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1. To fix deep in my mind that I have one business upon my hands—to serve and obey the will of God.
2. To examine every thought of self, and see whether it is wholly and solely for the good of God, and all his creatures.
3. To avoid all concerns with the world, or the ways and means of it, which obstruct this only pursuit to be like Jesus.
4. To think nothing great or desirable because the world esteems or approves it; nor allow my thoughts, words, or actions to be governed by any considerations of the world. 
5. To remember frequently, and impress upon my mind, that I have one business upon my hands—
   To fix deep in my mind that I have one business upon my hands—
   To fix deep in my mind that I have one business upon my hands—
   To fix deep in my mind that I have one business upon my hands—
   To fix deep in my mind that I have one business upon my hands—
6. That the greatest of human nature consists in doing nothing else but in fulfilling the Divine nature. That, therefore, all the greatness of this world, which is not in good actions, is perfectly beside the point.
7. To remember often, how much time is wasted away, how much trouble and sorrow is occasioned by such persons as can receive no benefit from me, nor learn from me.
8. To avoid all excesses eating and drinking.
9. To spend all my time in doing good, and promoting such persons as can receive no benefit from me, nor learn from me.
10. To be always careful of my reputation, and not make an errand without some result.
11. To exist all patience.
12. To set at naught the presence of God whenever I find myself under temptation to sin, and to have immediate recourse to prayer.
13. To fearfully of myself and with great charity of all others.
14. To forbear from all evil speaking.
15. To think often of the end, and to propose it as a pattern for myself.
16. To pray, privately, love a day, beseech my morning and evening prayer.
17. To spend some time in giving an account of the day previous to retiring to prayer: How have I spent this day? What sin have I committed? What temptations have I withstood? Have I performed all my duty?

—From Christian Perfection, by William Law
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Cover Photo by Heidi Winton Ellis: The Mosque, center of the Mount of Olives. The chapel was of stone, which stands on the site of the Temple, built on the place where Jesus “went” over the Mount of Olives, verse 63 of a wayward city.

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Preface

The Preacher’s Magazine, Proclaiming Christian Holiness

Volume 56, Number 3

March, April, May, 1981

Editor

Wesley Tracy

by

Wesley Tracy

HOLINESS—Something to Make a Glorious Noise About?

When John Wesley, Adam Clarke, John Fletcher, and the other venerable Methodists of yore weren’t speaking about holiness in a sermon, they were probably just leading up to it. They preached little else.

Right now I’m in the middle of writing a book about Adam Clarke’s preaching. A study of his 64 great sermons shows that he was a man with one message. He preached holiness all the time.

The reason that those Methodists turned the world upside down preaching holiness is not unrelated to the times in which they lived. They lived in the stifling tide of the Protestant Reformation. Still echoing across the Channel were Luther’s teachings. Some were so “misappropriated” were

1. Man is a horse. If he is ridden by God he is ridden to heaven. If he is ridden by the devil he is ridden into hell.

2. If on Sunday morning you see two men, one in a ditch, dead drunk from Saturday night revelry, and the other on his way to church with a Bible under his arm, there is no way to know which one is the Christian.

3. As far as sin goes, even the best Christian will have a Romans-seven struggle on his hands as long as he or she lives.

Meanwhile, from the mountains of Switzerland, Calvin was bugging all sorts of good news, like, “Sin is the instrument God uses to damn those He predestines to hell.” When Beza seized this and set it in concrete, and later when it was decorated with the “tulip of Dort,” a strange picture of the Christian life appeared.

By noon even the Westminster Confession, the creed of creeds, declared that even the regenerate would sin in thought, word, and deed as long as they lived. All this reduced the life of those with a religious turn of mind to seeking some sort of justification by faith (if they were so predestined) and to search for some evidence of it in their lives.

Their best religious leaders left them at the gate of justification.

There was nothing more to do but thank God for what He had done for them. Evangelism was rather beside the point with the ghost of predestination looming so ominously on the horizon. Hence good works could not save them. Adam Clarke observed, they were content to have no good works at all. Further, how happy can you be, thinking that no matter how you yearn for holiness you must always be a slave to sin? In what ways was a person, even a Christian, different from a football kicked about at the whim of Satan and sin?

Into this malaise strolls John Wesley, Bible in hand, saying fearlessly to one and all that the tulip of Dort is a lie (or at least imperfectly forever, the Bible speaks of holiness of heart here and now. The Methodists expounded the Word, teaching that long after sin was not the Christian’s proscribed.

Carrying away a corrupt heart was not required; rather, it was forbidden. The springs of the soul, they said, can flow crystal clear and clean. The revival was on—people hungering for holiness, guided by pure doctrine, sought and found.

One of Adam Clarke’s favorite ways of treating holiness was to tell believers that justification is what God has done for us, but you must now hear the Word about what God wants to do in us. He did not belittle justification (he called it the greatest miracle), but he stressed sanctification more—because it was the need of the hour.

Most moderns remember Adam Clarke only for his commentary, but he was also a great preacher. In an era of pulpits gone “out-congregationalized” them all. For 52 years he was one of the most listened-to preachers. The sermon “Apostolic Preaching,” he said, “Many talk much, and, well, of what Christ has done FOR us; but how little of what He is to do IN us… He was incarnate,
His "make holy" stance demands that we hear more than that by the human potential movement.

...that he was also "fearfully and wonderfully made" said Clarke. He is given through the blood of the covenant for the cleansing of our sins. He pervades that nature—purifies and refines, and sublimes it to himself. He is given through the 'blood' of the covenant for this very purpose. He comes to accomplish this great end...[so we can be justified freely, and sanctified wholly.

The Spirit purifies, indwells the heart, and fills the conscience. Clarke believes the heart was filled with the fullness of God, 'imbued with sin...and filled with humility, meekness, gentleness, goodness, justice, holiness, mercy: truth, and love to God and man.' "The heart in which Christ continually dwells. He completely fills and holiness becomes His house forever."

"What then is this complete sanctification? It is the cleansing of the blood that has not been cleansed—it is the washing of the soul of a true believer from the remains of sin—it is the making one who is already a child of God, more holy."

"The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of burning, destroys the pollution of the heart," and "the carnal mind is totally destroyed and the whole image of God restored upon the heart. This certainly points out a deliverance from all sin...and if this be fulfilled in man surely shall not be eradicated from the soul," for "the sanctifying Spirit...condemns to utter destruction the whole of the carnal mind" and "for those who humbly seek him the Spirit brings the purification of their hearts from all evil tempers, passions, and appetites: so that they can love God with all their hearts, and worthily magnify His name, and love their neighbor as themselves."

Are those forces which seemed to conspire against structural holiness in the days of Wesley and Clarke still abroad? It seems to me that the forces which make holiness impossible and life seem impossible, and thus unsought, have diversified and expanded, and are more subtle than ever. They are not only abroad, but dominantly so.

One such force is behavioristic or deterministic psychology. There is the idea of B. F. Skinner that "man is a dead, and good riddance, he never existed anyway. Nowhere does it say that man is just conscious automata, a lump upon which the environment acts. This is a sort of secular Bezan Calvinism with no vertical dimension. And if we could truly see how this thought pattern saturated the assumptions of the society, we would be amazed.

Another such force is the new humanism, typified by the human potential movement. It has become a kind of secular Pelagianism with no vertical dimension. It spreads like poison ivy the idea that man is not sinful anyway. What an archaic notion—sin. Don't try to save people, there is really no sin to save them from.

John Wesley, Adam Clarke, and company had to overwork the words that sanctification came by penitential purgatory or in the hour and article of death. These we must overcome have even more disturbing views. To the determinists, holiness is a mere amusing pawn on human nature that is completely beside the point. To the new humanism holiness is a pitiable, not-very-funny non-sequitur.

It seems to me that the challenge and need for preaching holiness, God's will in us, has never been greater. Time is so important in the movements of men. Holiness—has not time returned? What do men and women need more than that? By God's grace, Christ's atonement, and the indwelling, purifying presence of Christ's Holy Spirit, the springs of the soul can flow crystal clear, clean, and pure.

What greater challenge for today, what higher honor than to have the privilege to preach full salvation? The more thought is delightful. As we "celebrate Christian holiness" in our churches, we might become like the man Adam Clarke described who, during a preaching service, was so overwhelmed by the Spirit that he was "on the eve of making a glorious noise."
Socialills, Micah makes clear, begin when man makes religion serve his needs. Sin begins and ends in the world outside of God, and then becomes manifest in wrong relationships to everything else.

The motives of false prophets are exposed with loathing and disgust:

"As I have seen, those who lead my people astray, if one teats them they proclaim "peace," if he does not, then they prepare to wage war against him. Therefore right

The vacuum that existed in the area of moral leadership was evidently being filled with horro-
scope-type advice and dabbling in the occult, more than superficially applicable on Main Street today: "I will destroy your witchcraft and your fortune-tellers and empty cast spells" (6:12, NIV).

Micah would have little sympathy for "believers" who consult the daily horoscopes and dabble in the occult and superstitions.

Micah's treatment of the general moral climate of his day resonates with our concern for our own society; the general climate of immorality, of greed, of widespread consciousness, and of selfish, grasping materialism are objects of God's abhorrence and promised judgment:

"How to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds... They cover fields and houses thereby. They defraud a man of his home, a fellowman of his inheritance (2:12). ... her people are liars, and their tongues speak deceitfully. Therefore I have chosen you..." (6:12-13, NIV).

Micah promised God's judgment and His holy war: "And I will lay waste to the city; I will leave its outmost wall deserted, and it will be a waste forever; I will set up a signal against it..." (7:1).

Micah blasted judges and rulers who let considerations other than plain truth influence their decisions:

"For there is no truth in their mouth; they are wormwood, and deceit; the very mouth of them speaks lies; they ensnare the people. The ruler demands gifts, the judge accepts bribes, the powerful impose their will; and they all conspire together (7:3, NIV).

In our society where rich white people get away with almost anything while poor non-whites would go to prison for, we can be assured that Micah would not be to our liking or his God's. He would have no use for our "social issues" and "political correctness". Such is the way of men of faith, and yet that is the way of men of God. Micah's faith is a faith that-centered, whatever the cost. It is a faith that would allow nothing to stand in the way of carrying out God's will. Go back and read Micah's message and see how he was willing to be absolutely free with what poor non-white slaves, etc., had to suffer. He makes it clear that he will not allow his power to change man's situation—but rather his confidence was in the integrity of God.

The Hope: Micah's Will Triumph

Micah's message is a sincere appeal to faith in the character of God. When man addresses the ill of society he begins his thinking with grandiose schemes for organized human assault on problems that are more often than not symptoms rather than causes. When man listens to God the focus and fury of his concern align with divine guidance in seeking and finding solutions.

It wasn't that Micah would have been afraid to face police dogs or demonstrate against nuclear proliferation: it is just that he was looking in an entirely different direction for help. He could see with the eye of faith a time when peace would overpass all the earth.

"The law will go out from Zion. Nation will not take up sword against nation... Every man will sit under his own vine and no one will make them afraid" (4:2-4, NIV).

Micah's hope was not just in a future worldwide peace with prosperity and freedom from fear, but it was in a people that trusted in the Lord. He would become Judge and Guide. The Prince of Peace would rest almost silently upon the scene: "...you, Bethlehem Ephrathite, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come one who will be ruler over Israel... He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord (5:2-4, NIV).

But finally, Micah saw with the eye of faith, this Ruler would subdue all enemies and bring about a peace that would be eternal:

"It will take vengeance in anger and anger will pursue sinners. They will be destroyed who have not obeyed me" (5:15, NIV).

Micah's confidence is in the integrity of a God who will judge. He knows His own people, and a God who is in control even when the moral battle seems lost.

This is exactly where men of faith have always stood. And this is where men of faith must remain until the Day of the Lord has passed. Without faith it is impossible to please Him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that he rewards those who seek Him (Heb. 11:6, RSV).

Even though written hundreds of years after Micah proclaimed his message, it was true then, and it could have been Micah's life-verse.

Therefore, we can find the message of Micah's message on Main Street is the practical statement of God's personal requirement for His people. Living the midst of evil and with a hope that seems to be far in the future. God's people are challenged to a life of commitment with the total allegiance.

The Standard: A Holy People

It is not particularly disturbing to listen to a preacher who is concerned about the ills of "soc-
ociety." Micah, however, got lost in an impersonal pronouncement about the evils of the day. But as we listen to Micah, an unmistakably personal note comes slapping through. And it is a very disturbing note.

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (6:8, NIV).

And His requirements have not changed to this very day. These standards are the standards of a holy people.

God is concerned with what I do. Notwithstanding all the nonsense preached in the misapplication of the doctrine of salvation by grace, it matters, and it matters eternally what we do. No habitual neglect of its requirements. Sinners do not inherit eternal life.

God is concerned with what I believe—why I do the things I do. Right actions spring from holiness of heart. God requires the right act for the right reason. His holiness is the basis upon which we shall hear the words—not or hpear—"Well done, good and faithful servant!"

But both the "do" and the "love" and dynamic, and the heart of what Micah is trying to communicate is that we cannot do justice or love mercy apart from it. God requires that we are bound from living faith in God is really immorality; the second half of the Decalogue cannot be kept from the first; the dynamic of holy living is in the relationship that man can have with God.

To "walk humbly with God" means also that there must be a deliberate change and adaptation on both God's and man's part in order that continu-
ning fellowship can be reality.

God has stooped in love and mercy, and, far beyond even what Micah comprehended, has stepped into our situation in the Person of Jesus. But God cannot fellowship with sin. And so man, by God's grace, may choose to be made clean and holy in order that this relationship may continue, and so that the dynamic for doing justice and loving mercy may continuously be renewed.

The only hope Micah saw for his people was a renewal and revival of personal holiness. "Walking humbly with God" is our only hope today for personal salvation for any kind of real meaning, and our only hope for making any kind of impact on the people and the Main Streets. No Monastic retreat, or unholy com-
promise will do for our day. With Micah we must proclaim God's standard—holiness. Then and only then will God's people become the "dynamic dif-
terence" that will make Micah's hope reality.

---

Two Books About Preaching the Old Testament Prophets

**Something New, Something Old:**

"Something old, but classic and a must for every preacher is "Teaching Against the Inside Out" by Kyle M. Yates (Broadman, 225 pp., $7.56). This book gives insight into the Old Testament prophets, explic-
tial, and religious backgrounds which will help you get acquainted with 18 great prophets. Their for each prophet the author discusses the literary qualities and the profound spiritual values of the prophetic writings. "The volume is a compendium of facts, stated in crisp compen-
ness, but it is juicy with spiritual truth which spring eternal from the utterances of these heroic" fortifikors," says the Dallas Morn-
ing News. If a young preacher could at-
ford only one book on the proph-
ts, I think he should be the one purchased. Mature preachers, too, will find their minds stimulated as they go over familiar ground with Dr. Yates to point out things they have missed on previous journeys," the Christian Century says.

Yates gives 20 pages to the message of Micah, making this book a foundational aid to the theme of this issue of the Presch-
er's Magazine.

Both books available from your Publishing House.

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ern Seminary, contains 13 chapters which present vari-
ant profiles of the Old Testament prophets of righteousness. The author aims at present-
ing these men as human, yet with a difference. He says that our aim is to help the preacher start to understand the prophets and learn to think of them as friends who wants to know better and get along more with whom he shares a mission."
sumably delivered orally over a period of 25 years or more, in widely varying circumstances.

For some years now Testament scholars have been reluctant to grant the oracles of hope in 2:12-13, 4:1-9, and 7:8-20 an authentic status of Micah. This was based in part on Micah's own description of his mission as prophet of sin and impending doom. Furthermore, in Jeremi- miah's day a century later, Micah was still remembered as a prophet of doom. It was only once the destruction of Jerusalem (Jer. 26:18). The reluctance for many of the authors of that time was also tied to the fact that some of the sayings foretold the Babylonian exile (4:9-10) and appeared to assume the fall of Jerusalem of 587 B.C. (7:8-13), both of which seem to indicate something more than a late seventh century or exilic data to these texts.

In light of this situation any credible answer on authorship will of necessity involve the detailed excursive analysis and, where possible, the dating of each unit of the book. Granted our minimal knowledge of the varying situations in which the prophet spoke over the decades of his work, it appears unnecessary to deny Micah the probability of authorship of oracles as well as doom, at least not solely on the basis of the contrasting motifs. The two themes are by no means mutually exclusive, as Micah's contemporary Hosea well demonstrates.
A third major theme of Micah’s is the moral poverty of the clergy, who are engaged in prophesy and preach to the wealthy who cater to the whims of the rich (6:1-12), more eager to gain a hearing than to declare God’s ways (2:11-3:8). They will share in the judgment of the ingeguine hearers. A fourth main theme of this great work stands in stark contrast to the first two. It is perhaps the point of the book as it now stands: the Kingdom will come and God’s Word and worship will yet be established. Micah uses the idea of the returning “hears” (1:2; 3:1; and 6:1), the book pro- vises as follows in a judgment of hope and climax, in a liturgy of faith (7:8-20).

The name is appropriate for a book which unflinchingly addresses the spiritual unrest of his time. It is difficult to imagine a document which could offer in seven chapters a more comprehensive testi- mony to Yahweh’s power and to his purposes for the ages to come.

The final theme undergirds the entire work. It is the theme of Yahweh’s incomparable righteousness and blessing provided through the covenant relationship. Yahweh is the true and only one who can deliver from the grip of sin. He is the one who can fulfill his promises and seal the bargain. The word love (‘ahab) which is used with such frequency in Micah’s prophecies is a characteristic that states this promise for the ages.

Within this comprehensive testi- mony, Yahweh’s righteousness is set forth as the prominent character which sustains both the predictions of doom and the promises as well. Yahweh’s un- predictability, his compassion for the poor, his desire to bless those who are honest (7:1-6) abounds with hope. The remnant to be retrieved from the exiles, called the “remnant ofJacob,” is sometimes referred to as the “remnant of Israel.” This phrase refers to the portion of Israel which is not completely destroyed. It is the people who are called to return to the Lord and repent of their sins. Micah speaks of this remnant as being the “remnant of Jacob” who will be restored to their homeland.

In Micah’s prophecy, Yahweh is depicted as a righteous and merciful God who is willing to forgive and restore those who repent of their sins. He promises to judge those who oppress the poor and to establish a new covenant with his people. Micah’s message is a call to repentance and a promise of restoration for those who turn to Yahweh. The prophet’s vision is one of justice and righteousness being restored to the land. He envisions a time when the people will worship Yahweh and live in peace.

Micah’s prophecies challenge the existing social and political structures of his day. He calls for justice and righteousness to be established in the land, and he warns against the destructive power of idolatry and depravity. Micah’s message is a call to action, a call to repentance and a promise of restoration for those who turn to Yahweh.

FOOTNOTES

1. Micah is a shortened form of the name Micah, “Who is like Yahweh?” it is the title of this book, which contains the prophecies of Micah. The name Micah is also used as a synonym for God, referring to his surpassing greatness and power. Micah is the author of this book, which is called Micah’s prophecy.

2. Micah’s message is a call to repentance and a promise of restoration for those who turn to Yahweh. He challenges the existing social and political structures of his day, calling for justice and righteousness to be established in the land, and warning against the destructive power of idolatry and depravity.

3. Micah’s prophecy is a call to action, a call to repentance and a promise of restoration for those who turn to Yahweh. He challenges the existing social and political structures of his day, calling for justice and righteousness to be established in the land, and warning against the destructive power of idolatry and depravity.

4. Micah’s prophecy is a call to action, a call to repentance and a promise of restoration for those who turn to Yahweh. He challenges the existing social and political structures of his day, calling for justice and righteousness to be established in the land, and warning against the destructive power of idolatry and depravity.
The first verses of Micah 6 present the Lord's case against His people. He has an accusation to lodge against them (vv. 1-2). It is an accusation that, despite His mercy of graces acts (vv. 4-6), His people had become weary of Him (v. 3).

Verses 3-6 begin to set forth a series of hypothetical counter-challenges by the people. In response to God's accusation of taming Him, they hypocritically respond, "What does God really want from us? Does He even desire human sacrifice?"

In other words, "Is there some kind of sacrifice which will satisfy You, God?"

The famous verse which is the Lord's answer, in it Micah cites three things God does require:

1. He requires that they "do justice." The prophet complains bitterly about the injustices of his day. There was oppression (2:1-6), marketplace dishonesty (2:10-11), violence (6:12a; 7:2), and the leaders accepted bribes and dealt corruptly (3:1-11). These characteristics offended a God of justice.

2. He requires that they "love kindness." The great Hebrew word used here is difficult to translate simply. The RSV translates it "sacred love." "Mercy" is the NIV translation, while NASB translates it as "lovingkindness." It refers to a characteristic of God—an unconditional, faithful love to His people, particularly those in covenant relationship with Him. This quality is also to characterize the servant of God. We too are to love faithfulness, mercy, loyalty, steadfast love, and seek to demonstrate these graces in our daily life.

To demonstrate this divine attribute is to love unconditionally (Luke 6:32-35), to love actively, (1 John 3:18) and to love faithfully or loyalty (Isa. 5:22).

3. He requires that they also "walk honestly" with Him. Hebrew can be translated "walk carefully" or "circumspectly.

The kind of life of careful, personal piety, which was in contrast to the merely formal, external religiosity which often characterized Micah's day. Though religious cere-

Regarding the combination of spiritual and social concerns:

According to Donald Dayton, the early Weslayan Methodists "tested the spirituality of a church by its commitment to the great commandments (Mt. 22:37-40) and the social teachings of the church." (Dayton, M. A., 1981)

"Contemporary theosophies are similar to the realization that the major financial backing and organizational leadership behind the abolitionist crusade derived from the man who founded Dunn and Bradstreet (the world's first credit rating firm) and his silk merchant brother. Lewis and Arthur Tupper were two of the most prominent and wealthy businessmen in pre-Civil War New York. Yet those two men went on to wholeheartedly reform both areas." (Dayton, M. A., 1981)

The Q and A element of this passage is that it may be said without a question that Arthur Tupper was the pivotal center of the whole movement." (Dayton, M. A., 1981)

H. Mark Abbott
"When life collapses, hope remains"  

Text: Mic 6:11-12

The New Testament book which quotes this passage as forbidding the birthright of Isaac is Matthew. This was important to Matthew's primarily Jewish audience. He presents Jacob, who was a covenant partner with Israel, as a type of Jesus. He quotes the promise to Jacob: "I will multiply thee exceedingly, and make thee大国, so that people shall serve thee. And God said, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." (Genesis 15:13-14)

The writer of this text is a man who lives in the midst of great catastrophe, his country is defeated, cities are being destroyed, the country is in rebellion. When he reflects on his situation and the nation's plight, the hopes of the nation are reduced to nothing. 

This chapter begins with this claustrophobic pronouncement that the blind (Micah 6:10) in O ward on a city that is being laid waste. This is the Book of Micah, a prophecy of a doomsday future. In the overwhelming sense of anguish and suffering comes through again and again: pials like 'a woman in labor' (4:9, 15). "Zion will become wallowed like a whale, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubbish, the temple hill an overgrown mound" (3:12, 14). God has "planned a disaster against this people, from which they cannot save themselves." (2:3, 17). 

The prophetic message for this text is bleak indeed: it is filled with the sense of divine punishment for the sins of the nation. These sins chronicled in Micah have been summarized as follows: 

1. Oppression of the poor (2:2-8, 9, 3:14) 
2. Unjust use of resources (2:11, 3:10) 
3. Injustice (5:1-2, 7:4) 
4. Reckless scorn of religion (3:6-8, 12-14) 
5. Wrongdoings (3:5, 7) 
6. Greedy corruption in church and state (7:3)

This was a terrifying time for people whom God had so miraculously delivered from Egypt and so graciously established in their land. 

But our text speaks of hope. It is set in the midst of awful pronouncements, military destruction, and religious corruption. But Micah is not afraid to see beyond the gloom of the present predicament to a new kingdom of the redeemed. He is able to interrelate divine activity in the exile and see an opportunity for the evangelization of others as a basis for the desired restoration. 

Because Micah is singled out as the geographical center for God's redemptive activity. We know from 1 Sam. 17:12 that it was the birthplace of David. This is the very center of what a great modern historian has called "a small place." From this obscure village came a line of kings who ruled Judah. It was in the heart of this biblical region is viewed as the Golden Era of Judah. In prophetic language, David is often referred to as “the mighty David" (Isa. 22:5). There emerges a strange mixture of nostalgia longing for the golden age of David and an acute longing for the coming Day of the Lord. 

So, one of the reasons that we have as a people, and of the entire church, great longing for the Lord's return, and to see an end to this brief time of trials and tribulations, and the opportunity that God has given us to join in this global movement of salvation.

If you have not been able to see God's word, and have not been able to see the blessing God has given us, we need to be reminded of it. 

The oyster is irritated it secretes a milky fluid that coats the sand of grain and it is easy enough to make it bearable. If you can bring yourself to do so because here is a problem, or a dissipation, or an immediate failure, and to be able to face the hard facts that would otherwise be unable to endure. If hope dies, there is no reason for our striving. 

We are given a beautiful illustration of the implacable commitment of God to carrying out His purposes in this time of trial and suffering, and in any and all circumstances. This is the text: "What if all the people, even all the people of the earth, were gathered unto thee, and the sound of thy voice were like the sound of a mighty trumpet; would God account the word unprofitable that He hath spoken? And it shall come to pass, that, if they hear thy voice as one man, and all thy words were as they were heard; then shall this people go to the Lord their God, and shall be his people again" (Micah 6:1-4, 3-4).

Resources for Study: "The Vlignant Faith"  

Sermon Suggestions: "The Vlignant Faith"  

Illustrations: "Suppose you met a person on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River near New York City who was obviously very much larger and stronger than you. Suppose you didn't know where he was supposed to be, but that he wanted to get to New York City, and that he was not sure of the direction and was wondering around. You would be led to turn around. "To see that you could go up over the horizon into Canada." That's the constant element that's fixed. Walk in that direction and you will finally get to New York City.

"How come you have so much skin!"
by Harvey E. Finley

"Life is not worth the living or ‘stop the world, I want to get off’ the condition of deep dissatisfaction and despair are often heard in these times. They are typical expressions of those who have pursued and obtained a pleasurable way of life constantly preoccupied with the concerns of the day and programs, as well as in many other ways. These are the expressions of persons who experience a growing void of meaninglessness deep in the caverns of their souls, for such thoughts result when there is no hope.

Preachers of the Word of God have always had reasons to proclaim that any nation which forgets God or falls to give God due credit for accomplishing the day and making the world renew their hope in God. There are also an increasing number of analysts of the international scene, Western Civilization in its earlier history gave significant attention to the Bible and biblical values, but in recent years the Western Civilization have, by and large, cast aside the Bible and its values.
LIKE US EVER WAS

by Wesley Tracy

I. The following typical steps of homiletic pro-

1. Examine your text and its context.

2. Establish the text.

3. Choose a theme and interpret the text.

4. Write out the sermon and make suggestions for delivery.

II. What Do We Do with This Text?

1. Compare English Translations

2. Literary and Critical Concerns

3. There is a great deal of difference in the ways that English translations render the original text.

4. B. What About Authorship?

5. The critical consensus is that the author of the text is the work of the author of the book of Micah.

6. The text originally looked for things such as literary connections or language.

7. C. What is the Function of the Text in the Book of Micah?

8. The passage, 3:9-12, forms an effective climax.

9. D. The text was selected for its thematic importance.

10. E. What is the Canonical Function of the Text?

11. F. Is there a canonical reference in the text?

12. G. Who Were the "Rulers" and "Heads" Challenged by Micah in Verse Nine?

13. H. Why did Micah write this text?

14. I. Explore the Historical and Socio-

15. J. Summary of the text.

16. K. Next, in order to make the passage your own, make your own interpretive rendering in English vernacular.

17. L. Listen here, you haughty heads of Judah.

18. M. Where is your God?

19. N. Micah, a man of integrity, delivery a powerful and prophetic message.

20. O. From Esrael to Prophets—Preparing to Preach from Micah 3:9-12.
outcasts. The largest group was the peasants, making up some 80 or 90 percent of the population. The landowners were a part of this class. They were poor farmers. The upper classes fattened on their surplus which the legitimate rulers did not share. Against such an abusive power structure, Micah rose angrily to set things right.

E. What Was Meant by the Changes Against the Rulers? What Was the Nature of Their Offenses? The people were subjected to greedy land-grabbers who would stop at nothing. They were being subjected to a kind of socialism which did not agree with the people. Despite this, the land owner belonged to the monarch. He could do with it what he pleased. The only thing the people on it belonged to him. The land was the economy. Whoever controlled the land controlled the kingdom.

In premonarchical Israel, however, the land belonged to King Yahweh. His land was subdivided by lot to every household in Israel. Lest anyone forget to whom the land really belonged, the farms were redistributed by lot every seven years.1 When, however, David united the kingdom of Saul, he did so with the help of Cretna and Phinehas (1 Chronicles 12:32). Consequently, the land belonged to the monarch. He could do with it what he pleased. The only thing the people on it belonged to him. The land was the economy. Whoever controlled the land controlled the kingdom.

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F. Why Did Micah Blast the Priests and the Prophets? The only thing Micah ever said about the priests is that they were not only greedy but also hypocrites. When he talked about the prophets, he said that they were forewarned to tell the people that God's will was to do something. However, he also stated that he had seen them.

G. Why Did the Priests, Princes, and Prophets Think They Could Get by With Such Outrages? Their acts of foreclosures on the poor were clearly against God. Micah, therefore, is right in cursing them (Mic 6:15).

H. How Is Our Society Congregational and Personal? When we invite Micah to the modern world, many modern men say that they ask him to go out into the world (Hos. 4:6; Deut. 17:10ff.; 33:10). It seems that these people have a two-party decision to make that God always makes distinct and the people are given the choice of remaining in the world or being set apart to a way of life. In any case, it is not for the community to determine what is or is not right for the individual.

I. The modern thinkers will understand a little bit about social oppression, for they have seen a bit of it, and it has driven them to the brink. Some may identify with the eighth century peasant, for they too have struggled with systemic structures which strain their capacity. The poor are menaced in some ways by the law and by the fact that they cannot do anything to change the situation. The modern thinkers will nervously note that the legitimating function of religion still persists in the civil religion which they have developed.

J. The modern thinking makes the nation at fault, for the nation will not understand the institutional struggle which is going on. In this case, the law of the boarding school will have to slip into the soul of the eighth century peasant and change it in such a way as to turn out straight, thinking that nothing is demented by us beyond kicking off our Florshimes, grabbing another. It is this class of thinking which is settling down to watch a suntanned entertainer talk about "Love Boat" to "Fantasy Island."
The doors were cedar and gold and the girls were golden girls and the panels read and the girls chanted: We are the greatest nation, nothing like us ever was, it has happened before.

While the strong men sang and listened, and the strong men listened and felt good about it all, there were men and lizards who listened and the only listeners left now ... are the ... the rats ... and the lizards.

And they were black crows crying, "Caw, caw," bringing mud and sticks, building... over the words carved in the place where the panels were cedar and the strips on the panels were gold and the golden girls came singing: We are the greatest nation, nothing like us ever was.

The only singers now are the crows crying, "Caw, caw," and sheets of rain in the wind and the doors.

And the only listeners now ... are the ... the rats ... and the lizards.

The feet of the rats scrabble on the doors; the bluish phantoms of the rat footprints chatter the pedigrues of the rats and of the blood and gable of the breech of the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren of the rats.

And the wind shifts and the dust on the doorsills shifts and even the writing of the rat footprints tell us as well as the panel that Jerusalem was about the greatest city, the greatest nation where the strong men were and the women worked: Nothing like us ever was.

I. TWO SWEET BUT FALSE TRADITIONS

A. Judah's False, Sweet Tradition (3:11b)

The privileged class in Judah reasoned: Since God is bound to take care of us, it really doesn't make much difference how we live. We can do what we want—and in the persona lives of many of the elite were incredibly corrupt. But what bothered Micaiah is the believable injustice and oppression of the poor.

B. The Societal Scene

The Bible tells us that the destruction which Micaiah predicted was postponed for some time under Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:16-19). And that is the first task for many leaders and perhaps for many of us today—to repent. The second task is to report, repent to God for duty, the duty of living out the gospel today. It may mean speaking up like Micaiah it may mean rising up as a group to challenge unrighteousness.

Gerhard and Jean best look on human societies with a rather dismal note. They say that the future of high-quality human societies is grim—UNIL societies can:

1. Cooperate better.
2. Replace self-centeredness with altruistic action.
3. Solve inter-societal inequality by sharing.
4. Become willing to endure.
5. Have faith to look beyond technology for a new dominant force which can organize, motivate and inspire.

It seems to me that these social scientists have unwittingly said that the only hope for human societies is to live out the heart of the gospel. It's not competition, altruism, suffering for the sake of the others, but the heart of the gospel.

End Notes

2. International Critical Commentary.
3. McNeil, M. (1967, July). The coin-base evidence for Micaiah's words. This was a loud call to the public to rise up and return to God. It seems about the time of the first crusade of the Church.
4. L. B.棱.
5. The cover of the Psalter.

HOPE ALSO IN OUR TIME

(4:9-10), as well as return to Jeru-

salem and to former glory (6:6-7; 5:7-9).

Appropriate to the inner struc-
ture of this unit, there is the strik-
ing declaration that God is unique in His person and in His role of leadership, and that He is the only one who can lead to the realization of God's purpose in the world.

Unique in person, His is des-

cribed as unique one whose existence is distinctly far back into antiquity.

"Whose origin is from old, from ancient days." He is described as the Chief of the Ancient Ones, who shall be identified as Shepherd-Leader of God's people. Like His person "the majesty of the name of the Lord of His name (5:4 RSV). Micaiah's pronouncement for the future also stresses that it would be through this unusual, unique Ruler from Bethlehem that general or universal peace and justice conditions described earlier (6:1-15) would be realized.

From our vantage point in time and with the understanding provided by New Testament writers, we are able to say that Micaiah's expected Ruler or King did come from Bethlehem, and that through Him many nations have been at-

tacted to Jerusalem (see Mat-
tin. In the New Testament, the hope of God is as the belief that God is realizing His purpose in the world has been ful-

ly confirmed and wholly justi-

fied.

B. Micaiah's Hope also is in the Day when Man Meet God's Requirements

Micaiah had considerable to say about the lack of justice, about the lack of righteousness, about the lack of evidence in the broken relationship of the Church. He also was critical of the leaders and the people, and in the way that they were living in the world. And this would be turned around. His hope was in the day of a leader who would come from Bethlehem and who would be the Messiah and who would be able to turn the world around. His hope was in the day of the Lord, the day of the return to the land, the day of the return to the Promised Land and to the land of Canaan.

Micaiah's hope is our hope.
The Power in a Divine Call

(Mic. 1:1-2)

"The word of the LORD given to Micah...the vision he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem" (1:1).

Micah, a prophet of the Lord, lived and worked in the eighth century B.C. He prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah. Jotham and Hezekiah were good kings, but Ahaz was most wicked. Micah saw the apostasy of the nation and heard the people saying, 'We would be content as long as we never saw such destruction as we have seen. Ahaz was a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea. His message has elements of the same divinely inspired warning and spiritual guidance as in those other prophets.

Micah's hometown was Moresheth, a village on the Philistine border near Gaza, about 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem. His message was directed to both Israel and Judah, especially to the capital cities of Samaria and Jerusalem. He lifted up his voice against the sins of his people and warned of the coming destruction of both nations. But he also foretold the eventual restoration of a remnant of believers in accordance with God's covenants and promises to Abraham and Jacob.

Micah's authority came from the Lord. In this record of divine preaching, it is evident that discourses are rare and holy boldness. Micah fearlessly called sin what it is, a crime against the Almighty that cannot escape His wrath. He cried out His warnings even in the places of highest authority and condemned evils where other men would have been silent.

Micah's courage without doubt sprang from his sense of divine commission. Called by God, he delivered His message no matter what the consequences to the preacher. Throughout his career the prophet was confident in the face of difficulties, fearsome before his enemies, and always on course in the stormy sea by day and night.

There is nothing so steadying to a preacher as the certainty that he is in the center of God's purposes and that He is with him and does, is what God wants. Like Joshua, Micah's courage doubtless springs from his sense of divine commission. He knew that He was called and sent of God, and He was not afraid to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so will I be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Josh. 1:5).

The Heaps of Rubble

(Mic. 2:1-9)

"Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of rubble" (1:9).

Samaria, the northern nation of Israel, had been warned about her sins many times by the prophets Eliezer, Eliahu, and Amos. They would not listen. She continued in the capital city to propagate and carry on fervently throughout the nation the worship of the golden calf and of Baal, the fertility god. She also practiced the low morals associated with these religions. Jehovah and His ways were forgotten.

Israel would have, under Joshua, subdued the whole land of Canaan (see Josh. 1:1-5). But instead, she opted to coexist with nations committed to idolatry, and it was this wickedness and eventually petrified nature of her culture, Micah therefore, jointed to warn her. In Micah he was, a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea. His message elements of the same divinely inspired warning and spiritual guidance as in those other prophets.

The reaction of the man of God to Samaria's decay was one of concern and condemnation. "Like Isaiah before him, Micah acted out his grave warning of the nation's corruption about barefooted and naked, howling like a jackal, and moaning like an ewe, because she and corruption in Samaria were "insignificant" (v. 6). Micah, in this way, declared his extreme sorrow over the fate of the countrymen who had been so highly favored by God. His sorrow was increased because so many innocent would necessarily be caught up in the general havoc of so merciless an invasion. However, though Micah lifted up his voice like a trumpet, midst of his contemporaries it did not hear.

The man of God today shares Micah's feelings expressed here. He knows that the time will dawn when if the nation of slaves will not be filled with the entire generation hear the voice of God? Or will we go on saying, like Israel of old, "Is not the prophet a liar, no disaster will come upon us?" (3:11).

The Violent Rich

(Mic. 2:13-16)

"Micah's rich are violent" (6:12).

Micah castigates the wicked rich by pronouncing God will not look upon their unbridled oppressions. They will be at large, and they will be plundered, and they will plunder and overthrown; and their homes will be plundered" (17:1-3). They charge them also with perverting morality, subverting evil for good (2:2). He condemns those who rob the poor by using false measures in the marketplace (6:10-12), who cheat their fellowman with deceit and lies (6:12).

This scripture suggests the nature of evil to some of the wealthy who think they can resist God's judgments. There is a sense in which the Northern Kingdom reached down into Judah's towns, "even to the gate of Jerusalem" (v. 12). Because of Samaria's example and promptings, the towns of Judah took on the ways of her northern neighbor. They also suffered the fates of Samaria when she was destroyed by Assyria.

The Ten Commandments are still as valid as ever. Men break these laws to their own undoing. The prophet's word still rings out to the highest church, city, state, and national governments, and to all our economic enterprises. The perversion of morality ends only in brutality and death. When will we learn this truth?

The Breath of the Lord (Ruach Adoni)

(Mic. 3:1-8)

"I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord" (3:18).

Ruach Adoni is a common phrase in the Old Testament. It refers to the Holy Spirit as expressed in the words of Micah. "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and might, to declare His transgression to Israel His sin." This phrase is somewhat equivalent to "filled with the Holy Spirit." The word Ruach Adoni, often translated as "Breath of the Lord." The varied expression of this concept is found in the use of special Old Testament personalities. For example, when David was chosen to be king, we are told that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David" (1 Sam. 16:13). It is used in the verse concerning Saul—the Spirit of the Lord departed from him (1 Sam. 16:14) or, in a reverse fashion to Gideon in the construction of the Tabernacle in this wilderness under Moses. Ezekiel also refers to the Spirit of the Lord as coming upon him, standing him upon his feet, and giving him his special message to his people (Ezek. 2:2-3, 24). This idea is New Testament thought, as when Paul says that he does not depend upon the arm of flesh, but upon God for his defense (2 Cor. 3:3-4).

Most ministers need a special lift on Monday mornings. Here are 13 meditations from Micah, a
False prophets are those who lead God's people astray with promises, often hedged around with "plenty of wine and beer." (2:11). They demand that they be paid for their prophecies, and provoke the nations to war and strife. They love bribes and money, and are false prophets if God's people give them money. A prophet of the Lord has the Spirit of the Lord in him. He speaks for Jehovah. The Lord does not always speak in His own words, but speaks through agents. He calls for righteousness, justice, and truth. He fearlessly exposes men's transgression and moral corruption, and points the way of salvation. The moral aspect of his preaching distinguishes him from the false prophet.

In this thought, Micah (as does Joel, 2:28; 29) anticipates Pentecost and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Christian Church.

A Wasteland World (Mic. 4:1-8)

"Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore." (v. 3b). The present prospect for both the Northern and the Southern kingdoms of Israel was anything but desirable (3:12-18). They had nothing to look forward to but captivity and exile. The lot of property and home and children was immanent. However, in the midst of his dire predictions the prophet could also perceive God as Redeemer and Creator of the ideal world (4:10). He believed in the ultimate triumph of the right. This, for the prophet, had to be true or God would not be God. The prophet foresaw changes: a warless, happy, prosperous, God-fearing world.

Micah's passage is almost identical to Isaiah's (4:1-5), and it is possible that each had his own initial. But they did each carry the message and truth of revelation. The same hope is spoken of in other terms throughout sacred Scriptures. (See Zechariah 8, Revelation 21, Isaiah 65:17).

Micah foresees Israel as preeminent among the nations. God's people are "terrible" (that is, famous) and high Jerusalem to bless the world of nations (v. 1). All nations must, therefore, travel upward to Jerusalem (v. 2). No prophet had spoken to worship to the holy city and walk in obedience to God (v. 5). Each person will be constructively employed in working for peace rather than for war. In Micah's day and until modern times, the right to private property will prevail (v. 4). God will be Lord over all the nations" (or, all the nations that God has chosen for His own, as an individual nation or as a human community. They were, therefore, left with a leader. Judah, even though they were a nation, were a nation under God's control. Since they rejected God as their king, and since they had no proper leader, they could not even work with the forces of nature, and unable to stave off their foe. Then the prophet added, we shall be darker than they gloated over their downfall (v. 11).

But the prophet took another look. He discovered that the nations do not perceive God's ultimate goals for Zion. For the most part, they are blind about Judah. Even to our day, they do not understand Zion as the Jewish land (regenerated from every nation under heaven) to prepare for the second coming of the Messiah.

The Lord Our Redeemer (Mic. 5:1-5)

"You will go to Babylon." (4:10). Here is a most remarkable prophecy. Micah made his prophecy of Jerusalem's exile during the reign of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Thus his evangelistic warnings occurred while the Northern Kingdom was still standing. Assyria rapidly became a world power and lived to see Samaria fall to Assyria.

But the prophet was not alive when the prophetic text of this text was fulfilled—"You [Jerusalem] will return to Egypt," (v. 13; see Rev. 1:12). He lived to see the text fulfilled in Zechariah's words to Haggai. "Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7).

As God revealed to Isaiah, (Isa. 44:28-46:1): of the later Medo-Persian empire would authorize, and God would make it, and" God would bring out His people from Neheemiah and Ezra), so God revealed to Micah: the reality of Judah's exile in Babylon. (See Jer. 29:10-14). But the divine warning was coupled with the divine promise—"There you will be rescued. There the Lord will ransom you from all your enemies" (v. 10).

In the historical event, illustrates this redemptive nature and purpose. In Christ the will of God to redeem and save us comes to its highest expression. This redempive event is the type of our captivity to sin and the Cross our redemption. We must never lose the redemptive thoughts of the Lord toward the repentant (v. 12).

Promised Harvest (Mic. 4:9-13)

"Here, they gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor." (Hos. 2:23). Both Israel and Judah were slaves in a foreign land. They became a prey to other nations because they did not change nor changed and the nations guided by the law of the Lord, the whole world will be secure. The crucial word of the prophet is that such a day and world can be the work of the Lord. The human family cannot achieve this goal itself.

This passage is most often applied to the millennial age when Christ shall rule the nations and righteousness shall cover the land as waters cover the sea. To this kind of world, the Christian Church and the Christian minister must be committed. The

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He will give them security from their enemies. (3) He shall lead them in safety. (4) He is so mighty that he can send peace to the nations. Hence, Messiah's task is not just local, or confined only to the nation of Israel, but has world-wide implications. The modern missionary movement is playing a large role in the world, the influence of Messiah's message throughout the whole world. Already it is happening everywhere, producing a hunger and a need for the Spirit of God. Perhaps, better than we can know, the worldwide preaching is on the threshold of new and necessary steps for the return of Christ. Our task, as Christians, is to keep the message going out, whatever means God makes available to us. The Church is Messiah at work, preparing the world for His literal return and the establishing of His kingdom on earth.

The Remnant (Mic. 7:1-6)

"The remnant will be . . . as white from the LORD" (5:7). The theme of judgment and hope run through Micah's writings like colored threads in a piece of cloth. His message to Israel and Judah is composed of interwoven themes revealed intermittently throughout the prophetic. These themes have a common texture which is called, in the Old Testament, The Remnant. Micah insists that Israel and Judah, because of their sins, shall be surely destroyed (see verse 10-15, also 4:9-11). One reason for the dispersal of these nations is that God might bring His people to a repentance of heart. (1) Messiah (v. 12) and (2) Israel (13-14). Micah fulfilled the last two of these two goals. Since the restoration under Nehemiah, the Jews have not as a nation fallen again into the trap of idolatry (though they are out of the womb of common people, Micah's Messiah is the same person spoken of by Isaiah (6:9-7) and referred to Mal. 3. Sin has no more. The origin of events of the Incarnation, so beautifully described in Matthew, Luke, and other gospels of the New Testament. Zion's protection in Micah's text from the Assyrian siege (5:15) is a foretaste of the Messiah's role in the last days.

Thus Micah indicates that Messiah, both at a literal and a spiritual fulfillment, literal in the sense that Jesus did Christ the Messiah, and literal in the sense always provides deliverance for those who put their trust in Him. (This prophecy, literally fulfilled, was well known in Herod's day and was quickly on the lips of the religious leaders when the wise men inquired about their King who should be born.

Micah provides four main blessings (v. 15).

(1) Like a shepherd He will nourish His people. (2) He will guide them, and feed them, and make them prosperous (v. 12).

(3) To bring them back to the land (v. 14).

(4) He will lead them to safety (v. 16).
Micaiah's Doctrine of God (Continued from page 11)

the visible standard. Micaiah is not introducing something new anymore than was Jesus when He proclaimed the kingdom of heaven and the second greatest commandment. There is a careful notice of the reaction and attitude which greet Jesus. It is profoundly good of their misunderstanding of the doctrine of God, the people rejected both Micaiah and his message of judgment from a holy God. In 2:8 they are quoted as saying, ... one should not preach of such things: do not go on saying. (Micah retorts in 5:11 that the acceptable preacher would be one who utters winds and lies and preaches of wine and strong drink. Their doctrinal approval to their materialism and greed. They were callously without concern and rationalized their behavior, while Micaiah presented righteous judgments. Second, God is still true to His covenants with David and Jacob and to Abraham (v. 20). The sins of Micaiah's time seem to be four: He is especially offensive to Jerusalem. In the ancient Orient it was customary to opt out of Judah's blessings. Now Judah joined those that played God. He is the man in Judah professed to the Sibbath was a far cry from what they practiced. They were living and working with false weights and measures. Deceit and dishonesty pervaded every thought and act of far too many in Judah. Because of this pervasiveness, God sent Israel into exile. He chose a godless nation to punish His own people. He spoke this because He knew that a remnant would be saved (7:9-10). God delights to show mercy, to pardon and rescue. The restoration of all who put their trust in God is an inevitable fact of future history. God's promise to Abraham and to Jacob will be fulfilled (v. 20). Micaiah said that to the Lord His people will be united in purpose and work. Or else evil will more easily be upon them. Judah-Christians, like the old Judah, will never accept. The question before us is whether or not God will blot out the transgression and forgive. Micaiah's answer is: He will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham (v. 20).

Micaiah's God is holy, righteous, and changeless. He is the Just Judge, the Lord of History, the Judge of all men and nations, and the Designer of Salvation.

In the closing oracle of Micaiah (7:18-20), God is also seen as being righteous in His provision of blessings. God has always found a way to be both just and the Judge of all, and He has always been just and righteous in the sight of God (Rom. 3:25). It is significant that God is seen as being both righteous and just. God is the final portrait of God's plan of salvation in this book, for it reveals that the purpose of God is to transform us into the image of Christ. As James L. Mays says: Though they are sinners, under judgment, God is incomparable as the one who forgives for His power is more powerful than their sins. He delights them. Their salvation depends not, on them, but on something in Him. The wording of this oracle is based upon a theological form expressed numerous times in the Old Testament (Exod. 34:6; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; 138:3). It is expressed in Jeremiah 13:18 and in the sins of the people who have sinned... Like the effect of a stone hurled against a wall, it bounces off and hurtles back to the thrower. This is a metaphor for the Lord's judgment, which is not a passive, but an active punishment (Exod. 20:24). The Lord punishes evil that is done, but He also takes pleasure in the destruction of evil and the restoration of those who seek His guidance.
The Heritage of the Morning Star

by Tim White

This is the story of two ships, all bearing the name, Morning Star. It begins in 1851, when three missionary families left Hawaii to serve the islands of Micronesia, about thirteen thousand miles west of Honolulu. Rev. and Mrs. L. H. Quirk and Rev. and Mrs. Albert Sturges pioneered the work of the American Board of Foreign Missions (ABFM), enduring hardships that were difficult to imagine, even 130 years ago. In many cases, they were the islands' first contact with Western civilization. The difficulty of their work was compounded by disease, typhoons, and tribal warfare. Prior to 1858, travel between islands was dangerous and limited to a small number of charter boats and the irregular schedules of the U.S. Navy schooners that patrolled this remote area.

In 1855 the ABFM proposed the idea of making a "missionary packet ship" a project for American Sunday Schools. Throughout 1856, returning missionaries crossed the United States, challenging churches to meet the need of rapid transportation for the missionaries on the field. Across the country, children gave, through their Sunday Schools, to make the Morning Star a reality. The name came from Revelation 21:16, where Jesus is identified as "the bright and morning star." Ultimately, about $12,000 was raised through their efforts, more than enough to build and equip a multi-purpose vessel. Though the Star was not a large ship, her wondrous hull was big enough to allure the missionaries, families and cargo between islands without difficulty.

Back on the island of Kusale, a relation was brewing. Two tribal factions began fighting, and the missionaries caught in the middle, fled to the hills. The Morning Star's first port of call at Kusale on September 18, 1857 turned into a rescue mission. The Star provided the Snow family a month's stay, and a chance to regain flagging strength. Similar conditions were evidenced at Pongale, where the Sturges family had been reduced to starvation diet. In both cases, the Star meant survival. To meet the need of service, the ship was the line to civilization, safety, and supplies for the missionaries.

A second chapter in this story opened in 1865 when the Morning Star began showing inevitable signs of wear from battles with seas, storms, and coral reefs. By 1867, Micronesian mis-

THE MORNING STAR

nika of America came through. Two thous-

and Sunday School groups collected $28,700 to build a new ship, the Morning Star II.

The new ship was built by the same yard that had built the old ship, and it was given the same name, the Morning Star. It was a 140-foot, 300-ton vessel, with a displacement of 1,100 tons, and a crew of 20. It was designed to be a fast, efficient, and reliable ship, and it was built to last. It was a vessel that could endure the rigors of the South Pacific, and it was a vessel that could deliver its burden of supplies and missionaries to the islands of Micronesia.

The Morning Star II was launched on November 1, 1868, and it set sail for the islands of the South Pacific. It was a vessel that was built to last, and it was a vessel that was built to serve. It was a vessel that was built to endure, and it was a vessel that was built to deliver.
WHERE DOES CONFESSION FIT IN?

by Philip N. Metcalfe, Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Royersford, Pennsylvania

Confession... could there be a more appropriate Lenten theme?

If we were to play a word-association game with the word "confession," what would come to mind? Superfluous? Passe? Superseeded? Roman Catholicism? Does it really belong to a Christian life-style? Do sanctified people have anything to confess? To paraphrase a popular song "does love ... (en passant) more than having to say you're sorry?"

Citing confession as a class meeting, practice in Wesley's day, Rob Staples contrasts that with "our failure to teach growing Christians and sanctified believers how to confess their spiritual failings." He believes that "the notion of the institution that confession is only something the initially repentant practice tends toward spiritual plateauing, masking, and purging our strengths while preventing we have no faults to confess.

The purpose of this article is to look at the theological history of confession, to demonstrate the need and show where it fits in in holiness church today.

THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF CONFESSION

To understand the current demise of confession we must understand the Reformers' protest against the abuses of the medieval sacrament of Penance. While the New Testament knows nothing of confession as a formal institution, it became a law of the Catholic church in A.D. 1215. An annual confession to the clergy became compulsory. The "satisfaction" of penance often included an offering, fasting, or prayer. The system came to be closely tied to the practice of indulgences made available through financial contributions to the church.

Luther exposed the abuses of confession, but not confession itself, with his opposition centering on its exorbitant exploitation, the works-righteousness implications in which forgiven seemed excited to self-acting acts, the compulsory aspects, and the unworthy dispensers of grace who controlled the system. Not only did he approve it, but he recognized "no one as a Christian who withdrew from confession, because he sometimes takes it in the larger sense of confession of one's sins to God in prayer." As a result, the form of confession flourished in the class meetings of John Wesley, but he also advocated private confession at times to a trusted spiritual guide.

And if any of you should at any time fail from what you now are, if you should again feel pride or unbaptized, or any temper from which you are now delivered; do not deny, do not hide, do not disguise it all, at the peril of your soul. At all events, go to one in whom you can confide, and speak just what you feel. God will enable him to speak a word in season, which shall be health to your soul. And surely He will again lift up your head, and cause the bones that have been broken to rejoice. Why has it been so neglected, then? Several likely reasons could be given which will avoid the Enigma's explanation, which took a less serious view of sin, seeing it as merely ignorance and weakness, undercutting the need for confession. Knowing the institution as necessary than forgiveness. Then the emphasis on individual freedom made it somehow meaningless to be dependent on the church or anyone else in this way. Much emphasis was made of the fact that the human soul needed no external mediators. The spirit of anti-Romanism in Protestantism cast a shadow over it until anything resembling Catholicism was suspect. However, the principal cause of neglect has been seen by many as the loss of sin-consciousness in the modern age. Main-line Protestant churches have come to view themselves as respectable, law-abiding people. The transgressions of its people came to be downplayed. Spiritual faults and failures came to be concealed; sin-consciousness disappeared.

THE NEED FOR CONFESSION TODAY

Martin Luther believes the great need for Protestantism today is to restore confession. Why? With surprising suddenness we have discovered—almost too late—the regenerative experience in the modern world of Christianity into two false ways: legalism and relaxation. Under the quiet roofs of the world is a host of people who understand little to cover up terror. They use piety to cover up loneliness, piety to cover up despair; escape to cover up the vacuum that will not let us be alone with ourselves. In the face of this condition, people of other professions... ask evangical churches... why they have given up their greatest disciplinary and therapeutic treasure, confession...

Today we face a rising incidence of "mental illness," an alarming increase in suicide and various forms of addiction. Some of the mental and spiritual anguish today is the problem of guilt, an ailment of the conscience. The problem is deeper than a guilt complex; it is guilt. And much therapy today concentrates on bringing an "overdeveloped conscience" down to the level of performance instead of helping people live up to their conscience. The goal is often to enable people to do whatever (Continued on page 39)

CELEBRATION AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the quietness of "Celebrating Christian History"... we might give recognition and employ to the latest Holy Spirit. He must continually be honored, taught... and give the spiritual gifts in our homes and lives and in our public services...

Throughout the season there are several different symbols used to denote either the work or the presence of the Holy Spirit. Among these symbols are water, fire, wind, oil, and others. One of the chief symbols is the dove, Whose Jesus came to the river Jordan to be baptized by John the Baptist. Luke records: "And the Holy Ghost descended in bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." (3:22). In describing the people of God, David the Poet said, "Yet shall he be as the songs of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." (Psalm 68:13).

The dove is in motion to the dove, No others say, "Doves to the eagle's keep their terns. We open our hearts, and in thinking do not erect our hoard and hoard, keeping them over food upon the water, and with a large draught of al the manner of hearts." The dove is the embodiment of the day because it lives in the pristine memory, never desiring another mate.

The dove is a very sensitive bird—it is too proud or quenched. If human thinks to much too much the nest of the dove or handle the two poorly white eyes in the nest, the dove will soon return and there gone, sleeked or quenched beyond any hope of repair.

The bracket Holy Spirit has no elicits ambivalence, and more especially is the Spirit sensitive and so ever gentle. He too can be quenched or provoked by our failure to respond to His guidance or to our exploitations. Paul warns, "Quench the Spirit." (I Thessalonians 5:19).

In this period when we so easily celebrate the great truth, doctrine, and experience of heart holiness, let us especially keep this in mind: Allow Him to have control of everything. Let Him have expression in our singing! How His ancient and amazing upon us in every problem. The Holy Spirit, He will honor us in our churches and in our ministry.

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Serving without pay, the editorial board, pictured here, helped us put together this issue on "Micah."

Future issues of the "Preacher's Magazine" will center these themes:

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CONFESSION (Continued from page 32)

they want without being bothered by it. Drugs may be routinely used to mask symptoms ("take a pill and the headache leaves untouched.

The fact is that much "illness" today stems from the old-fashioned toxins of sin and guilt.

"The powerful but simple prescription for many needs is found in our Quaker-Christian faith: A confession process, transparent, self-disclosing attitude that includes letting "significant others" know as we really are. "Confess your sins to each other." (Lk. 5:16, NIV). "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy." (Prov. 28:13, NIV).

Karl Menninger of the U.S. psychiatric establishment asked a pertinent question some years ago: "What ever became of sin?" From the early days of the Christian Church small groups met regularly, often secretly.

Their first order of worship was self-disclosure, followed by prayers for forgiveness, closed by a period of deep fellowship and communalizing.

WHERE DOES CONFESSION FIT IN A HOLINESS CHURCH?

Confession Fits In Our Holiness Hymns

A corder look at the old hymns may surprise us with their confessional attitudes: "Spirit of God, descend upon my heart. Wean it from earth; through all its pulses move. Stoop to my weakness, mighty as Thou art, and make me love Thee as I ought to love." (We sing this one again last Sunday: "Thou, O Christ, art all I want; more than all in Thee I find. Raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick and dead; blot out the dross and impurities that the bright luster of Thy name I am all unlikeness. False and full of sin I am; Thou art full of grace and truth." Oh, "Thou hast promised to receive us; poor and sinful tho' we be, Thou hast mercy to relieve us, grace to cleanse and pow'r to free, until we know many others."

The confessional truth of these great hymns is not derived from comparison to others, but to God. The sky. They also demonstrate that confession is not an end in itself but a way to absolution, cleansing, forgiveness.

Confession Fits In the Scriptures

Very early in the Book of Genesis the questions addressed to Adam and Eve were calculated to bring confession. The mission of the prophet was to "speak to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin" (Mic. 3:8) and a reciprocal acknowledgment was expected (Jer. 2:35). The Psalms abound in instances of confession, Psalm 51 standing paramount. In the New Testament model prayer, Jesus taught disciples how to pray: "Forgive us our debts" (Matt. 6:12) "sins" (Luke 11:4). Luke defines Matthew's "debtors" it isn't spiritual debts we're to be absolved from, but moral and spiritual indiscretions. One of the highlights of our services has been the periodic congregation's participation in the Lord's Prayer following the pastoral prayer. Sometimes we simply pray in unison; sometimes it is sung a cappella. In Matt. 5:24-34, a confession to a justified offended brother is required. It is even implied that the very offerings laid on the altar are deprived of their value if such confession has not first been made. In Luke 17:4, God's own forgiveness of an offender is dependant on his coming forward and confessing his sins. In the Scriptures confession precedes forgiveness: If we confess, we are forgiven. Forgiveness is not merely an act of divine leniency. Such scriptural truths need expression today. I'll never forget a message given by Dr. James McGarrah in one of our small group meetings. He said, "I guess the tendency for me to consider myself immune to need to come before Father God now with any sense of godly sorrow—since I've saved and sanctified. I never need to acknowledge to the Lord, 'Lord, I've failed. I'm sorry. I've erred. I've wronged You.' ... Sometimes we tend to get a little too much like those Pharisees who prayed in the Temple, 'Thank God, I'm not like other men. I pray every day, liye honest, and I especially thank You, that I'm not like this poor fellow over here.' "

Then he concluded, "We don't want to be at that way, do we friends? The only way to prevent that from happening is to remain confessional and remember, 'The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit'" (Ps. 34:18, NIV).

Confession Fits In Our Wesleyan Theological Heritage

Believers need moment-by-moment cleansing from self-will (those times when we more or less will our will above God's); from idolatry (our inclinations to love and serve anyone or anything above God); from evil tempers, resentment, covetousness, uncharitable and unprofitable conversations, as well as sins of omission—all dealt with in John Wesley's standard sermon on "The Repentance of Believers" (one that deserves renewed consideration). Without ongoing repentance Wesley felt that "we cannot but contribute to the公用 of creating a new spirit within us". "A new spirit must be created, a new heart formed, as a new creation is a common thing, something of which we have not now any great need, seeing all our past sins blotted out. Yes, but if both our hearts and lives are thus cleans and, is there a kind of guilt which we are contracting every moment, and which, of consequence, would every moment expose us to fresh condemnation, but that 'He lives above us for us to intercede. His blood is the passage to plea.'"

Mildred Bangs Wynkoop class that the prayer for cleansing has been practiced from the early days of the Christian Church and particularly in disciplines how John Chrysostom and the Lord's Supper as many as four or five times a week, used the following wording in the Book of Common Prayer in those Communion services: "Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, worthily magnify Thy Holy name, through Christ, our Lord. Amen."
John Knitl has pointed out that "failure needs for the young, as does the dangers of covering our failures to the point of virtual in living in our own lives, but even the words of Jesus come down into my daily conversation." Such openness is attractively transparent communication.

On the wall of a tailor shop I recently noticed this sign: "I think people should practice their faults. I'd confess mine—IF I HAD ANY." Why pretend to be anything other than honest? I am sure this will be an issue that arises, why not admit it? Just a little bit of admission can bring miracles in relationships. It is that specific attitude which is Immense. John Drescher says if he were starting his family again he would be more honest, not pretending to be perfect, but would laugh more at himself, his mistakes, and faults. I suspect that many of our tensions would fall away if we took ourselves too seriously.

Does love then mean "never having to say you’re sorry?" is confession passed in a holiness church? To the contrary, it’s possible to be one thing on the surface but another thing from deep within. John suggests the potential for growth and change in our relationships when we are honest with ourselves and others.

Jesus said to him “Have you been made? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe!” (John 20:29 RSV).

John’s report of what happened the first Easter Day is quite different from what the other Gospel writers tell us. John’s story is agreeable in all four accounts of what took place. But there is no notable contrast between what Matthew, Mark, and Luke deal largely with events, John concentrates on persons.

Jesus’ 20th chapter, for example, can be seen as divided into two biographical incidents, each with a particular individual shown arriving at assurance that Jesus had experienced resurrection. Each of these may be thought of as representing a different type of person. One of them, perhaps, is ‘just like you.’ More likely still, each of them stands for one or several of the emotions or personalities strived in one of us.

The theme John followed after the first apostle John himself, although, in his practice, he does not mention his own name. The second is Mary Magdalene; and the third, Doubting Thomas. Let us not only identify them but identify with them, for it is by putting ourselves imaginatively in the stead of the various Biblical characters that we can learn what God has to say to us through each. For example:

1. JOHN Suggests the Approach of the Logical Mind

John seems to have had this in mind when he included his approach. That he came from a cultured Jewish intellectual company. That he was not the only one of his family in the New Testament by certain, historical, and biblical traditions. John’s approach is best illustrated in John 14:1-17, where he uses the term ‘faith’ to express the relationship between the believer and the God-man Jesus.

In the previous chapter of his Gospel, John has already given us an account of how Jesus made his disciples’ faith by his death on the cross and his resurrection. In John 14:1-17, John presents the concept of faith in a more philosophical way. He tells his readers that faith is not merely believing in something, but rather it is a kind of mental transformation in which one changes his way of thinking about the world. John’s approach is, therefore, an attempt to make his readers think in a new and different way about the events of the Gospel story. John’s approach is that of logic and reason, not of emotion and feeling.

In conclusion, John’s approach is that of the logical mind. He wants his readers to think about the events of the Gospel story in a way that makes sense to them. He wants them to think about the world in a way that makes sense to them. John’s approach is that of the logical mind. He wants his readers to think about the events of the Gospel story in a way that makes sense to them. He wants them to think about the world in a way that makes sense to them.
Bible passage now begins.

2. MARY MAGDALENE "Receives the Christ of the Hungry Heart"

She had been too much in love and a very feminine one at that. She had seen Jesus' face often before, of the same sex, and her vision of him had been blurred. His body had been formed by her desire, and she knew him well. A new creature, she knew him, and he knew her. When their eyes met, the tears were not expressed. They were plowed from the tomb, and they knew their own nature. They would only have felt her if she had. Her snap judgment was that something was stolen. The body of her Lord. Others, the calculating, would propose the same theory in time to come as a way of explaining away Christ's triumph. As to her theory it will not stand up to the scrutiny of the keenest of Jesus' disciples or the most probing of Jesus' enemies. However, the dead bodies of many soldiers at 1422 BC that the Bible tells us were carelessly handled and carelessly buried (and also by her deliberate disguise, the supposition that there was also no body present), she could hardly be faulted. Nor is this to be taken lightly, she was a prophet and she knew her Spirit.

But the day of the resurrection—what is it? Jesus was "the resurrection" and the "the firstfruits of the dead, for in him the dead are raised and the living are sanctified."

3. THOMAS in Tura Reminds Us of the Necessity of the Conquered Will Be God's Will

The story is well known, but "The Doubler" is the label which superseded it. Ordoinary who would have thought that intellectual disciplines would be saying a little later, when some of the women had gone away, that men who needed to return to dust and decay, were saying of the women that they had been deceived? No. This is not an ancient work of Greek literature, and to read it in modern terms, it would seem to have been much deeper than mere intellectual unrest. If you will check the several passages in which he appears on the Bible page, I think you will see that his deepest desolation is roused in his disposition, rather than in his mind. They showed themselves in the Cross and in the Resurrection. His disciples were expecting him to return. However, there was something of the spirit of the man in Jesus' parole that had organized his affairs on this planet. He is just a hard man, demanding more than his date.

This verse is a key-to-the-three Resurrection Day encounters with Christ is climactic. Before he met his heart, he should be sure that he had functioning—whether the subject is religion or romance! But it is true beasts, that neither horn nor foot can fully speak for us or their brethren can, is a mystery of God..."
Evangailsm— the right mix by Charles Shaver

A condensation of an address presented to the Billy Graham School of Evangelism, Kansas City, Missouri.

Evangailism has had its unpopular days, both the type of evangelism by a Christian layman in the most natural way and the person of the full-time evangelist have been attacked. Perhaps this criticism has reached its heights of injustice in 1960, during Billy Graham’s Berlin crusade. The Communist newspaper repeated the charge that Billy frequented nightclubs and, worse yet, was accommpanied by a “bland called Beverly Shea.”

Now evangelism is experiencing more favorable days. As a result, many conferences have been held telling us how to get the job done. Often one leaves such meetings with a variety of events and God’s providential grace that produce an air of optimism which produces enthusiasm and a new sense of purpose.

Consider some of several possible factors:

1. They were not the ordinary “run of the mill” Jewish people, but the devout, devoted Jews who were not in the mainstream. Acts 2:25 describes them as “Jews, devout men, out of every nation.”

2. They had come to the Feast of Pentecost and thus were in Jerusalem for religious reasons (Acts 2:1), already thinking in a religious direction. They were a part of the church and were the most expectant.

3. The news of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ was being discussed everywhere.

4. Peter’s strong sermon drew heavily on Old Testament Scripture with which they were well acquainted.

5. The great ingathering of souls at that time was not just because Peter had become filled with the Spirit, it was the right mix of a Spirit-filled preacher, 120 disciples filled with the Spirit, Christian witness, and some converts.

THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT— THE RIGHT MIX

I think I first became aware of the “right mix” of elements as I studied the account of the 3,000 converts at Peter’s first sermon. I noted that the key power was because he was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:4). Then I was challenged with the question, “If I’m a Spirit-filled Christian minister, how come 3,000 have never been converted through one of my sermons?” Then I discovered the other elements in the mix.

First, though it is true Peter was filled with the Spirit, he was one of 120 filled with the Spirit.

Secondly, among these Spirit-filled disciples, there were 11 who had been intensively discipled by Jesus for three years. Today we may have Christian workers filled but not trained or filled, but in Peter’s day there was the right combination.

A third condition has to do with the 3,000 Jews who were converted in Acts 2:41, I think we were they converted out of the “raw” when they heard the Christian message for the very first time. Now I realize they were a cultivated people. A unique combination of events and God’s providential grace had prepared them to receive the gospel.

Consider some of several possible factors:

1. They were not the ordinary “run of the mill” Jewish people, but the devout, devoted Jews who were not in the mainstream. Acts 2:25 describes them as “Jews, devout men, out of every nation.”

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THE WORKERS— THE RIGHT MIX

Ephesians 4:11-12 teaches that God has given evangelists, pastors, and teachers to the church for the equipping of the work of service. Today the pastor is valuable because he has a God-given ability to communicate the practice of ministry to laypeople and all saints.

The right mix means both pastor and layperson serve and minister.

THE CHURCH— THE RIGHT MIX

Leighton Ford has said, “The strategy to which we are called today is one of total evangelism. Our goal is nothing less than the penetration of the whole world at the present generation of the whole world; then for the agents to carry out this task we must aim at nothing less than the mobilization of the whole church.” This mobilization of the whole church will mean developing a church that is the right mix of delivery room—nursery—school—workshop. It will be the delivery room where new souls are born into the Kingdom. It will be a nursery where the newly born are cared for. It will be a school where the growing Christian is trained. It will be a workshop where the mature Christian will serve and produce for the Kingdom.

Imagine the delivery room and no nursery. It is highly evangelistic and new people are welcomed but not trained. It is a post-conversion care. To counter this, train follow-up workers to lead new Christians through Basic Bible Studies by regularly meeting in the home. We must prepare for birth before it happens by developing what Modie Schoonover called “a church with enough love to keep them warm.”

“It’s like the hospital nursery. The newborn babies are not sent home three months after their birth to fend for themselves. Because of their fragile condition, they receive warmth, love, a special diet, a germ-free atmosphere, specially trained nurses who give them care. So in the spiritual realm, it is not enough for people to be ‘born again’ to be born spiritually, there must be a warm and loving spirit in the church with people who will care for, feed, protect and guide their newborn spiritual children during their first crucial days.”

But a church cannot be content to simply win new people and begin them; there must be ministry to them. If all the public preaching deals only with saving faith, a sad condition results. Churches and State: “Spiritual reproduction is impossible if the believer is spiritually isolated from others who may be already discipled or because of inability to find satisfying answers to personal problems in his spiritual pilgrimage.” The church in its role of school ought to nurture those satisfying answers.

Thus, the great ingathering of souls at that time was not just because Peter had become filled with the Spirit, it was the right mix of a Spirit-filled preacher, 120 disciples filled with the Spirit, Christian witness and some converts.

There is a right mix in another sense. When I first began training laypeople in eternal evangelism, I noted that when people began to emerge as people with the gift of evangelism, some negative things could happen too. Those with the evangelistic gift might feel that other Christians not winning as many souls were not as effective. On the other hand, a capable soul winner felt inferior.

Yet God has not provided the same evangelistic skills. According to Peter Wagner, perhaps 10 percent of people are capable in the gift of evangelist, though all have the role and responsibility of witness. Now I see, in that regard to the evangelistic task of the church, the gifts of our members will cause the emergence of a mixture in which some will be cultivators; some,converters; and some, conservers.

The cultivator prepares people to receive the gospel. He probably has the gift of teaching and knows how to build bridges of friendship to the unsaved. The converter handles the new person and deals with people in intensive, face-to-face encounter and leads them to Christ. The conservers has the gift of exhortation, encouragement, or teaching. His special concern for people equips him to follow up and establish new Christians in their faith.

I asked Don to accompany me on a call to Dick who had recently visited our church. Dick was a sincere Christian, somewhat quiet, a loving person, but I wasn’t sure he had the evangelistic gift. Dick had recently moved to Kansas City, was a university graduate, and was starting a job as an engineer. As we talked with him, it became apparent that he knew the Lord personally. Then I asked myself if we should urge him to study Basic Bible Studies. They are basic, and he was a college graduate. As I was about to do so, he said that he was planning to join the church by profession of faith, married a wonderful woman, and this last year has served as treasurer of his church.

Don may not have had the evangelistic gift, but he had a wonderful evangelistic attitude. He did Bibbie study, he read the church magazine of one of the false cults on Dick’s coffee table, so I asked him to do Bible studies. Don agreed to come to a Bible study one of us had started with him. They met every week and did Bible study together. Don became intrigued with the church, joined the church by profession of faith, married a wonderful woman, and last year has served as treasurer of his church.

Don may not have had the evangelistic gift, but he had an evangelistic attitude. He did Bible study, he read the church magazine of one of the false cults on Dick’s coffee table, so I asked him to study Basic Bible Studies. They are basic, and he was a college graduate. As I was about to do so, he said that he was planning to join the church by profession of faith, married a wonderful woman, and last year has served as treasurer of his church.

Marlene finished my class in personal evangelism. We went out several calls several times. Each time I say, “I can’t do this. I can’t remember all these Scriptures, and I’m a little embarrassed.”

“Thank you for calling on these people.” I finally said, “I agree she might not have this gift. Then I said, “Marlene, will you serve as my helper?”

She had the gift of hospitality, the unique ability to make friends, and I sensed she could develop contacts that could become prospects for the gospel. If she would bring them to me, I sensed I could share the gospel in an easy, natural way. The right mix means both pastor and layperson serve and minister.
THE MOTHER'S DINNER PARTY

I have heard some fables debate us as to whether public or personal evangelism was the way to win people to Christ. But both public and personal evangelism are needful. Paul summed up his ministry in Ephesus: "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly (mass evangelism) and from house to house (personal and fellowship evangelism), seriously testifying to both Jews and Greeks of the re- pentance to God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." Jody stood alone for God in her family. Dennis, her brother, began to attend church. He was in his 20s, 200 lb., and of the world. For four years I worked on my friendship to him, prayed for him, one in a white preached to him, witnessed to him, and took him to lunch when I could barely afford it. When I left that church after nine years, Dennis still wasn't saved.

Then one Sunday night my phone ringer. It was 8:30 in the evening. "Mom, I'm going to church today," I responded. "You went saved?" he said. "That's right," he said, "in the Billy Graham Crusade this afternoon."

SP

I I O

The men of these two families have become personal friends. The Christmas before Christmas, we invited the Hodges and the Brown family to our home for a meal in the name of Christ. We were able to witness to them of our testimony, and they have accepted Christ. The Hodges later converted to the Church of God, and the Brown family continued to attend the church where I was a minister.

services, the altar, follow-up, fellowship groups, special services, and most of all, the faithful work of the Holy Spirit. It was not one thing—but the right mix of many methods.

Chuck and Jan are evidence of the cultivation process. They had been saved at a crusade in when he said, "I have found, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6). They fit in many spots on this same model. The Decision Process Model.

Chuck, who admitted in preconversion days he would have punched me in the face if I offended him, was perhaps a -6. He was aware of some of the fundamentals of the gospel due to his Catholic background—but was hostile.

2. Cultivation took place through the friendship call and eventually helped move Chuck to a -4 position, positive attitude toward the gospel.

3. Chuck's experience was the right mix of personal, fellowship, and mass evangelism.

FOOTNOTES


5. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow (Escondido, Calif: Regal, 1979), p. 97.

6. A number of church leaders have been changed to protect their privacy. The exact number is not known.


8. The paragraph and note at the bottom portion of the page were prepared originally by Bob Spectrum for the annual Conference sponsored by The Church of God in 1977.

THE PREACHER'S EXCHANGE

WANTED:


New complete set, 15-volume, Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching: This book took its place in another edition. For Chuck the church had moved to get Christ. For me the right mix of personal, fellowship, and mass evangelism.
Clara almost apologized to the junior pastor for what happened while he was on vacation. His surprise, she explained, was due to the lack of communication during his absence. Clara had not told the associate pastor that she was going on vacation. She knew pressures over secular concerns and administrative tasks could interfere with the junior pastor's work. Now she was wondering if they would be able to hire anyone to fill in as an associate pastor for the initiative and authority that the junior pastor had provided.

The Sunday-front syndrome is a reality in many churches, especially small to medium-sized congregations. It often results from a lack of understanding among church staff members about the roles and responsibilities of their positions. In some cases, the senior pastor may feel pressured to take on additional duties or responsibilities, leading to a decrease in the quality of pastoral care and ministry. This can create tension and conflict among church staff members, who may feel resentful or overwhelmed by the workload.

The tragedy is that many church leaders do not take the necessary steps to prevent and address these issues. They may be too focused on the day-to-day responsibilities of their positions, or they may lack the training and resources to handle the challenges effectively. In some cases, church leaders may even be complacent or unaware of the problems they are facing.

The article suggests that church leaders should consider four practical guidelines to address these issues:

1. **Recognize the Signs**: Church leaders should be aware of the signs of conflict and tension among church staff members. This includes monitoring the mood and atmosphere of the congregation, as well as observing the behavior and attitudes of individual staff members.

2. **Communicate Effectively**: Church leaders should establish clear lines of communication and provide regular feedback to staff members. This includes setting expectations for performance, providing ongoing support and encouragement, and addressing any concerns or issues promptly.

3. **Delegate Responsibly**: Church leaders should delegate tasks and responsibilities appropriately, taking into account the skills, strengths, and weaknesses of individual staff members. This includes providing opportunities for growth and development, as well as ensuring that tasks are clearly defined and understood.

4. **Provide Support**: Church leaders should provide regular support and encouragement to staff members, recognizing the challenges they face and offering assistance as needed. This includes providing opportunities for training and professional development, as well as offering emotional and spiritual support.

By implementing these guidelines, church leaders can help to create a more harmonious and productive work environment, which will benefit both the congregation and the staff members. It is important for church leaders to take a proactive approach to addressing conflict and tension, rather than allowing it to fester and become more difficult to resolve.
one, almost every newly born-again person was driven back into his old ways or out of the church by hurtful, unfeeling words. I watched the despair in my husband’s eyes. I experienced his deep depression as he vainly trying to pick up the pieces. And finally with desperation, we sold all of our possessions and went back to school (really to get away from the pressures of the pastorate). We were defeated.

Now at another place and another time, the hurt is almost forgotten. It is tucked away in the far corner of my mind because I am much too busy to dwell on the might-have-beens or even the could-bes.

Today, I must teach a class of beautiful, vibrant young people, who are hungering and thirsting for God. I must have the words that will prepare them for life with Christ. Yes, a life of uncertainty. Will they grasp enough strength from a caring and loving God to help them over rough spots in their lives? God help me.

I hear a knock, and open the door to Charles, a 16-year-old who has taken his life by an overdose in order to be in the service tonight. I feed him food bought over by someone in my congregation. My eyes fall on the many gifts of love scattered about, an oil lamp, especially chosen because I like red, a plaque fashioned by the hands of a young girl, paper flowers made especially for me by a dimple-cheeked child. I humbly remember when the ladies of my church washed dirty dishes the week I was sick.

Where are those sacrifices? There is only joy that God has allowed my dream to come true. He has helped me to realize that this is my church, he is the control, and I am not alone. I learn again and again to fasten my eyes upon Jesus, and never to lose sight of the fact that prayer and God’s Word become more and more important to success as a woman of God, and not as a pastor’s wife. Mostly I thank God that He allowed a 15-year-old child bride to begin the difficult, but oh, so rewarding vocation of ‘pastor’s wife.”
Perhaps we should begin with a threadbare summary. Holiness preaching is the declaration of the divine standard, the proclamation of the divine power, and the exposition of the divine processes. The standard is related to what is expected, the power of God is available, and the processes to personal experience.

When the man in the pulpit makes perfectly clear that God and the Christian spirit working in the pew can then create self-knowledge and hunger. When this same preaching is related to the distinctions of God in Christ to cleanse and enable, his listeners are inspired to believe in holiness as a personal possibility. But the man of God is not yet a competent holiness preacher until he so explains the way in that people under his preaching are finding their way in.

Such holiness preaching requires much prayer, study, labor, and courage. It is the most difficult and exacting demand in one's ministry. The intellectual and emotional barriers to talking about these distinctions and making them clear to ordinary folk. The spirit must be impelled by a profound conviction of truth, and an equally deep conviction of God. The personality must be radiant with the anointing which comes from intimacy with Holy Spirit, and which guides winged arrows of truth straight to the heart.

As for the divine standard, it is easily found in the Scriptures. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" (Ps. 84:3-4). Why did David pray for a clean heart and a right spirit? He perceived the standard—"Thou desirest truth in the inward parts" (Ps. 51:6). Much of our preaching is through the central thing into focus. He said, "What doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6:8). Forms can so easily become substitutes for reality, and divert attention from the main central thrust of it all, which is itself very simple. This is what God really requires. No matter how ornate our "holy" clean hands, or a pure heart? (Ps. 24:3-4). Who did David pray for a clean heart and a right spirit? He perceived the standard—"Thou desirest truth in the inward parts" (Ps. 51:6).

Let us affirm the power of the Holy Spirit to search and try. While the Spirit can search a sincere soul without the preacher, most people are not that spiritually alert. We need, therefore, to preach in a way that the Holy Spirit through us can expose the secret roots of unbelief, self-willfulness, unfaithfulness, pride, greed, and the like. People will not see it as the sinful, untruth of the carnal mind which they really are. We must expose the issue.

But let us also describe the blessings of the holy heart—the inner peace, the quiet rest, the unity within, the deep vibrations of holy joy. People need to be brought to the confession, "I have the marks of carnality, but I do not enjoy them." Enough of a man's heart is exalted that he no longer Conceives holiness in terms of carnality. The discovery of carnality precipitates an acute longing for holiness. The man who feels the presence of God leads to a crisis of surrender and consecration and self-crucifixion. This crisis issues in a Spirit-energized faith that walks into the blessing and brings the inner release and confirmation. The release and confirmation set one sing song and high speed, and real progress begins. Progress leads to submissives of divine discipline and further and further self-disclosure, which carry us higher and farther along the way to maturity, sanctification, and usefulness.

Now this sequence is essentially uniform and universal. When a mild Calvinist such as V. Raymond Edman traces the story of the Reformation (cf. They Found the Secret), this is, by and large, the sequence of the two major crises is preceded by preparation of the Spirit in the heart, the preliminary consecration, and the crisis. This is the divine movement, from God to man and man to God—the gracious shuttle of the Divine Weaver. It is this which keeps the relationship personal, dynamic, and thoroughly moral at every stage.

Now our preaching should so illuminate this sequence that our listeners learn to think in these terms. Even the unconverted who hear us often will become aware that if they are to be saved they must see certain other people who have been converted. There is a subsequent experience toward which they should move from the very start, which also involves definite conditions.

Neither can we avoid altogether being more specific and getting down to life. We have all heard of spiritual toddler, I knew a woman who had learned to see the way, but who had not been able to tell at all, not. She did not know how to know. She went from church to church, slipping into the back seat to listen to the services. Finally she heard the sermon that made the way clear and she was almost instantly at the altar.

After a year of great exhilaration and exciting religious activity, she became keenly aware of a lacking double-mindedness. She heard of sanctification, and again became confused as to the holiness churches, but received no directions. Another year passed when one Morninglight evangelist laid aside the planned masterpieces and in simple ABC form explained the steps to the blessings. At last she found that at a public altar finally break through at home, or in the car, or even on the street.

Yet in spite of these very real perils, we cannot cope out completely as guides. The Holy Spirit may go beyond our preaching, but he generally begins with it, and works through it. If the Spirit didn't move us, we should be at fault! No. The communication of truth by man to man is God's ordained plan, and that surely includes the communication of basic divine processes. There is a sequence in the divine working with men and women, demonstrating and revealing the power, and concealing and refusing the power. Holiness and repentance. Holiness precede the new birth. The new birth precedes the Christian life. The Christian life leads to the discovery of carnality. The discovery of carnality precipitates an acute longing for holiness. The man who feels the presence of God leads to a crisis of surrender and consecration and self-crucifixion. This crisis issues in a Spirit-energized faith that walks into the blessing and brings the inner release and confirmation. The release and confirmation set one sing song and high speed, and real progress begins. Progress leads to submissives of divine discipline and further and further self-disclosure, which carry us higher and farther along the way to maturity, sanctification, and usefulness.
UNHOLY TEMPERS

by George E. Failing*

But unholy temper also need cleansing. The Wise Man taught that "the fountain of filthiness is sin" (Prov. 24:4); he also taught that the Lord has "no delight in the evil doing evil purposes" (Prov. 6:18).

Even the passage of a thought or impulse of evil across the heart leaves its impurity. The conscience so often guilty of "dead works" needs to be cleansed (Heb. 9:14). So we are promised that "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). The immediate context indicates that this sin we are cleansed from particularly is the sin of not walking in the light as he is in the light, i.e., not living in 것이, loving, and complete obedience to God's will.

For John Wesley, entering "into a formal controversy would be a waste of time. So what does John Wesley teach?" The proposition which I will hold is this: A person may be cleansed from all sinful temper, and yet need the atoning for what? for "negligences and ignorance" for both words and actions (as well as omissions) which are, in a sense, transgressions of the perfect law.

And not we all see the self-same and so clear of these till he lays down this corruptible body" (Works XII, pp. 164). For revealed sinfull temper we need both guilt and plea for complete cleansing. For inadvertent negligences and ignorance, the atoning blood is applied, though there can be no confession of ignorance of ignorance in the various cases, are "legal faults."

These are positive, strong, and wholesome positions on unholy temper, would you not agree?*"}

*George Felling is general editor, Westminster Press, New York.

*Author's own translation.

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**Washington**

**CULTS, OCCULTS, AND APOSTASY**

by Norman N. Bonner

**Professor, Western Evangelical Seminary, Portland, Oregon.**

The propositions examined in this study are fourfold. First, there are heresies of biblical truth which need to emerge into a full-colored sphere of truth—overemphasis on other hemisphere may lead to heterodoxy. Secondly, there is a tendency to drift from orthodoxy in one or more areas of fundamental biblical truth which may lead to heterodoxy. Which, if continued, may result in final apostasy. Thirdly, the cults tend to separate one from the church, and thus removed from the safeguards of orthodoxy, the drift may continue toward occultism. Finally, there is a need for Christians within the church to examine themselves in the light of orthodox truth to determine if tendencies toward the cultic exist, and, if so, to flee quickly to the Word of God, the single citadel of truth.

DEFINITIONS

The term "sect," derived from the Latin "sequi," meaning "to follow," may describe any dissenting or schismatic religious body, which may or may not have parted company with a longer continuing communion. It is not this concept with which this paper is concerned.

The term "cult" which will be the focus of this paper, has a more restricted meaning. It is described as a religious regard which is unorthodox in the Christian sense, and will be documented in this paper.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF A CULT**

In his book The Four Major Cults, Anthony A. Hoekema notes that, "which appeared in German in 1987 under the title, Die Glaubensansetzung des Sekteurs, (The Faith-world of the Sectarian). Some of these characteristics, listed below, are drawn from this source and will be documented from Hoekema's book (pages 373-403).

1. A break with historic Christianity, Hoekema states, "There is, in all cults, an abrupt break with historic Christianity and with its controversies. For this reason, Christianity is threatened by the creeds, confessions, and disciplines of historic Christianity, as well as the lessons learned from church history."

2. A tendency to major in minors. "Cults tend to take certain peripheral truths (or teachings which are held to be truths) and to elevate them to a prominence far greater than they deserve, whereas, as matters of major importance are played down."

3. A tendency toward unhealthy perfectionism. This is published as "a feeling of superior holiness to those in other groups, particularly to the members of the established church." For example, "Jehovah's witnesses claim that they are more obedient to God than church members, or members of other groups.

4. An extra-scrip- tural source of authority. This is the question of "ultimate authority." Is the Bible in itself sufficient, or do we need some other source to shed light on God's Word? This "extra-scriptural" scripture may be derived from experience by noted cultists such as Joseph Smith and Mary Baker Eddy, or second Bible, as the Doctrine and Covenants, or the Bible and the Gospels, or the writings of the great controversialists. It is not found in every cult studied, the ultimate ground of authority rested in some extra-scrip- tural source.

5. The denial of justification by grace alone (Eph. 2:8-9). 'Faith is no longer considered as the
free gift of God to the unworthy sinner, but a reward which has been earned by the faithful keeping of various conditions and requirements." Huntington calls this the most basic fact of the cultists, and against this he cites the Reformation as asserting the prin-
ciple of "So-gets"—"man is saved by grace 6.

6. The denial of the person, personality, and per-
sonal ministry of the Holy Spirit. This is a danger-
ous point. The Holy Spirit is our medium of com-
munication with the eternal God; He is the Holy Spirit as a person, even as the Father and Son are persons. John 14:16-17: "I will not leave you as orphans; you shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you ever, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sitheth him not, neither knoweth him." John 15:26. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." John 16:13. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." John 16:13."Or the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are spoken of as persons, not principles. If God is a person, the Jesus Christ is a person, the Holy Spirit must be a personal. Person pronouns are used. Thus: He is loved, God loves; He loves, God is loved, etc.

7. A denial of Christ's role as the only head of the church, the Son of God, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. What appears to be

8. Proof-texting to a doxological doctrine. This is the tendency to place strong emphasis upon mean-
ings, or symbols, without due consideration of context, study of collected passages, comparative analysis, and use of the hermeneutical principles of sound biblical interpretation (the "hermeneutics called the "knight-errant method," leaping from verse to verse to bolster one peculiar belief. This is "sub-
jective" rather than "objective" biblical study. One
approaches the Word with a set of presuppositions, rather than regarding the Word apart from presuppositions?" The proper approach to Bible study should be: "Interpret the Word in the light of what God has revealed in His Word through the Word (Col. 1:26-27)."

9. Door-to-door visitation versus public procla-
nation. Huntington says, "This is the cardinal boul-
fulness of preaching to save them believe." This is not to diminish witnessing and discipleship, but to call to proclamation with its supporting min-
pressions.

10. Emphasizing teaching and training every
member to become a missionary of the movement rather than emphasizing preaching and worship. Teaching and training are good, but must not pre-
clude proclamation and fellowship. Church principles, such as kerygma (wor-
sip), koinonia (fellowship), diakonia (service), and diakonos ("teaching or training"

11. Separation from the body of believers. Grant-
that God's people are gathered together. His name, there in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). This is a hermeneutic of spirit. It is not forcing the meaning of the words, terms, the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some, but interpreting the meaning of the deity's approach (Hebrews 10:25). The exhortation is: "And let us consider one another to be more zealous in bringing each other into God's presence..."

12. Perception complex. The cultists thrive on what appears to him to be persecution. A cultist

5. One man, the Holy Ghost, and the three are one.

6. The cultis gains the exclusive Communion of the Body of Christ because the anti-church point out that the anti-church is the Church, the Body of Christ, and the three are one.

7. One of the basic foci of the cultic is the claim that the church is a separate organization, an independent spirit, that the church is independent of the Body of God's people, it must try to show

8. That the church is either an apostate organization or an independent spirit that is the Body of God's people, that the church

9. The claim to new insights, or new revelations of
truth. These new truths, according to the cultist, are not available to ordinary believers. This is one of the most dangerous of the cultists and leads to spiritual pride. Any claim that he teaching on such premises, can teach about anything and sub-
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text.

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text.
WHAT HOLINESS DENOMINATIONS ARE DOING ABOUT CONTINUING EDUCATION

Dialogs about the Practice of Ministry Conducted by Mark R. Moore, Executive Director, Department of Education and the Ministry, Church of the Nazarene.

Recently the directors of continuing education for the Church of the Nazarene, The Wesleyan Church, and the Free Methodist Church got together to talk over and share plans and ideas. Participating were Jack Motweller, director of Special Ministries, the Free Methodist Church; Lawrence Schoenhals, director of Higher Education, the Free Methodist Church; Lee Hulmes, general secretary, Department of Education and the Ministry, The Wesleyan Church; John M. Nolan, director of Ministerial Development, Church of the Nazarene; and Mark R. Moore, executive director, Department of Education and the Ministry, Church of the Nazarene. Here's part of that conversation.

Mark R. Moore: Jack, what is the status of continuing education in the Free Methodist church?

Jack Motweller: Several interesting things are happening at Free Methodists. It's great to see the church become more involved in continuing education. The role of the church as a vital educational force is being realized.

Lawrence Schoenhals: Our bishops and General Conference are highly interested in continuing education for ministers as they prepare for the next generation.

John M. Nolan: Our current programs offer a variety of options for ministers looking to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Mark R. Moore: What about the role of continuing education in the Wesleyan Church?

Lee Hulmes: We have a strong commitment to supporting our ministers in their ongoing education. We provide resources and opportunities for them to grow in their faith and ministry.

John M. Nolan: We are expanding our current offerings to better meet the needs of our ministers.

Mark R. Moore: Let's talk about the Nazarene's continuing education programs.

Lawrence Schoenhals: The Nazarene has a comprehensive program for continuing education. Our goal is to provide resources and support for ministers as they serve the church.

John M. Nolan: Our current programs include seminars, workshops, and academic courses to help ministers grow in their knowledge and skills.

Mark R. Moore: It's exciting to see how these denominations are working together to support their ministers.

We hope this conversation helps ministers understand the importance of continuing education and encourages them to engage in ongoing learning.

Free Methodists: Compulsory CEUs?

Lawrence Schoenhals: Our bishops and General Conference have made it clear that continuing education is essential for ministers in the Free Methodist Church.

Jack Motweller: The idea of mandatory CEUs is not new, but it's gaining traction in the church.

Lawrence Schoenhals: We hold seminars to help ministers understand the importance of CEUs and how they can be integrated into their ministry.

Mark R. Moore: How do other denominations feel about mandatory CEUs?

Lee Hulmes: The Wesleyan Church is currently exploring the idea of mandatory CEUs.

John M. Nolan: The Nazarene also supports the concept, but we are cautious about imposing mandatory CEUs without considering the context of each church.

Mark R. Moore: It's important to consider the specifics of each denomination and church when discussing mandatory CEUs.

We hope this conversation helps us understand the diverse perspectives on mandatory CEUs.

Macrole: Palcon II and AMS

Mark R. Moore: Yes, it's our biggest continuing education thrust for 1981. PALCON stands for Pastors' and Leaders' Conference. It is a program designed to update and upgrade our pastors in their ministry. PALCON is an ideal way to do it in an inspirational, non-hierarchical manner. Our first few conferences deal with topics that are regularly scheduled and have been required for years. Our second conference is an introduction to new and developing topics. Our third conference is a look at the future of the church and society. This three-pronged approach will give our pastors a well-rounded education.

Lee Hulmes: We have planned a comprehensive educational program for the coming year that includes seminars, workshops, and conferences to help our pastors continue to grow as ministers.

John M. Nolan: We hope that this program will help our pastors be more effective in their ministry and lead their churches to a better understanding of their mission.

Mark R. Moore: We hope this educational program will help our pastors continue to grow and lead their churches to a better understanding of their mission.

Wesleyan: Ministerial Roles of the 80s and 90s

We also hope to develop new programs using college campuses and other institutions to provide continuing education for local churches.

Mark R. Moore: I am especially interested in seeing how we can develop new programs using college campuses and other institutions to provide continuing education for local churches.

We hope this conversation helps us understand the diverse perspectives on how we can develop new programs using college campuses and other institutions to provide continuing education for local churches.

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THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF THE LOVE OF GOD

by Alex Deasley

INTRODUCTION

This passage, with all of its stupendous eloquence, marks the end of the first half of the Epistle to the Romans. Everything that Paul has said up to this point finds its focus here, and it is the intention of the Holy Spirit to show us what he means by all that has gone before. All that he has said about the power of God to sanctify through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit finds its focus here.

This is the substance of the question which he is asking us to consider at this point in the Epistle--"What shall we say to these things?" And we might well respond to that question with another question--What indeed shall we say to these things? It is hard to frame an answer that would be adequate to all of these things in their monumental scale and their far-reaching implications. And, in fact, Paul does not frame an answer either.

He answers his own question with three more questions, forms the leading verses of the eighth chapter, are really structured around three central divm questions, which he invites Paul to answer at the beginning of this chapter. What shall we say to these things?" And we might well respond to that question with another question--What indeed shall we say to these things? It is hard to frame an answer that would be adequate to all of these things in their monumental scale and their far-reaching implications. And, in fact, Paul does not frame an answer either.

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our trespasses, raised for our justification, exalted to God’s right hand where He intercedes constantly on our behalf.

Approach, my soul, the mercy seat. Wash with pure water away your stains. These terrors fall before His feet. Fear not. Make your prayer thus:

Be thou my shield and hiding-place, that shaded by Thy side, I may hold my peace, and tell Him thou hast died.

III. WHO SHALL SEPARATE US? (v. 35)

This brings Paul to his third and last question, from “Who shall be against us?” and “Who shall accuse us?” to the question in the 35th verse, which controls the thought down to the end of the chapter. We shall separate us from the love of Christ? The answer that Paul gives to the question is, “No, not the law of man, but the law of Christ.” And I ask you to notice in what paragraph’s answer comes. “What of the law of God?” he asks. “What makes us conquerors?” It is not because He loves us, although that is true. “It is,” says St. Paul, “because He loved us,” pointing back to that once-for-all, indubitable, invincible demonstration of His eternal love to us on Calvary’s Cross—that is our final anchorage and that is our final grounding. The phrase is not casual, for we use it elsewhere, as in Gal. 5:20: “I live through the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. And I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, not depth, shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

So, says St. Paul, nothing shall separate us from the love of God. Nothing. Tribulation shall not do it, persecution shall not do it, death shall not do it, at last and final of all separations—death cannot separate us from the love of God. That is a brave statement. You have heard, you no doubt, of the story when a small boy was shown to Raphael, the angel of God, the son of God. And He said, “What would you name your son?” The boy looked at him blankly and said, “Name.” “This,” Raphael said, “is the name that you wish to name your son, and I will write it for you.” The boy in bewildermont took pen and paper and wrote down the words “Ralph Waldo Emerson” and the old man took the pen out of the boy’s hand and wrote carefully from the words that the child had written down, referring to each letter in turn to make sure that he got it right. What shall we say of one in such a state in its advancement in life? He who the first steps falts, death is final and complete? Will the love of God surround us or experience is prior to it: God’s saving work in Christ. Two things mark the making of our relationship with God: our commitment to Him and His commitment to us. Both are necessary, but they are not sufficient. In that love of God and the Son of God is not the equal of His commitment to me. And my hold on Him is not the same as His grasp and of His hold upon me. Paul goes beyond experience. When he comes to ground the final triumph of the love of God, He goes beyond experience to those objective historical facts which stand out in human history undeniably. The Apostle, he says, that God loves you and it is impossible for anything to validate His love to you any more certainly or more clearly than all the historical events

My understanding is too slender a base on which to ground the hand in the presence of the final triumph of the love of God. It is not," says James Denney in the substance of the Lord’s prayer in the Gospel, “the acceptance of any theology or Christology however penetrating or profound, which keeps us from being rooted to our Lord and Savior only because He has apprehended us and His hand is with us. It is the experience of love towards God which secures and holds me and gives me ultimate confidence in the final and eternal love of God. For my love for God is subject to fluctuations of feeling, is obscured by my emotions, and I have no calculus that is fine enough to measure whether my love is all that ought to be. But one thing that I cannot doubt for a moment is the reality and validity of His love towards me, manifested once and for all and partially on the Cross of Calvary. And it is through Him who loved us, and whose love shines out eternally from that Cross, that we are more than conquerors.

As Firm as His Throne Promise stands, As far as the east is from the west, What I’ve committed to His hands Till the decisive day of the Lord. (Hymn)

HOSTAGES SET FREE

Background Scripture: Gal. 5:1

I. God the Father Sets His Creation Free

A. He Sets the Universe Free (Gen. 1:1-28)

2. He Sets the Creation Free (Gen. 1:26-31).
3. He Sets Humanity Free (Gen. 1:26-31).

B. He Sets the Jews Free

1. The Jews Become His Special People (Gen. 15:1-3).
2. The Jews Become Slaves (Exod. 11:1).

C. He Sets the Promised Freedom (Exod. 12:21). Set Free People.

A. He Sets People Free (Exod. 1:8-17). The Moses Free: God’s Answer.

B. He Sets People Free from Darkness (Exod. 15:2).
C. He Sets People Free from Darkness (Exod. 15:2).

D. The Spirit Sets Us Free (Exod. 19:9-21). The Angel of God shall lead this head.

E. The wildness is waiting beside the bed, And the widow and child forsakes the dead— The angel of the Lord shall lead this head. (Hymn)

Now “in this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be revealed even the sons of God.” (1 Cor. 15:53).

CONCLUSION

"Who shall be against us? Who shall accuse us? Who shall separate us from the love of God?" He answers: Nothing. Tribulation shall not do it, persecution shall not do it, death shall not do it, at last and final of all separations—death cannot separate us from the love of God. That is a brave statement. You have heard, you no doubt, of the story when a small boy was shown to Raphael, the angel of God, the son of God. And He said, "What would you name your son?" The boy looked at him blankly and said, "Name." "This," Raphael said, "is the name that you wish to name your son, and I will write it for you." The boy in bewildermont took pen and paper and wrote down the words "Ralph Waldo Emerson" and the old man took the pen out of the boy’s hand and wrote carefully from the words that the child had written down, referring to each letter in turn to make sure that he got it right. What shall we say of one in such a state in its advancement in life? He who the first steps falts, death is final and complete? Will the love of God surround us or experience is prior to it: God’s saving work in Christ. Two things mark the making of our relationship with God: our commitment to Him and His commitment to us. Both are necessary, but they are not sufficient. In that love of God and the Son of God is not the equal of His commitment to me. And my hold on Him is not the same as His grasp and of His hold upon me. Paul goes beyond experience. When he comes to ground the final triumph of the love of God, He goes beyond experience to those objective historical facts which stand out in human history undeniably. The Apostle, he says, that God loves you and it is impossible for anything to validate His love to you any more certainly or more clearly than all the historical events.
CAPTIVATED BY CHRIST

Fifteen times in 10 verses Paul lifts up the name of Christ directly or by personal pronoun. These verses constitute some of the loftiest and grandest revelation of Jesus in the entire New Testament. Most clearly, the eschaton is completely evoked by Christ. That embodies a sacramental theme of redemption.

First: Jesus is the Cosmic Christ (v. 1-4) who
1) calls us into His fellowship (v. 1-2), and who
2) redeems us from sin (v. 7).

Third: Jesus is the Consummate Christ (8-10), who
1) lavishes God’s grace upon us (v. 8), and who
2) brings all things to their final consummation in Christ (v. 10).

Paul's Theilard de Chardin, the French Roman Catholic theologian-philosopher had an intriguing idea which caught the Christological essence of these verses. He affirmed that Jesus is the alpha point of all creation (v. 4). He is the creator-God who brings all things into existence and who breathes everything forward through time. Yet Jesus is also the omega point (v. 10). He stands at the end of history, time, drawing all things to their final consummation in himself like a great cosmic magnet. And between these two poles, Jesus is the secret center, sustaining force, and redemptive power of the world. Beginning and ending, and at every point in between, Jesus is Lord! That is Chardin's view. That is Paul's conviction. And that is my sure confidence:

"The Quest for Identity" is a relevant topic that can be amply demonstrated by verse and by allusions to these three fundamental questions:

First: Who Am I? Paul's answer is: "I am an apostle of Jesus Christ." We are well on our way toward discovering who we are when we have come to know who we are.

Second: Who Am I Here? Paul's answer is: "I am here by God's express will" (cf vv. 4-5). Paul did not feel that he was a microscopic speck of human protoplasm accidentally floating on the cosmic sea of existence. He was convinced, rather, that the creator-God had His eye on him in a very personal way, and that he had been called to a most unique and special role in God's salvation history.

Third: What Am I To Do? Paul's answer is: "I am called to be an apostle (one sent out) to the saints and all who are faithful in Christ Jesus." As the very beginning of his conversion, Paul received his divine commission for ministry (Acts 26:16-18). To hear the Lord focus on Christ and commission ministry is the final step toward solving the identity crisis: only then can we know our true selves through investing in the lives of others. "For it is in giving that we receive, truly loving that we are loved, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life." (St. Francis of Assisi's prayer).

"Cultivating a Christian Concept of God" is a vitally important teaching sermon that can be fruitfully developed from these verses. Paul sings as he soars in exulting. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (v. 3, NASB). Unfortunately, many in our congregations cannot suppose after all, how can they bless a God whom they perceive to have cursed their lives with all sorts of disasters, losses, and cruel blows of fate?

It would be well to begin our sermon by focusing upon the plight of people struggling with a perverse understanding of God.

First: The Flight of a Grotesque God. It was Martin Luther who confessed his pre-wakening concept of God in these words: "Through the law I became aware of how it is in itself and me. Therefore, I moved about anxious with fears and questionings, unnerved by the slightest tempest, terrified by the thunder's noise. Every moment I expected God to come behind me and crush my head with a meteor." John Calvin's God who arbitrarily élects a few souls to heaven while irrevocably predestines the rest to hell—regardless of their own decision—represents one of the most grotesque portraits of God to emerge in the history of Church thought. Remnants of Calvin's vindictive and unfailing God who brings to pass all that occurs—whether good or bad—"removing deeply rooted in the minds of many sincere and sensitive Christians today. Jonathan Edwards, Puritan divine and true son of Calvin, gave a particularly frightening and repugnant expression to this repulsive concept of God in his famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

The "bottom line" of this perverse concept of God is that, He is no longer our deliverer, but the One from whom we must try to be saved. Thankful, Paul's vision of the God who has revealed himself in Christ is quite different.

Second: The Beauty of a Gracious God.

1) God is Gracious in Who He Is (v. 3). His first word to us is not law, but grace. It is not "Do," but "Done."

2) God is Gracious in His Revelation of Himself in Christ. The Hebrews defined God as the "Father of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Christians define God as the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." What is God like? He is like Jesus (cf. Jn 1:16; 1:1-3).

3) God is Gracious in What He Has Planned for Us (v. 4, 8-10).

4) God is Gracious in What He Has Done for Us (v. 7).

Karl Barth's definition of grace says it well. "Grace is the incomprehensible fact that God is well disposed toward us. (Heb. 10:19, NAB)"

Here is another way to develop the concept of a "Gracious God."

1. Before I became a sinner, God chose me to be a saint (v. 1). There is something more original than the original: and that is original righteousness! We were created in God's image. He breathed into us the breath of life. Sin is an aberration; sin is in our true nature.

2. Before I felt the lash of God's law, He called me into the liberty of His grace (vv. 2-3). God's first word is always a word of grace. Permission precedes prohibition. "Take, eat" comes before "Thou shalt not eat" (Gen. 2:16-17; Exod. 29:29). Where the word of grace precedes the Ten Commandments, also John 3:16-17; Rom. 5:8, 10; Eph. 2:8-9.

3. Before I became a sinner, God chose me to be a son (vv. 4-5). Charlie Brown fixated into existance (v. 7) has as its purpose the restoration of men to their original position of sonship.

4. Before I sought for salvation, Christ redeemed me (vv. 6-7). Everything of importance in salvation begins from God's grace (cf. Jn 4:10).

5. Before I lost my way, God included me in His Cosmic Plan (vv. 8-10). It was God's gracious intervention from the very beginning, to include us as active participants in the great destiny of bringing all things to their consummation in Christ. No wonder Paul can "raise the glory of His grace... which He lavished upon us," according to His kind word to us on verse four in this manner:

I. God has chosen us...

II. God has chosen us to be holy...

III. God has chosen us to be holy...

IV. God has chosen us to be holy...

As Charlie Brown exclaimed upon finally being selected one of the lunch-hour baseball teams: "Happiness is being chosen to play on the team."
TODAY'S BOOKS for TODAY'S PREACHER

Unfinished Easter

By David W., C. Reed (Harper & Row; 132 pp., paperback, $4.95).

David W. Reed's new work skillfully combines inspiration with a lasting practical value. Long after the first Sunday of Easter, his practical message will benefit, enabling the body of Christ to continue the work of effective communication.

The author speaks in a new kind of language, eschewing facile, platitudes for a discussion of what it means to be the church in the present age.

Reed's work is more than just an elaboration on the obvious. He raises questions we ask and then gives the answers drawn from scriptural principles.

Much of his material will be helpful in building a church. An example of this is found in chapter 2, "The First Man," pp. 47-53.

By Peter A. Loven, Baker Books

Voices of the Passion

By O. P. Knecht and A. C. Clasen, (Augsburg, 128 pp., paperback, $4.95).

Many books have appeared purporting to be "the" source for various aspects of the Passion. This one is different. The authors are not speaking to themselves but to any reader interested in the story of the Passion.

The book is divided into three sections: Eve, the Man of Sorrows, and the Lamb of God. The editors explain their work as "the essence of the Passion," but the editors have not attempted to present a "new view," they have sought to simply present the story in a clear and readable format.

The editors say this book is "for the reader who is interested in understanding the Passion story in a new way, who is looking for a fresh approach to the story of the Passion, and who is interested in the story of the Passion for its own sake."

By Peter A. Loven, Baker Books

How to Avoid Staff Infection

(Continued from page 44)

by Peter A. Loven, Baker Books

uncomfortable with each other enough to want to do something about it.

The more comfortable they are with each other, the more likely they are to stick around. So the first step is to create a comfortable environment for everyone to work in.

- Bill Gigler, Baker Books

Divine Healing of the Body

By J. Sidow, Baker Books (190 pp., hardback, $9.95).

While it is true that the condition of the body is often a result of spiritual causes, it is also true that physical causes do exist. The condition of the body is often a result of spiritual causes, it is also true that physical causes do exist. The condition of the body is often a result of spiritual causes, it is also true that physical causes do exist.

The author's main concern is to show that the body is not just a temporary dwelling place for the soul, but that it is a living, breathing organism in its own right. The body is not just a temporary dwelling place for the soul, but that it is a living, breathing organism in its own right. The body is not just a temporary dwelling place for the soul, but that it is a living, breathing organism in its own right.

- Charles M. Gallaway

Planning Your Preaching

By J. Winchester, Baker Books (117 pp., paperback, $9.95).

Every evangelist needs to understand the importance of planning his preaching. He needs to have a clear vision of what he wants to accomplish in each session. He needs to have a clear vision of what he wants to accomplish in each session. He needs to have a clear vision of what he wants to accomplish in each session.

Winchester's book is divided into two sections: the preaching plan and the preaching session. It is divided into two sections: the preaching plan and the preaching session. It is divided into two sections: the preaching plan and the preaching session.

- J. Winchester

Talking to the Story


Would you like to sharpen your preaching techniques? This book deals with the variety and imagination of preaching.

Dr. Stoll describes three basic types of orations. After each type, he gives sermon examples of the type he has described.

The facts of the classics of both diastatic preaching and preaching as a disciple of Jesus. Dr. Stoll then concludes the chapter with the weaknesses in providing

How to avoid staff infection

(Continued from page 37)

by Peter A. Loven, Baker Books

A pastor can talk to people, but communication requires a listening ear, not just a talking mouth. We all know that it's not possible to have both at the same time.

In his book "Circles of Influence," the author speaks to the church about what happens in staff relationships. He says that the church staff will not survive if they don't talk about the church.

"You must look for the right kind of communication when you talk to your staff," says the author. "And you must talk to your staff in a way that will make them feel comfortable and safe." And you must talk to your staff in a way that will make them feel comfortable and safe.

The Aramaic word for "a rock," John translates this for his readers as petra, the Greek word for "rock" or "stone." But since the Greek petra is rendered as "Peter" everywhere else in the New Testament (161 times), probably it is better here also to use it.

NOTE: (2.3) "Today, want" means "wish for." But the verb here, ὅθεν, is an archaic or Old Testament Greek word, which is generally translated as "from a place, from wherever."
1. Which of the following organizations had its first convention last November?
   A. Ex-Mormons for Jesus
   B. Ex-Jehovah's Witnesses for Jesus
   C. Ex-Communists for Christ

2. Which of the following is the newly elected president of the Sun Moon Unification Church?
   A. Bill Gothard
   B. Marvin Katenburg
   C. More Dust

3. Which of the following pledged $500,000 to the National Organization of Women and the ERA?
   A. Norman Lear's Tandem Production
   B. Rose Kennedy
   C. Mary Tyler Moore Productions
   D. The Ford Foundation

4. How many "refugees" are there in today's torn world?
   A. 1 million
   B. 8 million
   C. 13 million
   D. 130 million

5. What percent of American Protestants are members of the denominations they were raised in?
   A. 40
   B. 50
   C. 65
   D. 78

6. Which of the following religious groups have been under police scrutiny for stockpiling weapons?
   A. Jehovah's Witnesses
   B. Healthy Happy Holy Organization
   C. Hale Krishna
   D. World Wide Church of God

7. "The prince knew his own, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" is from:
   A. Matthew 12
   B. Micah 7
   C. Isaiah 1
   D. 2 Samuel 3

8. The President of the Christian Holiness Association (CHA) is:
   A. B. Edgar Johnson
   B. Dennis Kinlaw
   C. Lee Thornton
   D. Dennis Clemenger

9. Cross-cultural ministry is of grave importance because non-Caucasians make up what percent of the U.S. population?
   A. 7%
   B. 17%
   C. 27%
   D. 37%
   E. 47%
   F. 57%

10. "The Christian meets the world with the Bible in one hand and the daily newspaper in the other" is a well-known quotation from:
    A. Karl Barth
    B. Norman Vincent Peale
    C. Adam Clarke
    D. John Henry Howell

11. Which of the Gospels record the "Parable of the Sower"?
    A. Matthew
    B. Luke
    C. John

12. How many of the Gospels record the betrayal by Judas?
    A. 4
    B. 3
    C. 2
    D. 1

13. The promise that God will "subdue our iniquities" comes from:
    A. Psalm 91
    B. Joshua 6
    C. Micah 7
    D. John 3

14. Black churchman Simon Nkomo, the third highest ranking Anglican in Johannesburg, recently got into trouble with the law because his apartment adjoining St. Mary's cathedral:
    A. was found to be a hideout for revolutionaries
    B. was condemned as unsafe
    C. had become a source of illegal drug supplies
    D. is in an area reserved for whites only.

15. Which of the following was not written by Elton Trueblood?
    A. The Peculiarism of Modern Man
    B. The Lonely Man
    C. The Company of the Committed
    D. The Inevitable Fellowship

16. Which of the following were contemporaries?
    A. Francis Bacon and Adam Clarke
    B. Isaac Newton and John Locke
    C. William Shakespeare and John Wesley
    D. Harry Emerson Fosdick and Hugo Grotius