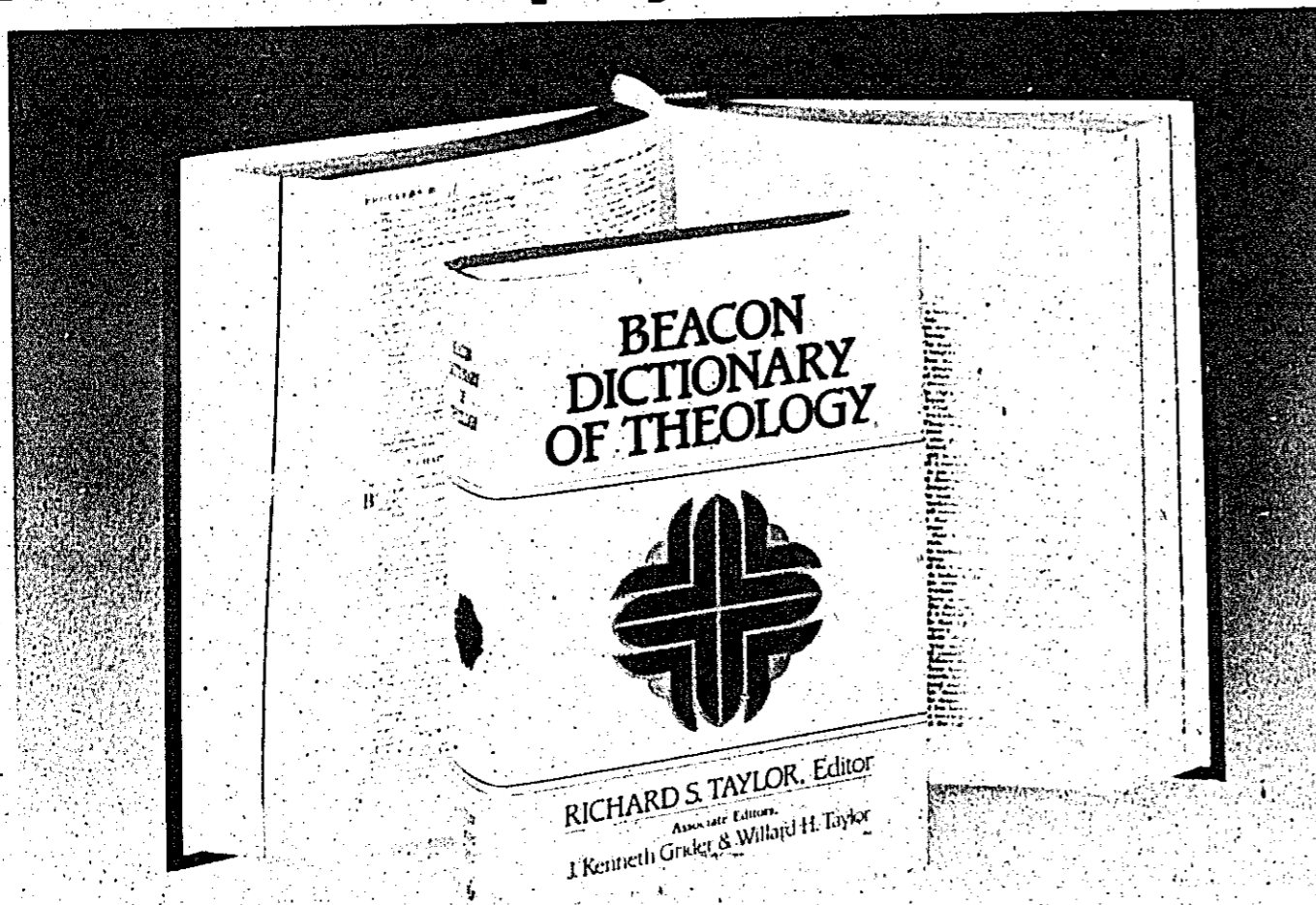


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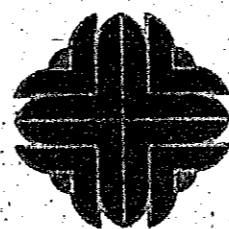
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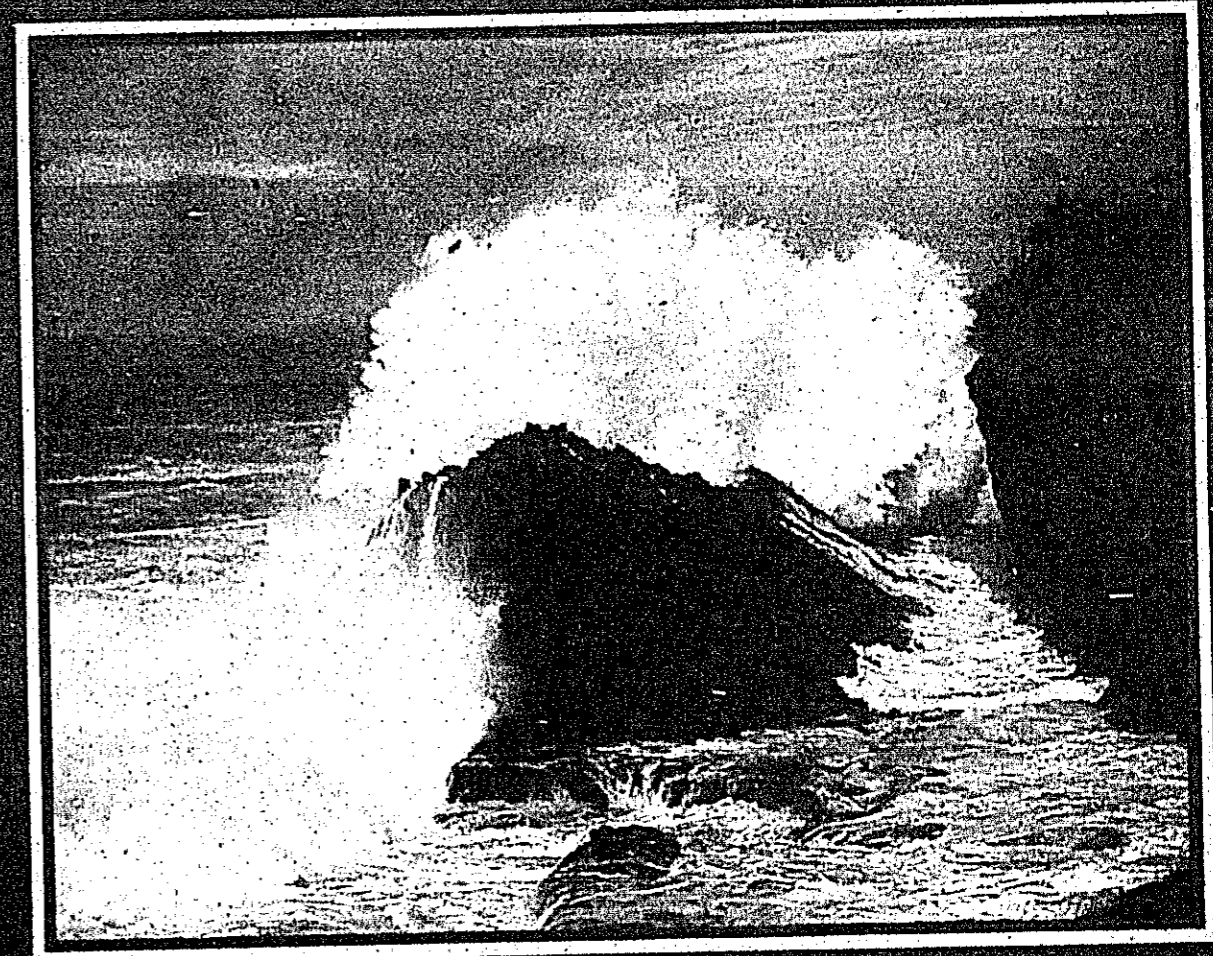


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JUNE, JULY, AUGUST, 1984

# THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE



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# Suitable for Framing

## Processionary Caterpillars

Processionary caterpillars feed upon pine needles. They move through the trees in a long procession, one leading and the others following—each with his eyes half closed and his head snugly fitted against the rear extremity of his predecessor.

Jean-Henri Fabre, the great French naturalist, after patiently experimenting with a group of the caterpillars, finally enticed them to the rim of a large flowerpot. He succeeded in getting the first one connected up with the last one, thus forming a complete circle, which started moving around in a procession, with neither beginning nor end.

The naturalist expected that after a while they would catch on to the joke, get tired of their useless march, and start off in some new direction. But not so.

Through sheer force of habit, the living, creeping circle kept moving around the rim of the pot—around and around, keeping the same relentless pace for seven days and seven nights—and would doubtless have continued longer had it not been for sheer exhaustion and ultimate starvation.

Incidentally, an ample supply of food was close at hand and plainly visible, but it was outside the range of the circle so they continued along the beaten path.

They were following instinct—habit—custom—tradition—precedent—past experience—"standard practice"—or whatever you may choose to call it, but they were following it blindly.

They meant well—but got no place.

Of course the natural application to the church is obvious. But ponder why both leaders and followers in the church are so happy with this arrangement.

## EDITORIAL



Wesley Tracy

## PREACHING POINT

by Wesley Tracy

Eighty-five percent of preachers," declared my first homiletics professor, Donald Metz, "say the same thing in the same way." Twenty-five years later I asked Metz if he still believed his 85-percent formula. "No," he shot back, "it's a lot higher than that."

If Metz is right, and I think he is, the matter of preaching style is as neglected as a ragweed in a rose garden. If you examine your books on preaching, you will discover that the chapter (or page) on style is buried in the back of the book. From the conglomeration of odds and ends that gets stuffed in the "style" section you may also begin to wonder if anyone really knows what "style" is. Everything from gestures to gerunds gets herded into the same corral and branded "style." Some authors flail at the obvious for a few pages and then declare that style is a personal thing anyway, different for each preacher and something that is more or less automatic. As long as it is *sincere* and *natural* it will take care of itself. Thus style is sent to the end of the line of preaching priorities.

To me style is the skillful use of language that makes the spoken message clear, simple, direct, personal, vital, and effective. The Earl of Chesterfield in 1749 called style the "dress for thought." In 1980 Haddon W. Robinson called it the same thing. Maybe they are right. The preacher's style task, then, is to search for the right words—the right wardrobe for the lofty themes of the Bible. Robinson declares that this search "scrapes the fungus off thought."

Elizabeth Achtemeier reminds us that to neglect the mastery of language

is to be like a carpenter who . . . sets out to fashion a piece of fine furniture, using nothing but an ax. We may hack away at a congregation with tools totally inappropriate to their purpose—dull words, misleading sentences, repetitious paragraphs, ineffective illustrations. Or we may take up the fine tool of language, honed and polished to a cutting edge, and then trust that God will use it to fashion his people—his work of art in Christ (Eph. 2:10).<sup>2</sup>

Such a challenge sets many style-related concerns to waving their hands for recognition like the schoolboy who finally knows an answer. Clarity, simplicity, appropriateness, vividness all wave "I know! I know!" Anaphoric cadence, assonance, personification, chiasmus, metaphor, simile, synecdoche, and the like put eager palms in the air. Even the forgotten waif, the "periodic sentence," says, "I can help."

Ignoring all these, for now, let me call on just one stylistic device that has been snubbed in a lot of sermons I've heard lately. Let the law of specificity speak. The law goes something like this: *If you replace general words, phrases, and images with specific words, phrases, and images you enhance communication.*

Consider this example from *The Golden Book on Writing* by David Lambuth:

*The man talked to the workers.*

This sentence is acceptable so far as grammar and syntax are concerned. It is weak because of its *general* phrasing. It needs the fungus scraped off. Here is Lambuth's rewrite:

*"Levensky, the communist, harangued the ditch diggers."* Now the phrasing is specific. Note the benefits of the law of specificity.

1. Increased clarity.
2. The quality of communication is improved.
3. The risk of misunderstanding is reduced.
4. The mental images are much sharper.
5. The abstract gives way to the concrete.

All of the foregoing benefits are important. I will enlarge only on number five. Conquering abstractness is a formidable problem, especially when preaching about theological principles or doctrines. The law of specificity is *one* way of conquering the abstract with the concrete. Specifics tend to be more concrete; generalities more abstract.

One preacher declared, "The relative value of the transitory deceives many. Thus the temporal is chosen at the expense of the eternal." Jesus said the same thing in *specific, concrete* language: "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

One speaker touted the emptiness of life by saying, "Mortal existence is victimized by the fecund human imagination which invents ruses to escape the reality that human life is meaningless." Shakespeare, a master of specificity and concreteness, expressed the same theme:

*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.<sup>3</sup>*

Here are some abstract generalities that I've heard in recent sermons that could be improved by the law of specificity: "Enter the realm of redemption." (Is this the Green Stamp store?)

"Keep the faith, walk in the light, and reap the harvest." (What could all that mean to a visitor?)

"Live by heaven's standards, not earth's standards." (Well, what are they? Do you want me to stop swearing, help the hungry, or go on a diet?)

"I want to go all the way with Jesus." (You what?)

"In Eden, that first couple had ample sources of satisfaction." (Well, what satisfactions did they have?)

"Job was faced with overwhelming difficulties." (I heard he had sores and a nagging wife.)

"We indulged in an act of generosity." (So what did you do—put a dollar in the offering? Or put the *Preacher's Magazine* in your will?)

Such generalities are sometimes all right as topic sentences. But meanings must be spelled out.

Perhaps the Bible is our best coach on the law of concrete specificity. In Psalm 104 David could have said *trees*, but he cited *cedars* and *firs*. He could have said *animals*, but he said *wild asses* and *grazing cattle*. He specifies the *stork*, not just birds. Human life is concretized, being described as grass and a flower soon to wither. The Bible does not leave God an "oblong blur" in the mind of man. He is called, specifically and

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concretely, a father, a husband, a bridegroom, a shepherd, a farmer, a fire, a king, and a redeemer of slaves."

Some preachers believe it is "unspiritual" to search for the "right words." Their style seems to be to get themselves so emotionally wrought up about the subject that they can't hold back the words. Mistaking this for "unction," they passionately blurt out their feelings as loud and fast as they can. Such sermons resemble the creek in back of my house when we get three inches of rain in three hours. It becomes a muddy torrent. Brush and weeds, Campbell soup cans, tennis shoes, fishing lines, and old T-shirts come churning downstream and are flung everywhere.

The preacher who does not dig out the right words may preach like a flooding creek. His or her sermon becomes a torrent of muddy prose tangled with misplaced modifiers, ambiguous antecedents, sentence fragments, grammatical cru-

dities, hazy abstractions, and fuzzy generalities full of "sound and fury, signifying nothing."

It seems that failing to labor to find the right words is rather "unspiritual" after all. And if you want to get started applying the law of specificity right away, try it out on the preceding sentence.

## NOTES

1. Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 175.
2. Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Creative Preaching*, Abingdon Preacher's Library, William D. Thompson, editor (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 22.
3. *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene V.
4. See Elizabeth Achtemeier's treatment of this theme in *Creative Preaching*, 97-103.

## We Get Letters

### Small Church Issue Appreciated

I want to express to you my appreciation for your recent issue of the *Preacher's Magazine*, "Focus on the Small Church." It is a quality publication with perspective that I think will make a difference because it is written by men who have earned the right to speak.

—Bill Burch  
Bethany, Oklahoma

### Read the Whole Thing

Last night I finished this issue of PM (winter, '83/84; "Focus on the Small Church"). It was about the first time I ever read the whole thing through—nearly, at least. I found it to be one of the most helpful, informative, and inspirational issues ever. Your finely wrought editorial provided a brilliant and warm frontispiece. Thank you.

—C. S. Cowles  
Nampa, Idaho

### Most Valuable

Congratulations on the winter issue of the *Preacher's Magazine* with the emphasis on the small church.

In my opinion, this is the most valuable of all of your issues. And there are so many of them with great value.

The emphasis on the small church is one of the more needed ones in our church. It is needed, for one thing, to get us away from an inordinate attention to superchurches, extraordinary churches in terms of growth, and special situations.

In my opinion, it is not the negative approach of asking, "Why do we have so many small churches?" or "What can we do to help them grow?"

Instead, as comes through so clearly in your issue, it is the positive approach

of the great good that is done, always has been done, and can be done in even better ways in and through the small churches. . . the most significant work being done in the church is not being done by us who are in the larger churches. Many pastors and churches of fewer than 100 are doing more significant work than we are doing. And I really believe that.

—Ponder W. Gilliland  
Bethany, Oklahoma

### Most Helpful

I have been an avid reader of the *Preacher's Magazine* for several years and have always found it very helpful. I want to thank you and our church for your help. The most helpful issue was the "Focus on the Small Church." Several articles were really helpful. There has been a lot of pressure to produce "big" churches with little attention to the majority of churches.

—K. L. Stinson  
Port Arthur, Texas

### Positive Feedback—Other Denominations

My congratulations on a fine issue. You covered the "small church" topic in an informative and inspirational manner. I commend you for putting out such a consistently fine product. I rub shoulders with people from various denominations and their reaction is always the same—positive.

—Jon Johnston  
Malibu, California

### Heritage Issue Too Heavy

I have been taught not to look a gift horse in the mouth, but I'm going to give it another try.

I am thankful for the *Preacher's Magazine* but recently it reads more like a magazine for a doctor of theology.

What happened to the illustration pages? In the past issue for Sept.-Oct.-Nov. there was not one idea about Youth Week; Labor Day; Communion Sunday; Laymen's Sunday; Reformation; or even Thanksgiving. I did use the heritage articles for my message on Heritage Sunday.

I need something that will help me on Tuesday for Sunday's sermons, not some theology story from 1559. I need the *Preacher's Magazine* to be for preachers, not some theology student. Help is what I'm asking for. Help in sermon and new sermon thoughts.

Thank you for putting up with guys like me. I know you must get letters often with this tone.

—Horace Smith  
Logansport, Indiana

### Can't Frame "Suitable for Framing"

Congratulations on the good work you are doing as editor of the *Preacher's Magazine*. The coverage on the many subjects contained in each issue is very helpful.

However, I offer a suggestion. The items you offer with the suggestion "Suitable for Framing" are very good items and suitable for framing. However, regardless of how good an article is, if it has emblazoned across it in bold red type, "Suitable for Framing," it is not suitable for framing.

Why don't you print over, under, or even on another page, "Suitable for Framing"? . . . or put it on a rubber stamp.

—Charlie Harrison  
Olathe, Kansas

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Cover photo by Glimpse of Time

# When You're Out You're Out

*This manuscript did not come to us as a regular submission for publication. Rather it came as a letter to one of the staff members in the Division of Church Growth. We offer it here as a case study for reflection and discussion.*

It seems that is my ministry; hooking up things and making them work again. In the '60s we took a church in the South. Fifty-year-old church in a frame house older than that, sagging, condemned by the city engineers, on a dead-end street in the wrong part of town. Seven years later we moved and left them with a new air-conditioned building and a new parsonage on four acres of land in the "best" part of town. It seemed easy then, I was young and youth knows no fear.

The next church was a six-year hitch, third largest church on the district. We left it larger than we found it. The next was a three-year ministry to one of the "real good" churches on the district. When we were called to a larger church our D.S. commended us highly. Those were the days when we took no thought of failure, God was very good to us, and we were aware that it came at His hand, not ours. God never fails. The problem is that there are times when one or two things can happen. Either we fail in our own head-long strength or the Lord allows us to "die"—fail—out—done. And it hurts.

August of 1980 I was out. Out of the ministry—without a church. The church we served was financially the best it had ever been, but it was sick spiritually. I was the pastor and couldn't seem to bring about healing. Letters had gone out, but no call was forthcoming. Friends prayed, other pastors commiserated with me, nothing happened. The last day came, and we left. We put our belongings in our mother-in-

law's garage, and then the long days of no work commenced. It was strange to go to church; it appears that no one in the Church of the Nazarene dares to have very much to do with a pastor who is "out." People don't know how to handle it—it's the same if you are divorced or have a terminal illness. Finally, my wife found a very good position with a university. I had found a position with an insurance company, but it wasn't really what I wanted to do. Then a break came and the president of a bank wanted me to take over an agency in his bank. I was given a brand-new office on the third floor and negotiations began. All I had to do was say yes and I would begin a new and lucrative career. It wasn't that I wanted out of the ministry—we called, wrote, contacted—but no call.

Where had I gone wrong? Where was God? Didn't He care? Didn't the church care? That was the hardest part; you see, in the Church of the Nazarene there is no machinery, so far as I know, to help a man who is "out." There are no agencies, no services, no recognition of previous service or seniority. I took stock; the Lord had honored my ministry through many years in many ways, but now I was dead.

Like Lazarus must have—I wondered, Where is Jesus? Doesn't He care? (I thought of all the sermons inflicted on tolerant listeners about a caring Christ.) That was great for them but this is ME, Lord. I thought about Lazarus, Job, and David, but quite frankly they seemed remote and impersonal. This was real, this was now, and this was me. Why? What happened?

Like Lazarus, the unfairness, the realization that nothing and no one can help gripped me—it's all over. I am dying, I am alone, and I am afraid. Unlike Lazarus, I do not know the feel of physical death, nor do I know the reality of the grave; but I know a living death

and a loneliness like unto the grave. When a minister has to leave the ministry there is a sense of shame that is attached. It is then that he needs a pastor, but there is none. There is an awkwardness that arises when friends introduce him. Is it Mister or is it still Reverend? Sunday School teachers are ill at ease in the presence of a man who is well trained in the Word.

## The district superintendent told me that he would not approve my renewal vote.

Pastors who are insecure view the man as a threat to their ministry. Like the principals in a divorce, everyone wonders who was "really" at fault. Like divorcees, he doesn't fit and is so painfully aware of it. It is my firm conviction that there is in these troubled times a need for the church to minister to men who have had to leave the pastorate.

It is especially hard to review the causes of why I was "out." They are not that clear. They were not clear to most of the church. I missed a two-thirds vote by two votes. Well, I thought, I have a year to find a place to move, and I began. Just three years before, when I felt it was time to move, I had received three calls and had to decide which one to take. One call was to the second largest church on my district. It was what is commonly known as a "prestige" church.

The church I was now serving had had a record of trouble. I didn't know that previously. The first year we increased in both members by profession and

finance. The second year we received the third largest faith promise offering on the district. But all was not well. It was hard to preach at times. Gossip was rampant and members were suspicious of each other and often suspicious of me, especially my motives. Somehow I was unable to overcome the problems. I am not trying to fix blame—I am reporting what was going on. Good men and women were praying and fasting and begging for help from the Lord. The peculiar thing is that many good members were totally unaware that anything was wrong. Those who were aware that the church was sick did not know what was the problem. There were, of course, some problems that were evident—even to me. We were receiving new members and it was upsetting the status quo. The one thing that brought things to a crisis was the teens. There were no teens when I arrived. We want teens in our church, I was told. What I didn't realize was that they wanted teens but they wanted them to be seen and not heard. Sort of window dressing to be seen and placed where they would look good but not move from their assigned place. I am glad to report the majority of the members did not feel that way, but the old homesteaders did and they had the power to control things. After seeing 16 teens pray through and then go through several weeks of one-on-one Bible training, I wanted to see them taken into membership. The board balked and said that the entire church board would have to interview them. Parents were disgusted and the kids said if they don't want us, pastor, it's OK. Four kids opted to join anyway. That was the beginning of the end. After receiving a one-year call I didn't panic, but I didn't jump for joy either. Somehow if I had

## "WE LIKED HIS SPIRIT"

We had just finished Sunday dinner when the phone rang. It was Mom and Dad from halfway across the country. Through the usual greetings I sensed a solemn note in their voices. Something wasn't right!

We understood when they broke the news. It was Sunday, and the vote had been less than the necessary two-thirds. They were crushed! Never before in their 30 years of ministry had this happened.

Though I tried to console and support, I was angry at carnal people and a church and a God that would allow this to happen to these caring people of God. Was this what I had to look forward to after 30 years in the pastoral ministry?

That evening I shared the burden with the people of my church, and they be-

gan to pray for Mom, Dad, and me. In the next few days, the Holy Spirit gently dealt with me. He reminded me that we are called to serve, and that we are to leave the circumstances to Him. He reminded me of the hundreds, yes thousands, who have served in the face of tragic circumstances.

I had to say, "Lord, You are in charge, and I leave them to You. Now about my ministry. Well, it's Yours also. If after 30 years the church doesn't want my services, then You'll have to give new marching orders." The hurt and anger flowed from me, but still there was concern for Mom's and Dad's future.

Through the months their spirits ministered to mine. Sure, they were disappointed, not only for themselves, but also for the church. Yet, there was the peace that God had called them to the

pastoral ministry, and whatever He had in store was just fine. No bitterness, just a sweet spirit that comes from a complete consecration of all of life—its-yesterdays, todays, and tomorrows.

Last night the phone rang. It was Mom and Dad. Through the usual greetings a note of victory rang. Another church needed a pastor. The board had unanimously nominated Dad, and only one negative vote arose at election time. One of the comments from the board was, "We liked his spirit."

Would they have liked his spirit had it been saturated with bitterness? I doubt it, for bitterness sours the spirit for all the world to see. "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many" (Heb. 12:15, NIV).

—Name withheld

# MY CHURCH DIED

Recently, we pastors received a questionnaire from Church Extension Ministries asking for information to aid in setting policy at the General Assembly. I filled out the form and added a page of comment, then I stuffed it into an envelope. After two days I scrapped the envelope and contents. I had been too sharp-tongued; besides, no one wanted to hear what I had to say.

I have since come to believe that there are other pastors going through the pain, confusion, and strain of closing their churches. I have decided to share my experience.

Like all pastors, I was excited about my call to my first congregation. My family and I arrived at our new town and home late in July. We were received warmly by the people, and when school started in September everything had settled down to a full schedule.

After the "honeymoon," facades and masks dropped and I began dealing with a serious structural problem. I found we (the church) had outstanding bills more than one year old relating to this problem. It also became apparent this problem was a source of spiritual division between three groups. Nothing was accomplished in talking with each group, so I proposed that the leaders of the three groups come together, get the past settled, and determine direction for

the present and future. Only one group was willing to do so.

As the structure problem worsened, so did the spiritual problem. My sermons on commitment had no effect. I saw no spiritual growth so I visited each family by appointment. With a little coaching, some of the people were honest and gave their opinions. One family had a list that sounded almost identical to another's. Two families were totally supportive while another told me to stop preaching on three subjects.

At one point I decided we would set goals to give everyone something to work toward. I set up tables, arranged chairs, brewed coffee, and prepared a quantitative chart and a qualitative chart. When we began the session they told me they had no interest in numbers or in other people; the quantitative goals they would not discuss. I set them aside hoping to get back to them. Everything they wanted was for themselves. The sermons, they contended, were to build the "Body," and the evening service was to be a time of dialogue. They wanted more formality in the morning service and suggested that maybe after one or two years of being fed they would be ready to reach out into the community to fulfill the Great Commission.

Shortly after this planning meeting my wife and I attended a zone overnight re-

treat. I was crushed under the financial and spiritual conditions of my people, and all the advice and support did not lift my heavy burden.

Of the nine months the church was active, I challenged the church board to tithe the income of the church but each time the idea was refused. One month my wife and I challenged them. My family and I tithe our normal amount plus the income of the church. They were not impressed, even though they knew we could not afford to give such an amount. They missed the point that God will meet needs when He is put above everything else. Such introverted unbelief always leads to financial problems. And we had problems! We were spending more than was coming in. We were cut back to the very essentials. And there was the definite welfare syndrome of "give to me!"

All the inner direction of ministries and lack of financial responsibility, as well as the way they treated each other, demonstrated clearly their spiritual apathy. Mine was the constant pain of caring and of not being able to reach them with the Word of God. This pain began to affect my marriage; I was alienating the affections of my wife. I was allowing distress for my people to separate us. I was shutting her out of my concern. My church was draining all of my emotions

and strength. Our conflict added to my despair!

One day we sat down and talked about our personal feelings. I learned that day that it really was *her* ministry, *her* church, and *her* people as well! She was also concerned about her pastor and husband. She was carrying every bit as much as I was! At that point I realized that I was wrong in allowing the pain of grief to separate us.

The board and I made a trip to the district office to meet with the District Home Mission Board to discuss the structural problem and to evaluate the reason for our existence. We left with no answers. It was suggested to me privately that there was little hope for the church.

One Sunday morning the people sensed the depth of my concern and wanted to return in the evening service to talk about closing the doors. I told them that they could not close up the church, that I would hold services as normal, that only the District Advisory Board could close the doors. After the service they called the district superintendent to see if any decision had been reached from our visit with the Home Mission Board. Nothing had been determined, but I was informed the church would probably close and I should keep it to myself.

Some time later I received a phone call from a member of the Advisory Board. They had decided we would discontinue services and asked me to stay and sell the properties and anything else of value. On the following Sunday I announced our closing to the congregation and the 40 boys and girls in Sunday School. I then went to each home to explain to the parents. I stayed to sell and give away the dreams and hopes of days gone by.

There are aftershocks that follow deep grief. Just as in the loss of a loved one, grief sweeps over you like a tidal wave, uncontrollable. Part of the aftershock was and is guilt. I blamed myself for not calling more, for not doing more, faster, better, or differently. For many months after the closing I asked myself, "What would have happened if . . . ?" There was also the aftershock of anger. If everyone else had done more for the church, been more concerned beyond their own contention, maybe it would have been better.

I found I was hypersensitive to the next congregation; when difficult times came, I feared the worst.

I learned a number of lessons during this turmoil. Oh, I already knew these things, but we can know that something is so without having really learned it.

I learned that God is the same today

as He was yesterday . . . as He will be tomorrow! Circumstances change, but God is the same. The fog of grief and despair that soaked in around me obstructed a clear view of God's purpose, but His love and care for me didn't change whether I was in or out of the fog.

There was a sense of peace that came from remembering mountain peaks of God's nearness, and because there had been these personal peaks, there would be more in the days ahead. I learned that God is love and His love demands the best for me and from me. From the crucible of adversity a more sterling character is cast. A character, better able to reflect the image of the Craftsman.

I learned more of God's love for me. This is reflected in a greater compassion on my part for other pastors. I am not critical of a "bad report." It is reflected also in more love and appreciation for my wife and family. I now realize that my wife carries a concern for me, along with sharing concern for the congregation. In all of our ministry we are a team.

God demonstrated His dependability throughout the ordeal. We can be sure He will fulfill His will and give us himself to lean upon when nothing else has substance. Praise His holy name!

only handled things differently, perhaps things wouldn't have degenerated.

The toughest part was that no one seemed to have any specific complaint, nor could anyone come up with any real reason for the situation except one thing—gossip. That is not an accusation or an excuse—it was the one thing the pastor, the board, and the D.S. agreed upon in one of the last board meetings I attended. The worst was yet to come.

After the one-year call was complete, the D.S. came and told me he would not approve my call. "Why?" I asked. "Your administration," I was told. Give me specifics. After some lengthy generalities I became painfully aware that there were no specifics. Nothing against my character. I was assured. No conduct unbecoming—no, no, nothing like that at all. The fur-

ther I went; the more I began to understand the main character in Franz Kafka's novel, *The Trial*. The theme of the story is that the main character is always on trial for his life but is never told what the charges are. Finally, he is sentenced. "Now I will know," he thinks, but his sentence is to never know what the charge is.

This article is not an attempt to "clear" myself, indict the D.S., or find fault with the particular church where this occurred. It is, I hope, a record of how, at times, God works. I know my strengths, and sensibly, like the rest of us, admit to some weaknesses. With that in mind I can say conclusively that I never would have considered going to the church I now serve until God humbled me completely—no, absolutely. The reason would not be pride; the real rea-

son would be that in the Church of the Nazarene a move like that isn't "smart." As a denomination we do not objectively create an atmosphere where a man can deliberately take a mission church without people wondering why. We seem to be moving ever so slowly in the right direction, but it is my humble opinion that it is unusual. If a man at the height of his career could take a home mission church with the assurance that he would receive adequate financial backing and that it would be considered a "step up," it might be that we could and would plant more churches and have healthier new churches.

In the Church of the Nazarene there is to my knowledge no machinery or service to help a man who is "out." In my files I have some tear-stained letters from a good pastor who hit a tough situation and was

voted out. He had a good record previously and wasn't a hardhead or a nut. I talked to him on the phone one day a few months after he had to leave. He cried and told me that I was the only person in the entire Church of the Nazarene who had called, and I cried with him. I have some other letters from pastor friends going through trials and facing a bad vote that are heartbreaking to read. The common theme is that there is nowhere to turn. A pastor cannot receive unemployment checks. He usually is not trained for other work because when he was going through college or seminary he was told a "real" preacher equips himself only for the ministry. If he has some skills in another field, he still is hurting because employers are leary of a man who does not have an up-to-date work record in the type of work he is seeking. And what went

wrong anyway in the ministry? "What's wrong?" I was asked by the employment interviewer. "You are the fifth minister I have had in here this year." This is not merely "all too common" but rather it is a way of life in the Church of the Nazarene, and no one wants to talk about it very much.

Please do not accuse me of rancor or bitterness. I'm past that. Nor do I wish to draw attention to myself. It is taking all the courage I have to type this, and to express my concern in a way that someone else might see or hear. However, I have learned one very dear lesson. No one can ever again threaten a man with death who has already died and been resurrected! I am talking about the death of a career, dreams, reputation, standing among peers, and all that goes with it.

For the man facing such a situation in the church he has nowhere to turn. The very organization that says "come unto me" is suddenly silent. No district superintendent can risk offering a man who is "out" to a "good" congregation. In many cases I am sure this is wise. But where is the man to go, and from whom will he seek help? Are his past years of service worthless? Even the most mediocre worker in today's society has "rights." The union stands ready to help. In the church there is no such avenue. Pastor friends suddenly are busy. Don't get too close to Lazarus. No one knows what he has and it is killing him. If you get involved you might catch his disease and die too.

Perhaps, however, if there were more deaths there would be more resurrections. Poor rationale, but perhaps it makes the point clear that only the Lord can help the dying man. Yet that is not entirely true. God called Lazarus from the grave. He heard the Lord's voice and recognized it and responded: If we believe in free moral agency, we are stuck with the deduction that Lazarus didn't have to come forth. He knew and trusted the Voice that called him, and responded. Out he came, and I think it is significant that we are never told by what means. I have always wondered how a man bound hand and foot "came forth." But I never wondered very long on that point. I am more concerned with why he didn't, like Jesus, come forth clean and with the graveclothes neatly folded and left behind. The lesson, it seems to me, is that God wanted man to be involved with resurrection. I gave him life—you unwrap him.

There is the smell of death that attends resurrection. It seems implied from the record that there were many who never believed Lazarus was the same person put into the ground—that there was some trick involved, just as with Jesus. In the church it seems very evident that there are many who feel a man can never come back. But then he does, and he lives, BUT THERE MUST BE SOMEONE HANDY TO UNWRAP THE STINKING MAN AND FREE HIM. Only Jesus had the power to lay down His life and to take it up again all

by himself. My point is that there needs to be someone, somewhere to help ministers who are dying and need to be resurrected. (I am aware that some do not want help from the church. They are too bitter.) Some are inept and are difficult to help. That's evident. But there are many who have good records who are "out" and need caring help and have nowhere to turn. It's worse than divorce. Divorce is no longer a shame. There are groups divorcees can join. Some good, some not so good. There are groups for children of divorcees. Help for the divorcees is abundant. Most churches have a group of divorcees and pride themselves on how they love them. They are accepted as equals, although at times there arises some awkward situation. But a pastor who is "out" isn't afforded the same measure of acceptance. Oh, everyone is polite, but that hardly fills the bill for an aching heart.

Death is usually unwelcome. I have some suggestions for those who are facing that death of being voted out or have already been voted out. The church does not have an agency to turn to for continued salary or emergency funds until you can get going again. You are on your own. Don't fight it. The organization at this point is not where your help comes from. But your help will come.

What I said was, the organization is not where your help comes from at this point. Your help comes from an unquenchable faith that you are still God's man.

Make plans immediately to do whatever you can to keep going. Do what is honorable and don't cry about what is going on. Take whatever work you can. Advise the Lord of your immediate plans and keep going. Keep your contacts with leaders. If you get a letter from a general superintendent that says he will help you and nothing happens—don't blame him. The organization doesn't lend itself well to fitting an outsider back in. I do not think it's fair, but don't fight it. Sit down and read the life of Joseph and then realize that God has a plan. Realize that the Bible stories we preach can have a present-day reality that might touch you—personally. If it does, thank God for it. I can assure you that at some point in time there will come a sense of His presence that calms the panic and brings the security that came to the disciples on the sinking boat. You will never know that feeling of security until your ship begins to sink. You will never hear "Come forth" until you are a dead duck. It's at this point, with all the inefficiency, lack of concern, and callousness, that the same denomination that turned you out will be that same church that unwraps the "mummy" and becomes a part of your resurrection. (I make a difference at this point between church and organization.) The organization can grind us to bits—but when a church is Spirit-filled and Spirit-led, resurrection and new birth become the order of the day and the pains of sickness and death fade in the light of day when

## A Superintendent's "Paperwork"

Mrs. Joyce Hyde\*  
807 Brookhaven Circle  
Shelbyville, TN 37160

Dear Joyce:

I appreciate very much your letter of June 3rd and apologize for not answering you sooner, but I stay covered up in work here in the office and on the road to the churches over the district for services and board meetings—not complaining, just explaining.

Yes, I do remember you and Gary, Joyce. If I had had the opportunity to speak with you that Wednesday night, I meant to tell you how much your bright countenance, Christian smile, and nodding your head in assent to my preaching meant to me. You and Gary were an inspiration to me—sitting there on the second pew to my right and drinking in the message. Last week after the board meeting I tried to call you from a street phone before leaving town, but evidently no one was at home.

Joyce, I praise God for what He did for you three years ago and for Gary more recently. Isn't it great to know Jesus! I'll never regret the day I met Him and later He sanctified me and has wondrously kept me across all these years—praise His name!

\*The editor has changed the names in this letter except that of Rev. Smith.

I'm happy to tell you and Gary that through many trials, temptations, and very difficult situations at times when some people misunderstood and misjudged, God's grace has been gloriously adequate and He has poured His love in and through me until (all praise to Him) I've been victorious and triumphant through it all. I know He will give you both courage, grace, and love in the midst of situations in and out of the church so that you, too, can be "more than conquerors through him that loved us," as St. Paul said.

I regret so much that the situation at your church has developed to the extent that the pastor-people relationship has been affected as it has. I've tried to stay close to the Bradleys by telephone and letters time and again. Then I've tried to minister to the church on two Wednesday night services and in three board meetings. I have sought to help both the Bradleys and the church to commit everything to God and keep trust in Him and love for each other uppermost. Oh, how Satan thrives on getting misunderstandings and feelings crosswise among God's people. I'm confident his greatest strategy against the church is to create internal unrest and dissension among the members and between the congregation and the pastor.

But, Joyce, we have to pray for each other, and amid our hurts for some and disappointments in others we must by all means commit

it to God and trust Him to work it all out for good to all concerned and for His glory. I'm praying fervently that God will open the proper door for Brother and Sister Bradley and that He will lead the right pastor to your church. I truly believe He will do both.

Let's hold steady and refuse to allow Satan to poison our attitudes toward anyone. These are perilous times everywhere. I'm convinced the devil works at times even through good people in creating misunderstandings and misjudgment, etc., so that he can disrupt the unity and/or progress of the church. In the last few years I've known of many pastors being voted out—doubtless at times some people were justified in voting no and at times some were not, but we have to pray for our pastors and churches, for God to defeat Satan and see us all through these difficult times.

I truly believe God will take care of Brother and Sister Bradley, will heal their hurt, and will provide for them another assignment in His kingdom work. I also believe God will help you fine people. I'm praying that the revival this week with Brother Henderson will be a mighty, wonderful refreshing of the presence of the Lord—that souls will be saved and sanctified, and that hearts and lives and attitudes and dispositions will be wonderfully cared for by God's redeeming and purifying power.

The Word of God says, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Believe it, Joyce and Gary, God will take care of His own. Don't worry and fret—be concerned, yes; and pray much and trust God who is mightier than Satan to overrule Satan's efforts.

Praise God, "I know the Lord will make a way for me," as the chorus goes. I received the worst vote in my last pastorate (1979) of all the 36 years I pastored, but God poured His love in and through me till I was able to minister right on for about 15 more months, victoriously, even to the 25 people who voted against me. He helped me and He sent a good pastor to follow me when I left and the church has made some fine progress. God knows how to help us preachers and He knows how to help the church, including how to deal with those who manifest attitudes and actions that are unchristlike and contrary to the spirit and doctrine of holiness.

Joyce, remember some blunders are from the heart and some from the head—and God "who knoweth the hearts" (as Peter said) certainly knows the difference. And He will judge and deal with people accordingly. That fact really helps me to keep people and circumstances that I can't understand in better perspective and proper balance, so far as my feelings and attitudes are concerned.

God bless you. I love and appreciate you and Gary and thank God that you both have given your hearts, lives, and talents to Jesus and the Church. Be faithful and steadfast in the Lord; keep sweet and kind in your attitudes; continue to be a vital part of your local church. You need the church and the church needs you.

Your friend in Jesus,

Doyle C. Smith  
Superintendent, East Tennessee  
District, Church of the Nazarene

the gravecloth is removed from your face, and like Lazarus you can again see your Lord and know He always has a plan for your life. Don't fear death; it is a prelude to the command, "Come forth."

In the midst of my "living death" a friend called. He had been converted under my ministry years before. He was a successful businessman now. We went to lunch and I shared the offer from the banker, which I mentioned earlier. He assured me it was a tremendous offer; that he knew the man and that it was a *once-in-a-lifetime career offer*. Twice my friend started to say something and then stopped. Later he told me he was going to offer me a partnership in his business (which I would have taken immediately). But he felt checked.

On the way home my spirit was troubled and I took an old road home. A winding, twisting, two-lane trail that I hadn't traveled in 15 or 20 years. As the road unfolded I noticed a cemetery that I had never seen before, so I turned aside and drove in. The far side of the cemetery overlooked a beautiful plain. I could see cattle, snow-covered barns, fences, horses. A dog barked in the distance. I was alone with my aching soul and the Lord.

Someone had made a cross out of two fence posts and put it up. It was lopsided, too short, twisted. Anyone could see that the posts were rejects, so crooked they couldn't be used. Rejects, ha, I know about rejects—I'm an expert on that subject. And the Lord

spoke to me and said, "So am I." A dialogue began that lasted until the sun began to set and my feet were nearly frozen.

Out of that confrontation with the Lord came an affirmation of all that I had learned and lived and preached. I said to the Lord, "I will try again. If You will help me get a call, I will take *whatever comes*. If no call comes, will You honor my work that I set my hand to so that I can provide a home for my family?"

Returning home we called a D.S. again. He would like to have me on the district but had nothing commensurate with my abilities and standing (what standing?). I had told him frankly what my circumstances were. I also told him that I would take anything. He said the only thing open was an "opportunity." I told him *immediately I would take it*. He said I had better hear the details. I told him, "In all due respect, the details are just that—details. Whatever the circumstances, I will come."

The "details" included adequate buildings in a good location. More intriguing, there was a \$1,000 a month mortgage payment and a membership of four couples. The D.S. told me *I could back out*. But I told him that I had promised the Lord I would take the first call regardless of "details." Even as I said it, I didn't really believe the Lord would require me to start over. But start over is what I did. Starting all over brings a humility previously unknown, and curiously enough, a security previously unknown.

This new rock-bottom assignment was the beginning of an exciting resurrection. The church has grown by leaps and bounds. If having a wall full of wood plaques with engraved brass plates on them is any measure of success, then I'm it. My church has received every award that is offered at the assembly.

I wonder—why has it happened to me? What have I done that the Lord should resurrect my ministry? I rejoice at His mercy with a keen awareness that I am not worthy. Am I wrong in feeling this is not the usual thing? Why is it I get the uneasy feeling that the Lord has done this in spite of the denominational machinery, not because of it? It seems to me as I view many of my unfortunate brethren that there ought to be another way—a better way.

I cannot help but wonder—why me? There are at this writing several good men whom I know personally who have been voted out and are withering away at secular jobs wondering, "Where is the promised help the Lord gives that we preached about all these years?" Some are bitter, but most are forlorn and bewildered. I can only tell them that God has not failed. I haven't the guts to say out loud that the church has failed, but I wonder, is it true? Are we failing, and what are we going to do about it?

Perhaps my view of the church is faulty. It is my earnest prayer, however, that if there is a better way it will be found, but if not I can hold out this unequivocal hope to the church that is dead or the man who is

out—death is not a permanent state. The God of Lazarus still lives and is still in the resurrection business.

—Name withheld

#### FOR REFLECTION

1. Summarize the problem of this case in a two-sentence statement.
2. Sort out the various theological interpretations the author makes. Do you agree or disagree with his theological affirmations?
3. Is the author's observations about the church's lack of structure and service to the "out" minister accurate?
4. Evaluate the author's references to and interpretation of scripture.
5. How does the author's wife fit into this painful picture? What do we know of her suffering or support of her husband? What more information would be helpful?
6. If you were chairperson of a committee to design a placement service and/or care ministry for clergy who are "out," what are the main ideas you would propose to the committee?
7. Consider the "sidebar" articles accompanying this letter. What complementary ideas do they suggest?
8. What questions do you have that we left out?

## Protecting Investments

It was our monthly meeting of the Pastoral Counseling Seminar, a time and place we provide for several local ministers to gather and share about themselves and their ministry. Here they find the caring support and gentle confrontation of peers. Sometimes cases are discussed. Several times we've looked at church problems. Now that trust is building, occasionally one will share a personal problem. This morning without warning a pastor opened up and shared. "You know how skeptical of psychology I was when we started these meetings. Well, things are changing. I got into trouble in the church. Some key families have left. They must have contacted my district leader because he called me to talk about it. I've been under tremendous pressure these past weeks. I haven't been sleeping at all. It seems as if all my time and energy is spent thinking about the problem and what if anything I can do about it. It's been hurting the whole family. It finally got so bad I called the district leader and asked him for the name of a psychiatrist. I could see. He gave me a name and telephone number, which I called. The man is a Ph.D. in psychology and ordained in my denomination. We set up an appointment right away. I went to see him (three-hour drive) and it has done me a world of good. My problems are still there. I probably will still have to leave the church soon. It just helped immensely to talk to someone of my denomination who is trained to help people sort out their problems. Best-of-all my denominational boss is still my friend and helping me and the congregation to settle things down."

He breathed a sigh of relief and so did we. We felt for our

brother. We had been available to him. Yet what he wanted most was help from his own denomination, from one of his own who was specially trained in helping him sort things out. In further discussion these facts became available: (1) It was well known to him that he or any member of his family could receive help in a time of crisis. (2) It was known that his district superintendent was the contact person. A phone call would bring him the name of a qualified counselor. (3) It was known that after referral the district superintendent would work on the church problem and let the counselor deal with the personal stress associated with the church situation. (4) It was known that there would be no charge for this service. The denomination assumed it as part of their investment in the ministers and their families.

My friend came by the other day. He's doing much better. He knows that he and his family will have to leave the church. His wife has gone with him to see the psychologist. It has relieved her pressures, too. They are beginning to understand how such a nice couple got themselves into such a mess. They think it is a correctible flaw so that it needn't happen again in the next pastorate.

In contrast I know of another situation where a pastor in our denomination went under "two-thirds." He was hurting and didn't know what to do or to whom to turn. He fell back on seeing a chaplain friend a few times. The chaplain didn't understand the denomination at all. The chaplain sent him to a psychiatrist for a couple of visits. The psychiatrist didn't charge him either. (Since the church quit paying him his salary there was no way to afford treatment.) After some time

of struggling and hurting he sensed that his district superintendent must be receiving telephone calls from the "other side" and that worse than that he must be believing what he heard. With coaching from the chaplain friend he set out to "un-brainwash" his district superintendent. He finally felt as though he got through with a fair presentation of the facts and was better understood and more appreciated. He still was under colossal pressures, and he and his family were hurting badly. No wonder, when confronted with the choice

between taking another church or going into a year's internship in the chaplaincy, he went for the "year off" from church-type pastoring. He still needed to heal, become whole, and understand how he had gotten himself into such a mess.

When I heard my brother tell how easy it was for him to find help, I jealously wondered, *How much longer will we continue to let our investment in our pastors and their families go unprotected?*

—Name withheld

## Out You Go!

by Clifford Chew, Jr.

So they voted him out. What a shame for everyone. They lost a good preacher. He lost his confidence.

What was the trouble? Was it him, or was it them? Was it neither or both? In this case it was ignorance on both parts.

He was a wonderful preacher; skilled in the Word and the arts of delivery; a master. But there it ended.

In singing and song leading his skill matched that of a duck leading a cage full of canaries. In organization he was paddling a canoe trying to lead a task

force. His business sense matched that of a schoolboy on his first date—all love and roses.

Where did he go wrong? Two ways: In not recognizing his weak areas and admitting them.

In not being able to recognize and use others to fill these weak areas. He had the greatest talent needed in our church today: the ability to preach the Word; but he ruined the atmosphere in which he preached it.

Just like a good cook can ruin a meal by the way he sets the table and

the atmosphere he creates in the room in which it is served, so a good sermon is tasteless in the wrong atmosphere and in a sloppy program.

And the church lost a good preacher. The next one may have other talents, but none will be skilled in all areas, and preaching is the most important of all a pastor's skills.

So they voted him out. They both made a mistake and they both lost. Could they have talked it out? Preachers are hard to talk to.

# Celebration of the Discipline of Study

by Richard J. Foster

*He that studies only men, will get the body of knowledge without the soul; and he that studies only books, the soul without the body. He that to what he sees, adds observation, and to what he reads, reflection, is in the right road to knowledge, provided that in scrutinizing the hearts of others, he neglects not his own.—Caleb Colton.*

The purpose of the Spiritual Disciplines is the total transformation of the person. It aims at replacing old, destructive habits of thought with new, life-giving habits. Nowhere is this purpose more clearly seen than in the discipline of study. The apostle Paul tells us that the way we are transformed is through the renewal of the mind (Rom. 12:2). The mind is renewed by applying it to those things that will transform it. "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of

praise, think about these things" (Phil. 4:8, RSV, italics added). The discipline of study is the primary vehicle to bring us to "think about these things." Therefore, we should rejoice that we are not left to our own devices but have been given this means of God's grace for the changing of our inner spirit.

Many Christians remain in bondage to fears and anxieties simply because they do not avail themselves of the discipline of study. They may be faithful in church attendance and earnest in fulfilling their religious duties and still they are not changed. I am not here speaking only of those who are going through mere religious forms, but of those who are genuinely seeking to worship and obey Jesus Christ as Lord and Master. They may sing with gusto, pray in the Spirit, live as obediently as they know how, even receive divine visions and revelations; and yet the tenor of their lives remains unchanged. Why? Because they have never taken up one of the central ways God uses to change us: study. Jesus



Photo by Glimpse of Time

made it unmistakably clear that it is the knowledge of the truth that will set us free. "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32, RSV). Good feelings will not free us. Ecstatic experiences will not free us. Getting "high on Jesus" will not free us. Without a knowledge of the truth, we will not be free.

This principle is true in every area of human endeavor. It is true in biology and mathematics. It is true in marriages and other human relationships. But it is especially true in reference to the spiritual life. Many are hampered and confused in the spiritual walk by simple ignorance of the truth. Worse yet, many have been brought into the most cruel bondage by false teaching. "You traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves" (Matt. 23:15, RSV).

Let us therefore apply ourselves to learning what constitutes the spiritual discipline of study, to identify its pitfalls, to practice it with joy, and to experience the liberation it brings.

#### What Is Study?

Study is a specific kind of experience in which, through careful observation of objective structures we cause thought processes to move in a certain way. Perhaps we study a tree or book. We see it, feel it. As we do, our thought processes take on an order conforming to the order in the tree or book. When done with concentration, perception, and repetition, ingrained habits of thought are formed.

The Old Testament instructs that the laws be written

**Study demands humility. Arrogance and a teachable spirit are mutually exclusive.**

on gates and doorposts and bound to the wrists so that "they shall be as frontlets between your eyes" (Deut. 11:18, RSV). The purpose of that instruction was to direct the mind repeatedly and regularly in certain modes of thought about God and human relations. A rosary or a prayer wheel has the same objective in mind. Of course, the New Testament replaces laws written on the doorposts with laws written on the heart and leads us to Jesus, our ever-present and inward Teacher.

We must once again emphasize that the ingrained habits of thought that are formed will conform to the order of the thing being studied. What we study determines what kind of habits are to be formed. That is why Paul urged us to center on things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and gracious.

The process that occurs in study should be distinguished from meditation. Meditation is devotional; study is analytical. Meditation will relish a word; study will explicate it.

Although meditation and study often overlap and function concurrently, they constitute two distinct experiences. Study provides a certain objective framework within which meditation can successfully function.

In study there are two "books" to be studied: verbal and nonverbal. Books and lectures, therefore, constitute only half of the field of study, perhaps less. The world of nature and, most important, the careful observation of events and actions are the primary nonverbal fields of study.

The principal task of study is a perception into the reality of a given situation, encounter, book, etc. One person could go through, for example, the Watergate scandal without any perception whatever of the real nature of that tragic situation. But if a person would carefully observe and reflect upon what was occurring, he would learn a great deal.

#### Four Steps

Study involves four steps. The first is **repetition**. Repetition is a way of regularly channeling the mind in a



specific direction, thus ingraining habits of thought. Repetition has received something of a bad name today. It is important, however, to realize that sheer repetition without even understanding what is being repeated does affect the inner mind. Ingrained habits of thought can be formed by repetition alone, thus changing behavior. That is the central rationale behind psychocyanetics, which trains the individual to repeat certain affirmations regularly (e.g., I love myself unconditionally). It is not even important that the person believe what he is repeating, only that it be repeated. The inner mind is thus trained and will eventually respond by modifying behavior to conform to the affirmation. This principle has, of course, been known for centuries but only recently has it received scientific confirmation.

That is why the issue of television programming is so important. With innumerable murders committed each evening on prime-time TV, the repetition alone will train the inner mind in destructive thought patterns. At the time of this writing there is a case in the courts in which the defense is claiming that the cause of a teenager killing his grandfather was his watching crime on television.

**Concentration** is the second step in study. If, in addition to bringing the mind repeatedly to the subject matter, the person will concentrate on what is being studied, learning is vastly increased. Concentration centers the mind. It focuses the attention on the thing being studied. The human mind has incredible ability to concentrate. It is constantly receiving thousands of stimuli, every one of which it is able to store in its memory banks while focusing on only a few. This natural ability of the brain is enhanced when with singleness of purpose we center our attention upon a desired object of study.

When we repeatedly channel the mind in a particular direction, centering our attention on the subject, and understand what we are studying, we reach a new level. **Comprehension**, then, is the third step in the discipline of study. Comprehension leads to insight and discernment. It provides the basis for a true perception of reality.

One further step is needed: **reflection**. Although comprehension defines what we are studying, reflection defines the *significance* of what we are studying. To reflect, to ruminate on the events of our time will lead us to the inner reality of those events. Reflection brings us to see things from God's perspective. In reflection we come to understand not only our subject matter but ourselves. Jesus spoke often of ears that do not hear and eyes that do not see. When we ponder the meaning of what we study, we come to hear and see things in a new way.

It soon becomes obvious that study demands humility. It cannot happen until we are willing to be subject to the subject matter. We must submit to the system. We must come as student, not teacher. Not only is study directly dependent upon humility, but it is conducive to it. Arrogance and a teachable spirit are mutually exclusive.

All of us know individuals who have taken some course of study or attained some academic degree and parade their information in an offensive manner. We



"Don't think for one minute that you can go over my head!"

should feel profound sorrow for such people. They do not understand the spiritual discipline of study. They have mistaken the accumulation of information for knowledge. They equate the spouting of words with wisdom. How tragic! The apostle John defined eternal life as the knowledge of God. "And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3, RSV). Even a touch of this experiential knowledge is sufficient to give us a profound sense of humility.

Now, having laid the basis, let us move on to consider the practical implementation of the discipline of study.

#### Study of Books

When we consider study we most naturally think of books or others' writings. Though only half of the field, as I stated earlier, and the most obvious, they are clearly important.

Unfortunately, many seem to think that studying a book is a simple task. No doubt that flippant attitude accounts for the poor reading habits of so many people. The studying of a book is an extremely complex matter, especially to the novice. Like tennis or typing, when you are first learning it seems that there are a thousand details to be mastered and you wonder how on earth it is possible to keep everything in mind at the same time. Once you are proficient, however, the mechanics become second nature and you can concentrate on the game of tennis or the material to be typed.

The same is true with studying a book. Study is an

exacting art involving a labyrinth of details. The major obstacle is convincing people that they must learn to study. Most people assume that because they know how to read words they know how to study. This limited grasp of the nature of study explains why so many people gain so little from reading books.

Three intrinsic and three extrinsic rules govern the successful study of a book.

The intrinsic rules may in the beginning necessitate three separate readings but in time can be done concurrently. The first reading involves *understanding* the book: what is the author saying? The second reading involves *interpreting* the book: what does the author mean? The third reading involves *evaluating* the book: is the author right or wrong? Most of us tend to do the third reading first and often never do the first and second readings at all. We give a critical analysis of a book before we understand what it says. We judge a book to be right or wrong before we interpret its meaning. The wise writer of Ecclesiastes said that there is a time for every matter under heaven, and the time for critical analysis of a book comes *after* careful understanding and interpretation.

The intrinsic rules of study, however, are in themselves inadequate. To read successfully we need the extrinsic aids of experience, other books, and live discussion.

Experience is the only way we can interpret and relate to what we read. Experience that has been understood and reflected upon informs and enlightens our study.

Other books can include dictionaries, commentaries, and other interpretative literature, but more significant are other great books that precede or further the issue being studied. Books often have meaning only when they are read in relation to other books. People will find it nearly impossible to understand Romans or Hebrews, for example, without a grounding in the literature of the Old Testament. It is impossible to read *The Federalist Papers* with understanding without first having read the *Articles of Confederation* and the U.S. Constitution. The great books that take up the central issues of life interact with each other. They cannot be read in isolation.

Live discussion refers to the ordinary interaction that occurs among human beings as they pursue a particular course of study. We interact with the author, we interact with each other—and new creative ideas are born.

The first and most important book we are to study is the Bible. The Psalmist asked, "How can a young man keep his way pure?" He then answered his own question, "By guarding it according to thy Word," and added, "I have laid up thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:9, 11, RSV). Probably the "word" the Psalmist is referring to is the Torah, but Christians throughout the centuries have found this to be true in their study throughout Scripture. "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17, RSV). Note that the central purpose is not doctrinal purity (though that is no doubt involved) but inner transformation. When we come to

\*These matters are covered in great detail in Mortimer J. Adler's *How to Read a Book* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940). I am indebted to him for these insights into the discipline of study.

the Scripture we come to be changed, not to amass information.

We must understand, however, that a vast difference exists between the study of Scripture and the devotional reading of Scripture. In the study of Scripture a high priority is placed upon interpretation—what it means. In the devotional reading of Scripture a high priority is placed upon application—what it means for me. In study we are not seeking spiritual ecstasy, in fact, ecstasy can be a hindrance. When we study a book of

### A vast difference exists between the study of Scripture and the devotional reading of Scripture.

the Bible we are seeking to be controlled by the intent of the author. We are determined to hear what he is saying, not what we would like him to say. We are willing to pay the price of barren days after barren days until the meaning is clear. This process revolutionizes our lives.

The apostle Peter found some things in the Epistles of "our beloved brother Paul" that were "hard to understand" (2 Pet. 3:15-16, RSV). If Peter found it so, we will as well. We will need to work at it. Daily devotional reading is certainly commendable, but it is not study. Anyone who is after "a little word from God for today" is not interested in the discipline of study.

The average adult Sunday School is far too superficial and devotional to help us study the Bible, although some churches believe sufficiently in study to offer serious courses in the Bible. Perhaps you live in proximity to a seminary or university where you can audit courses. If so, you are fortunate, especially if you find a teacher who is dispensing *life* as well as information. If, however, that is not the case (and even if it is) you can do several things to begin studying the Bible.

Some of my most profitable experiences of study have come through structuring a private retreat for myself. Usually it involves two to three days. No doubt you will object that given your schedule you could not possibly find that kind of time. I want you to know that it is no easier for me to secure that time than for anyone else. I fight and struggle for every retreat, scheduling it into my datebook many weeks in advance. I have suggested this idea to groups and found that professional people with busy schedules, laborers with rigid schedules, housewives with large families, and others can, in fact, find time for a private study retreat. I have discovered that the most difficult problem is not finding time, but convincing myself that this is important enough to find the time.

Scripture tells us that following the marvelous resurrection of Dorcas, Peter "tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner" (Acts 9:43). It was while tarrying in Joppa that the Holy Spirit got through to Peter (with visual aids, no less) about his racism. What would have happened if, instead of tarrying, Peter had immediately struck out a speaking tour to tell of the resurrec-

tion of Dorcas? Is it possible that he would have failed to come to that shattering insight from the Holy Spirit, "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35, RSV)? No one knows. But I do know this: for all of us God desires various "tarrying" places where He can teach us in a special way.

For many people, a weekend is a good time for such an experience. Others can arrange a block of time in the

### A private study retreat could be the most profitable thing you do this year.

middle of the week. If only one day is possible, often a Sunday is excellent.

The best place is anywhere so long as it is away from home. To leave the house not only sets you free from the telephone and domestic responsibilities, but it also sets your mind into a learning mode. Motels work well, as do cabins. Camping is less desirable since you are more distracted by the tasks of living. Often Catholic retreat centers are receptive and can accommodate private retreatants.

Organized group retreats almost never take study seriously, so you will most certainly need to structure the retreat yourself. Because you are alone you will need to discipline yourself and your time carefully. If you are new at it you will not want to overdo and thus burn yourself out. With experience, however, you will hope to put in 10 to 12 hours of good study, each day.

What should you study? That depends on what you need. I do not know your needs, but I do know that one of the great needs among Christians today is simply the reading of large portions of Scripture. So much of our Bible reading is fragmented and sporadic. I have actually known students who have taken courses in the Bible and never even read as a whole the book of the Bible being studied. Consider taking a major book of the Bible like Genesis or Jeremiah and read it straight through. Notice the structure and flow of the book. Note areas of difficulty and return to them later. Jot down thoughts and impressions. Sometimes it is wise to combine the study of the Bible with the study of some great devotional classic. Such retreat experiences can transform your life.

Another approach to the study of the Bible is to take a smaller book like Ephesians or 1 John, and read it through each day for a month. More than any single effort this will put the structure of the book into your mind. Read it without trying to fit it into established categories. Expect to hear new things in new ways. Keep a journal of your findings. In the course of these studies you will obviously want to make use of the best secondary aids available.

In addition to studying the Bible, do not neglect the study of some of the experiential classics in Christian literature. Begin with *The Confessions of St. Augustine*.

Next turn to *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis. Don't neglect *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence. For an added pleasure read *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* by Brother Ugo. Perhaps you might want something a bit heavier next like the *Pensees* of Blaise Pascal. Enjoy the *Table Talks* of Martin Luther before you wade into Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Consider reading the pacemaker of religious journal writing, *The Journal of George Fox*, or perhaps the better-known *Journal of John Wesley*. Read carefully William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (its words carry a contemporary ring). From the twentieth century read *A Testament of Devotion* by Thomas Kelly, *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis.

Obviously that is only a sampling. I completely passed over the *Revelations of Divine Love* by Julian of Norwich, *Introduction to the Devout Life* by Francis de Sales, *The Journal of John Woolman*, and many other books. Nor should we forget the great body of literature by men and women from many disciplines. Many of these thinkers have unusual perception into the human predicament. Lao-tzu of China and Zarathushtra of Persia, Shakespeare and Milton, Cervantes and Dante, Tolstoy and Dostoyevski, and in our century, Dag Hammarskjöld can teach us.

One word of caution is in order. Do not be overwhelmed or discouraged by all the books you have not read. You will probably not read all of those listed here and will undoubtedly read others not noted. These have been listed to encourage you by demonstrating the amount of excellent literature at our disposal to guide us in the spiritual walk. Many others have traveled the same path and have left markers. Remember that the key to the discipline of study is not reading many books but experiencing what we do read.

#### Study of Nonverbal "Books"

We now come to the least recognized but perhaps the most important field of study: the observation of reality in things, events, and actions. The easiest place to begin is with nature. It is not difficult to see that the created order has something to teach us.

Isaiah tells us that "... the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands" (Isa. 55:12, RSV). The handiwork of the Creator can speak to us and teach us if we will listen. Martin Buber told the story of the rabbi who went to a pond every day at dawn to learn "the song with which the frogs praise God."<sup>1</sup>

We begin the study of nature by paying attention. We see flowers or birds. We observe them carefully and prayerfully. André Gide described the time when during a classroom lecture he observed a moth being reborn from its chrysalis. He was filled with wonder, awe, joy at this metamorphosis, this resurrection. Enthusiastically he showed it to his professor who replied with a note of disapproval, "What! Didn't you know that a chrysalis is the envelope of a butterfly? Every butterfly you see has come out of a chrysalis. It's perfectly natural." Disillusioned, Gide wrote, "Yes, indeed, I knew my natural history as well, perhaps better than he . . . But because

it was natural, could he not see that it was marvelous? Poor creature! From that day, I took a dislike to him and a loathing to his lessons."<sup>2</sup> Who wouldn't! Gide's professor had only amassed information, he had not studied. And so the first step in the study of nature is reverent observation. A leaf can speak of order and variety, complexity and symmetry. Evelyn Underhill wrote:

Gather yourself up, as the exercises of recollection have taught you to do. Then—with attention no longer frittered amongst the petty accidents and interests of your personal life, but poised, tense, ready for the work you shall demand of it—stretch out by a distinct act of loving will towards one of the myriad manifestations of life that surround you: and which, in an ordinary way, you hardly notice unless you happen to need them. Pour yourself out towards it, do not draw its image towards you. Deliberate—more, impassioned—attentiveness, and attentiveness which soon transcends to the thing seen; this is the condition of success. As to the object of contemplation, it matters little. From Alp to insect, anything will do, provided that your attitude be right: for all things in this world towards which you are stretching out are linked together, and one truly apprehended will be the gateway to the rest.<sup>3</sup>

The next step is to make friends with the flowers and trees and little creatures that creep upon the earth. Like the fabled Dr. Doolittle, talk with the animals. Of course you can't really talk to each other . . . or can you? There is certainly a communication that goes beyond words—and animals, even plants, seem to respond to our friendship and compassion. I know this because I have experimented with it, and so have some first-rate scientists, and we have found it to be true. Perhaps the stories about St. Francis of Assisi taming the wolf of Gubbio and preaching to the birds is not so far-fetched. Of this much we can be sure: if we love the creation we will learn from it. In *The Brothers Karamazov* Dostoyevski counseled:

Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light.

### Notice the things that control people—not to judge, but to learn.

Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day.<sup>4</sup>

There are, of course, many other "books" beside nature that we should study. If you will observe the relationships that go on between human beings, you will receive a graduate-level education. Watch, for example, how much of our speech is aimed at justifying our actions. We find it almost impossible to act and allow the act to speak for itself. No, we must explain it, justify it,

demonstrate the rightness of it. Why is it we feel this compulsion to set the record straight? Because of pride and fear. Our reputation is at stake!

That trait is particularly easy to observe among salespeople, writers, ministers, professors—all those who earn their living by being good with words. If, however, we will make ourselves one of the principal subjects of study we will be gradually delivered from arrogance. We will be unable to pray like the Pharisee, "God, I thank thee that I am not like other men . . ." (Luke 18:11, RSV).

Become attentive to the ordinary relationships you encounter throughout your day: at home, work, school. Notice the things that control people. Remember, you are not trying to condemn or judge anyone, you are only trying to learn. If you do find a judging spirit emerging within you, observe that and learn.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the principal objects of our study should be ourselves. We should learn the things that control us. Observe your inner feelings and mood swings. What controls your moods? What can you learn about yourself from that?

In doing all this we are not trying to become amateur psychologists or sociologists. Nor are we obsessed with excessive introspection. We study these matters with a spirit of humility and needing a large dose of grace. We are wanting only to follow the dictum of Socrates: "Know thyself." And through the blessed Holy Spirit we are expecting Jesus to be our living and ever-present Teacher.

We would do well to study institutions and cultures and the forces that shape them. Also, we should ponder the events of our time—noting first, with a spirit of discernment, what our culture thinks is or is not a "great event." Look at the value systems of a culture—not what people say they are, but what they actually are. And one of the clearest ways to see the values of American culture is to observe television commercials.

Ask questions. What are the assets and liabilities of a technological society? What has the fast-food industry done to the tradition of a family gathering for dinner? Why do we find it difficult in our culture to have time to develop relationships? Is Western individualism valuable or destructive? What in our culture is in line with the gospel and what is at odds with it? One of the most important functions of Christian prophets in our day is the ability to perceive the consequences of various inventions and other forces in our culture and to make value judgments upon them.

Study produces joy. Like any novice we will find it hard work in the beginning. But the greater our proficiency the greater our joy. Alexander Pope said, "There is no study that is not capable of delighting us after a little application to it."<sup>5</sup> Study is well worth our most serious effort.

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#### NOTES

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2. André Gide, *If It Dies*, trans. Dorothy Bussey (New York: Random House, 1935), 83.

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C. S. Cowles

# Has Preaching Become Irrelevant?

by C. S. Cowles

Professor of Preaching, Northwest Nazarene College

I walked the halls of our educational institutions some 20 years ago, driven by the unshakable conviction that preaching was front and center in the pastoral ministry. I plunged into my first pastorate committed to the proposition that, whatever else I did, preaching the Word was my first, foremost, and most compelling assignment.

I was ill-prepared for the rude awakening that assaulted me from many directions. Apparently, a new day is dawning. A fresh consciousness seems to be emerging. The priority of preaching in pastoral ministry is undergoing a radical reappraisal on many fronts. A pulpit-centered ecclesiology is being called into question. Sweeping advances in the science of communicology threaten to render obsolete the lone voice of one crying from the pulpit.

Consider the rising tide of opinion coming from the ranks of noted ecclesiastical authorities.

### Preaching Is Ineffective

There may have been a day when preaching exercised a compelling power in winning converts, changing character, and affecting behavior. But, with a few no-

table exceptions, that day has largely passed. As Lance Morrow notes in a *Time* magazine essay on "The Decline and Fall of Oratory," "Few speakers today make oratory seem the urgent and necessary approach to the world that it once was. Eloquence implies certitude. 'Hear, O Israel,' said Moses, his voice reverberating with authority well beyond his own. It is *not* a posture much adopted now."

About the least effective program of behavior modification imaginable is that of a preacher exhorting passive parishioners to piety from a pulpit placed far away and high above the people. As Peter Berger sardonically observes, "The great delusion of preachers is that there is a direct relationship between what is said from the pulpit on Sunday and what is done by those in the pew on Monday."

Nowhere is this shift from pulpit to pew more apparent than in the explosive resurgence of New Testament personal evangelism. My friend George recently returned from yet another ministerial conference held at the posh retreat center of a leading evangelistic organization. One of the featured speakers, a highly successful pastor, apparently had not been properly

screened. Horror of horrors, this renowned pulpiteer began to exhort the thousand or so conferees on their need to spend more time in sermon preparation. He went to the ridiculous extreme of confessing that he didn't consider his principal Sunday sermon worth the preaching if not backed up by one hour of preparation for every minute of delivery.

Whereupon, the obviously agitated conference leader mounted the podium and, after appropriate apologies, took issue with his distinguished guest. Said he, "Think of all the lonely, lost, and alienated people who will never darken the door of your church to hear your sermonic masterpiece. Think of all the people who are perishing for want of a drink of water of life while you luxuriate in your cozy, book-lined study."

Drawing himself up to full height he protested, "You can have your great sermons, polished monuments to your preaching eloquence. But give me men who will walk the highways and hedges of this world's life and compel people, one by one, to come to Jesus!" This declarative speech, eloquent in its own right, brought most of the pastors to their feet in spontaneous ovation.

George asked me, "Why should I spend 20 hours a week preparing sermons when I could personally deal with 10 to 20 souls in the same amount of time?"

Well, what could I say?

### Preaching Is Irrelevant

That is, preaching is but one of the many roles—and by no means the most important—by which the pastor sets the laity free for ministry. To equate "ministry" with "preaching" is a misnomer. Thanks to a sharper reading of Eph. 4:11 ff., we now understand that the dividing wall between *cleros* and *laikos* (clergy and laity) is broken down. In fact, the word *laity* doesn't even appear in the New Testament. All of the people of God are raised to the rank of *laos*. And ministry is the proper work of all the saints, not just the paid professionals.

In this liberating new environment the pastor is released from the historic burden of having to be the sole spokesman for God. Now he is set free to equip the saints for their proclaiming, witnessing, reconciling, and servanthood ministry in the church and to the world. The Spirit is exciting a variety of gifts within the body to fulfill this greatly expanded mission.

So, the solitary pulpit yields to "body life." And the pastor's role becomes that of an equipper, a coach, a recruiter, a trainer, a manager, a facilitator, an enabler, a discipler. This is not to say that the traditional half-hour reserved for public preaching should be scuttled. To the contrary, it ought to be utilized by the pastoral director for his all-important equipping ministry.

Let the pastor, however, avoid the appearance of preaching. Let him leave the pulpit altogether and come down among the people. Let proclamation become sharing. Let preaching give way to teaching. Let monologue yield to dialogue. Let there be an abundance of personal-interest stories, testimonies, overhead projectors, multimedia presentations, musical extravaganzas exploiting 84-channel audio-stereo systems, dialogic sermons, drama, folk-song sings, questionnaires, three-ring binders, talk-back sessions, small-group buzz sessions, and, of course, genial handshakes all around.

Like a concertmaster, let the pastoral director orchestrate the various gifts within the body in such a way that his solo voice decreases and the rising chorus of the servant community increases. In the church that understands itself to be a genuine community of the Spirit, the old model of active preacher laying it on passive parishioners whose role is to "pay, pray, and obey" is dead. It is irrelevant to the real work of ministry.

### Preaching Is Nonproductive

That is the studied conclusion, based on extensive sociological research, of certain specialists in church

**"Pulpit work is an inexcusable dilution of time and talent."**

growth. I was in on one of the earliest expressions of this movement in southern California, where it largely originated. In one such conference, the six principal functions to which pastors have been conditioned to devote their time were listed on an overhead projector. They were, in order of time priorities, sermon preparation, study, administration, pastoral work, personal evangelism, and training of the laity for ministry.

We were asked to analyze this way of investing our energies with an eye toward the church growth graphs. Which of these tasks produced the greatest results? Which built membership, increased finances, enhanced the evangelistic effectiveness of the church? Does anybody go to anyone's church anymore just to hear someone preach? Does preaching draw crowds, build attendance, and promote lay participation?

Understanding myself as one called to preach, I found my own answers to these rhetorical questions disconcerting. We were asked to think about the superchurch pastors we had heard of or of whom we had read. Did any of them attribute their astounding growth success to the power of their pulpit work? Or did they not rather speak of Sunday Schools, bus-ministries, personal evangelism, discipleship groups, Bible studies, television outreach, puppet shows, possibility thinking, and staff philosophies?

We were then challenged to consider what might happen if we reversed these six major emphases and were to devote our greatest block of time and best energies to those activities most likely to fruit in "growing a church." Anticipating our question about sermon preparation under the new scheme, our church growth specialist assured us that we wouldn't have to worry about preaching; we would have more than enough to simply share out of the overflow of all that we had been experiencing in the dynamic flow of our church's life.

Jerry Falwell, in a recent *Moral Majority* newsletter, bluntly expresses this widespread feeling of futility regarding the effectiveness of preaching: "In recent months God has been calling me to do more than just preach—He has called me to take action."

Yes, brethren, the evidence is overwhelming. The facts are incontrovertible. The trends are irresistible.

Preaching is fast becoming an anachronism of the past. Sermons—a nonbiblical word anyway—are no longer relevant to the needs of the church. Pulpit work is an inexcusable dilution of time and talent.

The time has come to convert our studies into offices, trade in our books for computers, transform our pulpits into stages, and line our walls with charts and graphs.

As I reluctantly face the facts, I confess that preaching is indeed as nonproductive as . . .

a hymn sung beside the sea at eventide, as a walk in the high country at summertime, as a love-note scratched in the sand, or as a candlelight dinner for two.

Preaching is as ineffective as . . .

a father flying a kite with his son, as a rainbow on the edge of an autumn storm, as a moonlight stroll through dew-dusted meadows, as a Handel's *Messiah* filling the Advent air, or as lovers sauntering westward along a country road watching the sun go down.

Perhaps they are right about preaching. How do you go about computing its results? How would you measure its effectiveness? It strikes me that preaching may well be as irrelevant as . . .

a whispered, "Will you marry me?" as a spoken "I do," as

an announcement, "It's a boy," or as my daughter sitting on top of Mount Whitney last summer, looking out over the vast expanse and singing, "To God be the glory—great things He hath done."

What is preaching? Fundamentally, it is an act of hu-

man speaking: words, simple little innocuous words, words like . . .

"God created the heaven and the earth,"

"God so loved the world, that he gave . . ."

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,"

"Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified,"

"God raised from the dead,"

"He that hath the Son hath life."

**"Preaching is as ineffective as a hymn sung beside the sea at eventide."**

Preaching has to do with pronouncements like that—really inconsequential stuff.

Let's face it: preaching doesn't accomplish much. All it does is . . .

announce good news,

quicken the spirit,

pierce the heart,

awaken the dead,

provoke a decision, and

become the power of God unto salvation for everyone that believes.

Why should we get excited when the Spirit of the Lord is upon us . . .

preach good news to the poor, to

proclaim release to the captives, to

bind up the brokenhearted, to

# STOP THAT CLOCK TALK!

by Robert Hudson

Twenty years later, I can still remember the words he used in nearly every sermon: "This is my last point . . ." and about 10 minutes later, "This is my last, last point . . ." and about 7 minutes later, "This is my last, last, last point."

In spite of the hours I sat listening to him, I can't recall a single biblical point. He was second to none in spiritual, academic, and emotional preparation. Unfortunately, he was also second to none in his lack of time preparation.

If a minister has 30 minutes to deliver his sermon, that is his boundary. In spite of what he

seemingly could produce by going beyond that fixed line, ignoring, making mention of, or playing recklessly with that demarcation line will nearly always do more harm than good.

What do you remember most about some recent sermons you have heard? Among the more successful, you probably heard points that you borrowed for your sermons. From the others, probably the only thing you remember is one of these comments:

"It's already twelve o'clock, but just give me five more minutes."

"I have only been given a half hour, but I'll try to be as brief as possible."

bring recovery of sight to the blind, and to set free those who are oppressed?

All that happens when the Word is passionately and biblically preached is that

sinner are converted,

saints are nourished,

Satan falls like lightning from heaven,

darkness is dispelled,

light shines,

sin's power is broken,

the Kingdom comes,

eternal life dawns, and

downcast spirits are raised on the wings of the Word to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Roger Palms, editor of *Decision* magazine, is justified when he complains in a recent *Christianity Today* article that too many preachers preach with little or no eye toward specific results. The record supports him in this assertion.

There have always been preachers who couldn't help proclaiming the Good News simply because it was good, or who have been constrained to declare the truth simply because it is true, or who delight in expounding the Word of God simply because it is God's Word. And there continue to be those who squander valuable pulpit time by giving in to the inexcusable urge to lift their voices in celebrating the greatness, the majesty, the holiness, the glory of God for no other reason than that they really believe He is eminently worthy of such celebrative praise.

Considering how preaching has lost its appeal to the masses, one wonders what it was that over a million South Koreans went out to hear a few years ago. Was it

a coach? A facilitator? An enabler? An equipper? Or was it to hear a preacher of the gospel, an evangelist, proclaiming the Word of God—and through an interpreter at that?

One also wonders why it is that the Sunday morning preaching service consistently outdraws every other kind of performance or activity in the church, including Sunday School? How is it that more Americans get dressed up and go to hear someone preach every Sunday morning than crowd into coliseums, stadiums, and theaters during the week? (Over 75 million attend church on the average Sunday.)

In view of the demise of preaching, why is it that when pastoral vacancies occur, churches still doggedly set out to call a preacher? And why is it that so few of our young people are feeling a divine call to become trainers, managers, recruiters, disciplers, equippers? Yet, they continue to be aroused by a misty-eyed, soul-gripping, and all-consuming call to preach?

Considering how nonproductive, ineffective, and irrelevant preaching has proven to be, it is a mystery past finding out why Jesus came preaching, why Paul felt such a compelling passion to preach, why the apostles ordered their ministry to give priority to prayer and the preaching of the Word, or why every fresh breakthrough in the history of the Church has been keyed to powerful preaching. It contradicts the evidence, violates logic, and flies in the face of the experts.

In short, it just doesn't make sense that "God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:21, NASB).

"One more thing, then I'll rush on to my next point."

"I'm sorry to take more time, but this is such an important point."

"I have a lot to say, but I'll try to abbreviate it."

"I'll try to finish within two hours." (The oft-used, worn-out joke.)

"Please forgive me for going overtime."

"I'm sorry there is just not time to go any deeper into this point."

"This is God's time, so please be patient with me while I say what is on my heart."

Time weighs so heavily on the modern man's mind that, generally

speaking, if he hears the minister mention his time limits, he will remember nothing else. As the late Paul McGrady used to say in his homiletics classes, if you feel the audience getting restless and are tempted to relax them by referring somehow to the clock, it is best to sit down right then and there.

Yes, you can always find someone to say "amen" when you ask to go another five minutes after time has run out, but at that point, the destruction has begun and will grow so rapidly that the entire sermon can soon be destroyed. The organized preacher does not need to make any apologies or explanations, or request any special per-

missions. His ways are not self-destructive.

I am not condemning those times when an altar service or other Spirit-filled, extraordinary event prolongs the service. I am criticizing pulpit-time overruns that are habitual and common. This has nothing to do with the Holy Spirit, but rather involves the lack of pulpit-time organization.

The organized minister honors his allotted time. He will respect the laymen's time in the same degree that he wants the laymen to respect the pastor's schedule. His laymen will talk about his Bible-centered concepts rather than the longevity of his messages.

# NOW THAT THE OFFERING HAS BEEN "TAKEN"

by Kenneth Vogt

Ushers, will you now prepare to take the offering?" That is often the first warning that the worshipers have to get themselves ready to give their tithes and offerings. Surely there is a better way, and many pastors have found it.

First and foremost, instead of *take*, let's use the word *receive*. That is indeed better . . . but there is still a better way.

Why not sing the Doxology first, and let the people know that the high moment of worship has come, when we become givers? We're the most like God, the greatest Giver of all, when we, too, become givers. We should be able to feel our closest identification with God in His purposes in the world at that mo-

ment when we are sharing from our earnings. It is blessed to pray. It is blessed to be participators in a great message from the pulpit. It is more blessed to give.

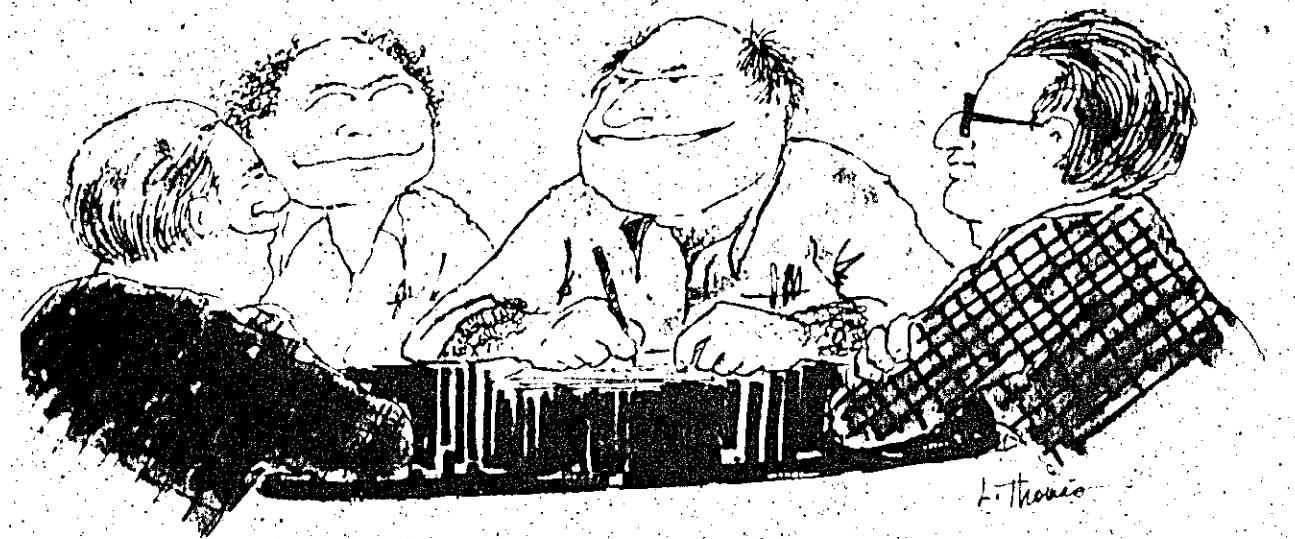
I once heard a pastor testify that he had so instructed his people about the blessedness of giving that when he announces the offering the congregation often breaks into spontaneous applause. The moment for rejoicing has come. They are privileged now to give tithes and offerings as unto the Lord. Hallelujah! The meaning of stewardship has reached its apex.

But, the real intent of this article is to stir up our pure minds beyond the moment of adoration and praise and identification with God as givers. We

are now looking into the attitudes and actions of those entrusted by God and the organizational procedures of the church to expend the tithes and offerings for the greatest and fastest advancement of the kingdom of God.

The first temptation that comes to officials who are entrusted with the disbursement of these funds is to think of it as "our money." Local treasurers, board members, and pastors are not immune from this thought process. The same attitudes of worship, praise, and identification ought to be present in the distribution, as was expected in the worshipers at the time of collection. There is no double standard for stewardship.

The second temptation that



"Whatever we decide about the pastor's salary, let's keep in mind all those sermons last year on the simple life-style."

© Leadership 1982 Concept, Jim Reapsome Artist, Larry Thomas Used by permission

comes to these officials is to hoard parts of this money for possible future emergencies. By this process, the implicit and naked trust in God for our daily sustenance shifts from the Lord God to our own resources. It is easy for such a group to become egocentric, and the preservation of self becomes a dominant note. The self ego of the organization begins to *Edge God Out. EGO!*

A third temptation that comes to officials is to invest the funds for interest and/or dividend earnings. It is possible in the life of an institution for this to be the proper and right course of action for a season. However, the officials bear the responsi-

bility of evaluating what such an investment might produce in dollars, as compared with what these dollars could produce when invested in an immediate people ministry.

I know these are heart-searching thoughts. They're intended to examine our attitudes and actions after the offering has been received.

There are some further heart-searching thoughts for those of us who live as the paid ministry of the church, in whatever capacity that may be. The very sustenance of our lives and our families is, as it were, from the shewbread of the Tabernacle. In David's day, he did not take of the bread as a matter of right. He took of it as a matter of privilege. He

did not take of it until after he had received permission from the proper authority to use the altar bread for personal life sustenance. May those of us who are in the paid ministry of the church bow down in humility before the Lord with a deep sense of stewardship. All that we are and have, and all that our families have, is the result of the faithful stewardship of God's people. In high moments of worship and praise in congregations all across the country, they have given as unto the Lord. May those of us who receive also live daily, hourly, as unto the Lord. We are not our own. We are bond servants by repeated acts of stewardship, both in the receiving and the spending of the Lord's tithe.

# A Study in Pastoral Stress

by Robert O. Noah

Community of Hope Church, Madison, Wisconsin

A composite picture emerges from the returned questionnaires I received from research done with pastors on one district in the Church of the Nazarene. As a class assignment for social work research, I sent out 50 questionnaires. Nineteen were returned.

As I read responses to the questions about personal, marital, and family stress, frequently the notes in the margins told more than the direct answers to the questions. While one pastor stated he had no stress of any kind, another revealed that though he had worked previously in various secular positions, including that of a social worker, he found the pastorate to be the most stressful. Another, in a marginal note, stated, "There is no one I talk to about deep concerns."

Just what kind of persons are the pastors of this district?

### Statistical Background

They vary in age from approximately 30 to 60 years. Their ages are not evenly distributed. The mean age is 35; over half are under 40.

These pastors are educated men. Only one reported less than a Bible school or college degree, 58 percent have master's degrees, and one, a doctor's degree.

They have spent from 1 to 38 years in the ministry. Their mean experience is 7 years. More than half have pastored their present congregations for 2 years or less; and 84 percent for 5 years or

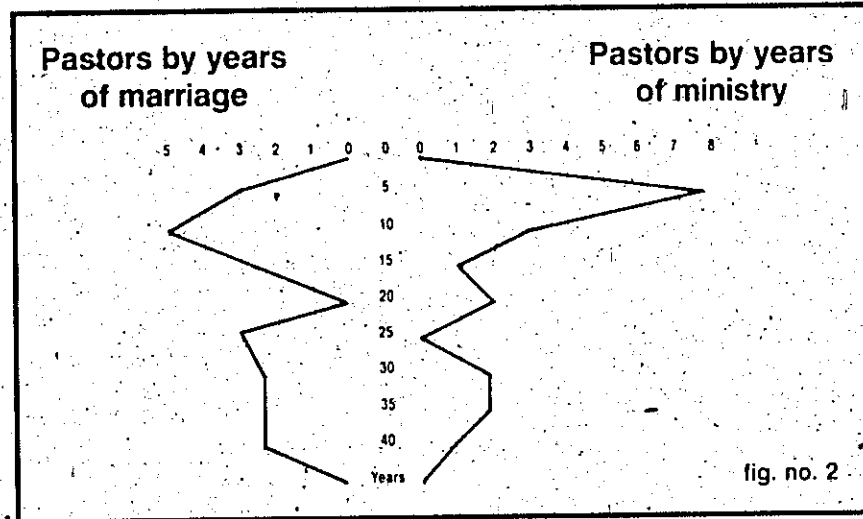
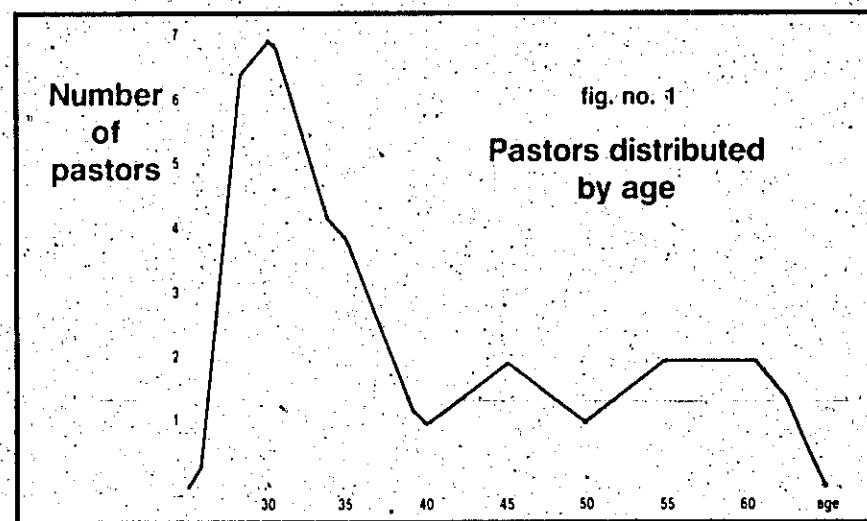
less. Seventy-eight percent are pastors in urban churches, 21 percent in rural churches.

One pastor is widowed and the remainder have been married for from 3 to 40 years. Notice how similar are the polygons of the years of marriage and the years of ministerial experience. It appears that most of them got married and shortly afterward entered the ministry. They average two children apiece and 74 percent still have children at home.

The salaries of the pastors range from \$3,000 per year to \$18,000 per

year. The mean pastor's salary is \$9,000. Two-thirds of the salaries fall between \$8,000 and \$12,000; 53 percent were between \$8,000 and \$10,000.

When salary is compared to age, a chi-square significance of .87 is the result. This shows that age has little if any relationship to salary. Similarly, when salary is compared with education, a chi-square significance of .1839 is found, indicating that education also has very little relationship to salary for these pastors.



### Sources of Stress

Open-end questions dealt with sources of stress. No responses were suggested for the three categories of stress: personal stress, marital stress, and family stress. Similar sources were reported for all three categories, with time as the most common source of stress. The second most common source was problems in raising children. The third was finances. Thirty-one different sources of stress were listed on the returned questionnaires. Of those, 18 were listed only once.

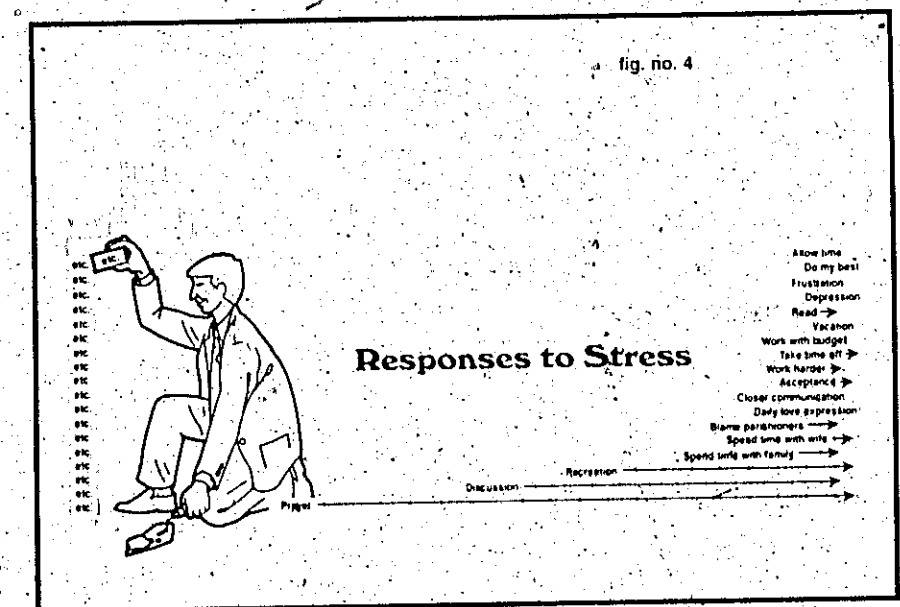
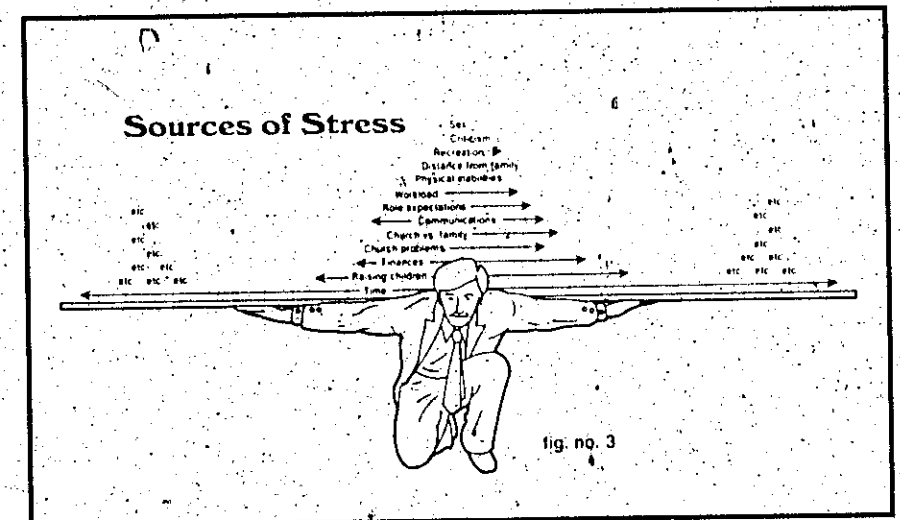
### Responses to Stress

Questions about how the pastors respond to personal, marital, and family stress were also open. Again, the most common answers were found in all three categories. Prayer was listed 21 times and was the most commonly reported response to stress. Prayer was followed in popularity by discussion, and discussion by recreation as a way in which the pastors of this district respond to personal, marital, and family stresses. There were altogether 38 different responses to stress. Nineteen of the entries listed were one of a kind.

### Conclusion

Each questionnaire brought a story of individual needs. One pastor had lost his wife through death and was learning to care for home and children as well as carrying on with pastoral duties. An older pastor was facing retirement with no home purchased. Other stresses included the need for personal friends, fear of failure, and lack of promotion in the church.

The mean statistics for the background material, combined with the most common responses to the questions about stress, produced a picture



of a 35-year-old man with a master's degree who has 7 years of experience in the ministry. He has been married for 13 years and has two children. This composite man is pastor of an urban church to which he moved 2 years ago. He

draws an annual salary of \$9,000. He finds that time, raising children, and finances are his chief sources of personal, marital, and family stress. He deals with this stress through prayer, discussion, and recreation.

# On Family Religion

by John Wesley

*"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Josh. 24:15).

1. In the foregoing verses we read that Joshua, now grown old, "gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges and officers; and they presented themselves before the Lord" (v. 1). And Joshua rehearsed to them the great things which God had done for their fathers (vv. 2-13); concluding with that strong exhortation: "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood [Jordan], and in Egypt" (v. 14). Can anything be more astonishing than this? that even in Egypt, yea, and in the wilderness, where they were daily fed, and both day and night guided by miracle, the Israelites, in general, should worship idols, in flat defiance of the Lord their God! He proceeds: "If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (v. 15).

2. A resolution this worthy of a hoary-headed saint, who had had large experience, from his youth up, of the goodness of the Master to whom he had devoted himself, and the advantages of his service. How much is it to be wished that all who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, all whom He has brought out of the land of Egypt, out of the bondage of sin—those especially who are united together in Christian fellowship—would adopt this wise resolution! Then would the work of the Lord prosper in our land; then would His Word run and be glorified. Then would multitudes of sinners in every place stretch out their hands unto God, until "the glory of the Lord covered the land, as the waters cover the sea."

3. On the contrary, what will the consequence be, if they do not adopt this resolution?—if family religion be neglected?—if care be not taken of the rising generation? Will not the present revival of religion in a short time die away? Will it not be as the historian speaks of the Roman state in its infancy—*res unius aetatis*?—"an event that has its beginning and end within the space of one generation"? Will it not be a confirmation of that melancholy remark of Luther's, that "a revival of religion

**"You should particularly endeavor to instruct your children—early, plainly, frequently, and patiently."**

never lasts longer than one generation"? By a generation (as he explains himself), he means thirty years. But, blessed be God, this remark does not hold with regard to the present instance; seeing this revival, from its rise in the year 1729, has already lasted above fifty years.

4. Have we not already seen some of the unhappy consequences of good men's not adopting this resolution? Is there not a generation arisen, even within this

**"Your children [are] immortal spirits whom God hath, for a time, entrusted to your care . . . train them up in all holiness."**

period, yea, and from pious parents, that know not the Lord? that have neither His love in their hearts, nor His fear before their eyes? How many of them already "despise their fathers, and mock at the counsel of their mothers"! How many are utter strangers to real religion, to the life and power of it! And not a few have shaken off all religion, and abandoned themselves to all manner of wickedness! Now, although this may sometimes be the case, even of children educated in a pious manner, yet this case is very rare: I have met, with some, but not many, instances of it. The wickedness of the children is generally owing to the fault or neglect of their parents. For it is a general, though not universal rule, though it admits of some exceptions, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

5. But what is the purport of this resolution, "I and my house will serve the Lord"? In order to understand and practice this, let us, First, inquire, what it is to "serve the Lord." Secondly, *Who are included in that expression "my house."* And, Thirdly, What can we do, that we and our house may serve the Lord?

I. 1. We may inquire, First, what it is to "serve the Lord," not as a Jew, but as a Christian; not only with an

outward service (though some of the Jews undoubtedly went farther than this), but with inward, with the service of the heart, "worshipping him in spirit and in truth." The First thing implied in this service is faith; believing in the name of the Son of God. We cannot perform an acceptable service to God, till we believe on Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. Here the spiritual worship of God begins. As soon as anyone has the witness in himself; as soon as he can say, "The life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"; he is able truly to "serve the Lord."

2. As soon as he believes, he loves God, which is another thing implied in "serving the Lord." "We love him because he first loved us"; of which faith is the evidence. The love of a pardoning God is "shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Indeed this love may admit of a thousand degrees: But still every one, as long as he believes, may truly declare before God, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Thou knowest that my desire is unto thee, and unto the remembrance of thy name."

3. And if any man truly love God, he cannot but love his brother also. Gratitude to our Creator will surely produce benevolence to our fellow-creatures. If we love Him, we cannot but love one another, as Christ loved us. We feel our souls enlarged in love toward every child of man. And toward all the children of God we put on "bowels of kindness, gentleness, longsuffering, forgiving one another," if we have a complaint against any, "even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us."

4. One thing more is implied in "serving the Lord," namely, the obeying Him; the steadily walking in all His ways, the doing His will from the heart. Like those, "his servants" above, "who do his pleasure, who keep his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his words"; these, His servants below, hearken unto His voice, diligently keep His commandments, carefully avoid whatever He has forbidden, and zealously do whatever He has enjoined; studying always to have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man.

II. "I and my house will serve the Lord," will every real Christian say. But who are included in that expression, "my house"? This is the next point to be considered.

1. The person in your house that claims your first and nearest attention is, undoubtedly, your wife; seeing you are to love her, even as Christ hath loved the Church, when He laid down His life for it; that He might "purify it unto himself, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." The same end is every husband to pursue, in all his intercourse with his wife; to use every possible means that she may be freed from every spot, and may walk unblamable in love.

2. Next to your wife are your children; immortal spirits whom God hath, for a time, entrusted to your care, that

### **"I cannot find in the Bible that a husband has authority to strike his wife on any account."**

you may train them up in all holiness, and fit them for the enjoyment of God in eternity. This is a glorious and important trust; seeing one soul is of more value than all the world beside. Every child, therefore, you are to watch over with the utmost care; that, when you are called to give an account of each to the Father of Spirits, you may give your accounts with joy and not with grief.

3. Your servants, of whatever kind, you are to look upon as a kind of secondary children: These, likewise, God has committed to your charge, as one that must give account. For every one under your roof that has a soul to be saved is under your care; not only indentured servants, who are legally engaged to remain with you for a term of years; not only hired servants, whether they voluntarily contract for a longer or shorter time; but also those who serve you by the week or day: For these too are, in a measure, delivered into your hands. And it is not the will of your Master who is in heaven, that any of these should go out of your hands before they have received from you something more valuable than gold or silver. Yea, and you are in a degree accountable even for "the stranger that is within your gates." As you are particularly required to see that he does "no manner of work" on the Lord's day; while he is within your gates; so, by parity of reason, you are required to do all that is in your power to prevent his sinning against God in any other instance.

### **III. Let us inquire, in the Third place, What can we do that all these may "serve the Lord"?**

1. May we not endeavour; First, to restrain them from all outward sin; from profane swearing; from taking the name of God in vain; from doing any needless work, or taking any pastime, on the Lord's day? This labour of love you owe even to your visitants; much more to your wife, children, and servants. The former, over whom you have the least influence, you may restrain by argument or mild persuasion. If you find that, after repeated trials, they will not yield either to one or the other, it is your bounden duty to set ceremony aside, and to dismiss them from your house. Servants also, whether by the day, or for a longer space, if you cannot reclaim, either by reasoning added to your example, or by gentle or severe reproofs, though frequently repeated, you must,

in anywise, dismiss from your family, though it should be ever so inconvenient.

2. But you cannot dismiss your wife, unless for the cause of fornication; that is, adultery. What can then be done, if she is habituated to any other open sin? I cannot find in the Bible that a husband has authority to strike his wife on any account, even suppose she struck him first, unless his life were in imminent danger. I never have known one instance yet of a wife that was mended thereby, I have heard, indeed, of some such instances; but as I did not see them, I do not believe them. It seems to me, all that can be done in this case is to be done partly by example, partly by argument or persuasion; each applied in such a manner as is dictated by Christian prudence. If evil can ever be overcome, it must be overcome by good. It cannot be overcome by evil: We cannot beat the devil with his own weapons. Therefore, if this evil cannot be overcome by good, we are called to suffer it. We are then called to say, "This is the cross which God hath chosen for me. He surely permits it for wise ends; let Him do what seemeth Him good." Whenever He sees it to be best, He will remove this cup from me. Meantime continue in earnest prayer, knowing that with God no work is impossible; and that He will either in due time take the temptation away, or make it a blessing to your soul.

3. Your children, while they are young, you may restrain from evil; not only by advice, persuasion, and reproof, but also by correction; only remembering, that this means is to be used last—not till all other have been tried, and found to be ineffectual. And even then you should take the utmost care to avoid the very appearance of passion. Whatever is done should be done with mildness; nay, indeed, with kindness, too. Otherwise your own spirit will suffer loss, and the child will reap little advantage.

4. But some will tell you, "All this is lost labour. A child need not to be corrected at all. Instruction, persuasion, and advice will be sufficient for any child without correction; especially if gentle reproof be added, as occasion may require." I answer, There may be particular instances, wherein this method may be successful. But you must not, in anywise, lay this down as an universal rule; unless you suppose yourself wiser than Solomon, or to speak more properly wiser than God. For it is God himself, who best knoweth His own creatures, that has told us expressly, "He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Prov. xiii. 24). And upon this is grounded that plain commandment, directed to all that fear God, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (xix. 18).

5. May we not endeavour, Secondly, to instruct them? to take care that every person who is under our roof have all such knowledge as is necessary to salvation? to see that our wife, servants, and children be taught all those things which belong to their eternal peace? In order to this you should provide that not only your wife, but your servants also, may enjoy all the public means of instruction. On the Lord's day in particular, you should so forecast what is necessary to be done at home, that they may have an opportunity of attending all the ordinances of God. Yea, and you should take care that they have some time every day for reading, meditation, and prayer; and you should inquire whether they do

actually employ that time in the exercises for which it is allowed. Neither should any day pass without family prayer, seriously and solemnly performed.

6. You should particularly endeavour to instruct your children, early, plainly, frequently, and patiently. Instruct them early, from the first hour that you perceive reason begins to dawn. Truth may then begin to shine upon the mind far earlier than we are apt to suppose. And whoever watches the first openings of the understanding may, by little and little, supply fit matter for it to work upon, and may turn the eye of the soul toward good things, as well as toward bad or trifling ones. Whenever a child begins to speak, you may be assured reason begins to work. I know no cause why a parent should not just then begin to speak of the best things, the things of God. And from that time no opportunity should be lost, of instilling all truths as they are capable of receiving.

7. But the speaking to them early will not avail, unless you likewise speak to them plainly. Use such words as little children may understand; just such as they use themselves. Carefully observe the few ideas which they have already, and endeavour to graft what you say upon them. To take a little example: Bid the child look up; and ask, "What do you see there?" "The sun." "See, how bright it is! Feel how warm it shines upon your hand! Look, how it makes the grass and the flowers grow, and the trees and everything look green! But God, though you cannot see Him, is above the sky, and is a deal brighter than the sun! It is He, it is God that made the sun, and you, and me, and everything. It is He that makes the grass and the flowers grow; that makes the trees green, and the fruit to come upon them! Think what He can do! He can do whatever He pleases. He can strike me or you dead in a moment! But He loves you; He loves to do you good. He loves to make you happy. Should not you then love Him? You love me, because I love you and do you good." But it is God that makes me love you. Therefore, you should love Him. And He will teach you how to love Him.

8. While you are speaking in this, or some such manner, you should be continually lifting up your heart to God, beseeching Him to open the eyes of their understanding, and to pour His light upon them. He, and He alone, can make them to differ herein from the beasts that perish. He alone can apply your words to their hearts; without which all your labour will be in vain. But whenever the Holy Ghost teaches, there is no delay in learning.

9. But if you would see the fruit of your labour, you must teach them not only early and plainly, but frequently too. It would be of little or no service to do it only once or twice a week. How often do you feed their bodies? Not less than three times a day. And is the soul of less value than the body? Will you not then feed this as often? If you find this a tiresome task, there is certainly something wrong in your own mind. You do not love them enough; or you do not love Him who is your Father and their Father. Humble yourself before Him! Beg that He would give you more love; and love will make the labour light.

10. But it will not avail to teach them both early, plainly, and frequently, unless you persevere therein.

Never leave off, never intermit your labour of love, till you see the fruit of it. But in order to this, you will find the absolute need of being endued with power from on high; without which I am persuaded, none ever had, or will have, patience sufficient for the work. Otherwise, the inconceivable dullness of some children, and the giddiness or perverseness of others, would induce them to give up the irksome task, and let them follow their own imagination.

11. And suppose, after you have done this, after you have taught your children from their early infancy, in the plainest manner you could, omitting no opportunity, and persevering therein; you did not presently see any fruit of your labour, you must not conclude that there will be none. Possibly the "bread" which you have "cast upon the waters" may be "found after many days." The seed which has long remained in the ground may, at length, spring up into a plentiful harvest. Especially if you do not restrain prayer before God, if you continue instant herein with all supplication. Meantime, whatever the effect of this be upon others, your reward is with the Most High.

12. Many parents, on the other hand, presently see the fruit of the seed they have sown, and have the comfort of observing that their children grow in grace in the same proportion as they grow in years. Yet they have not done all. They have still upon their hands another task, sometimes of no small difficulty. Their children are now old enough to go to school. But to what school is it advisable to send them?

13. Let it be remembered, that I do not speak to the wild, giddy, thoughtless world; but to those that fear God. I ask, then, for what end do you send your children to school? "Why, that they may be fit to live in the world." In which world do you mean—this or the next? Perhaps you thought of this world only; and had forgot that there

### **"God loves to do you good. He loves to make you happy."**

is a world to come; yea, and one that will last for ever! Pray take this into your account, and send them to such masters as will keep it always before their eyes. Otherwise, to send them to school (permit me to speak plainly) is little better than sending them to the devil. At all events, then, send your boys, if you have any concern for their souls, not to any of the large public schools (for they are nurseries of all manner of wickedness), but a private school, kept by some pious man who endeavours to instruct a small number of children in religion and learning together.

14. "But what shall I do with my girls?" By no means send them to a large boarding school. In these seminaries too the children teach one another pride, vanity, affectation, intrigue, artifice, and in short, everything which a Christian woman ought not to learn. Suppose a girl were well inclined, yet what would she do in a crowd of children, not one of whom has any thought of God, or the least concern for her soul? Is it likely, is it possible, she should retain any fear of God, or any thought of saving her soul in such company? especially as their whole conversation points another way, and turns upon



things which one would wish she would never think of. I never yet knew a pious, sensible woman that had been bred at a large boarding school, who did not aver, one might as well send a young maid to be bred in Drury Lane.

15. "But where, then, shall I send my girls?" If you cannot breed them up yourself (as my mother did, who bred up seven daughters to years of maturity), send them to some mistress that truly fears God; one whose life is a pattern to her scholars, and who has only so many that she can watch over each as one that must give account to God. Forty years ago I did not know such a mistress in England; but you may now find several; you may find such a mistress, and such a school at Highgate, at Deptford, near Bristol, in Chester, or near Leeds.

16. We may suppose your sons have now been long enough at school, and you are thinking of some business for them. Before you determine anything on this head, see that your eye be single. Is it so? Is it your view to please God herein? It is well if you take Him into your account! But surely, if you love or fear God yourself, this will be your first consideration. "In what business will your son be most likely to love and serve God? In what employment will he have the greatest advantage for laying up treasure in heaven?" I have been shocked above measure in observing how little this is attended to, even by pious parents! Even these consider only how he may get most money; not how he may get most holiness! Even these, upon this glorious motive, send him to a heathen master, and into a family where there is not the very form, much less the power of religion! Upon this motive they fix him in a business which will necessarily expose him to such temptations as will leave him not a probability, if a possibility, of serving God. O savage parents! unnatural, diabolical cruelty—if you believe there is another world.

"But what shall I do?" Set God before your eyes and do all things with a view to please Him. Then you will find a master, of whatever profession, that loves, or at least fears, God; and you will find a family wherein is the form of religion; if not the power also. Your son may nevertheless serve the devil if he will; but it is probable he will not. And do not regard, if he get less money, provided he get more holiness. It is enough, though he have less of earthly goods, if he secure the possession of heaven.

17. There is one circumstance more wherein you will have great need of the wisdom from above. Your son or your daughter is now of age to marry, and desires your advice relative to it. Now you know what the world calls a good match—one whereby much money is gained. Undoubtedly it is so, if it be true that money always brings happiness. But I doubt it is true; money seldom brings happiness, either in this world or the world to come. Then let no man deceive you with vain words; riches and happiness seldom dwell together. Therefore, if you are wise, you will not seek riches for your children by their marriage. See that your eye be single in this also: Aim simply at the glory of God, and the real happiness of your children, both in time and eternity. It is a melancholy thing to see how Christian parents rejoice in selling their son or their daughter to a wealthy heathen! As do you seriously call this a good match? Thou fool,



"The Pastor Is Sure Pressing Hard for That New Wing to the Church."

by parity of reason, thou mayest call hell a good lodging, and the devil a good master. O learn a better lesson from a better Master! "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," both for thyself and thy children; "and all other things shall be added unto you."

18. It is undoubtedly true, that if you are steadily determined to walk in this path; to endeavour by every possible means, that you and your house may thus serve the Lord; that every member of your family may worship Him, not only in form, but in spirit and in truth; you will have need to use all the grace, all the courage, all the wisdom which God has given you; for you will find such hindrances in the way, as only the mighty power of God can enable you to break through. You will have all the saints of the world to grapple with, who will think you carry things too far. You will have all the powers of darkness against you, employing both force and fraud; and, above all, the deceitfulness of your own heart; which if you will hearken to it, will supply you with many reasons why you should be a little more conformable to the world. But as you have begun, go on in the name of the Lord, and in the power of His might! Set the smiling and the frowning world, with the prince thereof, at defiance. Follow reason and the oracles of God; not the fashions and customs of men. "Keep thyself pure." Whatever others do, let you and your house "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour." Let you, your yoke-fellow, your children, and your servants, be all on the Lord's side; sweetly drawing together in one yoke, walking in all His commandments and ordinances, till every one of you "shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour!"



Jerry McCant

# Ministering to Older Adults

by Jerry McCant

Professor of Religious Education, Point Loma Nazarene College

Medical science has brought us better health and longer life. We are experiencing a gray revolution. "Senior Power" will no longer be ignored. Television and radio advertisers have been forced to revise their format to include the presence of older citizens. Their numbers have increased, and we will be seeing more and more of these older adults.

At the beginning of the twentieth century there were slightly more than 3 million men and women aged 65 and over, about 4 percent of the population. Today, we have in the United States alone 23 million over-65ers, about 11 percent of the population. Each day another 4,000 persons cross the boundary into the wonderful world of old age. About 3,000 persons in that category die every day, giving us a net gain of 1,000 senior citizens every day. By the year 2000 we can expect that percentage to reach 20 percent. And by the year 2020 we have predictions of more than 40 million elderly people in the United States.

It sounds like science fiction. There is talk of pushing the age limits upward to 130 and 140 years. We might soon see people retiring at 90 or 100 years of age. Social Security will not be sufficient and there will not be

enough younger people working to support the program. So, we are in for some changes. The church must respond to these changes if we wish to remain a relevant force in the world. Part of our response should be to take a serious look at our responsibilities to older people.

Youth has been so glorified in the church that we inadvertently deprecate old age. We don't mean to do it, but the net result is that the older adults are somewhat ignored. They will tell you that they are "on the shelf" or "in the way." Many of them feel that no one in the church is interested in them. We have come to associate the elderly with what is decrepit and disposable. Because we fear old age and death, we reject those persons who arouse our fears by their presence.

In the world of the Old Testament, old age was not considered a defeat but a victory; it was not a punishment but a privilege. Growing old was considered a blessing that God bestowed. God's promise to Abraham was that he would be buried at "a good old age" (Gen. 15:15). Dying in "a ripe old age" (1 Chron. 29:28, NASB) is a blessing to be desired. God promises to be with us till the hair on our heads turns gray (Isa. 46:4).

Honoring parents is a commandment accompanied by a promise of long life (Deut. 5:16; Exod. 20:12). Dishonoring parents was punishable by stoning (Exod. 21:17). The gray head is not a thing of shame but of honor (Lev. 19:32). Our Western culture hardly knows how to accept the biblical view that "a gray head is a crown of glory" (Prov. 16:31, NASB). Prestige, honor, and glory accompany old age. How startling to Americans.

Wisdom is one of the positive features accompanying old age in biblical characterization. From Job we learn that "wisdom is with aged men" (Job 12:12, NASB). Out of respect, Elihu refrained from speaking until Bildad, Zophar, and Eliphaz had spoken, because they were older and wiser (Job 32:4-9).

Around the turn of the century, child developmental theories came into their own. Psychologists talked about *stages* of child development, but for some reason they assumed that development ceased at about age 18. Developmental psychology is just now catching up and recognizing that adulthood is dynamic and that it is filled with developmental changes.

It is now fashionable to talk about "phases of adult life." Adults have discovered that there is a midlife crisis and some attendant problems. Gerontology has become a fruitful and exciting area of research. We are just now rediscovering what the Old Testament has been trying to tell us for a long time: *old* is not a four-letter word! This is a new frontier in our society, and the church must become aware of its responsibility to minister to older citizens.

Neither society in general nor the church in particular have understood senior adults. It is doubtful that very many people under 65 can understand what it is like being over 65. Before 65 we think that financial security and freedom from responsibility will be what we most want in old age. But those who have crossed that line tell us what they want most is to be needed by others and to feel self-esteem; in short, what an older adult most wants is to be somebody.

Older people lose their status rapidly—even in the church. They no longer serve on boards and committees and are no longer asked to sing. Except for those we deem "dirty old men," many assume they have lost all interest in sex, and older women are often thought by younger people to be ugly. They are thought to be incapable of thinking clearly, to be very forgetful, and to be unable to hold responsible jobs. In short, they are thought to be incapable of living.

Our prejudiced views, sometimes called ageism, need to be reexamined. Newsmen a few years ago were constantly writing about the 20-hour workday of Golda Meir even though she was in her mid-70s. Picasso painted masterworks until a few months before his death at 91. Michelangelo was still sculpting a few weeks before he died at 89. Suppose the works of these giants had stopped because they were old!

Verdi wrote *Falstaff* at 80; Tolstoy wrote *What Is Art?* at 68. Even Freud, who was pessimistic about the minds of old people, did not begin his best work until his 40s, and he wrote *The Ego and the Id* at 67. Titian did his finest work just before he died at 100. Pablo Casals was still playing the cello in his 90s. Winston Churchill was



Dave Anderson Photo

prime minister at 81. George O'Keefe starred his first television special at 90. Bob Hope has become a tradition in his own time in his mid-70s. George Burns is going strong and making jokes about his age as he nears 90.

This essay has both academic and practical interests. I am fascinated with developmental psychology even though I make no claim to professional competence. I have always loved older people, and for the past three years I have taught a Sunday School class of senior citizens.

There are assumptions underlying this essay that should be stated. The first is that we accept the Bible with its very positive attitude toward old age. It is further assumed that we accept its holistic view of man. That is, we do not compartmentalize man but view him as a single unit. It is then assumed that the biblical approach to ministry for older adults involves us in meeting the needs of the whole man. With such assumptions, I have the awful audacity to offer some suggestions for ministry to older adults in the church.

1. Prepare them for this final stage in human development. Since the only alternative to old age is early death, we must, through our Christian education programs, prepare people to become old. They must do

Nazarene

# UPDATE

UPDATE EDITOR, NINA BEEGLE, PASTORAL MINISTRIES

## PUTTING ON SAUL'S ARMOR

It has always been intriguing to me that David was able to slay the giant with a slingshot. When King Saul offered David his own armor, he was making available to the young lad the very best in weaponry that was available at that time. David was simply uncomfortable with it and proceeded to accomplish the task his own way with his own weapon.

There has to be a lesson in this for ministers. We find ourselves in a competitive society. The spirit of competition is maintained by the making of comparisons. Sales organizations follow this principle. A successful salesman is elevated as an example of success, but always with the admonition "because he did it, you can do it also."

Some of this is done in the church as well. The successful ministers are invited to be the seminar speakers. They tell us how they did it. The manuals are distributed and the tapes are sold. Encumbered with his armor we return to our places of service to face the giants in our communities. Once back home, however, we discover the armor simply doesn't fit. The seminar

speaker may have come from a large city and I am in a small town or even in a rural setting. He may have a multiple staff and I am the only one employed in my church. I then compare my lack of success with his great success and consider myself a failure.

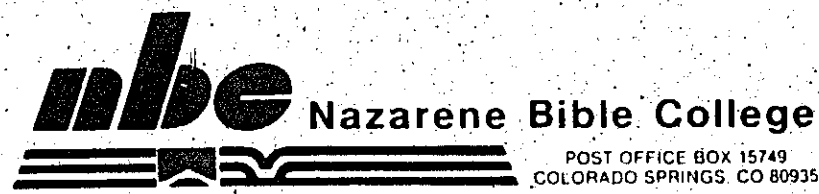
From that point on I must work doubly hard, for not only do the methods not work for me but along with it I have suffered damage to my self-esteem. Now I do have a problem, and my only recourse may be to plan to move on to another church where perhaps the methods might work for me and I can at least get a fresh start. The only other alternative is to leave the ministry altogether.

David could have left the battlefield that day a scared, defeated, chagrined little shepherd boy. But something inside of him said, "Let me try it my way. I will use what has worked best for me in this situation." I certainly am in favor of hearing the success stories. All of us must be open to receiving new methods and ideas and then implement them. However, we must not allow ourselves to be in bondage to them.

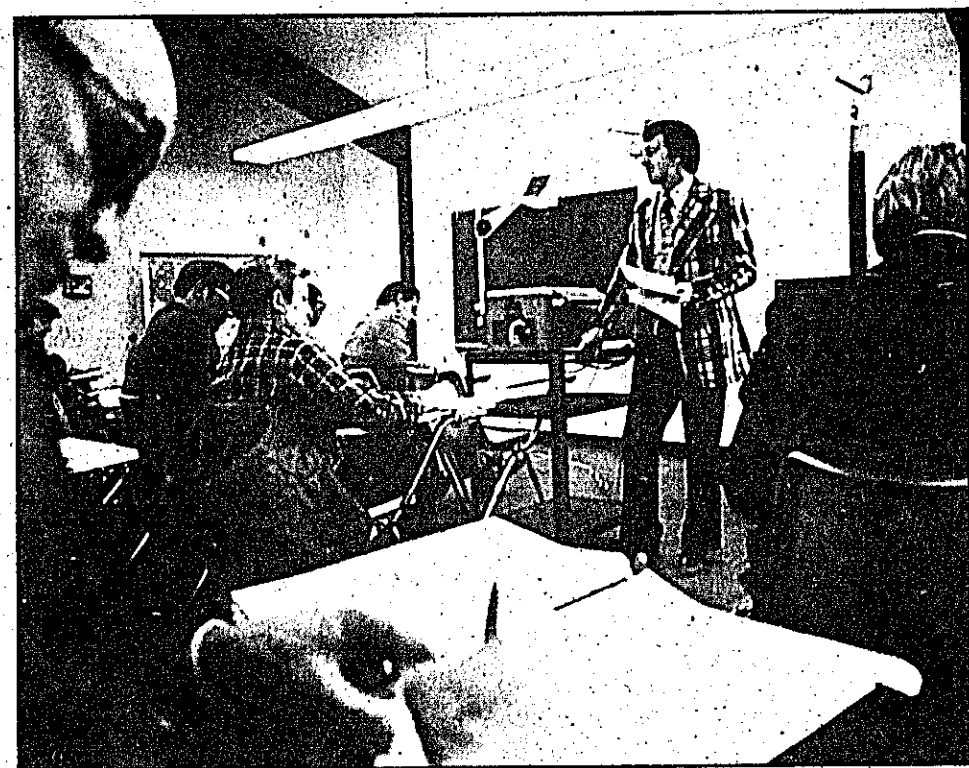
A rural church will have a program and implement methods to reach rural people. The statistics will in all probability not be as impressive as the statistics of a big-city church. This should not, however, be reason for a rural or small town pastor to be discouraged. As long as we are achieving reasonable goals commensurate with our opportunities, we should have reason to rejoice.

Let every pastor be excited and challenged right where he is serving. If you are a David and are more comfortable with a slingshot and are convinced you can slay the giant with one of five stones, then accept your lot as a shepherd lad rather than that of a king. God has placed you where you are for a purpose. As you are faithful to Him, His purposes are being fulfilled. Let this be your joy and contentment.

By General Superintendent  
Jerald D. JohnsonA complimentary subscription to the *Preacher's Magazine* is sent to all



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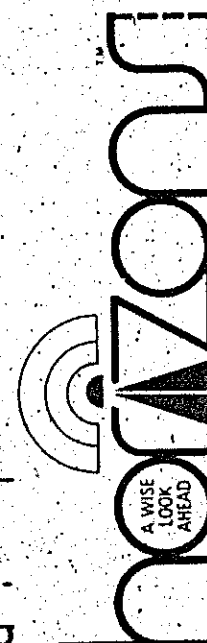
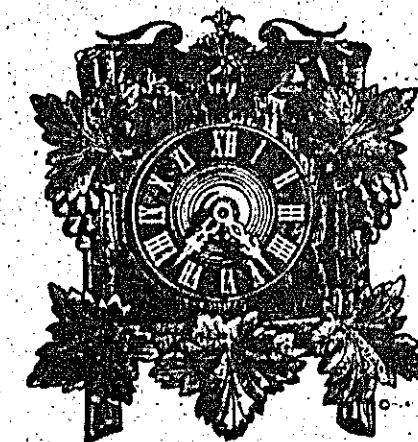
### (choose any 4)

- After the birth of your first grandchild.
- When one of the "old gang" expires suddenly.
- During your pastor's next sermon on heaven.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Any of the above may serve to remind us that time is still marching—and today is a very good time to prepare your will, so that your heirs won't be at loose ends "tomorrow."

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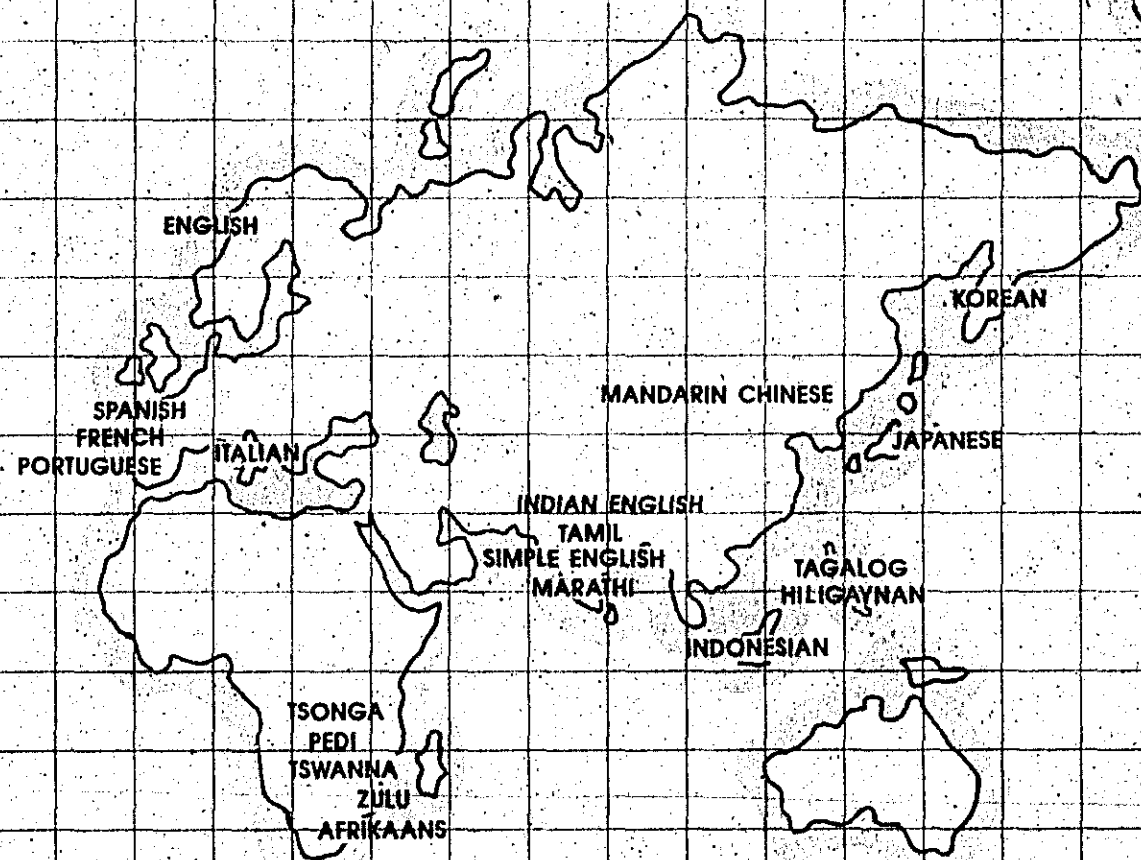
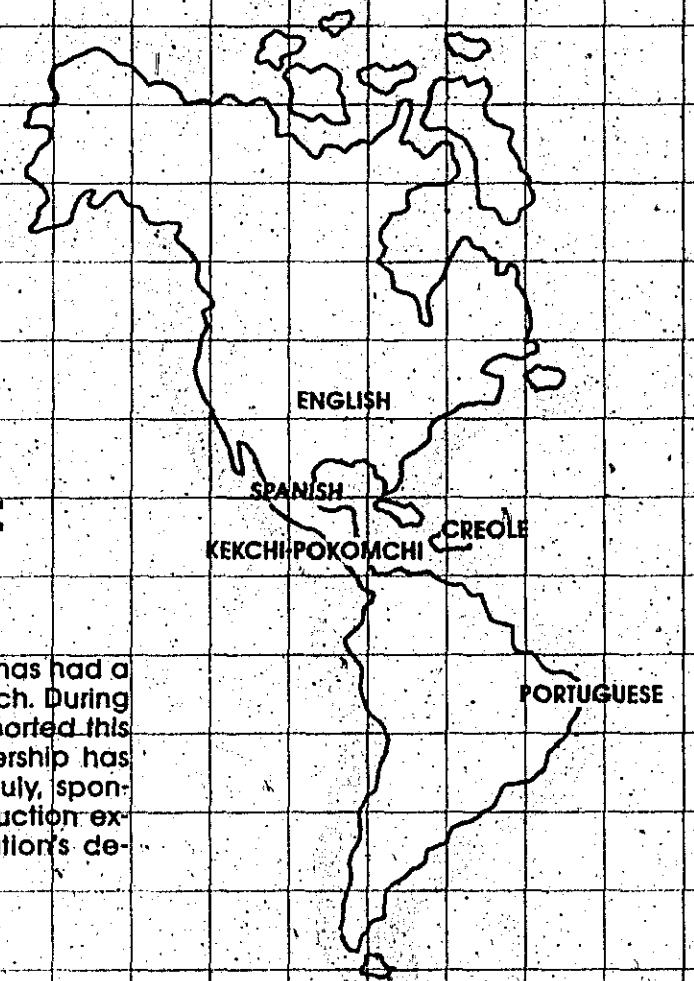
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Made available under special provisions of the Federal Income Tax Law, a Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA) is a means for an individual to accumulate money under tax-deferred conditions for the purpose of providing income for retirement. Accumulated at guaranteed interest rates, contributions as small as \$10.00 per month may be made.

**How can I put money into a TSA?**

In order to maintain tax-deferral, all TSA contributions must be remitted for you directly by your church employer. You and your church employer may agree to do this by a "salary increase" agreement, a "salary reduction" agreement, or a combination of the two.

**What happens if I cannot continue making contributions or need some of the funds?**

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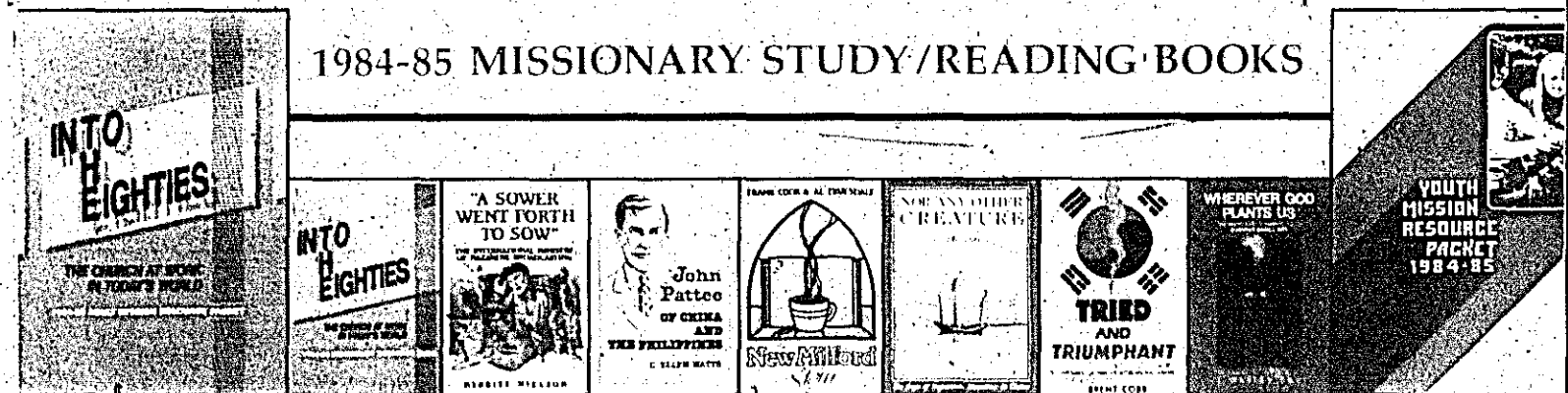
Write to Pensions and Benefits Services, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.



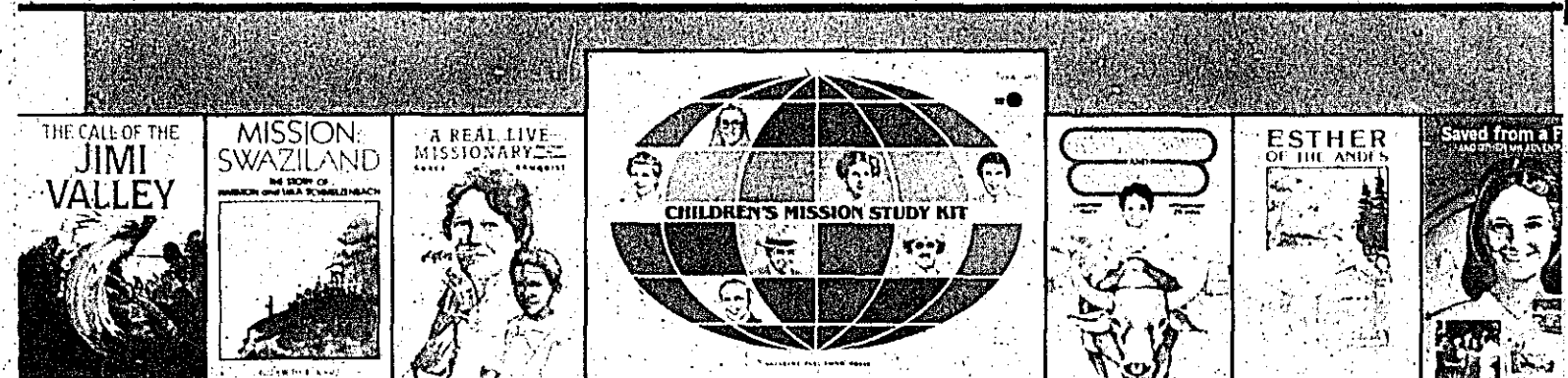
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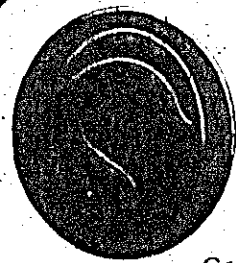


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## CHAPLAIN BOWERS JOINS PASTORAL MINISTRIES STAFF

Wilbur Brannon, director of Pastoral Ministries, has announced that Chaplain Curt Bowers, former staff chaplain at Fort Stewart, Ga., has accepted the position of Chaplaincy coordinator. The post was left vacant by the recent resignation of Chaplain Leroy Bevan.

Colonel Bowers entered the chaplaincy in 1961 and served with the 101st Airborne in Vietnam, as well as in Germany, Japan, and Korea. His assignments in the United States include Fort Campbell, Fort Carson, Fort Hood, Fort Knox, and

Fort Hauchuca. Bowers was commissioned in 1961.

Born in Lancaster, Pa., he is married to the former Doris Shawver. They have three children, Sharon, 26; William, 22; and Stephen, 18. After graduation from Asbury College and seminary, he pastored the Erma church in Cape May, N.J.

Bowers has the Silver Star, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Commendation Medal with First Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Air Medal with First Oak Leaf Cluster. □



## WHEN THE PASTOR'S FAMILY HURTS

"What has happened to me and my family is becoming more common among pastors and their families," begins an anonymous article in a *Home Life* magazine. "The pressures of the 'glass house,' the loneliness, the constant demands of energy, emotion, and self are enough. But when a church has a year of crises—one major problem after another—the parsonage family suffers."

This pastor's story included two suicide attempts by his severely depressed wife who couldn't live up to the "supersaint" expectations of her church.

"The pastor and his family are subject to the same physical, mental, and emotional problems that trouble other families. And like other families, they need the loving support of their church," ended the



## CAN WE HELP YOU?

pastor's article. But instead of support this family received harsh criticism and rejection. Small wonder the wife continued to get worse instead of better.

Pastoral Ministries recognizes human limitations of God-called pastors and their families. When guilt is added to the pressures of their lives because expectations are too high (their own, their church's, their con-

gregation's) destructive forces are brought to bear. The build-up of these forces can lead to breakage and the shattering of the "capsule" that contains the "inner-us."

CONET is an effort to alleviate some of the pressures. Pastors and their families need not suppress their feelings to the breaking point, feeling no one cares.

"Heartline" has been established in two areas as a pilot project to give counsel to these people in times of stress. Pastors and families in the three districts of Florida and in the Central Region, U.S.A., may call a toll-free number: 1-800-874-2021. If the "Heartline" counselor cannot help, you will be referred to a professional nearest you who will respect your need for confidentiality and your Christianity.

For more information write Pastoral Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131. □

## WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Ministers deal with it in their own church families where the people involved do not understand what is happening. When it strikes the pastor's own family it is often "too close" to be recognized for what it is.

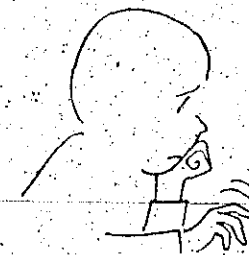
The following briefly describes three degrees of severity that will help the pastor recognize depression:

### MILD DEPRESSION (the "blues")

This is the most common type of depression. It is usually brief and doesn't seriously interfere with normal activity.

- Significant events such as holidays, anniversaries, a new job, a move, as well as boredom and frustration, can produce a temporary "down" mood.
- Postpartum depression (after giving birth) is a common type of mild depression. However, it can become severe, so talk to your physician if you feel depressed after childbirth.

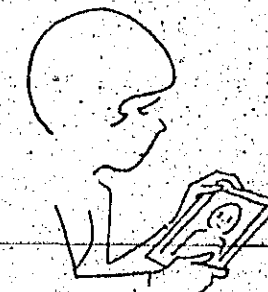
Treatment is usually not needed. A change of situation, pace, etc., is usually enough.



### MODERATE DEPRESSION (feeling hopeless)

Symptoms are similar to those of mild depression, but more intense and longer lasting.

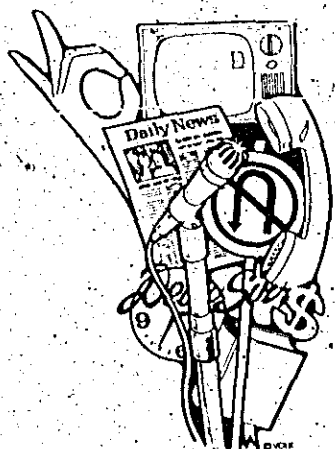
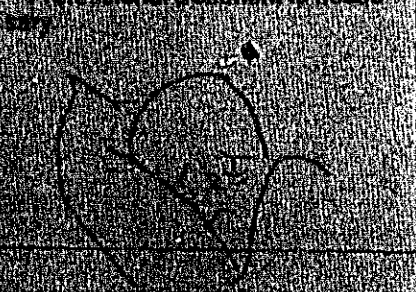
- An unhappy event such as loss of a loved one, career setback, etc., is usually the cause. Person is aware of unhappy feelings but can't control them.
- Daily activities may be harder to cope with, but usually are still possible.
- Suicide may be a danger. It may seem like the only "solution" as pain gets worse. Professional help may be necessary.



### SEVERE DEPRESSION (feeling far from reality)

Person is far from the outside world. Thoughts are often confused and irrational.

- Thoughts and actions are usually the cause. Sometimes a person's thoughts and actions may be related.
- Physical symptoms are often obvious. The person may suffer from delusions that his body is changing.
- Mental depression (stress) is a form of depression causing extreme pain and despair in a person. Professional treatment is necessary.



## CATCH UP—WITH VideoNet

We have been in production now for almost a year and the positive response has been far beyond our expectations. Pastors, district superintendents, and various denominational leaders have contacted us about how pleased they are with the information being produced.

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2. With laypersons: In producing VIDEONET we try to gear at least a portion of the program to instruct and enhance the productivity of lay workers. They will

enjoy VIDEONET as much as pastors.

3. District superintendents making the tapes available to pastors. Some will want to show the tapes to small specialized groups (new pastors, church planters, etc.). Others will make equipment and tapes available to use as their time permits.

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You've seen the word VIDEONET in many of our publications, and by now many have viewed at least one edition. If you haven't, you probably are wondering if you are behind the times. Well, you are—but you can catch up!

**MEMO TO:** Local and Licensed Ministers (who are students of liberal arts colleges and the seminary)

**SUBJECT:** Paragraph HM 429.1

If you miss **HANDBOOK paragraph 429.1** you could be embarrassed and in difficulty when ordination time approaches. Here's the scenario. It happens every year. The assembly is starting. Pastoral Ministries is requested to send a Certificate of Graduation. The general superintendent has asked if the validation is on hand. The boards, the candidate, the superintendent, and Pastoral Ministries are stymied. Then comes the inevitable question, "How could a religion major, much less a seminarian, not be qualified educationally for ordination?"

Deficiencies occur because of certain required subjects. Graduation attests to the fact that it is not a matter of total academic credits. The tension is that **it is possible to graduate from a liberal arts college and the seminary and not fully qualify for ordination.**

**What's the solution?** First, note the qualifying phrases in 429.1 such as "including one course in the doctrine of holiness" under *Theology*. Or, "including one course in the history and polity of the Church of the Nazarene with special concentration on the MANUAL" under *Church History*. Later the paragraph cautions "the candidate should not expect any of the requirements to be modified and waived."

Second, the student should; at appropriate intervals, check his records with the registrar, the school advisors, and the district advisors. With careful planning you can make sure that graduation means you have taken all the subjects required for ordination. Proper caution will save you delays and embarrassment.

See **HANDBOOK ON THE MINISTRY, pages 18-19.** (Boards of Ministerial Studies should make sure all licensed ministers see this article.) □

**MINISTERS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

Course No. 231a—**MAKING THE BIBLE YOURS**, by Earl Wolf, is a revised reprint of **THE LIVING WORD**, which is out of print. Release is scheduled for April. □

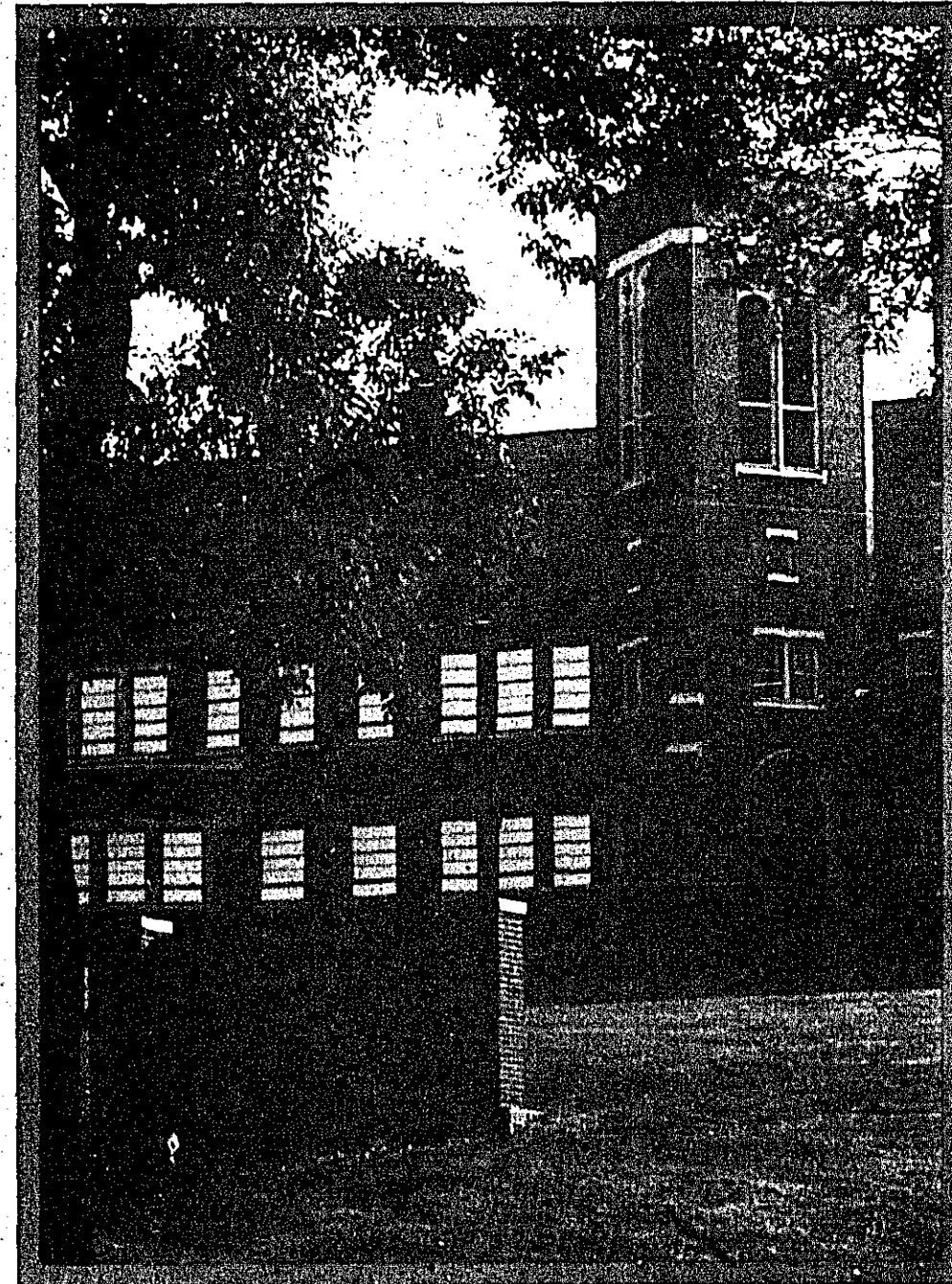
**MUSIC MINISTRIES**

Course No. 336—**THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC IN THE CHURCH**, by Vic Delamont (Moody), replaces **CHURCH MUSIC HANDBOOK**, by Lynn W. Thayer (Zondervan). □

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**1984-85—The Year of Church growth**

- |                              |                                     |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| August 27—September 2, 1984  | Youth Week                          |
| September 10-15, 1984        | NIROGA, Glorieta, New Mexico        |
| September 17-21, 1984        | NIROGA, Ridgecrest, North Carolina  |
| October 1-5, 1984            | NIROGA, Adirondacks                 |
| October 1984                 | European Military Personnel Retreat |
| February 18-22, 1985         | NIROGA, Florida                     |
| June 20-22, 1985             | General Conventions, Anaheim        |
| June 23-28, 1985             | General Assembly, Anaheim           |
| August 26—September 1, 1985  | Youth Week                          |
| September 9-14, 1985         | NIROGA, Glorieta, New Mexico        |
| September 16-20, 1985        | NIROGA, Ridgecrest, North Carolina  |
| September 30—October 4, 1985 | NIROGA, Adirondacks                 |
| October 14-18, 1985          | NIROGA, Canadian Rockies            |



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1 Timothy 1:5, NASB

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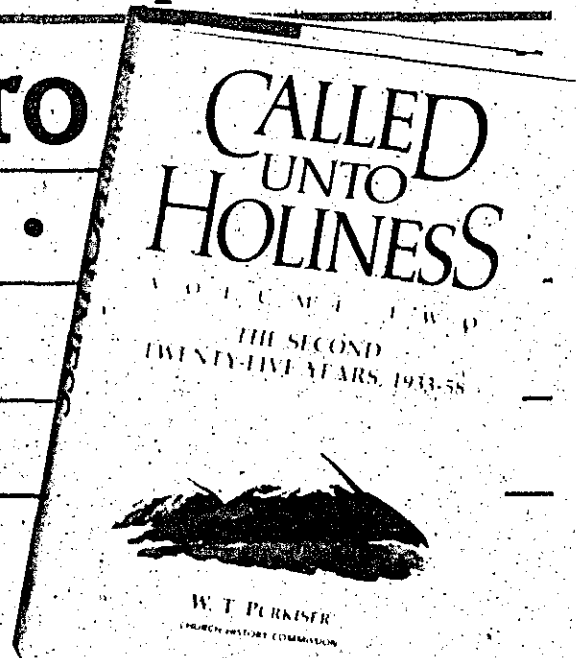
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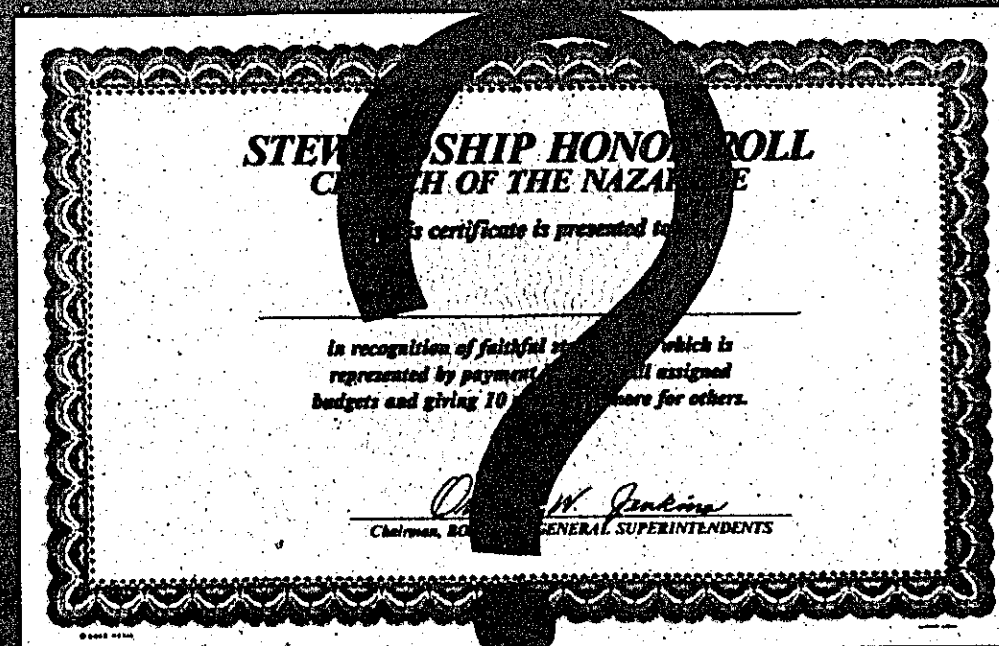
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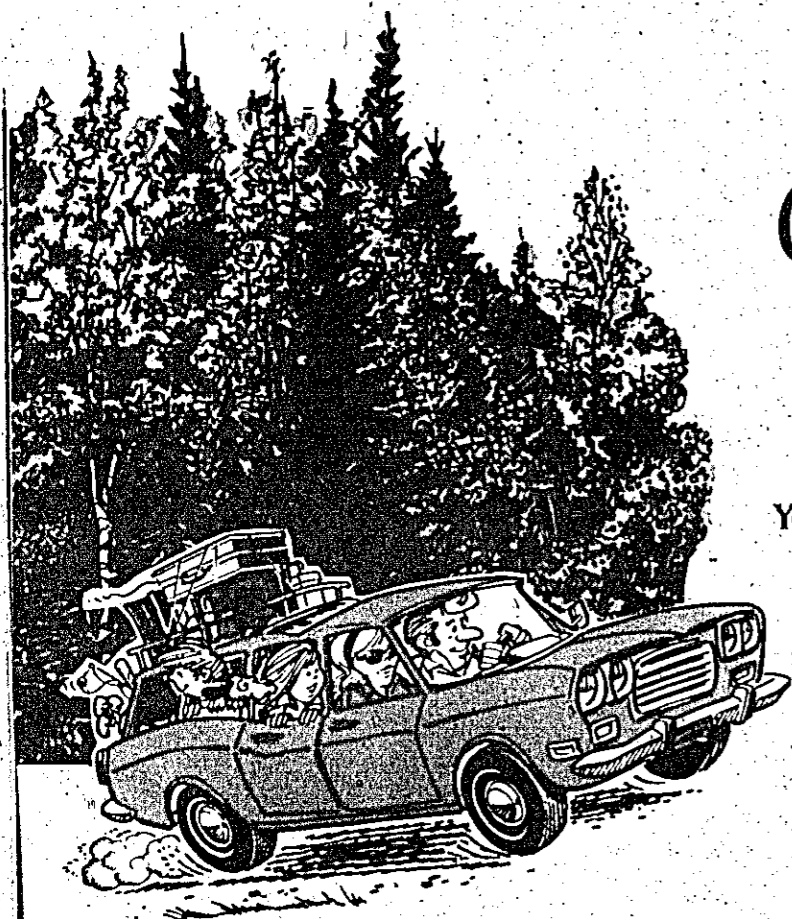
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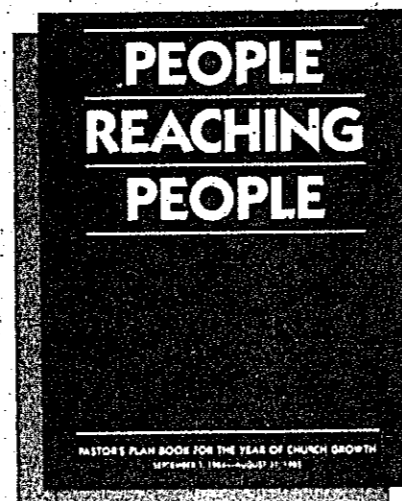
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more than prepare for financial security; they must also be prepared emotionally. The trauma of sudden retirement could be reduced if we helped them prepare.

2. Help them accept this final stage in human development. Until we accept old age and old people, there will continue to be the attempt to hide from it. How many people are there in your church who are still not attending the senior citizens class because they deny their age? When we begin to "honor the gray head" again, it may become less threatening for people to accept themselves as older adults.

3. Help them resolve the identity crisis. Older adults face identity crises similar to those faced by adolescents. Erikson writes that identity formation neither begins nor ends with adolescence; it is, he claims, a life-long development. They don't always know precisely where their lives are going. They are experiencing losses and they are being forced to change old habits. Many of them are made more dependent on others at a time when they do not want it. All of this becomes confusing in terms of one's self-identity. Once they served in various capacities of the church, but now they see the younger people taking over. It really is not carnal jealousy; they wonder who they are and how they fit into the program. We must help them with that crisis.

4. Provide for the achievement of Ego Integrity. Erik Erikson says the final stage in human psychosocial development is "Ego Integrity vs. Despair" when one is confronted with death and the reevaluation of his past experiences. This usually occurs in later adulthood when personal and social losses become most pronounced.

Ego integrity is achieved when one can acknowledge and accept the self as a totality. This means being able to accept the good and bad, the positive and negative aspects of identity without being threatened by this knowledge. This also allows the person to accept the inevitability of death. Despair results when the threat of death forces the person to realize that there is no time to "set one's house in order" and exit with no regrets.

5. Help them deal positively and hopefully with death. Despite being forced to face it, there is still a taboo on talking about death. Ernest Becker, in his Pulitzer prize-winning *Denial of Death*, deals with this taboo and says that we are all terrified by the idea of death. We cannot teach people to live until we can teach them to die.

Talking about death is not morbid; avoidance of the subject is morbid. One may seriously doubt that an authentic Christian life-style can be achieved without facing death head-on. Dying is a part of life. Wills need to be written, plans need to be made.

6. Use them in ministry. We've long known the slogan "use them or lose them" and we apply that principle for younger people. Have we forgotten that the same is true for older adults? Whatever else these older adults have or don't have, they have memories. Those memories can function as a bridge to interpret the traditions, rituals, and history of our church. The hope for keeping faith alive in the church depends upon our use of the memories the older adults have stored away. Moses commanded precisely this in Deut. 6:20-24.

7. Train them for a caring ministry. One of the great



Photo by Wesley Tracy

concerns of this writer is that we need a healing ministry in the church. There are so many people who are hurting, wounded, and traumatized. Older adults with their wisdom, patience, and tolerance can function as loving, caring assistants to the pastor. They have the time to listen. They can use the telephone and send cards even when they cannot drive. We need people in the church who have time to listen and care for the brokenhearted on a deep and sustained basis.

A couple of years ago I went through a very traumatic period in my life. My heart was broken; my life was in shambles. I did not know what to do; I did not know where to turn. It was a "mother of Israel"—86 years old—who took me under her wing. She called me two or three times a week, sometimes even more often if she "felt led of the Lord" to do so. She was patient, loving, and she was always there.

Why don't we mobilize our older adults into a caring ministry? It would be presumptuous to call it "counseling," but they can certainly provide a listening ear and the wisdom of their years.

8. Minister to the whole person. Some older adults are living in houses that are not fit for human habitation. They are on fixed incomes, and they are eating dog food and cat food to stay alive. The church has been slow

about doing anything because we thought the government would do it. We must accept that we have a responsibility for caring for the body as well as the soul. We cannot leave them hungry, naked, and cold, and simply say to them, "We are praying for you." Somewhere in the church budget we must find a way to minister to the physical needs of our older citizens. Paul reminds us to "contribute to the needs of the saints" (Rom. 12:13, RSV)—especially, he says, to those who are of the "household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).

9. Physical education can be included in the program. If we really believe the Bible teaches ministry to the whole person, we cannot afford to neglect the physical needs of older adults. Most of them are in good enough condition to jog, swim, ride bikes, play tennis, work, and garden. With the advances of medical science they will be increasingly more healthy. Providing safe ways for them to care for their bodies might be just as "spiritual" as taking them to Sunday School.

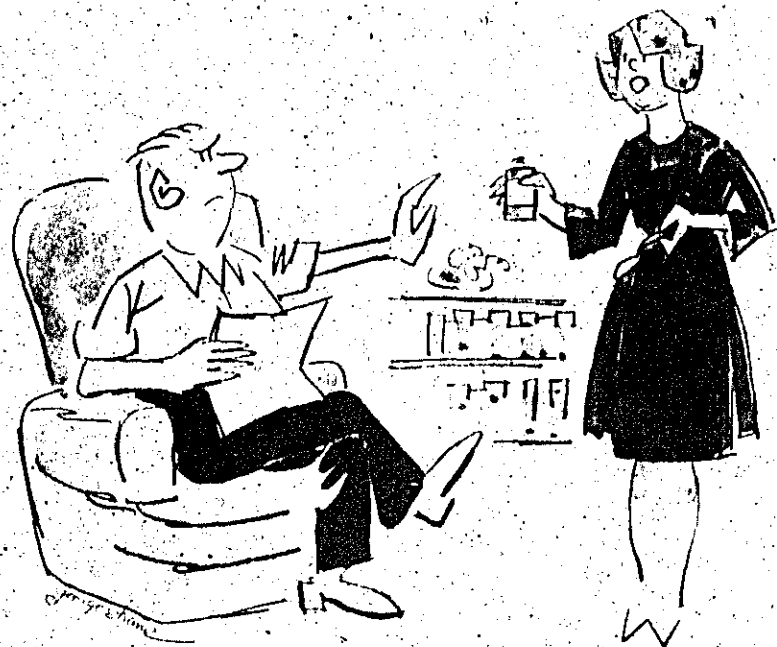
10. Transgenerational Christian education should be encouraged. In the church we are so inclined to compartmentalize and fragment the congregation. If you are in a certain age bracket you go here, in another bracket you go there. We are so age-conscious that some folk, even when they have reached their 75th birthday, still have a horror of being associated with "old" people! Somewhere in the church we need to get the ages together. Old people can learn from the younger set, and children need the advantage of being with and hearing older people. A great deal of very effective learning could take place. Everyone is a loser when we continually segregate people on the basis of age. Ageism is a prejudice every bit as real and as unchristian as racism.

11. Provide them with educational experiences. How often we hear it: "Oh, all you need to do with the old folks is let them talk and give a little devotional." Well, it just might surprise us to discover that older adults still have functioning brains! Despite past assumptions, age does not bring loss of intelligence or learning ability; disease may. The elderly deserve a good, sound educational experience.

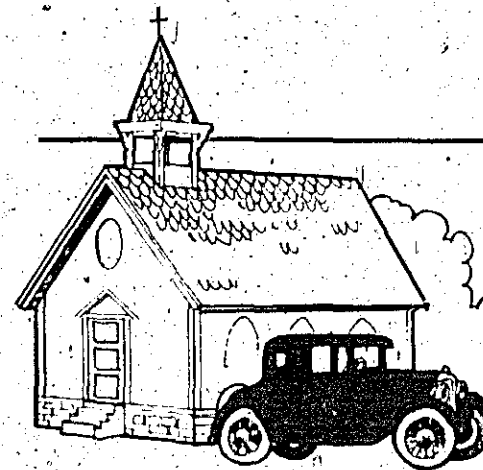
Across the country, senior adults are flocking to college and university campuses. They are returning to complete (sometimes to begin) educational careers that were interrupted earlier. That should send a clear message to the church. It would not hurt if we offered them some philosophy, theology, and biblical exegesis—along with some more "practical" studies.

12. Treat them as persons. They are individuals with individualized needs. Don't refer to them with derogatory terms such as "old fuddy-duddies" or in ways that treat old age as a negative phase of life. Almost as bad are terms of endearment that tend to treat older adults like children. They do not like to be described as "cute" or "adorable." Visit them, and listen to what they have to say. Treat them as friends, and enjoy them as persons who have something to offer. They need to know they are important; they want to know they are loved. A basket of fruit at Thanksgiving does not make up for a year of neglect.

Minister to older adults and allow them to minister in your church. We must respond to them as whole persons over a broad enough base to minister effectively to all their needs. This is our last chance to minister to these saints of God because the next stage of their development will remove them from us and from our ministry. Let us minister to them now.



"Dear, when the doctor told you to take your medicine religiously he didn't mean only on Sundays."



## In the Preacher's Magazine 50 Years Ago

### NATURALLY

"The voice of the modern preacher is often hideously artificial and not very natural.

"I believe that so far as a preacher goes away from his natural voice, either in language or tones, he loses his self-respect, inward vigor, and social frame. So, if we would know the art of making good in the ministry, we must be devoutly studious, sublimely courageous, supremely earnest, and beautifully natural."

—W. B. Walker  
April 1934

### A LITTLE VISION, PLEASE

"Some time ago a little woman who had the spirit of ministration and just wanted to help somewhere started a Sunday School and after a while had an evangelistic service. Then she started regular services, got a crowd together and called a pastor, and later built a church building.

"There were ministers in that congregation who could not find anything to do. They would have been glad to pastor that church or take a meeting somewhere, but when it came to service for the sake of others they couldn't find any place to serve and consequently were out of work.

"Sometimes it seems we need a revival of those things which are included in a call to preach."

—Paul S. Hill  
December 1934

### SOAP IS CHEAP

"There is no excuse for preachers who go into the pulpit with dandruff on their shoulders when soap is so cheap; and one good application a week will guarantee protection. A preacher should know that his collar is never clean enough to wear the second day . . . that his home and children should be kept clean at all times . . . when people come to your home and find it looking ratty, or yesterday's syrup on the children's faces, your preaching will not sound so good next Sunday. Clothes and personal appearance do not make character, but they do help to make reputation and thus help you to succeed."

—J. W. Roach  
July 1934

### THE PLAY'S THE THING

"If one of our Nazarene preachers should some day be tempted to put on some gaudy play or pageant in his church in the fond but foolish hope that it might prove a blessing, I would suggest that he procure the cooperation of some kindhearted undertaker to bring his outfit and stage a funeral. That would be far more appropriate because it will be a faithful portrayal of what is about to happen to your church.

"Other churches may turn their pulpits into forums for the discussion of economics, governmental affairs, racial problems, eu-

genics, modern fiction, and the like, but Nazarenes cannot."

—Raymond Browning  
May 1934

### SERMON BARREL

"Sermons may be purchased by the barrel, but they cannot be delivered that way. A doctor may not take his own medicine and a lawyer may not follow his own advice, but a minister must be a partaker of his own message. A congregation becomes like the minister as much as or more than like his message."

—C. T. Moore  
February 1934

### WHO'S IN CHARGE?

"To place the entire career of the ministry under the direction of the church is not right. The minister is not a machine that can be placed, by human hands, into a groove that is made for him in the machinery of the church. The minister is a throbbing, living, praying, wrestling man of God, with a divine call upon him; and with a burning message to proclaim; and to put him in confinement to the well worn systems of service is all too frequently a mistake. . . . There are thousands of ministers right this minute who are serving the church in perfect divine order; but that does not even infer that the ministry has gone out of the hands of God and into the hands of men for its directing source."

—Paul S. Hill  
March 1934

# Revival and Revolution

by Leon O. Hynson

Professor of Church History and Historical Theology,  
Asbury Theological Seminary

**T**he Wesleyan Revival prevented a social and political revolution in England like the bloody upheaval of the French Revolution.

This statement is a variation on the familiar thesis (commonly called "The Halevy Thesis") concerning the influence of Wesley on England in the eighteenth century. The prominence and importance of the claim is seen in its broad appeal and persistence. Evangelical Christians affirm it to praise the grace of God manifested through the Wesleyan preachers whose itinerary across the nation changed the spiritual face of England. Academic scholarship wrestles with the thesis as it studies social movements, economic trends, or historical patterns. Through its insights, conservatives laud the stabilizing influence of the revival that gave to thousands of persons the springs of spiritual vitality, transforming demoralized lives and giving a reason for living. This means that the power of the age to come not only moved them toward the hope of heaven but also provided them with a vital energy and purpose for living in the world. "In the world" they were seized by the unshakable conviction that God's kingdom could be realized in the pledge of the Spirit and that spiritual, moral, and human worth must be and can be affirmed under God to possess maximum worth.

From the economic and political left, socialists, Marxists, and liberation thinkers criticize and lament the revival's undercutting of the "corrective" processes of revolution that bring justice and equity to the poor, the dispossessed, or the emerging "have not" societies. That many of

the "haves" and "have nots" are made to suffer, are tortured, driven from home and murdered in the process, is the bloody foundation on which the new society rests and grows. In the mind of these thinkers, the Wesleyan revival siphoned off the proper force of revolution, redirecting it inward toward spiritual renewal and blunting its impact so much that England remained committed to the status quo. In considering this thesis, used as ammunition for both radical and conservative speakers and writers, how shall we bring objectivity to bear?

The answer should be sought first in Wesley's own program of revival and reform. Starting in his attempt to evangelize the American Indians (1735-37), his spiritual and intellectual pilgrimage encountered the blockage of confused priorities: Are good works at the basis of our justification before God, or is faith in Christ the prior requirement? He returned from Georgia in 1738 in a state of uncertainty about the ways of God and his own ministry. Christ opened mind and heart for Wesley at Aldersgate. Henceforth, he would see his calling to be a ministry of reforming and redeeming the world. As long as he lived, he, in concert with his brother Charles, sought "to serve the present age." Any interpretation of Wesley that divides social reform and spiritual awakening or minimizes one calling in order to amplify the other, has not given Wesley his due. For Wesley, renewal is toward reform. Where renewal is minimized, reform becomes moralism. And where reform is minimized, renewal is cut short. Revival without moral and spiritual reformation is like coming to a blooming fig

tree and finding no fruit thereon (Mark 11:12-14).

Attention should be drawn to the climate of English church and social life in the eighteenth century. While there were superlative examples of spiritual leadership by many others than Whitefield and the Wesleys—persons like Wilberforce, John Newton, Charles Simeon, and the Clapham Sect—the life of the Church of England had stagnated. The focus was upon human goodness, rather than the liberating word of faith. Wesley learned from St. Paul via Luther. The rules of the church were wielded as a club against those who sought through a diversity of forms—field preaching or small bands and societies—to produce change. According to Samuel Johnson, the clergy employed "glittering sentences and polished periods" in their preaching, but did not proclaim Jesus Christ crucified and risen. The laboring class was largely ignored and in consequence they were often brutish and alienated. Society treated debtors and petty criminals with unbelievable cruelty.

Where the church is committed to its own "best interests" in a society geared to self-seeking, the demoralization of society follows. The breakdown of morale and morality affected every sector of English society. Bernard Mandeville went so far as to argue that the private vices pursued by the people actually contributed to the benefit of the public. According to Wesley, too many physicians were concerned about their fees, and not their competency. Too many persons of wealth diverted vast amounts of grain from hungry people in order to feed their sleek horses. Too many poor, who had

**The Wesleyan revival, conservative in much of its political posturing, actually became revolutionary.**

carved out a modest living on small farms, had been driven off the land into the cities. While landholders controlled larger tracts of land for their purposes, the poor were deprived increasingly of food and shelter. Unequal tax structures made it more difficult for employers to hire some of these dispossessed. Hunger and shiftlessness followed the loss of dignity. "Gin Lane," Hogarth's painting of the London slum, revealed a depraved, demented populace; a people literally sated with meaninglessness.

Wesley's ministry to the world parish was largely confined to his homeland. There for more than five decades after Aldersgate, he proclaimed the gospel of salvation for all. As Bernard Semmel (*The Methodist Revolution*) has shown, this Arminian message shaped the self-consciousness of the nation. The great mass of common people were drawn to recognize their worth before God. The higher classes, often to their dismay, were convinced of their lack of merit before God. Thus the whole nation participated in a leveling process that flowed from the theological affirmation of universal grace.

The Wesleyan concept of human sinfulness always precluded, for him and his followers, utopian illusions. The world can never become a paradise, because sin and human failures will ever abound. "Never," that is, until the power of the gospel prevails and the Lord reigns. However, Wesley believed that the "grand Pentecost" would come and bring the restoration of the spirit of the Early Church exemplified in Acts 2-4. The power of sin will be subject to the triumph of grace.

Wesley's theology of perfect love offers the promise of a transformed relationship to God and a new spirit of love toward the world and toward our neighbors. The society of love—the church—will so impact the world that social reformation occurs. Is not this the Wesleyan correlation, when reform and holiness are linked in a relationship that sanctifies and renews? In 1811 a bill was proposed to Parliament that was intended to defend the Church of England against the Methodists. The Methodists declared that their ministry had changed the moral tone of the nation. Surely their perception was grounded upon decades of Wesleyan experience in reforming the nation!

Several counterarguments may be raised to dispute the value of the thesis. Distinct differences are discovered in the experiences of the French and English. The English had a long history of release from the force of oppression, even if as in the Magna Charta (1215) it was more psychological than political escape. In the Act of Toleration (1689) many Englishmen received the right of free exercise in religion.

In France, the church was wealthy in land, property, and resources, holding as much as one-third of the property. It exerted great power in the political arena. A spirit of hatred toward the clergy was evident. The church in France could not be ignored as it could be, and was by many common people, in England.

The Wesleyan revival, conservative in much of its political posturing, actually became revolutionary. It embodied revolution grounded in a spiritual dynamic that gave the new

company of earnest Christians a zeal to better their lives and their society as integral to their Christian faith and witness. The Methodist Revolution channeled men and women into constructive revolution, including zeal in labor, union leadership, care for the needy. The waste of human resources was turned around, and many were taught that being created in God's image meant that God's love and concern for human life was so great that they might live on a higher plane.

We now recognize the revival and reform movement of the Wesleys: its spiritual force; its dedication to the worth of everyone, slave or free, rich or poor; its appeal for civil and religious liberty; its rejection of any form of elitism or superiority because of class, wealth, or education; its assertion of the commonality of sin and the promise of salvation for all. In sum, its successful program of reforming church and nation through its message of full salvation helped to generate a thorough revolution of English life.

Those who stand gratefully in the heritage of Wesley believe that the revolution came—a mighty spiritual renewal. With it came the energy for reform; for economic improvement through responsible and diligent effort; for a stewardship of life that helped prepare England for the Industrial Revolution; and a modeling of Christian faith and life that continues to bear its fruit. The Wesleyan grasp of that "faith which works through love" contains the germ of a redemptive possibility that once more may change the face of the world. *Lord, let it happen again!*

# A COAT OF ARMS

by Frances Simpson

Have you ever made a personal coat of arms? I did this recently; and as I did, I observed a number of elementary principles that are standard for the Christian life. Since you are reading this article, your husband, like mine, is probably engaged in full-time Christian work and perhaps my coat of arms will resemble yours.

In the center of my design is a picture of me, the way I am today. I am a combination of whatever God gave me in the beginning, shaped by the environment in which I grew up, and changed from time to time by the people and circumstances that have entered my life—and they have been many.

I am not all that I want to be yet; but, as someone has said, "Thank the Lord, I'm not what I used to be." I used to be a perfectionist. Were you? I tried to do everything just right because I wanted people to like me. Finally, I discovered that no one could fit into the mold I had formed for myself so I backed off and let God do the fashioning. Through life's circumstances and whatever yieldedness and fortitude I have been able to contribute, God has made me into the person I am today.

**PRINCIPLE NO. 1—God has a plan for my life.**

In one corner of my coat of arms is a cotton ball, which represents my "growing up" years. You may have a buckeye or a sunflower. I was the first child born to a young couple on a cotton farm in southern Alabama.

As I pull back memory's curtain a bit, a train of unpleasant thoughts tumble out; but I push them aside to observe a young girl sitting on the back porch listening to the whip-poorwill, picking blackberries, gathering hickory nuts in the fall, making daisy chains, catching lightning bugs on a warm evening, kneeling by the bedroom window and looking out at the stars.

**PRINCIPLE NO. 2—Life is good.**

The next symbol on my coat of arms is the church. When I was 10 years old, the Church of the Nazarene came to the village where I lived, pitched a tent, and began holding services. Out of curiosity I went with the other neighborhood children to see and hear the "new folks in town." Within a year, I had been saved and sanctified and had joined the Church of the Nazarene.

Like many of you, I met my husband at a church college. We were married in the church. Our children were dedicated to God in the church. Most of our friends are in the church. The church is my husband's employer, my benefactor. I like the church. It doesn't have to be a perfect institution for me to appreciate it and brag on it.

**PRINCIPLE NO. 3—God works through His church.**

The next thing on my coat of arms is a picture of my family—the most important people in the world to me. For 28 years I've been in the middle of whatever took place in our home.

I've enjoyed being a wife and mother, but I've had to work at it. Have you? I have experienced some anxious moments; and, at times, I've cried out for wisdom and some concrete answers. But it continues to be a wonderful experience—that of taking a small bundle of love and transforming it into a man or woman that will inherit God's kingdom.

**PRINCIPLE NO. 4—God can take care of my family.**

The last symbol on my coat of arms is a hibiscus bloom. Our first two pastorates were in Florida where the hibiscus flourishes in brilliant reds, yellows, and pinks. Here I did most of my growing as a pastor's wife, so the hibiscus bloom represents God at work. Why the hibiscus? It dates back to about 15 years ago when I was going through a difficult period of adjustment. Our son, Mark, then about eight years old, was playing with his dad's golf clubs. A stray ball struck our birdbath by the ficus tree and cracked it on one side, enough that all the water trickled out. The birdbath became a symbol of my own brokenness, as I observed it day after day.

In time, as I prayed and leaned on the Word, God carried out His process of healing. As an act of faith, I set out one morning to restore the birdbath. I applied the proper glue to the broken parts and laid the basin on its side to dry. Early the next day I hurried out to fill it with water and again set it beneath the tree where

## THE MINISTER'S WIFE The Stereotyped Leader's Wife

by Hazel McAlister, Sylmar, California

Who is she?  
What is she?  
Webster says, it's an unwavering form or pattern,  
having no individuality, as though cast from a mold,  
then  
Why have we created her?  
The perfect stereotype of a leader's wife?  
She is killing us, this monster  
we have created  
and she doesn't even know who she is.  
She is like a doll  
a lifeless,  
colorless doll.  
Wind her up  
tell her how to look  
what to wear  
what to say  
and she will shake your hand,  
smile,  
teach your children in Sunday School,  
play the piano,  
lead the choir,  
sing solos,  
attend prayer meeting,  
lead the women's group,  
and never miss a service.  
She can lead worship  
and not even know you are there.  
She might know your name  
but she can't know you or me  
and we can't know her  
because she is so busy and occupied with  
being the perfect person we want her to be  
that she doesn't have time to find out  
who she is  
what she wants  
or where she is going.  
The strain we have put her under  
is unbelievably cruel,  
making her live in a glass house.  
Expecting her to keep it perfect,  
have ideal children,  
always look right (whatever that is).

She is never able to relax.  
All—because her husband is your spiritual leader.  
It is total cruelty,  
almost sadistic,  
but that is the way it is  
for the wives of our country's leaders.  
Robots  
because we have prescribed  
a certain style of life,  
a particular mode of dress  
and our own rules of conduct for her.  
All of them unrealistic,  
unfair,  
and unjust.  
We require things of her  
have attitudes toward her  
that we never require of anyone else  
and it is all so  
inhumane.  
We have intimidated,  
hindered the progress  
and stifled the life  
of countless ladies  
as we have strutted our stuff and  
discussed our preposterous expectations  
for the wife of our leader.  
She is being killed  
by our nonsensical demands.  
Let us all—apologize  
in one mass demonstration of understanding and love,  
beg her to forgive us  
for our unbending, fatuous attitudes,  
and give her room to breathe,  
to grow,  
and to be herself, a lady of worth.  
Let us love her as she is and give her the opportunity  
to demonstrate her own ability to love  
and be her friend.  
Let us allow these words  
however strong they may appear to be,  
to keep us in His love  
understanding and caring for  
our Pastor's Wife.

the birds could drink and play. It worked! But then I observed the crack lying like a scar beneath the swirling water. Impulsively I reached over, gathered a handful of hibiscus blooms, and set them afloat in the water. The effect was beautiful. Rejoicing in God's goodness, I sang to Him that morning:

"Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,  
All His wondrous beauty and purity,  
May Thy Spirit divine fill this being of mine.  
Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."

**PRINCIPLE NO. 5—I need to keep growing.**

At a recent preachers' and wives' meeting on our district, the ladies brainstormed the question: What characteristics should a pastor's wife possess? This is their composite answer:

The pastor's wife should:  
depend totally upon God,  
maintain good devotional habits,  
be herself and like herself,  
have complete trust in her husband, respect him, and support him,  
exert a positive influence in the home.

keep lines of communication open,  
be gentle and kind to everyone,  
accept people as they are,  
smile and possess a good sense of humor,  
be a good listener,  
keep secrets,  
admit her faults,  
be hospitable.

Perhaps all of the above can be summed up in the statement: A pastor's wife should be the unique person God intends her to be, fully submitted to Him, a helpmate to her husband, a home builder, and a friend to the congregation.

## CHURCH EMPLOYEES OR INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS???

by Paul D. Fitzgerald

Administrative Assistant for Pensions and Benefits-Services  
Church of the Nazarene

Dear Sirs:

*The only employee we have besides our pastor is a part-time custodian (or secretary). Do you know of any way we could pay them by contract and save the trouble of withholding income taxes and Social Security (FICA) taxes?*

In one form or another, this question has been asked literally hundreds of times in financial seminars, correspondence, and telephone conversations. Fortunately, the answer is fairly straightforward. However, it is usually not the answer desired by the questioner.

### WHO ARE EMPLOYEES?

There are basically two types of employees defined by the Tax Code: statutory employees and common law employees. Statutory employees have specifically defined jobs that on the surface might appear to be self-employed positions were it not for the statutes that define the work as that of an employee. The common law employee is the category that affects local churches most often.

The Tax Code defines a common law employee generally as anyone who performs services that can be controlled by the employer. That is, the employer has the legal right (even if not enforced) to control the means, methods, and results of the services provided. If the employer/employee relationship is deemed to exist based on the facts in each case, it does not matter what it is called nor how the payments are measured or paid, nor if the services are performed full time or part time. The employer must determine any taxable amounts paid, withhold appropriate taxes, pay and report those taxes to the IRS. Virtually all church custodians, church secretaries, paid choir directors, paid nursery workers, etc., are viewed by the IRS as common law employees.

### WHO ARE INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS?

Some local churches do hire independent contractors who offer specific services to the general public. Generally, in a year's time an independent contractor will have more than one organization to whom he offers services. An example would be services provided by a janitorial service, snow removal service, roofing contractor, etc., that advertises city-wide. No employer/employee rela-

tionship exists between the church and persons performing such services as an independent contractor, therefore, no withholding is required. However, the local church may still be required to report to the IRS those payments made to an independent contractor. The Tax Code provides that payments for services to an independent contractor in excess of \$600 per year must be reported to the IRS on Form 1099 MISC.

### WHAT IF WE DON'T WITHHOLD AND REPORT?

There are criminal and civil penalties for willful failure to comply with withholding and reporting requirements! In addition, the amount of Social Security (FICA) not withheld at the time of payment from an employee's salary (that must later be paid) becomes the responsibility of the employer! The employee has no obligation to later reimburse the employer for such amount. Further, in some cases, an officer or responsible employee may become personally liable for the taxes and penalties involved.

### WHAT IF WE ARE NOT SURE IF WE HAVE AN EMPLOYEE OR INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR?

The local church should carefully consult the Employer's Handbook (Publication 15) and the free Publication 539 for examples that might be similar to the church's situation. (Both publications are available from the IRS office. See your telephone directory for listings in your area.) Consultation should be made with a local tax counselor for advice. If questions still arise, a special form is available from the IRS to request that they determine if such person has an employment relationship with the local church. In no case should the questions be ignored nor should there be willful failure to abide by legal requirements for withholding and reporting either wages paid to employees or payments in excess of \$600 to independent contractors.

(Nazarenes may request further information on how this applies to their churches by requesting Memos on Church Management Nos. 3, 6, and 7 from Pensions and Benefits Services, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.)

The information contained in this article is of a general nature. It is not offered as specific legal or tax "advice." Each church and individual should evaluate its own unique situation in consultation with personal, legal, and tax advisors.

## Tithing the Time— Telephone Evangelism Plan

by J. Lester Seel

Retired Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Casselberg, Florida

I was wearied of watching the sanctuary door in the hope that a visitor would enter. There were indeed few. Why?

Last year Fern Park Church of the Nazarene invested \$1,500 in newspaper advertising that covered Greater Orlando. One week we spent more than \$200 for a very large display, hoping that this startling space would attract new people. There was virtually no response.

We made the usual surveys, but the prospects were few, if any. I do not recall that we had as many as five outside people enter the church doors that year.

A chain of thought began to alert me to another method of recruitment. I prepared a message on the *tithe of time* as well as that of money—the 168 hours in everyone's week and the consequent 16.8 hours we owe God. Allowing for the hours spent in church service and for family and personal devotions, there would still be time left for special service to God.

I challenged our 15 families to win a family each between then and the next assembly time. I realized this was "old material," but I told them they could use their own methods or accept a plan that I would present that would transform the old into new material.

I had learned the technique of commercial telephone canvassing and remembered that about 50 calls a day will result in five appointments. Two of these will probably "back out" when the representative knocks at the door, three will admit him and listen to his appeal, and one will purchase the product. The salesman goes home with a handsome commission. He is not discouraged by the 45 original rejections, nor by the 2 at the door, nor by the time consumed in making the three presentations. He expects that the law of averages will finally produce.

Most libraries have a city directory that lists names, addresses, and telephone numbers by streets. Grouping these in lots of 50s, I pasted each grouping to a 5" x 8" card and challenged my people to each take a card. Most of my little group did not feel adequate and asked to do their project in their own way. I then asked them to be my assistants, following up on prospects the rest of

us found. It evolved that my wife and I did most of the telephone work.

I was handicapped by the smallness of my group. If a pastor had from 5 to 15 callers, with as many more "friendship visitors," I think the results could be astonishing. I had personally caught the vision, and I refused to let it subside.

### Procedure

On August 29, 1978, I sat at the phone and dialed my first number. "Hello, Mrs. ———," I said. "I am Rev. Seel, the pastor of the Fern Park Church of the Nazarene, real close to where you live. Do you know of any children in the neighborhood who do not attend Sunday School anywhere?" (Later, I sometimes said, "Hello, Mrs. ———, I am Rev. Seel, a minister here in Fern Park. I am doing a survey. Many people in our area have not found their own church or any church as yet, and I am trying to discover some of these nice people and be helpful and friendly." Using a push-button phone, it takes very little time to dial a number and say my "piece.") The "callee" may say the family is already involved. Only five or six have said, "I am not interested in religion," but even these often say, "Where is your church located?" "What time is your morning service?" "I attended your church before moving here." I listen for nuances—hesitations—leading phrases or sentences—from there I simply speak from my heart. I talk as long as the callee wants to talk, and establish rapport. I tell her (it is usually a woman) I will send her a mimeographed sheet that gives our location and the times of services.

My ninth callee that morning said that her uncle and nephew had both been Nazarene ministers in West Virginia. I responded properly. Then she said, "Will you call again?" Would!! The next day my wife and I visited her. Two days later two of our ladies called and said that they would come after her for church. She said it wasn't necessary but they insisted as I had urged them to do. She did come. The next Sunday she came on her own and found God. I seldom weep but I could not restrain the tears when she rose from the altar radiantly happy in her newfound salvation.

(Continued on page 60)

# THE IDEA MART

## COMMITMENT FORMS

Commitment forms come in many cloaks. Here is another, used by the Youngstown First Church of the Nazarene with good results.

### Commitment Day

*Scripture:* "Commit thy way unto the Lord" (Ps. 37:5). "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).

Realizing how important it is to commit myself wholly to the work of Christ and to His Church, specifically, to Youngstown First Church of the Nazarene, Youngstown, Ohio, I make the following commitments. By the help of God, I will be faithful in these commitments:

(Check the appropriate blank, or make comments.)

- I promise to faithfully maintain a personal daily devotional life, realizing how important it is to my own life, and the life of the church.
- I promise to be consistently faithful in attendance of all services of the church, realizing the importance of my involvement and witness to the church in this area.
- I will faithfully tithe (10 percent of my income) \_\_\_\_\_ and in addition, give other offerings as the Lord directs \_\_\_\_\_, realizing the necessity of such to fulfill God's commandment to tithe and my personal responsibility to give to God's work.
- I will participate in the life of the church by making myself available to help and contribute my time, talent, and energies to the following areas of church work:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Sunday School (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Youth Program (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Missionary (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Music (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Ushers (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Public Relations: Greeters, Visitor Contacts, Community Survey, Fellowship Times with New Contacts, etc. (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Activities (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Junior/Children's Church (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cantata/Plays/Special Days (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Personal, Phone or Card Calling (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bible Studies in the Home (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help in Work on Church Buildings & Equipment (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Involved in Organized Senior Citizens' Group (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ladies' Fellowship (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Men's Prayer/Fellowship Breakfast (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Evangelistic/Soul-winning Efforts (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)

- I will pray daily for my local, district, and general church leaders (including our district superintendent, personnel at headquarters, colleges, and seminary, etc.) and support them in personal concern, realizing my responsibility to the whole church.
- Realizing that God gives all of us inspirations and insights into His work, I am suggesting the following things to be considered by our church, some of which may be new insights and some of which may be new ways of doing what we are presently doing: \_\_\_\_\_

## DEDICATION OF HYMNBOOKS

Here is a ceremony used by Donald Sides and the Church Street Church of the Nazarene to dedicate their new hymnbooks.

*Pastor:* O Lord, we thank You for Your presence.  
*Choir:* O Lord, we thank You for Your help in the past.  
*Congregation:* O Lord, we trust You expectantly for the future. We acknowledge Your Lordship over our lives.

*Music Director:* And what is the chief aim of man?  
*Choir:* To bring glory to God.  
*Congregation:* And sing praises to Him in His sanctuary.  
*Pastor:* O Lord, our purpose is to give glory, praise, and honor to our God. For He is worthy to be praised.  
*Congregation:* Our Lord, we again dedicate ourselves to Your work and service.  
*Choir:* We dedicate ourselves to bringing praise to Your holy name.  
*Musical Director:* We dedicate these hymnbooks to God, for His praise and glory.  
*Congregation and Choir:* We dedicate these hymnbooks to God, for uplifting His people.  
*Pastor:* For edification, instruction, and conviction.  
*Congregation:* We dedicate these hymnbooks to the glory of God.  
*Pastor:* For encouragement, praise, joy, and growth in grace.  
*Congregation:* We dedicate these hymnbooks to the praise of God.  
*Unison:* That all God's people may sing His praise and be lifted up, that we all may benefit from the ministry of song, and that God's holy name may be praised in His sanctuary, we reverently dedicate these hymns.

—Donald E. Sides  
 Carlšbad, New Mexico.

## THE HELLO PAGES

In an effort to encourage the establishment of new friendships and to aid new members in getting to know other folks in our congregation, we publish annually "THE HELLO PAGES."

Unlike the book of a similar title published by "Ma Bell," "THE HELLO PAGES" pretends neither to be inclusive nor exclusive (it is not a directory as such), but is rather a convenient listing of the names, addresses, and telephone numbers (plus birthdays and anniversaries) of those who attend our services.

Using our mimeograph, bulletin stencils, and 8½" x 11" paper (yellow, of course), we can produce 150 copies of

a 24-page 5½" x 8½" booklet using less than two reams of paper.

"THE HELLO PAGES" is a low-cost, high-mileage way to build community in a congregation.

—William L. Poteet  
 Union, Missouri

## TRY AN IN-HOUSE REVIVAL

Does your church need a new surge of vitality and spiritual life, but there seems no way to schedule an evangelist? Don't despair. Your church can hold an "in-house" revival.

I coordinated a series of revival messages in our local church, and the results were successful and lasting. We used the talents of our own people in preaching and music. Enthusiasm ran high, and there was a shift from passive response to active participation and commitment. They became aware of their own abilities and it made their faith more meaningful. The number of individuals and families involved was much greater than in traditional revival services.

The potential for holding an in-house revival series is just waiting to be tapped. Here are some of the things you will want to consider in planning yours:

### Planning and Preparation

Schedule the revival services for the near future. Allow about three months' lead time.

Select a committee to coordinate the music, the speakers, promotion, and other items that apply to your church.

### Consider Who Will Preach

You can use ministers and the laity. Early selection of speakers or speaker

will allow adequate time to prepare. Encourage them to study and pray together. This will help to cement their thoughts and avoid duplication of sermons. Schedule the speakers in the most logical or meaningful sequence.

### Consider What to Preach

You may decide to center around a topic such as justification, sanctification, or growth in the Christian life. Or you may choose a book or section of the Bible.

We chose the Book of Romans and used both styles. While we preached from selected texts, we covered such areas as mentioned above. The goals of evangelism and Christian maturity can be realized in this way.

### Consider the Music

Select music that will broaden and complement your services. Music helps to prepare the heart for worship and praise.

### Consider Prayer

Prayer and meditation are essentials to the proper outcome of all revivalistic movements. Plan for private and public prayer times. My pastor says, "No prayer, no results; little prayer, little results; much prayer, much results."

### Other Considerations

When you have the arrangements settled, you need to publicize the services in your church and community. Personal visitation, letters, or other media will enable you to target areas or people you want to reach for special contacts.

Services may be funded through normal methods or by a special project.

Our primary expenses were for publicity and utilities. You might want to consider an honorarium for the principal participants.

Schedule periodic gatherings to check on the progress of various aspects of the services and avoid last-minute problems.

### Presentation

Because the spiritual foundation of your people has been broadened you will find you have a more well grounded congregation. They will have worked together for months toward common goals; and they will do their best to realize them. You will reap the harvest of your preparations and labors.

In our services we ministered to our own people and also to visitors and family friends. Our Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night services all showed an increase in attendance. We began to average 80 percent of our Sunday morning attendance at our other services, and months later we still do.

Other increases were evident in finances and outreach ministries.

### Follow-up

Establish lasting results by discipling those who have made spiritual decisions and advances. Provide Bible studies, prayer groups, and other avenues of contact so you will not lose the spiritual gains you have made.

In-house revivals aren't meant to replace traditional methods, but to supplement them. You can use these guidelines to build your local church. Use the talent. Utilize it.

—John R. Hughes

# PREACHER'S EXCHANGE

**WANTED:** A Baptistry. Contact: Rev. Jeff Botsford, Union City Wesleyan Church, 204 St. Joseph Street, Union City, MI 49094.

**FOR SALE:** Books by Dr. J. B. Chapman:  
 1. *Ask Dr. Chapman*  
 2. *The Divine Response*  
 3. *Religion and Everyday Life*  
 4. *Singing in the Shadows*

Books by Dr. George D. Watson:

- Our Own God*
- God's First Words*
- White Robes & Spiritual Feasts*
- The Heavenly Life*
- Glimpses of George D. Watson's Work*

Books by F. W. Boreham—famous Australian preacher:

- A Casket of Cameos*
- The Luggage of Life*
- Faces in the Fire*
- The Uttermost Star*

Also have Dr. W. B. Godbey's theology and commentaries. Many others. I'm retiring—selling complete library; many out of print. Contact: Hugh L. Slater, 100 Northdale Rd., Glen Burnie, MD 21061. (301-761-9498)

**FOR SALE:** Write me, William Thompson, 9 York Drive, Shore Road, Belfast, B.T. 15, 3QY, Northern Ireland, to obtain books by these authors: G. D. Watson, Rev. S. D. Garrison, S. L. Brengle, Edward Corderoy, A. B. Simpson, Bud Robinson, H. A. Baldwin, A. M. Hills, John Wesley, John Fletcher, Daniel Steele, Martin Wells Knapp, H. W. Sweetin, Ezra Squier, John T. Hatfield, James Sington, Vinson Synon, John E. Hartley and R. Larry Shelton, Charles Disbell, B. T. Roberts, G. A. Turner, and J. B. Chapman. The *Preacher's Magazine* from Vol. 54, No. 1 to Vol. 58, Sept. 1982 and May 1983. The *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Vols. 1-17. Send stamped, addressed

envelope. Money from the sale of these books and journals will help to make it possible for me to enter the Lord's service in a full-time capacity as an evangelist.

**FREE:** Copies of the *Preacher's Magazine*, including the *Nazarene Pastor* for the following years: 1951-53, assorted copies; 1954-59, August 1961-77.

The monthly *Bible School Journal*, Feb. 1954—Sept. 1959 (most copies). You pay postage. First come, first served. Contact: James N. Lee, Box 1737, Casa Robles, CA 93446. (805-238-2118)

**FOR SALE:** One new set (23 volumes) of *Pulpit Commentary Old and New Testament*—\$200 postpaid. Also have one new set (13 volumes) of *20 Centuries of Great Preaching*—\$100 postpaid. Contact: Randy McCulley, 5807 Brookgreen Ave., Orlando, FL 32809. (305-351-6292)

# PREPARED MEMBERS ARE BETTER MEMBERS

by Carl C. Green

Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Marysville, Washington

The preparation of candidates for church membership is vitally important. Nevertheless, many church members have not been properly schooled. They are uncertain about church beliefs and life-styles and, therefore, feel little commitment to them.

My own experience reminds me that this preparation is too often neglected. In the early years of my ministry, I had no form of membership class. Requests for church membership were handled on a one-to-one basis. Unfortunately, this procedure creates increased and unnecessary stress and typically puts the pastor on the defensive. When request for membership is made, it puts him in direct confrontation with the prospective member. The whole weight of decision-making rests on the pastor's shoulders; it is he who has to say yes or no. If the answer is no, the inevitable question is "Why?" Often the pastor's future ability to minister to this person is severely damaged because of the volatile nature of such an encounter.

A membership class, on the other hand, will filter out many of those with whom the pastor would otherwise end up in confrontation, but without crippling his ability to minister to them. The responsibility for decision making is placed on the prospective member's shoulders. The pastor has no need to say, "No, you can't join because \_\_\_\_\_"

Even if the pastor knows a person does not qualify, he informs the person that he will need to take the pastor's class as it is a prerequisite to membership. Now the pastor is on the offensive as he explains, "This is what it means to be a Nazarene . . ." By the end of the class, if there is any problem, the candidate will be more likely to postpone his request for membership until he has made the appropriate adjustments.

This commitment to membership preparation grows out of my conviction that our task is not only to record "new Nazarenes" but also to lead people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and to nurture them into a maturity that includes faithful, responsible churchmanship. Neglect of this task will dilute the life of the church.

If our primary motivation is to conduct a membership class to fulfill a duty, the results will be superficial. Rather, we should see a membership class as the opportunity to clarify Nazarene beliefs and life-styles and to help potential members commit to our denominational witness.

I have entitled my membership class "Church of the Nazarene: Beliefs and Life-styles" in the effort to make it attractive to persons who may be curious about the church but would not be inclined to take a membership class. The class is nine weeks long because it needs to be comprehensive. A significant commitment of time will help potential members understand that membership is not a matter to be treated lightly.

Each one-hour class includes a lecture, opportunity for questions, and distribution of supplementary materials I have compiled. Following is a skeletal outline of my membership class:

**Session 1:** "A Biblical Theology of the Church: the Importance of Church Membership to the Christian's Fullness and to the Fullness of Christ."

*Objective:* To establish that there may be legitimate debate over what church the Christian will join, but that there can be no scripturally supportable debate over whether or not membership is necessary. A committing identification with the Body of Christ is mandatory for the person who would mature as Christ desires. One cannot come to full Christian maturity in disassociation from the Church of Jesus Christ.

**Session 2:** "A History of the Church of the Nazarene: Our Place in the Scheme of Things."

*Objective:* To establish where the Church of the Nazarene fits into the whole church history picture and its reasons for existence.

**Session 3:** "Our Articles of Faith: What We Believe."

*Objective:* To review in their entirety the central doctrines of the church and to explain them. To emphasize



Dave Anderson photo

that doctrine is not a "bad word." Everyone has a doctrine, that is, a system of beliefs by which he lives, whether verbalized or not.

**Session 4:** "Salvation and Entire Sanctification: Further Review of These Essential Beliefs."

*Objective:* To clarify the doctrine of salvation (which is fairly commonly understood) and the doctrine of entire sanctification (which is not commonly understood). The pastor needs to be able to explain the doctrine of entire sanctification clearly and precisely. This challenges his own understanding, and he must not be threatened by questions.

**Session 5:** "Entire Sanctification and Glossolalia: Our Position on Tongues."

*Objective:* To explain the relationship between entire sanctification and tongues speaking, as we certainly do not understand the popular usage of tongues to be an evidence of the fullness of the Spirit.

It must be carefully noted, however, that the procedure here must not be to "put down" the tongues-speaking churches; but to positively state a biblical position on tongues. Modern church culture being what it is, people have to decide about this sooner or later. A membership class provides the opportunity to give biblical information to those who are undecided while they are still open-minded and nondefensive, and to weed out those who might later become a problem.

It should also be noted that it is counterproductive—and not very Christlike—to build our case by citing unfavorable case histories and otherwise "slinging mud" at "charismatics." W. T. Purkiser states:

Among the fallacies that threaten clear thinking is the fallacy of attempting to refute a theory by attacking the motives or judging the character of those who hold that theory . . . It is always wrong.

There is a companion error. It is the fallacy of supposing that to discuss a theory means a personal attack on those who hold that theory. Nothing could be further from the truth. Christians may be better than their creeds—or, on the other hand, not as good.

In either case, the creed must be examined—even critically, if necessary—without implying any criticism of the life and character of the person who holds that creed.

We should carry no cudgels and throw no stones at those whose worship of the Lord differs from our own.

All of us must test our theories by Scripture. The Bible must be given first place in matters of faith and practice. What we must try to do is to find out for ourselves "what saith the Lord."

If we cannot state our case biblically and help class members make decisions about glossolalia from Scripture, we had best not tackle the subject as it will probably be viewed by them as a vendetta on our part.

**Session 6:** "Church Government: The Way We Function."

*Objective:* To describe our method of government at the local, district, and general levels, thereby setting the stage for the next two weeks. A well-planned, thoughtful presentation here disarms much of the negative response regarding the matter of Nazarene life-style. It becomes understood by class members that such a life-style is not imposed by some outside force. It is self-imposed and we are all participants in the collective conscience of the church.

**Session 7:** "General Rules of Faith and Life: the Scripture Calls Us to Live by These Principles."

*Objective:* To establish that these items represent principles that every Christian should seek to embody.

**Session 8:** "Special Rules of Faith and Life: We Have Imposed These Life-styles on Ourselves in Order to Make a Strong, Much-needed Moral Statement to Our World."

*Objective:* A careful distinction needs to be made between those life-styles (special rule) that are unquestionably commanded by Scripture and those that represent denominational conviction. Too often the distinction between the two has been hopelessly blurred. I believe



this has created frustration among our members; it has certainly created misunderstanding among non-members.

Denominational convictions arise from our attempt to apply scriptural principles to a world that desperately needs moral statements not explicitly outlined in scripture. While we may feel our applications of biblical principle to be valid and much needed, honesty requires us to acknowledge that we cannot point to a "thus saith the Lord." Therefore, we must be careful that we do not lump that which is explicitly scriptural together with that which is admittedly interpretative. That which is interpretative cannot—and should not—be made to carry the same weight as that which is unquestionably scriptural.

Having clarified this distinction, it becomes possible to defend the right of the church to establish its collective conscience. The material presented in the session on church government now becomes very important. Class members can be reminded that although one may be able to participate in some of the activities discouraged in the Special Rules and still retain his personal Christianity, Nazarenes have determined to boycott such things, believing our world needs this kind of moral witness.

I have also found it helpful to suggest that we all make trades in life—we trade away certain things in exchange for other things that mean more to us. This principle applies to our choice of a church as well. We trade away certain personal rights for the privilege of church membership because the fellowship of the church means more to us than these personal rights. It is here that the foundations laid in session one become crucial. It has already been established that membership with acceptance of the accompanying disciplines and life-styles is essential in the life of the maturing Christian.

**Session 9: Conclusion: "The Need for Churchmen."**

**Objective:** To draw the previous eight weeks of instruction together by reemphasizing the need for class members to be developing churchmen if Christ's mission in the world is to continue being accomplished. J. S. Stewart's sermon, "To God Be the Glory,"<sup>2</sup> has been very helpful as a resource.

If newborn Christians do not mature into responsible, contributing Christian churchmen and churchwomen,

they lose credibility with both God and man, and God's purposes are frustrated by their neglect.

The final matter to be cared for is the distribution of a response form. By now, class members understand what is involved in being a Christian in the Church of the Nazarene, and they are able to offer a responsible response to the following:

Having completed this class as a prerequisite for church membership, I desire to submit my name to candidacy for church membership. I am in sympathy with the Articles of Faith. I understand and agree with the General Rules. I desire to share with other Nazarenes in making the kind of moral statement to our world outlined in the Special Rules. I understand that the continuance of some of these activities might not affect my personal Christianity; however, our world is desperately in need of a strong moral witness. Therefore, I choose to set aside certain personal rights to unite with other Nazarenes in making a strong, clear statement of this kind. I believe I qualify in all other regards for membership in the Church of the Nazarene.

I believe it is important that I commit to the Church of Jesus Christ. I understand that membership is essential to my fullness and to the fullness of Christ. However, it is important that I not submit my name for membership at this time in order that I might prayerfully prepare myself so that when I join it will be wholeheartedly and without reservation.

I took this class in order to get better acquainted with the Church of the Nazarene. It has met that need.

Having marked one of the above responses, each class member signs his name and turns it in, and the pastor can begin to engage in appropriate kinds of follow-up.

Though not a foolproof system, this has worked well for us and is certainly better than nothing at all!

1. W. T. Purkiser, *The Gifts of the Spirit* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1975), 49-50.

2. J. S. Stewart, "To God Be the Glory," *King Forever* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), 17-25.

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5. Quotations not cited with a special designation are from the King James Version of the Bible.

## CHURCH AND SOCIETY

# The Church Returning to the World

by Tom Nees

The Community of Hope Church of the Nazarene, Washington, D.C., received a \$100,000 grant from the city to rehabilitate a building owned by the church and used for a variety of church-sponsored community projects, including a health clinic, emergency housing, and a chapel for worship. The only stipulation to the Community of Hope is that the building be used for the proposed purpose for at least five years. As a grant, the money will never have to be repaid.

While the grant has served to restore a seriously deteriorated old building, the city made it clear that the grant was made not simply to provide for physical rehabilitation, but to do so in a way that will make possible the various community projects under way and proposed by the Community of Hope. The Demonstration Grant Program is designed to encourage churches and other community groups to use their resources to do what the government is unable to do—involve the community and its residents in restoring the city. The failures of various government attempts at social reform are well known. HUD is now placing great emphasis on local initiative in the planning and implementation of urban redevelopment. The government wishes to use its resources to encourage autonomous community-based organizations such as churches to lead the way in responding to the needs of the cities.

If this marks a major shift of the local and federal government, it also requires a reevaluation of the role of church and society. During a recent visit to the Community of Hope, Dr. V. H. Lewis, general superintendent, Church of the Nazarene, observed that in the recent

past the church has assumed that a "Christian nation" could do a better job of caring for the sick, educating children, and responding to the needs of the poor than the church could. So the church has confined itself to so-called spiritual ministries without assuming responsibility for the social and physical well-being of the nation. But, he continued, we are suddenly aware that we do not live in a "Christian nation." Indeed, around us we are seeing evidence that there is little if any moral direction for education, health care, and the administration of welfare, whether in the distribution of food stamps or housing subsidies. Christian social workers are increasingly discontented with the way social work is done by overloaded government agencies. Health care professionals are more and more aware of the need for the practice of "holistic" medicine, which responds to both the spiritual and physical needs of people. Dr. Lewis went on to say that the church must do more than "preach to people Sunday morning and evening if we are to communicate the gospel."

This is the time for the church to return to the world, to assume its place of service and moral direction in society. The grant to the Community of Hope was made to encourage and support a local congregation acting as a representative of the larger denomination committed to the renewal of the city.

At no time was it suggested that the church cease being the church in worship or that the use of a part of the building for worship, evangelism, and Christian education is a conflict of interests. Nor has it ever been suggested that the church compromise its independent

**When the gospel is shared in a caring community it needs little defense.**

(Continued on page 60)

# STONEMASON AND LIVING STONE

by Albert J. Lown

John Nelson, one of John Wesley's outstanding converts, was born at Birstall, a village near Leeds in Yorkshire, England, in the eighteenth century. He was physically strong and sturdy, had a happy religious home, and a mind that pondered over the great questions of the day. He grew up to be a stonemason. He was not truly happy, feeling he did not really know God, although he wanted to be used by Him in service.

Going 200 miles south to London to assist in building a large hall, he heard John Wesley preach on Moorfields Common. His experience of the new birth received at that open-air meeting changed his whole life. Returning home, he set out to win his relatives and friends to Christ with great success. His preaching changed the whole outlook of his needy and sinful community.

Hearing of Nelson's work, John Wesley set out from London to visit and direct him and was surprised to find a society and a preacher awaiting him. Through a converted, firebrand stonemason, Methodism had taken root in Birstall, soon spreading to most villages in Yorkshire. Wisely, Wesley utilized the

help of "lay preachers" like Nelson in his traveling ministry to all parts of Britain. Following the New Testament pattern, these men would work at their trades by day and join Wesley at night to address meetings, giving testimonies to God's saving and sanctifying power in their

**"A rioter filled his mouth with dirt."**

lives. Many of them became class leaders and circuit preachers.

In his own style, John Nelson tells of a memorable visit to St. Ives, in Cornwall, with Wesley and a friend. About 120 Methodists had gathered. Visiting on foot in surrounding villages where Methodism was still unknown, the preachers suffered from lack both of food and of comfortable shelter.

"All this time," Nelson records, "Mr. Wesley and I lay on the floor; he had my great coat for his pillow, and I had a book about the New Testament for mine. After being there nearly three weeks, one morning about three o'clock

Mr. Wesley turned over and, finding me awake, clapped me on the side, saying, 'Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer, I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but one side.'" These were not uncommon hardships for Wesley and his good companions, after long and hard riding and walking in the most adverse conditions of weather and roads, often with persecution and riots thrown in as a bonus.

Time and grace made John Nelson a successful preacher and a much-traveled and sought-after evangelist. Working by day and preaching by night, his good sense, cool courage, sound piety, and pithy speech gave him acceptance and success wherever he went. His genuine spirit and tact often caused his worst opposers to become his best friends, and the most uncouth of men delighted to hear him. Wesley highly prized him as a spiritual son and fellow laborer.

*Soldier and Saint*

One of the worst features of those days was the "press gang." Officers seized civilians for army service by the most unscrupulous means—as Simon

of Cyrene was conscripted to bear the cross of Jesus, lawfully in his case. People went about in fear of capture and Nelson was warned upon returning to Birstall from an appointment that he would be "impressed" if he did not escape immediately. "I cannot fear," replied the brave mason, "for God is on my side." He was seized the next day while preaching and taken to Halifax, a few miles away, falsely accused of being a vagrant, and imprisoned at Bradford. Blood and filth flowed into his dungeon from a slaughterhouse above it, so that it "smelt like a pigsty." He adds, "My soul was so filled with the love of God, that it was like a paradise to me."

Hardships were many. He had nothing to sit on, his only bed a heap of decayed straw. ("Drunk for a penny, dead drunk for two pence with free straw," was then a common notice in taverns; but theirs was fresh straw!) However, friends were kind and rallied round, bringing comfort and fellowship. After appearances at Leeds and York as a prisoner, he was given a musket and ordered to obey his officers. For three months, in the face of ignorant brutality and cruelty, he kept his temper and on every occasion witnessed to soldiers and civilians when opportunity pre-

**Attempts to throw him in a well were frustrated by a woman who defended him.**

sented itself. Providentially, through Lady Huntingdon's influence in government circles, he was released and returned to his work and ministry as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

*Pioneer Layman*

His wide travels about the country brought many adventures and trials. At Nottingham (Robin Hood country) a group tried to burn his face with squibs (firecrackers). In Nottingham itself a mob rushed the house where he was preaching and drowned his voice with outcries. He went on preaching until one of the rioters came behind him and filled his mouth with dirt. "I think," he wrote, "I was never so near being choked in my life; but when I got the dirt out, I spoke on."

Like Wesley, John Nelson had great success in mastering riots, but some-

times they were quite beyond control, and his escape from death seemed miraculous. At Hepworth Moor he was struck on the back of his head with a brick and lost much blood. But the next day he was preaching at Acomb, until knocked down and beaten senseless. When he recovered they again knocked him down eight times, dragged him by the hair of his head over the stones, and kicked him mercilessly. Their attempt to thrust him down a well was frustrated by a woman who courageously defended him.

Yet the very next day Nelson rode 40 miles to listen to John Wesley preach!

This mason and lay minister was revered by the thousands he led to Christ. Heroic, forgiving, sensible, pious, hard-working, and courageous in suffering, John Nelson was a shining example of full salvation grace, a steadfast and loyal lay preacher for 33 years. He died suddenly, humble to the last, but his name lives on, not in the annals of naval history as his illustrious admiral namesake; but as an ambassador of the Cross and a coworker with Wesley.

Nelson's spirit motivates church builders, pastors, laymen, and missionaries today.



"Greatest stewardship committee chairman we've ever had!"

# VISITING THE SICK

## More than a Social Call

by William G. Justice, Jr.

Daily, many dedicated but frustrated pastors trudge reluctantly through the motions of visiting the sick. They feel it a duty, but they are plagued by conflicts: "I ought to see them but it seems so futile"; "It's a political necessity but I accomplish nothing"; "The pastor down the street seems to enjoy it, but I could better spend my time running the mimeograph machine." The conflict may seem endless. At the same time, they recognize that one's richest ministry is usually performed to those in crisis.

Few pastors neglect their ministry to the sick for lack of concern or dedication to the ministry to which our Lord has called. The neglect usually stems from inadequate knowledge and an unclear purpose for visiting the sick.

Since this subject isn't always taught in college and seminary, many have relied on what they have hoped to be the leadership of God. Those who have tried to find books on the subject know that little has been written. Some of the best are out of print. If you ever find an old copy of *The Art of Ministering to the Sick* by Cabot and Dicks or *The Pastor's Hospital Ministry* by Richard K. Young, grab it. *Don't Sit on the Bed: A Handbook for Visiting the Sick* by William G. Justice (Broadman Press), offering many concrete dos and don'ts, is available, and books on basic counseling and interviewing techniques can help.

### Visit with Purpose

Much of the futility in visiting the sick grows out of a lack of purpose combined with a misunderstanding of the word *visit*. It is *not* a social call! Webster defines the word: "To go to see for the purpose of giving comfort or help." But what "comfort or help" can we give? Must all true comfort or help be left to the highly skilled *medical* team? Not at all!

We are called to be "ministers of reconciliation," and if there is any person whose world is in the throes of conflict, it is the sick. Either his conflict has made him sick or his sickness has filled him with conflict. There are

few exceptions. Then we do have a purpose: as "ministers of reconciliation" we work to help the sick become more harmonious in their relationship with God, others, and themselves and to help them adapt to reality. But how many people know this?

If you see your purpose, tell it to the people of your church. It probably took you months or even years to define your purpose to yourself. Surely they are not likely to have given it nearly as much thought as you have. Then teach them. Who is going to if you don't? Say it to individuals and say it from the pulpit. Still further, let them know that you expect to be called. They need to know that your communication with God is such that He will probably not inform you that Mrs. Weakly is ill and in Room 402 of a local hospital.

### Listen Carefully

Make sure people *know* that anything they tell you is in total confidence. You need to tell them this, and then you must demonstrate it by *not* revealing their "interesting" stories as sermon illustrations. I heard a lady say not long ago that she cringed every time her pastor started telling a story because she knew exactly who he was talking about. Though people are actively seeking someone with whom they can share their concerns, they are not sure whom they can trust, nor are they sure who will listen. The overall problem will not be solved overnight, partly because of our image as talkers!

I was once asked to see a patient who was distressed because a young man had represented himself as a gospel minister. Upon reflection after his departure, the patient was positive that he could not have been. When I showed her pictures of some men in my basic program of Clinical Pastoral Education, she pointed and exclaimed, "That's him. That's the man! He can't be a minister! I told him a lot of the things that I am scared of, and some of the things that make me feel guilty. He *couldn't* have been a preacher—he *listened carefully to everything I said*. He didn't do all the talking like a preacher does!" She is far from alone with this view of

**"Sickness is a time when people think. That's something they haven't done in a long time."**

the minister. To acquire the image as a *listening* pastor, one has to do a lot of listening. And we do have to *listen* if we are going to be brought into the world of the patient's conflicts.

From our desire for people to share their struggles, it is tempting to walk in and begin a conversation around the medical problems of the patient. If you begin by asking the patient how he feels, though, he may have been trying to keep from thinking about his discomfort all day. He'll talk about it because it is obviously your interest. Then what can we do about it once he has said that his leg has been hurting all day, or that his traction keeps him from sleeping, or that his radiation treatments make him nauseated? Leave medical questions for the medical staff! How many people have the courage to look their pastor in the face and say, "Hey, your questions don't give me opportunity to talk about what I feel I need to talk about." They are much too gracious. So we satisfy our curiosity, and have a safe way of controlling the conversation.

### Be Alert

Though properly timed and appropriate questions are indeed aids in pastoral conversation, learn to put your observations into words. To observe conflicts, "listen" with every sensor of *feeling* you possess. Watch for fresh traces of moisture in the eyes, for pressed lips, for a quivering chin, or a set jaw. Listen for a strained voice, a suddenly changed subject, or an incompleting sentence. Listen for words that subtly convey distress. Something bothers them or they are uneasy, unsure or confused, or they are "bugged" by something. Or they have been thinking. Be far more concerned with *what you feel they are saying* than with what you feel *about* what they say. There is a difference. Ask yourself, "What do I feel that they are feeling?" Is it sorrow or anger or fear or regret or joy or discouragement or hope?

Watch not only for the negative but also for the positive. When you detect the positive, call attention to it.

Give an opportunity for them to elaborate, thus drawing upon their own inner resources. They can continue long after you've gone.

Since words denoting conflict are often threatening, try to use milder words that make elaboration easier. When you sense that someone is feeling guilty, respond by observing the "regret"; to anger respond to his "irritation"; to fear, his "uneasiness"; to doubt, his "uncertainty." Of course the sick person has a new set of concerns: he is away from his normal responsibilities (maybe good or bad); he's away from his family (again that may be good or bad); he has the anxiety (discomfort) of waiting for the outcome of tests or surgery. Even if his income is not suspended during his illness, he is building a hospital bill of more than a hundred dollars a day plus his doctor bills, both of which will probably leave him owing at least 30 percent after insurance pays.

If he's like more than half of the people, no matter what his cause of illness he's feeling guilty just for being sick. He is probably experiencing at least some fear and it is highly probable that he is at least somewhat angry with life for being so "unfair"; or he may be angry with himself for not having taken better care of himself, or with others who have "caused" his sickness or accident. He may be secretly (or not so secretly) angry with God whom he feels has made him sick or who has not prevented him from getting sick. He may feel that his whole world is crumbling.

Sickness is a time when people think. That's something many haven't done for a long time. Give them a chance to share those thoughts with you. It may provide an opportunity to interpret and bring to application the healing power of God's love to all that is broken in the lives we touch. But to do so the pastoral visit will have to be more than a social call.

William G. Justice, Jr., is chaplain at East Tennessee Baptist Hospital, Knoxville.

# OVERCOMING THE GIANT "DESPAIR"

by Ross W. Hayslip

There is a mood known as discouragement that comes periodically to haunt every preacher no matter what his ecclesiastical station. Frequently on Sunday evening near bedtime this specter comes to keep him company. He is exhausted physically and mentally. Usually at this hour he also feels "homiletically bankrupt." His arsenal of preaching ammunition has become vastly depleted by his two efforts of the day, and if he were called upon to deliver a sermon at this unlikely hour he would have to throw up his hands and say, "Gentlemen, I don't have it in me."

Sometimes a well-meaning member invites him out for a bit of social fellowship after the service, then uses the time to share with the pastor a problem that has arisen in the church. No matter how inspiring the service or how wonderful the presence of the Lord has been, this particular hour is not a good one for problem-solving. Problems always look greater late at night than they do at dawn.

If he enters into serious conversation with the member relative to the problem, he will find it awesome and formidable. To look at the situation under such circumstances can only lead to pessimism.

If the minister is sensitive to attendance statistics (as most of us are), the days of low attendance will hang about his head like an albatross of defeat. Long holiday weekends, summer vacations, and attitudes of indiffer-

ence on the part of leading laymen will cause the attendance figure to sag. If it sags below last Sunday, Sunday a year ago, or that of a neighboring church of comparable size, our spirits can sag along with the figure. We dread the question by a fellow pastor, "How many did you have last Sunday?" We have the awful realization that when our monthly average appears in the minus in the district newsletter that the question on all lips will be, "What's happening to Brother Doe over at Podunk?" The reason we are so sure this question will be asked is that we ourselves have asked it about our various brethren.

Slumping finances can also bring despair to the pastor. He can survive about any kind of setback in his congregation except a dropping off of tithes and offerings. He has his local expenses to keep salaries paid and the physical plant in operation. The general and district obligations are part of his Christian responsibility. He must loyally support the church college and other institutions, but operating on a "shoestring" doesn't make it easy. The pastor constantly faces the moving away of good tithing members and the changing economic structure of his community.

We all rejoice in the progress of our brethren, and we take great joy in their advancements, but we would not be human if at times we did not wonder why we were bypassed for an honor when we know well we were

better qualified by both experience and ability than the brother selected. Men have been called to pulpits that we are sure we could have graced. Why did no one think of us? We are tempted to believe that "who we are" is more important than "what we are." It is easy to become discouraged or even downright bitter.

When the congregation takes steps that we feel are not right, ignoring our advice and overruling our counsel, we are apt to brand them as nonprogressive and decide that we should be associated with a more enlightened group of laymen. We are apt to take this as an affront to us and our ministry and to feel resentful toward strong personalities in our congregation.

Many of our colleagues seem blessed with an ability to make money on the side or to enter successfully into speculation in stocks, bonds, and/or real estate. Some seem to have a Midas touch that enables them to make money readily in whatever they pursue without adverse effects on their ministry. They drive nicer cars, take longer vacation trips, wear more expensive clothes, and have large nest eggs toward a pleasurable retirement.

I have always found myself among those with a low business IQ. My hindsight is 20/20, but for my business foresight I need a white cane and a seeing eye dog. I do not say this with a sense of pride, for I know that it does not reflect upon me with any great degree of personal achievement. It is only a statement of fact. I sometimes feel that the guarantee for the failure of any business venture would be my participation in it.

No, I cannot align myself with that bold group of ministers who say, "I never become discouraged in my work." I have known the Sunday night blues when the crowd was small and inattentive, the delivery of the message was not particularly easy, and I learned at the close of the service that one of my finest and most loyal members was being transferred out of the city.

I have felt the gnawing worry caused by the approach

**Stay steady during the down cycle and you can have the satisfaction of riding the cycle up.**

of district assembly time and unpaid budgets. I have "sweat through" major building programs and pondered which "essential" to cut out to keep us within our projected budget.

I have sat in board meetings where an issue was decided contrary to my way of thinking. I was sure my judgment was correct, and I left the meeting with a sense of defeat.

I suppose I have been confronted by about every type of problem that one in my profession faces. Many of these were created by my own incompetence and failures. Some were dumped into my lap by circumstances

over which I have had no control. But in spite of them all I am still in the ministry. Why?

First of all, I have never doubted my God-given call to the ministry. Several years ago a rather caustic businessman in a small city said to me, "It seems that God calls men into the ministry who couldn't make a success at anything else."

I spent six years as a public school teacher during my preparatory years for the ministry. This teaching career included everything from a one-room rural school to teaching general science and history at the high school level. When I left full-time teaching, I was offered a "continuing contract" by my employing board of education. I did not enter the ministry because I could succeed at nothing else.

I felt divine constraint to enter the ministry. I am in this field because it is God's will that I be in it. When He called me He knew all my handicaps, inabilities, and shortcomings. If He called me in spite of these, then He understands my failures and forgives them. I shall not let discouragement dissuade me from my task, for if God is not dismayed with me, then why should I despair? If God be for me, who can be against me?

I try never to check my spiritual pulse when I am physically and mentally exhausted. It is amazing how a good night of sleep will change the perspective of a situation.

Problems have a way of waiting. We needn't wade into a solution when the dilemma first confronts us. God and time can handle a lot of things that we would fatally ruin in our haste to take care of them. A day along a quiet stream with a fishing rod or a morning on the golf course with a friend can sometimes be the pause that refreshes before we have to face an issue.

I find it very helpful to focus my attention on the plus side of the ledger of my ministry. A pastor friend one time told me: "There are cycles in the movement of a longer pastorate. If you are willing to stay steady while you ride the cycle down, you can have the satisfaction of riding the cycle up." All of us wish that the cycle were always upward, but in the career of the ordinary pastor there are down cycles. Even Paul the Peerless states that he knew both how to be abased and how to abound.

I seek to respect statistics, but not to be ruled by them. I know it is necessary to keep them, and I seek to make my annual statistical report as accurately as I can, but I am firmly convinced that statistics do not tell the whole story. When my statistical year has been a good one, I choose not to shout too loudly about it so that perhaps I can report with candor the year that is not so good. I have ceased to gloat over beating a colleague in a Sunday School attendance contest. If we both did our best in the contest, then we were both winners.

Winning is the name of the game, but these are some of the things that have helped me to stay in the race until it is finished. I am confident that Giant Despair will drop out long before I do.

# Don't Wipe Out the Local Church

by J. Grant Swank, Jr.  
Church of the Nazarene, Walpole, Massachusetts

Our society is changing rapidly at every turn. The change includes the church.

Martin E. Marty, professor, University of Chicago Divinity School, analyzed present-day ecclesiastical structure in this statement: "We are in a time when people value individualized, private, consumer-oriented religion. The huge Christian radio and television networks and programs help engender this new individualized Christianity."

He further points out that "we've suddenly seen the development of clientele more than congregation. You don't hear simply of churches, you hear of personalities—David Wilkerson, Marabel Morgan, Rex Humbard, etc. Each of these attracts a clientele which he/she must constantly satisfy. If people are rubbed the wrong way, they pick a different author or a different channel."

Interestingly enough, Dr. Marty brings out that "far less than 1 percent of the evangelical church members even claim to have gotten there via radio or television. How many 'electronic converts' have joined churches in the last 25 years? We must conclude that they are either in revolving doors or on musical chairs. Millions never join a church."

Dr. Marty says, "I think it's extremely easy to be an individualized Christian, where no one can judge you or put you to work. It's sometimes hard to be in a congregation where the message isn't always designed to appeal just to you." He speaks to the point when he says, "We have become a nation of religious window shoppers

and shoplifters. Modern Americans don't know how to move from this pure voluntarism to an idea that the church is a 'given' of God, into which we grow."

All of this brings out the truth that there are those sitting in front of the TV watching one religious program or another, rather than going to a local church. The questions that should be put to such individuals include: *Do you actually think you are participating in New Testament Christianity? Are you content with merely receiving rather than giving? Do you realize that you are being more entertained than put to work for the sake of Christ? Do you understand that you are becoming involved in a self-oriented intake, void of helping others in worship?*

It is understood that invalids profit legitimately from the electronic church—those who are bedridden, in convalescent homes, confined to senior citizens' centers because of lack of transportation and the like. However, for the able, there is the call to the local church. It is in the local congregation that the Holy Spirit moves in conviction to bring people to salvation. *If "Christians" are attending the electronic church at home, how can they pray with people who kneel at the altar?*

It is at the church on the corner that the believer stands to testify about what God has done in his life in the recent past. This encourages those who are having difficulty spiritually. *If "Christians" are at home, in front of the electronic church, how can they share their testimonies in the sanctuary?*

It is at the local level that the missions group functions

and prepares boxes for the field, where teens gather with their leaders for fellowship, where the older folk meet to enjoy a potluck supper, where the ladies cluster for Bible study and prayer, where the men kneel at the altar to pray together before fellowshiping at breakfast on a Saturday morning. What would happen if all these people wrapped themselves up in one radio or TV personality and became full-fledged members of a "clientele"? Where would be the gatherings of warm, deep, meaningful relationships?

It is at the local level that the pastor counsels the person who is ready to throw in the towel, where the minister directs a young adult who has questions about Christian versus secular education. It is there that the clergyman prays with a wayward teen or chats about financing and tithing with a newly saved couple. It is in the local church that the spiritual leader spends an evening in prayer with one who is having marital problems.

The electronic church has no ambassadors who fly in via jet on Monday morning to have prayer with a parishioner at 6 a.m. before surgery. Nor does it provide for a Friday night counselor for in-depth family problems. The "big-name" personalities with their "groupies" do not sponsor professionals who show up to marry or to bury. They do not make available a packaged, warm, sharing in group friendship for an evening in the living room of a fellow church member.

It is in the local church that the baby is brought to be

dedicated while the congregation senses that inexpressible glow that binds us together in a spiritual happening before God. It is in the local church that the beaming face of a new convert lights up the sanctuary at the close of an altar invitation. This simply cannot be reproduced in the electronic church.

It is in the local congregation that the children recite their "pieces" at Christmas and the choir sings its best on Easter Sunday morning. It is in the local church that the teen plays his trumpet solo for the first time, gaining self-confidence. It is in the corner, steeped building that the elderly feel the sense of belonging, where they are more than a number, where the pastor and fellow worshipers shake their hands and convey real caring. It is there the people stand in the aisles after a service to chat with one another about this and that.

The mechanized world has depersonalized us enough. The last thing we need is to give up on the local church. A saner prediction would be that the more society turns cold and the world turns threatening, the more genuine disciples will understand why it is that none other than Christ instituted the church, the local worshipping congregation. Paul's 13 letters in the New Testament written to just such local plantings, gives further credence.

\*Quotations from Dr. Martin E. Marty are from *Your Church* magazine, November-December 1979, pp. 5-6, 48, in an article entitled "Interview with Martin Marty," an interview conducted by Editor Phyllis Mather-Rice.

## GIVE FIRST PRIORITY TO THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE

by C. Neil Strait

Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, in giving advice to young seminarians, said among other things: "Sink your roots deeply into a daily devotional life." I think they are good words, not only for seminarians but for all Christians!

The one thing we ought to be saying to every new Christian is "Sink your roots deeply into a daily devotional life." For it is at

this point that growth either "takes" or, due to benign neglect, death occurs in the spiritual pilgrimage. Thousands of students wrote poet Carl Sandburg, asking him how to become a writer. His reply was: "Solitude and prayer—then go on from there." It is good advice for any area of life, but especially it is necessary for the Christian journey.

# FINNEY ON REPENTANCE

**F**or godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:10).

The apostle Paul speaks of two kinds of sorrow for sin, one working repentance unto salvation, the other working death.

It is high time professors of religion (those who profess to be Christians) were taught to discriminate much more than they do in regard to the nature and character of various religious exercises. Were it so, the Church would not be so overrun with false and unprofitable professors of religion.

The cause is doubtless a want of discriminating instruction respecting the foundation of religion and especially respecting true and false repentance.

True repentance involves a change of opinion in regard to the nature of sin, and this change of opinion is followed by a corresponding change of feeling toward sin. Feeling is the result of thought. And when this change of opinion is such as to produce a corresponding change of feeling, if the opinion is right and the feeling corresponds, this is true repentance.

It must be right opinion, such an opinion as God holds respecting sin. The godly sorrow God requires

must spring from such views of sin as God holds.

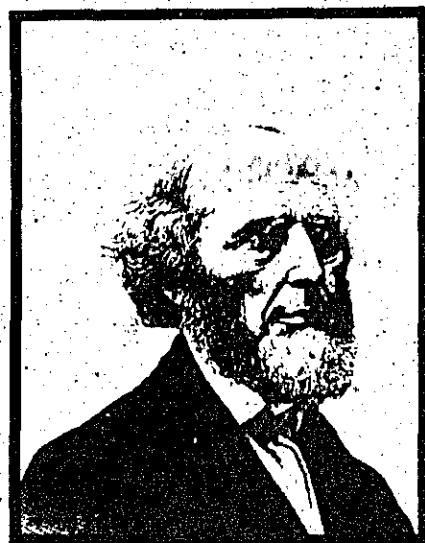
## Change of Opinion

There must be a change of opinion in regard to sin.

1. In regard to the nature of sin. To one who truly repents, sin looks very different from what it does to him who has not repented. Instead of looking desirable or fascinating, it looks the very opposite, most odious and detestable, and he is astonished at himself that he ever could have desired such a thing.

Impenitent sinners may look at sin and see that it will ruin them because God will punish them for it, but after all it appears in itself desirable; they love it; they roll it under their tongue. If it could end in happiness they never would think of abandoning it. But to the one who truly repents it is different; he looks back upon it and exclaims, "How hateful, how detestable, how worthy of hell such and such a thing was in me!"

2. In regard to the character of sin in respect to its relation to God. Sinners do not see why God threatens sin with such terrible punishment. But when they are strongly convicted, many a sinner sees its relation to God to be such that it deserves eternal death, even though his heart does not go with his opin-



Charles G. Finney

ions. This is the case with the devils and wicked spirits in hell.

Mark then! A change of opinion is indispensable to true repentance, and always precedes it. There may be a change of opinion without repentance, but no genuine repentance without a change of opinion.

3. In regard to the tendencies of sin. Before, the sinner thinks it utterly incredible that sin should have such tendencies as to deserve everlasting death. Now he sees sin to be ruinous to himself and everybody else, soul and body, for time and eternity, and at variance with all that

is lovely and happy in the universe. He sees that there is no remedy but universal abstinence.

4. In regard to the desert of sin. Repentance implies a change in the state of mind about all this.

The careless sinner is almost devoid of right ideas. Even if he admits in theory that sin deserves eternal death, he does not actually believe it. But the truly awakened and convicted sinner has no more doubt of this than he has of the existence of God.

He sees clearly that sin must deserve everlasting punishment from God. He knows that this is a simple matter of fact.

## Change of Feelings

In true repentance there must be a corresponding change of feeling. The change of feeling has to do with sin in all these particulars: its nature, its relation to God, its tendencies, and its desert.

1. The individual who truly repents not only sees sin to be detestable and vile and worthy of abhorrence, but he really abhors it and hates it in his heart.

2. In regard to sin's relation to God, he feels toward it as it really is. And here is the source of those gushings of sorrow in which Christians sometimes break out when contemplating sin.

3. As to the tendencies of sin, the individual who truly repents feels sin as it is. Viewing sin, there is awakened within him a vehement desire to stop sinning, to save people from their sins, and to roll back the tide of death. This feeling sets his heart on fire, and he goes to praying and laboring and pulling sinners out of the fire with all his might. When the Christian sets his mind on this, he will bestir himself to make people give up their sins.

4. He feels right as to the desert of sin. He has not only an intellectual conviction that sin deserves everlasting punishment, but he feels that it would be so right and so reasonable and so just for God to condemn him to eternal death that, far from finding fault with the sentence of the law that condemns him, he thinks it the wonder of heaven, a wonder of wonders, if God can forgive him. He is full of adoring wonder that this whole guilty world has not long

since been hurled to endless burning. And when he thinks of such sinners being saved, he feels a sense of gratitude that he never knew until he was a Christian.

## Effects of Genuine Repentance

1. If your repentance is genuine there is in your mind a conscious change of view and feeling toward sin. Of this you will be just as aware as you ever were of a change of view and feeling on any other subject.

2. Where repentance is genuine the disposition to repeat sin is gone. If you have truly repented you do not love sin; you do not abstain from it through fear and to avoid punishment, but because you hate it.

3. Repentance, when true and genuine, leads to confession and

## The lack of genuine Christians may be traced in part to a dismal ignorance of true repentance.

restitution. If you have cheated anyone and do not restore what you have taken unjustly, or if you have injured anyone and do not set about rectifying the wrong you have done so far as you are able, you have not truly repented.

4. True repentance results in a permanent change of character and conduct. It is repentance unto salvation, "not to be repented of." In other words, it is repentance so thorough that there is no going back. The love of sin is truly abandoned.

## False Repentance

False repentance is said to be worldly, "the sorrow of the world." It is sorrow for sin arising from worldly considerations and motives.

1. It is not founded on such a change of opinion as belongs to true repentance. A person may see the evil consequences of sin in a worldly point of view, and it may fill him with consternation. He may see that it will greatly affect his character or endanger his life, or that if some of his concealed conduct should be found out he would be disgraced. It is very

common for persons to have this worldly sorrow for sin.

2. False repentance is founded in selfishness. It may extend to fear—deep and dreadful fear—of the wrath of God and the pains of hell, and yet be purely selfish. All the while there may be no such thing as a total abhorrence of sin, and no feeling of the heart going out after the convictions of the understanding in regard to the infinite evil of sin.

3. It leaves the feeling unchanged. The individual still feels a desire for sin. It works death. It leads to hypocritical concealment. Instead of that ingenious, openhearted breaking forth of the sensibility, and frankness, you see a palavering, smooth-tongued, halfhearted mincing out of something that is intended to answer the purpose of a confession and yet confesses nothing.

4. False repentance produces only a partial reformation of conduct. The heart is not changed. Observe that young convert. If he is deceived, you will find that there is only a partial change in his conduct.

5. Spurious repentance leads to self-righteousness. The individual may know Jesus Christ is the only Savior of sinners, and may confess to believe on Him and to rely on Him alone for salvation, but he is actually placing ten times more reliance on his reformation than on Jesus Christ for his salvation. It leads to false security.

6. Ordinarily the reformation produced by false sorrow for sin is temporary even in those things which are affected. The individual is continually relapsing into his old sins. The woman who loved dress, loves it still, and gradually returns to her ribbons and gewgaws. The man who loved money loves it yet, and soon slides back into his old ways.

Go through all the departments of society, and if you will find people with thorough conversions, you will find that their most besetting sins before conversion are farthest from them now. The real convert is least likely to fall into his old besetting sin, because he abhors it most.

The reformation of one who has true repentance is from the heart; he no longer has a disposition to sin. He experiences that the Savior's yoke is easy and His burden is light.

# SERMON OUTLINES



## PARABLE OF THE SHREWD EMPLOYEE

Preaching Portion: Luke 16:1-9

**Introduction:** One of the boldest parables Jesus told is found in this story of the wealthy man who fired an incompetent manager running his business. So, as the manager cleaned out his desk he called in his master's two delinquent debtors and cut one's debt in half and the other by a fifth.

Jesus is not commending dishonesty. He came to save us from that. He was simply applauding his uncommon ingenuity. And Jesus was anxious to have the man's astute shrewdness for His own side. Knowing that there is some good in the worst of people, Jesus found some praiseworthy things in this man, things by which the children of light can be encouraged:

### I. INGENUITY

1. The man was fired, but not floored. He was resourceful, inventive.
2. The top salesman today will use nearly every avenue: he never stops going to school, constantly studies the consumer mind, does most anything to make a sale.
3. Compare that to the average churchman's efforts to "rescue the perishing"—if one halfhearted attempt to witness does not succeed, why bother the poor fellow further? Sometimes we stop where a corporation just begins to fight.
4. Jesus admonishes us to love God with all our "mind"—people of the world put heart and soul and MIND into what they are doing.

The shrewd manager had something else we need:

### II. COMMON SENSE

1. If we expect to survive spiritually, we must face facts as they are.
2. Having received his notice, he did not daydream about what might have been. He became extremely realistic—"What am I to do now? I am not strong enough to dig, and too proud to beg."

3. The business world is brutally honest with facts while all too often in Christian enterprise we construct a fool's paradise.

(a) Jesus labeled PRIDE deadly poison—yet many still get drunk on it (pride of place, face, race, or grace).

(b) The BEATITUDES—cannot casually be dismissed in lieu of "my own personal philosophy."

(c) Do we read our JOURNAL like the businessmart reads the WALL STREET JOURNAL?

(d) Have we wrestled with these concepts as carefully as the merchant wrestles with "supply and demand"?

Another quality to be emulated is:

### III. FORESIGHT

1. The business world looks ahead to 1990, 2000, and beyond.
2. Yet many Christians do not have the same zest in planning for eternity that they do in planning their next vacation.
3. The safest investment is not real estate, but men. We are established in this business when we lie awake at night looking for, praying for, some way we can help others and give to them as Christ has given to us.

**Conclusion:** The mortality rate is not just high, it is 100 percent. How much time we have left does not matter. Anytime is short. Our investment for Him is so sound it is like building on a rock.

—Phil Metcalfe

Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

## THE RACE

Preaching Portion: Heb. 11:32—12:2

**Introduction:** This is one of those passages found in the "Sports Pages of the Bible." Paul must have been fascinated with sports events in that numerous metaphors are sports oriented. "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (NIV). I find in it a very vivid

picture of the Christian life: Many important races have been held—the breaking of the four-minute mile—called the "Mile of the Century." But this race in Hebrews is infinitely more important.

### I. IT IS AN INVITATIONAL RACE

1. Invitational sports events mean you have to be invited to participate. Basketball has its National Invitational Tournament. In sports there is one difference—generally only the best are invited. In this race everyone is invited—worldwide, universal, "whosoever will may come."

2. Three things you can do with an invitation:

(a) Accept it;

(b) Decline it; or

(c) Ignore it—but the result of ignoring it is the same as rejecting it.

Those who have accepted this invitation find themselves:

### II. IN A GREAT STADIUM CALLED "THE STADIUM OF LIFE"

1. 12:1—"Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses" (NIV).

2. Who are these people?

(a) Hebrews 11—indicates some of them: Noah, Abraham, Isaiah, etc.

(b) The New Testament witnesses—Paul, Peter

(c) The martyrs

(d) People like Augustine, Calvin, Luther, Wesley

(e) You may see your grandfather and grandmother, mother, father, or the last Christian who just died

3. Are these people mere spectators? No. If, when you play the game, you concentrate on the spectators watching, you're not as apt to play well. These witnesses all bear the exact testimony: "Jesus Christ can save and keep and satisfy." They're all looking at the end of the track where Jesus is standing.

### III. HOW DO YOU START THIS RACE?

1. By throwing off everything that hinders.

(a) Hindrances must not be the same as sins (the reason the author mentions both).

(b) Hindrances are good things—homes, families, friends, studies, our knowledge, our sport, our business—things that can slow us down if they assume first place.

2. By throwing off the sin that entangles.

(a) You don't run races you want to win by wearing robes.

(b) Sins that cling so closely, so subtly, can choke out the life of a perfectly good Christian experience.

### IV. HOW DO YOU RUN THIS RACE?

1. With perseverance—This is what wins in sports—endurance.

2. By fixing our eyes on Jesus. If we are to keep our eyes on Jesus, it means there are some places we should not look:

(a) At the other runners—some Christians are stymied by their comparisons with other runners—as they compare themselves to those less faithful. Jesus' disciples did it. LOOK AT JESUS.

(b) At yourself—you don't win races by being self-absorbed, looking down at yourself. It is time for the "me" generation to look again at the words: "I am crucified with Christ" and to "die trying."

(c) Back—We are to look straight at the goal. As Christians we forget the past and "all things become new."

**Conclusion:** Let us look at Jesus—who stands at the finish line, the track, of the Stadium of Life saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour . . ." Ironically, He's not

only at the finish line but there beside us to pick us up when we fall.

—Phil Metcalfe

Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

## WHAT THE CALL OF GOD MEANS

Preaching Portion: 1 Sam. 3:1-21

**Introduction:** These verses show that the "call of God" is much broader than we may have suspected. Let us look briefly at the meaning of God's call. The first thing we note is that God calls men and women:

### I. TO HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIMSELF (3:1-10)

1. Samuel has been living with Eli for perhaps 12 to 15 years—he may have been in his mid to late teen years.

2. He knew about religious ceremony, but did not yet know the Lord; "Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him" (v. 7, NIV).

3. Many people are like this today—they go to church every Sunday, perhaps even help at the church, but they do not know the God by whom they feel called.

4. God's call in these verses is for the express purpose that Samuel might have a personal relationship with God.

But, God does not leave us there. He calls those whom He has called to a personal relationship with himself, secondly:

### II. TO A MINISTRY WITHIN HIS CHURCH (3:11-18)

1. Eventually, for Samuel, this meant being a preeminent prophet in Israel, a judge among the people, a priest over the nation. But immediately, it meant being a prophet of God who spoke the words of God to Eli.

2. The Lord calls all those whom He calls to himself in a personal relationship to a particular ministry in His body.

3. A call from God today is extended basically in four ways:

(a) In reading the Scripture

(b) In prayer after having read the Scriptures

(c) The voices of our brothers and sisters in Christ

(d) The circumstances of our lives. The call of God is not just to full-time Christian work. Many are not full time, but are nonetheless important ministries.

### III. THE CONFIRMATION OF THAT CALL (3:19—4:1a)

1. By His continued presence—"The Lord was with Samuel."

2. God gave success to Samuel in what he did (v. 19b)—"He let none of his words fall to the ground" (NIV). God gave him effectiveness in what he felt called to do.

3. Through the voice of the people of God—"And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord" (v. 20, NIV). Your calling will be ratified by the people of God. "Good job. That's what you should be doing." Or else they say, "Bad job. That is not what you should be doing," which is much harder.

**Conclusion:** What is the ministry you are attempting to fulfill? God has ways of confirming that call to you. Let us work together in such a way that our ministry exalts Jesus Christ, brings honor to the gospel and others into the Kingdom.

—Phil Metcalfe

Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

## MERCY OVERRIDES

Text: John 8:11b: "Go, and sin no more."

The ACCUSERS:

8:7—BLIND by their own sin.

8:6—BOUND in self-centeredness.

8:5—BENT on hurting others.

The ACCUSED:

8:3—FOUND in sin.

8:5—FLUNG upon Jesus' mercy.

8:4—FORGIVEN by the Savior.

—J. Grant Swank, Jr.

## Evangelism Plan

(Continued from page 41)

By October 10, my wife and I had talked with 401 people, and had accumulated 32 prospects. I visited them and concluded that about 15 were immediately hopeful; the others would be added to the bulletin mailing list and perhaps one day be productive. By January 1, I had "found" 112 prospects. Eighteen of these families have now been to our church. Sunday morning, January 14, there were 16 new people in the morning service (11 in Sunday School), representing five families.

The law of averages has produced one prospect for 11.26 calls, and one family actually attending for every 66.2 calls. I quote these figures from strict record keeping, but in speculation there are 26 more families (including three formerly Nazarene-related before moving here) who will almost surely respond. If so, the ratio of success will be one attending family for every 26.8 calls. We pass up no streets for hungry hearts are everywhere.

Persistency and consistency are urgently necessary. My own goal is 25 conversations a day and not fewer than 100 a week. How better could I spent time! Sometimes 25 calls will yield no "good" results; sometimes

there will be several. From December 11-18 I gave my little talk 123 times and had 15 warm responses. Two of these had been Nazarene-affiliated before moving to Florida. One of them asked about a favorite pastor in Ohio. I wrote to the general secretary's office, got the answer, and took it to her.

In more than 1,000 calls, I have not had one sarcastic answer. Often people will say, "I wish you luck, Reverend."

The field is almost inexhaustible. For example, Orlando has 120,000 telephones. Subtracting the business numbers, one pastor making 100 calls a week would need 20 years to cover his territory! And the calls can be repeated after only one year!

This method of canvassing will provide only prospects. Friendship evangelism is the marvelous tool for following up on prospects. Think of the strong impression made when a gifted visitor takes a pan of hot rolls, a pie, or anything that indicates a loving, personal interest to such a prospect!

So go ahead! Go to the library and get your list (or buy the directory for about \$50.00—and worth it!). Start dialing and keep at it. Who knows! If you shoot for the moon, you just might hit an eagle!

## Returning to the World

(Continued from page 47)

prophetic voice to become politically one-sided. On the contrary, the church is perceived as an ally, a welcome and necessary participant in the restoration and preservation of the city.

Government leaders know they cannot pay for the kind of commitment that evolves from those who serve out of a Christian commitment. Whatever notion there has been in the past that government and church cannot cooperate seems to have been forgotten in the face of the overwhelming social and moral problems facing society.

It may be that local churches will increasingly establish private day schools as an alternative to the public school system and at the same time work for the improvement of public schools. In the interest of low-income housing rehabilitation, some of us at Community of Hope have been asked to participate in forums where government and business leaders are searching for models of how to do a better job. We need to have enough involvement and expertise to give direction. In the past it was the Christian hospitals, universities, and relief agencies that established the pattern for similar public institutions. The "care of souls" has always implied responsibility for the physical and social needs of people.

Some fear that involvement with the social and physical needs of the people will divert the church from its task, or at least drain off resources that could be used for evangelism. A brief review of the Church from the

New Testament to the present will quickly reassure us that there is no need for such compromise. If our experience in Washington, D.C., is of any value, we have found that it is our interest in the physical and social needs of the people in the ghetto neighborhoods that opens doors for sharing the good news of God's forgiving grace. We are finding that when the gospel is shared in the context of a caring community it needs little if any defense. The deeds have preceded the Word, preparing the way for repentance and faith. The Word must become flesh.

If others have abandoned the Word of personal salvation as they have tried to serve the social and physical needs, or the reverse, let us learn from their mistakes and go on to hold together both the social and personal dimensions of the gospel. The crowded cities of the world, with their staggering needs, are open to the Church. Government officials are at a loss to find ways of serving the public interest. Increasingly, the Church will be looked to for direction and answers. If the Church will take the lead, and the risks, others will watch and may eventually follow, and we can be faithful to Isaiah's mission vision "to rebuild the ruined cities" (see Isa. 61:4).

In the heart of Washington's "Riot Corridor," an old, abandoned apartment building, on a hill overlooking the Capitol, has come to life. More than a building, it's a place where people come in time of need, for food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, legal aid, and the Bread of Life. The grant from the city is a way of saying, "This is the sign, this is hope, this needs to happen throughout the city, and perhaps the nation."



# TODAY'S BOOKS for TODAY'S PREACHER

### Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition

By Thomas A. Langford, Abingdon Press, 1983, \$9.95

This book by the professor of systematic theology at the Duke University Divinity School is valuable reading for any Wesleyan interested in understanding his "roots." But one finds more than roots; the book also pictures vividly the trunk and the branches that make up the living "tree" of the Wesleyan faith.

The term *practical divinity* is John Wesley's, describing his understanding of the purpose of theology—it must be practical. Intended as a survey, the book covers much ground and does not go into great detail at any point. But it is admirably accurate in summarizing the many theologians and movements that constitute the Wesleyan tradition.

The opening chapter deals with the origins of the tradition in John Wesley's thought. Chapter 2, entitled "Scriptural Christianity: John Wesley's Theology of Grace," depicts Wesley's doctrines of justification, prevenient grace, assurance, Christian perfection, and the church. Nine subsequent chapters trace the spread of Wesleyanism in Britain and America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, viewing it against the background of changing cultural environments, and analyzing the teaching of each significant theologian responsible for the development of the tradition.

Of special interest to *Preacher's Magazine* readers will be chapter 6, entitled "Holiness Theology." Here the author surveys the contribution of the holiness movement to the ongoing spread of Wesley's message. The holiness movement is seen as a vital and valid part of historic Methodism. Langford assesses the work of Nazarene, Free Methodist, and

Wesleyan theologians past and present and shows an acute awareness of the creative theological discussions now being carried on in holiness circles. He says: "Whatever the final conclusions . . . the discussion has enriched the historical understanding of the teaching of Christian perfection" (p. 143), adding the observation that "holiness theology is alive, and it remains a partner with others who claim Wesleyan roots and who wish to continue in the Wesleyan spirit" (p. 146).

The final chapter enumerates the themes that, according to Langford, constitute the nucleus of the Wesleyan tradition—"biblical witness to Jesus Christ, vital experience of God in Christ as Savior and Sanctifier, commitment to human freedom and ethical discipleship, and the shaping of church life around missional responsibility" (p. 263).

This book can be profitable reading for holiness pastors whose laity, through various media, are being bombarded by many non-Wesleyan voices and may be in danger of losing their own Wesleyan identity.

—Rob L. Staples

### Real Christianity

By Bailey E. Smith, Broadman Press, \$8.95

You would not expect the pastor of a Southern Baptist church of more than 12,000 members who has more than once baptized over 1,000 converts within a year to be a dull or uninspiring preacher, and you would be right. These 21 sermonic treatments of passages from Acts are vigorous, forthright, practical, and often insightful. The author has done exegetical homework, but the smell of the study is not on these pages; indeed, occasionally the exposition (Acts 15, for example) seems a bit inadequate. If the treatment does not always deal with the

primary theme of the passage it is, nevertheless, always pertinent and fresh.

The basic thrust is a challenge to Christians to daring and costly living. The style is down-to-earth, with "no punches pulled." The applications are multiple and life-situational. The illustrations are skillfully told with economy of words. The language, although it lacks the eloquence of a George Truett, is pictorial and sometimes colloquial. Keen imagination comes through in messages like "Crosses Make Good Crusaders."

The doctrinal content is minor. Two or three times the author's Calvinism surfaces. The work of the Holy Spirit is scarcely mentioned. The author's burden is for *doing* Christianity. He wants faith with feet. He is against cozy, no-risk, merely respectable Christian living.

I'm glad I was introduced to this book. I'll pull it off my shelf again when I preach from Acts.

—A. E. Airhart

### The Triune God

By Edmund J. Fortman, Baker Book House, 1982, Paperback, 382 pp., \$10.95

This book is a reprint of a valuable historical survey indicating the ways in which various thinkers developed the doctrine of the Trinity. Most of the book focuses upon the early centuries of the Church when most theological battles were fought. Positions taken by Protestant Reformers and contemporary theologians are also addressed.

Fortman takes a strong, orthodox position on the Trinity: One God in Three Persons. But the value of this volume is in its historical information. Anyone interested in the doctrine of the Trinity as interpreted over the centuries will profit from studying this book.

—Gerard Reed



# OLD TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES



by Harvey E. Finley

## YAHVEH—REDEEMER, Part I

"Redeemer" and "Savior" are two names for God that focus attention particularly on His delivering, saving purpose for His people who are to be not only recipients of salvation themselves but also instruments through whom salvation may become the prized possession of all peoples. Both terms are important parts of the God-nomenclature, occurring most frequently in Isaiah 40—66. This is the first of a two-part study on *Yahveh-Go'el*, "Yahveh (is) Redeemer." A study on "Savior" will follow this one.

1. *g-l* Designating Kinds of Human Relationships.—The Hebrew root *g-l* means "to act as kinsman, avenge (a relative's blood), and redeem."

(a) *Marrying a Relative's Widow to Perpetuate His Name.*—Acting as a kinsman or "being a *go'el* (redeemer)" in order to perpetuate a relative's name was in effect an act of redemption. Such action was according to ancient custom (see Deut. 25:8-10); it saved the name of a relative for posterity by preserving it among the names of the people of God. Ruth's marriage to Boaz vividly illustrates this kind of "acting as kinsman" or "acting as redeemer." Ruth not only provided for her elderly mother-in-law, Naomi, by gleaning in the fields. She also carefully followed Naomi's counsel in contacting and reminding near relatives that one should assume the responsibility of *go'el* in their and Elimelech's behalf so that Elimelech's name and inheritance would be perpetuated among the people of God. (See Ruth chaps. 2, 3, and 4; especially 2:20; 3:19; and 4:1-10; and compare Deut. 25:8-10.) The Ruth-Boaz wedding not only preserved or saved the name of Elimelech but provided continuity in the family line from Judah to Jesse to David. (See 1 Chron. 2:3-17; Matt. 1:1-11.)

(b) *Redeeming a Relative from a Slaveholder.*—Acting as kinsman (*g-l*) also included the role of redeeming a relative from a slaveholder by paying the amount of money required for the release of the relative (see Lev. 25:47-54). This kind of redemption had its precedent in Yahveh's redemption of Israel from Egyptian oppression (Lev. 25:25).

(c) *Avenging the Blood of a Relative.*—Acting as kinsman (*g-l*) meant

in some instances that of acting as the avenger of the blood of a near relative. The *go'el had-dam*, "the one avenging the blood" or "the one acting as kinsman in behalf of the slain one" was allowed or even expected to retaliate by taking the life of his relative's murderer (see Num. 35:16-28).

(d) *Buying Back Something Consecrated to God.*—*g-l*, meaning "buying back" or "redeeming," is used of payment of value assessed plus one-fifth for an item consecrated which the person wished to recover for his own possession. (See Lev. 27:1f.) This involved such things as a parcel of ground, a domesticated animal, or various kinds of lites (perhaps grains or wares). Such items when consecrated were probably presented with the understanding of short-term need and of possible return to the original owner.

2. *g-l* Verb Forms with Yahveh as Subject.—A sizeable number of verb forms of *g-l* imply a personal relationship with God. These forms thus are used as metaphor for expressing significant truth about God in His relationship with certain individuals and particularly with Israel, His people. This root therefore has become a most significant part of the "salvation vocabulary" of the Bible. This root in verb form implying relationship with God occurs most frequently in poetry.

(a) *Yahveh "Redeeming" Individuals from Evil or Death.*—The verb forms of *g-l* designating Yahveh acting "to redeem" persons threatened by evil or death occur a number of times. God or His Angel "redeemed" Jacob from all evil (Gen. 48:16). God spoke through Hosea promising to ransom Israel from the power of the grave and to "redeem" them from death after a certain due measure of judgment (Hos. 13:14). The writer of Lamentations, probably Jeremiah, affirmed that Yahveh had pleaded his case, had "redeemed" his life (Lam. 3:58). The Psalmist expressed gratitude to Yahveh as the One who "redeemed" his life from destruction (Ps. 103:4).

(b) *g-l* Used of Yahveh in Relating Himself to Enslaved Israel to Lead Them out of Egypt.—Yahveh, deeply concerned over Israel's oppression by the Egyptians; promised: "... I will deliver you from their slave-labor, and I will re-

deem' (*g-l*) you with My outstretched arm and with mighty judgments" (Exod. 6:6). The victory song for celebrating the crossing of the Red Sea includes among other adulations and praises an acknowledgment that Yahveh had shown mercy in leading the people forth, the people whom He had "redeemed" (*g-l*) (Exod. 15:13; cf. Ps. 77:15 and 106:10). The Psalmist lamenting the desolation of Mount Zion earnestly implored Yahveh to remember His congregation, the tribe of His inheritance, which He had "redeemed" (*g-l*; Ps. 74:2). The Psalmist also in reviewing the Exodus and Wilderness experiences stated that despite Israel's many occasions of waywardness and God's judgments on them, they turned and sought Him and remembered that He the Most High God (El Elyon) was their "Redeemer" (*go'er*; Ps. 78:35).

It is in these instances (see 2a and b above) in which Yahveh is affirmed as relating himself to an individual or to the people Israel that *g-l* ("to redeem" or "Redeemer") takes on theological dimensions not present in the context of strictly human relationships. Thus "to redeem" and "redeemer" mean: God is motivated out of concern for the troubled, oppressed person or people and takes the initiative to extend help, even to effect rescue or deliverance; God offers hope where otherwise despair and helplessness would prevail for, situations beyond human solutions; God aligns himself against all the enemies arrayed against His person or people, thus assuring protection and triumph; God manifests mercy and forgiveness as far as the past is concerned and beyond this intends a continuing, fulfilling relationship between himself and those He has "redeemed"; in the newly founded relationship God has "elected" or "chosen" His "redeemed" ones to be His own special possession—His witness among other men and nations. Thus while these *g-l* incidents may be primarily those of a life spared from physical death or of a military victory over a threatening enemy, one is nevertheless forced to recognize most significant theological dimensions to these incidents in which it is acclaimed that God has "redeemed" or He is "Redeemer."

# NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES



by Ralph Earle

## Hebrews

### Sum (8:1)

The word *kephalaion* comes from *kephale*, "head." In the only other place in the New Testament where it occurs (Acts 22:28) it means "sum" (of money)—see discussion there (WM, 2:145). But here it has its primary meaning, "main point" (NASB).

### Is Set (8:1)

In the King James Version the verb *kathizo* is correctly translated "sat down" twice in Hebrews (1:3; 10:12). But here and in 12:2 it is given an awkward, incorrect rendering.

### Of the Sanctuary (8:2)

The Greek literally says "of the holy things" (*ton hagion*). But here and in 9:1 the adjective is used as a substantive (neuter singular in 9:1) for the "sanctuary" of the Tabernacle.

### Example (8:5)

The term *hypodeigma* was used in secular Greek for an "example." But it also meant, "copy." That meaning fits better here and in 9:23 (NASB, NIV). In the latter passage the KJV has "pattern(s)."

### Mediator (8:6)

See the discussion at 1 Tim. 2:5 (WM, 5:179-81).

### Made Old . . . Decayeth (8:13)

Both of these translate the same verb, *palaioo*, which comes from the adjective *palaios*. Arndt and Gingrich say that the adjective means "old" = in existence for a long time, often with the connotation of being antiquated or outworn" (*Lexicon*; p. 605). Seesemann writes: "The word has theological significance only in Heb. 8:13, where it occurs twice. . . the author argues that by setting up the new covenant God has declared the old to be outdated. God Himself cancels its validity" (TDNT, 5:720).

Since it is the same verb in 13a and 13b, it is best to translate: "made obsolete" and "is becoming obsolete" (NASB; cf. NIV). The first form is the perfect active indicative and the second is the present passive participle. With the coming of the new covenant in Christ, the old covenant made at Sinai is now obsolete. We are not under law but under grace.

### Waxeth Old (8:13)

This is the present active participle of the verb *gerasko* (in NT only here and John 21:18), which comes from the adjective *geras*, "old age" (only in Luke 1:36). It means "growing old" (NASB) or "aging" (NIV).

### Candlestick (9:2)

The Greek word is *lychnia*, which means "lampstand" (NASB, NIV). They did not use candles in the Tabernacle. See discussion at Matt. 5:15 (WM, 1:19).

### Sanctuary (9:2)

It is true that we have here the neuter plural (*Hagia*) of the adjective *hagios*, "holy." But the translation "sanctuary" does not fit here, because verses 2 and 3 describe two sanctuaries. The first (v. 2) was called "the Holy Place" (NIV; cf. NASB). The second, behind the second curtain, was called "the Most Holy Place" (NIV). The Greek is *Hagia-Hagion*—literally, "the Holy of Holies" (NASB). These two rooms together comprised one building, which could be referred to as "The Sanctuary." The rest of the Mosaic Tabernacle consisted of open courts or courtyards.

### The Shewbread (9:2)

In the New Testament this same term occurs (in KJV) in each of the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 12:4; Mark 2:26; Luke 6:4). There it is a translation of *tous artous tes protheseas*—literally, "the loaves of the presentation" (or, "placing

before"). Here the order of the words is reversed: *he prothesis ton arton*. This poses a bit of a problem. Maurer suggests: "When Hb. 9:2 lists not only the table but more specifically *he prothesis ton arton* as an object in the temple sanctuary, the reference is not so much to the act of placing as to something concrete, perhaps the bread laid on the table . . ." (TDNT, 8:165).

### Cherubims (9:5)

This is the only place in the New Testament where this term occurs, though it is found scores of times in the Old Testament. It comes directly from the Hebrew *kerubim*. *Im* is the masculine plural ending of Hebrew nouns. So, to say "cherubims" (KJV) is simply not correct; it is like saying "I have three children." All good modern versions, of course, have correctly "cherubim" or "cherubs."

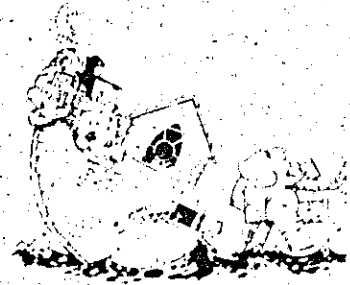
### Figure (9:9)

It comes as a bit of surprise to discover that the Greek word here is *parabole*, which is translated "parable" (KJV) 46 out of the 50 times it occurs in the New Testament. It is used for the parables of Jesus 17 times in Matthew, 13 times in Mark (though translated "comparison" in 4:30), and 17 times in Luke. Once in the Synoptic Gospels it is rendered as "proverb" (Luke 4:23). Aside from these Gospels it is found only in Hebrews (9:9; 11:19)—where the KJV has "figure."

The noun *parabole* comes from the verb *paraballo*, which means "place beside," "compare." Here it may well be translated "illustration," which is what the parables were.

### Reformation (9:10)

*Diorthosis* (only here in NT) comes from the verb *diorthoo*, "set in the right path." Here it is used for the "new order" (NIV), which replaced the old order found in the Mosaic law—as the first part of this verse indicates.



# THE ARK ROCKER

## A LATE DISCOVERY

"Kill 'em with kindness," my mother used to say. That was her advice to us when we sought to know how to waylay those who maltreated us.

Well, for years now, I have sought to be obedient to the maternal vision and put her advice into practice. Sometimes I've succeeded, sometimes not; an inconsistency that has troubled me. And even more bothersome has been the inconsistency of the responses of my strategy—everything from "Whatever are you talking about? I've always supported you wholeheartedly!" to "Buzz off" to "Thanks, I needed that." I've learned that loved enemies don't always become loving enemies.

But I think I've found the secret to consistency now. At least my attitude can be consistent. And, so far, the responses have been much more predictable.

I got my clue from the daily newspaper, of all places. Some columnist was grouching about the way some folks have thumped the Reagan administration for its attitude toward the poor. Especially irritating to the scrivener was the tendency of some to see in administrative policy some sort of malign spirit at work. They see the Oval Office and its satellites as veritable hatcheries of plots to oppress. They interpret anything that the administration does as part of some evil scheme. It simply is not fair, said the writer. And then it was that he dropped the clue so helpful to me.

The clue came in a quotation from a professor of political science somewhere. The professor, too, was irked by those who read Reagan's policies as pieces of some nefarious conspiracy against anything poor, non-white, or liberal. "That's a gross misreading," said the professor. "Actually, they're not that intelligent. Give 'em credit for some stupidity."

Now, analysis of the character and quality of the policies of the current American administration is not my purpose here. I'm just wanting to share my new insight in interpersonal relationships. To wit: "Give 'em credit for some stupidity."

You see, hardly a week goes by that I don't hear or read in some correspondence some complaint that either alleges or implies that there are dark designs afoot in the denomination and that these have just blighted or thwarted, or advanced someone's career. Then, too, we all know that those outside the holiness movement are up to no good, trying to derail the old-time religion.

In fact, every once in awhile, a friend or two and I just let the waves of paranoia roll over us, enjoying most the big breakers of self-pity that bathe us. There is, after all, plenty of evidence that somebody has it in for us. Some-

body is actually *working* to keep us back—probably in retribution for our integrity. And even when our conversation isn't so personal, we tell war stories. We have a veritable library of tales of baleful stratagems, past and present, to place this person here and that person there, to seat this one and to unseat another. Then there's our collection of reports of mischievous deals made for controlling this or that.

The problem is not that we are making things up, building cases on wholly imaginary evidence. There is, in fact, no lack of evidence that charlatans and manipulators can invade even holiness denominations, not to mention those whose piety and ethics haven't been properly connected.

And here's where my newfound principle is of immense help. I had tended to see evil plots everywhere, only to have my perceptions pooh-poohed by some fatuous assurance that I was simply discovering "the humanity of the church." I did not like either alternative. The habit of seeing, or assuming, that there was concerted, deliberate mischief throughout the church nurtured cynicism and worse. But assigning every peccadillo, and worse, to "the humanity of the church" seemed to be an even worse practice, for it often became a matter of excusing the inexcusable, of allowing attitudes and practices in the church that we would severely criticize when found in the world or in other branches of the Body. And, it threw off on what it means to be human. Folks in the Reformed and Lutheran traditions can say, "To be human is to be sinful, necessarily." We Wesleyans can't say that. With our deep concern for human moral responsibility, we want to be slow to let people off the hook by letting them plead "human nature" or "circumstances" or "evil forces." For us, to be human means to be morally responsible. Saying, "That's just the humanity of the church," can tend to moral irresponsibility.

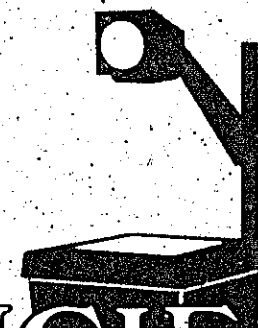
So, my new insight helps me a great deal. It gives me a very believable and useful third alternative. I don't have to assume that things are going as they are because of some selfish, if not downright carnal, scheming somewhere in the system. And I don't have to chalk it all up to "humanity" in some naive spirit. I can just sit back and "give 'em credit for some stupidity."

"Kill 'em with kindness. Give 'em credit for some stupidity." Oh, there's another one I read somewhere, too: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

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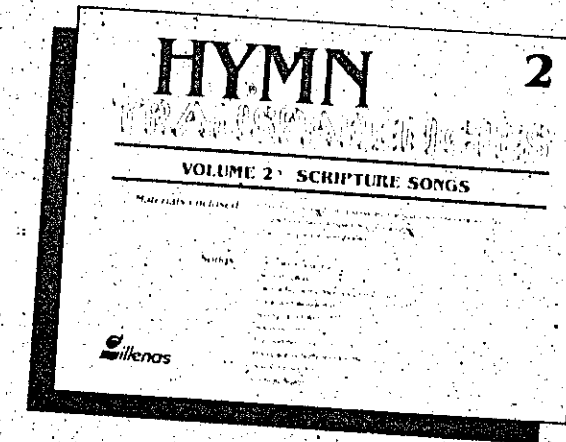
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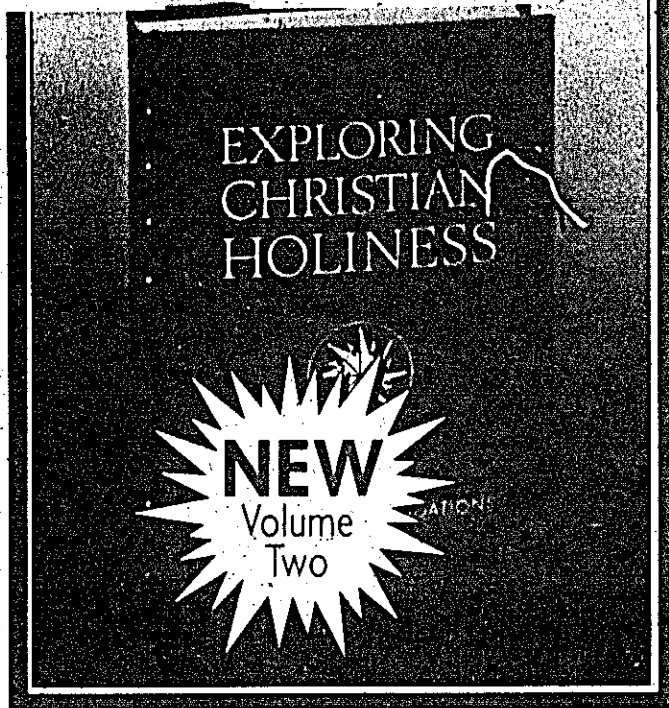
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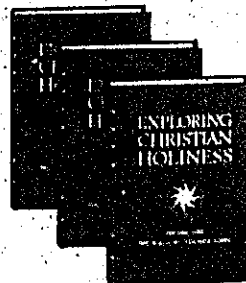
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