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KINDLED BY A SPARK OF GRACE

Acts 2:1-21

(The Day of Pentecost)

Frank Lyman

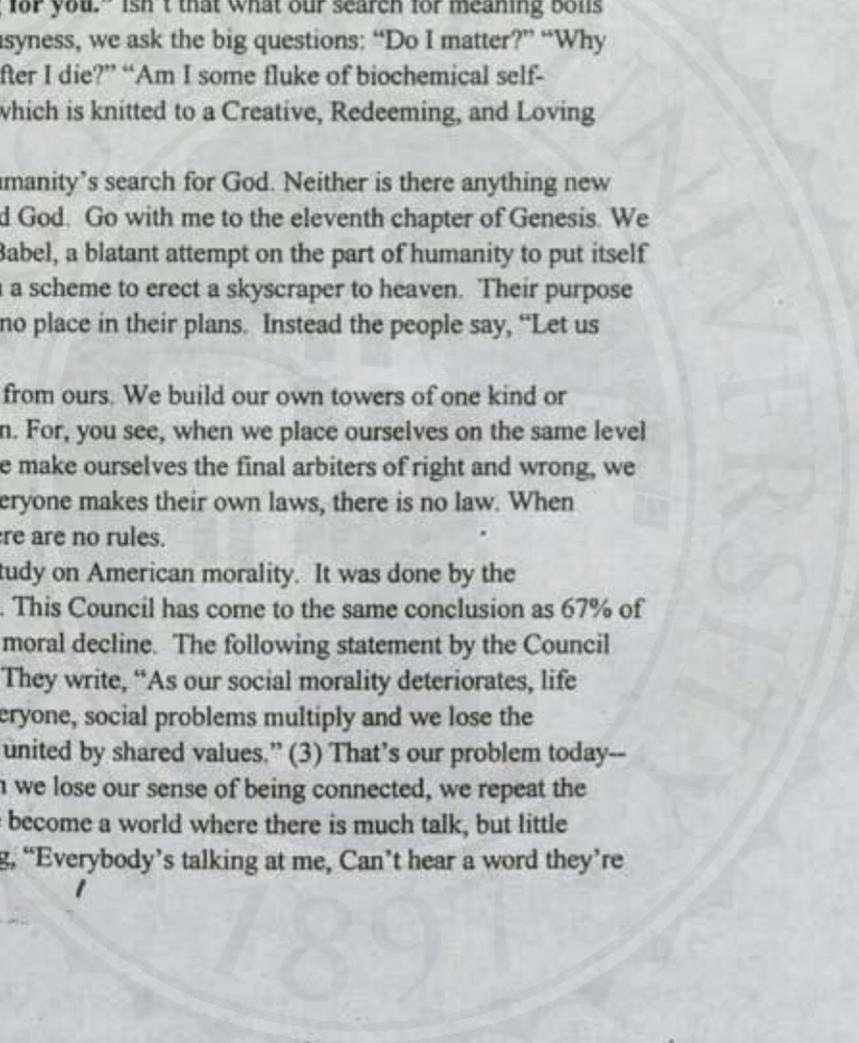
Some time ago The Assembly of God Church in Bushnell, Florida received a computer generated letter from the American Family Publishers. The letter said that "God, of Bushnell, Florida" had been named a finalist in the American Publishers' Sweepstakes. The letter made three affirmations: 1) "God, we've been searching for you." 2) "God, can you imagine the looks you'll get from your neighbors?" and 3) "Don't just stand there, God!" (1) I'd like to express my appreciation to the American Family Publishers for giving us a **classic three-point sermon for Pentecost**: "God, we've been searching for you," "God, imagine the looks you'll get," and "Don't just stand there, God!"

"God, we've been searching for you." Isn't that what our search for meaning boils down to? When we let go of life's busyness, we ask the big questions: "Do I matter?" "Why was I born?" "What happens to me after I die?" "Am I some fluke of biochemical self-determinism?" or "Do I have a soul which is knitted to a Creative, Redeeming, and Loving God?"

There's nothing new about humanity's search for God. Neither is there anything new about people who choose to disregard God. Go with me to the eleventh chapter of Genesis. We find there the story of the Tower of Babel, a blatant attempt on the part of humanity to put itself on a par with God. The people hatch a scheme to erect a skyscraper to heaven. Their purpose is not to reach God. In fact, God has no place in their plans. Instead the people say, "Let us make a name for ourselves." (2)

Their ambition is no different from ours. We build our own towers of one kind or another. And then our problems begin. For, you see, when we place ourselves on the same level as God, we eliminate God. When we make ourselves the final arbiters of right and wrong, we eliminate right and wrong. When everyone makes their own laws, there is no law. When everybody makes their own rules, there are no rules.

I've been struck by a recent study on American morality. It was done by the nonpartisan Council on Civil Society. This Council has come to the same conclusion as 67% of Americans: The United States is in a moral decline. The following statement by the Council goes beyond liberal or conservative. They write, "As our social morality deteriorates, life becomes harsher and less civil for everyone, social problems multiply and we lose the confidence that we as Americans are united by shared values." (3) That's our problem today-- fewer and fewer shared values. When we lose our sense of being connected, we repeat the arrogance of the Tower of Babel. We become a world where there is much talk, but little listening. As Harry Nilsson once sang, "Everybody's talking at me, Can't hear a word they're



saying, only the echoes of my mind.”

In the book of Genesis, God sees the erecting of the tower as a brazen act of defiance. God says, “This is only the beginning of what they will do.” (4) To prevent the tower being built God scrambles the people’s language. When you can’t communicate, you can’t build a stairway to heaven.

If only the people of Babel had been building their tower to search for God, rather than to make a name for themselves. What a different ending this story might have. If only they had echoed the theme of the letter to God, of Bushnell, FL: “God, we’ve been searching for you.”

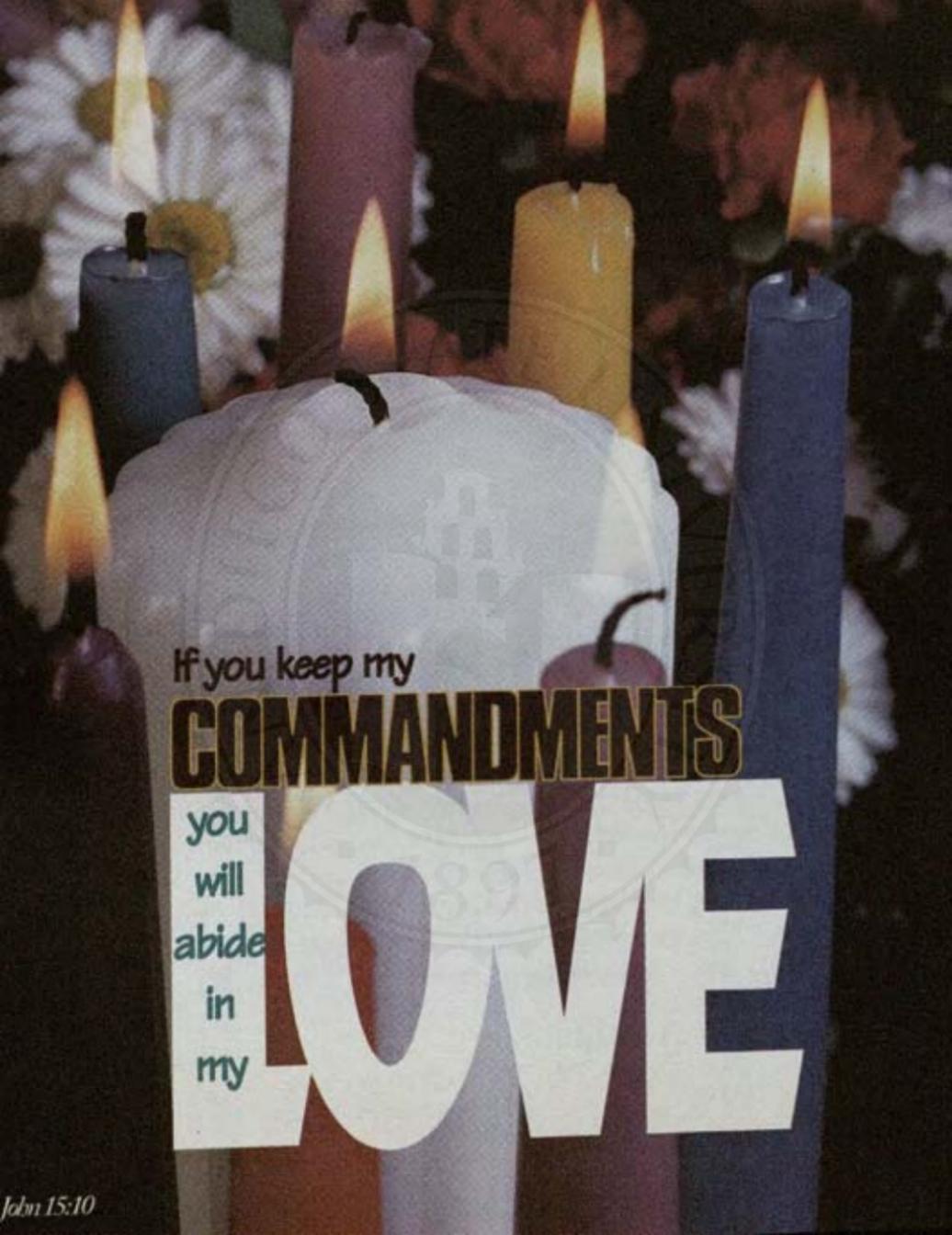
Do you remember playing the game, “Hide and Seek?” It’s fascinating to watch a group of middle-school young people playing this ancient game, especially if one of the kids hides himself or herself too well! The other young people enjoy searching for about 6 1/2 minutes but then their interest flags. They will often quit the game, leaving the youth who hid having no one to find him! That’s no fun. Those who search need to find and the one who is sought needs to be found!

The God of the Bible is that youth who wants to be found. But God is also the youth who is searching—searching for us. Our task is not so much to “find God,” as it is to allow God to find us.

God revealed his nature through Jesus of Nazareth. But Jesus was rejected. People called for his crucifixion. Jesus, who spoke of God as love, was put to death by the friends of hate. Surely, the next part of the message written to God of Bushnell, Florida is now eerily relevant, **“God, imagine the looks of your neighbors.”**

We know how the neighbors of the early church reacted. As far as they were concerned, Jesus’ influence ended with his death. Only the faithful were witness to Christ’s resurrection. To everyone else the tiny Christian movement was a failed enterprise. It was a lost cause. It is amazing how often the world gets it wrong.

Christian author Philip Yancey wrote a wonderful article a couple years back in *Christianity Today* titled, “A Bad Week in Hell.” After the stunning death of Princess Diana, a television producer called Yancey to get his opinion on the age-old question, “Why did God allow this to happen?” Yancey turned down the chance to appear on this producer’s show and debate the question. In times of tragedy, people rarely want to listen to reason, and no one has yet discovered the answer to that question anyway. Over the years, Yancey has collected a file containing situations in which people had blamed God for their adversity. When speed skater Dan Jansen lost his balance on the ice and missed winning the 500-meter race at the 1994 Olympics, his wife responded by crying, “Why, God, again? God can’t be that cruel!” When Susan Smith, distraught over a failing relationship, drowned her two young sons in a lake, she blamed God for allowing it to happen. And now a much-admired princess, caught in a speeding car driven by a presumably drunk driver, had been killed. And people were questioning God again. But Philip Yancey decided to look at the issue from another angle.



If you keep my

COMMANDMENTS

you
will
abide
in
my

LOVE

MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE

May 28, 2000

10:30 A.M.



PREPARATION OF OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

"Let the people be in silent meditation and prayer upon entering the sanctuary."

WE PRAISE GOD

PRELUDE Organist

CHORAL INTROIT "He's Worthy" Youth Choir

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

...

§HYMN OF PRAISE "There's A Sweet, Sweet Spirit" #398

✠CALL TO WORSHIP

*Leader: Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise.
People: Within our temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.
Leader: Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the end of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness.
People: For this God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even to the end.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

Father, we come before you like Isaiah of old, in so doing, we discover again Your character. You are holy, holy, holy. As we kneel in your presence we are struck by our unworthiness – our hands are unclean, our feet have strayed, our motives are mixed, our thoughts have been ungodly. Be pleased, Oh God to touch our lips, to cleanse our hearts, to restore to us the "joy of our salvation." This we pray for Your glory for our good. In the name which is above every name, Jesus the Lord. Amen.

DECLARATION OF PARDON

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH "The Apostle's Creed"
(The Presbyterian Hymnal)

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WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD

ANTHEM "Sinner Man" Youth Choir

Huffman

...

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*Leader: Lift up your hearts.
People: We lift them up to the Lord.
Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.
Leader: Let us pray.*

PASTORAL PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE "Let The Words of my Mouth" Youth Choir

New fault, Dallas

CHILDREN'S SERMON Dorothy Smith

David Majors / Roy / Nadine

RITUAL OF FRIENDSHIP "What A Fellowship" Congregation

GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY MUSIC "Open My Eyes" (p.324) Youth Choir

DOXOLOGY "Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow" Congregation

OFFERTORY PRAYER

THREEFOLD AMEN

GOD SPEAKS TO US

SCRIPTURE Dorothy Smith Acts 2:1-14

MUSICAL SELECTION "My Hope Is Built" Youth Choir

SERMON Rev. George W. Smith

"Kindled By A Spark of Grace"

INVITATIONAL HYMN "Be Thou My Vision" #339

CHORAL BENEDICTION "Till We Meet Again" Youth Choir

*§Congregation standing
✠Congregation sitting
...Worshippers will be seated*

TO OUR GUESTS: You are welcome to our worship service and all activities of the church. Please help us to know you by filling out a visitor's card from one of the Ushers. You are invited to meet with others in the Fellowship Hall for refreshments following the Worship Service. Please come again and invite your friends and neighbors to come with you.

USHERS FOR TODAY are Robert Matthews, James Rhetta, Al Littlefield, Ray Hill.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS YOUR SAVIOR, we invite you to come to the front of the sanctuary during the Invitational Hymn. Elders NL Allen and Barbara Boucher will be at the front of the sanctuary to greet you.

PREPARING FOOD FOR THE HOMELESS TODAY will be **THE YOUTH**. If you are asked to help prepare or purchase food, please do it with a smile! We love your time and talent. Thank you.

HOSTING THE FELLOWSHIP HOUR TODAY will be **Ms. Mary Collier-Wade**.



CHRIST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SAN DIEGO
3025 Fir Street
San Diego, California 92102

Phone: 239-2346/2347
FAX: 239-8830

MINISTER: Rev. George W. Smith
CHANCEL CHOIR DIRECTOR: Mrs. Dolores E. Stevens
ORGANIST: Ms. Juanita Dentham
YOUTH CHOIR DIRECTOR/PIANIST: Ms. Delores Fisher
CHILDREN'S CHOIR DIRECTOR Dr. Dorothy Smith
CHURCH SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS: Dr. Robert Matthews
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COORDINATOR: (Vacant)
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Mrs. Zee Griffith
SECRETARY/BOOKKEEPER: Ms. Cathy Ramsey

ANNOUNCEMENTS

May 28, 2000

TODAY, SUNDAY, May 28

9:00 AM Church School
10:30 AM Worship Service
3:00 PM Humility Circle Meeting

MONDAY, May 29

Memorial Day Observed

TUESDAY, May 30

6:30 PM Boy Scout Meeting
6:00 PM Christian Education/Evangelism Mtg. In Room 3
7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal

WEDNESDAY, May 31

12:00 PM Mid-Week Prayer Service

THURSDAY, Jun. 1

10:00 AM Finance Committee Meeting

FRIDAY, Jun. 2

6:30 PM Youth Choir Rehearsal

SATURDAY, Jun. 3

9:00 AM Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team Gathering
9:00 AM Session Meeting
10:30 AM Deacons Meeting

SUNDAY, Jun. 4

We celebrate the Sacraments of the Lord's Supper

FRIDAY, Jun. 9

Presbyterian Night at the Padres

SUNDAY, Jun. 11

Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1)

SATURDAY, Jun. 17

8:00 AM Men's Association Meeting
10:00 AM Joint Meeting – Men's Association & Presbyterian Women

SUNDAY, Jun. 18

Father's Day

SATURDAY, Jun. 24

General Assembly convenes in Long Beach, CA

SUNDAY, Jun. 25

Youth Sunday

Thought For Today

When we control the controllable in our lives, we can more effectively cope with the uncontrollable.

- **MEETING CHANGE:** The regular meeting of the Christian Education/Evangelism Committee will be held on Tuesday, May 30 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 3.
- **THANKS:** The Presbyterian Women thanks the congregation for a total of \$461.00 for the Birthday Offering. The offering was presented to the Presbyterian Women in the San Diego Presbytery on Friday, May 26, at the Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church to be dedicated with all Birthday Offerings from all the Presbyterian Churches in San Diego.
- **YOUTH SUNDAY:** 2000 is "The Year of the Child" in the Presbyterian denomination. On June 25, 2000, in addition to the youth having a display of their awards, certificates, trophies, hobbies, collections, etc., the children and youth (Pre-school – 18 yrs.) are encouraged to do an artwork and commentary, (what the story means to you), using a Bible Story of your choice. All participants will receive a prize. If you need additional information, please see Mrs. Irene Smith.
- **GRADUATES:** If you know of anyone in the church who is completing High School, please call the church office (239-2346) and leave their name.
- **JOINT MEETING:** Joint meeting with Men's Association and Presbyterian Women, June 17 at 10 a.m. to discuss videos "Full Focus" and "The Legacy". Guest speaker, Alison St. John from KPBS.
- **SICK & SHUT-IN:** Mrs. Jean Fields is convalescing at home. Mr. Samuel Douglas is in Sunbridge Terrace, 5602 University Avenue, Room 32, San Diego, CA 92105 PH: 583-1993,
- **THE TRAVEL PEOPLE:** Please tell us where you've been and how much fun you had. We'd like to share your adventures with Christ United members. We want your pictures, videos and other memorabilia you may have collected. We will keep them safe and return them to you unharmed. Please call us at (619) 470-4698 or leave your name and number on Cathy's desk in the Church Office. - Nadine Reid & Ray Hill
- **TAKING TIME OUT:** Have you given thought to taking time out to make a phone call or send a card to an elderly member or to a member whom you have not seen in a few weeks? A moment of your time can brighten a whole day for someone else. These members have not been to church lately: The Grigsbys, Berthann Heath, Evelyn Lane, Bernice Seals, Thomas Killingsworth, Oneida King, Geneva Humdy, John & Angelique Hood, Freeda Abbott, Mildred Craig, Barbara Gilliam, Earl & Rebecca Gilliam
- **EMERGENCY FOOD DRIVE:** The Deacons are soliciting donations of canned goods for emergency food needs. Thank you. Shirley Logan, Moderator

(Announcements continued on reverse side)

- **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY:** General Assembly meets in Long Beach, California June 24-July 1, 2000. Members are needed to volunteer their time during this meeting to fill the following positions: Ushers(at the Assembly), Greeters (at the hotel and airport), Computer Workers, Drivers, Preparation of Communion elements and other services. If you are interested, please see Ardelle Matthews. Please see insert (CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS) for further information.
- **NURSERY AVAILABLE:** Members and guests requiring nursery services should speak to one of the Ushers who will either take your child or direct you to Room 40 where you will be met by qualified staff to care for your child/ren.
- **TAPE MINISTRY:** Tapes of all services are available at \$4.50 each. Place your request with John Smith or call the church (239-2346) to order.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: Jo Hohlfeld, Allie Mae Jones, Liz Forge-Chapman, Earl Gilliam, Marita Saunders, Lena Edwards, Dorothy Hughes, Ruth Anderson (Grice), Walter Fuller, Luella Foster, Nancy Black (Roz), Samuel Douglas, Eddie Stuart, Thelma Quinn, Wayne Shipley, Alfonso Manson, Jamal Wilkens, Maureen Wright, John Wall and others dear to thee.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO THE 2000 CUPC DIRECTORY
 (If you know of any changes, please submit them to the church office)

Add:

Bryant, Clarissa
 †Gladis Bryant

Coleman, Sharon
Family Member: Sidney Caroline Coleman
 BD: 04/09

McKnight, Rita (619) 668-0380
 2779 Buena Vista Avenue
 Lemon Grove, CA 91945
Family Member: Kevin McKnight

Change:

Clayton, Ernest (619) 477-3349
 1904 Via Las Palmas, #5
 National City, CA 91950

Collins, Herman
 Apt. # 709

Smith, Burton and Audrey (619) 575-1476
 500 Hwy. 75, #101
 Imperial Beach, CA 91932

Smith, Carl and Dorothy (619) 263-3651
 2650 Blackton Drive
 San Diego, CA 92105

Thompson, Harriet (619) 338-9208

Woo, Becky and Don (909) 693-9563

PLEDGES AND DONATIONS RECEIVED TO HELP REPAIR THE PIPE ORGAN
AT
CHRIST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 2000

Barnes, Elouise
Dukes, Mary
Elie, Viola
Fowler, Louise
Henderson, Mable
Hendrix, Augusta
Hill, Bonnie
Jackson, Freddie
Johnson, Loma
Littlefield, Al & Audrey
Littlejohn, Joe & Tina
Matthews, Bob & Ardelle
Mayes, Bob
Major, Brenda
Moore, Gene & Juel
Moore, Gina
Moore, R. Vernon
Murphy, Myshaud & Danzalei
Plummer, Rev. & Mrs. Clark
Purdie, Rufus & Brunette
Reavis, Carrel & Joan
Sharp, Glenda
Smith, Carolyn Y.
Smith, Dorothy
Thompson, Harriet
West, Jacinta & Andrew
Watts, Tom & Doris
Yeldell, Calvin & Joyce

TOTAL AMOUNT PLEDGED \$ 3,580.00
AMOUNT RECEIVED TO DATE IN PLEDGES AND DOONATIONS \$ 1,333.00

PLEDGE CARDS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE USHERS
IN ADDITION TO INDIVIDUAL PLEDGES.....
ORGANIZATIONS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PLEDGE