



THE WORK OF OUR HANDS

“May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us – yes, establish the work of our hands.” Psalm 90:17 NIV

Psalm 90 is actually a prayer of Moses. I thought it was appropriate to take a selection from Psalm 90 for the 90th issue of *One Body* magazine. I chose the 17th verse not just because I like the number 17, but because of Jesus’ prayer for our oneness in John 17.

I especially like Psalm 90:17 because Moses (who lived to be 120) is requesting that the favor of God might rest upon us. The Hebrew word for favor is *no-am* which means “beauty” or “pleasantness.” David said, “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! ... For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore” (Psa 133:1, 3). How we need the favor and blessing of God resting upon us!

Moses appeals to God to “establish” the work of our hands. The Amplified Old Testament reads, “Confirm and establish the work of our hands; yes, the work of our hands confirm and establish it.” Twenty-six years ago Don DeWalt and I started this magazine. He served as founder and publisher and I as editor. We both wanted to do something significant for God to honor our dear Lord’s prayer for oneness. We believed then that we were engaged in a good work and I maintain that belief to this day. We wanted the blessing of God to be upon this work and I believe that His hand of blessing has been upon us from day one. We both knew that the success of our work was dependent upon the blessing of God. We needed Him to establish the work of our hands. “Our work ought to be beautiful, but God alone can give the beauty. If our work be the work of gratitude, love, humility, and self-sacrifice, it is God that has made it beautiful” (*Pulpit Commentary*). We give thanks to God for the favor He has bestowed upon us. We give thanks to God for establishing the work of our hands. As I have stated on many occasions: we exist to make the prayer of Jesus an unavoidable issue in the church.

I believe that every Christian should want to see the work of their hands blessed by God. I also believe that every Christian should desire to see the work of their hands established by the Lord. We want His confirmation, His voice of

assurance, His stamp of approval. But how long will the “work of our hands” last? Will there be any likeminded person to carry on our work when we are gone? I think every concerned soul has those thoughts, especially as they get older and can see the end of their days approaching. No one wants to see the work of their hands become something that is useless or unwanted.

Still, everything has a life. My *alma mater* (Midwestern School of Evangelism) is no more. That brings me some sadness. Yet I know that hundreds of young people who were trained there have gone into various parts of the world and made their mark for God. I recently learned that *Pulpit Helps*, a periodical that has published scores of my sermon outlines, is ceasing publication after a 34-year run. Last year *Word & Work* ceased publication after a 100-year run (both journals will live on in some form on the Internet). I wonder if Moses’ prayer – “Teach us to number our days” – also applies to publications? I think it probably does.

So, how long does *One Body* continue? Our critics – and we had many in our early days – predicted an early demise. Such would have brought them a perverted form of “joy.” But we carried on. Brother

DeWalt was called home in 1991, just seven years after our beginning. But we carried on. Twice we have major donors cease their funding. But we carried on. We lost many readers when we began charging a subscription. (Evidently the thought of paying a few dollars for what they had freely received for years was too much for them.) But we carried on. And we plan to keep publishing *One Body* until it becomes abundantly clear that we have “served God in our generation” and that it is time to lay down our pen. No printed work, other than Holy Scripture, has lasted forever or will last forever.

“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever” (Isa 40:8). Periodicals will wither and journals will fall, but God’s Word will stand forever!

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