

Friends, Colleagues Praise Editor at Retirement Banquet

Sam Stone served at the editor's desk of **CHRISTIAN STANDARD** throughout 2002. In fact, his last day in the office was December 31. But friends from far and wide joined him, his family, and his coworkers for a celebration of his service at a retirement dinner in Cincinnati, Ohio, on October 15.

The date was chosen partly to coincide with the annual meeting of the Publishing Committee, and two committee members, Wally Rendel and Marshall Hayden, participated in the program with a third member, Roy Lawson, presiding.

Close to 200 attended, including coworkers from Standard Publishing, representatives from several Christian colleges and the North American Christian Convention, leaders of missions and other church agencies, and church staff ministers.

Those who attended, as well as many who couldn't, sent letters to thank Sam for his ministry. "What you have done daily (editor, adviser) may be coming to an end, but . . . who you are daily (Christian brother, friend) will continue," wrote John Samples from Indianapolis, Indiana. "Your desire for Christian unity and to always 'speak the truth in love' has been clearly evident to those who know you," wrote Victor Knowles from Joplin, Missouri.

The theme of the banquet was "Impacting the World for Christ," and speakers were chosen to reflect Sam's international influence. Ziden Nutt, longtime friend, from Good News Productions International, spoke, as did Jay Henry (Mid-India Christian Mission) and Gene Wigginton, former publisher and president at Standard Publishing.



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Gwen and Sam Stone at Sam's retirement banquet. The couple's children and grandchildren all were able to attend, as were dozens of friends.

"We've seen each other in a lot of different situations," said Nutt. "Loving and tender care are the hallmarks of Sam and Gwen."

"Even in my native language, feelings and words are difficult to express," said Henry. "I don't know how Sam has time to call me and write me notes of encouragement. The impact of his leadership has strengthened churches in India."

"You really see the character of a person when you get behind locked doors," Wigginton said, and he spoke of Sam's strength combined with gentleness.

Sam's sons, Jeff (minister with Dublin [Ohio] Christian Church) and Dave (associate minister with Southeast Christian Church, Louisville, Kentucky), offered tributes both hilarious and moving. Attendees were treated to rare insights into Sam's



Dave (left) and Jeff Stone told humorous and heartwarming stories as part of the program for their father.



Publisher Mark Taylor (right) presented Sam with a gift certificate for future travel as a retirement gift.

parenting style and stories from home when the boys were growing up.

"He's been like a father to me!" Dave quipped. And then, when he was finished, he added, "Not every preacher's kid can actually say that."

"Much more than a father, he is a friend and an example," Jeff said.

To complete the "world" theme, Sam received a gift of an inscribed clock displaying time zones around the globe. A suitcase decorated with insignia from the many countries Sam has visited contained a gift certificate for future travel.