



Dear Phil

LETTING THE DEAD BURY THE DEAD

*Dear Phil,
What does the Bible mean by "let the dead bury the dead?" —Cindy*

Dear Cindy,
The phrase you asked about occurs in Luke 9:60 (cf. Matt. 8:22). In context, a man whom Jesus commanded to follow him replies, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." In response, Jesus says, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Of the various suggestions interpreters have made, I think there are two that are more likely than the others. The first option suggests that "burial customs in the vicinity of Jerusalem from about 20 B.C. to A.D. 70 involved a reinterment of the bones a year after the initial burial, once the flesh had rotted away. At that point the son would have placed his father's bones in a special box known as an ossuary to be set into the wall of the tomb. Thus, Jesus could well be rebuking the man for wanting to wait around for as much as a

year before making a commitment to follow him" (NET Bible). The second possibility is that the man's father was near the point of dying, and he wanted to wait until he died to follow Jesus. When you remember that Isaac thought he was going to die at age 100 but then lived another 80 years(!), there is no telling how long it would have been before the man followed Jesus.

Jesus' statement, "Let the dead bury their dead," probably means that those who are spiritually dead should be responsible to bury his

father, but he must follow Jesus. It is difficult to know whether the father had already died or was near death. In either case, however, Jesus' point is clear: *following Him is the most important priority.*

Sincerely,
Philip Brown ■

Dr. A. Philip Brown II is a member of the ministerial faculty of God's Bible School and College. He may be contacted by e-mail at pbrown@gbs.edu.

THE WORLD TO WIN continued

➔(p4) with some loose ends still to be tied up, but we sense the blessing of the Lord with us in this readjustment. Of course, all of this is temporary as we hope that the new home next door to the HOPE #2 property will be ready to be moved into by early next summer. Sister Marilyn Olson is presently in Mongolia and staying at the HOPE #2 home overseeing the HOPE #1 girls. Sister Beverly Rhoades is now in charge of the finances, paying of wages and supply purchasing." —*John E. Knight, Far East Newsletter.*

NIGERIA. "Pray for the new school year just begun at the Grace Bible Institute and Seminary in Calibar, Nigeria. This institute is supervised by Arms Around The World, Steve Sturtevant, Director." —*Ropeholders*

UKRAINE. "Missionary life is a mixture of adventure and excitement. Other times it simply takes discipline to put one foot in front of the other to keep doing what we know we should. The joy and satisfaction of doing God's will is the glue that holds this mixture together. Our focus is on God. We're trusting Him to make seedlings grow into a spiritual harvest. We try to befriend anyone we can. We visit and pray and care and give. We invite others to our services and often become a transport service for other needs that they have. If people are interested in English, we'll do our best to give them English along with our testimony." —*Dale Drummond, Sharing the Bread Newsletter*

"We arrived safely in Kiev with every single piece of our luggage and have been very busy trying to set up home in an apartment on the west side of the city. It is nice but was completely bare when we arrived. The neighborhood we live in consists of many high-rise apartment buildings. Transportation and language are two of the most intimidating circumstances we encounter. I was invited to preach the first Sunday we were here at a small church in the city, and we have visited the facilities where the college [Kiev Wesley Bible College] has its offices and classrooms. We will be busy ministering in every way we have an opportunity. Pray for our schedule of classes as we begin school." —*Tim and Cheryl Boyd, HIM missionaries* ■

