

# When 'It Has Not Yet Been Revealed'

By DAVID DIESTELKAMP

The apostle John wrote concerning the Christian's hope of putting on an immortal body:

*"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 Jn. 3:2).*

Why didn't John go ahead and tell us what "we shall be" when we are raised? Why didn't he speculate? Why didn't he tell us what he thought we might be? Why didn't he tell us something which was not revealed, but which doesn't contradict what has been revealed? Why didn't he tell us a widely or long held position? Why didn't he tell us what conclusions scholars have reached? Why didn't he tell us what he felt? Why didn't he confidently affirm what we will be, and challenge someone to show him a verse saying it isn't true, or a "Thou shalt not"? He told us why he didn't do these things: "it has not yet been revealed."

John knew when "it has not yet been revealed," man must not presume to know what is true in that area. Something "has not yet been revealed" because God has been silent. When Scripture is silent, God is silent. When God is silent we cannot say what is true (right) or act with any confidence that we are pleasing Him.

Concerning what we will be at the coming of Jesus Christ we can agree. We can be united in saying we do not know because it has not been revealed. We would reject someone's speculation as to "what we shall be" as "...intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Col. 2:18).

Why do we not consistently apply this to things like instrumental music in worship, church supported human institutions, the sponsoring church arrangements, the missionary society, etc.? As with "what we shall be" in the resurrection, we will begin to be united in other areas when we are all willing to stop teaching and acting in areas where it "has not yet been revealed."

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# THINK ON THESE THINGS

Philippians 4:8

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## Browsing Old Bulletins

By AL DIESTELKAMP

When my father died I came into possession of his bound volumes of church bulletins he edited from February, 1948 through June, 1959. They were bulletins from churches in Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and the Chicago suburbs of Brookfield and Berwyn.

His bulletins would be looked upon today as quite crude in appearance even though he went to a lot of trouble to publish them on a weekly basis. He would type onto a stencil and then duplicate them on a mimeograph machine. I realize that I'm using terms that are completely "foreign" to most of the younger people. Suffice it to say, it was a tiresome, time-consuming and messy process.

His bulletins contained a lot of "news" which now serve me well as history books. In the *Northern Watchman*, from Minneapolis, I can find the recording of my baptism on July 4, 1953. Then there's this other life-changing item in the December 2, 1956, *Brookfield Bulletin*: "Brother Fred Hennecke and daughter Connie were at Brookfield services Wednesday night. Sister Hennecke and the other children are in Kankakee. The Henneckes are natives of this area, but have been in Texas for some years."

I also have used these volumes to look for articles suitable for bulletin articles. In doing that I am struck with how much my father thought it necessary to include articles and admonitions concerning the use of alcoholic beverages. I have to wonder if there was a greater problem among brethren back then, than we see today. Or, could it be that we "let up" on this issue too much? I believe most brethren still oppose the social and recreational use of alcohol, but we are seeing an increasing number who don't.

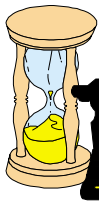
Another issue which evoked many articles was the subject of indecent attire. As the public swimming pools became popular there was the need to warn against "mixed swimming," not because it was wrong for

males and females to swim in the same pool, but because of the revealing attire that was worn. This is another issue which many preachers and elders have put aside except in extreme cases. We now have a significant element in the church who, even if they don't personally dress immodestly, approve of those who do.

On some issues it does seem that we have made significant progress. For instance, when I was a boy there were usually a number of members of the church who used tobacco. In fact, there were often men who would use the break between class and worship to go out front and advertise their habit (we called them "holy smokers"). Thankfully, I haven't seen that in years, but I doubt that we can take credit for the change. Smoking has become a "no-no" even to much of the world because of the health risks, and I suspect that this, more than biblical teaching, has made the difference.

There are a couple of current issues which are noticeably missing from old bulletins of past generations. I don't recall ever seeing an article even mentioning sins of homosexuality and other forms of fornication—only warnings against conduct that produces lust, which "gives birth to sin" (Jas. 1:15) and leads to spiritual death. Nor was there much need to write about the sin of abortion. Even the world looked down on such abhorrent behavior.

Unfortunately, as the world becomes increasingly tolerant of sin, brethren tend to "be conformed to the world" despite the inspired warning against such (Rom. 12:2). Preachers have a special duty to teach the truth even in the face of those who "will not endure sound doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:1-4). Elders, who are charged with the responsibility of watching out for the souls of their flock (Heb.13:17), need to have the courage to "convict those who contradict" (Tit. 1:9). Otherwise, those who defend drinking, dancing and immodesty may soon be redefining fornication and murder—or, if not, the next generation will.



# BUILD and FIGHT

By **LESLIE DIESTELKAMP** (1911-1995)

**W**hat is our goal anyway? Is it to fight against all evil? Indeed, this is a task we must perform, even though it may be a very distasteful one to any who truly try to imitate Christ. It is quite inconceivable that one of His disciples would delight in any kind of fight. Yet, it is so necessary. If we fail, sin and false doc-

## 'Steadfast' Disciples

By **ED BRAND**

**E**ach of us carries a mental concept of what being a disciple is all about. We learned what we think is necessary to be a true Christian. Then we try to match what we think with what we are.

Luke uses an interesting word in describing the early church. After Peter announced God's terms for the forgiveness of sins, there were about 3,000 responses. Imagine, that many people being baptized in order to be forgiven (Ac. 2:38,41). What an exciting day!

What next? Here is Luke's description: "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Ac. 2:42). Think about "steadfastly" for a moment. What comes to mind? A multitude of people, each having his own agenda and tight schedule? With a wave of the hand, they part Sunday saying, "See you next week"? Or, is it a multitude of men and women who act as one, who are willing to devote time and energy to their common cause?

Luke's word, "steadfastly" means "busily engaged in, devoted to, continue or persevere in something, spend much time in" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 722). They "spent much time in the apostles' teaching..." What a wonderful description of unity and commitment.

Now fast-forward to today. Let's place the template of Acts 2:42 on the church of which you are a member. Do you see the same "steadfastness" to duty and devotion? "Unfair!," you say. Then don't look at the congregation—look at yourself. Would "steadfast" describe you?

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trine will tread down the influence of righteousness. If we refuse to fight, Satan will run loose without restraint. We must ever remember that the only soldiers God has—the only fighters against the devil—are true Christians. We are God's army. Fight, we must!

But is fighting our objective? Have we been redeemed to fight? Were we purchased with the precious blood of Jesus to be warriors? Contrariwise, "We are laborers together with God" (1 Cor. 3:9). We are "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10).

*We are builders.* Indeed, we must take heed how we build (1 Cor. 3:10), but we must not fail to build. In the lesson of the vine and the branches (Jn. 15), Jesus did not portray the disciple as a fighter, but as a builder. He did not say that one must fight to stay on the vine, but He did say that if we fail to bear fruit we will be cut off.

In their efforts to build the walls of Jerusalem, it is said of Nehemiah and his companions, "every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded..." (Neh. 4:17-18). There was no use for them to work hard if they did not keep the enemy driven off. On the other hand, *their work was building!* The Bible does not

say, "And so fought they," but it does say, "So built we the wall" (Neh. 4:6).

Let us not fail to put the emphasis in the proper place. If the church prospers in our eyes, but is not kept pure and true, all our work is in vain. If the church is not exactly what the Lord expects it to be, all our labor is useless. On the other hand, let us not fight for the sake of fighting. Let us not be prevented in the work of building by an antagonistic spirit that only keeps us in a fight and ever keeps us out of work!

When the forces of denominationalism threaten; when the power of infidelity strikes; and even when sectarianism, modernism and institutionalism appear in the church, fight we must, but to build is still our primary task. Even if all the evil forces could be overcome (and they can't), the harvest of saved souls cannot be gathered in unless we have sown the good seed and cultivated it well.

A great and mighty people have emerged from years of fighting error. Our strength is now challenged for "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few..." (Lk. 10:2). Workmen—builders—are needed today. Sometimes they may have to fight while they build, but everywhere and *under every circumstance they must build!*

This article first appeared in Truth Magazine, May, 1963

## We Don't Know Enough!

By **RICK LIGGIN**

**H**ow knowledgeable does a person have to be to question the judgment of God? How strong does a man have to be to save himself? Well, listen to what God has to say about this in a context where His judgment was being called into question:

"Adorn yourself with eminence and dignity; and clothe yourself with honor and majesty. Pour out the overflowings of your anger; and look on everyone who is proud, and make him low. Look on everyone who is proud and humble him; and tread down the wicked where they stand. Hide them in the dust together; bind them in the hidden place" (Job 40:10-13). If we can do all these things, God says: "Then I will also confess to you, that your own right hand can save you" (40:14).

Of course, none of us can do the things God challenges us to do in this text—and

that means that we're not strong enough or knowledgeable enough to save ourselves! And since we don't know enough to save ourselves, we just don't know enough to question God's judgment.

I know we don't always fully understand God's dealings with us. We don't know why He sometimes lets good folks suffer while evil men enjoy the easy life. We don't understand why He lets some men live, while better men die. No, there are many times we just don't understand...we don't know why.

But we do know this: that we're not strong enough to save ourselves or smart enough to second-guess God. And so we must trust Him! Trust Him enough to know that He knows what He's doing; trust Him enough to know that He only acts in our best interest; trust Him enough to follow His lead without reservation.

The question is: do we trust Him?

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# When Do You Plan to Die?

By ANDY DIESTELKAMP

**W**hen do you plan to die? Over three thousand years ago Moses observed, "The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years" (Psa. 90:10). Even in contemplating a full lifespan it seems that life is "soon cut off, and we fly away." Thus we are admonished to learn "to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (vs. 12).

The truth is that none of us knows how long he will live. When it is suggested that we number our days, it is not a call to literally attempt to figure out how long we will live but to soberly contemplate the brevity of life. David wrote, "Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my age is nothing before You. Certainly every man at his best state is but a vapor" (Psa. 39:4,5).

Whether 16 or 96, you are frail. Your age is nothing compared to eternity. Do you know that? It is understood that the old and weak and poor and sad die, but the young and strong and rich and happy often mistakenly think that they must first become old or weak or poor or sad before they die. This is not so! Yes, the old must die; but, as is known all too well, so might the young. As Job coldly observed, "They lie down alike in the dust, and worms cover them" (Job 21:26).

Therefore, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart" (Eccl. 7:2). In other words, the time you spend at a funeral is better spent than the time you spend at a party. Yes, a party feels better for the moment, but parties have very little potential for changing the heart for the better. A funeral reminds the attendees of the common end for all of us, and that can be profitable to think about.

Those who will take the reality of death to heart will be the better for it. Indeed, "The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth" (Eccl. 7:4). When you pick up your daily newspaper, you will be much better served by reading the obituaries than by reading the comics. It is the wise who give sober consideration to the end of all men; fools don't. Fools insulate themselves from the reality of death, drown themselves in pleasure, and distract themselves with vain things and thus find themselves totally unprepared to meet their Maker.

While fools avoid the subject of death with



***"Come now, you who say,  
'Today or tomorrow we will go  
to such and such a city, spend  
a year there, buy and sell, and  
make a profit'; whereas you do  
not know what will happen  
tomorrow. For what is your  
life? It is even a vapor that  
appears for a little time and  
then vanishes away."***

**James 4:13,14**

all its implications and attendant concerns, the wise make plans. While fools think it morbid to think and talk about plans for death, the wise know that life is uncertain. As we age, we become much more aware of our mortality and our eventual date with death. As a result, some buy life insurance, pick out burial plots, make arrangements with funeral homes, give thought to how they would like to be remembered, select a headstone, specify what it will say, etc. I even know one man who has built his own casket.

Yet, if the physical "putting our house in order" is as far as we go in our preparation for death, then we have wasted not only our time and money but our knowledge as well. Contrary to evolutionary theories, life is more than just a physical cycle. Life has design, purpose, morality, hope, and love. Our Creator, God Almighty, has a greater plan than just a vicious cycle that ends with death.

While the carnally-minded concern themselves with their legacies and how they will be remembered by their families and fellow man, the spiritually minded are only concerned with being remembered by God. It is for this reason that we are admonished to remember our Creator in the days of our

youth before the difficult days come when we lose our abilities and our zest for life (Eccl. 12:1-8). Unfortunately, some people seem to think that remembering God is for the retirement years. Many are only interested in giving God their leftovers—a few hours per week or perhaps a few dollars per week. We squeeze Him into our lives after we have done what we want to do, foolishly forgetting that our life is a vapor and we have no guarantees beyond the present (Jas. 4:13,14).

Death and the grave have long been the tools of Satan. With these he has

intimidated and captured humans with no hope of escape...until Jesus. Jesus lives. He was dead, but now He is alive forevermore. He has the keys of Hades and death (Rev. 1:18). Therefore, those who confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, are able, with boldness, to march right up to the very gates of death and be victorious (Matt. 16:16-18).

It is those who have been baptized into Jesus Christ's death who will certainly be raised with Him (Rom. 6:3-5). It is these that can confidently cry out, "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" because of the victory over sin and death that Jesus has graciously given us (1 Cor. 15:55-57). We know that "whether we live or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14:8) and that death cannot separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:38,39). Therefore we magnify Christ in our bodies whether by life or death and can honestly say with the apostle Paul, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:20,21).

Now is the time to plan to die. Laying up treasure in heaven is the only wise investment (Matt. 6:19-21). The riches of this world are too uncertain (1 Tim. 6:17) and our bodies are too frail to spend any more of our time selfishly pursuing the passing pleasures of sin (1 Pet. 4:3; Heb. 11:25). We are going to return to dust and our spirits to God. Therefore we are admonished to fear God and keep His commandments because there will be a day of judgment (Eccl. 12:7,13,14).

In view of the obvious reality that none of us has any idea how much more time he has left on this earth, it becomes foolish for us to neglect our commitment to the One who had the power to create us and, therefore, has the power to lift us out of the grave. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

# FREE RANGE CHILDREN

By DAVID DIESTELKAMP

Free range isn't such a bad idea when it comes to raising barnyard animals. There's less maintenance as they roam around, eat an occasional bug or two, and weather some survival of the fittest consequences of being part of the food chain. They are animals and are fairly well suited for raising themselves. The consequence of poor survival skills means that breakfast will be

short some bacon and eggs and milk to wash them down, but little more.

Free range is a terrible idea when it comes to raising children. They roam around without parental oversight and wisdom, and they aren't brought up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

They swallow humanism and materialism, thinking that the only way to survive or succeed in this life is to be worldly. In spite of what they and the rest of the world

may say, they are children and are not suited for raising themselves. The consequence of poor survival skills means a physical life that will not be "well" (Eph. 6:3) and a ravaged spiritual life that is ended by sin and death (Rom. 6:23).

We're talking temporal *and* eternal disaster if we fail to do our God-given job as parents!

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## Updated Upper-Midwest Directory of Churches

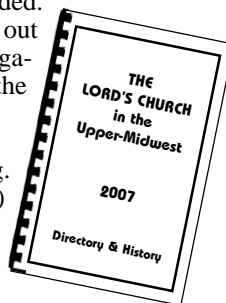
An updated edition of *The Lord's Church in the Upper-Midwest* containing a directory of churches, is now available for sale and distribution to those who are interested.

The 64-page spiral-bound booklet contains information (including elders, preachers and/or contacts) about non-institutional churches in northern Illinois, northwest Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin. In addition to the directory, there is a brief history of each of the congregations in the area.

Two earlier editions were published, one in 1987 and another in 1994-95. Several brethren said these proved to be very useful in communicating with other Christians in the area, and encouraged me to print this updated edition. It has been a long, drawn-out process gathering the additional information needed. In November, of last year I began the process by sending out forms to approximately 85 congregations. Only 56 congregations returned the completed forms, requiring me to get the lacking information by phone or e-mail.

A total of 325 copies have been printed. Single copies, if mailed, are \$7 including sales tax, postage and handling. Additional copies in the same mailing (or copies not mailed) are \$5 each. Order from:

**Diestelkamp Printing**, P.O. Box 891, Cortland, IL 60112  
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Thanks, so much, to our "voluntary partners," past and present, who help us continue this publication. Postage rates will be changing as of May 14th. I have not yet learned what effect the new rate schedule will have on this paper. I will be mailing the past issue along with this issue to our foreign readers. With that extra expense I expect this issue to cost about \$570 which would create a deficit of \$369.14.

# THINK ON THESE THINGS

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