives." ("Find Us Faithful," by Jon Mohr.)

Do you have some seed lovingly tended which you long to see grow? Have you planted...watered? It is God that giveth the increase. (I Corinthians 3:7.) We usually can't perceive our influence on others. It is such a dynamic process. Only eternity will reveal how much the Lord has accomplished through our lives. "...For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap...and let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:7-10.

Let's keep tending our actions, thoughts, and motives, remembering that, when the Lord turns the soil of a friend's heart, some of the seed that surfaces may be from us. Will it be thistles or petunias? Wheat or tares?



SC—Please pray earnestly for Kurstn Weatherford, the young niece of Sis. Marie Weatherford. She has been very ill with a kidney infection that has worsened and she is now suffering from other symptoms. Also pray for her grandmother, Peggy, as she recently lost her mother and has health problems of her own.

—Sis. Cheryl Smith

Standing Prayer Requests

Sis. Agnes Burleson
 Bro. Gary Burleson
 Sis. Gladys Cashio
 Sis. Helen Carson
 Sis. Genevieve Carver
 Sis. Elizabeth Corteway
 Sis. Waneta Creel
 Bro. Terry Dawson Sr.
 Bro. Mancil Doolittle
 Sis. Guy Domin
 Sis. Dorall Forbes
 Bro. Dan Gellenbeck
 Bro. Troy Gentry
 Jaden Howard
 Sis. Patsy Jordon
 Sis. Earnestine Jordon
 Sis. Karoline Kessler
 Bro. Mark and Sis. Darlene Knight
 Sis. Virginia Myers
 Sis. Elsie M. Offerman
 Sis. Melba Powell
 Sis. Sharon Quave
 Bro. Vernon Robinson
 Sis. Ruth Shehee
 Sis. Cheryl Smith
 Bro. Michael Smith
 Bro. Edward and Sis. Gloria Taylor
 Sis. Imogene Taylor
 The Mitch Taylor family
 Sis. Norma Tiller
 Bro. Delmar Wilkins
 Bro. Curtis Williams
 Sis. Jan Wood

MEETING DATES

Miami, FL (Camp Meeting)—March 13-20
Alabama Singing (Warrior, AL)—April 16
Wichita, KS (Spring Revival)—April 17-24
Oklahoma State (Guthrie)—May 27-June 5
Holly Hill, SC (Camp Meeting)—June 5-12
Green Bank, WV (Camp Meeting)—June 10-16
Sisters' Retreat (Guthrie, OK.)—June 24-25
Fresno, CA (Camp Meeting)—June 26-July 3
General Southern (Loranger, LA)—
 June 26-July 3
Sisters' Retreat (Bakersfield, CA)—July 8-9
National (Monark Springs, MO)—July 15-24

MEETING NOTICES

MIAMI, FL, CAMP MEETING

The Saints in Miami, FL will be having a camp meeting beginning March 13 and continuing through March 20. Services will be nightly at 7:30 with two services on Sunday. The schedule of day services will be announced at the meeting. All are welcome.

For more information call Bro. Charles Clay at (305) 804-8504, Bro. Ken Baxter at (786) 554-8833 or Bro. Rodney Edwards at (305) 258-4925. The chapel is located at 235 NW 47th St, Miami, FL.

ALABAMA SPRING SINGING NEAR WARRIOR, AL

The Church of God congregation near Warrior, AL is planning a singing April 16th at 6:30 p.m. in the chapel. Activities will begin on Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m. at the C. W. Day Park in Hanceville, which is the same place we had it last year. On Sunday, April 17th, there will be services at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. with dinner on the grounds at the chapel. Everyone is welcome.

The chapel is located approximately two miles west of Interstate 65 off exit 289 on Acton Bend Circle.

For further information you may contact Bro. Roy Herron at (205) 647-7869 or Bro. Marshall Whitson at (205) 647-6325 or (205) 317-4151 Cell.

WICHITA, KS, SPRING REVIVAL

The Wichita congregation welcomes you to our spring revival. The meeting will run Sun-

day, April 17 through Easter Sunday, April 24. Monday through Saturday, services will be held at 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. On Sunday, services will begin with Sunday School at 9:30 followed by Morning Worship at 10:45 and afternoon and evening services. The final service will be the afternoon service on Sunday.

Please join us and pray for the revival. For more information contact Bro. Emanuel Gracey at (316) 461-1267 or Bro. Theodore McCray at (316) 641-4170.

HOLLY HILL, SC, CAMP MEETING

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all to attend the Holly Hill, SC Camp Meeting which will be held from Sunday, June 5 - Sunday, June 12, 2011. On Sunday, June 5, there will be two services, at 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. On Monday, June 6 through Saturday, June 11, 2011, there will be two services daily, at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. On Sunday, June 12, there will be one service at 10:00 a.m. On Monday through Saturday, we will also plan to have an early morning prayer service at 8:00 a.m. each day. Meals will be served, and there is a limited amount of accommodations available on the grounds on a first-come, first-served basis.

There are several motels located in Santee, which is about 10 miles from the chapel. If you would like to stay on the grounds or if you wish to obtain more information on local motels, please call Sis. Beverly Pratt at 803-496-3057 or Bro. Kevin and Sis. Cheryl Smith at 803-492-7975. If you cannot attend our meeting, please be in prayer for us that God will meet with us and pour out His Spirit on each service.

In Jesus' Love,

—Bro. Kevin and Sis. Cheryl Smith and the
Holly Hill, SC Congregation

FRESNO, CA, CAMP MEETING

The Saints at Fresno extend a cordial invitation for all to attend our camp meeting that will be held, Lord willing, June 26 - July 3, 2011.

6/26—Sunday 9:30 a.m. Sunday School, 10:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Worship Services,

6/27 - 7/2—Mon. - Sat. Worship Services 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.

7/3—Sunday 9:30 am Sunday School, 10:30am, & 2:00pm Worship Services

For more information you may contact:
Sis. Gwendolyn Robinson at 559-233-6492.
Sis. Dorothy Gray at 559-229-6395.
Sis. Brian and Sheri Rich at 559-246-0604.

Please continue to pray that the Lord will bless in these meetings. —Sis. Stephanie Pree



LETTERS
FROM
OUR
READERS

MO—(January 28, 2011) Dear Bro. Willie and Sis. Neta: Greetings of love in Jesus name. We trust this finds you all well and encouraged in the Lord. We are all living in a pressing time. The enemy has so many snares and pitfalls, so we must keep on guard to resist the enemy. We need to pray much, read God's Word and obey the Word. Let us be sure we are walking close to our dear Lord, because the enemy is ready to cause us to get lean in our soul's with being so busy with the cares of life. Time is slipping by so fast, and the dear Lord's coming could be closer than we think. Let us not get caught short. God bless and comfort all hearts is my prayer.

The song comes to my mind, "Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer blessed Lord." May we all be lined up and ready for the trumpet to sound.

Your sister in Christ, —Natalie Allen

(After suffering a stroke on February 15, Sis. Natalie peacefully went to be with her dear Lord on the evening of February 28. May the Lord comfort her family. —WEM)

OK—I want to say 'Thank-You' for all who knew and prayed for me in my past illness. Your prayers, phone calls and texts were appreciated. I was sick for a little over 3 weeks from Dec. 17th into the first full week in January. I thank the Lord for a complete recovery from a severe case of strep throat.

At the lowest point I was encouraged by the songs "Hold the Fort" and "Look and Live."

Thank the Lord for answers to Prayer!
—Bro. Galen Kelly

KS—Dear Bro. Willie: Thank God for salvation! As the world becomes filled with more knowledge, well, sin does much more abound. It is so good to be in the Ark of Safety and I do praise God from Whom all blessings flow. May

all Saints keep going straight ahead and make Heaven their home. —Sis. Shirley Knight

AL—Dear Saints: I have so much to thank the dear Lord for. The whole month of January, I was sick. I had several things wrong with me. They may have all been related. I hurt all over (some of the time.) One night I was having such pain, I could not be still. We called some in our congregation for prayer. Immediately I felt some relief. It wasn't long until I could go to sleep. I don't know what all was wrong with me, but the One that made us knows all about us, and He has touched me and healed my body. I am very thankful.

January 11, while I was sick, someone broke into our house. I heard loud knocking and banging on our front door. It got louder. Then I heard a different sound along with the knocking. I was on the couch in the den. I put on shoes that were handy and slipped out the back door. I did not know what to do once I was outside. Snow was on the ground and I could not see where to put my feet. There are neighbors that live behind us, but I couldn't tell who was home. I stayed outside only a few minutes, three or four at the most. It was windy and cold. I was not properly dressed to be outside. I convinced myself that it was my imagination, that no one was breaking in and I went back inside. While I was outside they broke in the house and stole some things. I do not know how many people were involved. While one was knocking and banging on the front door, one or more came through the basement and up the stairs. They got something out of the room I was in and some things out of the bedroom. It was hard for me to believe what they could get in three or four minutes. I can not stop thanking God for protecting me during all of this. We have a great and wonderful God. He is there for all of our needs.

Please continue to pray for me.

—Sis. Betty Herron

SC—We want to thank everyone for their prayers for Kevin, during this time of sickness. God has definitely touched him, and we are so thankful for the way He has answered prayer for us once again. He still has a bad cough, and we desire your continued prayers that God will complete the healing and make him whole. We give Him all the glory, for He is worthy, and He alone came on the scene and sent the healing he so desperately needed. We so appreciate each one of you! Love,

—Bro. Kevin, Sis. Cheryl and Zachary Smith



Alford Lee DiDio was born in Loranger, Louisiana on May 30, 1953 to Salvatore and Wanita Stice DiDio. He passed away after a short illness at his little camper home in New Sarpy, Louisiana, November 4, 2010.

He is survived by three sisters, Carmelina Joy DiDio Waite and her husband, Satoshi "Danny" Waite; Catherine Mae Bhramayana; and Olene Whiddon and her husband, Harlan Eugene Whiddon, and precious nieces, nephews, cousins and aunts.

He was preceded in death by his sister, Nigrl "Angel" DiDio, very dear nephew, Satoshi Dan Waite, Mommy Wanita Pearl Stice DiDio, and Daddy Salvatore George DiDio.

He was a true "Mr. Motor" mechanic at Durham Pontiac in Hammond, Louisiana, at 17 years of age, before being taken into the Army where he was a truck driver in Germany during the Vietnam War. He had wonderful carpenter, electronic, mechanical and plumbing skills that he used for helping family and neighbors. Due to an injury he received while in the military, these jobs would often cause him severe pain and he would have to take to the bed to recover in his own way.

He often said that one man's junk was another man's treasure and he certainly put that into practice. For example, he would piece scrap lawnmower parts together to achieve improved performance.

We appreciated the sacrifices he made for us, including sharing his rubber roof to stop ours from leaking. We will miss his hearty laughter and cute little funnies. His cremation remains, as he requested, were laid to rest in his sister Cathy's plot at Oak Grove Church of God Cemetery, Loranger, Louisiana, on Thanksgiving Day.

Nephews Tom, P.T. and Austen escorted you and your flag. Brother Kyle Claunch, your great

niece Ashley Whiddon Claunch's husband, ministered. Sissy Cathy shared your memory album she made with a little support from me. Sissy Olene shared a special poem by your Veteran Patient Friend, Philip Riili from August 2, 1993. Niece Mia gave a lovely, tearful tribute to you and played some special songs. "Cry Out to Jesus" and Go Rest High on that Mountain." Aunt Dorall May Forbes sang your special baby song she composed "God Gave Mommy a Rosebud" with Niece Ammy. Everyone sang Amazing Grace and Sissy Cathy arranged for all the sweet children to also help dip the dirt in pretty flower containers for the burial and Nephew Tom did the rest. It was all so beautiful!

—Your Sister Carmelina Joy DiDio Waite and all your family

Donald Ray Ligons was born, June 17, 1953, to James and Amelia Ligons, in Hoffman, Oklahoma. He attended Hoffman Elementary for grades 1-8, then attended Dewar High School in Dewar, OK and graduated May 10, 1971. While in high school he took a carpentry class and—along with other classmates—helped to build the superintendent, C. W. Henson's, home. He attended Okmulgee State Tech and pursued a two-year degree in Building Construction and Landscaping and graduated on the Deans Honor Roll with a 4.0 GPA. When taking his test for his state carpentry license, Donald made a top score of 110%. The person administering the test said, "I would like to meet the man who scored 110% on the state licensing test." From Oklahoma he moved to California where he worked as a ship builder at Todd Shipyard. He then moved to Wichita, KS where he spent the rest of his adult life, working various jobs and later becoming self-employed.

Donald felt the need of God and gave his heart to the Lord in his early twenties and attended church at Evening Light Church of God. There he met Letha Phillips and they were joined in marriage on July 12, 1980. To this union three children were born: Anitra Dionne, Dallas Marquise, and Austin Thomas. Donald was a man who enjoyed the outdoors. Hunting, fishing, gardening and working with livestock brought him much enjoyment. He also enjoyed reading individually, as well as reading with the family when the children were young. Donald was well liked by many and loved by his family.

Everyone he came across always had something nice to say about him. Even on his sick

bed, the nurses enjoyed his presence. Donald passed away on February 12, 2011 after a brief illness. He will be greatly missed. He leaves to cherish his memory Letha, his wife of 30 years; daughter, Anitra (Richard) Scott; son, Dallas Ligons; three sisters: Wynema (Herbert) Clay, Mission Hills, CA, Zenobia Willis, Tulsa, OK, Goetha (Anceo) Francisco, Sylmar, CA; two brothers: William Ligons, Layton, UT, Marcus (Mildred) Ligons, Tulsa, OK and many nieces, nephews, friends and family. He was preceded in death by his parents James and Amelia Ligons, one son, Austin Thomas Ligons, three sisters: Loretha Johnson, Julian Stone, and Loretta McCray and one brother, J. C. Ligons.

Funeral services were held on Friday, February 18, 2011 at Tabernacle Bible Church, Wichita, KS, officiated by Bros. Darrell Johnson, Emmanuel Gracey and Theodore McCray, with burial following at Quiring Old Mission Cemetery, Wichita, KS.

— — — — —
Carrie Elizabeth McMillian

January 21, 1919 – February 4, 2011

“...We spend our years as a tale *that is told*...and we fly away.” Psalm 90:9-10.

In a cemetery near the old Neosho Church of God Chapel, there will soon be a marker on a new grave which will bear the name of Carrie Elizabeth McMillian. The dates of January 21, 1919 – February 4, 2011 will be carved out below her name. A sum of 92 years and 14 days was the length of her life. The scripture reads, “We spend our years as a tale that is told.”

Carrie Elizabeth Wyatt was the youngest of three children born to Roscoe and Ida Wyatt, a family who made their lifelong residence in the Neosho, MO area. She had a brother, Claude, and a sister, Merle. When the mother of this family chose another path, Carrie's maternal grandmother, Sis. Brewer, took the family in, which even included Carrie's father. This grandmother was a Saint of God and attended the Church of God in Neosho. The home place was “in the sticks,” located northeast of town. Even though the family walked an hour and a half to the chapel, they were seldom late for service. But, it has been told, that years later when they were able to purchase a car, they would sometimes be late.

Sis. Carrie was truly saved at the tender age of 12. She recognized this experience with the Lord as what she needed for life, and she determined never to give up. She soon found the

trials and tests of life made her stronger, and she developed a true dependence on God. She often liked to tell how she gained the victory even as a young girl. At the time, because of some difficult trial she was tempted to go back. As she worked in the yard raking leaves, with thoughts working in her mind, she came to the conclusion, “As soon as I finish here I'm going in and pray. **I'm not going to give up!**” And that is when the victory came. Sis. Carrie's resolve never weakened, and she lived for the God of her salvation all of her life.

Sis. Carrie received a call to the ministry in her early 20's, to which she was faithful throughout her life time. She overcame many obstacles both in the church, as well as in her family. When many of the young people of her time turned back, her burden for young people became a passion. Later in her life she worked with many young people in the Neosho congregation, often as their Sunday School teacher and with young people's meeting on Sunday evenings before service. She often would have a young person bring a lesson in the young people's meetings. Her intense interest and burden for young people was apparent with these encouraging words in which she would say, “**You can make it!**” The record bears out that nearly all of those she worked with during that period of time have been faithful.

It was in about 1943, at a meeting in Langdon, Missouri, she “caught the eye” of an Alabama boy, Thomas Vada McMillian. Their mutual desire to live their lives unto the Lord became the foundation for their marriage on February 6, 1944, at Neosho, MO where they made their home for a major part of their lives. Their daughter, Carol was the first addition to the McMillian family, with their son, Tom arriving about a year later. The family was complete with the birth of Jim, about three and a half years later in the old home place. In time they built a new home on their property on Newt Road. In the process of building, funds began to run low. When Bro. Vada expressed this financial need, Sis. Carrie presented \$2,500 she had frugally saved secretly.

Sis. Carrie came from a talented musical family, which influenced her own children. She led the singing in the Neosho congregation during the years there, and had a gifted memory of many, many songs. Singing and playing musical instruments was a common activity with the McMillian family. And, when Carol

married Paul Cole, he fit right in the family circle with similar talents. This talent is apparent even to the fourth generation.

Bro. Vada and Sis. Carrie worked side by side in the work of God for the Neosho Church of God congregation for a number of years ministering to the needs of the Saints. Bro. Austin McMillian labored with them, as well as in other Church of God congregations in the area. Bro. Bob Huskey also ministered for a few years and was a special blessing. When Bro. Vada would feel a burden to help in meetings elsewhere, Sis. Carrie would tell him to go on, that she would stay with the congregation. They were both faithful to their callings, and their ministries always complemented each other.

Throughout most of Sis. Carrie's life she carried a burden for her mother. She always prayed for the Lord to save her "at any cost." As her mother came to her declining years, she needed care. Sis. Carrie extended an invitation and said, "If you will come to Neosho I will take care of you." Her mother lived in a small apartment near the fish hatchery, and for seven years Sis. Carrie cared for her until she passed. There was hope that her mother was saved before she died. This was an answer to all her prayers down through the years.

Sis. Carrie had poor health for many years of their marriage. In 1999 they felt the need to move to an apartment at the Golden Rule Nursing Home in Shawnee, OK. The years began to take a greater toll on her physical body, and from the time they relocated she was unable to attend the worship services. The last few years of her life were not the most pleasant, but she bore the hardships of old age cheerfully and remained strong spiritually. For more than a year, Sis. Carol and Bro. James faithfully and lovingly cared for Sis. Carrie. Often she prayed for the Lord to take her home, and that prayer was answered on February 4th.

Sis. Carrie McMillian was preceded in death by her parents, siblings and one son-in-law, Paul Cole. She is survived by her life companion of almost 67 years, Thomas Vada McMillian of their home; by their daughter, Carol Jantz and husband James of Shawnee, Oklahoma; two sons, Tom McMillian and wife, Shirley, of Houston, Texas; and Jim McMillian and wife, Marilyn, of Lubbock, Texas; a daughter-in-law, Vonda McMillian, of Vinita, Oklahoma; 11 grandchildren; 27 great grandchildren and 1 great great grandchild; a number of relatives; and a host of Saints and friends.

The funeral services were held February 12, 2011, in the Church of God Chapel, Neosho, Missouri, with Bros. Carl Shaffer, Ed Wilson, and Sis. LaDawna Adams officiating. Her grandchildren and great-grandchildren sang two songs. Grandson, Ronald Cole led the congregational songs. Interment was in the IOOF Cemetery, Neosho, Missouri, with Bro. Clifford and Bro. Eugene Cole officiating.

A Memorial Service was held in Shawnee, Oklahoma, February 18, 2011, with Bro. Carl Shaffer and Sis. Maxine Busbee officiating. Bro. Loren and Sis. Maxine Busbee sang two songs with a congregational song led by Bro. Leslie Busbee.

A note of thanks from the McMillian family:

We want to extend special thanks to our ministers and the Church in general. We really appreciated the good food, the beautiful flowers, cards, offerings, and the love freely expressed. May God bless each one of you.

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Isaiah 4:6

Isaiah 41:9-10

God's Promises

By Sis. Lana Johnson

Isaiah 51:12

1 Peter 5:7

*God has promised us protection
As a shadow from the heat.
He has promised us a refuge
And our every need to meet.*

*"I have chosen you and love you,
And will not cast you away.
I am He that brings you comfort
In the things you face today."*

*A covert from the storm,
And also from the rain,
A help in time of trouble,
For He sees and feels our pain.*

*"I also will uphold you with
My right Hand of righteousness."
This right Hand is Jesus,
And His peace will bring us rest.*

*"Fear not, for I am with thee,
So you need not be dismayed.
I will strengthen you and help you
In the times when you're afraid."*

*We must humble self before Him
As we run this race below.
Casting all our care upon Him,
For He cares more than we know.*