

# AMERICA'S PROMISE NEWSLETTER



AMERICA, THE BIBLE LAND

Published monthly by  
**LORD'S COVENANT CHURCH**  
and **AMERICA'S PROMISE Broadcasts**

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March - April, 1984

## PASTOR'S HEART OPERATION - CHANGE IN AUG. CAMP - MISC.

*"Hear me, O Lord; for thy lovingkindness is good; turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies; and hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily." (Psalm 69:16-17.)*

**GOD HAS BEEN MERCIFUL BEYOND MEASURE.** I am home after a "triple by-pass" heart operation, recovering normally, and must give God all praise for His Mercy. When my wife, Elaine took me to the Hospital Emergency at about 2:30 a.m., January 31st, I was possibly within minutes or hours of what could have been a fatal heart seizure. There is no doubt in my mind but that what then transpired and my now being alive came through the great Mercy of the God of Israel. Men and women did what they could. However, I think all here, especially me, have been totally impressed that the only thing that explains my survival was that God was merciful to Sheldon Emry, a sinner. I do pray that I shall learn from this what God wants me to learn and that I shall serve Him for the rest of my days.

**MY FAMILY AND STAFF** carried on the ministry with literally no break. Pastor Williams took over the pulpit and the day to day supervision and I praise God for the fine crew we have at AMERICA'S PROMISE.

**THE HEART OPERATION:** Most on the mail list probably know by now that I had a heart attack at the end of January, ending up in the Hospital and had a "triple by-pass" operation on February 13th. Some may wonder, "Well, if God was going to keep Pastor Emry alive, why didn't He do it by simply healing him and not put him through such an operation?" It is a valid question and I think those who support me and this ministry should have an answer. I will attempt to give my understanding of it after I first explain the events of the heart attack, the surgery, and my present condition.

I began having pains in my chest on Friday, January 27th as we drove to Deming, New Mexico to spend the weekend with Pastor and Mrs. Earl Jones and to attend their worship services in Las Cruces on the 29th. The pains bothered me so much we did not drive the 70 miles to the services, but instead I spent most of the weekend napping or sitting around at their ranch. I continued to pass off the pains with, "Well, it must be something I ate and I am having gas pains."

However, the pains did bother me enough Sunday night

that we drove home Monday (400 miles), a day earlier than planned. I had some pain most of that day, then about 2:00 a.m. (Tues. morning) I was awakened by enough more pain that I realized it had to be heart pains. We dressed and Elaine drove me to the Hospital about 5 miles away. In the Emergency Room they immediately gave me Nitroglycerine, oxygen, and hooked me up to video heart monitors. By then the pain and other symptoms were quite intense. The on-call Doctor informed me my heart was skipping beats and was so erratic he would have to call a cardiologist. The cardiologist arrived within 45 minutes and after a number of other things, they got the heartbeat smoothed out although I did have two "spells" of intense pain where they had to put Nitroglycerine under my tongue and increase it through the I.V. There was no question but that it was a heart problem.

The next morning, after a number of blood and other tests, the doctor told me I had indeed had a "minor heart attack," but that the problem was not really the heart, but was a circulation problem, that the blood tests and the E.K.G. showed the blood flow to the heart muscle was very, very restricted. He believed one of three arteries which supply blood to the heart muscles was blocked, the others were partially blocked, and he explained the only way they could tell how much of the blood flow was cut off was with an "arteriogram," the putting of a tube up a main artery from the groin into the heart arteries, then squirting water into the blood stream while they take "movie" X-rays. The clear water would then show where the arteries were blocked. They needed my permission, of course, to do that.

By then Pastor Earl Jones had driven up from Deming, New Mexico and he and Les Lindvig, one of our church-Trustees, came to visit me. Both had had by-pass surgery 8 to 10 years ago, knew the medical terms and had the experience. The cardiologist had already explained to me that if the blood flow restriction was minor, it could be treated with drugs and rest, then, even if the arteries were up to half blocked, they could be treated with a balloon-like device threaded into the artery where the balloon would be inflated in the blocked area, expanding the artery at that point. That is still minor surgery and has been

very successful. However, if one or two arteries were totally or almost totally blocked, neither drugs alone nor the balloon treatment would work and I would be told just how bad it was and would have the option of choosing the by-pass surgery or not. Earl and Les both urged me to have the arteriogram so I would know exactly how serious the blockage was.

The arteriogram was done the next afternoon. The next day the Doctor informed both Elaine and me that of the three small arteries which are the source of blood to the heart muscle (the heart is NOT nourished by the blood pumping through it), the right artery was 100% blocked, the left one was 100% blocked and the middle one was 90% blocked! My heart was getting barely enough blood to sustain life. There was practically nothing left over for any activity. He told me his professional opinion was that neither medication nor the balloon treatment would help and that by-pass surgery was the only treatment that would be successful. He suggested I talk it over with my family and make a decision very soon.

I have a long-time friend in Arizona who is a Naturopath, a Chiropractor and an M.D. and very knowledgeable about both sides of treatment, natural and the M.D. methods. For some years here in Phoenix he took X-rays for doctors and also interpreted them for them. In his own practice he uses mostly Chiropractic and natural methods. Elaine called him and asked if he could come to Phoenix to view the movie X-rays and give us his opinion, in other words, tell us if the Hospital Doctor was interpreting this all correctly. He made an appointment with the hospital, came up, viewed them and then came to see both of us. His words were, "Sheldon, you have 100% blockage in two arteries to the heart muscle, 90%, at least, in the third. This is an emergency situation, you have no choice but the by-pass surgery." He then went on to say, "I don't want to frighten you, but your heart condition is such that you could have another heart seizure anytime and if you were not in the hospital you could be gone in 5 minutes." He added, "I really don't know why they have delayed surgery as long as they have." (This was about 8 days after I entered the hospital.) I told him the cardiologist had explained he was not pressuring me for the by-pass, especially since he felt it imperative to "stabilize" my heart beat before they could have any kind of surgery anyway. That made sense to him, but he still repeated, "You are in an emergency state."

That settled it in my heart and mind and I know my wife and the others already felt I should give my approval for the by-pass, which I then did and I was put on the schedule to be moved to the other hospital where the surgery would be done early the next week. As you perhaps realize, my family, the church congregation and others who had heard of this were praying for me. While in the hospital I read Psalms, finding a marvelous promise every few verses, promises which had no condition upon us, but simply reflected God's Grace and Mercy upon His People. I read scores of passages like, "When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches, because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." (Psalm 63:6-7.) That reading and all my previous understanding simply told me I was totally in the Hands of God and it made my own prayers,

literally, "Well, God, I am in a terrible state. I am in your Hands. I don't know why you should save me, but if you do, please help me preach and teach your Truth to Israel, for that is all I really want to do."

Although most of my own prayers were general as to myself, I was greatly burdened to pray specifically that God in His Mercy not make my wife a widow at such a young age. My own father died when my mother was in her 50's and it makes for a long, long widowhood. Mother is now 77. Her father died when her mother was in her 50's and her mother lived to within 3 weeks of 90, 35 years after her husband passed away. For some reason, I really prayed for Elaine more than for myself. She has been such a wonderful wife, mother and helpmeet that I just desperately did not want her to go through the sorrow of losing her husband. To me that seemed more terrible than my dying was to me for I was not really afraid of death.

At the same time I couldn't think of any other reason why God should spare me. That may sound strange to some of you newer folks, but if you've listened to me for any length of time you know that I know that the Almighty doesn't need Pastor Emry, that He can handle the world and the Kingdom Himself, that He could raise up stones to preach the Gospel if men do not do it, so there just wasn't any way I could say to God, "Well, God you should save me because you need me." Lying on my back in that hospital bed I felt so useless I couldn't really think of anyone needing me except my wife and it seemed only reasonable to pray that way. In any case, I was perfectly at ease, I had no fear, God must have eased my mind so I could say, "Okay, go ahead with the operation, I haven't a worry or a fear about it," and I didn't.

Anyway, God was Merciful. I was operated on Feb. 13th, about 3 hours in the operating room, saw Elaine, my oldest son, Brian, and Earl Jones for a few minutes a few hours later while I was still on the machine which did my breathing for me (that was some experience in itself, being conscious for hours while a machine had to make my lungs expand and contract), then spent about 24 hours in recovery and was moved to a special care heart section of the hospital. I walked a little a few days later and was released 11 days after the surgery on Feb. 24th.

I've been sleeping 12 to 14 hours a day and walk several blocks 2 or 3 times a day. The walking is good for my heart and also I have a long incision in one leg where they removed a leg vein for use in the heart by-pass. That leg has to grow new veins in that area which will take some weeks. I have been instructed, "Walk as much as you feel like, but don't lift things, don't drive a car, and no preaching for a few weeks." Preaching requires standing and talking for 45 minutes all at one time and that will come later. I've been back to see both the cardiologist and the surgeon, my progress is a little better than "normal," and they, and my friends who have had this kind of surgery, tell me it will be about 6 weeks after the surgery and then I should feel "better than you have in years!" I trust God that that shall be so. He has answered our prayers, He has done above all that we had thought, and I, for one, know there is no payment I can make, nor that He expects. His Grace to me and to my family is known to us although it may always be beyond our understanding. We don't know why it was granted other than that one of the greatest attributes of

God that man can sense and understand is His Mercy upon these poor creatures of the dust, "But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned He his anger away, and did not stir up His wrath, for He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again." (Psalm 78:38-39)

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS** and your cards and your extra offerings. I've received so many cards I cannot acknowledge each of them so I'll do it collectively here. Thank you for the concern and the cheerful words you sent. They were all a comfort to me and to my family. Your prayers for me and for my family represent a love and a concern that can only be sparked by the Spirit of God. Praise Jesus for such a manifestation.

While I was in the hospital Pastor Williams sent a letter to the mail list so you folks would know of my heart attack (most of you got it several weeks ago). In it he asked folks not to send flowers to the hospital (I already had several plants and bouquets from the local folks) because a number of folks had called and wanted the hospital address so they could send flowers and he could just imagine scores of people doing that with no way they could all be put in the hospital room and the money and the flowers would be wasted. So he suggested in the letter that those who might have sent flowers should send a money gift instead as I had no insurance and the costs would be far beyond any savings I might have. He was thinking in terms of a few dollars from a few of you, money needed much more for the bills than for flowers and was NOT really asking nor expecting any large offerings. Well, did you folks surprise us! Hundreds of people have sent all the way from \$5 to \$50, dozens sent \$100 or more and we had several gifts of \$500, \$1,000 and \$1,500, all with notes saying, "Use this for Pastor's medical bills!"

So far we have received more than \$20,000 sent for that purpose and I am literally overwhelmed. You folks do me honor far beyond what I have earned or deserve. All I can do is praise God and I thank each and every one of you for those gifts which have taken a great burden from us. The total for the operation, the days of intensive care, and the hospital stay of about 4 weeks came to a little over \$30,000 and Pastor Williams was right, I had neither insurance nor savings to take care of that. While still in the hospital, we were contacted by an Arizona State agency to make an application for the State to pay all the costs if I was "indigent," or just did not have the money. I guess that is standard procedure and I could easily have made a case for the State to pay part or most of it. However, I was greatly impressed that that was not right, that the Almighty had not put me through this thing for me to then turn to the oppressive State which I condemn and ask it to pay for my heart attack. It seemed so wrong I told the members of our Board of Trustees about it, that I could not turn to the State for help, that somehow we and God's People had to pay for this directly. They all agreed, they felt the same way, that this heart attack, this putting me out of the ministry for these weeks, was somehow done for God's purposes and that we and God's Congregation should pay whatever the money costs were. That was before we had begun to get the very generous gifts from our supporters

and your giving has convinced us we were right to turn away from the State on this. Now, with the help so many of you have sent we will be able to pay most of it right now and the rest very soon. Your response has been a marvelous blessing to us.

**WHY SURGERY AND WEEKS TO RECOVER INSTEAD OF INSTANTANEOUS HEALING?** Some will certainly ask (or think): "If God really intended Pastor Emry to be saved, how come He didn't do it by simply healing him, eliminating the need for surgery, the month in the hospital, two months recuperation, and over \$30,000 of expenses?"

The question is a logical one for believers to ask. They know God has the power to immediately heal any sickness or disease. They know from the record in the Scriptures and from the testimony of men that He has done it so many times and they know they and others were praying for Pastor Emry. Why was he not healed that way?

I may NOT know the full answer to this, perhaps this is not even the right answer, but I will tell you what has been impressed on me as being the reason this went this way.

In the past many of you have heard me criticize Oral Roberts and others who organize large public gatherings where they claim to "lay hands on people and have God heal them instantaneously." I have said I believe much of that is deception, that the person claims healing because he "hopes" he has been healed, the preacher repeats his claim to the audience, and the audience then praises and exalts who? The preacher, usually. Even those who sincerely praise Jesus for the healings, they think they have seen, become interested only in Jesus for healing or personal blessings and have little or no interest in the great things of the Scripture regarding Israel, the Abrahamic Covenants, the Kingdom, etc. They'll spend time, tithe and travel hundreds of miles to see "healings," but wouldn't spend 15 minutes or drive 10 miles to hear a sermon on the Kingdom.

However, I believe most are led to exalt the preacher far above Jesus. Any investigation of the various "healing" ministries such as Roberts, the late Kathryn Kuhlman, T. L. Osborn, etc., will convince you that thousands literally adore and worship the preacher. They worship the creature more than the Creator!

The tragedy is that many "healers" then take advantage of that and gather riches and prestige to themselves and in the process Jesus and his Kingdom are lost both to the preacher and to those who follow him.

Also, and this is more appropriate to me, individuals, especially preachers, who have been "instantaneously healed" of some injury or ailment, will often make that "healing" the focal point of their life story and their preaching. They will tell and retell the story until both they and their hearers again exalt who? Jesus? No, they impute to the one who has been healed some esoteric greatness which implies that that person was SO IMPORTANT TO GOD, that God healed him, not because of God's mercy, BUT BECAUSE OF THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF THE HEALED ONE! That "healed" preacher is held in esteem far above the lesser folk whom the God of Creation must have felt were not important enough to heal! Those who have been ill and NOT healed tend to then believe that

