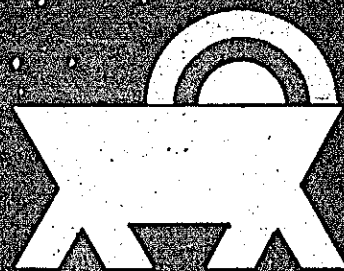


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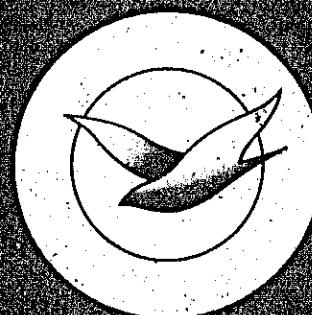
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THE preacher's magazine

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.....From the.....EDITOR

The Seasonal Sermon



SOME PASTORS TAKE THEM IN STRIDE, with never a hint of pressure. Some fret and chafe under them, wishing they would go away. Some are slaves to the custom, following it in minute detail as though driven by an overwhelming compulsion. Others are "free," even to the point of ignoring them completely. We refer here to the "special days" in the church year, the "seasons" during which the pastor is expected to produce a masterpiece which is directly related to the occasion.

At the top of the list is Easter, and this could include the entire Lenten season. Christmas stands also at the top in importance. Some might argue that Pentecost should head the list. Regardless of their order of importance, the list of special days is long. There is the New Year, Reformation Sunday, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Promotion Day, and Laymen's Sunday, to name only a few.

The ideal is for the pastor to USE these special occasions, but not let them make him a slave to their demands. We offer here a few suggestions and one example.

The seasonal sermon does have its advantages. It affords the preacher the opportunity to capture the imagination of his congregation at the point of their interest. It makes the message fresh and appropriate. It gives a congregation the feeling that the pastor is aware of what is happening, sensitive to needs and interests, and living life as his people live it.

Thanksgiving is one such season. In Canada it comes in October, and in the United States in November. Some other countries celebrate it as well. The pastor cannot afford to preach essentially the same sermon every year on "thanksgiving"! Nor can he find enough variations to narrow the subject to "The Meaning of Thanksgiving" or similar topics.

This writer found an answer which may be the solution you have been seeking. It comes through *letting* (not forcing) the Scriptures to speak on these various themes. Topics suggest themselves in regular devotional readings of the Bible (this is very important) as contrasted

with "text-hunting" in the Word. As a topic suggests itself to the mind during Scripture study, it is jotted down in a notebook used for this purpose—a collection of sermon ideas for future use.

Such a topic was suggested several months ago in a study of First Corinthians. One of the key verses in the first chapter reads: "I thank my God always in your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Christ Jesus" (v. 4). Thanksgiving! But thanksgiving with a difference, when you consider the occasion. This letter was addressed to the most problem-ridden church St. Paul ever founded. Its members lived in a wicked city, and this was having its effect upon their lives. They were divided and contentious (1:11 ff.), immature (3:2), carnal (3:3), and tolerant toward sexual immorality of the basest sort (5:1-2). A church with problems.

So one might quickly conclude, Here is a message to use during some future thanksgiving season: "Thanksgiving for a Church with Problems." And indeed you may wish to use it in this way.

The application, however, is not only for a church. It is also for a family, a nation, or an individual. The theme may begin to emerge, "Thanksgiving in Times of Crisis." The church at Corinth was in crisis. And so are we at times as churches, as nations, as families, as business organizations, or as individuals.

Such a sermon could be introduced with the reminder that anyone can be thankful when things are going well, when health is good, money is in the bank, and life's problems are all solved. But it is a different kind of person who gives thanks to God when things are not going well. Perhaps health is gone, or material needs are not being met, loneliness has replaced companionship, and life's problems are multiplying. Anyone can give thanks in times of prosperity. God can help us to be thankful in times of crisis.

Notice how this chapter supports this theme.

1. *There is thanksgiving for the promise of God* (v. 6). "... even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you."

His testimony is now confirmed. What Christ said is true, and what He promised is fulfilled. Like the church at Corinth, we tend to forget this. Let us be thankful for God's promise, and its fulfillment.

2. *There is thanksgiving for the gift of God* (v. 7). "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here the word *charisma* is used, and it means a gift freely given, a gift not deserved, a gift which cannot be earned. The gift is God's only begotten Son, the price of our redemption. Salvation is God's gift to us, and for that we should be thankful.

3. *There is thanksgiving for the hope of God* (v. 8). "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." We have hope for the future. Judgment day causes no panic in the heart of the Christian whose hope is in Christ. Even in times of crisis, we can be thankful for our hope.

Here, then, is an example of a sermon idea which germinated and grew. You may find it helpful to "let" this happen to you.

It makes any sermon—and especially the seasonal sermon—more rewarding and less threatening.

Faith in ACTION

The Cycle of Financial Victory

By James S. Spruce*

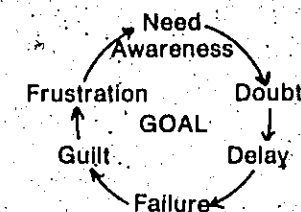
WE WERE UP AGAINST IT. Our church owed \$76,000 in 10 months, and over the past 12 years we had reduced the mortgage only \$25,000. We were raising \$60,000 annually. The banker was not overly anxious to renew our financial relationship. The people were fearful, some even expressing private hopes to me that I not mention the "depressing debt" too much in my preaching ministry.

The debt, by many standards, was not much at all. But over a period of years it had become a millstone, a weight around our necks that had strapped our people to fear and negative reasoning. Suddenly the gravity of realizing that the mortgage would come due during my ministry really hit me. And the more I studied the picture and preached on obedience in tithing and self-denial, the more concerned I became. And I saw that if the problem were to be solved, God would need to employ me as an agent of change. My calling to my church demanded that I instill sufficient faith in those around me. And yet, if former pastors had not convinced the people, how could I?

Then our miracle began. It happened quietly, slowly. The Holy Spirit was to be the Convincer—not me. And when I learned *that lesson*, the pressure left me! I was responsi-

ble, still, for creating an atmosphere of genuine expectancy, but the task of individual conviction to the debt was in God's hands. Our church board, first of all, experienced spiritual renewal. Then the board pledged themselves to specific financial "gift commitments." Through the combined faith of several key laymen we purposefully spread the interest and enthusiasm to our congregation. By this time we were down to within six months of the due date. But during those closing Sundays we received \$43,000 in cash! The barrier, at least, had been broken.

Our problem was largely attitudinal. We had spun around in a "Cycle of Financial Defeat" as shown below:



Every time we recognized our need we hit the "doubt button," much like the conditioned reflex of Pavlov's dog. Doubt produced delay, which bred failure. Failure led to guilt and frustration. By the time we saw our need again, we fell into doubt. For us this was true because the GOAL was central and WE were peripheral! The goal was simply not part of our cycle! We had been more

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interested in goal-meeting than in getting started.

I finally arrived at a time when my personal objective was to devise practical, specific ways to reduce the debt little by little. And we began to conceptualize a framework in which people could see their own involvement in debt reduction as a necessary part of God's will for financial victory.

Our barrier was psychological, not financial. I saw that a wholesome approach in my preaching toward accepting the debt rather than mentally rejecting it was needed. We had to break the cycle at the doubt level. Small faith usually led into other perils and continued us on our defeat treadmill.

So we embarked upon a "Cycle of Financial Victory" which made goal attainment a part of the natural course of events. We established, first in the board, the policy of announcing amounts pledged without revealing the giver's name. This of course, inspired the congregation. Actually, more than \$60,000 was pledged. It is just a matter of time now before all the money comes in. You can see from the new cycle that we took our GOAL off its high and mighty pedestal and made it a part of our workable, reachable structure.



In this new relationship to our goal of debt reduction, we are able to be constantly "need-sensitive" whether or not a goal is reached. Since faith builds the foundation for goal-setting, our purpose was dramatically altered. Our goal became not the

total reduction of our debt, but the desire to be sensitive to our need. Along the way, of course, we are finding that indeed financial goals are being met. And, interestingly, we have found that *individuals* have gained satisfaction in personal goal attainment even though the collective job of total debt reduction is not finished.

When I unfolded what happened to our bank president, he just shook his head. (I'm glad it was in the right direction!) I was able to relate to him that much of our problem did center around the attitudes we had toward our own money. He understood that. But I was also able to tell him that God came to our church. That we found a few new tithers. That we found a few who began practicing self-denial. That some people borrowed large sums of money in their own names from their own banks. That others sold personal property, or dipped into precious lifetime savings funds. He seemed to understand that too.

Needless to mention, but worthy of your attention, a revival spirit broke upon our fellowship. Prayer, not money, became our primary concern. When our regularly scheduled revival arrived, one young man settled his call to preach and left a promising managerial career to attend our seminary. A man with a broken fellowship with God found complete spiritual transformation. And many other people found that their needs were rooted in a kind of spiritual depression as well as in their attitude toward the church debt.

I cannot call this a "success story" because we simply did not meet our goal on time. But I can tell you that when people become involved in any type of faith enterprise, an explosion is bound to come.

And the fall-out is simply wonderful!

Pastor, May I Play a Tuba Solo This Sunday Morning?

By Ray Welch*

OF COURSE NOT, PETER. The Sunday morning service is a worship service, and it is necessary for us to establish a mood of reverence with the music. I cannot see how a tuba solo can contribute to an atmosphere of worship or praise. And besides, the congregation will not be able to identify with the music unless you are planning to play a hymn or a gospel song that they know.

These arguments do sound valid, don't they? Music is very important to the corporate worship. The outstanding churches of our day have outstanding music programs. The nature of the music that precedes the message can often determine the degree of reception of the message. If the congregation receives the message as well. No pastor can afford to neglect what is happening musically in his church and focus on his preaching ministry only.

Where does music by instruments belong in this ministry? An understanding of corporate worship may help. Unlike many other group gatherings, corporate worship is a community experience. The person in the pew is participating in the

activities in some manner, although the participation may be in some subliminal level. The only evidence of this participation may be his rapt attention, an occasional nod of approval, or perhaps the presence of a tear. Nevertheless, the worshiper has really come to church expecting this participation.

The musician can sometimes forget this fact and assume that he himself is all that he needs to be concerned with, since he is the obvious leader of worship at the moment. Thus he sometimes says, "If I can worship with this piece of music, that is all that matters." What a tragic mistake he is making. As a result, the worshiper often leaves the service saying, "My, that was dead." It is because he hasn't participated.

What about instruments then? Since participation is important to the worshiper, how can this be achieved? With choral music, the problem is less serious. Choral music has a text that may provide a point of common reference. Also, since the church has a long history of including choral music in its worship, familiarity may provide the link. But music written for an instrument may not have either of these links.

All is not lost, however. All instru-

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mental music generally represents some overriding mood. It may be light and fast moving. It may be ponderous. It may be lyrical and awe-inspiring. It may be a shout. These different moods can be very conducive to worship. All we have to do is to identify and label the mood and tie it into our worship. You, as the pastor or musician, may not associate the same mood to the same piece of music, but that doesn't matter. An acceptable mood can be named; therefore, name it and use it for worship.

For instance, being a French horn player, I was recently asked to play my horn for a city-wide Good Friday service. Knowing that the mood of the service would be one of quiet meditation and challenge concerning the seven sayings of the Cross, I chose to play an excerpt from Mendelssohn's Fifth Symphony that I felt was in the same established mood. I didn't feel that in this case it was necessary to explain a thing to the congregation. I didn't feel that I was there to educate them on the lofty ideals of serious music for worship. I would not have felt that I was condescending to any lower level of musical standards had I played "The Old Rugged Cross," but for this particular occasion I felt that the moods of the service and my solo were matched, and so I simply played the solo. As a result, I felt I had given my best, and according to the response I received from those in the congregation, the music was received and so we worshiped.

On another occasion I may read a portion of scripture that identifies

the mood I feel the music represents and provide the link that way. Other times a familiar gospel song provides the needed link. Again, a verbal testimony describing the joy I see in the music, or the pathos I see in it provides the basis for worship. Simple, isn't it?

Certainly with the amount of instrumental music activity all around us, and with the emphasis of many public schools on instrumental music, we as church musicians and clergymen should give this medium of worship its due consideration.

Instrumental music does not need to be limited to a familiar gospel song or hymn before it is appropriate for worship. Neither does it need to be limited to something slow and ponderous. The Bible is full of moods—joy, sadness, rejection, reproof, quietness, peace, boldness, challenge, awesomeness, and on and on. Instrumental music can represent any of these moods. Let's tap all of our resources for corporate worship. In the case of instrumental music, simply identify the mood, support the mood with scripture, or explain it if necessary.

Yes, Peter, since your solo strongly supports the spirit of awesomeness and somberness that we hope to establish this Sunday, your sustained Bach-chorale would be very appropriate this Sunday morning. Let's see, we'll place it right after the scripture where the pastor reads the portion about, "Holy is the name of the Lord." That lyrical tuba sound you have will sound great in the reverberant, high-ceilinged sanctuary at our church. God bless you.

Christ will be Lord of ALL your life—however much or little that may be, depending upon your degree of light—or He will not be Lord of ANY of your life.

—John A. Knight

The Preacher's Magazine

The "preliminaries," the prayer, the worship, the sermon—all are necessary parts of the complete pastoral function

The Priestly Pastor

IT IS THE RESPONSIBLE privilege of the prophet to interpret God to man, and the privileged responsibility of the priest to interpret man to God. In Christian ministry they are complementary aspects of the one pastoral calling: they belong as faith and works.

Catholicism tends to exalt the priest and assign preaching to a secondary place, while Protestantism in the main reverses the process. Psychological and secular pressures have alerted both to the importance of the dual role in ministry. Preaching is accentuated in the modern Catholic priesthood. Group counseling and individual interviews involving "confession" and soul-therapy increase in the Protestant pastor's schedule and office.

Invariably, when any aspect of ministry is reemphasized, specialization and specialists appear in that area. The majority of pastors, in lesser or greater degree—by virtue of their love for God and people, the sensitive intuition of sanctified com-

mon sense, and a psychological illumination gained in the school of life and experience—combine the roles of prophet and priest, training apart. Untrained by the standards of earthly schools, "Jesus knew what was in men," their hidden depths, questions, and possibilities, as He knew the hunger and reservation of Nicodemus—John's proof-example of a divine, supreme psychologist.

There are pastors who excel in preaching and counseling. Pulpit ministry gives people confidence to approach and unburden in pastoral calling or requested conference. This in turn quickens congregational attendance and receptivity to the preached Word. Some ministers have felt impelled to major upon counseling, relinquishing the full-time pastorate to do this. A minority of churches with scope and resources are appointing an associate pastor or family counsellor to assist in or enlarge this aspect of ministry. Pastoral book shelves, the space of paperback "problem-solvers" and "experiential-formulas" for success, and the number of training courses and sessions available indicate this rethinking and re-slanting of ministry.

Valuable as specialization and case-training are, there is a time and place a true pastor is inherently and intuitively a priest in calling and privilege—in the Sunday morning service particularly.

The preliminaries is the usual



by
Albert J. Lown
Nazarene evangelist
London, England

November, 1977

term for singing, praying, scripture reading, voluntaries, special items, and offering that precede the sermon. This is an unacceptable term if it implies, as it could sometimes seem, "unessentials" to be shortened or omitted as if in comparison with preaching they count but little.

It is here, if anywhere, the pastor is priest, exemplifying and inspiring the worship of his people, and presenting their hearts and lives before God in the fresh focus of the pastoral-family prayer. Well-chosen hymns of adoration, confidence, fellowship, supplication, theology, and testimony combining in poetry and praise will give release and atmosphere for the opening invocation, special music, and clear, impressive reading of God's Word. A people who have expressed themselves worthily, thoughtfully, and emotionally in renewing worship are most open to be impressed by the sermon-message.

It is a slight against God and man for the "preliminaries" to be insipid or impoverished. They are of right and necessity worship indeed—so much so that the term is etymologically correct in usage, but almost a *misnomer* in parlance and practice. They are not grace before meat; a courtesy before a prepared meal; a calling card laid aside upon the arrival of an important personage; a short drive to a large house or a long address. They are a major part of the spiritual menu and meal; the warmth and welcome of a Presence in preparation for a message; the vestibule and tour of a beautiful mansion before the privilege of a heart-to-heart talk with the Owner.

Only in order of service are preliminaries preliminaries. The pastor-priest has neither part nor place in bygone or unchristian systems of sacrifice: selection of substitutionary victims, bloodshedding, atoning penances, indulgences, or formal

absolutions. He does not convey magical merit or inspire mindless chants of Baal or Krishna. Christ has died once for all. He is the risen Lord reigning in the midst of an eternal throne and resident in His Church through the Holy Spirit. He alone is to be loved, honored, and adored in the church; the one Mediator between God and man, as faith is the one medium by which salvation and sacramental grace are appropriated.

As prophet, the pastor declares this saving word of full salvation to men. As priest he gathers the needs of his people to and upon his heart, and bears them—and bares them—before the throne of grace as Aaron carried the names of Israel's tribes upon his breastplate. Never more so than in a pastoral-family prayer that is the unifying and unburdening of a congregation's soul in the Father's house on their Lord's day. He, Jesus, is in the midst of the Church and in every phase of its corporate, common life. Through Him the Christian's sacrifice, altar, and priest, the pastor leads his people into the holy of holies of communion, confession, and cleansing.

His prayer, preferably extempore, is the language of love's involvement and intercession: joy, sympathy, sorrow, penitence, confidence, gratitude, hope, mystery, agony, and faith are blended. His faith and concern touch all ages and every area of life.

Children, teens, singles, and married young adults; parents, grandparents, all ages and stages of life assemble in his petitioning. Hearts, homes, families, friendships, responsibilities, privileges, memories, and hopes touch him deeply. The world of denial and handicap is his: loneliness in all its forms; bereavement; affliction of body, mind, and spirit; limitation of sight, hearing, speech, or movement. The glad and beautiful things of life find happy

expression too: educational achievement, safe travel, legitimate pride in the success of loved ones, invested unselfish talent, good books with humor, wise stewardship, and warm hospitality. The world of nature is not neglected in the shepherd soul's outpouring: its laws; rhythm of birth, life, and death; myriad forms of life;

marvels of design and color; mysteries of bounty and barrenness inspire awe and wonder.

"Thank you for your message, Pastor," is a heartening tribute as services close. "If I did not come to hear you preach, I would come to hear you pray," is the greatest tribute a pastoral heart could covet.



Wesleyana

Methodist Class Meetings: The Genius of Christian Intimacy

By Larry Shelton*

MUCH ATTENTION has been given to John Wesley's ecclesiastical organization. His purpose was not to found a new structure for schismatics, but to care for souls. He was task-oriented, not program-oriented. His organization was always for the pastoral purpose of nurturing the converts who had come to Christ through his preaching. In establishing the Methodist societies, he faced the criticism that he was causing a schism in the church and destroying existing fellowship (A. S. Wood, *John Wesley: The Burning Heart*,

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p. 189). Wesley's answer is classic:

I answer, That which never existed, cannot be destroyed . . . Who watched over them [converts] in love? Who marked their growth in grace? Who advised and exhorted them from time to time? Who prayed with them and for them, as they had need? This, and this alone, is Christian fellowship. But, alas! Where is it to be found? Look east or west, north or south; name what parish you please: is this Christian fellowship there? Rather, are not the bulk of the parishioners a mere rope of sand? What Christian connection is there between them? What intercourse in spiritual things? What watching over each other's souls? What bearing of one another's burdens? . . . We introduce Christian fel-

lowship where it was utterly destroyed. And the fruits of it have been peace, joy, love, and zeal for every good word and work" (*Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 251 f.; brackets mine).

The key to the effectiveness of his societies was the class meeting. Organized under a system of under-shepherds, the class was the disciplinary and pastoral unit of the society. Each under-shepherd visited each member of his flock once each week to inquire of his spiritual condition and to give comfort or reproof, as the occasion required (*Works*, *Ibid*, p. 253). In the class the new convert found the kind of disciplined fellowship he needed, and the mortality rate of babes in Christ was greatly reduced. It was an ideal system of pastoral care, especially for the newly-converted.

The value of the class meeting for the Wesleyan Revival is incalculable. They gave coherence to the results of the revival and continued its vitality. The new convert found himself in fellowship with others who shared common emotions—the joy of sins forgiven, a passion for the salvation of others, and a desire for growth in Christian experience. He was sheltered from his former vices and edified and disciplined in the faith. Believers learned to bear one another's burdens and care for one another in practical, as well as spiritual ways. They learned to overcome shyness in spiritual things. In short, "Wesley erected fellowship into a permanent feature of church life," which closely resembled the *Unitas Fratrum* of the apostolic church (W. A. Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century*, p. 221; cf. 222 ff.).

It seems that Wesley realized the importance of spiritual fellowship from his earliest years. Susanna's weekly kitchen meetings convinced him that fellowship was essential to the Christian, and this may have led,

at least indirectly, to the formation of the Holy Club, and later to the class meetings (Wood, *Burning Heart*, p. 31).

Although we in the Wesleyan tradition should realize that there can be no such thing as a solitary religion, we often allow just this in our churches, at least in practice. Whereas the class meetings were laboratories for learning to live out the gospel, we substitute a mass production machine which allows little or no Christian intimacy. How can we expect deep personal sharing when our people see each other once or twice a week, and then for only a few minutes with no real personal interaction? People can sit in adjacent pews for years without ever shedding a "sympathizing tear" (Charles W. Keysor, *Our Methodist Heritage*, p. 105 f.).

Rather than encouraging the growth of "sharing groups," or other forms of growth which involve intimacy within groups, we hold such groups under suspicion. They can so easily develop into "cliques," can they not? We follow a utilitarian policy of focusing our attention on accomplishing our program objectives, when we need to realize that when the Church tarries until it is filled with the dynamic of the Holy Spirit, it will naturally fulfill the ministry God has given it.

We are sometimes so concerned with getting our people to "fit in" or "carry the load" of our prefabricated institutional programs that we overlook the need for the nurturing closeness which Wesley saw to be so essential for spiritual vitality. As pastors, therefore, we are not entirely inculpable if our parishioners become "mere ropes of sand." Let us note with Wesley that the fruit of the Spirit and "every good word and work" follow from the New Testament form of fellowship.



The Cry of the Forgotten

By Clayton P. Wilson*

RECENTLY my 85-year-old mother was visiting me. This is always an enjoyable time because she is so alive. Her spirit and attitude are an encouragement to everyone around her. But on this particular day she was very quiet. Then as I looked at her, I noticed that tears were rolling down her cheeks and her chin was quivering. I asked her if something was bothering her, and this was her reply.

"I guess I'm not much good anymore. I can't do much in the church like I used to [she taught a Sunday school class for years]. Now I'm just a part of the forgotten group. I can't give like I used to [she's on Social Security], but I am faithful in paying my tithe and I give over and above to Faith Promise giving in our church. I was never one who demanded much of the pastor's time because I knew he was a busy man. To lighten his load, we used to keep the evangelist during revival time. That was back when revival meetings went for two or three weeks. But now I'm older and can't do those things. It has been three years or better since a pastor has called on me. [For one of her friends it has been five years.] I get out to church as often as I can find a way, but I can't get out as much as I

used to. In the church calling program, not even the younger laymen remember those who are past the age of usefulness. [Mom still carries a tremendous burden for her church and the lost, and prays many hours a day for them.]

"I have an unsaved daughter and son-in-law that I wish someone would take an interest in. One time when I was going to be away, I called my pastor and told him my tithe was at my daughter's and he could pick it up there. I did this on purpose to give the pastor an excuse for coming to their home. But when I returned three weeks later, the tithe had never been picked up. Several other times I've made ways for someone to call on them, but so far no one has."

She said more to me that day, but it was along the same line. Then she grew quiet and picked up her favorite book—the Bible—and a calmness came over her as she read.

I sat there and never said a word. But I was doing a lot of thinking. I was, and still am, asking myself if I have been guilty of neglecting and forgetting the older people in my church. And, in all honesty, I have to say that I haven't remembered them as often as I should. But thanks to a mother who has opened my eyes to a great need in our church—remembering the forgotten.

*Pastor, East Liberty Church of the Nazarene, Akron, Ohio

Some Christians are not yet married, some will never marry. There is a need for a caring community of believers who accept them and will involve them in the life of the church.

From Survival to Belonging

I SAT AT LUNCH with two dozen young adults. They were planning a "singles" retreat for their district. I had been invited to be their speaker, and since I just happened to be in the area at the right time, they included me in the planning session.

The first topic for discussion was to adopt a theme for the retreat. From somewhere down at the other end of the table, a young lady said, "Let's call it something but a 'Singles' Retreat.'"

"Yeah!" everybody agreed.

The first speaker continued, "Let's give it a name that tells where we are, and what we want to get from the retreat. We ought to call it, 'From Survival to Belonging.'"

"Yeah!" they gave unanimous approval.

The discussion continued as we destroyed that mound of Chinese

food. Somewhere along the line a committee was appointed to make a final decision about theme and program, with instructions to keep in mind the suggestion, "From Survival to Belonging."

By that time I had made a number of new friends, especially the young lady with whom I was sharing a plate of sweet-and-sour ribs. So I asked her, "Why did the group react so positively when the suggestion was made that the theme be 'From Survival to Belonging'?"

"Because," she said quietly and without bitterness, "most of us singles are just barely surviving in the church."

I sat there stunned. I was totally unprepared for her honest reply. Here were two dozen of the most involved single young adults from the churches of that area saying, "We don't feel like we belong!" My 23 years in the pastorate had not been conspicuous for a major ministry to single young adults, but I had not ignored them, and thought I understood them pretty well. But I was unprepared for this.

For several months now, I have been listening to single young adults. Just listening—just trying to hear what they are saying—trying to feel what they are feeling—to learn where

they hurt and what makes them laugh.

They have talked with me like I had never heard single young adults talk before. Perhaps it was because I was no longer a pastor. More likely, it was the first time I had stopped long enough to listen to what they had to say. I found them open, eloquent, and forthright in what they thought about the church.

I asked one young lady who is completely committed to follow Jesus Christ and deeply involved in the life of the church, "Is it easier to be a single inside or outside the church?"

"It is easier to be a single outside the church," she replied, "because outside the church no one questions the validity of my singleness."

There exists no Christian imperative to get married. Every pastor has spent many weary hours counseling with those who should have temporarily or permanently postponed marriage. Obviously, marriage is not the answer to the problems of the world. One newly-married, former "career" single put it this way, "I'm happily married, and I'm happy married, but it wasn't marriage that made me happy."

But the fact of "singleness" has made many young people very unhappy. In this country people walk in pairs. Our culture strongly encourages a woman to find her identity in relation to a man, and questions the sexual orientation of a man who

chooses not to marry. The church adds its voice to this common idea by affirming that marriage is the noblest way to personal fulfillment.

But some are not yet married, some will never marry, and some will not marry again. For these, there is a need for a caring community of believers who will accept "singleness" as an acceptable life-style; who will attempt to minister to their needs; who will involve them completely in the life of the church.

Our family orientation in the church makes us uncomfortable with the trends in our society toward singleness. Our traditions make it easier for us to minister to two-parent families than to single young adults and to one-parent families.

However, the church that will accept "singleness" as a valid option for adults will find an exciting new field for evangelism and ministry. To do that we will have to accept these people as "whole" people, not one half looking for the other half. We will have to change our thinking to include them in the fabric of the church—right now, just as they are, not at some future date when they are a part of a couple which fits more neatly into our cultural framework. But, most of all, each of us must involve ourselves in a loving way with these young people—this great army that is marching to a different beat, and most of them marching outside the influence of the church.

A SANCTIFIED SPIRIT

A sanctified spirit is a pure, tender, Christlike spirit, one that is free from anger, malice, flattery, self-praise, self-seeking, and pride in every form. Sin not only corrupts the soul, but it also hardens and encrusts the affections with an icy coldness, puts a stiffness into the voice and manners, and dries up the fountain of tenderness . . . which is the very heart of Jesus.

—J. M. Hames



by
Gene Van Note

Director of
Young Adult Ministries
Church of the Nazarene

Perfect! Not in talents or thought patterns, but in love and loyalty to Christ. This is His will for us.

Christian Perfection— What Is Meant by It?

By J. Grant Swank, Jr.*

THE BIBLE STATES CLEARLY that the people of God are to be perfect. This is mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments.

In Gen. 6:9 there are these complimentary words about Noah: "Noah was a just man and *perfect* in his generations, and Noah walked with God."

In Gen. 17:1, we read concerning Abram: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou *perfect*."

The familiar passages concerning Job read: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was *perfect* and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil . . . And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast Thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a *perfect* and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause" (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3).

In Ps. 37:37, there is the reward of the perfect man: "Mark the *perfect*

man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace."

Studying these verses alone we can conclude that the biblical definition of "perfection" has to do with being just and upright, hating evil, and walking with God, all of which reaps God's peace. Consequently, God's call to perfection is not a physical perfection. It is not even an emotional or mental perfection. Nor is it a perfection of abilities and talents. Instead, it is a perfection of the soul—a perfect walk!

That perfect walk stays in step with God. It does not run ahead impulsively, nor does it lag behind in spiritual sloppiness. That walk keeps pace with the Almighty in total commitment. A step-by-step consecration with the Lord yields its own upright life which hates that which is evil, and this in itself brings the soul peace of Ps. 37:37.¹

Continuing into the New Testament, 1 Cor. 2:6 gives the words of Paul: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are *perfect*: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought." "Them that are *perfect*" are those who are in perfect step with God—a total commitment to His will.

2 Cor. 13:11 reads: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be *perfect*, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Again, the challenge of Paul is for the Christians to have a total commitment to God which yields a unity in peace throughout the congregation, thus bringing the love of God in power in their midst.

We find in Eph. 4:11-13, "And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the *perfecting* of the saints, for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God; unto a *perfect* man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Col. 1:28 states: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus." Paul yearns that his ministry will yield people who are "completely consecrated to God—perfect in their commitment."

In 2 Tim. 3:16-17, Paul talks to his preacher-friend: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be *perfect*, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The Bible is to form the perfect man, that one who is spiritually perfect in knowing that he has done all he can do. He has given his all upon the altar of God for His blessing (Rom. 12:1-2). He has measured up to the divine challenge of the Scriptures and therefore has found the sanctifying presence of the Lord.

Heb. 6:1-2 states: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto *perfection*; not laying again the foundation of

repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

Heb. 12:23 reads: "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made *perfect*."

And Heb. 13:20-21 concludes the epistle with: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you *perfect* in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

James 1:4 states: "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be *perfect* and entire, wanting nothing."

1 Pet. 5:10 reads: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

The words of Jesus in Matt. 5:48 are: "Be ye therefore *perfect*, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Certainly one of the main thrusts of these words in the Sermon on the Mount is the thought that just as the Father has given His all, we who are disciples are to give our all back to Him. He has given His perfect plan to us, if we will it. Therefore we respond with giving our perfect commitment to Him. In this way, perfection (divine) meets perfection (human) in peace and love.

In Matt. 19:21, we read of Jesus once again referring to "perfect." He is confronting the rich, young ruler: Jesus asks of him his all: "If thou wilt be *perfect*, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Fishkill, N.Y.

and follow me." The man was called to give his all, to make that complete consecration, that total commitment. If he would do this, Jesus could call him "perfect," for his allegiance would be just that—perfect.

Jesus asks that of every disciple. He does not ask for physical perfection in flesh and bones. He does not ask for perfection in thought patterns and emotional structure. He does not ask for perfection in talents or capabilities. But He does ask for perfection in loyalty, in the disciple climbing up onto the altar of God to present his very self as a living sac-

rifice, holy, ready for the Lord's use.

Perfection in the Bible points to a perfect "all-ness." When the disciple has given his all—moment by moment—then God can ask for no more. "All" is all. When the disciple has presented everything, there is nothing more to present, except the everything of the next moment, and the next moment, and the next moment—that perfect walk that Noah, Abram, and Job experienced. When the all is given—the everything—then God can look upon His disciple and call him "perfect." The commitment is perfect—100 percent.

Practical Points

that make a difference

Ten Thousand Churches Make a Difference

Dear Son:

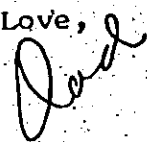
Our pastor made the tactical mistake last week of dispensing funds without board action. The board was kind and confirmed his action after the fact, but I expect that it taught him a lesson he needed to learn. The *discipline* is very explicit at this point. No pastor or treasurer has the legitimate right to dispense funds apart from the direction of the church board. The pastor was chagrined, the board amused—but I "hurt" for my leader. Evidently he was impetuous or had just not read his *discipline* as seriously as he should have read it.

And then I began to think of your career and how important it is that

since you have taken "orders" in the church you must work within its framework. There is a crisis of authority in the world, and the church has not escaped. When you stood before your leaders and accepted "elder's orders," you also accepted the responsibility of working within the framework of the organized church. It may "gall" you sometimes, but it is the only way that a church can fulfill its purpose. There will be a day when you will be glad for the counsel.

District assembly is next week, and you will stand before the leaders and make an accounting for your year's work. You have nothing to be ashamed of. It has been a better year than last. The week will take your time, overwhelm you with program, and probably result in raising all your local apportionments. But that is all right too! The church in the world needs your help where you are. And 10,000 churches working together make a tremendous difference!

Love,



The Preacher's Magazine

NOVEMBER

NAZARENE



FOR
PASTORS
and LOCAL
CHURCH
LEADERS

Compiled by the General Stewardship Commission

EARL C. WOLF, Executive Director
STEPHEN J. SORENSEN, Office Editor

General Superintendent Lewis



Church Growth— The Good Achievement

THE BIBLE tells us that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." This is essentially the requirement we have in our *Manual* on page 58. We break into the full membership statement by quoting in part, "after having declared their experience of salvation, and their belief in the doctrines of the Church of the Nazarene, and their willingness to submit to its government . . ."

It is our belief that the doctrines are scriptural and helpful for the faith of the Christian. We believe that the government of the church is good for the corporate witness of Christianity and for the pursuit of the Christian in living for Christ. These are basic truths and practices we must not forget.

There is a lot of emphasis on promotion and growth today. Both are good and helpful to the building of the kingdom of God. The lack of growth is abnormal and results in deformity. Growth, however, is more than getting larger. It must proceed as a result of health and activity.

A church is a spiritual organism. As such, a spiritual dimension must be paramount in the organization. When a pastor lays plans for outreach and church growth, he must give attention to the basic doctrinal, biblical preaching that must accompany the growth pattern. Plans for significant growth in members then must include extensive preaching of the redemptive doctrines of the Bible.

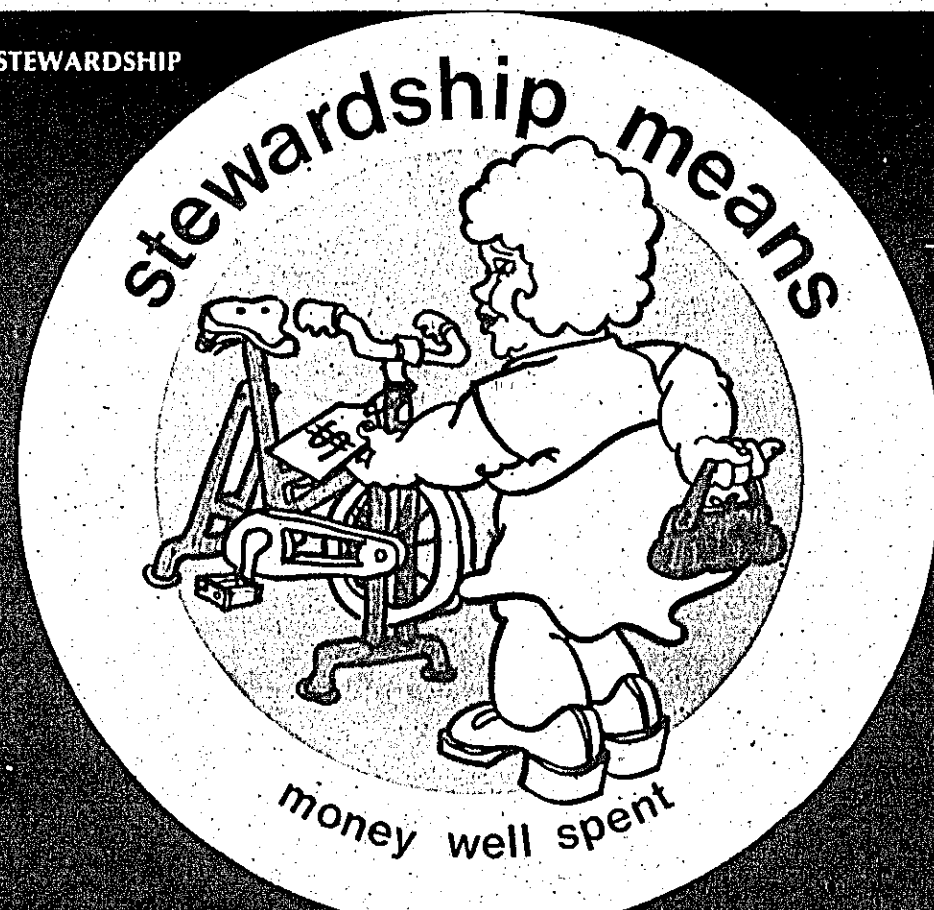
Looking back at the above quote from the *Manual*, we also must emphasize the distinctive beliefs of our church and its

government. This is good and profitable to the new Christian, for it gives him a "set" of beliefs that he can substantiate in his Bible reading. It enables him to bring his life to a Christian standard and causes him to feel a sense of belonging to his new church environment.

Also, since he needs to take his place as a part of the continuing growth, he must be a constructive part of the government of the church. The new people must join the church. The church must not "join" them.

Numerical growth can be abnormal. When this is so, while seeming to be right, it is in reality the beginning of death. I know of a church that has nearly 4,000 members and has a weekly attendance between 7 and 40 at its services. How dead, in reality, a church can be when it no longer has spiritual vitality. That church has four pastors. They keep birth records and death statistics. How tragic: how useless—members on a roll; no life.

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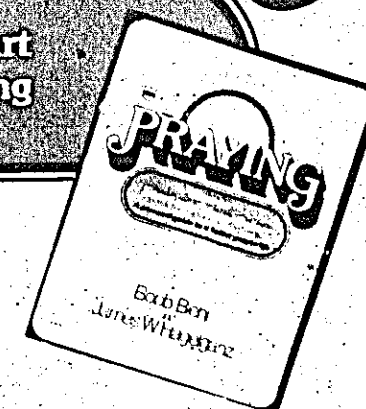
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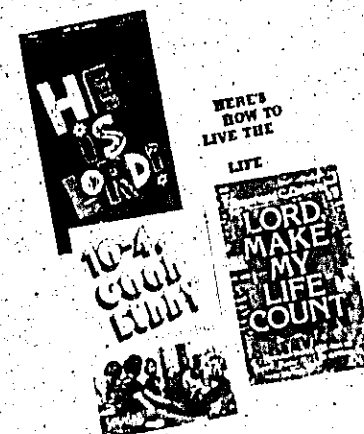
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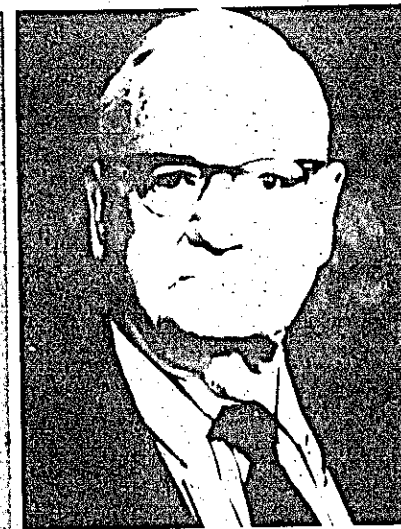
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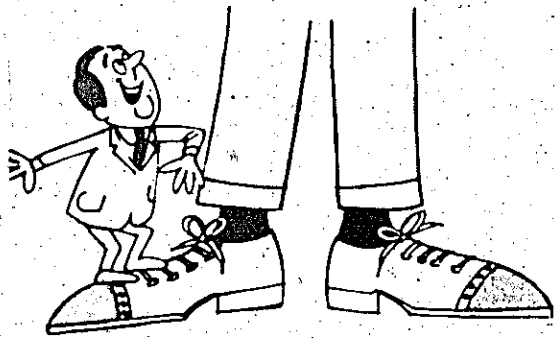
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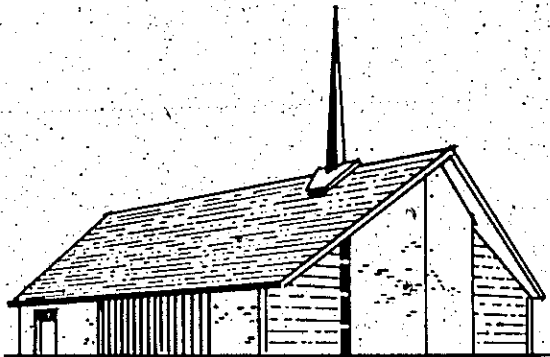


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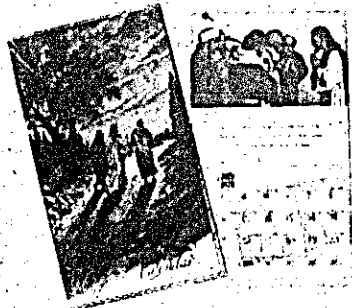


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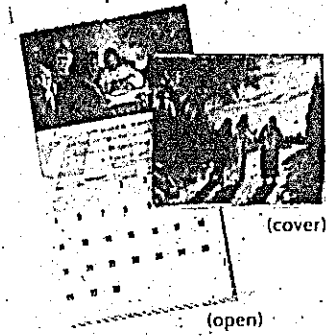
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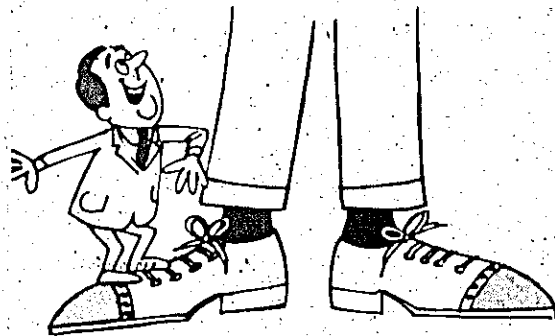
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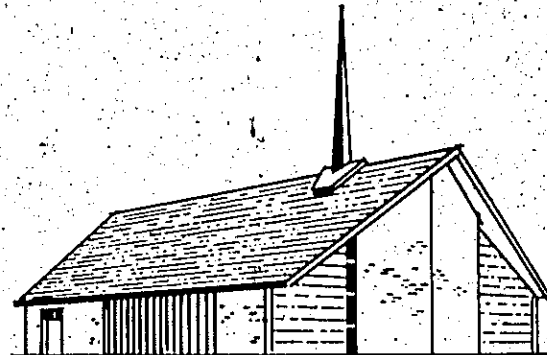


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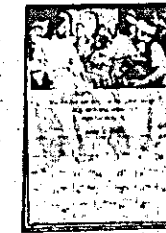
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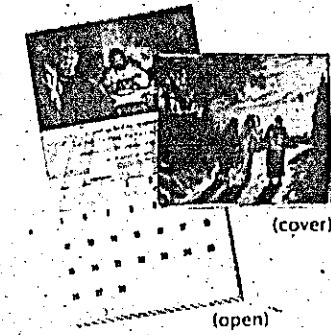
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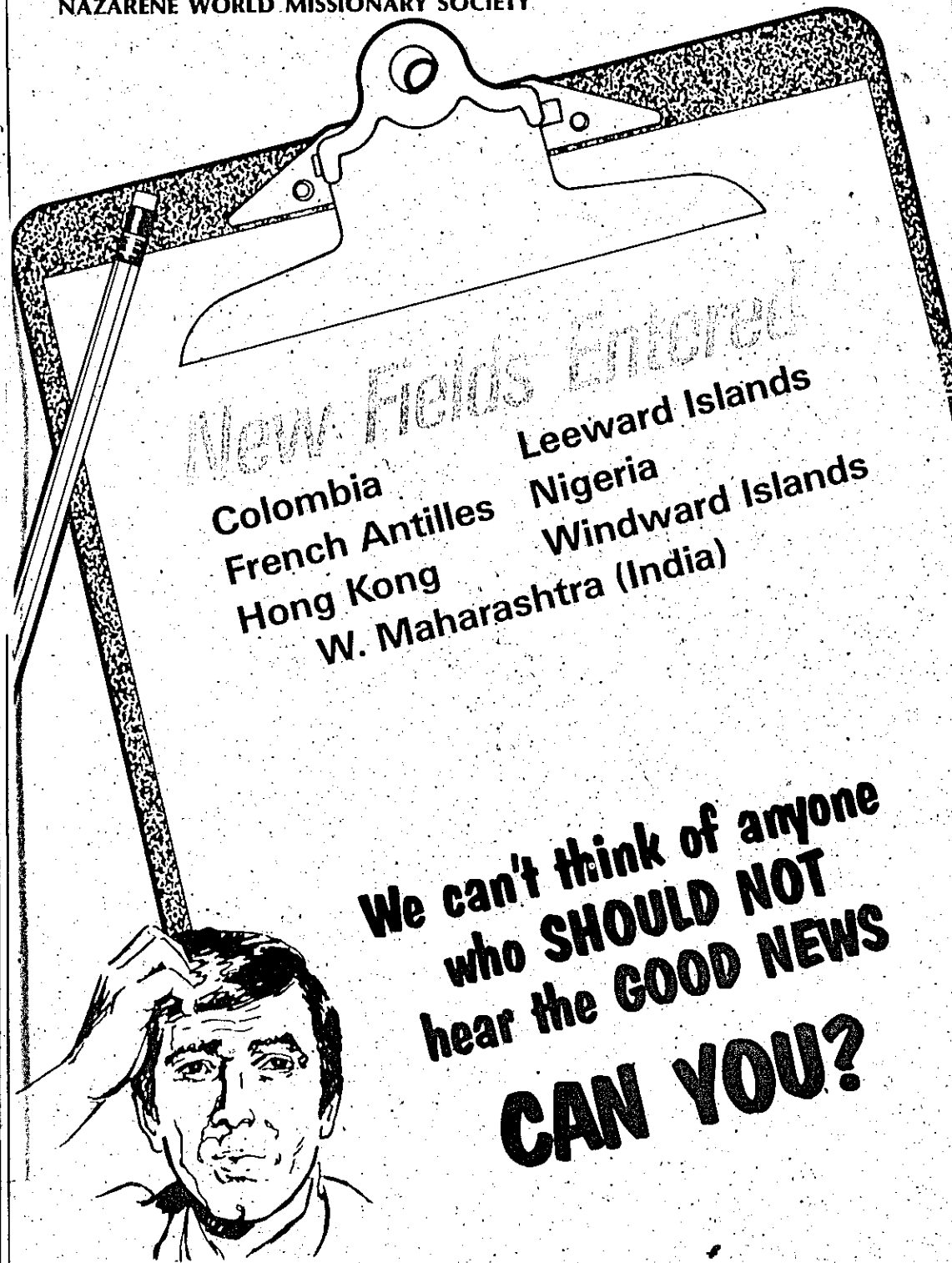
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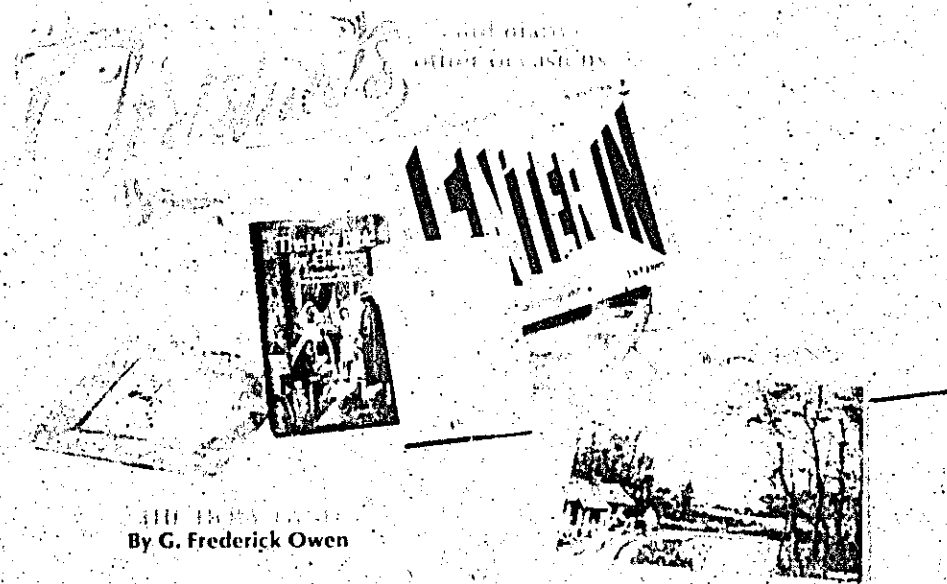
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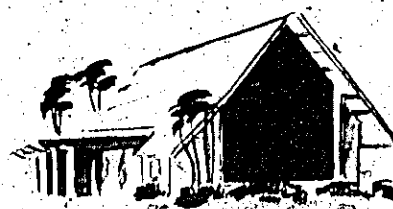
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The Power of Appreciation

AT A MOTHER-DAUGHTER BANQUET the question was asked, "What was one of the most important bits of advice your mother gave you?" In my case it didn't take long to come up with one. Mother "preached many sermons" on expressing appreciation. "Never fail to say 'Thank you' to others. Always pay a compliment to another. It costs so little and means so much. Be sure to pay special attention to older people. They need it lots."

I can still hear Mother's sermons. When I was in my teens she said, "Never walk by an older person without speaking. They love to know youth notice them and care that they are there."

I guess Mother's sermons were being etched on my subconscious mind because I tell my children the same thing. Today our children think appreciation is law and gospel.

I had stopped my car in front of a friend's home and let her out. I asked her what I should speak about on the radio because I was just getting my thoughts together. I said, "I'm thinking about writing on the power of appreciation." She threw up her hands

and said, "That's something I can't do. I admire someone, and after I am gone from them I wonder why I didn't say something nice about them."

I asked her if she grew up with appreciation. She said, "My land, no! I was the last of seven, and I took the food out of the others' mouths, so I wasn't appreciated." She went on, "I think they loved me in an odd way. I don't remember ever being shown, though. I worked real hard. I recall working all day helping Mom, and my dad came in and kicked me several feet forward while I was stooped over sweeping dust into a pan. He reprimanded me because I didn't work more."

Little wonder her words stuck in her mouth and expressing appreciation was painful.

The Bible is probably the most appreciative book in the world. God lavishes appreciation on His people. He takes advantage of repentance to do more for His children.

The Apostle Paul started most of his 13 Epistles with words of commendation. To Corinth, "I thank my God always on your behalf." To Phi-

STEWARDSHIP

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lippi, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." To Thessalonica, "We give thanks to God for you all." To Philemon, "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers."

The beloved Apostle John excelled in appreciation. In writing to each of the seven churches, whom he had something about which to correct, he always prefaced his correction with commendation.

I can listen much better to a correction if someone takes the opportunity to love and appreciate me first. It's always good to remember when there's a need for correction that the person is not all bad.

Here's a little test for you. Are you ready with a pencil?

1. Is it hard for you to pay someone a compliment? Why?
2. Is it hard for you to relay to someone a compliment someone else has given them?
3. When is the last time you paid your husband a compliment? What was it?
4. When did you last pay your most difficult child a compliment?
5. When did you last pay a difficult neighbor a compliment?
6. When did you last compliment a person who has wronged you?
7. When did you last compliment someone in your family?
8. When did you last compliment the custodian of your church?
9. When did you last compliment your competitor?

Would you like to change people around you? Most of us would. I want to give you seven secrets to change others in the world around you.

1. Becoming intent on the good in another breaks the continuity of the thought of evil in him, and gives the good a chance to manifest itself.
2. What you accept for another you accept for yourself.

3. You cannot have good for yourself until you recognize it for all the world around you.

4. If you tell a man he's lazy, unspiritual, self-centered, you will no doubt live long enough to eat your own words.

5. If you tell a child he's lazy, mean, ugly, stupid, you will eat your own words.

6. If you speak evil of youth, churches, politics, public officials in general, you become part of the problem.

7. Hypnosis is the power of belief. People who are hypnotized only do surprising things when they are convinced the hypnotist's words are true.

It makes no difference where the idea came from—God, the devil, man, or yourself. If you have accepted an idea and are convinced it is true it has the same power over you as hypnosis, whether or not you have been formally hypnotized. You can have a wrong belief and be willing to die for it. Belief is a tremendous power. How important to believe rightly!

Through appreciation you can be the healing agent for a world around you. If you're having a hard time loving a rather unlovely person, try writing this note to change your attitude:

_____ is really a beautiful person. I observe this one good quality about him: _____

"I relinquish former negative thoughts about him and will check them with good thoughts and words before they leave my mind. I want the very best in life to come to _____ spiritually, physically, in his family, business and church life.

"In the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

This has helped to change my inner and outer world.

If a church does not grow, it is because that church is either unable or unwilling to pay the price in growing pains



Growing Pains

NUMEROUS BOOKS on church growth—or the lack of it—are appearing in bookstores and being distributed by the various denominations. Most of them are helpful and encouraging. Church growth is a real possibility in most cases. But when these books are read, as helpful as they are, we are still left with only two reasons for a lack of growth. A church is either incapable or unwilling to grow. The former is self-evident, and the latter sounds like a cruel oversimplification.

Most of the material available deals with the matter of how to overcome the problem of inability. While this is essential, the matter of being unwilling to grow is equally important. Few congregations would be willing to admit that they actually don't want to grow. Most of them bemoan the fact of their smallness. Many have outreach programs, visi-

tation, and extension classes. They talk growth, hope for growth, and actually work for a larger church. But year after year they report about the same numbers in membership and attendance.

The only real solution to this problem must begin with some soul searching. The price to be paid is a painful exercise in self-discipline. It hurts to grow. It hurts the pastor, board members, Sunday school teachers, and others who have been in their position for many years.

There is the pain of lost leadership

An influx of new people means that some of them will take leadership from those now in office. Even sanctified people have difficulty relinquishing the reins to others. To see new people come in and be elected to a job we thought we were doing well can be painful to the biggest souls. It hurts! But if the members are not big enough to see younger (and frequently untried) people take over, real growth is unlikely.

The pain of diminished prominence

The more people we have, the less prominent any one person becomes. When a church of 40 suddenly jumps to 80, competition for the limelight



by
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THE STARTING POINT

Some Thoughts on Prayer

Here are some "starting points" from Gordon W. Johnson, editor of *Time to Tell*, on the subject of prayer. I pass them on for your further development.

1. Prayer revives, Acts 4:29-32
2. Prayer restores, Ps. 51:12
3. Prayer removes sin, Isa. 6:6-7
4. Prayer reconciles, Gen. 32:9; 33:4

Justification by Faith

Bible scholar Warren W. Wiersbe, in his book *Be Free*, which is a study of Galatians, points out something that could be developed into a series of sermons on the doctrine of justification by faith. Wiersbe states that Romans explains the meaning of "the just"; Galatians explains "shall live"; and Hebrews explains "by faith" (Victor Books, 1975, p. 53).

A Matter of Priorities

Rev. 2:1-7 records the letter to the church at Ephesus. From the context, let me pass along three "starting points" for your further study.

1. Notice the *record that is spotless*, v. 2, "I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men" (NASB)*

*From the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971.



by
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2. Notice the *reality that is shocking*, v. 4, "you have left your first love."
3. Notice the *remedy that is sure*, v. 5, "Remember . . . and repent."

A Thought on the Life of Jesus

An interesting study would be the fact that before the Cross everything that Jesus had was borrowed—the stable, lodging, the donkey, the cross in which He was crucified, etc. But after the Cross, He is Lord and lays claim to His place at the side of the Father.

Life after the Cross and the Resurrection, has a new authority—not only for Christ, but for every man.

Know the Will of God

In Elisabeth Elliot's book *Shadow of the Almighty*, she shares some interesting thoughts on the will of God found in Jim Elliot's journal. They could be the seed-bed for a sermon. Here they are:

"Impressed with Ephesians 5, 'understanding what the will of the Lord is,' and Romans 12, 'proving what is the will of God.' Every moment I may be conscious and rejoice in the knowledge of God's will. Obedience to every command puts me on the track and keeps me there. Decisions of course must be made, but as in railroad, so in life—a block signal, a crisis, is lighted only where there is special need. I may not always be in sight of a GO light, but sticking to the tracks will take me where the next one is. Understanding the will of the Lord is believing Him, that He will—in all situations where I have obeyed—make that way His own way, effectual for eternity."

A Thought on Preaching

Edmund A. Steimle, formerly Brown Professor of Homiletics at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, gives us this interesting word concerning preaching, quoted on Thesis Theological Cassettes: "I would hope for the pulpit of the future what I would hope for when I go into any church and listen to a sermon, that my story [preaching] would be reflected in such a way, with such sensitivity and accuracy, that early on in the sermon I could say to the preacher, 'Yes, yes, that's where I am. Now let's go on to-

gether.' In addition, I would like him to expose something of his story [his life], so that I know this fellow is for real. And that he shares my doubts and my agony,

as well as my joys" (Edmund A. Steimle, "Preaching as Story Telling," Thesis Theological Cassettes, Dec. 1976, vol. 7, No. 11).

IN THE STUDY



Seeds for Sermons

During November we continue our "Major Messages from the Minor Prophets." This month, week by week read: Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah. Each man of God has a message from God for us today.

November 6

WALK WITH GOD

TEXT: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and 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).

INTRODUCTION: Two fussing children came running to Mother, each vehemently telling what the other had done to him. The mother stopped them and said: "I don't want to know what your brother did to

you, but you tell me what you did to your brother." God is that way. He doesn't ask what others did to us, but what we do to others. He shows us what we ought to do.

I. WALK WITH GOD IN A WORKADAY WORLD

As we walk with God we see people who are covetous. They lie awake nights thinking how they can get the best of others (2:1-2). Life is a rat race. A dog-eat-dog dilemma. Seems there are no good men, no honest men, no trustworthy men anymore (7:2-5). How should a godly man live? Why—just keep walking with God and do justly. Treat those above you, beside you, below you, fair and square. He has showed you what He requires of you.

II. WALK WITH GOD IN A WICKED WORLD

We long for a day of universal peace when men "shall beat their swords into plowshares" (4:3-5). We are sickened by hypocrisy in leadership, especially when it is in religion (3:9-11). For America today verse 11 could well read: "Our national motto is: 'In God We Trust'! none evil can come upon us." Even in a wicked world the Lord hath showed you what to do: love mercy, walk with God. Leave judgment and vengeance in God's hands.

III. WALK WITH GOD

As Amos said: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" So in our walk with God we need a oneness with



by
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Him. Micah said: "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord" (3:8). He needed this power to keep his own soul alive and to rebuke sin. Walking with Christ we enjoy His presence. Filled with Christ's Spirit we enjoy His power. A humble walk will ever acknowledge God as the guide.

CONCLUSION: Our unchanging Companion on the changing path of life is Jesus. Micah told of His coming (5:2). Jesus walked life's road among covetous and wicked men. He knows the evils of this world firsthand. He has promised to walk with us, never to leave nor forsake us. He daily will show us what to do.

November 13

IS YOUR FAITH A FARCE OR A FORCE?

TEXT: "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked" (Nah. 1:3).

INTRODUCTION: Another fitting title for today's message from Nahum could be "The Folly of Following a Faded Faith." We are all aware of Jonah's message to Ninevah and the saving revival the city enjoyed. A century has now passed and that great city is set for destruction.

I. WHEN OUR FAITH IS A FARCE—GOD'S VIEW:

One definition of "farce" is "an absurd failure." Thus, a faded faith is a forceless farce. In the opening eight verses of Nahum we find every Hebrew word to indicate the wrath, anger, and vengeance that God feels toward a faith that is a farce. Vengeance (v. 2; cf. Rom. 12:19; 2 Thess. 1:8). Wrath (v. 2; cf. Rom. 1:18; John 3:36). Indignation, fierceness, anger, fury (v. 6) all reveal God's hatred for sin. God's wrath is intense because His love is intense! True love is jealous love (v. 2). Jonathan Edwards, preaching in New England at the time of the Great Awakening, made the wrath of God so vivid and hell so real, people did not need an atlas to know where it was.

II. WHEN OUR FAITH IS A FARCE—MAN'S VIEW:

We will accept many things. Some are:

A. We make our own gods. "... out of the house of thy gods" (1:14). One has said that in ages to come if someone would dig into the ruins of America and find an autojunk yard and say, "The ancient Americans worshipped these idols," he would be right.

B. We make our own set of standards. Ninevah "is all full of lies and robbery" (3:1).

C. We find immorality acceptable (3:4-5).

III. WHEN OUR FAITH IS A FORCE:

The name *Nahum* means "full of comfort." Our comfort is this: When the wrath, anger, vengeance, and fury of God is released—and it will come; when we ask, Who can stand in that day? (1:6); then what comfort! "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him" (1:7). He knows if our faith is a farce or a force. He knows!

CONCLUSION: In his Revelation (6:12-17), John saw the sinner fleeing to the rocks, hoping to hide from the wrath of God. Our comfort is not in the rocks but in the Rock of Ages!

November 20

THE WHY OF FAITH, THE WHAT OF FAITH, THE WORSHIP OF FAITH

TEXT: "And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it ... but the just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:2, 4b).

INTRODUCTION: Having moved week by week through the Minor Prophets, we note that the burden or message of Nahum and Jonah was toward Ninevah; that of Micah toward Samaria and Jerusalem; that of Obadiah toward Edom, etc. Habakkuk's burden, however, is that of a sincere man of God trying to find the answer to his prayer, the solution to his problem, and the rest of faith. His message is most fitting for us this Thanksgiving Sunday.

I. THE "WHY" OF FAITH

"O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! ... Why?" (2:2-3). Habakkuk is not questioning God but bringing his questions to God. Why do I feel a burden for the wicked about me and You do not punish them? Our "whys" often result from God's timetable being slower than ours. "Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne. Yet the scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown, standeth God within the shadows, keeping watch above His own."

II. THE "WHAT" OF FAITH

"I will ... watch to see what he will say unto me" (2:1). Bertha Munro once wrote: "You get ahead in your faith when you change the question *Why* to *What* when you are speaking to God." To the sincere heart comes the answer: I will make it plain (2:2); it will come (2:3); the just shall live by his faith (2:4). Disillusioned? Look to yourself, and you will find that you have taken your eyes off God and fixed them on people.

Dr. Earle comments on 2:2 that God's answer will be plain enough to speed us on our way and keep us in the way.

III. THE "WORSHIP" OF FAITH

The first two and last three verses of Habakkuk's prayer (chapter 3) are best known. He had waited before God not just long enough for God to hear him, but for him to hear from God. He had fought through doubt to faith. He ends by saying that even if he doesn't have a good harvest and there are no livestock in the barns, he will still rejoice in the Lord. What a thanksgiving testimony!

CONCLUSION: In the early days of our seminary, President Benner often had faculty and students sing one of his favorite hymns, "Living by Faith." Habakkuk knew the just shall live by his faith. Dr. Benner knew it. And I rejoice for I too know it!

November 27

GUESTS OF THE LORD

TEXT: "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God: for the day of the Lord is at

hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests" (Zeph. 1:7).

INTRODUCTION: We are familiar with the New Testament parable of the wedding feast where the servants are commanded to go into the highways and compel the guests to come to the dinner. Here in Zephaniah is a strange account where the Lord has prepared a sacrifice and bids his guests.

I. STRANGE GUESTS

The Lord is searching (1:12) for his guests. They are:

A. Those who actively worship other gods (1:4-5a).

B. Those who are hypocrites and worship the Lord and "Malcham"—a heathen god—(1:5).

C. The backslider who has turned back from the Lord (1:6).

D. The indifferent—not actively evil, but who have never sought the Lord (1:6).

II. SURPRISED GUESTS

The attitude of these guests was: It makes no difference how we act, God won't do anything about it (1:12). The plan of the Lord is like the time Jehu prepared a great sacrifice for all the followers of Baal. When all the guests were assembled, they were all destroyed without mercy (2 Kings 10:18-28). Dr. Earle has said, "Our religion will be no stronger than our attitude against sin."

III. SAFE GUESTS

These guests are much different from the former. These are those who gather for the great "solemn assembly" (3:18). Those who have sought the Lord; sought meekness and righteousness (2:3). Those who have so trusted the Lord know how to "wait on the Lord" (3:8). For them there is salvation, security, joy, and rest in His love (3:17). On this most beautiful verse in Zephaniah, Dr. Earle has written: "Only in Christ does this gracious promise find its fulfillment. We can never exaggerate how much Christ means to us."

CONCLUSION: Someday we will all stand before the Lord as His guests, either guests destined for grief or guests destined for glory. The choice is ours.

By
Ralph Earle

Distinguished Professor
Emeritus, New Testament
Nazarene Theological
Seminary



Gleanings from the Greek

2 Corinthians 12

"Expedient" or "Profitable"? (12:1)

Sympheron means "profitable" or advantageous." The word *expedient* hardly communicates that today. The first part of the verse may rather literally be rendered: "Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable" (NASB).¹ The whole verse is well expressed this way: "I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord" (NIV).²

"Thorn" (12:7)

The word *skolops* (only here in NT) means "something pointed." In classical Greek it meant "a stake." But in the Septuagint it clearly is used, for the first time, in the sense of "splinter" or "thorn"—never for stake (TDNT, 7:410-11). And this is unquestionably its meaning in the papyri (VGT, pp. 578-79). "In the flesh" suggests it was a physical affliction, probably chronic malaria or poor eyesight. The idea of pain seems suggested by the context.

"Paradise" (12:4)

This comes directly from the Greek *paradeisos* (here, Luke 23:43; Rev. 2:7), which is thought to be of Persian origin. Among the Greeks it was first used by the historian Xenophon in reference to the parks of Persian kings and nobles (A-S,

1. From the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971.

2. From the *New International Version*, copyright 1973 by New York Bible Society International. Used by permission.

p. 338). He describes it as shady and well watered, and so it came to mean "a garden, pleasure-ground; grove, park." Here it is used for "an upper region in the heavens" (Thayer, p. 480).

Joachim Jeremias devotes eight pages to a discussion of this word. He asserts that it is "a loan word from old Persian" (TDNT, 5:765), and adds: "Already by the 3rd century B.C. it can then be used generally for a 'park'" (p. 766). The Persian term was adopted into Hebrew and Aramaic, but only in a secular sense. It was used for the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2.

Jeremias agrees with other writers (e.g., Plummer) in saying that we cannot be sure whether Paul equates "the third heaven" (v. 2) with Paradise (v. 4). It seems to us that he does.

"Buffet" (12:7)

The verb *kolaphizo* comes from the noun *kolaphos*, "the knuckles, the closed fist." So it literally meant "to strike with the fist" (A-S, p. 252). Since thorns do more than buffet a person, it seems that "torment" (NIV) is justified here.

"Reproaches" or "Insults"? (12:10)

The word *hybris* occurs here and in Acts 27:10 (of physical disaster). Thayer says that it means "insolence, impudence, pride," and then "a wrong springing from insolence, an injury, affront, insult." He adds this comment: "in Greek usage the mental injury and wantonness of its infliction being prominent" (p. 633). It seems that "insult" conveys this better than "reproach."

Four things, or three? (12:12)

The KJV of this verse sounds as if the signs of an apostle were wrought by Paul in four ways: patience, signs, wonders, and mighty deeds. But the Greek clearly does not say this. The correct translation is found in the NASB: "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles." We have noted before that *hypomone*, usually translated "patience" in the KJV, actually means "perseverance."

"Miracles" (12:12)

Three words are here used for miracles,

as in the Synoptic Gospels. The first is *semeiois*, "signs." The second is *teras*, "wonders." The third is *dynamis*—literally, "powers," or "powerful works"—the term that is usually translated "miracles" in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, as here in the NASB and NIV.

The miracles of Christ and His apostles were "powerful works." But they were also "signs," signifying a spiritual truth. And they were called "wonders" because they excited wonder in those who saw them.

"Crafty" (12:16)

The adjective *panouragos* (only here in NT) literally means "ready to do anything." In classical Greek it was used mainly in a bad sense. But in the Septuagint it is used frequently in the Book of Proverbs in a good sense—"clever" or "prudent."

What does Paul mean by his use of it here? Arndt and Gingrich (p. 613) suggest: "Paul says, taking up an expression used by his opponents . . . crafty fellow that I am" (see NASB, NIV). This is a logical explanation.

Eight sins (12:20)

The KJV has "debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults." These hardly convey the correct meaning today.

The first is *eris*, which basically means "strife" (NASB) or "quarreling" (NIV). The second, *zelos*, means "jealousy." The third, *thymoi*, suggests a boiling over. It is better rendered as "angry tempers" (NASB) or "outbursts of anger" (NIV). The fourth, *eritheiai*, suggests "factions" or "disputes." The fifth, *katalaliai*, literally means acts of speaking against. It may be translated "slanders" (NASB). The sixth, *psithyrismoi* (only here in NT) does literally mean "whisperings." Today we would call this "gossip" (NASB, NIV). The seventh, *Physiōseis* (only here in NT), in the singular means "a puffing up," and so, "swelling with pride" (A-S, p. 476). Perhaps "arrogance" (NASB, NIV) best expresses it today. The last, *akatastasiai*, literally means "disorders" (cf. NIV) or "disturbances" (NASB).

Paul feared that these were the things he would meet when he returned to Corinth. No wonder he dreaded to go.

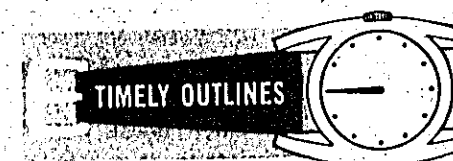
Ideas That Worked—

Thanksgiving Project

Umbongo is an African word meaning "a present with which to express thanks."

At Thanksgiving time challenge your church people to bring their "Umbongos" in the form of some type of canned food. These then go to needy families designated by the church board, or to some home mission pastor on the district. This will give your church family an opportunity to become involved with the needs of others. Flyers should be sent out, or reminders put in your church newsletter just prior to the launching of this special Thanksgiving project.

BETTY B. ROBERTSON



Good News from Galatians

By Derl Keefer

No other Gospel

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 1:6-10

I. NO OTHER GOSPEL SHOULD LEAD US ASTRAY (v. 6)

- A. The gospel of materialism
- B. The gospel of socialism
- C. The gospel of social prestige
- D. The gospel of "new morality"
- E. The gospel of "isms"
- F. The gospel of occult
- G. The gospel of cults
- H. The gospel of glossolalia

II. NO OTHER GOSPEL SHOULD LEAD US INTO CONFUSION (v. 7)

- A. We should study the true gospel.
- B. We should know the true gospel.
- C. We should be aware of the perverted gospel.

III. NO OTHER GOSPEL SHOULD BE ALLOWED INTO THE CHURCH

- A. There should be purity to the true gospel.
- B. There should be singleness to the true gospel.
- C. There should be priority to the true gospel.

IV. NO OTHER GOSPEL IS REALLY GOSPEL (v. 7)

- A. The only true gospel is Jesus.
- B. The only true gospel is about Jesus.
- C. The only true gospel is to be accepted.

Lessons for the Clergy

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 2:1-21

The clergyman—

- I. Must catch a vision of the gospel (v. 2)
- II. May get discouraged (v. 2)
- III. May be a deceiver (v. 3)
- IV. Must be firm in his stand for the gospel (v. 5)
- V. Must have an inner compulsion for the gospel (v. 6)
- VI. Must be a minister to all people (vv. 7-10)
- VII. Can be wrong (v. 11)
- VIII. Must tell of faith and justification in Christ (vv. 15-16)
- IX. Must live in Christ (v. 19)

Gospel Faith

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 3:1-14

Gospel faith comes by—

- I. Seeing Jesus (v. 1)
- II. Hearing the Word (v. 2)
- III. Receiving the Spirit (vv. 3, 5)
- IV. Examining the Word (v. 8)
- V. Living righteously (v. 11)
- VI. Observing the law out of love (v. 12)
- VII. Promise of the Living God (v. 14)

Becoming Sons of God

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 3:26-4:7

Becoming a son of God involves—

- I. Faith in Christ (v. 26)
- II. A vital relationship with Christ symbolized by baptism (v. 27)
- III. A knowledge that whosoever will may come (v. 28)
- IV. A covenant contract of long standing (v. 29)
- V. Rights and privileges of sonship (4:5, 7)
- VI. A unique joy of calling God our Father (4:6)

Freedom in Christ

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 5:1-12

Freedom comes—

- I. In the Person of Christ (v. 1)
- II. To replace slavery (v. 2)
- III. By the grace of God (v. 4)
- IV. By a hope in Christ (v. 5)
- V. By the expression of love (v. 6)
- VI. By running the race of life (v. 7)
- VII. By way of the offensive cross of Christ (v. 12)

Life by the Spirit

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 5:13-26

- I. Life by the Spirit is bathed in *agape* love (v. 13)
- II. Is evidenced by our love for each other (v. 14)
- III. Is seen by our positive attitude towards each other (v. 15)
- IV. Life in the Spirit desires to do right (v. 16)
- V. Despises the wrong (vv. 17-19)
- VI. Develops freedom (v. 18)
- VII. Destines the fruits produced (vv. 22-23)
- VIII. Crucifies the old nature (v. 24)
- IX. Continually follows the Spirit of life (v. 25)
- X. Makes us aware of faults and needs (v. 26)

The Biblical Concept of Interpersonal Relationships

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 6:1-10

Christians should—

- I. Deal with others in gentleness (v. 1)
- II. Deal with others in wisdom (v. 1)
- III. Share each others' burdens (v. 2)
- IV. Compare themselves in the light of Christ and not others (v. 4)
- V. Shoulder responsibility (v. 5)
- VI. Learn from each other (v. 6)
- VII. Plant fertile fields of relationships with others (v. 7)
- VIII. Be active in the family of God (vv. 8-10)
- IX. Be led by the Spirit in dealing with others (v. 8)

I Became a New Person

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 6:11-18

A new person—

- I. As exemplified in Paul's life (v. 11)
- II. Comes through the cross of Christ (v. 12)
- III. Does not boast in selfish ambitions (v. 13)
- IV. Boasts about Christ (v. 14)
- V. Receives peace and mercy (v. 16)
- VI. Bears the mark of Christ (v. 17)
- VII. Will receive God's grace (v. 18)

HOW TO THANK GOD

(Ps. 116:12-14, RSV)

- I. BY PRAISING THE LORD—"I will lift up the cup of salvation."
- II. BY PRAYING TO THE LORD—"I will call on the name of the Lord."
- III. BY PAYING MY VOWS TO THE LORD—"I will pay my vows to the Lord."

—RON FRY

LIVE TODAY

(Ps. 118:24, RSV)

- I. LIVE TODAY—"This is the day"
- II. LIVE TODAY WITH FAITH—"The day which the Lord has made."

III. LIVE TODAY WITH GLADNESS—"Let us rejoice and be glad in it."

—RON FRY

When Trouble Comes

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND: 2 Kings 6 and 7

INTRODUCTION: I get alarmed at the number who let their problems get the best of them. It is what we do when we are down that determines whether or not we succeed. Being a Christian does not solve all our problems. Christ is the answer, but this does not mean He has worked all the problems. Illus.: The old math book.

We come now to the moment of great crisis in the lives of four leprous men.

I. CONFRONTED WITH A GREAT PROBLEM—"And there was a great famine in Samaria" (6:25).

- A. Because of where they were
- B. Because of what they were

II. EXERCISED GREAT COURAGE—"And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians" (7:5).

- A. They faced an army.
- B. They had no resources.

III. RECEIVED A GREAT REWARD—"They went into one tent, and did eat and drink" (7:5).

A. The Lord had removed their greatest obstacle.

B. They found what they so desperately needed.

CONCLUSION: I heard Dick Palmer tell his life's story last night, and as he told it I received a new awareness of God's willingness to help us when in our desperation we come to Him.

JAMES F. SPRUILL

Most of us live too near the surface of our abilities, dreading to call upon our deeper resources. It is as if a strong man were to do his work with only one finger.



A PRAYER OF THANKS

O Lord, I thank You
For being my Guide
For being with me,
So close to my side.

I thank You, dear Lord,
For giving me light.
And guiding me through
The long winter night.

Lord Jesus, I want
To do Thy blest will.
Take me and use me,
Thy call to fulfill.

And if it takes me
Through valleys so drear,
Lord, I know always
That You will be near.

O Lord, make me holy,
Pure through and through,
That I may do what
You want me to do.

Thank You, dear Lord,
For Thy presence today,
For all You have given,
I gratefully pray.

—Linda Maurice

*Nothing is big enough to hurt you unless
you are small enough to let it.*

*A holy life is perfectly adapted to an
earthly sphere. If you cannot be holy
where you are, you could not be holy any-
where else (Titus 2:3).*

Men who pray much don't brag much.

*A retentive memory may be a good
thing, but the ability to forget is the sure
token of greatness.*

*The man who wants to lead the
orchestra must turn his back upon the
crowd.*

*Did you hear about the minister who
said to his congregation, "Before I
preach, I want to say something"?*

A tourist who visited an exquisite garden on one of the lovely estates in Italy gives us the following conversation he had with the caretaker.

"How long have you been here," he asked.

"Twenty-five years."

"And how often has the owner been to see the estate?"

"Four times."

"When did he last come?"

"Twelve years ago."

"He writes to you, I suppose."

"Never."

"From whom do you get your orders?"

"From the steward in Milan."

"Does he come here often?"

"Never."

"Who comes, then, to look after things?"

"I am left pretty much alone."

"Yet you keep the garden so spic and span, one would think you were expecting the owner tomorrow."

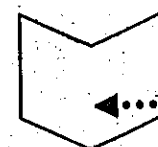
"Today, sir, today!"

THE BIBLE

I am the BIBLE.
I am God's wonderful LIBRARY.
I am always—and above all—
TRUTH.

- To the weary pilgrim, I am a good, strong STAFF.
 - To the one who sits in black gloom, I am the glorious LIGHT.
 - To those who stoop beneath heavy burdens, I am SWEET REST.
 - To him who has lost his way, I am a safe GUIDE.
 - To those who have been hurt by sin, I am healing BALM.
 - To the discouraged, I whisper a glad message of HOPE.
 - To the distressed, I am an ANCHOR.
- "O child of man, to best defend me,
just USE ME!"

—Selected



HERE AND THERE

AMONG BOOKS

Conducted by the Editor

All books reviewed may be ordered from
your Publishing House

The Making of a Christian Leader

By Ted W. Engstrom (Zondervan Publishing House, 1977. 208 pp., cloth, \$6.95.)

The author is executive vice-president of World Vision International, also serving formerly as book editor of Zondervan Publishers, and as executive director and president of Youth for Christ International. He states, "This book has been written to help the Christian leader get a clearer picture of what he wants to do and be in a church or organization—and how to get there."

The book deals with understanding the principles of management and human relationships, how to develop skills and cultivate the qualities and personal traits according to a person's unique gifts and skills. To this end the author considers examples of leadership in Scripture, gifts of leadership, and priorities. "We do not lack people, but rather a scarcity of people willing to assume significant roles and do the job effectively."

Your Job— Survival or Satisfaction?

(Christian Discipleship in a Secular Job)

By Jerry and Mary White (Zondervan, 1977. 190 pp., cloth, \$6.95.)

This book has value both for the layman and for the minister. Lorne C. Sanny, president of Navigators, says, "I commend this book to everyone who works for a living—and who doesn't?"

Secular jobs can be frustration or fulfillment. The authors seek to answer the questions of how you fit your job into

the totality of your life. The first part of the book deals with the work ethic, purpose in work and life, changing jobs, etc. Then it applies practical biblical principles to specific kinds of jobs—the hourly employee, the salaried employee, homemaker, working women, military and government employee, salesman, self-employed, etc.

Author Jerry holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, a master's and a Ph.D. in astronautics. He resigned from the air force to become a full-time staff member of the Navigators and is now regional director for them.

Pastor's Annual 1978

By T. T. Crabtree (Zondervan Publishing House, 1977. 367 pp., paper, \$6.95.)

This is the Zondervan annual planned preaching program for next year, containing 52 morning services, 52 evening services, outlines, illustrations, midweek meditations, services for special days, funeral meditations, Communion thoughts, etc.

Is My Head On Straight?

Meditations for Women

By Phyllis C. Michael (Word Books, 1976. 120 pp., paper, \$3.50.)

This is a book of contemporary meditations for women. There are 54 subjects dealt with, including attitudes toward ourselves and others, and God. There are catchy, short meditations on affliction, confusion, courtesy, excuses, procrastination, etc. The author is a retired school-

teacher who at one time was unable to walk unaided due to Miniere's disease, but she found courage through faith in God and is able to encourage others to do the same.

Preachers' Exchange



WANTED: By missionary in S. America: *Fletcher's Checks to Antinomianism*, abridged by Peter Wiseman (Beacon Hill Press, 1953). Dorothea Wolcott, 2823 Berry Ln., Independence, Mo. 64057.

WANTED: *Is This Really the End?* by George C. Maladin. Major Houston Ellis, 1073 Lanier Blvd. N.E., Atlanta, Ga. 30306.

WANTED: By Nazarene Bible College Library, the following volumes of *Preach-*

er's Magazine: 1934, Vol. 9: 2, 3, 4, 10. 1935, Vol. 10: 8, 9, 10, 11; 12. 1939, Vol. 14: 12. Roger M. Williams, Nazarene Bible College, P.O. Box 4746, Knob Hill Station, Colorado Springs, Colo. 80930.

WANTED: *The Secret Is Out*, by Charles D. Masher, and any other publications on oath-bound secret orders. Rev. Bob McKenzie, P.O. Box 376, Barnesville, Ga. 30204.

FOR SALE: 45 volumes of 50-vol. set of John Wesley's Christian Library published by Mr. Flavel of Bristol, England, in 1755. They bear the date MDCCLV (1755), written in old English, leather bound, books of antiquity. Rev. Wilfrid E. Mouteux, P.O. Box 8102, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2K 2B6.

Items for this Exchange may be either WANTED or FOR SALE, but must be confined to old periodicals and out-of-print books. All response should be directly with the advertiser and not with this office or the Nazarene Publishing House. We are glad to render this free service on these terms. This service not available to bookstores or laymen.

COMING
next month

• The End of an Era

The most certain thing about life is change, and we are changing.

• The Unsolvable Conflict

The pastor looks at the disagreement between an elder brother and his father, and draws a conclusion for today's Christians.

• How to Live on a Pastor's Salary with Joy

The first part of the title is important, but the last two words are the clincher.

• Skill Is Not Enough

It doesn't matter *who* you know; it matters only slightly *what* you know. What really matters most is *what you are*.

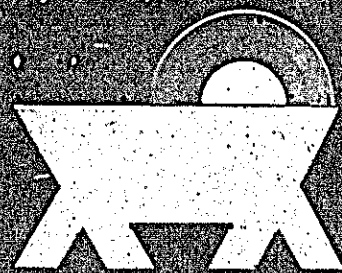


Pastors who have solved the financial problem in the administration of a church organization have all learned one thing in common—it cannot be coerced, but it can happen. It happens when we Christians see our stewardship of money for what it is—a way of worshipping God. There just isn't any other way to put it in perspective. The church *needs* our help? The bills are crying to be paid? The budget is dropping farther behind? The church is watching your giving, and you will not escape the pressure? All this pales into irrelevancy when we consider that what we do is for the love of Christ! Even the argument, "You really should give liberally, then God will return liberal financial blessing to you" almost brings a blush, for if He didn't we STILL would give joyfully because we love Him. So thanks to a young pastor who finds this secret never fails (p. 3). Praise God. We might even want to play a tuba solo in celebration (p. 5); who knows?

Yours for souls,

JM

Share the LIGHT of Christmas



THE FIRST CHRISTMAS GIFT New!

Musical Drama for Young Children. This Christmas story written by VETERIA and DERRELL BILLINGSLEY is both flexible and easily learned. Involves 12-14 boys and girls ages 4-7 in pantomime parts with an adult narrator. May be as simple or elaborate as desired. Props enhance presentation but are not essential. Performance time approximately 30 minutes.

MC-33

75c

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM BUILDING No. 30 New!

More excellent resource material for Christmas program planning by GRACE RAMQUIST. Thirty-two pages of poems, songs, readings, and exercises to help celebrate our Saviour's birth. Material for children, teens, and adults not duplicated in other Builders. Need ideas? Here they are!

MC-130

95c

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Children's Cantata. Contains nine original, singable tunes by JOE E. PARKS for children's voices. Employs solos, rounds with optional flute, tonebells, Autoharp, and percussion accompaniment. Delightfully presented in uncomplicated language. Performance time approximately 35 minutes.

MC-249 Choral Book

\$1.25

MY CHRISTMAS GIFT

A Christmas Musical. OTIS SKILLINGS expresses the encompassing thought that true joy comes in bringing Christ our greatest gift—ourselves. Written for the choir that is interested in a musical presentation with a contemporary flair. Includes narration. Performance time approximately 40 minutes.

MC-31 Choral Book

\$

L-7111 Stereo Album

\$

L-7111C Book/Record Combination

\$1

MU-7111 Accompaniment Tape

\$2

MC-31SF Service Folder

100 for \$5

REJOICE, O EARTH

A Christmas Cantata. A motivating musical by JOE PARKS focusing attention on that unforgettable, historic night of Christ's coming to earth. All original music soloists and choir. Not difficult but effective in presentation. Performance time approximately 30 minutes.

MC-29 Choral Book

\$1

L-217 Stereo Album

\$5

L-217C Book/Record Combination

\$6

MC-29SF Service Folders

100 for \$3

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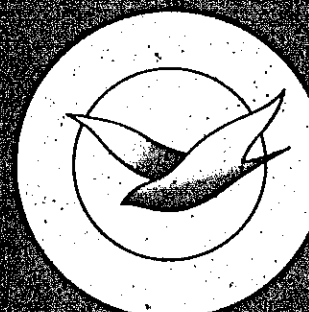
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PREACHING CHRISTIAN HOLINESS



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.....From the EDITOR

The End of an Era



THIS ISSUE MARKS THE END OF AN ERA in the publication of the *Preacher's Magazine*.

Beginning with the next issue, we will be published bimonthly. You will receive a "January-February" issue in January, and 6 issues during the year instead of 12.

Each issue will be larger—48 pages instead of the present 32—but the magazine will not be coming into your study as often as in the past.

An explanation is in order, and your editor will do his best to set forth the reasons for this departure from the format which was followed for 51 years.

To put it simply and briefly, the principal reasons are financial. In times like these, with rapidly rising costs, periodicals have been dying like flies. Red ink replaces black, costs outrun income, and managerial headaches multiply. Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, which publishes our periodical for the Aldersgate Publications Association, has been wrestling with these problems, as have other religious publishers.

In a recent report to his governing board, Beacon Hill Publishing House Manager M. A. (Bud) Lunn discussed the escalating costs of publication, financed by large volume sales and small profits. The cost of paper, for example, increased an average of 5.5 percent annually from 1968 to 1974, and there was a huge 30.2 percent increase in 1974 over 1973.

Paper costs are predicted to continue this rise for the next five years. This industry, as all others, is affected by inflationary pressures in general, and its own problems in particular. One of these is the increasing cost of meeting governmental environmental standards in the production of wood and pulp for the manufacture of paper products.

And then there is the postage problem. Postal rates have risen rapidly during this period and are projected to go higher. Beacon Hill's

annual postage bill in 1968 was approximately \$294,800. For the year 1976, it totaled \$666,250, which is an increase of 126 percent. The postage bill for this year was up 30.4 percent over last year.

With publication of six issues annually, the postage costs obviously will be reduced, and the cost of paper will be down despite the larger size of the bimonthly edition.

So much for the bad news. Now for the good news.

We will continue our policy of improvement, and, more than ever, strive for top quality in editorial materials.

It was five years ago that a giant step was taken. In January, 1973, we broadened our subscription base to include our sister denominations in evangelical holiness circles. The *Preacher's Magazine* was better known and more widely read than at any time previously. Colleges and seminaries began subscribing for their libraries. Interest was significantly increased, and many letters of congratulations were received on the occasion of our 50th anniversary issue (January, 1976).

In 1972, a year before becoming an interdenominational publication, we began using more pictures and artwork. This was made possible by changes in production techniques which permitted the use of such graphics at a more reasonable cost than had been possible.

Most important, with the cooperation of ALL the denominations involved in the magazine, the quality of writing rose steadily and has continued to reach higher standards.

All this means we have endeavored to move toward a more attractive magazine with better articles and editorials. Now, with the beginning of the bimonthly publication, this trend will be intensified. This is our pledge.

So there you have it, the bad news and the good news. They do go together, more often than not.

An amusing story was making the rounds recently. It seems a preacher dreamed he was conversing with an angel, and he took advantage of his rare audience with the heavenly being to satisfy his curiosity. "Will there be golf courses in heaven?" he asked the angel.

"First, I will give you the good news, and then the bad," the angel replied. "The good news is that there will be golf courses in heaven."

"Now, for the bad news," the angel continued. "You will be there to tee off next Monday morning at eight o'clock."

Whether this editorial is good news or bad will depend on how you look at it. Half the number of issues in the future hardly means good news. But on the other hand, publication continues. The *Preacher's Magazine* is not going the way of many other publications which have been forced to stop the presses and cancel production.

We do not know what the future holds. But for now, the promise is six good issues, 48 pages instead of 32, and top quality all the way.

Enjoy this one. It is the last of its kind.



The minister can keep his head and heart above the tidal wave of materialism that would destroy his sense of significance in the high calling of God.

Are You Being Cheated?

MORE THAN ONE MAN, during the course of his ministry, has been cheated and robbed of his sense of worth. Beyond salvation, what greater gift could the Lord God give to a mortal man than His call into the ministry? To answer that call is both the greatest privilege and the highest responsibility known. There is no kingdom, no political office, no corporation, presidency to be compared with the call of God to minister His spiritual gifts to men.

When a nation has heard and heeded the pronouncements of the Lord's prophets, she has moved forward and prospered. Contrariwise, when a church or a nation has lost her prophets she has dwindled and died.

Herman Melville, in *Moby Dick*, puts it this way: "The panelled front of the pulpit was in the likeness of a ship's bluff bows, and the Holy Bible rested on a projecting piece of scroll

work, fashioned after a ship's fiddle-headed beak . . . What could be more full of meaning, for the pulpit is ever this earth's foremost part; all the rest comes in the rear; *the pulpit leads the world*. From thence it is the storm of God's quick wrath is first described, and the bow must bear the earliest brunt. From thence it is the God of breezes fair or foul is first invoked for favorable winds. Yes, the world's a ship on its passage out, and not a voyage complete; and the pulpit is its prow."

Since the pulpit leads the world, why is it that any minister of the Lord God should ever feel unimportant or insignificant in his role? It may be because he has allowed himself to be cheated in any one of several ways.

He is cheated when he gets his sense of values from his surroundings instead of from the written and living Word; when he begins to interpret the meaning of life in terms of attendance, finances, professions of faith, big buildings, or even the confidence of the people. To be sure, none of these things are altogether unimportant, but they are not *most* important. The object is so to live in the atmosphere of the Bible and spiritual things that when such temptations occur, there will still be a sense of worth in the approbations of God on



by
Kenneth Vogt

Superintendent,
Sacramento District,
Church of the Nazarene

a minister's inner life, his prayer life, his intercessions. He will still know that he is giving himself to the things that are high and holy and eternal. He is not overwhelmed by things which are transitory—as transitory as last Sunday's attendance.

He is apt to be cheated of his sense of significance when he does not learn how to shift the load of life into a more comfortable position from time to time. Have you ever backpacked into the high country? Many are trying it these days. Have you felt the straps cutting into your shoulders until your whole body demanded attention to that spot of strain and pain? Then by giving a little shift to the load, the burden became tolerable again. Prayer, the quiet time with God, adjusts the load, and the climb into God's high country is accomplished successfully and with joy.

A called man of God can be cheated of his sense of worth or significance because of what I call the "rub of life." The people complain, are picky and critical, lack vision, and are unresponsive. They never praise the preacher, or their comments at the door are so perfunctory as to be mechanical, indicating no life change at all. "Good message, preacher," is said like "Hello" or "Good morning" for lack of something else to say. The board quibbles about little things and the committee discusses high-sounding philosophy, when action is needed. The children are noisy in worship and the ushers huddle with each other and talk

about last week's weather, while a hapless visitor looks apprehensively for a place to be seated. Then, of course, the finances are balanced precariously on the thin edge of disaster. Have I overdrawn the "rub" of the corporate life of the church? Unless we learn to see in every disruption, every telephone call, every shattered ideal, an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work, we will be rubbed out by the "cares of the church."

Worth, significance in our task, comes from our constant renewal of our relationship with God in the Holy Spirit. There is no other way to keep our heads and hearts above the tidal wave of materialism and humanism that would destroy our sense of significance in the high calling of God!

But there is a way, thank God. We have been promised the "renewal of the Holy Ghost." And this promise has been validated over and over again in personal experience. We can be growing persons in Christlikeness in the midst of life's realities.

Rollo May states in *Love and Will*, "The human being cannot live in a condition of emptiness [insignificance] for very long; if he is not growing toward something he does not merely stagnate; the pent-up potentialities turn into morbidity and despair, and eventually into destructive activities and attitudes."

Titus 3:5 tells us, "He saved us . . . by the . . . renewing of the Holy Ghost."

One of the great benefits of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is intellectual. George Mueller said that the night the Spirit of God filled him, he learned more in four hours about the Scriptures than he'd learned in the preceding four years that he'd been a Christian.

A pastor looks at the disagreement between the elder brother and his father, and draws a conclusion for today's Christians

The Unsolvable Conflict

By Vaughn R. Davis*

I HAVE A CONFESSION to make. For many years I've been secretly in sympathy with the "elder brother" in the story of the prodigal son. The elder has been condemned in the past because of his attitude toward the younger brother. However, it's humanly possible for anyone in like circumstances to react as he did.

My sympathy, in all probability, stems from my conclusions to the unanswered questions I entertain relative to the parable. I question the reason for the prodigal son's dissatisfaction, the real motive for his leaving the home, and I wonder if he was a pampered and spoiled child. Perhaps my reasoning is faulty, and my answers to these questions but a guess. But the fact remains, the younger son made a decision that brought the father and the elder son into an unsolvable conflict.

The following will reveal some traits in the personality of the younger brother that triggered the upset.

First, he asked for his share of the

family's wealth. It was given him. He severed the ties with the business responsibility, and became a free agent. His pockets were full of money, and his head was full of wild ideas—coupled with no sense of true values. He determined to invest in his ideas away from the restraints of home and parental authority. When he arrived in the land of his dreams, he soon became engulfed in his care-free adventure. At this point the Bible is clear: He "wasted his substance in riotous living." To be frank about it, he began acting like a hog, and it wasn't long until he was living with them and eating with them. His motto was "Eat, drink, spend, and be merry, for tomorrow I'm going home to father."

He came home all right—bankrupt. Broken financially and physically, friendless and guilty, the younger son threw himself on the mercy of the father. He had no other recourse. The father received him openly, forgave him immediately, and reinstated him to the good grace of the home. Dad killed the fatted calf, put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and celebrated

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hilariously the homecoming of the wanderer, waster, wrongdoer.

I can sympathize with the father. Had I been in his place, I would have done what he did. Any father worth his salt would do the same thing. He would rejoice, be glad, grateful, and pleased that his long-lost son had returned. But the son's return created a rift between the father and the elder brother. It added fuel to the fire that had been smoldering in the heart of the eldest son. And as it burns, he has my sympathy.

Come with me and let us study the elder brother as he approaches the house. Drained and tired from the day's work in the field, he is stopped in his tracks by the sound of the celebration. Quickly he calls a servant and asks what these things mean.

"Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound," he is told. His face is flushed from the heat of anger as the servant dashes off to the house to warn the father of the return of the elder brother.

Surprised at the bad news, the father takes leave of the jubilee, and rushes out to the field to explain his excitement. He pleads with him to join in the celebration. But the elder son refuses to surrender his position. He states his views emphatically.

The conflict rages. We have a father who is glad and a son who is mad. Their views are diametrically opposite. Each feels he is right in his point of view. The elder can't accept the foolishness of the younger, nor the reception staged by the father. After all, he had stayed by his father's side, faithful and obedient. He had worked without any fringe benefits—not once had the father rewarded him with a goat, much less a fatted calf that he might have a feast with his friends. Little wonder

he was upset, and I pity him as he further states his case.

"But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." With these words the charge ends.

The father pleads his defense and countercharges:

"Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." So ends the defense.

No more words were spoken, yet the story doesn't end. Many questions remain unanswered: Did the elder brother change his mind? I don't think so. He wasn't ready to surrender his hurt feelings caused by his father's neglect, shortcomings, and failures. Did the father apologize to the elder son, and try to heal the hurt? Again, I don't think so. There's no mention of it in the parable. So we wind up with an unsolvable conflict.

Another confession, please. In my 25 years as pastor, I have met many people—good people—whose views were different from mine. The situation sometimes called for me to agree with them or collide head on with them. From my standpoint, to surrender my convictions and agree with them was to do wrong. But by the same token the other party felt that to yield to my philosophy would be compromise for them. We were successful in reaching a stalemate.

Deadlocked situations do not happen solely in the church. They sometimes occur in the home. Certainly they can happen among the best of friends. When they happen in the church, they can lead to total abortion of God's work. In the home they often lead to the divorce court. Among friends, they end in bitterness.

Is there an answer to the conflict that ends in stalemate? Maybe. I heard Dr. Vanderpool say, "It's better for a loaded freight train to be delayed on a siding, than to run into a passenger train head on and hurt a lot of people." The siding is a possible solution.

When I use the word *sympathy* with regard to the elder brother, I do not mean that I agree with his pent-up feelings, or his anger, nor his attitude. But I pity him—pity him because apparently he never learned the true value of prayer in the stalemate situation. Prayer often changes one's mind and helps him to understand the other person's point of view.

I pity him because obviously he hadn't learned the lesson of "forgetting those things that are past" and pressing onward.

Certainly he knew not the promise

of God, "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord." However, the principle has always been there.

Another approach to the solution—but one that is very difficult to practice—is to put oneself in the other person's shoes. Evidently the elder son hadn't heard this idiom.

I pity him because he was clinging to the "eye for an eye, and tooth for a tooth" philosophy. Forgiveness on the part of the offended party will often bring about a reconciliation.

Is there such a thing as a stalemate situation in human relationships? As far as human beings are concerned, there may be a certain type conflict that ends in what appears to be an unsolvable situation. But not so with God. For with Him "All things are possible," and with Him and His wisdom, there is no unsolvable conflict.

The Christ of Christmas is

the LORD of the working man



The Lord of the Christmas-tide throws a halo over common toil. The good news was told to shepherds, to working men who were toiling in the fields. The coming King would hallow the common work of man, and in His love and grace all the problems of labour would find a solution.

Some of us can see the light resting upon a bishop's crosier, but we cannot see the radiance on the ordinary shepherd's staff. We can discern the hallowedness of a priest's vocation, but we can see no sanctity in the calling of a grocer. We can see the nimbus on the few, but not on the crowd; on the unusual, but not upon the commonplace. The very birth-hour of Christianity irradiated the humble doings of humble people. When the angels went to the shepherds, common work was encircled with an immortal crown.

—John Henry Jowett

It doesn't matter *who* you know, and only partially on *what* you know. Success depends primarily on *what you are*

Skill Is Not Enough

EVERY DEVELOPING industrial society, by necessity, must place great emphasis on skill. That's "the name of the game" in machinery production on a mass scale. But there comes a time when industry must say, "Skill is not enough." To be accurate, it never was enough, but in the developing industrial society this fact was obscured. Now business leaders are saying audibly that it's not enough. They are stressing integrity over intelligence, steadfastness over skill, what's inside a man as critical factors in success. In other words, "Success depends on character."

Henry O. Golightly, a management consultant, authored an article in *American Way* by that title. In it he quoted 12 leading business executives, and their evaluations of criteria for success make very interesting reading. J. Lucian Smith, president

of Coca-Cola, listed them in this order: integrity of personal conduct; integrity of product; integrity of policy; dedication; sound judgment; initiative; persistence; organizing and planning ability.

Mr. Golightly says: "Motivation is important; capability is necessary; knowledge and experience are required. But these leaders, and others, are placing renewed emphasis on innate strength and integrity as criteria of success. It no longer matters so much *who* you know, and only partially on *what* you know. Success depends primarily on *what* you are."

We are apparently entering upon a renewed concern in industry and in government on the basic necessity of integrity and other factors of sound character in success. Thank God for this.

But if industry is saying this, how much more must we reiterate in the church that skill is not enough. This is not to downgrade the constant need for trained minds and hands, but it is to underscore that prior to skill, and exercised with it, character is of fundamental importance.

Church leaders must focus on *what* they are—on whether or not there is integrity communicated through



by
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1. *American Way*, April, 1976 (Magazine of the American Airlines)

their relationships. This demands a deepening of their personal devotional strength. Prayer and meditation, for personal growth as well as for professional communication, are required patterns that must be developed.

This kind of focus will necessitate the cultivation of the inward journey of the soul with God. It will require honesty in our prayer life, not for God's sake, but for us. God knows us anyway, but He can't help us deeper spiritually until we are willing to admit our "face" in His sight.

This kind of focus will rearrange our people concerns. We will begin to see them not as statistical report digits but as persons created in the image of God. We will become sensitive to their hurting places. We will

cease placing them in perfect plaster-of-paris moulds, and accept them with all their "warts" of imperfection. We will cease expecting them to accept us as little tin gods, and realize that they will in return accept our "warts." We will be amazed that in that very mutual acceptance of each other, the foundations of the bridges for change and growth will be laid.

No, skill is not enough; but perfect love is. Divine love, poured out in our hearts by the sweet Holy Spirit given to us, will prove adequate for both motivation and method in the work of the church. Love builds bridges for understanding and success. It is the guarantee that character will be the fundament from which skill is applied.

The Christ of Christmas Is the Lord of the students



And so the good news came to "wise men," shall we say to students, busying themselves with the vast and intricate problems of the mind. And the evangel offered the students mental satisfaction, bringing the interpreting clue, beaming upon them with the guiding ray which would lead them into perfect noon.

Yes, our wise men must find the key of wisdom in the Lord. To seek mental satisfactions and leave out Jesus is like trying to make a garden and leave out the sun. "Without me ye can do nothing," not even the unravelling of the problems which beset and beslege the mind.

My mental pilgrimage . . . must begin with Jesus, and pay homage to His Kingly and incomparable glory. I must lay my treasures at His feet, "gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." Then he will lead me "into all truth," and "the truth shall make me free."

—John Henry Jowett

Wesleyana



Wesley and the Assistants

By Claude Ries*

ONE GOD-CALLED GROUP of people in the Church of Jesus is seldom given any prominence in ecclesiastical circles, yet they comprise the largest number of those "appointed" by God as an essential part of His laborers in the kingdom of God. I refer to that blessed body of Christians known as "helps" or helpers. In 1 Cor. 12:28 we find first the outstanding spiritual leadership of the church, the apostles, prophets, and teachers. After that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, capacity to govern, and speaking in tongues.

The so-called "helps" in the Authorized Version are variously translated in different versions as "aptness for helping others," "ability to render assistance," "those who help others," or just "assistants."

I call your attention to the fact that such helpers are God's *gift* to the church. The Apostle Paul points out three men representative of this class of God-called assistants, namely, Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Cor. 16:17). "For that which was lacking on your part they have supplied." Of them the Apostle said: "They have refreshed my spirit and yours; therefore acknowledge ye

them that are such." "They have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." That is, "they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints."

The men in church leadership need an encouraging word occasionally. A little fellow was running in a race, when he suddenly dropped out. When asked why, he said sorrowfully, "Nobody said, 'Go to it, Jimmy.'"

That is part of the laity's job as an "assistant," to occasionally say to the overburdened pastor or spiritual leader, "Go to it, Pastor, we are with you." And to remember to say to the vexed Christian layman, "Hold steady, Jim, we're praying for you." That is being an "assistant" in God's great cause.

My dear father was a grown man when he was converted. He asked the Lord what He wanted him to do. The Lord's reply was, "Do with thy might what thy hands find to do." And Dad did just that. He was a house painter and painted to the glory of God. When times were hard and linseed oil soared in price, other painters used substitutes, but Dad kept to the pure product and ever sought to do a first-class paint job. When other painters were out of work, Dad was always busy. He was

God's "assistant" as a painter. He fulfilled his calling from God, and lived and worked for His glory.

I think Malachi, chapter 3, is very pertinent here. In verse 11 is a promise God gave to my father: "I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes."

"What is my devourer?" Dad asked.

God said, "Your doctor bills." And how God made good that promise! "And they shall be mine . . . in that day when I make up my jewels" (v. 17).

Wesley's words are so pertinent here for those in the "assistant" class of God's people. We find them under Wesley's title: "Rules of a Helper":

1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither spend any more at any place than is strictly necessary.

2. Be serious. Let your motto be: Holiness to the Lord. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

3. Converse sparingly and cautiously with women; particularly with young women in private.

4. Take no step toward marriage without first acquainting us with your design.

5. Believe evil of no one, unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on everything. You know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

6. Speak evil of no one; else your word especially would eat as doth a

canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast till you come to the person concerned.

7. Tell everyone what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, as soon as may be, else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.

8. Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing master. A preacher of the Gospel is the servant of all.

9. Be ashamed of nothing but sin; not of fetching wood (if time permit), or of drawing water; not of cleaning your own shoes or your neighbour's.

10. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And, in general, do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath but for conscience' sake.

11. You have nothing to do but to save souls; therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want [need] you, but to those that want you most.

12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the Gospel; as such, it is your part to employ your time in the manner which we direct; partly in preaching and visiting from house to house; partly in reading, meditation and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in the Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for His glory.

Did you think the star was meant just for the Magi and the shepherds—just for that one night alone?

Oh, no! God hung it there against the ages; it is for all of us. Its radiance enfolds us all, knowing no bound of creed, color, or servitude. It guides the aged home; it is reflected in the eyes of babes, generation after generation, and in the eyes of mothers seeking in their babes the countenance of Christ. All of us are come once more under the spell of the star, come to take new hope in peace and the Prince of Peace.

—Selected

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How to Live on a Pastor's Salary —with Joy

By Thelma Kratzer*

WHEN I WAS ASSIGNED this title, I thought, I can get along fine with the first part—"How to Live on a Pastor's Salary": but it's the "with Joy" that might need to be reexamined. So I decided to study the word *joy*. I have been studying in the Book of Philippians, and over and over Paul shows us that we are to have joy in all things. Joy is not dependent upon outward circumstances. Joy comes from within. Joy is a part of the "fruit of the Spirit." We are not handed joy all wrapped in pink ribbons, but it is cultivated through the power of the Holy Spirit. Someone has said that joy used as an acrostic would be "Just Our Yield-edness." I believe that is the secret.

Since God has called my husband to be a minister of the gospel, it is my joy and privilege to share with him in this highest of callings. And because I am his wife, I am pledged to be his helpmate—and one of the responsibilities is to balance the budget.

My heart is full of joy because I have great trust in the Lord. I recall an incident that happened while we were in seminary: We received a letter from my husband's mother with a check for \$100 in it. The letter told about how a dear saint in Nampa First Church, who had a hot line to heaven, rushed up to her after church and placed a \$100 bill in her hand and said, "Get this to Ronnie. He needs it." We were a little surprised

and thought that was nice, but we really didn't need it. Then the very next day the motor went out in our car, and it had to be completely overhauled. We thought, "How neat!" Then we remembered the scripture in Matt. 6:8, "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." That scripture has been a constant source of strength to me for many years. Just to know that God knows, brings comfort.

Even though we know that God will provide, He still expects us to do our part. In our great denomination, 50 percent of the churches are smaller congregations, and therefore the salaries are smaller. But it is amazing how far that money can stretch if there is a plan. And there can be real joy in working that plan.

It is my belief that, where at all possible, we must be full-time pastors' wives. We won't be able to afford some of the luxuries, but we will have the satisfaction of knowing that we have been able to balance the budget on our husbands' salaries. Having a plan and working that plan is the secret to financial solvency. Sometimes learning new skills can help immeasurably—such as dressmaking, furniture upholstery and refinishing. Real bargains in furniture can be found through newspaper ads on moving sales, garage sales, etc. Touches of refinement can be added quite reasonably in helping to make our homes castles where

love and happiness are the real luxuries.

Another thing I have found helpful is an "emergency shelf." There have been some weeks when cash was low and I couldn't buy groceries, but I could fix a nice meal if company dropped by.

I am a great "sale" person. I carefully go over the ads in Wednesday's paper and plan my menus for the following week from them. Some items I never buy unless they are on sale, including flour, sugar, shortening, paper products, and special dinner items such as pineapple, olives, etc. I save for these sales and then buy several to last until the next sale. In October I start watching for items on sale that I will need for my cookies and punch for open house or other Christmas entertaining.

You can save money if you purchase Christmas cards, wrappings, and other decorations right after Christmas.

The January white sale is a good time to use some of that Christmas cash gift to purchase a nice set of sheets and towels to be used only when the evangelist or special visitors come, or a nice cloth and napkins for those special dinners.

Take advantage of end-of-season sales for clothing. Ronda's Easter dress has always been one purchased the previous August at the sidewalk sale. We will purchase next winter's coat in March. I also watch for the annual lingerie sales of good brand items that will outlast several of cheaper brands.

Entertaining can be done simply. I used to go "all out" to fix the best, and often spent money on things that should have gone for something else. I have learned that we can have just as great fellowship over something simpler. I can still have a pretty table without a seven-course dinner.

We can save finance charges by buying on layaway rather than charging.

Plan for those semiannual insurance premiums or new tires, for special offerings at Easter, Thanksgiving, and missionaries.

John White, in an article entitled "Priorities" in the *Moody Monthly*, gives us three principles to help us live within our needs rather than our desires: (1) Don't allow yourself to be burned by

overexposure to the value system of the world. We are bombarded constantly with billboards, TV commercials, magazine and newspaper advertisements. (2) Avoid daydreaming about material possessions. (3) Talk yourself out of large expenditures that are often "pitfalls for Christians."

One thing so important is not to discuss financial struggles with church members. I'm afraid that sometimes this is done in hope that it will result in a special gift. It's like confessing that the Lord and the church are not taking care of us properly. It's a great day when we can commit all of this to the Lord and Him alone—not calling parents or a rich uncle, but trusting in Him completely. When we do get a raise in salary I want it to be because the board feels that we deserve it.

We wives can set a joyful atmosphere in our homes regarding our financial "status quo." No husband enjoys feeling that he is not adequately caring for his family, and parsonage children should never grow up feeling they are poor or deprived. A few weeks ago our little girl came to me and said, "Mother, are we poor?" I said, "Honey, what makes you ask a question like that?"

She replied, "Well, I was just thinking, the house belongs to the church, and the stove and the refrigerator." And I broke in with "and the washer and the dryer, and a bedroom set." She said, "Wow! We really are poor!"

I told her that even though we didn't have a lot of material things we were really rich in many ways. We have never gone without anything we really needed. We are rich because we have so many dear people who care for us. They do provide a home for us, pay our utilities, and give us cash benefits. Then we went around the house and looked at all the pretty little "extras" that decorate our home—nearly all given to us across the years by our dear church people. All of these tip the scales toward a very rich life because her father is a pastor.

When we left seminary, we went to a very small church in Ritzville, Wash. During our second year there we began to feel the pressure financially. We were getting \$30.00 a week, and Ron was

*Pastor's wife, Baker, Ore.

driving a school bus—getting along fine because those dear people cared for us in many other ways. But we were going to have to replace our car, and I was expecting, and we had no insurance. We really prayed about our situation.

Then we received a call to another church, much larger, which paid \$90.00 a week plus insurance and all the extras. I was so excited. Ninety dollars a week! I tried to be objective in my praying, but in prayer all I could see was \$90.00.

Then one afternoon while Ron was driving the bus, our district superintendent, who was also my father-in-law, came by for a fast cup of coffee. He had with him our General Superintendent Powers. Dad had shared with him our call and he was aware of our situation. Then Dr. Powers gave me some wise counsel that has helped me so many times when faced with similar situations. He said, "Thelma, we pray for God to supply our needs, and He always does, but we never know how He is going to do this. Perhaps moving to another church is the way that He will answer your prayer, but never let that be the deciding factor. If He wants you in Ritzville, He'll supply your needs right here."

The more we prayed the smaller that \$90.00 looked, and in a few short days we had peace. We knew we were supposed to stay right there in Ritzville. And in a few days miracles began to happen! Our church, who never suspected that we might be leaving, gave us a \$15.00 raise in salary, plus taking on our insurance, and the amazing thing was that the insurance company accepted us, even though I was expecting, and later paid most of the expenses of the delivery. Then a very dear but frugal aunt and uncle, who were not Christians, felt "impressed" to send us several hundred dollars to help purchase a new car. Another miracle!

Always it has been through preaching that revivals have come: always by preaching that the Spirit has made the tired Church young again. . . . If history is any guide, if you are to win back the world for God, it will far likeliest be through preaching.

—Arthur John Gossip

God knows our needs and has promised to supply them. As our churches grow, alert church boards usually increase the pastor's income. When this happens, there comes a sense of mutual accomplishment in this "journey of joy." If salary increases are slower or less generous than the growing treasury would warrant, we can refuse to become impatient but wait for God's timing. Contentment brings joy.

Ella Miller, in her Book *I Am a Woman*, says: "Contentment brings happiness, an inner joy and peace of mind. It frees your mind for positive, worthwhile thoughts and actions."

A motto on the wall of a home where there were six or seven children said:

*Eat it up,
Wear it out,
Make it do,
Or do without.*

Make up your mind to be satisfied. I might be dreaming of a new couch or table and chairs. If I get them, I'll be satisfied; but if I don't get them, I'll be satisfied. To be content with what we have is the greatest of all riches.

Nothing is more attractive to a congregation than a pastor's wife who radiates joy. Nothing is more defeating than one who constantly complains about insufficient funds.

Two passages of scripture have been a source of strength to me: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). And, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11).

So I can live on a pastor's salary with joy because He has promised to take care of me. "But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

God hates sin, but He loves sinners. The ark symbolizes both aspects of His nature

Make Yourself an Ark

By Wayne Duncan*

IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS, the chapters record as follows:

- 1—2, Creation, with God making man in His own image.
- 3, The first sin
- 4, The first murder
- 5, Genealogy of Noah
- 6, The story of the flood that destroyed the world.

The Bible contains 1,189 chapters, but with the first 6 God passes judgment and punishment upon sin. He did so, not because of the stars being in a certain order, not because a certain number of years had elapsed on a calendar and something dreadful always happens every so many years, nor was it due to any other mystical reason. Rather, the Bible says it was the result of one thing—God always punishes sin! Yet, before He did, three things are worthy of notice:

I. WHAT NOAH WAS LIKE. The Bible pays Noah one of the greatest compliments in the Holy Account by saying, "Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:9).

II. WHAT OTHER PEOPLE WERE LIKE. It was a day when people lived for hundreds of years, but their hearts were evil continually. King Solomon said, "There's nothing new under the sun." Then it's very possible that their generation was corrupted by the same things that corrupt ours. Is it important to know for certain? Yes. Very. For Jesus said that He would return when the days were as

they were in the time of Noah. Of all generations and societies, Jesus pointed out that His return to earth was directly related to the world being corrupted as it was in Noah's day, for they were "eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage" (Matt. 24:38). Note that He didn't say it was a day of murder, rape, or adultery, which are in direct violation of the Ten Commandments. Rather, they were judged and punished by the things that God had given and, at one time, sanctioned as being good. When Jesus returns for His Church, it will be a day in which the God-given things have become corrupt, for they are the very balance by which the world is to be weighed.

III. WHAT GOD WAS LIKE. In the first two chapters of Genesis, God was excited and delighted about what He had made—and said it was all good. In chapter 6, it had all been degraded and had become repulsive to Him. He actually regretted having made it. Something had to be done. Two characteristics of God were incorporated at the same time—love and punishment. Noah had to be preserved. Sin had to be punished. It's hard to understand that the same God who loves and always preserves His people also hates and will always punish sin. However, these are both characteristics of God.

The Hebrew language used different names for God when speaking of His different characteristics. It often referred

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Macomb, Ill.

to God as Elohim or Jehovah. We translate these as Lord or God, but each has a different meaning.

The Bible says that Elohim commanded Noah to build the ark and to put the animals and his family in it. Elohim was the name which referred to God while He was pouring out His righteousness and judgment. But when Noah and His family were safe aboard the ark, it was Jehovah, the covenant-making God of love, that closed the door and sealed Noah safely within.

God loves people but God hates sin.

Which characteristic has a greater influence over His being? Love! God's love preserved Noah before God's wrath punished sin. Though all the world was corrupt, one man was righteous. That righteous man was provided for out of love before sin was punished.

We as Christians—people who walk with God—have a responsibility to this corrupted world to tell them that our God loves them more than He hates their sin. Then let's encourage them to come within the ark of Christ where there is still shelter in the time of storm.



The Key to World Peace

By Joseph T. Larson*

A military general of the United States Army at the close of World War I, in an address at Chicago said, "There have been 3,770 years of war in 4,000 years of history. You cannot tell me that there will not be another war!" History has proven this statement to be true.

Christians do not want war and are often asked to pray for and promote ways of peace among men.

Men of all nations have hoped for a peaceful world, but satanic methods of strife have robbed them of the blessings of peace. There is strife in homes, in political circles, and in every society. Only Jesus Christ can bring peace.

Jesus Christ is the key to international peace among nations. He is the "Prince of peace" (Isa. 9:6). He desires to give men peace with God by atoning for their sins and giving them new hearts. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9). Diplomats and rulers should hearken to the Word of God and listen to the advice of Jesus Christ who is called "Wonderful, Counsellor."

Many evil things must be ousted from the world scene before righteousness can

triumph. Christ alone has the power to do this.

When Christ comes to reign for 1,000 years, a kingdom of righteousness and peace will be ushered in. All despots and dictators will be deposed and judged. Satan will be bound, and the Antichrist and the false prophet will be placed into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:11—20:15). "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:7). This scripture tells plainly which government shall endure. All forms of past and present governments will perish. Theocracy, the government by one God, is what God has planned for the whole world for 1,000 years.

At the close of a great war, one general, willing to surrender, extended his hand to the victorious general. The victorious general said, "Your sword, first, if you please." After the surrender of his sword, both generals shook hands and were at peace.

So men must surrender to God all weapons and all hostile attitudes, and accept Him who is the Prince of Peace. After centuries of failure to bring peace, there is no other alternative than to allow Christ His rightful place as King of Kings.

*Spring Valley, Calif.

DECEMBER NAZARENE + CUS FOR PASTORS and LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Compiled by the Department of Stewardship

LEON DOANE, Executive Director
STEPHEN J. SORENSEN, Office Editor



General Superintendent Stowe

PALCON Plus

AS I WRITE THIS EDITORIAL, the schedule of Pastors' Leadership Conferences is half completed. PALCON seems to be a glowing success. Never has the general superintendents' mail bag bulged with more complimentary mail. We sincerely appreciate your enthusiastic response to this monumental effort to bring first-class continuing education to every Nazarene pastor.

But now what? Several months have passed since your PALCON. Has it made any real difference in your ministry? Have you read those books and listened to those tapes? Would you take a reading on your personal improvement in the four major areas of study?

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2. **BIBLICAL PREACHING.** Has your pulpit ministry been affected by the basic concepts of expository holiness preaching and sermon planning proposed by W. T. Purkiser, William McCumber, and Alex Deasley?

3. **FAMILY LIFE.** How are things in your home? Did the things which James Hamilton, Cecil Paul, and Jarrell Garsee said make a difference in your family life and that of your parishioners?

4. **ADMINISTRATION.** Are your board meetings any better after hearing Leslie Parrott and Ponder Gilliland? Did you get some help from Robert Scott and Mark Moore on financing your church? And has your philosophy of church management changed since you heard those dynamic laymen—Dick Jones, Bob Wilfong, Lee Shevel, Ron Mercer, and Dale Beckman?

Are the ideas of "How to Grow a Church" given by Chic Shaver, H. B. London, Morris Wilson, Keith Wright, Don Wellman, and Clarence Jacobs helping your church to grow?

Are your Sunday services better planned and more productive since hearing Bill Sullivan and Jim Van Hook?

Have you kept the promises you made to God and the other members of your colleague group?

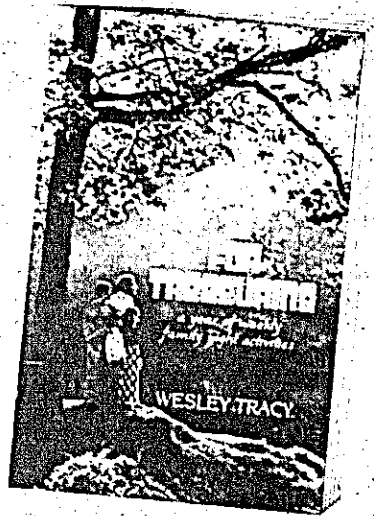
If your score on this test is not as high as you wish it were, don't be discouraged. PALCON was never envisioned as a magic fetish which would work instant miracles in every phase of your ministry. This is continuing education—PALCON plus daily application to learning the principles which will upgrade practice.

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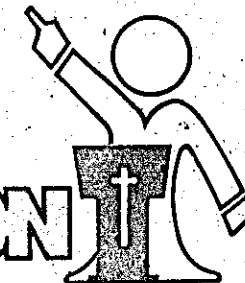
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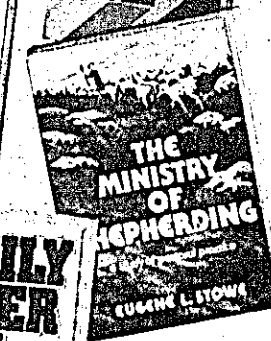
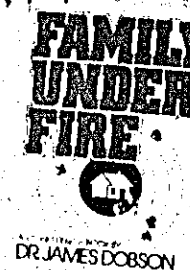
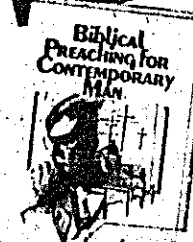
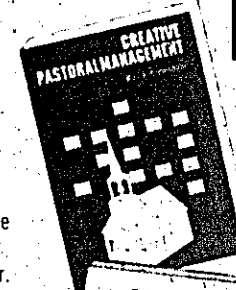
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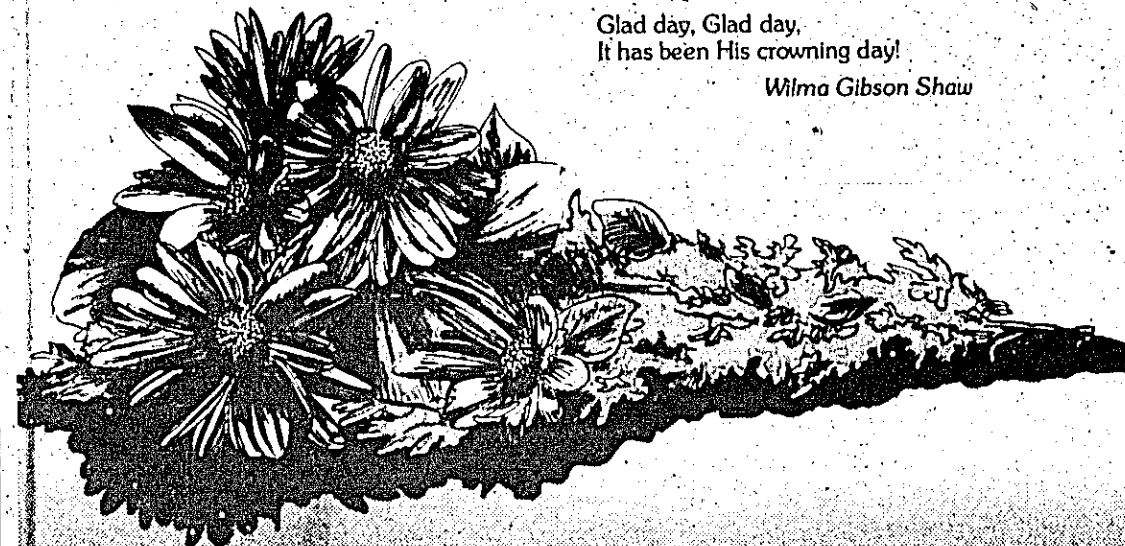
Pastor— Lest We Forget That

It was the crowning day
that day; it seemeth sad,
And yet, a crowning day
is not sad, but glad—
to exchange pain and suffering,
all sorrow and discord;
to remove the cross, its burden
which life thus did afford;
to understand the paths and steps
as ordered by the Lord;
to see unfolded in full view
the glories of God's Word.

It was the crowning day
that day; it seemeth sad,
And yet, a crowning day
is not sad, but glad—
to view the magnificence
and the brilliance of God;
to see the Lamb's book of life,
the King's scepter and His rod;
to behold the Christ whose death
and resurrection millions awed;
to fall gratefully at His feet
to thank, praise, and laud.

Glad day, Glad day,
It has been His crowning day!

Wilma Gibson Shaw



Place Their Name
on the
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Dr. Neil B. Wiseman joins Department of Education and the Ministry



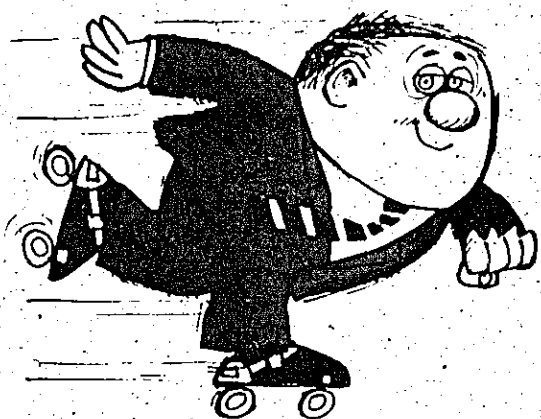
Dr. Neil B. Wiseman, former college chaplain and chairman of the Department of Religion at Trevecca Nazarene College, Nashville, Tenn., became an associate in the Department of Education and the Ministry on September 1, 1977.

Dr. Wiseman holds three degrees—Th.B., Olivet Nazarene College, 1955; M.Div., Nazarene Theological Seminary, 1960; D.Min., Vanderbilt Divinity School, 1974. His work in Christian education includes 15 years in the local church as pastor and director of Christian education. Early in his ministry, he was involved in producing Caravan materials and Sunday school audiovisual productions. He also served as director of Christian education at First Church of the Nazarene in Flint, Mich.

After chairing the Church School Board on the Colorado District, Dr. Wiseman returned to the Department of Church Schools at Kansas City as program associate, editor, and research director. He was the first editor of *Dialogue*, the young adult elective Sunday school curriculum, and the first producer of the *Sunday School Superintendents' Resource* packet. He has authored two books, *The Sunday School Supervisor* and *To the City with Love*. His writing appears frequently in Christian education journals, including *Edge*.

Dr. Wiseman has just concluded 15 months of intensive work as director of the innovative and highly successful Pastors' Leadership Conferences. To thousands of pastors in the United States, Canada, and Europe, he is known as "Mr. PALCON." His new assignment in the Department of Education and the Ministry will be to develop and expand the program of continuing education for ministers. He will also have charge of the recently revised courses of study for ministers in the Church of the Nazarene.

The Wiseman family includes two teenage sons. They reside in Olathe, Kans.



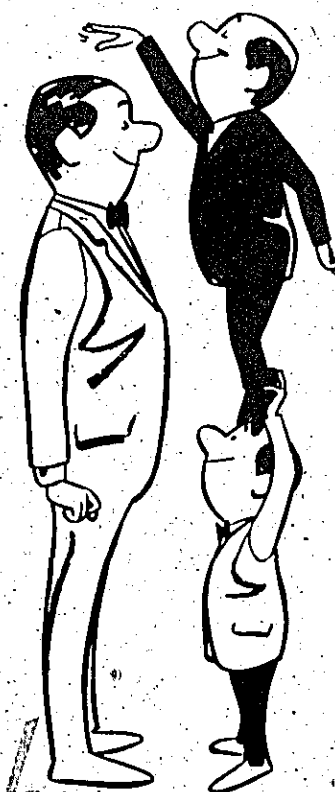
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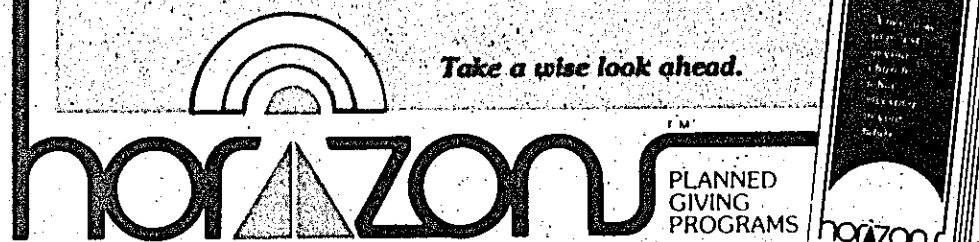
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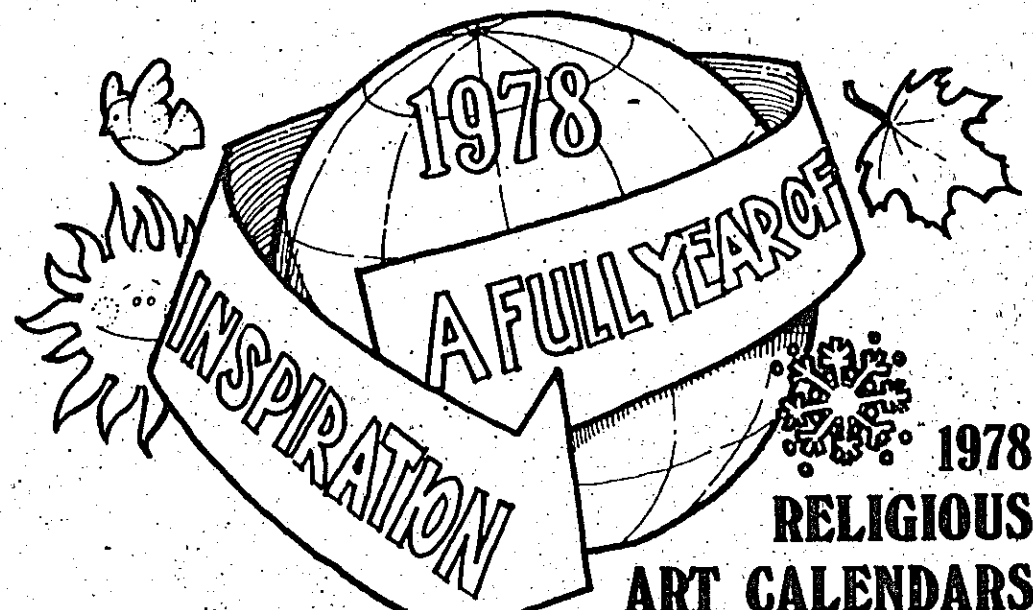
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FROM:

Melvin McCullough
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Melvin McCullough, Executive Director of the Department of Youth Ministries (pictured right), presents the record-breaking check to Arthur Borden, A.B.S. representative (pictured left).



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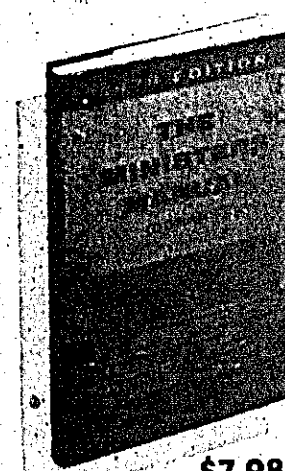
Dr. Stowe

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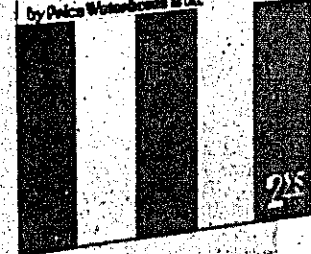
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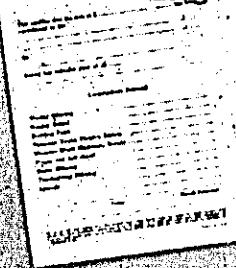
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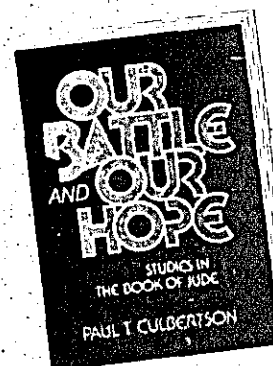
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What Wives Want from Their Husbands

WE WIVES are getting hit right and left with our role as a wife these days. But—confess it, girls—most of us need it. I think I'm safe in saying we all do. I am constantly finding out things I can do or be or say to make my husband happy.

Last week three of our ministerial staff couples were talking about the big emphasis on women today. I said, "I think we need a crash program for men and their role as husbands." To my surprise they all agreed with me and they put it to us point blank, "What do women want from men?"

Now a woman doesn't get asked that every day, and we all sat looking at each other blankly. It took me a while to get my mind in gear and gather up the fragments of many counselling sessions.

Perhaps what a woman wants from a man depends on the woman. Since Christians are usually the most willing to adjust, and really the only standpoint from which I can speak, I'll confine my views to the Christian woman.

1. *A woman wants a man to take strong Christian leadership.*

If a woman is already dominant she should have a frank talk with her husband and tell him she's giving him the responsibility. Most men will assume this leadership if they are

not coerced, intimidated, or shamed into it. If a woman tells him she respects him and feels a need for this, and doesn't correct his efforts, he will very likely take over.

2. *A woman wants a man to lead the home.*

Women may struggle for a freedom they will eventually hate. When all the family votes are in, it's still the man who should make the final decision. God has given him this appointed place. Anything short of masculine leadership in the home is confusion of God's ordained plan.

3. *A woman wants a man to love her.*

She wants to be told that she's loved. She needs to be told she's beautiful. A loved woman usually has a special glow. If she misuses the gentle love of her husband, she will have to pay the penalty. Many women are starved for love words and love expressions from their husbands. However, a man who loves his wife but doesn't demand the respect of strong leadership when there are issues to be decided on in the home sometimes finds that passivity blocks the respect which he wants from his wife.

4. *A woman wants a man to take an active part in teaching and disciplining the children.*

He should be as concerned about

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the children's development as the mother. Very often the father is not as strict as the mother. A balance in the home brings security to the child.

5. *A wife wants a man who is industrious and happy in his work—whatever it is.*

A man who barely serves his employer or church and begrudges every new day doesn't lend his family adequate security even though he brings a weekly paycheck. His family can almost feel guilty for thrusting unwanted responsibility on him. Some children suffer all their lives from even eating a complete meal because their father begrudged the food they ate as a child. A man's job takes on a sacred air when he loves and blesses his occupation. One man said he would feel like a sinner to remain occupied in a job he loathed. The Bible tells us whatever our hands find to do, to do it with all our might. Serve cheerfully and industriously.

6. *A woman wants to know, and needs to know, about the business affairs of the family.*

I know several men who buy all the groceries for the family. It's hard for me to comprehend this, but this is smothering to a woman's natural gifts and qualities for caring for her family. A long acquaintance of ours died recently, and his wife had no idea as to how the financial affairs of the couple stood, let alone knowing anything about what to do in such an emergency. She was like a frightened child. She not only was in a state of grief and shock, but in complete confusion about how much money she had, where it was, and how much was owed. It was a sad commentary on a man and woman who had lived together for over 40 years.

7. *A woman wants her husband to look neat.*

Her own appearance will be a great incentive for this. A man usually

allows the wife to pick out his clothes, or at least influence his opinions a great deal. A clean, sweet-smelling husband who is well groomed is easier to love. If a man expects a romantic wife, he needs to keep himself in good repair. She wants to be proud to be his wife.

8. *A woman wants a positive husband.*

Nothing hurts a marriage more than negativism. Fear of the future, fear of debts, fear of calamity, fear of sickness inject a home with insecurity. The woman needs to feel her future is secure with a self-confident husband to provide for her.

9. *A woman wants a home with short-range and long-range goals.*

A man who always reaches beyond his grasp has a sense of mystery. This sense of mystery keeps life from getting monotonous and routine.

10. *A woman appreciates a husband with a sense of humor.*

A husband who gives you the silent treatment when he's angry—and you don't know why—has found a slow means of torture for his wife. A lot of tense situations could be broken by a good laugh at one's situation. A merry heart is like medicine. It makes hubby's entrance at the front door a joy to look forward to.

11. *A woman wants a husband to listen.*

Her world is the most important to her, and she needs to feel he is interested in her activities during the day. The husband and wife who are best friends have a continual romance. There are no worries about the man or woman finding a more understanding or sympathetic ear outside the home if they each take time to listen and be interested in the needs, activities, and feelings of the other person.

12. *A woman wants a husband to communicate.*

Communication is not constant

chatter. It's feeling comfortable with the other person because of spoken or unspoken approval. Many couples live together and don't know each other. There is an invisible wall which creates a bondage to the other person so that there's a constant strain to make conversation or find something to do.

13. *A woman wants togetherness.*

A couple who does everything together is a happy couple. A man can learn to enjoy drying dishes just because he's near his wife. He can make grocery shopping a special treat because they are together. He can make a game out of ordinary household chores. My husband and I say we're playing house. When he was a little boy he had a clubhouse. When I was

little I had a playhouse. Now we're just big children, and we like to think we're children sweeping, washing dishes, and tidying up our clubhouse and playhouse. Maintain childlike simplicity and you'll be much happier.

14. *A woman likes a special night a week out.*

My husband jealously guards Monday morning for breakfast out together. He also takes me out for shrimp on Friday night, not because he's so fond of shrimp, but I am. He loves to please me and I love to let him know he does please me.

15. *A woman wants to know her husband's love is unconditional.*

Marriage is not a trial, and each person needs to have the security

Practical Points that make a difference

Headquarters Is Really Trying to Help You!

Dear Son:

I know how you feel at times with various departments and bureaus of the church flooding your desk with all kinds of material. You wonder sometimes if we might increase our missionary giving by saving on the tons of paper that immediately end in file 13. By the time community, educational, district, and general interests vie for your attention, the morning is fragmented with differing priorities. If I gave to every agency that asked me these days, I would end up in the hole every week with no place to hide.

But this is where discernment comes into the picture. Son, they are all try-

ing to help, and need your cooperation in making the church-international a unit of endeavor.

The Department of Evangelism is only one illustration. Did you know that you can use their open number, tell them the new members by profession of faith and from other denominations, and the Board of General Superintendents will send a personal letter of greetings? It takes only a few minutes—but look at the blessing for the new member and the relationship it holds for pastor and people.

Reports are in the same category. Actually they take little time to fill out, but they show in one dimension what the church is doing in any given area.

How about making up your mind right from the first that you will read what comes across your desk, discern what is important, and immediately respond as you can to those items that are imperative.

Love,
Paul

that it's forever. Sickness, loss of youth, nothing will threaten that love because it is built on integrity, godly integrity.

It's not easy for me to speak from the woman's needs, because I truly feel the greatest power to make the marriage most often lays with the woman. However, in this day when

the home is continually threatened by unparalleled temptations, it takes two working, praying, loving, dreaming, laughing, crying, hoping, believing together. Don't wait for your partner to improve. You be first, because God must have somewhere to start. Your marriage can be a blessed marriage. Happy living to you.

THE STARTING POINT

Concepts of Prayer

John W. Rilling, in his column "Word in Season" in *The Clergy Journal*, shares this interesting idea that could be carried out in a sermon. Mr. Rilling relates how many of us turn to prayer only in the crises of life. He calls this conception of prayer the "For Emergency Use Only" idea.

The Preacher and Preaching

Bishop Quayle, a noted preacher in his day, one time said: "Preaching is not the art of making a sermon and delivering it but of making a preacher and delivering that."

Every preacher needs to hear, ever and again, the authentic and confirming Word—in his own heart—before he is adequate for the task of preaching. And for every man who has the authentic Word; preaching, then, is truly an event.



by
C. Neil Strait

Pastor, First
Church of the Nazarene
Lansing, Mich.

The Minister as "Interrupter"

Dr. Caryle Marney has said that the minister is "... one sent to change, by interruption."

Certainly the minister's proclamation—if it is biblically based—often interrupts the life-style of people. Let us take courage that the great change-agents of history have been "interrupters."

Three Pictures of Jesus

There are three accounts in the Gospels that give us a glimpse of Jesus and His life-style.

One is found in Matt. 26:26-27: "And while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And He took a cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you'" (NASB).¹ "The phrase 'He ... gave ... to the disciples' pictures the sharing hand of Jesus.

The "sharing hand" had been a symbol of His ministry. He is our model for sharing.

A second picture is recorded in John 13:1-20. Here Jesus washes the disciples' feet. I call it *the serving Host*.

Again, it is a vivid reminder of what Jesus had done throughout His short years of ministry. Always He was the "serving Host." Service was His mission, and we have no greater example than the washing of the disciples' feet.

A final picture is seen in Luke 22:20: "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood" (NASB). It is a picture of *the spent heart*. Jesus emptied himself for us. Paul's words are

adequate: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9, NASB).

The "spent heart" is the example that challenges the church to a depth of commitment which clarifies every priority and sets the heart doing the mission of its Master.

Commitment

The Living Bible paraphrases Psalm 37:5 to read: "Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him to help you do it and he will."² There are three dimensions to commitment: (1) The scope of our commitment—everything. (2) The security of our commitment—"Commit everything you do to the Lord ... and he will" (3) The strength of our commitment—"Trust him" Every relationship built on trust has a built-in strength,

for out of trust comes confidence, and hence strength. This is how Paul put it in 2 Tim. 1:12: "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

A Word About Preaching

In the foreword to Colin Morris' book *The Word and the Words*, Donald Cantaur highlights the philosophy of preaching as held by Morris in these words: "The articulation of God's imperious demand, the offer of his forgiveness and the gift of his peace."

It would be hard to improve on this concept or philosophy of preaching.

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IN THE STUDY

Seeds for Sermons

This month, read the last three minor prophets—Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi—and the Christmas story from Matthew. Through the eyes of the prophets see the advent of Christ who alone was Prophet, Priest, and King.



by
Mark E. Moore

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December 4

A CHRISTMAS EARTHQUAKE

TEXT: "For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. 2:6-7).

INTRODUCTION: This first Sunday of Advent we see God's Christmas Earthquake. It is different from the Palm Sunday earthquake in Alaska not many years ago. Handel, in his *Messiah*, uses this portion in a great soul-shaking section of

his oratorio. When the "desire of all nations"—the Messiah—came, it was an earthshaking event!

I. THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME UNTO ME

As you have read the minor prophets week by week, have you noticed that the common opening statement of each prophet is basically: "The word of the Lord came unto me"? It is the thrill of knowing the Lord speaks to us and has a message for us today. For Haggai it was the building of the Temple, and the glory of it. He even foresaw the greater glory when "a greater than Solomon" has appeared, even Jesus Christ. How often we have heard fellow Christians testify, "The Lord spoke to me." Praise God for a speaking Lord!

II. THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME

Haggai spoke of the "desire of all nations" coming, but John in his Gospel testifies that the eternal Word of the Lord came (1:1, 14). John testifies of His glory. This is the message of Christmas! Though we sing, "Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing," we cannot grasp the earthshaking event that really took place. So great was God's Christmas earthquake, the earth still shakes as His name is proclaimed. And the glory is that in the shaking, only Satan's empire falls!

III. THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME UNTO ME

The glory of the Christmas earthquake is that one day my sand castles fell, and I saw that it was the loving hand of Jesus that had shaken my insecure world. When Sir James Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform, was asked: "What was your greatest discovery?" his striking reply was, "On the morning of Christmas Day, 1861, I discovered that I was a sinner and that Jesus Christ was my Saviour." Oh, the glory of Christmas when the WORD of the Lord came even to you, to me!

CONCLUSION: The story is told that a minor earthquake tremor shook a church where a group of the "saints" had met. When the shaking started, they fell on their knees and started praying. When the tremor stopped, they stopped praying. The faithful custodian looking on

said, "O Lord, shake 'em again, shake 'em again!"

My prayer is, Lord, send a Christmas earthquake. Shake us again! Shake us again!

December 11

A CHRISTMAS FOUNTAIN

TEXT: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1).

INTRODUCTION: It is difficult to select a theme verse for Zechariah because the book is more a compilation of sermons than a single message. For example, chapters 1, 7, 8, 9, and 12 all begin with a fresh message from "the word of the Lord." Dr. J. B. Chapman's choice of 13:1 as best portraying Christ is my choice today. Zechariah is a fitting study for this second Sunday in Advent, for so many references tell of Jesus and His mission on earth.

I. A FOUNTAIN OF CLEANSING

For this message, open your hymnals to that great hymn of Augustus Toplady—"Rock of Ages." Notice, it was from the wounded side of Jesus that this fountain of cleansing was opened. It is "the double cure." It is for sin, and it is for cleansing. Zechariah even saw a glorious day when holiness unto the Lord will be triumphant (14:20). When salvation is mine and my heart has been cleansed, then I know the joy of the King—the King of Kings—coming unto me, even me (9:9).

II. A FOUNTAIN OF TEARS

The second stanza of "Rock of Ages" begins by speaking of the flowing tears. I know tears cannot save me, but let tears come to my eyes as I behold the wounds of Jesus. Zechariah said, having looked at the wounded form of Jesus, "They shall mourn for him" (12:10; 13:6). The more you gaze upon Jesus and see His love wounds for you, the more you will find tears of love flowing from your eyes. The next time you take the Communion bread and wine, look at the love wounds of Jesus.

III. A FOUNTAIN FOR ALL

The third and last stanza of "Rock of Ages" speaks of seeing Jesus on the throne. All my life I have lived on the opposite side of the earth from where Jesus lived and died. I am grateful that this Fountain was opened to all. It reaches beyond the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It reaches you. It reaches me!

CONCLUSION: Have you ever looked at the shape of the Bethlehem star? It is not the common five-pointed star, nor the six-pointed Jewish star. It is the star of the Cross. The Bethlehem star fits perfectly over the Calvary Cross. This is the fuller message of Christmas.

December 18

A CHRISTMAS SUNRISE

TEXT: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2).

INTRODUCTION: How fitting that this Sunday before Christmas we should conclude our study of the minor prophets. How significant that the Old Testament should end with the promise of the coming of Christ. Our thoughts will be on two main prophecies of Christ—Mal. 3:1-2 and 4:2.

I. THE LORD WILL COME ONLY IF WE PREPARE (3:1-2)

Dr. E. P. Ellyson, writing the Sunday school exposition on this verse (Dec. 22, 1935), said: "The reason we do not see more manifestations of the divine presence is because the way is not prepared. We cry for God to come into our hearts, and into our churches, but we expect Him to come over the rubbish. We are always disappointed. Can we never learn the lesson?" How much we need to apply the words of "Joy to the World": "Let every heart prepare Him room."

II. THE LORD WILL HEAL IF ONLY WE PERMIT

Malachi 3:1-2 is sung in the early part of Handel's *Messiah*. The summer of 1741 was a time of extreme depression for Handel. London had ill received his music, and he felt rejection and failure.

A friend, Charles Jennens, gave Handel a compilation of Bible verses that became the scriptural inspiration of the *Messiah*. Early in his oratorio, Handel knew Mal. 3:1-2 was fulfilled in his life. The Lord had suddenly come. Many can testify that after a time of darkness and despair there came that glorious moment when the Sun broke through!

Charles Wesley, in "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing," wrote: "Hail, the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings."

III. HE WILL LOVE IF ONLY WE PERCEIVE

Malachi begins (1:2) with a testimony of God's love, and His disappointment that men cannot perceive it. John 3:16-17 is a testimony of God's love, and vv. 18-19 of His disappointment that men cannot perceive it. What a tragedy that we who live this side of Christmas should not perceive the love of God in Christ! Joseph Mohr, in the best-loved of all carols, "Silent Night," magnifies our text and God's love. "Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love's pure light . . ."

CONCLUSION: One Christmas season many years ago I wrote a letter to a Christian professor confessing and apologizing that on one occasion I had cheated on a test. His reply was centered in Phillips Brooks's beautiful carol, "O Little Town of Bethlehem": "O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend on us, we pray. Cast out our sin, and enter in; Be born in us today."

My prayer this Christmas is that if there are any hurts in your heart, you may find His gracious healing and perceive His infinite love.

December 25

THE CHRIST OF BETHLEHEM

TEXT: "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel" (Matt. 2:6).

INTRODUCTION: This Christmas Day we conclude our Bible Reading-Predaching Plan for 1977. We have covered over one-half of the Old Testament books. Having just completed the 12 minor prophets,

the thousand Sunday we saw in Mary's account of the Testament prophecy fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. What a sense of awe pervades in this last chapter! There are some thoughts and profound words from the Scriptures that say a lot of things in the last chapter of 1958. The title is the same, "The Word of God," and the outline is the same.

I. THE PHARISEES DID NOT THINK OF JESUS

"The great multitude of men are, and have been, interested only in themselves. Indifferently interested." Nevertheless, there were those who were the seeds of the new world, all along through the ages who saw the vision of the Christ. Simeon, Samuel, Isaiah, Malachi. "We came to His temple this morning . . . It is impossible for me to stand by this temple, and think of Him only as a child. . . . The eternity past centers in this child. All heaven and all earth of the past are here. . . . And all the future is here also. . . . The eternities, the past and the future meet in Him. Heaven and earth meet in Him. He is the Son of Mary. He is the Son of God."

II. BETHLEHEM DID NOT BECOME GREAT OF ITSELF

"Here is littleness made great. . . . Here is a little city, scarcely more than a village, lifted into prominence, shedding the luster of its presence over the ages. Why? Because here the Christ came. So it is in all life. . . . Were not Simon and Andrew and James and John but ordinary fishermen just casting their nets? Yes, but one day Jesus came along and said, 'Follow me . . .'. And we could add: Mary and Egypt were exalted because of Jesus and prophecy of old that was fulfilled (Matt. 1:22-23; 2:14-15).

III. THE GOVERNOR IS NOT RULER OF HIMSELF

"King, Prince, Ruler, Governor: the embodiment of government means not empty power and dominion but in that it is the act of care, provision, protection. . . . We live under the government of the United States. It means something

*From *Scriptures from Matthew's Gospel*, by P. F. Grace, Nazareth Publishing House, Undated.

more than that there is a society and obedience. It means that our life and means that we are to have no property and no money. . . . This is the life of Jesus Christ. There is no other. There is no other. It means that we are to have no other life.

CONCLUSION: "There is a life in Jesus Christ. . . . How the pure and holy life lives. . . . That is Alexander Caesar, Napoleon, Socrates, Christ. The purified men and women of this world are not purified by genius or position or wealth but by the revealing Christ."

By
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Gleanings

from the Greek

2 Corinthians 13

"Mouth" or "Testimony" (13:1)

The second sentence of this verse is a free quotation from Deut. 19:15. Probably the meaning is clear enough. Today, however, we would not say "in the mouth" (a literal, Hebraistic expression), but "by the testimony." NASB, NIV.

"Word" or "Matter" (13:1)

Abbott-Smith notes that *hremā* is used "properly, of that which is said or spoken," and so "a word." Then it was extended to mean "a saying, statement." Parallel to the Hebrew *darar*, it finally came to be used, as here, for "a thing, matter," as "that which is the subject

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The Preacher's Magazine

of speech" (p. 397). It is interesting to note that in the KJV "matter" is used in Deut. 19:15, where the Septuagint has *hrema*. What is stated or reported has to be confirmed by two or three witnesses.

Still sinning (13:2)

The verb *proamartanō* is found only here and in 12:21 (the immediate context). Properly it means "to sin before" (A-S, p. 378)—from *pro*, "before," and *hamartano*, "sin." In 12:21 it is translated "have sinned already," and in 13:2 "heretofore have sinned."

In both cases it is the perfect active participle, which not only indicates completed action but also emphasizes a continuing state. So these incorrigible opponents of Paul at Corinth were still sinning.

The first part of the verse in the KJV is a literal translation of the Greek; but it makes rather awkward English and can be misunderstood. It is given more clearly in the NIV: "I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent . . ."

"Mighty" or "Powerful"? (13:3)

At the end of v. 3 we find the verb *dynamai* translated "is mighty," whereas in v. 4 the noun *dynamis* is twice rendered "power." By using "is powerful" in v. 3 the NIV points up the connection.

"Examine . . . prove" (13:5)

The two verbs are *peirazo* and *dokimazo*. Thayer defines the first as "to try, make trial of, test: [someone], for the purpose of ascertaining his quality . . ." (p. 498). The second, he says, means "to test, examine, prove, scrutinize [to see whether a thing be genuine or not], as metals" (p. 154).

While these two terms seem to be used rather interchangeably in the NT, Trench warns us that "they are not perfectly synonymous." He goes on to say: "As employed in the NT, *dokimazein* almost always implies that the proof is victoriously surmounted, the *proved* is also *approved* . . . just as in English we speak of *tried men* . . . meaning not merely those who have been tested, but who have stood the test" (*Synonyms*, p. 278).

On the other hand, *peirazo* "means properly no more than to make experi-

ence of . . . to pierce or search into . . ." Trench continues: "It came next to signify the trying intentionally, and with the purpose of discovering what of good or evil, of power or weakness, was in a person or thing . . . or . . . revealing the same to the tried themselves; as when St. Paul addresses the Corinthians . . . 'examine yourselves,' (p. 280).

The two verbs may be translated "examine . . . prove" (KJV), "test . . . examine" (NASB), or "Examine . . . test" (RSV, NIV). They have much the same meaning here.

"Reprobates" (13:5, 6, 7)

The word is *adokimoi*. It means "rejected after testing" (see *Word Meanings*, 3:38-39). The term *reprobates* is hardly contemporary. Today we would probably say "fail the test" (NASB, NIV). Paul affirms that he has not failed the test, and he hopes that his readers will not.

In the middle of v. 7 we have "approved" and at the end "reprobates." The Greek has "*dokimoi* . . . *adokimoi*." The NASB expresses well this play on words by using "approved . . . unapproved." On the other hand, the NIV preserves the continuity of the three occurrences of *adokimoi* by having in v. 7: "stood the test . . . may seem to have failed."

"Wish" or "Pray"? (13:9)

The verb is *euchomai*, which is correctly translated "pray" in v. 7. That is the only meaning that Abbott-Smith's *Lexicon* gives for this word, though others allow "wish." But we would agree with Greeven when he writes: "In 2 Cor. 13:7 Paul expressly mentions God, to whom he prays that the Corinthians may do no evil. We should understand v. 9 also of intercessory prayer rather than as a mere wish" (TDNT, 2:776).

The verb *euchomai* occurs only 7 times in the NT. Already the compound *proeuchomai* had begun to supplant the simple verb in the Septuagint, and in the NT it became dominant (87 times).

"Perfection" (13:9, 11)

In v. 11 it is the verb *katartizo* (see WM, 3:196). In v. 9 it is the derivative noun *katartisis* (only here in NT). On

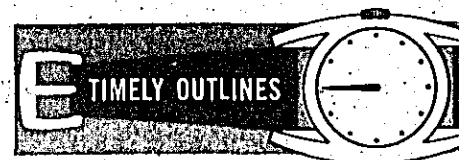
the latter Delling writes: "Similarly *katartisis* denotes inner strength whether of the community [*foikodome*] in its organic relationship, or of the character of its members, i.e., their maturity as Christians (2 Cor. 13:9)" (TDNT, 1:476). Both "perfection" (KJV, NIV) and "completion" (NASB) fit well here. But the verb in v. 11 must be translated consistently with this.

"Sharpness" (13:10)

It is the adverb *apotomos* (only here and Titus 1:13). Abbott-Smith says it means: "abruptly, curtly," and so "sharply, severely" (p. 55). Plummer says of Paul, "He writes sharply, that he may not have to act sharply" (p. 378). This was the part of wisdom.

"Edification . . . Destruction" (13:10)

The first noun is *oikodome*, which literally means "building up." The second is *kathairesis* (see comments on 10:4, 8), which means "pulling down." So the correct translation here is: "for building up and not for tearing down" (NASB; cf. NIV).



Christmas outline

Missing the Miracle

(Matt. 2:1-12)

- I. THE ONES WHO MISSED THE MIRACLE
 - A. The Innkeeper
 - B. King Herod
 - C. The religious leaders
- II. THE ONES WHO FOUND THE MIRACLE
 - A. The shepherds
 - B. The wise men
 - C. Simeon and Anna
- III. WHY DID THESE PEOPLE FIND THE MIRACLE?
 - A. Honest enough to admit their need

B. Humble enough to receive the Lord

RONALD FRY

Series of Advent Outlines

By Darl Keefer

(I used these sermons in a series from Advent Sunday through Christmas. I had an Advent wreath made, and each service a candle was lighted as I explained what each represented, and then, of course, the center one was lighted.)

THE GREAT PROMISE

INTRODUCTION: On every package sent out by a certain printer was an impressive trademark. It was simply a circle, within which was the name of the printer and these words: "I never disappoint." Every promise of the Lord bears this trademark.

- I. GOD PROMISED AN ADVENT "... He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (Gen. 3:15, NASB).
- II. AN ADVENT OF A MESSIAH (Isaiah 11; John 1:41)
- III. A MESSIAH WHO WILL REDEEM US (Isa. 9:4)
- IV. A MESSIAH WHO WILL REDEEM US from sin, distress, darkness, depletion, defeat, and destruction, and has named Him "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).
- V. HE HAS COME IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST (Luke 2:11)

CONCLUSION: The Messiah-Jesus has come that you and I might be redeemed and have life; that we might be rescued from evil and hell. The promise—the great promise—has been kept. Let's accept the promise of God.

THE GREAT LIGHT

SCRIPTURE: Isa. 60:1-5; 9:2

TEXT: John 8:12

INTRODUCTION: Jesus said of himself: "I am the light of the world." A light has many characteristics, and we would like to examine them today. This light of Jesus is—

- I. A GUIDING LIGHT
- II. A CHEERING AND GLADDENING LIGHT
- III. A HEALING LIGHT
- IV. A LIBERATING LIGHT
- V. A PURIFYING LIGHT
- VI. A REVEALING LIGHT
- VII. A PENETRATING AND POWERFUL LIGHT
- VIII. AN ILLUMINATING LIGHT
- IX. AN AVAILABLE LIGHT
- X. AN EXPERIENCED LIGHT

CONCLUSION: Holman Hunt's famous picture depicts Christ standing at the heart's door, waiting to be invited inside. The title of the picture is "The Light of the World," and in a very truthful way it shows that the real Light of the world wants to enter the hearts of people. Will you let Him in at this Christmas season?

THE GREAT LOVE

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1-20

TEXT: John 3:16

INTRODUCTION: God wants all the people of the world to know how much He loves them. There is a Sunday school song that reminds us of this great love—"Jesus loves the little children . . . of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, They are precious in His sight."

In one church a special Advent wreath used is so large, none of us could get our arms around it. It is composed of red, yellow, black, and white, just like the song. The candles represent the people of the world. As each different candle is lighted during Advent, members pray especially for those nations and often collect money to help minister to them.

I. THE GREAT LOVE ORIGINATES FROM GOD

- A. It is written from beginning to end in His Word.
- B. It is personified for us.
- C. It is in action for us.
- D. It is for all of us.

II. THE GREAT LOVE CONTINUES FROM GOD (1 John 4:19)

- A. It did not stop at the manger.
- B. It did not stop at the Cross.
- C. It did not stop at the Resurrection.
- D. It continues on today's scene.
- E. It continues on tomorrow's scene.

III. THE GREAT LOVE SHOWN FROM GOD'S FAMILY

- A. The great love that stirs (Heb. 10:24)
- B. Love that shows (Matt. 5:44)
- C. Love that strengthens (1 Thess. 5:11)
- D. Love that spreads (Matt. 28:19)

CONCLUSION: What greater love than to see the Creator sending His only begotten Son to die for His creation's sins.

THE GREAT HOPE

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:8-20

TEXT: John 14:3

INTRODUCTION: Arch Edwards wrote in *Come Ye Apart*, November 28, 1976: "Hope, in one sense, is the oil which lubricates the vehicle of life. Life without hope becomes existence without meaning." The coming of Jesus the Messiah gives us the great hope of life.

I. THE GREAT HOPE IS TO DISCOVER HIM

- A. His love
- B. His peace
- C. His spirit

II. THE GREAT HOPE IS TO EXPERIENCE HIM

- A. His forgiveness
- B. His transformation
- C. His comforting

III. THE GREAT HOPE IS TO SHARE HIM

- A. What He has done
- B. What He is doing
- C. What He will do

CONCLUSION: Edward Mote wrote the song "The Solid Rock" (quote these meaningful words).

Christmas brings us that great hope!

BULLETIN BARREL

A CHRISTMAS CANDLE

A Christmas candle is a lovely thing;
It makes no noise at all,
But softly gives itself away—
While, quite unselfish, it grows
small.

Eva Nicholson



TRUE CHRISTMAS

If one should walk the midnight hills
Outside a quiet town
And suddenly should see the sight
Of glory blazing down;

If one should search with humble men
To find a manger dim
And kneel in simple worship there
As welcoming for Him;

Then would this season hold much less
Of tinsel, gilt, and sound,
For peace would fill the heart that
came

To seek the Christ, and found.

—Selected

LET HIM IN

*There was no room for Christ in crowded
Bethlehem.*

*Only a star beneath the heaven's diadem.
How many times since then has He been
turned aside,*

*His pleas to enter in impatiently denied.
He asks no garnished room, no chamber
set apart,*

*But just the simple gift of shelter in your
heart.*

—Marjorie Hunt Pettit

REVIVAL NOTES—

Newspapermen went down from London to report firsthand the marvelous happenings of the great Welsh revival at the turn of the century. On their arrival in Wales, one of them asked a policeman where the Welsh revival was. Drawing himself to his full height, he laid his hand over his heart and said, "Gentlemen, the Welsh revival is inside this uniform!" He had caught the holy fire.

—Selected

CHRISTMAS FOR A DAY?

"When Christmas is over," said a merchant to a minister, "it's over, and it's our job to rid this store completely of Christmas in a day."

"Well," said the minister, "I've a bigger job—to keep Christmas in the hearts of my people for all year."

*He who has not Christmas in his heart
will never find it under a tree.*

CHRISTMAS ETERNAL

The presents are put up, the tree is torn down, the toys are tossed about, the stores have sales, and the bills begin. Yet the best part—the Christ Child—is not seasonal but eternal. He remains as long as the heart is open to Him.

When Christmas is over, what will you have left? —Jim Christy

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WANTED: The following books on Nazarene History: *P. F. Bresee, D.D.*, by A. M. Hills; *Out Under the Stars*, by Miller; *The Potter's Vessel*, by McConnell; *Holiness Pioneering in Southland*, by Roberts; *Rev. Bud Robinson*, by Wise; Also 1907, 1908, 1923, 1932 Nazarene Manuals. Send list of what you have and asking price to Larry Stover, 7402 E. 110th St., Kansas City, Mo. 64134.

COMING next month

• **God in the Beginning**
We cannot exhaust the list of instances where this concept is not appropriate

• **I Can't Believe There's a Hell**
However much we may see the need of it, who doesn't shudder at the thought of it?

• **Church Growth: An Idea Whose Time Has Come**
It takes a miracle from God for a new convert to be born into the Kingdom, and for a new church to grow and develop.

• **A Day-Care Center for Your Church**
By providing day-care services that are supportive and complementary to the family, the church can enhance and protect family life.



A rut, so someone says, is a grave with both ends pushed out. Who wants to stay in a grave, or even a rut? Maybe our plans to go bimonthly with the January-February issue will help us avoid "rutdom" with all its dire consequences. We think we mean this—but could be a bit of whistling in the dark going on, for to be honest, the editor would like to keep coming your way every month. However, back to the first statement, it is always exciting to try something new and different. We will be hoping you like what we are doing when you receive your next issue of the magazine. Meantime, it may sound like we are in a rut, but we again send you our warm and sincere greetings for the Christmas season. May your celebration of it be the most joyful yet—even above those you experienced in childhood, which are indeed hard to top.

Yours for souls,