



Preacher's Pen *by Gene McCoy*



Diving Lessons

Since taking the SCUBA certification course a few years ago I have been privileged to explore some beautiful exotic sites. My first three dives were in the abandoned lead mine at Bonne Terre, MO, where you must first descend 100' below the surface of the ground before entering the water. The temperature of the water requires the use of a wet suit, which is confining. All other dives have been in the Caribbean Sea, specifically the Mexican Riviera, Cozumel and, more recently, Aruba. One dive was an inland site in Mexico — a cavern or cenote, as they are called. Cenotes are areas where sections of cave roof have collapsed revealing an underlying cave system; surface connections to subterranean water bodies; a natural pit, or sinkhole, resulting from the collapse of limestone bedrock that exposes groundwater underneath. The colors and natural formations of both reefs and caverns are magnificent.

With each dive I have become more comfortable and confident. But I do not anticipate ever being completely free of anxiety. A degree of fear accompanies every dive. After all, humans were not created to live in water. And the dangers that lurk in the ocean's depths are of a different nature than those we face above the surface.

Every time I descend with SCUBA gear I am conscious that I am leaving the environment created for humans and entering an environment where survival is impossible apart from equipment strapped to my body. Instead of breathing through my nose I must now inhale and exhale through my mouth, utilizing an apparatus that

must remain in my mouth.

I can remain in this environment for only a short time; only as long as the supply of air in the tank allows. The deeper I dive the greater the pressure, which increases the danger and decreases the duration of the dive. Perhaps you are recognizing several parallels in our earthly existence and making applications to your spiritual life. Though earth provides a suitable environment for human life, it is not God's intent that we feel at home here, for our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). Every time we enter the world we should be aware that the environment is adverse to spiritual survival and that we are dependent upon the armor God provides (Eph. 6:10-17).

The oceans and seas are home to some incredibly beautiful plants and creatures that you might be tempted to touch. The appearance of some, however, is frightening, creating no desire to touch them. All of them are unlike me in almost every respect. Some pose a threat to humans. The general rule is to refrain from touching any plant or animal. All of them have a place and a purpose, by God's design. Apply that to life on land. The allure of the beautiful can get us in trouble. That which is ugly should be avoided. Touching is often necessary to fulfill our earthly mission. But it must be exercised with wisdom from God.

It is crucial to continually monitor the gauges to maintain proper depth and air. Also, it is a fundamental rule to always dive with a buddy. Your dive buddy is a partner who checks your gear before and during the dive.

If a problem arises, your buddy will assist by either resolving the issue or accompanying you to safety on the surface.

Basic to enjoyable diving is trust in the dive master and the equipment. As relating to the dive master, you must do as the dive master instructs. That person is responsible for your safety during the dive. Trusting the equipment is another important element in diving.

When we dive into the mission field of the world, we must always monitor our spiritual

gauges. Just as the diver keeps a careful eye on air supply and the length and depth of his dive, so also must the Christian pay attention to his spiritual indicators. There must be a plan for renewing spiritual resources. Above all, we must always demonstrate complete trust in the Master, obeying His instructions without hesitation. Our life depends upon it!