

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

November 2

2008

When Is A "Miracle" Really A Miracle?

A fund raising letter from a local hospital said: "Miracles at this place are part of everyday life. Miracles that come from technology. And miracles that come from human caring. I've seen them happen." This is an excellent example of the inaccurate use of the word "miracle" in modern usage.

What this man is describing IS a wonderful thing. It's great to see a sick person recover. It is thrilling to view the fruits of recent technological advances in medical care. We are seeing things that folks only a few years ago never imagined. Open heart procedures, organ transplants, laser surgery and a host of other new medical methodologies have been perfected in rapid succession. It is truly amazing – but, it's **NOT** a miracle! And, today we understand more than ever before about the "psychology" that is associated with physical illness. And this is surely helpful in bringing about cures – but, it's **NOT** a miracle!

You see, by definition – and in accurate Biblical usage – a miracle is "an effect in the physical world which surpasses all known human or natural power. . . supernatural." So, when a doctor uses a sophisticated new medical device to effect the cure of a seriously ill patient, there is no miracle involved. While the technology may be new and very advanced, it is still a procedure that is known and understood by men. It is an action that is in accord with natural law. It is not supernatural. It is **NOT** a miracle.

Miracles are things like: walking on water, turning water into wine, raising a man who had been dead for four days; etc. These things defy a natural explanation. They are truly supernatural. The

Bible records many instances of true miracles – but it also tells us that no such miracles are taking place in the world today (1 Cor. 13:8-13). No, there are no miracles at that hospital – or any place else!

✠ Greg Gwin



The Power of Example

Once upon a time there was a local church that had a tradition. For several months each year on a selected night a "Men's and Boy's Training Class" was conducted in which those interested were trained and encouraged to develop and use their talents in God's service. This tradition continued for decades and helped to produce elders, deacons, preachers and other leaders in congregations to which these young men would, in later years, be scattered.

There was an old man in that church that rarely missed one of these classes. Even when he was in his eighties and in poor health he was present. He sat patiently as young men and boys led songs pitched too low and sung too slowly. He listened attentively as several struggled to make it through five minute talks on very basic Bible topics. Others read scripture in a voice that you could barely hear and in a manner that made listening difficult. The old man had never led a song, thus this phase of the training had no application to him. However, he had preached, taught classes and read from the Bible for half a century. But he had forgotten more scripture than most of these young men would ever know. Even in his old age he could still speak with much more skill of Bible themes than those to whom he was listening. He knew he was nearing the end of his life and that his most active years of service and assembly participation were behind him. He could have easily begged off and rationalized, "I'll not learn anything, I'll never use any of the training techniques being taught, and it's difficult listening to the feeble efforts of these novices". Then why did he attend the training classes? *The reason was simple: he was there to encourage and he was aware of the power of his example and the impact it would have upon others if he failed to attend.*

I've thought of this old man and this training class many times through the years. I've thought of it when brethren say they'll not participate in a class or some assembly because they don't care for the

teacher, or the subject matter is something that doesn't interest them, or it has no application to them, etc., etc. I've wondered if they've thought of the power of their example. I've wondered if they realize that others are watching, and will remember, what they do and don't do. And I've wondered if it has dawned on them that, by what they are failing to do, they are being a discouragement to others and causing someone else to follow their poor example. And as I ponder these things, I more and more have less and less patience with such conduct.

This church, this class, and this old man are not some fictional scenario I made up to illustrate the power of example. This church is where I grew up. This training class is where I got my first instruction in public service. This old man was my grandfather.

I'm glad that J.A. Bruton thought about the power of his example and I wish that more would do likewise.

David Smitherman



Training Class

In the next few weeks brother Raymond Harris will be teaching a training class for the men. The preceding article shows the importance of **EVERY** man attending these classes. As brother Smitherman notes in his article, there are those who may feel that they could never preach a sermon or do anything that requires them to speak in public (in fact, I would have put myself in that group when I was a junior in high school) but they can, by their presence and encouragement to others, especially the young, be a great blessing.

If history is any indication of what to expect, those who could profit the most from such classes will fail to attend. Also, some may fail to attend because they feel that they already know all they need to know and have the ability to do all they need to do. Even if such were true these could be a great help and encouragement to those who are learning. However, I do not believe that anyone ever reaches the point that they can not learn more or improve in what they are doing. I hope all the men at Belleville will take advantage of this opportunity to learn and grow. We appreciate Raymond's willingness and ability to teach this class. Dates and time will be announced soon. (JH)

New Converts Class

The Hebrew writer told the Hebrew brethren *"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."* (Hebrews 5:12)

This passage shows the need for those who have become Christians to grow and mature as Christians. The only way this will come about is true diligent teaching of God's word. We have several new Christians here at Belleville. We want to make sure that they continue to *"grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"* (2 Peter 3:18). Within the next few weeks we will be beginning studies to help accomplish this goal. Plans for these studies will demand help and participation from every member of the congregation. Details will be announced soon.



Meetings Over

The meeting in Kentucky last week was my final meeting for 2008. As noted in the previous 2 articles we will be having studies here to improve ourselves in service to the Lord. We want to encourage every member to strive to grow and do more in His service. (JH)

Belleville church of Christ	
5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258	
www.bellevillechurch.net	
Schedule of Services	Elders
Sun. Bible Study..... 9:30 a.m.	Charles Carpenter... (317) 839-3873
Sun. Morning Worship... 10:30 a.m.	James Hahn. (317) 745-1507
Sun. Evening Worship. 5:00 p.m.	
Wed. Bible Study..... 7:00 p.m.	Deacons
Evangelist	Leon Nevins (317) 272-2966
James Hahn. (317) 745-1507	Don Perry..... (765) 676-5825
	Alvin Stanley. (317) 831-3514