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Neil B. Wiseman (Editor)  
*Olivet Nazarene University*

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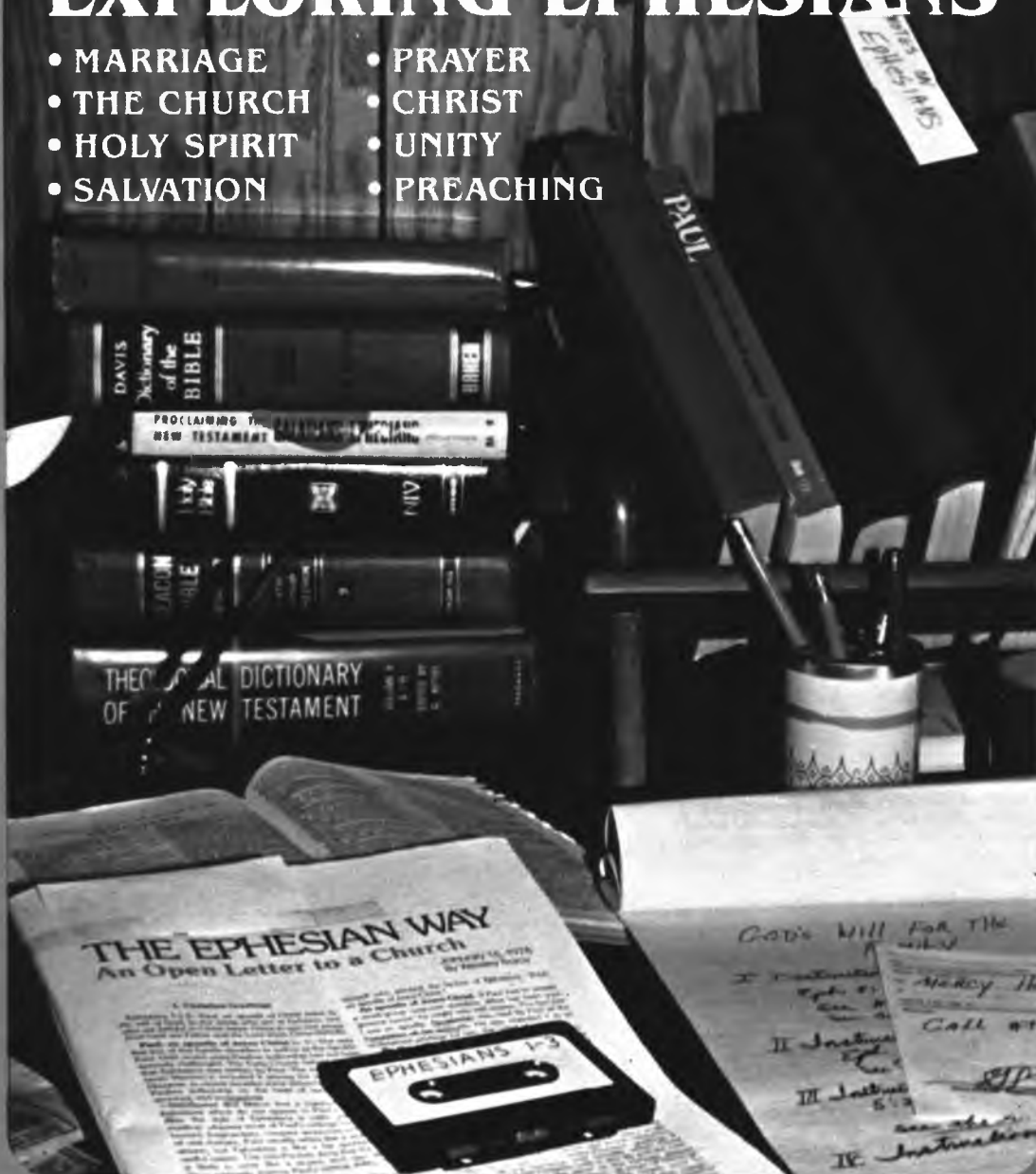
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# The **Preacher's** **II** Magazine



## EXPLORING EPHESIANS

- MARRIAGE
- THE CHURCH
- HOLY SPIRIT
- SALVATION
- PRAYER
- CHRIST
- UNITY
- PREACHING



June, July, August, 1979

*"For by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).*

## Make Us True Ministers of Thy Grace

Our Heavenly Father: Our supreme prayer today is that Thou wilt make us true ministers of Thy grace.

We acknowledge that this grace is from Thee, the Source of all good giving. Thou hast honored us with a mission like unto Thy Son's, for He declared to His inner circle in that ancient day: "As the Father sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21, NEB).<sup>\*</sup> This same redemptive mission is ours today through His grace received.

We are sure that the good news is for all, for Christ died for all. This puts us under obligation too; for: "His purpose in dying for all was that men, while still in life, should cease to live for themselves, and should live for him who for their sake died and was raised to life" (2 Cor. 5:15).

May this message engage our full energies with a sense of urgency, until trifling issues shall not detain or derail us. May its measureless joy overflow in our own hearts because of His resurrection victory. Reveal to us again the inner meaning of that ancient word: "Buy truth, never sell it" (Prov. 23:23). This is our chief treasure. When the world's Babel of voices engulf us, let the assurance of the Psalmist speak to our inner need:

Thou wilt show me the path of life;  
in thy presence is the fullness of joy,  
and in thy right hand pleasures for evermore  
(Ps. 16:11).

Today we do not seek to be cajoled or comforted, but rather to be strengthened for our task. This redemptive mission demands of us "the selfless me!" This mission was initiated in Thy own heart in the gift of Thy Son, but He purchased its remedy on a hill called Calvary.

Take us again to the empty tomb where Jesus gave the startling news of deliverance to a humble woman whose tears would not dry. You have trusted us with an assignment, now enable us to trust Thee for the daily grace we need in lowly service. Save us from any reversion to self-willing and self-planning. Our wills are ours, but we make them Thine. Thy kingdom is first, then comes the power and the glory. But they are all Thine.

Help us to press the claims of the gospel upon all we serve. Enable us to involve others in this glorious mission. When the progress is slow, save us from grumbling or murmuring. Let the flame of Thy love kindle afresh in our hearts today. May our imploring message get through to some this very day: "Be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). We speak only as Thy ambassadors. Give us the right tones as well as the redeeming message. May successes not go to our heads or delays or defeats throw us in the abyss of dejection. Only Thou can give the increase. Make us good stewards of Thy grace today.

—Samuel Young

<sup>\*</sup>All quotations in this prayer are from the *New English Bible*. © The Delegates of the Oxford University Press and The Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1961. 1970. Used by permission.

# ABOLISH MINISTERIAL HYPOCHONDRIA

by Neil B. Wiseman

**M**any ministers suffer from an occupational inferiority complex. While society salutes the secular helping professions such as medicine, social work, and psychiatry for their rising competence, the minister is regarded as an intellectual feather-weight.

At the same time, various secular forces attack even the character and integrity of ministers. "Sagging courage," "lost nerve," and "enslavement to the establishment" are among the accusations.

Like Pavlov's dogs, we are conditioned to accept every conceivable criticism of the ministry. True, we refuse to believe the worst. Yet every negative word adds to our declining ministerial self-respect. Even the welcomed escalating education level of the laity, with its consequent higher expectations of the minister, can aid and abet clerical hypochondria. Are there any signs of hope? Is there a way to separate the noise from the genuine problems we face?

A few months ago my preaching ministry took me to a little southeastern tobacco town—not exactly an ideal setting for planting a new home mission church. But the pastor, well trained and deeply committed, poured out his energies to plant another holiness witness. Three pastors of stronger nearby churches sent reinforcements to sing, to pray, and to

provide economic support. The pastor of a neighboring holiness church brought his entire congregation for one service. And a few miles down the road, two other young preachers are digging out new churches in similar situations. I seriously doubt that frontier home missions efforts were more challenging or fun. How privileged I felt to be a part of the ministerial symphony in planting the church in that place.

In another setting, hundreds of miles from the little tobacco town, an invitation to lead a two-day seminar on preaching put me in touch with 50 serious pastors. The atmosphere of the seminar fairly crackled with commitment to become more effective servants of the Word. Two of those pastors kindly asked me to preach in their pulpits the next Sunday. As it happens nearly every Sunday, the thrill and the terrible responsibility of preaching came to me all over again. But I was moved to my depths as those pastors prayed, shared their burdens, and related creatively to persons in their congregations. Self-giving love showed in the ministry of both those pastors.

About a week ago, I had a friendly lunch with one of the influential leaders of the holiness movement. He is supposed to be at the apex of the so-called hierarchy of the ecclesiastical establishment. As we talked to-

gether about the future of ministry, I was impressed that this leader desperately wants the very best for the church. Contrary to some ecclesiastical pulse-takers, he straightforwardly defended his conviction that the future of the church depends on the quality of her ministers.

In my mail came a letter from a pastor who wrote, "My commitment to ministry was renewed after reading a recent issue of the *Preacher's Magazine*. I want to be the best pastor God can make me. I want to be a growing man for Him."

Last night I shared fellowship with an evangelist of 28 years' experience. I thought about how many seekers he had led to the Savior, the weary travel miles, and the pressing economic concerns of those long years. Then I was reminded of how much so many owe to his call and faithfulness.

Late at night a pastor phoned long distance. Last year he was voted out for courageously facing a moral issue in his church. He had been reading Gossip's sermon "But when Life Tumbles in, What Then?" from the *Preacher's Magazine*. He said, "I awakened my wife. We read the sermon together. We laughed. We prayed. We cried. My temporary lack of assignment is a test of faith. I was offered a lucrative insurance sales opportunity but I couldn't sign my name. I know He will

bring us through. Doesn't right always prevail?"

In a few days my ministry will take me to a short, one-week experience in the seminary classroom to lead a class titled "Creative Tensions in Pastoral Ministry." Those alert young people will challenge me and humble me. We will discuss real tensions—some self-made, some imposed by others, and some unchangeable. Perhaps those students and I will discover again that ministerial difficulties are real but our satisfactions are eternal.

I salute faithful contemporary ministers everywhere. The historical and biblical cloud of witnesses call me to more effective ministry, but it is my present-day ministerial brothers and sisters who challenge my faith, stimulate my mind, and call forth my energies for greater service to God and man.

For me, I want to be through with this misdirected ministerial hypochondria.

Whatever our ministerial faults and incompetencies, today's ministers are better trained, more capable, better informed, and more sensitive to human need than their forefathers. They make me want to do my ministry better, correct my faults, and face my challenges. As needed, I am ready to change my ministerial diet, to add exercise, take bitter medicine, or even submit to corrective surgery. But an unexamined feeling of quiet ministerial despair does nothing for the world, the church, or the preacher.

I salute you, my ministerial colleagues; your service for Christ provides me with inspiration and calls me to perspiration. This work of the Christian ministry keeps pulling us, shaping us, and, yes, even testing us. The majority of what we do in the name of the living Christ is important to others and to Him.

Down with ministerial hypochondria, professional inferiority, and those unexamined feelings of quiet despair. Up with a well-rounded ministry of faith, meaning, and courage; rich opportunities for service abound all around us.



# THE ARK ROCKER

## THREE DANGERS

Many years ago a wise professor told a class in church administration that every church faces four persistent dangers. If a church overcomes these dangers, it survives as a dynamic spiritual force, said the professor. If, on the other hand, the church succumbs to these dangers, it loses its spiritual vigor and drifts into barren institutionalism.

The quartet of dangers included professionalism in the clergy, secularism in the laity, formalism in worship, and humanism in education. This particular literary voyage deals with the first three dangers.

**Professionalism in the clergy** varies from Chaucer's fat, friendly, rollicking friar in the 14th century to the sleek, congenial, gregarious preacher/clergyman of the 20th century. Professionalism in the preacher is performance without concern, proclamation without passion, and preparation without prayer. Professionalism specializes in knowing "how" without knowing "why." Professionalism reduces worship to a program and evangelism to a mechanical routine. The professional pastor sheds few tears, bleeds for few causes, and battles for few principles.

**Secularism in the laity** rises from a combination of increased affluence, broader educational background, and continued involvement in secular affairs. Secularism is conducting our lives as though God made no difference. Secularism is a fatal addiction to things. Secularism adjusts the life-style to current fads, frills, and interests. Secularism manifests great concern for houses, furniture, dress, and bank accounts, while showing little interest in spiritual activities, intellectual ideas, or biblical values.

**Formalism in worship** emphasizes faith in creeds, liturgy, or institutions, rather than a positive response to Christ as Redeemer. Formalism goes through the motions without the motive—a kind of half-hearted, ecclesiastical calisthenics. Formalism in worship may vary from an annual printed program of worship to a "spontaneous" service with no previous planning. Formalism is attempting to worship without the presence of God.

My first reaction to the professor's analysis was that he was too pessimistic, too analytical, even too critical. But the persuasive presence of these dangers forces me to give a verdict in his favor.

*The Ark Locker*

# THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

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Authors should address all articles  
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# EPHESIANS: A PREACHER'S TREASURY of TRUTH

by J. Wesley Adams\*

## The Sublimity of Ephesians

Ephesians stands among the foremost books in the New Testament. It belongs in a class with Romans, the Fourth Gospel, and Hebrews—the mountain peaks of biblical revelation. Among Paul's letters it has a character all its own.

Conspicuously absent are the doctrinal arguments of Galatians and Romans, the pastoral problems of the Thessalonian and Corinthian letters, and the personal notes so prominent in Paul's writings. Rather than being hammered out on the anvil of doctrinal or pastoral controversy, Ephesians conveys the impression of nurture in prayerful solitude.

Many superlatives have been used to describe this Epistle, but none are more descriptive than "Queen of the Epistles." Alford suggests that nowhere is "the wonderful effect of the Spirit of inspiration on the mind of man . . . more evident than in this epistle."<sup>1</sup> Coleridge, the great poet, regarded Ephesians as "the divinest composition of man."

It is regrettable that in the modern era critical questions about its authenticity and origin have been discussed more intensively by scholars than its matchless message. But wherever the mystery of God's great plan of redemption in Christ Jesus is regarded as primary in importance, and where the practical application of the believer's union with Christ is stressed, among those people Ephesians continues to be a much loved, much read, and much preached book.

This is not to suggest, however, that Ephesians is a book easily digested. It is not. Nowhere are diligent study and prayerful reliance on the Spirit's illumination more required than here. But, then, nowhere are the rewards of such study more edifying

either. For in Ephesians we have both the *summit* and *summary* of Paul's redemptive message.

In his perceptive book *A Man in Christ*, James S. Stewart contends that the heart of Paul's "religion" and the key to understanding his letters lie in his experiential union with Christ. This is represented in the weighty Pauline expression "in Christ" which occurs 160 times in his letters, 36 times in Ephesians alone. The essence of what union with Christ means (for the individual believer and for the corporate body) is sublimely set forth in Ephesians, the copestone of Paul's writings.

## The Background of Ephesians

• *Recipients.* Unlike other letters by Paul, the identity of the original recipients of Ephesians remains uncertain. Although the title "To the Ephesians" is ancient, like those of all other New Testament writings, it is not original. This problem might seem superficial, since the letter itself is addressed to "the saints who are in Ephesus" (1:1). Two additional considerations, however, raise questions about the original destination.

First, the expression "in Ephesus" does not appear in the text of the earliest and best Greek manuscripts. This indicates the expression was not in the original. Second, there are no closing greetings or personal references characteristic of Paul's letters to a church in which he was well known. That he was well known at Ephesus is clear from the narrative of Acts, which states that he spent nearly three years there (Acts 19; 20:31).

These and other considerations have led scholars to commonly suppose that Ephesians was written as a general treatise, initially used as a circular letter for numerous churches in the Roman province of Asia where Ephesus was located. Subsequently, the Epistle became identified with the mother church and chief city of the province. As a circular

\*J. Wesley Adams is assistant professor of biblical literature at Mid-America Nazarene College.



letter, it may be in fact “the letter *from* Laodicea” referred to by Paul in Col. 4:16.

• **Author, Place, and Date of Composition.** The acceptance of Ephesians as a genuine letter of Paul is early and well attested. The letter itself claims to be written by Paul while a prisoner. Two outstanding imprisonments of Paul are recorded in Acts: two years at Caesarea (24:1—26:32) and two years at Rome (28:16-31). The pastoral epistles (the order of their writing being 1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy) recorded missionary activity of Paul after the first Roman imprisonment and ending with a second Roman imprisonment. In addition to these three notable prison experiences, during which time Ephesians could have been written, some propose that a fourth occurred at Ephesus. Most authorities who accept Paul's authorship regard the first Roman imprisonment (A.D. 60/61 to 62/63) as the occasion and time when he penned the letter.

**There are two basic themes:  
how to be redeemed, and how  
the redeemed ought to live.**

Many liberal scholars in Europe and America deny the genuineness of Paul's authorship of Ephesians; almost all British scholars have defended it, along with many conservative and moderate critics elsewhere. It is noteworthy that Markus Barth, professor of New Testament at the University of Basel, Switzerland, affirms Paul's authorship in the *Anchor Bible* commentary series on Ephesians.

• **Relation to Colossians.** It is commonly acknowledged that Ephesians manifests a close resemblance to Colossians. They are sometimes called the twin epistles. One writer notes that “as many as 40 coincidences of thought and language can be found; yet they are so intimately woven into the fabric of each epistle that it is impossible to believe they are due to any attempt at imitation or forgery.”<sup>2</sup> Tychicus appears to have carried simultaneously both letters for Paul to their destinations (Col. 4:7; Eph. 6:20). The best judgment is that Ephesians was written shortly *after* Colossians.

• **Purpose.** The circumstances which prompted Paul to write are not found in Ephesians. The purpose seems to arise more from Paul's circumstances than from those of his readers. Clearly the purpose was not polemical as in Colossians where Paul stressed the cosmic preeminence of Christ. Perhaps as Paul the prisoner meditated on this Colossian theme, he was inspired to synthesize his understanding of the Christian faith in a positive way for all the churches of Asia. That he wrote with particular readers in mind is suggested by passages such as 1:15 and 6:21. Whatever was Paul's pur-

pose, “his mind dwells on the theme of Christ and the Church, resulting in an exalted Christology and a high appraisal of the privileges of believers in Christ.”<sup>3</sup>

### **The Structure of Ephesians**

My mentor, Ray Summers, suggests that (in the simplest possible terms) there are two basic themes in the New Testament: (1) how to be redeemed—i.e., by grace through faith; and (2) how the redeemed of the Lord ought to live—i.e., the ethical imperatives of grace. Comprehensively, all other themes may be subsumed under one of these categories—doctrinal or ethical.<sup>4</sup> These broad categories are reflected in the organization of several of Paul's epistles.

Ephesians falls naturally into two parts as well. The first (cc. 1-3) is concerned largely with thoughts about the redemption which God has provided for us in Christ. The second (cc. 4-6) consists largely of practical instruction about the demands that this redemption makes upon our lives. Theology and ethics are inseparable parts of one whole and are often intermingled in the same paragraph. But for purposes of organization and logical presentation, Paul tends to set forth one, then the other, in his plea for the total Christian life. The following outline prepared by this writer seeks to reflect clearly the Pauline structure.

Christian Greetings (1:1-2)

### **THEOLOGICAL AFFIRMATIONS ABOUT REDEMPTION**

- I. The Plan of Redemption (1:3-23)
  - A. Thanksgiving for God's Glorious Plan (1:3-14)
    1. Its Formulation by the Father (3-6)
    2. Its Realization in the Son (7-12)
    3. Its Application Through the Spirit (13-14)
  - B. Prayer: For the Believer's Divine Enlightenment (1:15-23)
    1. The Inspiration for the Prayer (15-16)
    2. The Essence of the Prayer (17)
    3. The Rewards of Enlightenment (18-23)
- II. The Nature of Redemption (2:1—3:19)
  - A. It Releases Us from Sin and Death to New Life in Christ (2:1-10)
  - B. It Is for All Without Regard to Race (2:11-13)
  - C. It Issues in Unity Among Believers (2:14-22)
  - D. It Is Revealed Through Men to Other Men (3:1-13)
  - E. Prayer: For the Believer's Spiritual Fulfillment (3:14-19)

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

- III. The Christian's Walk (4:1—5:21)
  - A. Walk in Unity—One Body (4:1-16)
    1. Preserve the Unity of the Spirit (1-6)
    2. Differences of Function to Subserve Unity (7-12)
    3. Advancing Toward Full Unity and Maturity in Christ (13-16)
  - B. Walk in Newness of Life (4:17-32)



1. Life Without Christ (17-19)
2. Life in Christ (20-32)
- C. Walk in Love (5:1-5)
- D. Walk in Light (5:6-14)
- E. Walk in Wisdom (5:15-21)
- IV. The Christian's Homelife (5:22—6:9)
  - A. Duty of Wife to Husband (5:22-24)
  - B. Duty of Husband to Wife (5:25-33)
  - C. Duty of Child to Parent (6:1-3)
  - D. Duty of Parent to Child (6:4)
  - E. Duty of Servant to Master (6:5-8)
  - F. Duty of Master to Servant (6:9)
- V. The Christian's Warfare (6:10-20)
  - A. Our Ally—God (6:10-11a)
  - B. Our Enemy—Satan (6:11b-12)
  - C. Our Equipment—Full Armor (6:13-20)
    1. Belt—Truth (14a)
    2. Breastplate—Righteousness (14b)
    3. Sandals—Readiness (15)
    4. Shield—Faith (16)
    5. Helmet—Salvation (17a)
    6. Sword—God's Word (17b)
    7. Alertness—Prayer (18-20)
- Conclusion (6:21-24)

### The Contents of Ephesians

There is much here to explore, to study, to preach/teach, and to live. Comments must necessarily be confined to a few general observations. First, the opening paragraph is one of the most profound passages in the Bible (1:3-14). This magnificent hymn of redemption includes thanksgiving for election, predestination, adoption as sons, redemption through His blood, the mystery of God's will which involves "the summing up of all things in Christ" (1:10), and the work of the Holy Spirit as seal and pledge of our inheritance "with a view to the [final] redemption of God's own possession" (1:14). The repeated refrain "to the praise of His glory" (1:6, 12, 14) underscores the contribution which each Person of the Trinity makes in the planning and execution of redemption.

The key thought in the first half of Ephesians is expressed in 1:3 and 2:6: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ . . . and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus."<sup>5</sup> The phrase "in the heavenly places [literally in the heavenlies] in Christ" occurs in 1:3, 10, 20; 2:6; 3:10, and expresses the exalted state of the believer's union with Christ. Ephesians teaches us that Christian victory begins in a *sitting* position, seated with Christ in the realm of His Lordship.

Paul opens the second half of Ephesians by entreating his readers "to *walk* in a manner worthy of the call which you have received" (4:1). The key word in this section of the epistle is "walk." Having been seated with Christ "in heavenly places," the Christian is now urged to flesh out the Christian life in all relationships and activities of daily living. Five times in cc. 4—5 Paul admonishes the believer

to walk consistent with one's redeemed existence (4:1-3, 17; 5:2, 8, 15). Finally, Paul concludes Ephesians by exhorting his readers "to *stand* firm against the schemes of the devil" (6:11). For a helpful development of the Ephesian metaphors "sit," "walk," and "stand," see Nee's book mentioned in the following section.

### The Interpreters of Ephesians

The literature on Ephesians is legion. Many interpreters have given us useful sources. The following selection is especially recommended for the pastoral preacher/teacher. For exegesis of the Greek text, four commentaries excell: those by J. Armitage Robinson, B. F. Westcott, Salmond in the *Expositor's Greek Testament*, and T. K. Abbott in the *International Critical Commentary*.

On the English text, an older volume by H. G. C. Moule in *The Cambridge Bible for School and Colleges* contains the uncommon combination of careful scholarship and devotional application. The most notable commentary of recent date is a two-volume work by Markus Barth in the *Anchor Bible* series (Doubleday, 1974). This is a thorough study that is destined to be the classic of modern scholarship. A less ambitious but valuable commentary is F. F. Bruce's *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Revel, 1961). The Ephesians-Colossians volume by E. K. Simpson and Bruce in the *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1957) is substantial and reliable. The best conservative one-volume commentary on the Bible, *The New Bible Commentary* (Eerdmans, 3rd rev. ed., 1970), should not be overlooked. Willard Taylor's work on Ephesians in *Beacon Bible Commentary* (Beacon Hill Press, 1965) is one of the best-written portions of that set.

There are four economically priced paperbacks on Ephesians. (1) William Barclay's *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Westminster, 1958) is a pastor's delight (a modern equivalent of H. G. C. Moule). (2) Francis Foulkes's *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians* ("Tyndale New Testament Commentaries"; Eerdmans, 1963) is quality evangelical scholarship in concise form. (3) A small popular paperback among university students is Watchman Nee's *Sit, Walk, Stand* (Christian Literature Crusade, 1962). It contains valuable insights for preaching/teaching based on a devotional exposition of three metaphors in Ephesians. (4) Finally, Ray Summers's *Ephesians: Pattern for Christian Living* (Broadman Press, 1960) is a short, well-written interpretation (growing out of the author's own study of the Greek text) that emphasizes practical devotional values.

1. Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* (London: Rivingtons, Waterloo Place, 1856), III, 25.

2. W. G. M. Martin, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," *The New Bible Commentary*, ed. F. Davidson (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1954), p. 1015.

3. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction: The Pauline Epistles* (2nd ed.; Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1963), p. 135.

4. Ray Summers, *Ephesians: Pattern for Christian Living* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1960), p. v.

5. Quotations from the *New American Standard Bible*, © The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, are used by permission.

**The mystery hidden in God for ages  
is now an open secret.**

# **CHRIST'S ROLE IN GOD'S SAVING WORK**

by Willard H. Taylor\*

**E**phesians, Philippians, and Colossians have been tabbed by J. B. Lightfoot and others as the "Christological" epistles. Any attempt to categorize the writings of Paul, however, has its faults. Paul's thought is fairly wholistic and he tends to draw upon the truth of the entire theological field even when dealing with minor issues. There is, nevertheless strong justification for calling Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians "Christological." For example, the *Kenosis* passage in Phil. 2:5-11 has no parallel for expressing the humiliation and exaltation of Christ.

And what about the Hymn to Christ in Colossians 1:15-20? There Paul speaks of the person, power, priority, preeminence, personality, and purpose of Christ.

Ephesians is no exception in its focus on Christ. The entire letter can be analyzed according to certain affirmations regarding Christ:

1. Christ in the Purposes of God—1:1-23; 3:1-13.
2. The New Life in Christ—2:1-17; 3:14-20; 4:17-32; 5:1-20; 6:1-23.
3. The Church of Christ—2:19-22; 4:1-16; 5:21-32 (the analogy of the bride of Christ).

Elias Andrews reminds us in *The Meaning of Christ for Paul* that Paul remained a strict monotheist

throughout his life. In no way would he permit his doctrine of God to be subordinated to any other doctrine. "In his theology the loftiest Christology and the most uncompromising, unqualified monotheism go hand in hand. His entire thought and feeling are controlled by Jesus Christ; yet it cannot be said that God is thereby given a secondary place" (p. 131). For Paul, in Christ "*the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily*" (Col. 2:9, RSV).<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in Christ God is doing His saving work, as we shall come to see.

## **The Unity of All Things in Christ**

Strikingly, at the very center of his magnificent opening paragraph in Ephesians, the "Hymn of Salvation" (1:3-14), Paul declares Christ's role in God's saving work. Verses 9 and 10 read: "*For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*" "*To unite all things in him*" is the heart of this declaration! Christ's work according to the divine will is to bring about unity in a disordered universe.

Paul employs a special word to convey this concept of uniting. *Anakephalaiomai* literally means "to bring to a head again." The Greeks used this word to express mathematical addition, that is, "the

\*Willard H. Taylor is dean of the faculty and professor of biblical theology at Nazarene Theological Seminary.

adding up of a sum." Their practice was to add a set of figures from the bottom to the top and the procedure was called "bringing to a head." This word was also used in literary composition to refer to a summary at the end of an article. In industry, it designated the process of weaving several threads and knotting them at the end. Metaphorically, it means "to reunite" or "to gather up again."

The prefix *ana* suggests repetition, "a gathering up *again*." All things are not only gathered up in Christ, but gathered up *again* in Christ. Moreover, the verb as used in verse 10 indicates reflex action so as to suggest that God purposed in Christ to unite all things *unto himself*. The harmony which God originally intended for His creation has been destroyed by sin, but in Christ it is, and eventually will be completely, restored according to the divine plans.

The overarching theme of Ephesians is unity or oneness. A tragic rift exists in the order of things; man and God are separated. Even the natural order is at odds with the Creator and yearns for unity (Rom. 8:19-24). But God is working to bring about unity through Christ and His Church. Christ is the principle of union and the Church is His instrument by which all is to be united, so states E. F. Scott. The unity of all things is the passion of God's heart; it also is the passion of Paul's heart. In Ephesians he exhorts his readers to eagerly "*maintain the unity of Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all*, who is above all and through all and in all" (4:3-6). He goes on to assert that the gifts of Christ to believers are for the purpose of building up the Body of Christ (4:13).

### Christ the Meaning of History

God's good purpose (1:9 *eudokia*, "good thought") in reuniting all things unto himself in Christ Jesus is also His eternal purpose (3:11). This means that His coming to us in Christ was not an afterthought, a last ditch stand, introduced in desperation to save His world. God's best thoughts for us from before the foundation of the world (1:4) were to incarnate himself in His Son "as a plan for the fulness of time" (1:10). The Incarnation therefore is the actualization in history of the redemptive purpose of God. In Rom. 3:25 Paul writes that God "put forward" (*proetheto*) Christ as an expiation or propitiation (means of redemption) by His blood. Here in Eph. 1:9 he declares that God "set forth" (*proetheto*) His purpose in Christ. The saving intention of God comes to historical realization in Christ.

If one could ask God, What are Your plans for us? He probably would answer simply, "Behold My Son!" The Incarnate Christ is God's gracious Word and Work in our behalf. As the writer to the He-

brews reminds us, in the past the Eternal Father spoke in many and various ways to our fathers by the prophets, "*but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son*" (1:1-2, RSV). God's heart of love and mercy which reaches out to save His people has been exposed in history in Christ Jesus. So Paul writes in chapter 2, "*But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loves us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)*" (2:4-5).

Therefore history is important for it is "the sphere of the saving activity of God. It is not merely a passing show, nor are its events merely symbolical. In the Incarnation the divine enters history not as a spectator and controller, but as an active participant in the historical process itself. All the events of history are therefore viewed as somehow relevant to the acts of Christ in his historical manifestation,

**God has broken through to us and through Christ has laid bare His heart of love and mercy.**

and are seen as ripening to their destined culmination in him."<sup>2</sup>

The phrase in 1:10, "in the fulness of time," is not without significance here. While English versions translate the word *kairon* with the singular "time," the Greek word is really a plural, "times."

This word *kairos*, unlike the word *chronos*, indicates more than durative time, that is, minutes, hours, days, and years. Rather it suggests qualitative or epochal time, moments bearing special meaning, as in the case of a wedding day or a death. Such times are life-altering. Across the centuries from creation God has been at His redeeming work, entering the life of humanity at strategic "times" to reveal His love but also His wrath (Rom. 1:18; 2:21) to the end that He might reconcile His creation to himself. These epochal times of the "mighty works of God" (Acts 2:11) culminated with the Advent of Christ, His mightiest work, the giving of His Son Christ Jesus in redemptive love at Calvary. The long series of saving deeds constitute what the Germans call *Die Heilsgeschichte*, salvation history or the history of redemption. God so planned that when the full measure of all His salvific events of the past "with all their lessons of preparation and discipline should be accomplished" (West-

cott), He would send His Son, and with that event, that *time*, all of history would be illuminated and understood. The key to the meaning and outcome of history would be revealed.

For Christians, therefore, Christ is not only the Focus of the universe; He is also the Center and Meaning of all history, both sacred and secular, and of all being. A new time has come for them in Christ, and they view history from "the Godward side" now. They know that "all things in heaven and on earth" will eventually be brought under God's Rulership where all alien and discordant elements will be subjected and harmonized. To the Romans Paul writes, "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose" (8:28).

### **Christ the Medium of Divine Revelation**

Paul also writes that God "*has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will*" (1:9). What God has done in Christ is an act of revelation. A special communication concerning the divine has been delivered to us in and through the presence of Christ. This knowledge cannot be acquired through the rational processes of the human mind, inspired intelligence, nor through any intensive scientific research. It is a gift of the revelatory deed of Incarnation. So John writes: "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory [his true nature], glory as of the only Son from the Father*" (John 1:14).

It is common for Christians to say that Christ is like God. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul beautifully enunciates this truth. In the case of the outsiders, Paul declares, "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of Christ, who is the likeness of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:4-6). To fasten one's eyes on Christ is to view the reality of God.

Perhaps it would be helpful to reverse that statement and say that God is like Christ. The full exposure of the nature of God is revealed in Jesus Christ. The Apostle John writes: "*No one has ever seen God; the only[-begotten] Son, who is in the bosom [inner being] of the Father, he has made him known [exegetato, "exegeted"]*" (John 1:18). The whole of Christ's ministry—His teaching, preaching, working of miracles, contesting with the pseudo-religious order, dying at Calvary, and being raised to life by the power of God—is a dramatic and authentic exposure of God himself to us.

Baffling as it may seem to the faithless human mind, whoever has seen Christ has seen the Father (cf. John 14:9).

The believer, whose mind and spirit have been illuminated by this revelatory divine deed, possesses wisdom and insight. These are redemptive gifts of faith in Christ. The believer's eyes are now open to view the full sweep of God's purpose. J. A. Robinson distinguishes between wisdom (*sophia*) and insight (*phronesis*) as follows: "Wisdom is the knowledge which sees into the heart of things, which knows them as they really are. Prudence (or insight) is the understanding which leads to right action."<sup>3</sup> Barclay comments: "Christ gives to men the ability to see the great ultimate truths of eternity and to solve the problems of each moment."<sup>4</sup>

Even the least-schooled person, who lives close to Christ, will often evidence an amazing insight into

**God will "gather together in one all things in Christ, both . . . in heaven, and . . . on earth" (Eph. 1:10).**

the workings of God and will live with an authentic ethical sensitivity because of his "inside view" of things. Andrew Young, a black minister and the current ambassador to the United Nations, once spoke of his bewilderment at the understanding of spiritual things of one of his elderly members when he attempted to share with that member some of the profound truths of Oscar Cullmann's classic book, *Christ and Time*. Though he could not read Cullmann or any theological literature as technical as Cullmann, that member seemed to know all about the kingdom of God and the assured victory of God over the forces of evil in the day of consummation and could talk with ease about them. And so it is, God has broken through to us in Christ and through Him has laid bare His heart of love and mercy.

### **Christ and the Unveiled Mystery**

The revelation of God in Christ has so exposed the mind of God to us as to remove any mystery about God's purposes. God has made known to us, Paul says, "*the mystery of his will.*" The New Testament uses the word "mystery" in a special sense. In no way does it suggest the current usage of that which is strange and puzzling, for which a rare clue

*(Continued on page 59)*

# God's Poem— and other lofty metaphors of salvation in Ephesians



by Morris A. Weigelt\*

**P**aul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has left some brilliant writings for our study. Foremost among these writings is the Epistle to the Ephesians—often called “the Alps of the New Testament.” In Ephesians, Paul literally “sings” the praises of God and His cosmic salvation in lyrical fashion. He skillfully and masterfully uses a series of powerful metaphors to communicate his understanding of the essential nature of salvation.

Paul’s understanding of the profound and transforming effect of salvation is so deep and rich that he finds difficulty in expressing it fully. Even the sentence structure in Greek—especially in the opening sections of cc. 1 and 2—reflects this profundity. The concepts tumble out over each other in a welter of rich ideas couched in a wide variety of metaphors.

Salvation is such a rich and

variegated concept that Paul employs a wide variety of metaphors to bear the freight of meaning. The metaphorical language enables the readers to begin to comprehend the profundity of the work of God in Christ. It is the purpose of this article to examine several of the major metaphors Paul uses in order to clarify and enrich the understanding of the nature of salvation in Ephesians.

## “made alive together”

The obvious place to begin is c. 2. The first metaphor is contained in the first main verb—“made alive together.” Paul is working with the whole series of ideas surrounding the understanding of salvation as an impartation or creation of spiritual life. In the first three verses of c. 2 Paul carefully outlines the nature of spiritual death. It is a death under the control of the course of this world. The “course of this world” speaks of an age dominated by sin and the resultant spiritual powerlessness. The subjects of this world

are under the domination of “the prince of the power of the air” and are themselves “sons of disobedience.” Verse three further defines the nature of this life-style as controlled by the longings of the flesh and the mind. The spiritually dead persons are indeed “children of wrath.” Into this state of spiritual stupor and powerlessness comes the life-giving power of God in Christ—He has “made us alive together with Christ.” The metaphor brings to mind the picture of creation in Genesis in which God creates a living being out of the dust of the earth. Now, through the Cross, Christ reaches down into the chaos and formlessness of spiritual death and imparts life—and power—and strength. What a beautiful picture of the work of salvation!

## “raised us up with Him”

The second main verb in Ephesians 2 is a close synonym to the first—He has “raised us up with Him.” The Greek word speaks of a resurrection—of a lifting up

\*Morris A. Weigelt is professor of New Testament, Nazarene Theological Seminary.

from death. It is a favorite doctrine of Paul that the very same energy which raised Christ from the dead operates in the lives of the believers to bring about their resurrection. Salvation is indeed resurrection from the dead. And that resurrection is the direct result of the rich mercy and great love of God (v. 4). The verbal artistry of the apostle paints a grand scene of God's love and mercy lavished upon us through Christ to produce a restoration to life as God designed it for man from the beginning.

### **"in heavenly places"**

The third main verb in the second chapter of Ephesians (remember we are still in the first sentence) is: God "seated us with Him in the heavenly places." The metaphor now is one of the believer participating in the royal reign of Christ. The royal position is the seat at the right hand of the king. The Christian no longer lives under the domination of the prince of the power of the air, but participates in the kingly functions of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The same metaphor is in view in 1:3 "Blessed be the God . . . who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." What a picture of salvation as a transfer from wallowing in the lusts of this age to exulting in the blessings appropriate to the realm in which Christ reigns unchallenged.

It must be noted at this point that these three verbs are all in the aorist tense in Greek—expressing the accomplished work of God in Christ on Calvary. Each of the three verbs is intensified by the prefix *sun*—expressing the essential union with Christ which provides these blessings to us. The three metaphors taken in series form a powerful climax. After describing the wretchedness and hopelessness of the life of spiritual death in trespasses and sins, Paul now moves to express salvation as a new creation (made alive together), as a resurrection (raised together), and as a

participation in kingly functions (seated together). No wonder the whole letter sings the praise of God for the salvation provided!

### **"surpassing riches of his grace"**

The purpose clause which follows these three verses (v. 7) introduce yet another of the metaphors of the language of salvation (still in the same sentence in Greek). "In order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ

**God's work in Christ is so rich and variegated that no single analogy or metaphor can capture its profundity and power.**

Jesus." Verse 7 picks up the idea already introduced in 1:4-5 and 2:4 to express salvation as a flow of God's love through Christ to the believer.

Just as the resurrection of Christ was the dazzling display of God's power for the world to see, so the salvation of believers will be the dazzling display of God's grace. How frequently in Ephesians Paul has to resort to superlatives to express this marvelous overflow of God's lavish love and mercy and grace which is expressed in v. 7 as "surpassing riches."

The exceeding, abundant, lavish, overflowing grace of God as the only source of salvation is the basis for the Reformation motto: *sola gratia, sola fide, soli Deo gloria* ("by grace alone, through faith alone, to God be the glory"). The metaphor brings to mind all the grace and mercy and love of God funneled through Christ to meet the needs of a graceless, merciless, and loveless world in bondage to Satan.

### **"we are His workmanship"**

Verse 10 introduces yet another picture of the doctrine of salvation in Ephesians—"for we are His workmanship." "Workmanship" is a noun built from the root of the Greek word *poieo*—to make, to do. It expresses the fact that salvation is the creation of God. The believer is fashioned by God through the instrumentality of the Cross. The Greek noun is *poiema* from which the English word "poem" is a transliteration—hence the translation "workmanship." Salvation is the work of art of the Master Designer—His masterpiece. Verse 10 further indicates that the good works of the Christians are inevitable and direct results of God's own work in us. Salvation is God's work of art in human lives!

### **These too . . .**

Ephesians 2:1-10 introduces us to a number of the metaphors of the language of salvation in this fascinating summary of Paul's mature thinking. Other metaphors in the Ephesian letter which are worth exploring and understanding are those of redemption (1:7, 15; 5:2, 25-26), election (1:4, 5, 11, 18), adoption (1:5; 5:1), inheritance (3:6), citizenship (2:19), reconciliation (1:9-10; 2:11-18—a particularly beautiful section in which Paul shows that the death of Christ has broken down the ancient barriers which divide Jew and Gentile to make one united body in Christ), and sealing by the Holy Spirit (1:18). Yes, God's work in Christ is so rich and beautiful and variegated that it is impossible to capture the profundity and power of it in any single analogy or metaphor.

How thankful we should be that the Word of God communicates through such colorful and insightful imagery! The metaphors communicate to the unschooled and to the most learned of men. Soak your minds in the metaphors until they bring you into encounter with the living God. Then hasten to let the riches of your understanding benefit those who are dead in trespasses and sins at your very elbow.

# The Prayers of Paul in Ephesians

by Richard H. Neiderhiser\*

In a sense nearly the whole Ephesians letter is a prayer form. Herbert Lockyer makes these prayer divisions: "Prayer and the Believer's Position" (1:1-11), "Prayer for Perception and Power" (1:15-20), "Prayer as Access to God" (2:18—3:12), "Prayer for Inner Fulness" (3:13-21), "Prayer and Inner Melody" (5:19-20), and "Prayer as a Warrior's Reserve" (6:18-19, 23-24).<sup>1</sup>

With all that could be and has been said about prayer as it is offered in the Ephesians letter, three specific passages entice particular interest: 1:15-23, "Thanksgiving and Prayer"; 3:14-21, "A Prayer for Those Who Hear or Read This Letter"; and 6:18-20, "Prayer in the Spirit."

## THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER Ephesians 1:15-23

Paul employs a *fulcrum* technique in v. 15, that is, he balances what he is about to say with what has already been established with the phrase, "For this reason" (RSV),<sup>2</sup> or, "Wherefore I also, after I heard" (KJV). And what is it he has heard? The answer is contained in the very same sentence: "your faith in the Lord Jesus, and your love for all the saints" (RSV). The thought continues with Paul having never

stopped giving thanks for them in his prayers.

He thanks God for their "faith" and "love" because it tells him that they have received redemption, forgiveness, and grace (1:7), and the Holy Spirit (1:13-14). Further they would rejoice in the Lordship of Christ (1:8-10).

When we think of our great redemption—all of us who are believers by our own choosing and in accord with God's eternal plan—we are given reason to never stop giving thanks, remembering our deliverance in our praying.

Having reminded his hearers of all this, Paul presses some weight to the other side of the fulcrum. He says, "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father may give you *the Spirit [or a spirit] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better*" (1:17, NIV).<sup>3</sup> When have we ever come to the point in our spiritual pilgrimage that we need not know Him better? The holiness pilgrimage is an ever extending incline to the gates of glory. And as each day brings new joys and sorrows, benefits or detriments, we need the wisdom and revelation of God—who He is and what it is we need to know about Him—to deal with life as true Christians.

Paul then prays for their "en-

lightenment" so that they may know the "hope of their calling," the richness of their "inheritance" (1:18).

If in fact Paul is here reinforcing the gifts of *wisdom* and *revelation* as inward enlightenment (knowledge) of the *hope* to which the Christian is called, he may be referring to "the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:26-27, NIV).

To this Paul adds the weight of the word *power*—"his incomparably great power for us who believe" (1:19, NIV). And he asserts that we will participate in His power via our commitment, willingness and yieldness; "power like the working of his mighty strength" (1:20, NIV) in the resurrection and present presence of Christ who is seated with God in the heavenly realms which is far above the rule and authority of highest order on this earth. The message is that the disclosure of the "mystery" will make men so aware of the great things they have in common in Christ that they will overcome their differences and come together in unity under Christ, for "God placed all

\*Richard H. Neiderhiser is pastor of the Church of the Nazarene, Grandview, Mo.



things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is the body, the fulness of him who fills everything in every way" (vv. 22-23, NIV).

### A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO HEAR OR READ THE LETTER

#### Ephesians 3:14-21

A dear Christian lady I know, (when she becomes excited) starts a sentence, interrupts it with some tangent information, then comes back to it just as abruptly as she left it without missing a beat. Paul seems to do something like that in c. 3. He launches into a prayer for the Ephesians (and anyone else who will listen) but interrupts himself with a vindication of his preaching to the Gentiles and a beautiful exposition of the gospel of the unity of God's creation, reminding his hearers not to be distressed because of his sufferings, for in suffering there is glory. Finally he returns to the subject which was predicated in v. 1, "For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles [3:1, NIV] . . . kneel before the Father" (3:14, NIV).

Something seems to be troubling Paul about those who hear him. He is concerned with the Christian's "inner being" (v. 16). And he comes to it by associating the "whole family" (every family) to be the fatherhood of God. So here is his prayer: "That out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being" (3:16, NIV). Why? "So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (3:17, NIV). To *act out* Christlikeness is one thing. To be *motivated* in any thought or action by the inner presence of Christ is quite another. And Paul is here saying that if you call God "Father" you have that privilege only if in fact you are motivated by the inner presence of His Son in your heart. Alexander Maclaren adds, ". . . the father makes the family, and if any community of intelligent beings, human, or angelic, bears the great name of family, the great reason for that lies in God's paternal relationship."<sup>4</sup>

As Paul is writing his prayer for

the Ephesians a monumental thought comes to his mind. As William Barclay says, "It is as if Paul invited us to look at the universe—to the limitless sky above, to the limitless horizons on every side, to the depth of the earth and the seas beneath us, and said, 'the love of Christ is as wide as that.'"<sup>5</sup>

Paul wants the Ephesian Christians to know how vast, how efficient and effective, and how powerful the love of Christ is. Paul knew well the Greek philosophies that surrounded the Ephesian fellowship to which the human mind and its ability to collect and assimilate knowledge was of supreme importance. So he writes, ". . . I pray that you, being rooted and established in love [this being what is truly of supreme importance in gaining knowledge of spiritual things], may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to *know this love that surpasses knowledge*—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fulness of God" (3:17-19, NIV).

Paul then raises a hymn, offering what he has concluded in this prayer. "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen" (3:20-21, NIV).

### PRAYER IN THE SPIRIT

#### Ephesians 6:18-20

This is an invitation to prayer complete with instructions.

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions" (v. 18, NIV). This enjoinder is connected to the contents immediately preceding which describe the Christian warrior, the armor of God, and the warfare by which the child of God encounters "the flaming arrows of the evil one."

Here is the point. Even though the Christian is armed with the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and has the belt of truth buckled around his waist, has properly placed the breastplate of

righteousness, has his feet fitted with the gospel of peace, and holds firmly to the shield of faith, he is to add the keystone of his defense to form an impregnable wall of salvation by praying on all occasions "in the Spirit."

Now, says Paul, with this in mind, "be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints" (6:18, NIV). Francis W. Beare reminds us, "*Perseverance* ('always keep on pray') is to be taken closely with *supplication for all saints*; the unsleeping alertness of the Christian is to be shown especially in persevering intercession on behalf of all his comrades in the fight. We are not in a single combat with the powers of evil, but are members of an army; and we must be concerned for the welfare of all who fight alongside us."<sup>6</sup>

Finally, Paul says, "Pray for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains" (6:19-20, NIV). Can it be that Paul, the epitome of courage, is fearful of not proclaiming the "mystery" that the gospel includes Gentiles as well as Jews? Yes! That is precisely what he is saying. "I am," he says in essence, "subject to human frailty, and I want so desperately to let everyone I talk to know that Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and presence now at the right hand of God the Father, is meant for *all* men. So, pray for me!"

Now, if Paul admitted to this weakness, ought we then take the members of our fellowship around the world to the throne of grace and pray for them to be courageous in witness?

1. Lockyer, Herbert, *All the Prayers of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), pp. 246-50.

2. From the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyrighted 1946, 1952, © 1971, 1973.

3. From *The Holy Bible, New International Version*, © 1978 by the New York International Bible Society.

4. Maclaren, Alexander, *Expositions of Holy Scripture*, Volume XVI (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1942), p. 128.

5. Barclay, William, *Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 155.

6. *The Interpreter's Bible*, Volume X (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953), p. 746.

# THE STANDARD FOR THE CHURCH IN EPHESIANS

by Mildred Bangs Wynkoop\*

**W**hat is the Church? This is a massive question only recently beginning to receive the attention it deserves from Protestants and Catholics alike. It is not merely a theological question but a very practical one which determines the shape of our Christian faith and life. What the Church is conceived to be reverberates through the entire inter-related complex of Christian doctrines producing the kaleidoscopic and often confusing variety of church "shapes" encountered today.

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (no other Christian in the first century A.D. is known to exist who was capable of such writing) lays the foundation for a Christian theology of the Church. In the early days of the Christian communities, scattered as they were throughout the Jewish and Gentile world, there was a need to know what the Church was, why it existed, and how to behave in a pagan society as a Christian.

The need to know is even more urgent today. In our world, the tendency is to see the Church through secular eyes, to evaluate the Church by secular measures, to determine success or failure by norms derived from the business or scientific world, and to create strategies for success out of secular philosophies. Though we are in the world and are an integral part of the world, to mold our image of the Church, and to chart its course by the world, is to miss the unique contribution of the ministry of the Church to our age.

## I. The Church: Its Identity

The word *church* suffers from being stretched out too far to cover all the variations of meaning which it must include. It has become its own barrier to meaning.

In determining the identity of "The True Church" through history a number of identifying "marks" have been proposed. The classical marks—*Apostolic, Holy, One, and Universal*—can be interpreted in ways congenial to almost any tradition, Catholic or Protestant—or non-Christian. These marks alone are inadequate in one important respect. They turn all the attention toward the human organization and fail to indicate the divine *purpose* of the Church. The "marks" alone are divisive and totally void of the dynamic which makes "church" Christian. Paul, in Ephesians, calls us to the missing ingredient which gives Christian meaning to the "marks."

Paul's magnificent grasp of God's purpose in creation as the warp of theology, reaching from eternity to eternity, engaging mankind into the developing woof of the fabric's pattern, makes it possible to show the integral relationship of the Church

\*Mildred Bangs Wynkoop is Theologian in Residence at Nazarene Theological Seminary.

to the whole of Christian theology and that theology to life.

Any doctrine taught from the complex of theology found in Ephesians must take into consideration (1) the purpose of the book, (2) the movement of thought the author brings to bear on that purpose, and (3) its interaction with all the doctrines included in the book. Paul, in Ephesians, seems to be relating the great basic soteriological themes as found in Romans to the meaning of "community in Christ" which is created by God's grace. Ephesians deals most specifically with the nature and purpose of that community. The "in Christ-ness" of creation and redemption projects the pattern of authentic Christian life into every aspect of human relations, in the church, in society, and in the home. Ephesians presents the most integrated picture of the doctrine of the Christian faith and life that is to be found in the New Testament.

The individual's encounter with God in the crisis events has a necessary corporate dimension, because we are social beings, biologically, psychologically, culturally, economically, spiritually, religiously. To be redeemed involves all that we are in all relationships. All social connections are caught up in what being a Christian is. All alienations, hostilities, social inequities, chauvinisms, broken relationships, come under God's judgment in the light of Christ's life and death. *He himself is our peace* (2:14, NIV).<sup>\*</sup> John Wesley saw this dimension of the life in Christ when he wrote, "There is no holiness but social holiness." The meaning of Church begins here.

James Smart, in *The Strange Silence of the Church*, reminds us that the Bible is "a public book," calling into existence a *new people of God*. Paul's letters are to *churches* and they instruct us in what it means to be a *church*. "The Bible is marching orders for an army, not bedtime reading to help one sleep more soundly" (p. 23). Certainly this message is particularly true of Ephesians.

## II. The Church: Its Head

The Church is a Christological Community. "God placed all things under his [Christ's] feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body . . ." (Eph. 1:22-23). Our participation "in Christ" is not optional if we are Christians.

The *Head of the Church* is Christ in whom God's purpose is realized. In Headship, all *individualism* and human particularity is melded together into the "Body of Christ" which is God's dwelling place by the Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16). "There is one body, and one Spirit . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:4-6).

"The Church has rightly been called the company

of those who have nothing in common except Jesus Christ," said David A. Hubbard (*World Vision*, September, 1969). But that common Lordship stamps an identity on every participant which marks him. That mark, or seal, is the shared reality of forgiveness and the pervading presence of the Holy Spirit who weaves the enormous variety into a Christian witness to God's presence in the world (Eph. 1:13-14). The Church is a community in which each individual finds his true identity as a person. It is not an organization which submerges the individual into itself as a faceless number without personal meaning or creative obligation. In the Church, "in Christ," one loses himself to find himself bigger, better, more flexible and self-giving than he ever could be alone.

All men are united as fellow citizens and members of God's household, built on the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus as the chief cornerstone. In Christ, the whole building is joined to become a holy temple in the Lord—a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit (Eph. 2:19-22).

**The standard for the Church is so high that no chauvinism—male or female, black or white—can endure it.**

The Early Church was not a womb to which to return when the pressures of responsibilities and the chains of unwanted conformity cripple restless spirits. It was not a comfortable fellowship in which to be "stroked." Jesus called together a dozen men straight out of the violent crosscurrents of first-century Jewish life. There were Zealots, Pharisees, publicans, old men, and very young hotheaded men, ready to stab each other to death for their political stances and claim God's blessing on themselves for doing it. Divisions, as hateful and vicious as in the 20th century, had to be overcome *within* the fellowship before the wider antagonisms of nationalism, sex, and social castes could be healed outside.

In Christ the healing of all the alienations sin has caused takes place. Any barriers—social, cultural, national, sexual, racial—that divide mankind have been "abolished in Christ's flesh." He made peace so that there are no longer aliens and

foreigners. Jesus Christ is the "chief cornerstone" of God's holy temple. Together we become the dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit. Human barriers of any kind—"dividing walls of hostility"—cannot survive the reconciliation achieved by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Human society is shot through with circles that shut each other out: skin color, age barriers, sex differences, culture patterns, social levels, economic levels, educational differences, religious commitments, and provincial prejudices, to name a few. The Head of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ, transcended every hostility and creates in himself a Community which also was intended to transcend them, by His grace.

### III. The Church: Its Mandate—Walk Worthy!

The Church is God's "workmanship," said Paul, "created in Christ Jesus, *to do good works*" (Eph. 2:10) which God foreordained that we should do. Therefore, "*live a life worthy of the calling you have received*" (Eph. 4:1).

The Church is not man-made but God-made. It dare not set the norm for itself or substitute its human standards or convenience and provincialism for God's creative intent for it. Human relations are to take the shape of the Church, not the Church to conform to the divisiveness of cultures. God's glory is revealed by the "good works" (Eph. 2:10) of those He has made. "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifest wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in heavenly realms" (3:10). The Church is a witness to God's love and purpose for mankind. God is the creator of the Church, not as some abstract, invisible Platonic form, but as the living human community of grace, people vitalized by His Spirit. What God has done in Christ is the pattern of the divine mandate for the Church.

"Walking worthy of our calling" involves us in several things that touch the quick of each individual in the Church—the Body of Christ. Preparing the people for "works of service" in order to build up that Body to the full measure of Christ's perfection indicates the responsibility of everyone in the ongoing task. The barrier to church growth is "childishness" (a pejorative Greek word for self-induced spiritual arrested development) which blinds one from detecting the falseness of the many movements swirling around claiming divine status.

The Christian alternative to childishness is "truth spoken in love." Christ is the pattern of that love. *And this is the key to the Ephesian doctrine of Church* (Eph. 4:16). Love, as revealed and demonstrated by Christ, is the total reversal of all human interpretations of acceptable relationships. The chauvinisms, greed, the power structures and injustice (Eph. 4:17-31) which characterize unredeemed

society has no place "in Christ." Pagan home relations and slavery were to come under the new human evaluations of Christ. Worldly norms and means for *building oneself up* were to be deliberately and radically "*put away*," and Christ's way "*put on*." This is a mandate which cannot be ignored. It is spoken to the Church and must be obeyed in the Church.

Love unseats the old way of lording it over others, as Jesus had said (Mark 10:43-45). Instead of taking advantage of one's status with God, or in society, or in the home, the Christian mandate requires the servant's role. The model for that role was Jesus himself. As in Christ God forgave us, we are to forgive each other. We are to imitate God (Eph. 5:1) and "live a life of love." How? As Christ loved us, and *gave himself up for us*.

Self-giving love, forgiveness, this is the role of the Church to be exemplified in each individual member of the Body of Christ. Forgiveness is defined by the total self-giving—even to death—of Christ for us. This is a standard so high that no chauvinism—male or female, white or black—can endure it. It means breaking down the barriers that exist between ourselves and others. It means surround those who are in bondage to sin and unbelief and imprisonment to social injustice and prejudice, with trust and acceptance and strength and self-respect until the way to Christ is made possible.

Forgiveness is not a legal fiction but an active, outgoing, accepting, costly relationship. It is the creating of an atmosphere of welcome even before the estranged person seeks it. It is the breaking down of barriers which make fellowships impossible. It is becoming winsome, oneself, in order to call forth the love of others who are hurt and broken by the destructiveness of sin and broken faith in everything good.

Forgiveness/love as defined by Paul in Ephesians makes the Church, Christ's Body, the source of the kind of "soul care" that glories in the freedom and full development of the potential and responsibility of every member. It means finding one's fulfillment in the fulfillment of those for whom one is responsible. It is rejoicing in lifting those whom the world calls inferior to their full measure of capacity. This is what it meant to God. This is what Christ achieved. Nothing less than this is the norm for the Church.

What is the Church? It is that body of people, united "in Christ," which has taken to itself the servant role of its Lord. Its mandate is to live out in the world, in society, in the home, that love which prompted God to pay the ultimate price to make returning to Him possible. It is to find its joy and fulfillment in giving others the glory once coveted for itself.

\*All scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible, New International Version*, © 1978 by the New York International Bible Society.

**A pastor lets us look over his shoulder at a series of sermons from Ephesians which he recently developed and preached to his congregation.**

# PREACHING FROM EPHESIANS

by Arden A. Sickenberger\*

I have a simple method I follow when preparing a series of sermons. First, I put on my desk all resource tools like commentaries and word studies. Second, I read the passages from several versions. For this series, I read the entire Ephesian letter over and over for a month.

Third, as I approach the actual sermon-building effort I think of how the passage applies to the local congregation. I attempt to unite sermon title and themes into one concise thought—preferably a quote from the scripture passage. Repeating this concise thought throughout the sermon helps both me and the listener steer a steady course.

One of my most used tools is a book of synonyms and antonyms. Also, a good dictionary is valuable for the word accuracy expected of public speakers. I freely mix all styles of sermon-building, but endeavor to keep it all biblically based.

There is nothing profound in these starters and outlines. They were all prepared from the practical viewpoint and used in the regular Sunday evening services with varying results. Illustrations are not included because they often hinder more than help if they are not the preacher's own. Sources used—

Commentaries: *The Interpreter's Bible*, Adam Clarke, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, *The Pulpit Commentary*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, *The Daily Study Bible*, *Handfuls on Purpose*.

Miscellaneous: *Ephesians, A Positive Affirmation*, Leonard Griffith; *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, B. F. Wescott; *Know Your New Testament*, Ralph Earle; *Exploring The New Testament*, Earle, Blaney, Hanson; *Studies in Biblical Holiness*, Donald S. Metz; *How to Build Expository Sermons*, T. M. Anderson; *The Adult Teacher*, Nazarene Sunday school lessons.

\*Arden Sickenberger is pastor of the Church of the Nazarene in Kennewick, Wash.

## GOD'S ETERNAL GOAL AND STRATEGY

Scripture: Eph. 1:1-14, NIV

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul is explaining God's eternal goal and purpose.
2. The explanation is made to "the saints, the faithful in Christ Jesus" (v. 1).  
—They are the only ones who can understand it all  
—They are the only ones who will listen closely enough to understand
3. "Saints" are separated, holy, the faithful, the Body, the Church.
4. To them God makes full explanation, through Paul, of His eternal goal and strategy.
- I. God's goal is clearly stated in v. 4—"That we should be holy and blameless before Him" (NASB).<sup>1</sup>
  - A. This is not the only place Paul states God's goal.
    1. Eph. 5:27
    2. Col. 1:22 (NASB)
  - B. This is central in the New Testament message—that God's people are to "be holy and blameless before" God.
    1. Luke 1:74
    2. 1 Thess. 4:7
  - C. This goal of God for us is so thoroughly accepted that it is included in our "Battle Hymn of the Republic"—"As He died to make men holy . . ."
  - D. This goal for our holiness is according to His criteria.
    1. "Before Him" (NASB)
    2. "In his sight" (NIV)<sup>2</sup>
    3. His standard is the one we must measure up to.  
—not our own standard  
—not another person's  
—not some theologian's  
—not even a church's
    4. This is not an excuse to dismiss questionable attitudes or conduct.
    5. God sets up His permanent, unchanging standard in His unchanging Word.

- II. Now let's explore God's strategy in reaching His goal—you could call this His "MO" (Modus operandi).

A. He devised His strategy before He built the world.

1. v. 4

- God didn't wait for the calamity of sin to panic for solution
- He created us in love, love demands free will, free will affords rebellion—so God acted before the fact
- it's not a bandage and aspirin program
- it is a well-planned cure, planned before tragedy struck

2. 1 Pet. 1:20

B. God declared His strategy with us.

1. v. 9. We know what's going on, as Paul says, "That we may know what the will of the Lord is."

2. As the Old Testament prophet states, "What the Lord requires of us." We are not left in the dark, it is part of the biblical whole, just read and heed.

3. He has made a special effort to get His plan fixed in our understanding—1 Pet. 1:20.

C. God delivers His *strategy* in simple steps.

1. v. 7, forgiveness of sins

2. v. 7, redemption or deliverance

3. v. 5, adoption (cf. Wm. Barclay, *Daily Study Bible*, Eph. 1:5 comments)

4. v. 13, sealing

5. v. 14, inheritance

6. v. 8, understanding

III. Now let's notice the arena in which God places His plan into play.

A. v. 11, "we" means Jews

B. v. 13, "you" means non-Jewish saints

CONCLUSION:

1. This is God's eternal goal, "That we should be holy and blameless before Him," according to His standard.
2. God's *Strategy* for reaching this *goal* is forgiveness of sins, deliverance from sins, adoption as sons, sealing or earnest of His Holy Spirit, inheritance of glory, our understanding of it all.
3. Such grace and love is available to all men without regard to race.

### MY PASTORAL PRAYER

Scripture: Eph. 1:15-23, NIV

INTRODUCTION:

1. There is a little chorus that speaks a big personal prerogative—  
"Every promise in the Book is mine,  
Every chapter, every verse, every line."
2. We very properly claim the promises, instructions, and encouragements of God's Word as our own.
3. Although this scripture portion was originally Paul's pastoral prayer for the Early Church, I have claimed it as my pastoral prayer for this present church.
4. As every proper prayer should, it falls into two distinct divisions: "thanksgiving" and "requests."

I. I "Give thanks for you," vv. 15-16.

A. Before I begin asking, I pause to thank God.

1. "For this reason"—all God's purposes and provisions in previous 14 verses
2. Proper procedure in prayer—Eph. 4:6
3. Intelligent sensitivity urges appreciation before request.

B. *This* congregation has been blessed with the truth of God's purpose and provision just as surely as that Early Church.

1. From its founding

2. Faithful pastors, Sunday school teachers

3. History of proclaiming—Eph. 1:1-14

II. Having never stopped "giving thanks for you, I keep asking" for two crucial needs to be met—vv. 17-19.

A. Not a one-shot, spur of the moment, whimsical question.

1. Daily, hourly, pleading with God

2. *You* are constantly in my prayers

B. I ask that "God . . . may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation."

1. "Wisdom"—deep things of God, eternal truth, God's will for you

2. So "you might know him better"

3. Persons learning every day to improve self—to improve in Christ

C. I ask God "that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened."

1. "Heart"—moral comprehension, in contrast to Eph. 4:18

2. So "you may know"

3. "The hope to which he has called you"

—in today's world of despair "hope" stands isolated as a God-given reality

—acceptance of God's salvation and way of life offers the only "hope"

4. So you may know "the riches of his glorious inheritance" = God's inheritance; He could have the universe, but chose us; who would rob God of His rightful inheritance?

5. So you may know "his incomparably great power for us who believe."

—power of Holy Spirit within us, same power raised Jesus from death, raises us from death to life, "the life we now live we live in the power of God."

CONCLUSION:

1. Verses 22-23 give sound logical and theological basis for such praying.
2. In reality, when I pray for you this way I am essentially praying, "Thy will be done in earth as in heaven."
3. Let us pray.

### THE BELIEVER'S BOUNTY

Scripture: Eph. 2:1-13, NIV

INTRODUCTION:

1. The American success story is rags to riches by way of work.
2. The Bible says our own works of righteousness are but filthy rags.
3. Here the Apostle Paul gives us an in-depth review of the believer's bounty which comes by faith in the Son of God.
4. He pictures the believer's bounty by:  
—Recalling the poverty of the past,  
—portraying the plenty of the present,  
—projecting the fulfillment of the future.

I. Let's recall the poverty of the past without Christ.

A. "You were dead in your transgressions and sins" (1)

B. "Followed the ways of this world" (2; cf. v. 3)

C. "Separate from Christ" (12)

D. "Foreigners to the covenants of the promise" (12)

E. "Without hope" (12)

F. "Without God in the world" (12)

II. Let's survey the plenty of the present in Christ Jesus.

- A. "You hath he quickened [given new life]" (1)
  - B. "Have been brought near through the blood of Christ" (13)
  - C. "God raised us up with Christ" (6)
  - D. "God . . . seated us with him in heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (6)
    - 1. Formerly we "walked in the counsel of the ungodly, stood in the way of sinners, sat in the seat of the scornful."
    - 2. Now we "walk in the light as he is in the light," stand in praise to the King, "sit with him in heavenly realms"
- III. Now let's project the fulfillment of the future.
- A. Verse 7.
  - B. Could any possibility of the future be more fulfilling than this promise?

#### CONCLUSION:

- 1. The total picture shows the believer's bounty.
- 2. Let's sing No. 365, "Jesus Has Lifted Me."<sup>3</sup>

### FOR THIS REASON

Scripture: Eph. 3:14-21, NIV

#### INTRODUCTION:

- 1. Normally the Jews stood up to pray; here the Jew who has chosen to follow Christ "kneels before the Father."
  - 2. "For this reason"
    - Paul had said that same phrase before in c. 1, and 3:1; now again for the third time
    - In c. 2—God's grace is offered to all men, Jew, Greek, every generation, every man, us
  - 3. Jesus Christ is God's offering to us.
    - Paul kneels to pray that we will receive God.
  - 4. In his prayer Paul recognizes:
    - An acute shortage
    - An adequate source
    - An abundant supply
- I. We are engulfed in an acute shortage.
- A. We are experiencing a spiritual power failure.
    - 1. The heavy industry of the church is on short power rations:
      - much production cancelled
      - spiritual goods inventory low
      - many people out of work
      - potential producers on spiritual welfare
      - limited production of church while world market is begging for help
    - 2. Reason for plight is not the church:
      - it's a people problem
      - church machinery is adequate for the most part
      - personal anemia, voluntary anemia
      - amazing but true, we like being spiritually anemic or else we would be different
    - 3. Listen to Paul's prayer, v. 16:
      - every person needs God's Holy Spirit within to have power
      - Isa. 40:29; Acts 1:8
      - cause of idling church is refusal of individual to be "filled with the Holy Spirit."
      - all available energy is consumed in maintenance program, no power left for production
      - what travesty when all you need is to ask—Luke 11:13
  - B. This all stems from an acute shortage of the indwelling presence of God.

- 1. There can be no spiritual power where Christ is not honored.
    - Matt. 13:58; Heb. 11:6
  - 2. Now in v. 17 Paul prays "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."
    - he recognized our problem, the need of indwelling Holy Spirit
  - C. Then there is the matter of a stable character.
    - 1. How do you react when crossed?
    - 2. Verse 17—Christian character must be rooted in Christ's love.
  - D. Another area of acute shortage is in the comprehension.
    - 1. Verse 18—"to grasp"
    - 2. The great Church of God, that Jesus loved so much that He gave himself for it and said that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, is for the most part languishing impotently.
    - 3. That's why Paul prayed, v. 18.
- II. However, there is an adequate source of spiritual power.
- A. Illustrate constant reminders of predicted power shortages in the world.
  - B. Not so spiritually.
    - 1. Verse 20
    - 2. The key to hooking up to this adequate source is "your faith."
      - "according to your faith be it unto you"

#### III. And there is an abundant supply available.

- A. Verse 16
    - 1. "His glorious riches" have no limits.
    - 2. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
- CONCLUSION:
- 1. Although there is an acute shortage of spiritual power, the indwelling presence, stable character, and comprehension—there is an adequate source and an abundant supply of "power from on high."
  - 2. Verse 16.
  - 3. Will you accept God's provision?

### GROW UP

Scripture: Eph. 4:1-16, NIV

Text: 4:14-15

#### INTRODUCTION:

- 1. Everyone wants to grow up, children and youth. There is a normal desire and function to do so.
  - 2. Paul encourages us to grow up.
  - 3. How? God shows us the way to spiritual maturity in His Word.
- I. Apostle Peter encourages us to grow up, 1 Pet. 2:1-3.
- A. "Crave" is basic to accomplishment.
  - B. Growth requires food: "milk," Word, all scripture, etc.
  - C. Light is also essential to growth; "I am the light"; only fungus grows in darkness, fungus of sin's darkness.
  - D. Must develop taste: "Taste and see that the Lord is good."
- II. Paul thanked God for the Thessalonians' growing faith, 2 Thess. 1:2-3.
- A. Their growing faith encouraged Paul.
  - B. How does faith grow "more and more"?
    - 1. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.



2. The excellent path is that henceforth we grow up into the measure of the stature of Christ.

### III. Peter instructs us a second time to grow, 2 Pet. 3:18.

- A. Grow in grace.
- B. Grow in knowledge.
- C. The area of growth is important.

### IV. Growth must be based upon a solid foundation: Eph. 2:19-20.

- A. God the Architect.
- B. Apostolic teaching the foundation.
- C. Jesus the Cornerstone.
- D. We are the building, the temple of God.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Everyone wants to grow up.
2. God shows us how in His Word.
3. Do it.

### PUT OFF—PUT ON

Scripture: Eph. 4:17-32, NIV

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. In 2 Cor. 5:17 we read that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (NIV).
2. In Phil. 2:12 we are instructed to "continue to work out your salvation."
3. All of this is accomplished through putting off the works of the flesh and putting on the works of righteousness.

#### I. In this passage Paul lists the things we must put off.

- A. Your old self (22).
- B. Falsehood (25).
- C. Stealing (28).
- D. Unwholesome talk (29).
- E. Bitterness (31).
- F. Rage and anger (31).
- G. Brawling and slander (31).
- H. Every form of malice (31).

#### II. Paul then gives a list of things we must put on.

- A. New self (24).
- B. Truth (24).
- C. Sharing (28).
- D. Helpful upbuilding of others (29).
- E. Kindness (32).
- F. Forgiving spirit (32).

#### CONCLUSION:

1. To put off the wrong and put on the right is to accept the truth in Jesus Christ.
2. Verses 20-21.

### THEOLOGY OF CHURCH GROWTH

Scripture: Eph. 5:8-20, NIV

Text: 5:18b

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. Much of the excellent church growth material currently available revolves around sociological factors.
2. The theological factors involved in church growth also need attention.
3. Part of the theology of church growth has a bearing on the optimum size of any given local church congregation.

#### I. Three basic paths to local church growth.

- A. Existing congregation continues to grow.

- B. Existing congregation mothers a baby church, or churches.
- C. A combination of the above two.

#### II. Theology largely determines how large an existing congregation can grow.

- A. Holiness theology provides a unity of the Spirit which permits the congregation to grow indefinitely because personal opinions are surrendered to God's will (text).
- B. Non-holiness theology generates an interpersonal conflict from "self-life" expression. There is a tolerance level within any group, to help in coping. That becomes the group size.

#### III. Theology largely determines motive for mothering a baby church.

- A. Holiness viewpoint (16-18).
- B. Non-holiness viewpoint (18a—wine of self-life).

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Whether we articulate it or not, we do have a theology of church growth based largely upon our personal response to the God-given command, "Be filled with the Spirit."
2. Verses 16-17.

### PREPARED FOR BATTLE

Scripture: Eph. 6:10-18, NIV

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. In his instructions to young Timothy, Paul models the "good soldier of Jesus Christ" as one who "wants to please his commanding officer" (2 Tim. 2:3-4).
2. The way to please any commanding officer is to follow his instructions implicitly as relayed through his lieutenants.
3. Lieutenant Paul gives us our Commanding Officer's orders in this passage, that we be prepared for battle.

#### I. Clearly identify your enemy and his troops personally (11-12).

- |                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| A. Devil       | D. Powers |
| B. Rulers      | E. Forces |
| C. Authorities |           |

#### II. Carefully select the specified necessary defensive and offensive equipment from God's supply (13-17).

- |                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| A. Belt        | D. Shield |
| B. Breastplate | E. Helmet |
| C. Footgear    | F. Sword  |

#### III. Keep the communications lines open to headquarters in order to receive updated tactical orders from your Commanding Officer (18).

- A. Pray
- B. Be alert.
- C. Continue praying.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Realize the source and extent of your strength as stated in v. 10.
2. Go forth confidently in the power of the Spirit.
3. You are more than an overcomer through your Commanding Officer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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2. From *The Holy Bible, New International Version*, © 1978 by the New York International Bible Society. Used by permission.

3. From *Worship in Song* hymnal.

# GOD'S WILL FOR THE

# FAMILY

## MARITAL AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN EPHESIANS

by Alex Deasley\*

It is impossible to interpret individual ethical precepts in the Epistle to the Ephesians without considering the overall framework of the ethical teaching of Paul, and indeed, of the New Testament as a whole. Much harm has been done, and is still being done, by the assumption that, to discuss Paul's ethical teaching for today all that is required is the recitation of his directions and injunctions. But *recitation* is not *interpretation*, and for present-day application, *interpretation* is what is needed.

The point may be illustrated by an example from Ephesians. In 6:5-9 instructions are given to slaves regarding their behavior. In essence, Paul says that a Christian slave ought to be a good slave, serving not out of fear but out of goodwill, even as he serves Christ, concerned about giving good service, not about receiving a reward. Slave owners are enjoined to behave in the same way, remembering that they too have a master.

Now, if this passage is to be taken at its face value, two conclusions are irresistible for the con-

temporary reader. The first is that it is irrelevant today since, in the Western world at least, the institution of slavery no longer exists. The second is that slavery as an institution is compatible with the gospel. This inference was drawn with great readiness by slave owners from the 1st to the 18th centuries, and many eloquent and fervent sermons were preached from this passage on the biblical basis of slavery. At the same time many of our Wesleyan forefathers, including John Wesley himself, were loud in their denunciation of slavery.

Who were right: the slave owners or the emancipationists? If the letter of Scripture is the guide, the slave owners were right. Scripture says: "Every one should remain in the state in which he was called. Were you a slave when called? Never mind. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity" (1 Cor. 7:20-21, RSV).<sup>1</sup> But to our Wesleyan forebears such an attitude quoted the words of Scripture at the expense of misquoting its thought; it recited Scripture without interpreting it. For they saw that an institution which robbed men of their freedom, dignity, and responsibility could in

\*Alex Deasley is associate professor of New Testament at Nazarene Theological Seminary.

no way be squared with the liberty Christ had died to secure; and in that conviction they subordinated the letter of ethics to the spirit of the gospel.

None of us would dissent from their conclusion. But the troublesome question remains as to whether they were right in the means by which they reached it. If prevailing moods and mores are the guidelines, then what becomes of New Testament ethics? If the biblical teaching on slavery is to be discarded, then what is to prevent much more from going the same way? In short, are there any hermeneutical principles in terms of which the specific ethical teaching of the New Testament is to be understood?



**Mutual  
submission is  
declared to be  
part of the  
Spirit-filled  
life.**

The answer to that question can be found by examining the principles which, implicitly or explicitly, lie behind Paul's social and ethical teaching. These may be summed up as follows.

#### **Stated Principles and Practical Advice**

Paul was giving guidance for Christians living in society as he knew it, which was not necessarily society as it ought to be nor even as he thought it ought to be. Discussion of Paul's social ethics sooner or later comes round to the tension between Paul's stated principles and his practical advice. The principle is stated in Gal. 3:28 (RSV): "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." The meaning is clear: in Christ there are no distinctions based on race, social status, or sex.<sup>2</sup>

The problem arises when this is placed alongside such practical advice as 1 Cor. 11:5 (RSV): "Any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head—it is the same as if her head were shaved"; or 1 Tim. 2:11-14: "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor." How are these to be reconciled?

The answer is that while, in the kingdom of God,

Paul believed they were "all one," yet Paul and his converts were not living exclusively in the kingdom of God; they were also living in "the kingdom of this world" which had not yet become "the kingdom of our God and of his Christ," (Revelation 11:15), and it was not only foolish, but dangerous to pretend otherwise.

Slaves may have constituted as much as one fifth of the population of the Roman Empire in Paul's day. T. E. Jessop writes: "Why did he not campaign for the equality of women with men, and for the abolition of slavery? Part of the answer is that both reforms would have turned the Roman Empire upside down, that the attempt would have been vain and suicidal, that as a Christian Paul was a member of the tiniest minority in the Empire, and that a private citizen had no power to agitate for social reform."<sup>3</sup>

C. F. D. Moule adds: "In a secular state, like the early Roman Empire, no change in the actual constitution could have been made by the Christians without the use of physical violence; and against this they were continually admonished. . . . It was not simply the best policy, then—it was the only policy to apply the far more subtle solvent of the transformation of character."<sup>4</sup> What Paul thought was the

appropriate Christian way to treat slaves is evident from Philem. 13-16. The rest of the Epistle shows however that he respects existing law on the matter (vv. 12, 18), and meanwhile expects the new master-slave relationship "in Christ" to do its own work in eroding the foundations of the institution as a whole (vv. 15-17).

An illustration of Paul's view of the man-woman relationship is found in 1 Cor. 11:2-16. The precise situation in the Corinthian church is not clear, but evidently women had been participating in Christian worship without wearing veils—an apparent defiance of current custom. Paul enjoins them to wear the veil for two reasons: first, because woman, as originating from man (Gen. 2:18-23) and so reflecting his "glory," ought not to allow man's glory to appear to rival the glory of God, i.e., the unveiled face of man (v. 7). This argument is one with the argument from prevailing practice (vv. 13-15).

Nevertheless, the creation data are not the only data to be taken into account in the argument: there are also the data of the new creation; and these show that in the Lord man and woman are mutually dependent and neither has a higher dignity

than the other before God (v. 11). Accordingly, Paul the Christian apostle reinterprets the significance of the veil, giving it a Christian meaning. If to the non-Christian onlooker it is a sign of inferiority, to the Christian it is a sign of authority (v. 10). Without the veil, the woman would not be able to participate in worship at all; adorned with it she is able to play a full part (v. 5); and this is the second reason Paul gives for wearing it. In short, what we are seeing here is the old order being superseded by the new: not by violent overthrow but by quiet revolution.<sup>5</sup>

The scale of the revolution should not be underestimated. The pious Pharisee gave daily thanks that God had spared him from being born a Gentile, a slave, or a woman. Paul the converted Pharisee declares that in Christ there is no room for such distinctions. In doing so he was merely following the example of his Master who scandalized Jewish society by counting women among his closest followers and giving them instruction (John 4:27; Luke 10:39), something no rabbi would waste his time doing. How well Paul learned from Jesus is evident from Rom. 16:1-4; Phil. 4:2-3.

The point is therefore that in areas where Paul's advice conflicts with the absolutes declared in Gal. 3:28, Paul is in no way diluting the absolute but recognizing the barriers which the prevailing sinful situation has raised against their realization. As the situation changes under the impact of the gospel, so will the ideal be more capable of implementation. One of the major challenges to the Christian conscience is monitoring the increasing degree of change in the situation so as to permit further approximation to the ideal.

### **Social Structures and the Return of the Lord**

A second factor which conditioned Paul's social ethical teaching (as well as his individual ethical teaching) was his eschatology. George Eldon Ladd writes:

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Paul's eschatological perspective affected his attitude toward social structures. He seems to have no genuinely historical perspective nor to be concerned about the impact of the gospel on contemporary social structures. In fact, he expressly says: "In view of the impending distress, it is well for a person to remain as he is" (1 Corinthians 7:26). Married people should not seek to break the marriage bond, Jews should not try to appear like Gentiles and vice versa, slaves should not seek to be free even if the opportunity presents itself. However, the context of the passage is one of indifference to one's situation in the social structures of the old age. "Every one should remain in the state in which he was called" (1 Corinthians 7:26) because "the form of this world is passing away" (1 Corinthians 7:31). . . . Paul clearly is dominated by a sense of the parousia and the end of the world that rendered questions of social ethics comparatively irrelevant.<sup>6</sup>

How lively was the expectation of the return of the Lord in the Early Church is evident from the Epistles to the Thessalonians; indeed these were written to administer a corrective. Paul himself, and the Early Church as a whole, were capable of accommodating

competing aspects of the subject in their minds. On the one hand, they could speak as Paul does in 1 Cor. 7:20-31; on the other hand, Paul could contemplate without disturbance the possibility of his death before the Lord's return, as in 2 Cor. 4:7—5:5.<sup>7</sup>

What is certain is that Paul did not envisage the possibility of 20 or more centuries of Christian history before the Lord's return; and it is this factor which makes a decisive difference to the application of Paul's ethical teaching. If 1 Cor. 7:20-31 had been applied literally, the Christian Church throughout history would have consisted of a community of celibates and slaves. It is the perspective of history, largely absent from Paul's mind, which makes interpretation of his ethical teaching indispensable.

To quote Ladd again: "The cultural situation and the structure of the church are very different from that of first-century Christianity, and the modern Christian cannot apply the teachings of Scripture in a one-to-one relationship but must seek the basic truth underlying the particular formulations in the New Testament."<sup>8</sup>

The task of the interpreter of Paul's social ethics, therefore, is to seek to define the principles of Paul's ethical teaching and then to formulate their contemporary application in the light of the applications that Paul himself makes in his epistles. The ethical principles are unchanging; the form in which they are applied may vary as historical circumstances change, not least under the impact of the gospel which makes fuller application of the principles possible. On this basis we may now turn to the Epistle to the Ephesians to hear its message for today on marriage and the family.

### **The Background and Setting of Eph. 5:22—6:4**

The controlling theme of the Epistle to the Ephesians is the extension of the reconciliation accomplished by Christ throughout the universe (1:10; 2:13-18; etc.). In a mind like Paul's this carried practical implication, hence beginning at c. 4 he applies this in the various spheres of life: the Church (4:1-16); the individual viewed as a member of the community (4:17—5:20); and finally, the Christian household (5:22—6:9). Lists of rules for households were by no means uncommon, both in Judaism and pagan (especially Stoic) philosophy; and they are found in various places in the New Testament, notably 1 Pet. 2:18—3:7; and Col. 3:18—4:1.

However, the list in Ephesians 5 is unique, because there the bond between Christ and the Church is seen as a pattern for Christian marriage. Not that the couple is to strive to impose upon their relationship something which is essentially alien to it; rather conformity to the pattern is the realization of what being a couple truly means, so that "all that the apostle says, in Ephesians 5, of the Christ-Church relationship, can be transposed to apply in the same way to the couple itself."<sup>9</sup>

The section divides itself into three parts.

#### **I. The Relationship Between Wives and Husbands (5:22-33)**

##### **A. The Duties of Wives to Husbands (5:22-24).**

The most striking thing about v. 22 in the Greek text is that it has no verb. Most translations correctly supply the verb from v. 21, reading, "Wives be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord" (RSV). This immediately points us to the preceding verses as the context of the present section, and particularly to v. 21: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." The word "submitting" (a participle in Greek as well as in English) can be taken in two ways. It can be taken (as would be the normal procedure) as dependent on the preceding main verb "be filled" (v. 18), and in parallel to the other participles in the sentence.

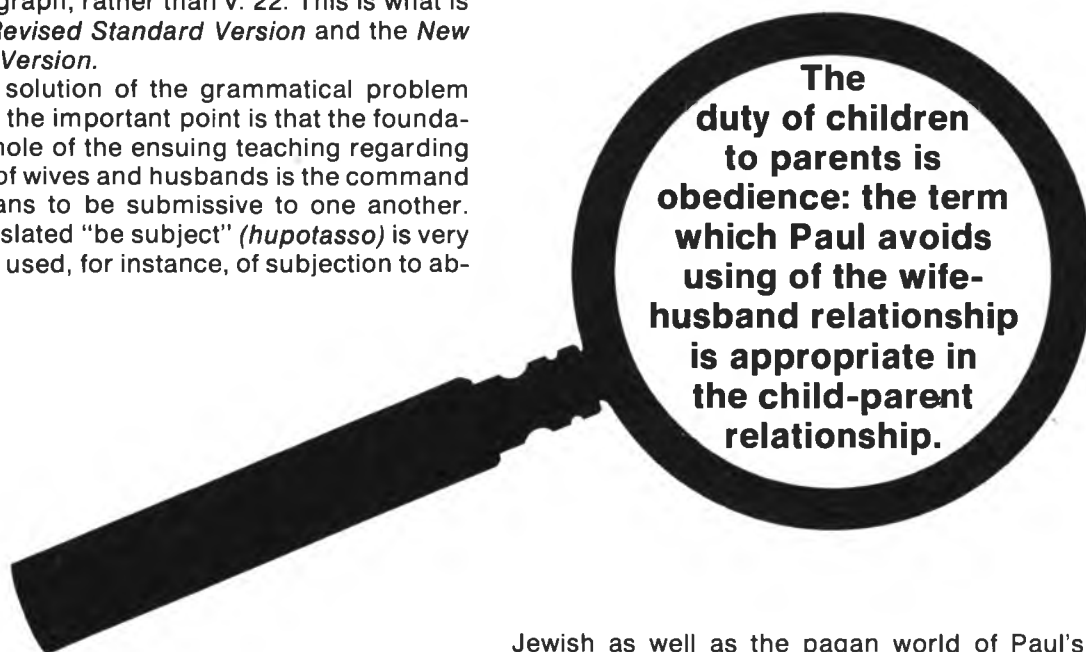
The meaning would then be: Show that you are full of the Spirit by the following three activities: (1) praise: "speaking to yourselves in psalms," etc. (v. 19); (2) thanksgiving: "giving thanks always for all things," etc. (v. 20); (3) mutual service: "submitting yourselves" can be taken as an independent verb<sup>10</sup> in which case v. 21 would be the beginning of the present paragraph, rather than v. 22. This is what is done in the *Revised Standard Version* and the *New International Version*.

Whichever solution of the grammatical problem be preferred, the important point is that the foundation of the whole of the ensuing teaching regarding the attitudes of wives and husbands is the command to *all* Christians to be submissive to one another. The verb translated "be subject" (*hupotasso*) is very strong, being used, for instance, of subjection to ab-

"source" or "origin." That is its necessary meaning in 1 Cor. 11:3 and its natural meaning here.<sup>12</sup> The wife is to defer to her husband not because he is her "boss" but because he is the source of her existence (Gen. 2:21-23);<sup>13</sup> just as Christ is the source of the Church's existence.

In a way analogous to (though not identical with) that in which Christ is the Church's Savior, so the husband is the wife's savior, even to the point of laying down his life for her if necessary (v. 25). Such provision is not to be dismissed with contempt but received with due deference. Hence in v. 24 Paul repeats his point, but with an illuminating and elevating addition: the relationship of wife to husband is akin to that of the Church to Christ, and her deference should be of an appropriate order.

What we are really seeing in a passage like this is the Christianizing of the marital relationship. In the



solute rulers (Rom. 13:1, 5) or (in this epistle) of the subjection of all things to Christ. However, certain contexts require a different shade of meaning. First Cor. 15:28 is one; this is another. The very idea of *mutual* subjection requires a verb whose meaning is less one-sided; "deferring to one another" is a better suggestion.<sup>11</sup> The significance of this is that from the very start Paul places his view of the husband-wife relationship squarely in the context of the selfless service which each Christian owes the other, in conformity with the example of Christ.

Wives, then, are to defer to their own husbands: that is, the deference they should show their fellow-Christians should be shown especially to their husbands. This is to be done "as to the Lord," that is, as part of their obedience to Christ. The reason given is that "the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church: as he is the savior of the body" (v. 23). The Greek word for "head" (*kephale*) can mean "ruler;" it can also mean

Jewish as well as the pagan world of Paul's day, women were regarded as inferior, and their subordination to their husbands was regarded as part of the natural order. The rights were all on one side and the duties were all on the other. Paul rejects all of this. He does not regard women as inferior. He does not enjoin subjection to their husbands as part of the natural order but as part of their Christian service. And he regards husbands as having duties to their wives—an admission little short of revolutionary in the ancient world.

Does there underlie this teaching the idea of a pattern of order in which the subjection of wife to husband is necessary for preserving the orderliness of society? Yes, and Paul does with it the same thing that he does with slavery. By affirming the equal worth of women and enjoining the mutual deference of husbands and wives in the Lord he sows the seeds of its destruction.<sup>14</sup> The orderliness of the Christian home is not preserved by the imposition of a hierarchial pattern, but by the submission of husbands and wives in the fear of God.<sup>15</sup>

### **B. The Duties of Husbands to Wives (5:25-33).**

If the Christian faith requires that the wife defer to her husband, it lays a corresponding obligation on the husband. The duty the husband owes his wife is "love." However, it is a very special kind of love Paul has in mind: not the love based on sexual attraction (*eros*), but the specifically Christian form of love (*agape*) denoting active concern for the well-being of others even at the expense of one's own, and which was supremely displayed in the self-giving of Christ (v. 25). A hint of this has already been given in v. 23 where Christ's Headship of the Church has been defined in terms of Saviorhood. The point is elaborated here.

It is notable that Paul says not that Christ "loves" the Church (though that is true), but that he "loved" it. The reference is to Calvary, where His love was shown in a way that could never be exceeded. The impression made by this on Paul's mind is shown in that he frequently refers to Christ's love in the past tense (e.g., Gal. 2:20). The parallel term "gave himself" is in the past tense for the same reason (cf. Rom. 8:32). Such is the kind of love a Christian husband should bear towards his wife.

At this point we expect a reinforcing word directed to husbands such as comes in verse 28. Paul, however, in very typical fashion is carried away by his illustration of the love of Christ for the Church, and proceeds to describe what this accomplishes in the sanctification and purification of the Church as Christ's Bride (though he does not use that term). Verses 26-27 are devoted to this theme. There is no parallel to this in the relation of husbands and wives, except in the very widest sense; and while the verses are important in describing Christ's work for the Church, they say nothing specific regarding the marital relationship.

The argument is resumed at verse 28 where a new idea, implicit in the relationship of Christ and the Church, is drawn out and controls the remainder of the discussion regarding husbands and wives. This is the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ. This image is used by Paul in different ways, depending on the point he is trying to make. In 1 Cor. 12:12-27, Paul is emphasizing the importance of all of the gifts of the Spirit for the Church's ministry; consequently, he pictures Christ as the whole body and Christians as the members of which the body is composed. In Eph. 4:15-16 he is stressing Christ's full and perfect manhood as the goal toward which the Church is to grow; hence he depicts Christ as the head, with the remaining parts of the body striving to grow up to the measure of the development of the head.<sup>16</sup> In Eph. 5:28-31 the metaphor takes yet another form. In a mysterious way, through the relationship of marriage a man and a woman become "one flesh." This gives Paul an additional reason for enjoining the husband's love of his wife: namely, in loving her he is loving himself since she is "one flesh" with him. "He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh" (vv. 28b-29a, RSV). At first sight this may seem to represent rather a sad decline from the lofty, selfless love in verse 25, but this is to mis-

understand. There is a proper self-love, as the second great commandment implies (Matt. 22:29), and the man who has no proper regard for himself will have no proper regard for anyone else. The converse of this applies to marriage: that since a wife becomes a part of a man's self, to maltreat her is to maltreat himself. How true this is borne out amply in experience. The pattern of the husband's treatment of his wife is, once again, Christ's treatment of the Church (vv. 29-30). The oneness achieved in marriage, whether of man to woman or Christ to the Church, is profoundly mysterious, yet profoundly real. Verse 33 summarizes both sides of Paul's argument: the husband is to love his wife as himself; the wife is to respect her husband.<sup>17</sup>

### **II. The Relationship Between Children and Parents (6:1-4)**

Paul turns next to the relationship between children and parents. In keeping with the pattern of the instruction given to wives and husbands, this falls into two parts: the duties of children to parents, and parents to children. As noted above, this in itself was a radical innovation in a society which held that men had all the rights and everyone else the duties.

#### **A. The Duties of Children to Parents (6:1-3)**

The duty of children to parents is obedience: the term which Paul avoids using of the wife-husband relationship is appropriate in the child-parent relationship. However, an important qualification is included: the obedience demanded is "in the Lord." Comparison with the parallel passage in Col. 3:20 is instructive. There the obedience demanded is absolute: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." The assumption underlying the command is that the family in mind is a Christian family, and the conduct required of the children will be Christian conduct and so well-pleasing to the Lord. The situation envisaged in Ephesians is significantly different.<sup>18</sup> The assumption is that some of the children addressed may have pagan parents and find themselves under orders to do things inconsistent with Christianity. In this case their primary responsibility is to the will of Christ; hence the qualifying phrase "in the Lord."<sup>19</sup> Such obedience Paul declares to be "right," and he proceeds to back this up by quoting the fifth commandment. The form of the commandment which Paul quotes is interesting. First, he draws attention to the fact that this is the first of the Ten Commandments to have a promise appended to it, indicating its great importance. Second, Paul quotes the Deuteronomic form of the commandment in the Septuagint version (Deut. 5:16) rather than the earlier form in Exod. 20:12. Not only so, but he adapts it to the contemporary situation by omitting the words "which the Lord your God will give you." Originally, these words referred to the Promised Land. Paul the Christian, writing to Gentile (as well as Jewish) Christians who had never seen Palestine and had no aspirations to live there, reapplies the commandment to the new situation of universal Christianity by reading: "That you may live long on the earth"

*(Continued on page 58)*

# IS CHURCH UNITY POSSIBLE?

## *Christian Unity in Ephesians*

by K. E. Brower\*

\*K. E. Brower is professor of biblical studies at British Isles Nazarene College, Manchester, England.

**E**phesians contains the epitome of Pauline theology, with the doctrine of the Church pervading the whole Epistle. This ecclesiology centers on the theme of Christian unity, for it is the foundation upon which Paul constructs his advice on ministries and marriage, and has explicit expression in numerous scattered passages throughout the Epistle (e.g., 1:10, 22; 2:14-22; 3:6; 4:3-6, 11-13, 16, 25; 5:1). But the depth of Paul's conception cannot be grasped apart from the context of the whole Epistle (exegesis of isolated verses containing the term "unity" could result in a superficial understanding).

This theme of Christian unity does not gain prominence from a 1st-century equivalent to the 20th-century ecumenical movement. It springs, rather, from the very heart of Paul's gospel. Paul is at one with His Lord: his prayer, too, would be "that they may be one" (John 17:11).

But Paul develops the idea in a slightly different direction. He does not base his discussion as much upon the unity of Father and Son as he does upon the nature of God's action in Christ,

the work of the Holy Spirit, and the nature of man. Only when we see this broader context of Christian unity are we saved from the trivializing sentimentality that characterizes all too much of modern thought about unity.

### **In Christ**

For Paul, the whole basis and goal of Christian unity is found in the phrase "in Christ." Paul talks of the basis in 1:3-22, examining the cosmic dimensions of God's action in Christ. Here we grasp the essence of our election—it too must be understood "in Christ." (Many problems relating to the doctrine of election could be solved if Paul's repeated usage of phrases like "in Christ" and "in him," were not ignored, an error which turns a doctrine of election into one of determinism.)

In Christ, says Paul, we were elect (*exelektato*) from the foundation of the world (v. 3), chosen (*proorisas*) to be sons (v. 5), redeemed and forgiven (v. 7) and the mystery of God's purpose made known to us (v. 9; cf. Rom. 3:21-26). All of this, a present reality, is ours *in Christ and in Christ alone*.

Finally, God has elected Christ as the administrator (*alaonomias*) for the fullness of time, summing all things up (*anakephalaioasthai ta panta*) in Christ (1:10), once again bringing unity and order out of chaos (cf. Gen. 1:2; Rom. 8:19-24). An implied allusion to Christ as the Head or Unifier is probably present in all of these statements about decisions and events "in Christ." Now, in the single verb in verse 10 (RSV, "uniting"), he makes explicit what was implicit, a point which takes seriously the total context of Ephesians (cf. M. Barth, *Ephesians, Anchor Bible*, pp. 89 ff.).

The whole basis of the unity is "in Christ."

### **"Already" and "not Yet"**

This unity must be viewed as both a present reality and a future hope (1:18). Herein lies the vital eschatological tension between the "already" and the "not yet." For the fullness of time is not yet accomplished (1:10), and the present experience of unity where



Christ is all in all is far from complete. Thus the Church's unity is part of the summing up in Christ. His administration (1:10) is to be seen, not as a static imposition, but as a dynamic, vital concept in which the fullness is being brought about by the continuing action of God in Christ in the Church, His Body (1:23).

It is at this point that Paul makes his first specific reference to the Church and its unity in Christ, for Christ is the (present) head of the Church (1:22). But in the same breath, Paul states that the Church "is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all" (1:23, RSV).

The combination of two of his favorite images, Christ as the Head of the Church, and the Church as the Body of Christ, leads to some far-reaching implications. Christ's headship denotes his authority over the Church, his power exerted in it, his presence to it, the unity of the Church and the combined operation of all its members (M. Barth, p. 192). The image of the Body presents Christ as the unifying vitality and the energizing life within the whole. And it presents the Christian people as a means by which the vitality expresses itself.

### The Church's Task

Paul now begins to draw out the implications of c. 1. He is not only speaking of our glorious hope or the present mystical union we have in Christ, and with our fellowman. Rather, he shows how the task of the Church, now in a world divided by race, color, culture, and politics, is to bring all men into the captivity of obedience to Christ—back to their true functions and unity in Him (cf. F. Foulkes, *Ephesians, Tynedale New Testament Commentary*, p. 53).

To express this truth in concrete terms, Paul uses the example of the then (and now?) problem of Gentile/Jewish conflict. He asserts that in the cross of Christ, the dividing wall of hostility has been broken *once and for all* (2:14-17).

Indeed, the proclamation of this gospel of unity is one of the prime

reasons Paul writes this letter (3:6-12; cf. J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, who makes the proclamation of unification even more central to Paul's thought than justification by faith). In effect, he urges them to enjoy the unity they now have in Christ.

### Ethical Results

Now Paul leaves the atmosphere of cc. 1-3 with its profound theological insights and shows the ethical results of this unity of the Church in Christ. It is a unity to be maintained, not attained (4:3). Paul never suggests that Christian unity can be conjured up by psychological manipulation, nor can it be created by man. It is a given—an essential characteristic of the Church—the gift of God through the Holy Spirit, to be maintained by keeping the bond of peace.

Paul reinforces the point by reminding his readers of the spiritual realities which unite them, however diverse their background (4:4-6). Yet Paul saw a diversity of gifts (4:11), all for building the Body (not *bodies*) of Christ (4:12), proceeding to the unity of faith, knowledge, mature (*teleion*) manhood, and the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (4:13). This unity would provide stability, growth, and up-building (4:14-16). It also means that truth, purity, and love should characterize our relationship, "for we are members one of another" (4:25-32). Christian unity must affect every area of the Church's existence.

Ephesians stands as an indict-

ment against the modern church.

Instead of being characterized by unity, the church is often torn asunder by discord within the local fellowship, disagreement within denominations, and schism within the church as a whole. Instead of the Cross being the scandal of Christianity, the lamentable discord in place of the harmonious functioning of the whole is the scandal of the modern church, and the message of reconciliation through the cross of Christ is treated, at best, as irrelevant.

If Paul expected the gift of unity in Christ to head the seemingly incurable problem of Jewish/Gentile relationships, what would he have thought of the present host of tragic, often trivial divisions? Could it be that Christian man, especially Western man, has been so captivated by the individualistic spirit of the age that he is unable to grasp the true nature of both man and the Church?

One of the most challenging messages of the Scriptures for modern man must be a call for reconsideration of the solidarity and unity of all mankind. And, as for the Church, it is the *very Body of the Lord Jesus Christ*, united under one Head.

May God, for Christ's sake, forgive and help us as we seek to maintain the unity of the spirit and attain the unity of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

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"Sure, I know this is a challenge. But I've had three 'challenges' and two 'opportunities.' Now, how about sending me to a church?"

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# THE *HOLY* *SPIRIT* IN EPHESIANS

by Gerald E. Lane\*

**M**any erroneous ideas circulate today regarding the Holy Spirit. One good corrective for this situation is to look deeply and openly into Ephesians. God is an expert in the correction of error, for He himself is Truth.

God says some important things about the Holy Spirit, through Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. Before we consider the focus of Paul as he mentions the Holy Spirit, let us note the Greek terms which are translated "Holy Spirit" in English.

The noun which is translated "Holy Spirit" is to *pneuma*. The gender of the term is neuter rather than masculine or feminine. However, when it is used to designate the Holy Spirit, it refers to a Person—the Third Person of the Trinity—rather than to a thing or an object. So the Holy Spirit should not be referred to as "it." Furthermore, contrary to what older English parlance may suggest, the Holy Spirit is not a "ghost" or a "spook." He is a Divine Person.

The term *pneuma* occurs 15 times in the Ephesians epistle, and it seems that in at least 11 of those instances the reference is to the Holy Spirit. This

term is also used in Ephesians to denote human spirit, and in one instance it refers to the evil spirit (2:2).

The Greek adjective *hagios*, meaning "holy," also occurs 15 times in the epistle. In two of the instances (1:13 and 4:30) it modifies the noun *pneuma* and the combination of the terms is translated "the Holy Spirit." In the other 13 occurrences the adjective modifies men, temple, apostles, prophets, and so on.

## **The Spiritual Deposit**

The first of Paul's 11 statements in Ephesians regarding the Holy Spirit occurs in 1:13-14: "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. In him, when you believed, you were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory" (NIV).<sup>1</sup>

Significant in these two verses are the verbs. The process of being "included in Christ" is described in three progressive steps: (1) hearing, (2) believing, and (3) sealing. The first two Greek verbs are aorist

\*Gerald E. Lane is professor of New Testament at Mid-America Nazarene College, Olathe, Kans.

participles which indicate that those actions—"having heard" and "having believed"—occurred prior to the action of the main verb—"were sealed," which is itself an aorist passive indicative form.

The meaning which is conveyed here through these grammatical forms is that divine-human spiritual interaction has occurred. God provided the gospel message, people heard and then believed, so He sealed or marked them as His own by His Holy Spirit. The hearers-believers have been sealed by God as God's own people. They belong to Him until the time of final redemption. God's ownership is the crucial point, and the seal or sign of that reality is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believers' lives.

In v. 14 the words "who is a deposit" refers to the Holy Spirit. It is true that in some Greek manuscripts the term *hos* is used and translated "who." It would appear to refer to Christ rather than the Holy Spirit, since it is masculine gender and would match the noun *Christos* used in v. 12. However, the latest and best Greek text uses the term *ho* for "who," which is neuter gender and matches the noun *pneuma* in v. 13. The noun *pneuma* is obviously the antecedent of the relative pronoun *ho*. So the *Holy Spirit* is a "deposit guaranteeing our inheritance."

The term *arrabon* is translated "deposit." It no doubt refers to a practice of Phoenician traders and others who paid part of the purchase price for goods in advance as a guarantee that the remainder would be paid later. This figure fits well the spiritual principle which Paul is emphasizing.<sup>2</sup>

A final comment on 1:13-14 is that the sealing of believers by the Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our final redemption, is both accomplished by God and results in His glorification—"the praise of his glory." This is the third element of the doxology which is given earlier in vv. 6 and 12.

### Access to the Father

In 2:18, Paul writes: "For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit" (NIV). In this second mention of the Holy Spirit all three Persons of the Trinity are included. Jesus provided the "access" to the Father by means of His Holy Spirit.

The Greek term for "access" is *prosagoge*. In ancient Middle Eastern kingdoms, such as Persia, the royal court had an official called "prosagogeus." He introduced people who desired to speak with the king. The figure represents the Holy Spirit here, but in reality the Spirit is more. He not only introduces us to God, but also through Him we communicate with the Father. He is the Agent of the access to the Father which was provided by the Son.

The context provides yet another perspective from which to view this statement . . . namely, the Holy Spirit, who fills *both* Gentile uncircumcised

and Jewish circumcised believers, and unites the Christian spirits of both groups. As a result "both" are part of the family of God (1:9). No longer are Christians, who are humanly different, strangers in God's house. We are brothers through the action of the Holy Spirit.

### Becoming God's Temple

Also, in 2:22 we read these words: "And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (NIV). As a helpful extension of the truth presented in 2:18, we are reminded here that through the Holy Spirit, we are in the *process* of becoming God's house or temple. Through the Spirit, Jesus is building us together, and also through the Spirit, God dwells in us.

The Greek term translated "being built together" occurs only here in the New Testament. It points to a continuous building process in which the Holy Spirit is the Builder, Jesus is the Developer, and God is the Resident. What a thrilling picture! God is "at home" in the life of the growing Christian.

### The Revealer

In 3:5 the inspiring and revealing work of the Spirit is cited: ". . . the mystery of Christ, (5) which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets" (NIV).

Paul speaks here of the fulfillment of Jesus' words in John 14:26 and 16:13-15. Jesus promised that His Holy Spirit would lead them to truth. He would teach them, clearing up the mystery regarding God's will. Paul defines the mystery in verse six—that Gentiles as well as Jews are included in God's family, the Church.

In Paul's day he saw vividly the manifestation of the mystery—Gentiles were believing in Christ, being filled with the Spirit, and joining the community of believers. The leaders and preachers in the Early Church saw clearly the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He made it known to them. Men in previous generations had not known. Men in Paul's day, however, knew "for sure."

### The Dynamite of God

In 3:16 we hear one of the priority items on Paul's prayer list: "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in your inner being" (NIV). The expanse of God's personality is so great and wonderful that the qualities which mark Him as God continually spill over into the lives of those who know Him personally and spiritually. It is for this to continue, that Paul prays.

*Dunamis* or "power" is the specific quality he mentions. It is from this term that we derive our English word *dynamite*. Paul prays that the explo-

(Continued on page 60)

# PREPARING TO PREACH

## FROM EPHESIANS 3:14-19

*Fourth in a Series of Holiness  
Exegetical Studies*

by Frank G. Carver\*

*For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God.<sup>1</sup>*

I

### **The Historical Question: Where Do We Find Our Text?**

#### **1. What Was the Life Setting of Ephesians?**

*In what historical form?* Although Ephesians takes the form of a letter (1:1-2; 6:23-24), in line with ancient literary conventions<sup>2</sup> it is not an occasional letter in the same sense as Philippians or Philemon,

\*Frank Carver is professor of biblical theology at Point Loma Nazarene College.

that is, obviously directed to a particular congregation or individual. It is somewhat like a written sermon,<sup>3</sup> in substance characterized as "above all a prayer directed to God—but a prayer prayed publicly."<sup>4</sup>

*From what historical setting?* Ephesians is firmly linked to the apostle Paul (1:1). It is quite possible that Paul had entrusted its compilation and publication to a disciple-colleague and amanuensis shortly before his death.

But as Markus Barth insists, the liturgical diction and style of much of Ephesians, dictated by its peculiar substance—a public prayer to God—suggests direct Pauline authorship. He concludes that Paul wrote from a Roman prison about A.D. 62 to the church members of Gentile origin in Ephesus who had been converted and baptized after his final departure from the city.<sup>5</sup>

The Epistle was written to new Christians fresh out of a pagan environment to expound the present work of Christ in their midst and the hope for all the world inherent in it:

A new ground, order, and way of life is open to all men: the manifested, outgoing love of God, the inclusion and participation in Christ crucified and

risen, the reconciliation and peace brought by the Messiah, the energy of the Holy Spirit, the ecumenicity of the church that is being built.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. What is the role of 3:14-19 in the content of Ephesians?

Ephesians opens with an epistolary address (1:1-2) and a benediction (1:3-14). With its praise of God, it functions as a prologue or overture to all that follows. With the exception of the conclusion (6:21-24), the remainder of Paul's presentation of the significance of "Christ in His Church" for his readers can be viewed in three movements. In the first, 1:15—2:22, he "describes" God's perfect work in Christ among men. In the second, 3:1—4:24, he "praises" the ongoing work of God's revelation to and through His people. In the third, 4:24—6:20, Paul "encourages" his readers to let their light shine in the world.<sup>7</sup>

Our text, 3:14-19, a "prayer for perfection,"<sup>8</sup> falls between an excursus on the commission given to Paul by God (3:1-13) and a passage dealing with the life, order, and purpose of the Church (4:1-16) which flows appropriately into its ethical expression in the life of the Christian (4:17-32). In authentic response to the exposition of 2:1-22, Paul's prayer in 3:14-19, his second in the book, (cf. 1:15-23), is the highlight of the book as it expresses the underlying motif of praise in a majestic "prayer for the work of the Spirit, the presence of Christ, and manifestation of God's glory in the saints."<sup>9</sup>

## II

### The Recreative Question: What Did Our Text Mean to Its First Readers?

#### 1. How does the writer seek to communicate his message?

*What is the structure and form of the text?* An analysis of the structure and precise flow of thought in the prayer of 3:14-19 is problematic. Here the language of prayer defies strictly logical analysis for it "follows the form of devotion and meditation rather than that of deduction, induction, careful subordination or coordination."<sup>10</sup> Alongside other proposed analyses we suggest the following as a framework for our interpretation of Paul's prayer:

##### (1) 3:14-15 Introduction

- (1.1) 3:14a Indiction of Motive: "For reason"
- (1.2) 3:14b-15 Description of mode: "I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name"

##### (2) 3:16-19 The prayer itself

- (2.1) 3:16 The principle petition: "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory,

to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man

##### (2.2) 3:17-18

The first interpretative expansion of the petition (v. 16)

###### (2.2.1)

3:17a Definition: "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith"

###### (2.2.2)

3:17b Hortatory digression (?): "being rooted and grounded in love"

###### (2.2.3)

3:18 Purpose: "that you . . . may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth"

##### (2.3) 3:19

The second interpretative expansion of the petition (v. 16)

###### (2.3.1.)

3:19a Definition: "and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge"

###### (2.3.2.)

3:19b Purpose: "that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God."

##### (3) 3:20-21 Concluding doxology

###### (3:1) 3:20

Description of power: "Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us"

###### (3:2) 3:21

Ascription of honor: "to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

As a "prayer," Eph. 3:14-21 has its background or setting as a form in the worship of the synagogue and the Early Church as the diction and style indicate.<sup>11</sup> The function of the form is naturally that of prayer in the context of public worship.

As he wrote Ephesians, Paul's mind and spirit was in the framework of worship. In its literary context his prayer in 3:14-21 reflects his own mode of public prayer, probably in connection with the sermon, utilized here as there to illuminate the meaning and communicate the person of the crucified, risen, and present Christ to his readers.

(1) *Introduction (3:14-15).* Paul introduces his return to prayer (cf. 1:15-23), integral to his presentation of the gospel of grace, with reference to the reason for and the manner of his praying.

(Continued on page 54)

# SEEN & NOTED



"The life of every man is a diary in which he means to write one story, and writes another; and his humblest hour is when he compares the volume as it is with what he vowed to make it."

—James M. Barrie

**"Life seems adventuresome when each nightfall whispers that the day's toil has been for a cause larger than our life."**

—Bryant Kirkland

"Cultivate universal holiness of life. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hands of God."

—Robert Murray McShane

**"God has made many doors opening into truth which he opens to all who knock upon them with hands of faith."**

—Kahlil Gibran

"Our heresy is not that we deny our Lord but that we make small what is intended to be large—a little attendance, a little money, a little prayer, and that's it."

—Elton Trueblood

**"The greatest crime a minister can commit against his people is to let them think they can be halfway Christians and get away with it."**

—Anna Mow

"Authentic preaching is not entertainment. It is not solicitation of personal admiration, applause, or support. It is an art of mediation between God and man, between the needs of the soul and the reservoirs of spiritual supply."

—Arthur L. Teikmanis

**"There is a place for statistics and Acts abounds in numbers . . . The difference is, then they were result but today they are goal."**

—Vance Havner

"Staying here in Lambaréné I feel like one who was conquered by Jesus and who is willing to serve Him as Lord. . . . Through the Spirit of Jesus I became conscious that a man can be called to a place without knowing exactly why. . . . He would like to withdraw from his obedience, arguing that others could do better than he, and yet . . . the Spirit of Jesus commands and we have to obey."

—Albert Schweitzer

**"A charitable man is like an apple tree—he gives his fruit and is silent. The philanthropist is like the hen."**

—Charlee May Fraser

"Nowhere in the New Testament is the world commanded to come into the church and be saved. Everywhere the church is commanded to go into the world with the message of salvation."

—Dick Langford

**The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them.**

—Mark Twain

"You must accept it [God's will] before you know it. Whether or not you can do that depends on what opinion you have of God."

—Charles Allen

**"From the best bliss that earth imparts, we turn unfilled to Thee again."**

—Bernard of Clairvaux

"A converted man, armed with two or three Bible promises and overflowing with a rich experience of the forgiveness of sins, will win more converts in six weeks than will be won in six years by a well-read, well-indoctrinated church member who quotes from the creed and the theologians but has no vibrant 'I know' in his testimony."

—Paul S. Rees

**"With Thy calling and shouting, my deafness was broken; by Thy flashing and shining my blindness was put to flight; I drew in my breath and panted for Thee; Thou hast touched me, and I am on fire with Thy peace."**

—Augustine

" . . . when God commands to take the trumpet and blow a dolorous blast, it lies not in man's will what he will say or what he shall conceal."

—John Milton

**"Simon Stylites who sat 33 years on a flagpole has nothing on today's clergymen who seem to spend a lifetime sitting on a fence."**

—Anon

"You know as well as I do that life is meaningless; death is always there, like a standing proof of the absurdity of life."

—Andre Malraux

**"What matters happiness? Duty! There's a man's moment; this is yours."**

—Robert Browning

"Pride is the first and worst of sins and, on your way to sue for mercy, it will tug at your sleeve and seek to persuade you not to go through with it."

—W. E. Sangster

**"He who waits to do a great deal of good at once, will never do anything."**

—Samuel Johnson

"Every Christian community must realize that not only do the weak need the strong, but also that the strong cannot exist without the weak. The elimination of the weak is the death of the fellowship."

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Nazarene

# UPDATE

Compiled by Stephen M. Miller,  
Department of Education and the Ministry

## “A FIRST FOR OUR PREACHERS”



This issue of the *Preacher's Magazine* is the first of others which will be devoted to a single book of the Bible. Periodically such an issue will appear, and these may well become a part of the permanent commentary section of your library.

The idea is to provide another help for you, pastor, to become an effective exponent of the Word.

Your people come to church to hear “a good word from the Lord.” Your business is to find that word for them—in the Book. At whatever cost, be a man of the Word!

So, read this issue with that in mind.

The editors could not have chosen a better book with which to begin. The Epistle to the Ephesians has been called “the quintessence of Paulinism.” Here we discover the full flower of Paul’s gospel. Ephesians offers you the exciting opportunity of guiding your people into a fresh discovery of “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8).

Resolve now to spend several months with your congregation in this veritable diamond mine of New Testament truth. Read and reflect on this issue with that as your purpose.

Permit me, however, to give you a word of caution. Don’t begin prematurely. Take time to prepare yourself. The effectiveness of biblical preaching depends in large measure upon the degree of preparation—spiritual as well as intellectual—the preacher himself brings to the endeavor. Biblical preaching requires diligent and honest work, but nothing is more rewarding to either congregation or preacher than the anointed proclamation and exposition of the living Word of God.

So, prepare thoroughly for your journey through Ephesians. First, read the Epistle itself, again and again, in all the versions at hand. If you work in the Greek at all, use the original to get the true Pauline flavor. Read prayerfully, with pen in hand to jot down insights and ideas. Expose your own heart to the Word. Say, “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.” Obey the Word. Permit it to minister to both your mind and spirit.

You will soon exclaim with the Psalmist, “While I was musing the fire burned” (Ps. 39:3).

Secondly, use all the good helps you can find—beginning with the fine articles in this journal. Written by scholars who are themselves effective preachers, each article focuses on one aspect of Paul’s gospel in Ephesians. *Make your own commentary on Ephesians.* Using your helps, including quotes from articles, make a verse-by-verse commentary in a loose-leaf notebook. Keep adding quotations as you plough through different books. I suggest you begin with Willard H. Taylor’s excellent treatment of Ephesians in *Beacon Bible Commentary*. If your library is weak, use Dr. Taylor’s bibliography as a guide for buying other expositions. I have found F. F. Bruce’s *The Epistle to the Ephesians* an extremely helpful and inspirational guide. It is compact but highly suggestive.

Finally, after you have spent a number of weeks in this process of saturation, incubation, and assimilation, start preaching from Ephesians. Announce in advance your intention and urge your people to begin their own reading. May I be so immodest as to suggest for congregational use my own treatment of Ephesians in *Search the Scriptures*, available through the Publishing House? You may wish to have a supply of these on hand for sale or distribution just before you start.

Whether you announce and preach from a planned series is up to you. You may do this, or your approach may be more flexible. Let the Spirit guide. You will be amazed at the timeliness of your sermons, as the Spirit brings God’s Word and human need together.

Preach to yourself, and you will find your people listening. Preach devotionally. Preach doctrinally. Preach evangelistically. Preach ethically. Expose the Word. Prepare as if it all depended upon you, and then rely upon the Spirit as though it were all dependent upon Him. Fill your mind and heart, then burn!

If this issue makes any contribution toward helping you to become a better preacher of the Word, it will have attained its goal.

Here is Ephesians—what will you do about it?

—General Superintendent William M. Greathouse



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At the *Preacher's Magazine*

# The Editorial Chair

is supported by the wise counsel of a rotating editorial advisory board. Each issue of the new *Preacher's Magazine* will accent a quarterly theme. An advisory board of persons with experience and expertise on the subject is recruited to tell the editor and his staff what needs to be said about the accented theme. Serving without pay, the editorial board pictured on this page helped us put together this issue on "Ephesians." A riotous burst of applause is due these gentlemen.

Future boards will be helping us frame issues of the *Preacher's Magazine* on these pertinent themes:

- Christian Holiness
- Reviving the Prayer Meeting
- Worship
- . . . and many more



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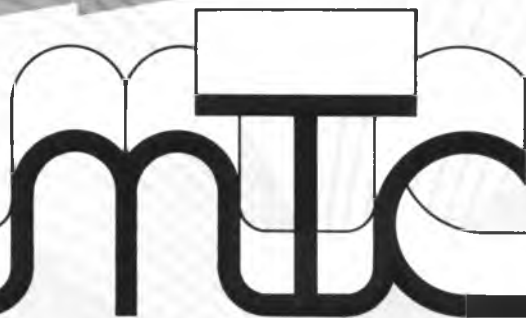
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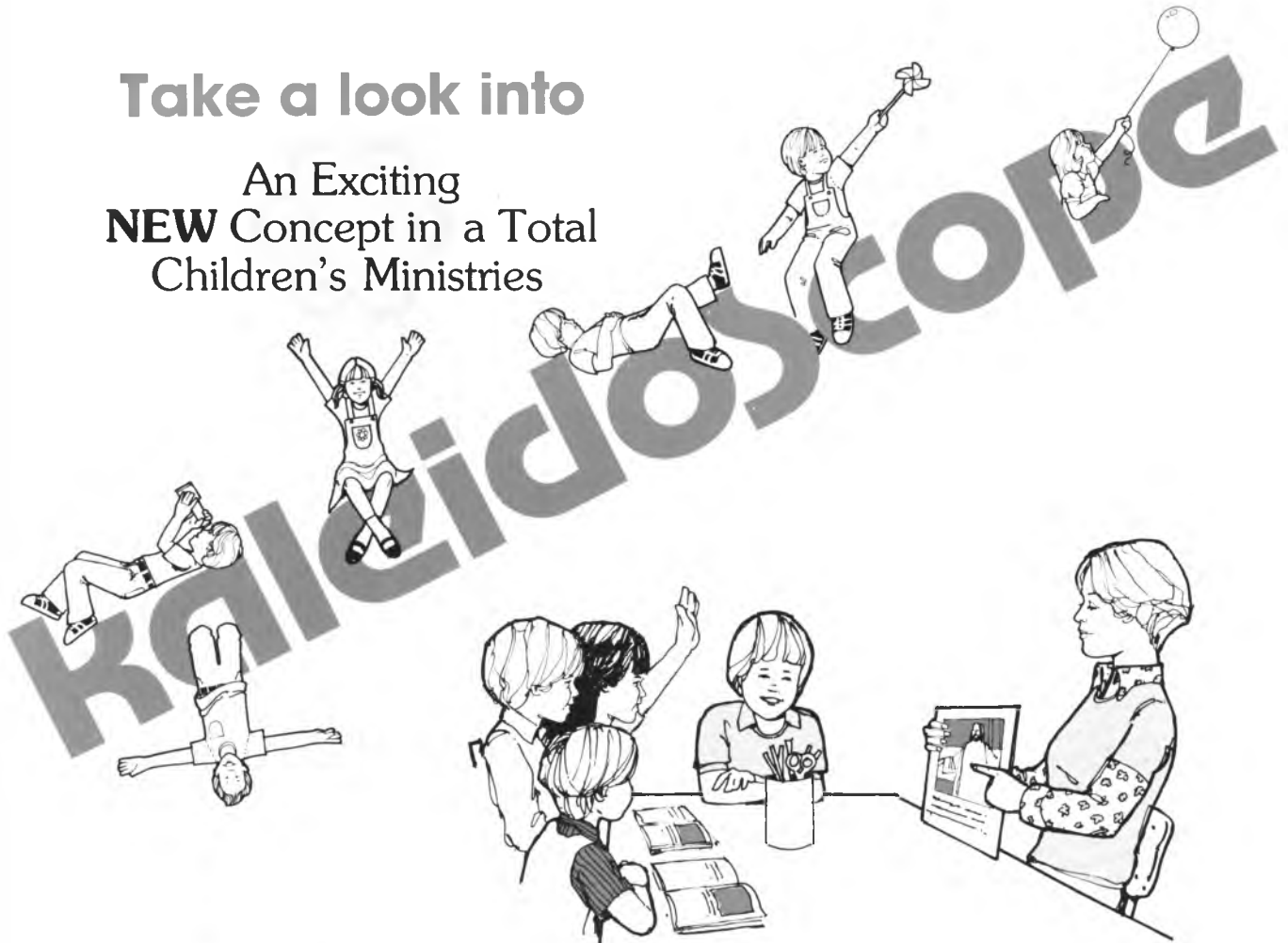
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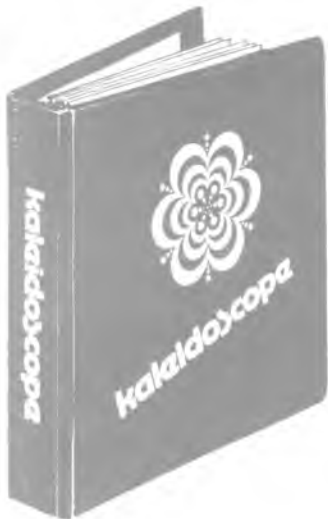
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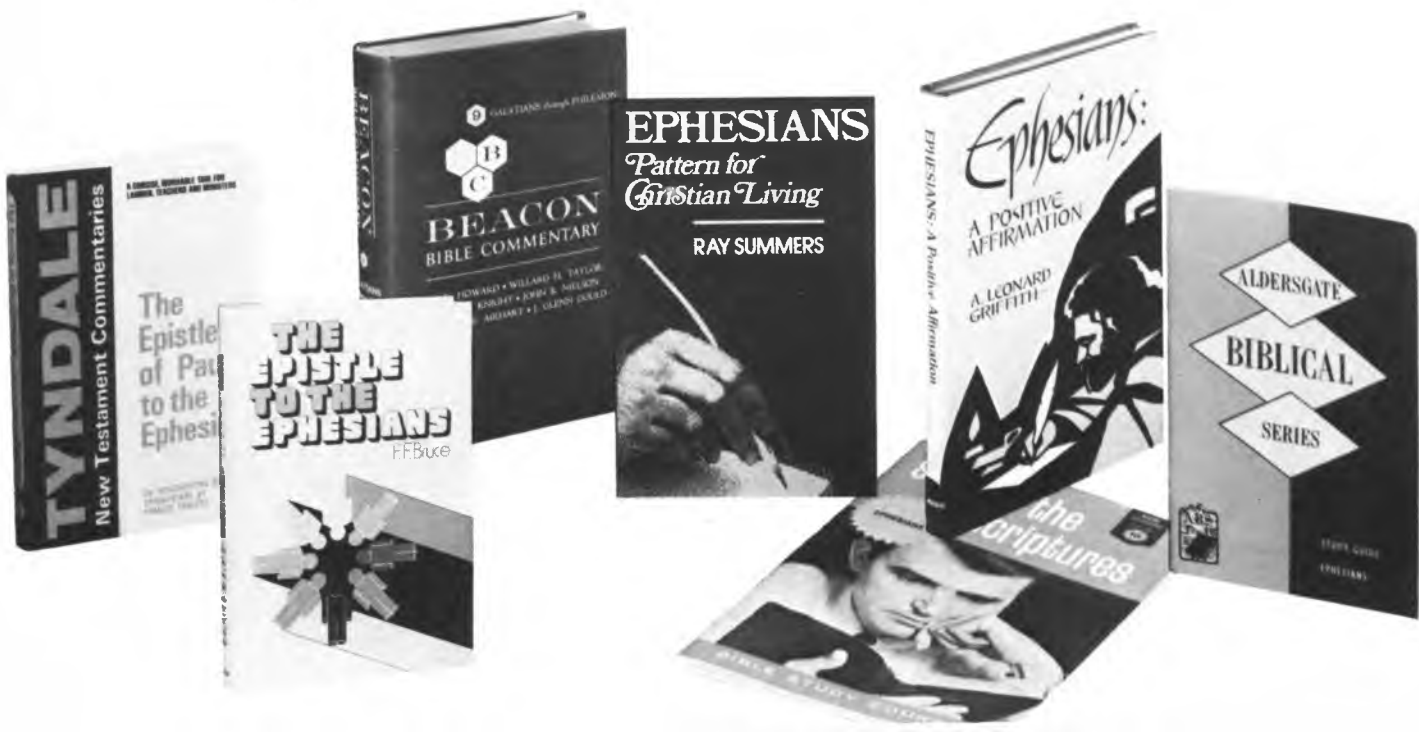
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**T**HE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT occupies a unique position in the structure of our church.

"The duties of the district superintendent shall be:" states paragraph 208 of the *Manual*. Following that is a long list of duties. They are varied and essential for the operation of the local churches on that district as well as the function of the district itself.

This responsibility deals with people as well as meeting decisions with church boards and churches. Inherent in his duties lies motivation, promotion, organization, and achievement of desired objectives for the church.

Finance—at both local and district levels—is ever in his realm of concern. The translation of denominational plans, procedures, and goals is channeled through him.

High on the list of the duties of this man is the leadership and decisions as to the calling of pastors for the churches on his district. The late General Superintendent Dr. Hardy C. Powers stated it well: "The ability to select the right man for each church determines the success of a district superintendent." To get the unfitted man in the wrong church makes it difficult for both pastor and people. So the district superintendent must be a keen judge of both church and pastor.

All of this adds up to the importance of the man—the district superintendent.

With characteristic brevity and a rather startling confidence in its people our church simply says through its *Manual*: "To elect, by two-thirds favorable vote, an elder to the office of district superintendent . . ." The only restriction placed on the voting delegates is: That person must be an elder and not yet 70 years of age. This brings us to the always implied and ever implicit belief that God will help "us" in selection of ministers for specified positions.

In the election, the church places a district area upon the shoulders of the district superintendent. It is indeed an awesome assignment—and may all district superintendents always regard it so.

Not only does the destiny of souls rest on his shoulders, but the welfare of pastors. The inescapable importance of the district superintendent has been highlighted by our history. It is written in the records of a vast array of district minutes. The district superintendent of leadership, vision, initiative, and strength leads a district forward into growth and success of churches and men. The one who coasts or fritters time away on trivia brings the district to a tragic stalemate and even regression.

A district superintendent's relationship with every church is vital. It is his judgment and decisions that they must depend upon. The members of a local church are not in a position to know the large number of ministers needed for selective judgment when considering future pastors. They must rely for the most part on him. Failure to provide guidance here is crucial. To misplace a man is to hurt both him and the church.

By repeated experiences of wise leadership in pastoral selection, a church board and church learn to depend on the judgment of the district superintendent. When this breaks down, there is no real alternate method, and a group of laymen trying to decide on their own in rejection of a superintendent's recommendations brings added dissatisfaction and results in inability to lead in other matters of importance. People have a natural psychological tendency to turn away from a district superintendent's leadership in all matters if he carelessly or mistakenly leads them into an unhappy pastoral situation.

While this is true for the church, it becomes doubly vital for the pastor being called. It is the pastor and his family who are affected by far the most. The pastor's ministry, his ability to function in a happy and contented situation, his family, his future are all affected by his ministerial decisions in life.

In those cases when through human error a less than satisfactory relationship in a church is developed, the district superintendent must not place all blame on the pastor and/or the church. He should be "big enough" as leader and decision maker to accept his responsibility and proceed to be as helpful as possible to alleviate the problem and guide toward a solution. If the district superintendent fails here the problem is compounded and the work of the kingdom of God is too often sadly affected for ill. The district superintendent helped make the arrangement and he is vital to the modifications needed.

In the district superintendent-pastor relationship where each is bound together in the advance of the church the high confidence level of Christian churchmanship is essential and effective for all concerned. For the pastor to turn from this good and working relationship to isolation is unfortunate for both, but more so for him. The Church of the Nazarene is a fellowshiping family of God's people and that working relationship is inherently implied, fostered, and indispensable.

Incumbent upon the pastor in all such decisions is the responsibility to prayerfully seek God's will. It is my sincere belief that God who calls a man to preach will also guide that man as to where to serve. No one can or should attempt to make that final decision for the pastor being called to a church.

But once a "call" is accepted, the pastor and district superintendent are entering a relationship and situation together; both are participants—and fully recognizing this can be a pleasure to both and a blessing to the church.

The pastor must strive to merit and fulfill the confidence of his district superintendent and the superintendent must be the willing ally of the pastor to establish himself as the divinely called leader of the church. For the district superintendent to "place" the pastor and then "disappear over the horizon" is a dereliction of duty.

So once again we come to the conclusion that since our *Manual* and church rely so heavily upon the "man of God," we of the ministry must "measure up" to that confidence and make the structure work well. A key person in that always has been and still is the district superintendent.



# The District Superintendent and Pastor . . . A Team Ministry!

By General Superintendent V. H. Lewis

# EDUCATION AND THE MINISTRY



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Kansas City, MO 64131

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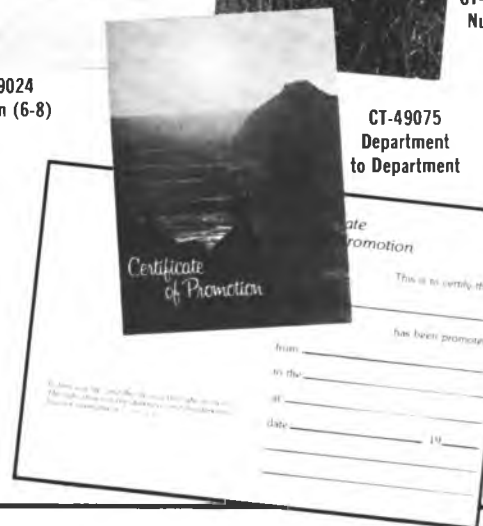
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◆**CHAPMAN, W. EMERSON & LOIS.** (C) Rte. 1, Box 115a, Miltonvale, KS 67466  
◆**CHEZEM, DALE E.** (R) Rte. 1, Box 153A, Lookout Mountain, TN 37350 (full-time)  
◆**CLARK, GENE.** (C) 104 Waddell St., Findlay, OH 45840  
◆**CLINE, JERRY & MADY.** (C) 1229 W. Mead Ave., Bowling Green, KY 42101  
◆**COBB, BILL & TERRI.** (C) P.O. Box 75512, Oklahoma City, OK 73107  
◆**COFFEY, RUSSELL E.** (C) Rte. 2, Hopkins, MI 49328  
◆**COLLINS, LUTHER.** (R) 1215 Lyndon St., South Pasadena, CA 91030 (full-time)  
◆**CONE, ANDREW F.** (C) 1032 Danby Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850  
◆**CONWAY EVANGELISTIC PARTY, TED.** (C) 905 Wallington Cir., Greenwood, IN 46142  
◆**COOK, RALPH.** 6355 N. Oak, Temple City, CA 91780

◆**CORBETT, C. T.** 459 N. Forest, Bradley, IL 60915  
◆**COX, CURTIS B.** (C) 2123 Memorial Dr., Alexandria, LA 71301  
◆**COY, JIM.** (C) 3205 Churchview Dr., Valparaiso, IN 46383  
◆**CRABTREE, J. C.** (C) 3436 Cambridge, Springfield, OH 45503  
◆**CRANDALL, V. E. & MRS.** (C) Indian Lake Nazarene Camp, Rte. 2, Box 7, Vicksburg, MI 49097  
◆**CRANE, BILLY D.** (C) Rte. 2, Box 186, Walker, WV 26180  
◆**CREWS, H. F. & MRS.** Box 18302, Dallas, TX 75218  
◆**CROFFORD, DON.** (R) 254 Southridge Dr., Rochester, NY 14626  
◆**CULBERTSON, BERNIE.** (C) 100 N.E. 8th Pl., Hermiston, OR 97838  
◆**DARNELL, H. E.** (C) P.O. Box 929, Vivian, LA 71082  
◆**DAVIDSON, CHARLES.** (C) 541 Gibson, Fremont, OH 43420  
◆**DAVIS, LEO.** 403 "N" St., Bedford, IN 47421  
◆**DEFRANK, JOSEPH.** (C) Box 342, Barberton, OH 44203  
◆**DELL, JIMMY.** (C) 4026 E. Flower St., Phoenix, AZ 85018  
◆**DELONG, RUSSELL V.** 5932 48th Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33709  
◆**DENNIS, DARRELL & FAMILY.** (C) c/o NPH\*  
◆**DENNISON, MARVIN E.** (R) 1208 S.E. Green Rd., Tecumseh, KS 66542  
◆**DISHON, CLARENCE.** (C) Rte. 8, Box 251J, Indianapolis, IN 46234  
◆**DISHON, MELVIN.** (C) 911 Edgefield Way, Bowling Green, KY 42101  
◆**DIXON, GEORGE & CHARLOTTE.** (C) Evangelists and Singers, c/o NPH\*  
◆**DODGE, KENNETH L.** (C) 2956 Rollingwood Dr., San Pablo, CA 94806  
◆**DOROUGH, JIM.** (R) Box 571, Bethany, OK 73008 (full-time)  
◆**DOSS, J. W.** (C) Rte. 7, Box 370, Crossville, TN 38553  
◆**DUNMIRE, RALPH & JOANN.** (C) 202 Garwood Dr., Nashville, TN 37211  
◆**DUNN, DON.** (C) P.O. Box 132, Bartlett, OH 45713  
◆**DURHAM, GARY, & CLARION TRIO.** (C) P.O. Box 1536, Springfield, MO 65805  
◆**EASTMAN, H. T.** 5102 Galley Rd., Space 317A, Colorado Springs, CO 80915  
◆**EASTMAN, RICK.** (R) Box 10026, Kansas City, MO 64111 (full-time)  
◆**EBY FAMILY SINGERS.** (R) 1905 Omohundro Ct., Nashville, TN 37210  
◆**ECKLEY, LYLE E.** P.O. Box 153, Laguna Park, TX 76634  
◆**EDWARDS, LEONARD T.** (R) 3427 Wallace Ave., Stockton, CA 95204  
◆**EDWARDS, LOU.** (C) 7042 Forest View Dr., West Chester, OH 45069  
◆**EDWARDS, TERRY W.** (R) Box 674, Frederick, OK 73542 (full-time)  
◆**ELLINGSON, LEE.** (C) c/o NPH  
◆**ELROD, RON.** (R) Box 7150, Flint, MI 48507 (full-time)  
◆**EVERLETH, LEE.** (C) 300 Aurora St., Marietta, OH 45750  
◆**EVENSEN, GREG.** (See Bishop-Evensen Gospel Team)  
◆**EVERMAN, WAYNE.** (C) Box 377, Stanton, KY 40380  
◆**FELTER, JASON H.** (C) c/o NPH\*  
◆**FILES, GLORIA, & ADAMS, DOROTHY.** (C) c/o NPH  
◆**FINE, LARRY.** (R) 16013 W. 151st Terr., Olathe, KS 66061  
◆**FINKBEINER, A. J.** 84 B St., Campbell, CA 95008  
◆**FINNEY, CHARLES & ISOBEL.** (C) 269 N.W. Lincoln Cir. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702  
◆**FISHER, WILLIAM.** (C) c/o NPH\*  
◆**FLORENCE, ERNEST E.** (C) P.O. Box 458, Hillsboro, OH 45133  
◆**FORD, JAMES & RUTH.** (C) Children's Workers, 1605 Laura St., Clearwater, FL 33515  
◆**FORMAN, JAMES A.** (C) Box 844, Bethany, OK 73008  
◆**FORTNER, ROBERT E.** (C) Box 322, Carmi, IL 62821  
◆**FRASER, DAVID.** (C) 1076 Meadow Dr., Beaver Creek, Xenia, OH 45385  
◆**FREEMAN, MARY ANN.** (C) Box 44, Ellisville, IL 61431  
◆**FRODGE, HAROLD C.** (R) Rte. 1, Geff, IL 62842  
◆**FULWOOD, JOANNE; & BOOTH, DIAN.** (R) 625 N.E. 6th St., Gainesville, FL 32601 (full-time)  
◆**GADBOW, C. D.** (C) 1207 S. Second St., Marshalltown, IA 50158  
◆**GAGNON, DAVE & KAREN.** (C) c/o NPH  
◆**GARDNER, GEORGE.** (C) Box 9, Olathe, KS 66061  
◆**GATES, KENNETH.** (C) 219 W. Hendricks, No. 7, Shelbyville, IN 46176

◆**GAWTHORP, WAYLAND.** (C) Box 115, Mount Erie, IL 62446  
◆**GILLESPIE, SHERMAN & ELSIE.** (R) 203 E. Highland, Muncie, IN 47303 (full-time)  
◆**GLAZE, HAROLD & MARILYN.** (R) P.O. Box A, Calamine, AR 72418  
◆**GLENDENNING, PAUL & BOBBIE.** (C) c/o NPH  
◆**GOODMAN, WILLIAM A.** (C) Rte. 3, Box 269, Bemidji, MN 56601  
◆**GORMAN, HUGH.** (R) P.O. Box 624, Melfort, Saskatchewan S0E 1A0 (full-time)  
◆**GORMANS, THE SINGING (CHARLES & ANN).** (C) 12104 Linkwood Ct., Louisville, KY 40229  
◆**GOSPEL SINGING POLICEMEN, THE** (See Bishop-Evensen Gospel Team)  
◆**GRAVAT, HAROLD F.** (C) 812 N. 9th, Lot 26, Mattoon, IL 61938  
◆**GRAY, JOSEPH & RUTH.** 2015 62nd St., Lubbock, TX 79412  
◆**GREEN, JAMES & ROSEMARY.** (C) Box 385, Canton, IL 61520  
◆**GRIMES, BILLY.** (C) Rte. 2, Jacksonville, TX 75766  
◆**GRIMM, GEORGE J.** (C) 820 Wells St., Sistersville, WV 26175  
◆**GRINDLEY, GERALD & JANICE.** (C) 539 E. Mason St., Owosso, MI 48867  
◆**GRINDLEY, R. E.** (C) 4754 McFadden Rd., Columbus, OH 43229  
◆**GUNTER, WILLIAM J.** (C) 515 Locust, Nampa, ID 83651  
◆**HAINES, GARY.** (C) c/o NPH\*  
◆**HALL, CARL N.** (C) c/o NPH\*  
◆**HALL, DAVID & BETTY.** (C) 3220 N. Wildon, Box 681, Springfield, MO 65803  
◆**HAMILTON, JAMES A.** 907 Cowan Ave., Conroe, TX 77301  
◆**HANCE, RAY.** 7705 N.W. 20th St., Bethany, OK 73008  
◆**HANCOCK, BOYD.** (C) Box 968, Rogers, AR 72756  
◆**HARLEY, C. H.** Burbank, OH 44214  
◆**HARRISON, J. MARVIN.** Box 13201, San Antonio, TX 78213  
◆**HARRISON, ROBERT.** (C) 3202 Benbrook, Austin, TX 78758  
◆**HARROLD, JOHN W.** 409 14th St., Rochelle, IL 61068  
◆**HATHAWAY, KENNETH.** (C) 605 W. Elder, Mustang, OK 73064  
◆**HAYES, CECIL G.** Rte. 2, Howard, OH 43028  
◆**HEASLEY, J. E. & FERN.** (C) 6611 N.W. 29th St., Bethany, OK 73008  
◆**HECKER, JOHANNA.** (C) c/o Church of the Nazarene, Longvue Dr., Wintersville, OH 43952  
◆**HENDERSON, DEE.** Rte. 1, Box 439A, Donaldson, AR 71941  
◆**HENDERSON, LATTIE V.** (R) 3006 Liberty Rd., Greensboro, NC 27406  
◆**HESS, BILL.** (R) P.O. Box 382, Owosso, OK 74055 (full-time)  
◆**HILDE, D. W.** (R) 3323 Belaire Ave., Cheyenne, WY 82001 (full-time)  
◆**HILL, HOWARD.** (R) Joyland Trailer Park, 2261 Gulf-to-Bay, Lot 319, Clearwater, FL 33515  
◆**HOECKLE, WESLEY W.** (C) 642 Vakey St., Corpus Christi, TX 78404  
◆**HOLCOMB, T. E.** 9226 Monterrey, Houston, TX 77078  
◆**HOLLEY, C. D.** (C) Rte. 2, Indian Lake Rd., Vicksburg, MI 49097  
◆**HOLLOWAY, WARREN O.** (C) Holiday Mobile Estates, D-14, Jessup, MD 20794  
◆**HOLLOWELL, JERRY.** (R) P.O. Box 30, Edgewood, TX 75117  
◆**HOOTS, BOB.** (C) 309 Adair St., Columbia, KY 42278  
◆**HORNE, ROGER & BECKY.** (R) P.O. Box 17496, Nashville, TN 37217  
◆**HUBBARD, MRS. WILLARD.** (C) 3213 W. Ave. T, Temple, TX 76501  
◆**HUBARTT, LEONARD.** (C) 1155 Henry St., Huntington, IN 46750  
◆**HUNDLEY, EDWARD J.** (R) 732 Drummond Ct., Columbus, OH 43214 (full-time)  
◆**INGLAND, WILMA JEAN.** (C) 322 Meadow Ave., Charleroi, PA 15022  
◆**INGRAM, TED.** (C) 2030 S. 21st, Rogers, AR 72756  
◆**IRWIN, ED.** (C) 7459 Davis Mill Cr., Harrison, TN 37341  
◆**ISENBERG, DON.** (C) Chalk Artist & Evangelist, 610 Deseret, Friendswood, TX 77546  
◆**JACKSON, CHUCK & MARY.** (C) Box 17226, Nashville, TN 37217  
◆**JACKSON, HERB.** (R) P.O. Box F, Eudora, KS 66025  
◆**JACKSON, PAUL & TRISH.** (C) Box 739, Meade, KS 67864  
◆**JAGGER, KENNETH.** (C) 4270 Loomis, Mo. A, Colorado Springs, CO 80906  
◆**JAGGER, MARVIN W.** (C) 5102 Galley Rd., 442 AW, Colorado Springs, CO 80919

(C) Commissioned (R) Registered ◆Preacher & Song Evangelist ◆Song Evangelist  
\*Nazarene Publishing House, Box 527, Kansas City, Mo. 64141.

NOTE: Names with no classification (R or C) are receiving ministerial pension but are actively engaged in the field of evangelism

JAMES, R. ODIS. 353 Winter Dr., St. James, MO 65559  
 ♦JANTZ, CALVIN & MARJORIE. (C) c/o NPH\*  
 JAYMES, RICHARD W. (C) 321 E. High Ave., Bellefontaine, OH 43311  
 JOHNSON, BOB. (R) Box 183, Bradley, IL 60915  
 JOHNSON, EDWARD J. (R) Rte. 1, Clearwater, MN 55320 (full-time)  
 ♦JOHNSON, RON. (C) 3208 Eighth St. E., Lewiston, ID 83501  
 JOHNSON, STANLEY G. (R) Box 6, Robinson, KS 66532  
 JONES, CLAUDE W. Rte. 4, Box 42, Bel Air, MD 21014  
 JONES, FRED D. (R) 804 Elissa Dr., Nashville, TN 37217  
 KEALIHNER, DAVID J. (C) 6927 Parkway Ln., Nampa, ID 83651  
 KELLY, R. B. 4706 N. Donald, Bethany, OK 73008  
 KEMPER, MARION W. & MRS. 2910 Harris St., Eugene, OR 97405  
 KLEVEN, ORVILLE H. 1241 Knollwood Rd., 46K, Seal Beach, CA 90740  
 KNIGHT, JOHN L. 4000 N. Thompsons Ave., Bethany, OK 73008  
 KOHR, CHARLES A. (C) Rte. 2, Box 360, Brookville, PA 15825  
 KRATZ, ELDON & KAY. (R) 1510 Sylvia, Olathe, KS 66061  
 LAING, GERALD D. (C) 2417-2 E. Jolly Rd., Lansing, MI 48910  
 LANIER, JOHN H. (C) West Poplar St., Junction City, OH 43748  
 ♦LASSELL, RAY & JAN. (C) Rte. 1, Box 81, Brownburg, IN 46112  
 ♦LAWHORN FAMILY, MILES. (R) P.O. Box 17008, Nashville, TN 37217 (full-time)  
 ♦LAXSON, WALLY & GINGER. (C) Rte. 3, Box 118, Athens, AL 35611  
 ♦LECKKRONE, LARRY D. (C) 1308 Highgrove, Grandview, MO 64030  
 LEE, C. ROSS. 1945 E. Broad St., New Castle, IN 47362  
 ♦LEICHTY SINGERS. (C) Rte. 1, Hicksville, OH 43526  
 LEMASTER, BENJAMIN D. (C) 1324 W. Eymann, Reedley, CA 93654  
 LESTER, FRED R. (C) 328 Meadowbrook Ln., Olathe, KS 66061  
 LIDDELL, P. L. (C) 3530 W. Allen Rd., Howell, MI 48843  
 LIGHTNER, JOE. (C) 4335 Raven Pl., Springfield, MO 65804  
 LINDER, LLOYD P. (C) 1018 Cedar St., Elkhart, IN 46514  
 LINEMAN, HAZEL FRALEY. (C) 10 S. Third St., Bradford, PA 16701  
 ♦LOMAN, LANE & JANET. (C) c/o NPH\*  
 LONG, WILMER A. (R) Rte. 2, Box 174, New Florence, PA 15944  
 LOWN, A. J. c/o NPH\*  
 ♦LUSH, RON. (C) c/o NPH  
 LUTHI, RON. (R) 709 Sheridan Rd., Olathe, KS 66061  
 ♦LYKINS, C. EARL. (R) 59059 Lower Dr., Goshen, IN 46526 (full-time)  
 LYONS, JAMES H. (C) 1011 W. Shaw Ct., No. 1, Whitewater, WI 53190  
 MACALLEN, LAWRENCE J. (C) 41808 W. Rambler Ave., Elyria, OH 44035  
 MACK, WILLIAM M. (C) W W Mobile Home Park, Lot 57, 2006 Ontario Rd., Niles, MI 49120  
 MADISON, G. H. 1000 Gwynn, Nashville, TN 37216  
 MANLEY, STEPHEN. (C) c/o NPH\*  
 MANN, L. THURL. (C) Rte. 1, Box 112, Elwood, IN 46036  
 MARLIN, BEN F. P.O. Box 6310, Hollywood, FL 33021  
 MATTER, DAN & ANN. (R) 2617 Carew St., Fort Wayne, IN 46805  
 MAYO, CLIFFORD. (C) Box 103, Allon, TX 79220  
 ♦MCABEE, JAMES. (R) 410 Freeman Ave., Seymour, IN 47274  
 McCANTS, H. T. (C) 606 Midland, Houston, TX 77022  
 McDONALD, CHARLIE. (C) 403 N. Jackson, Savannah, TN 38372  
 McDOWELL, DORIS M. (R) 819 Tampico, Walnut Creek, CA 94598  
 McKINNEY, ROY T. (C) 2319 Wakulla Way, Orlando, FL 32809  
 ♦McKINNON, JUANITA. (C) Box 126, Institute, WV 25112  
 McWHIRTER, G. STUART. (C) c/o NPH\*  
 MEEK, WESLEY, SR. (C) 5713 S. Shartel, Oklahoma City, OK 73109  
 MELVIN, DOLORES. (C) Rte. 1, Greenup, KY 41144  
 ♦MEREDITH, DWIGHT & NORMA JEAN. (C) c/o NPH\*  
 ♦MERRITT, HERBERT & MRS. (C) 7401 Belinder, Prairie Village, KS 66208  
 MEULMAN, JOSEPH. (C) 1221 S. Grove Rd., Ypsilanti, MI 48197  
 MEYER, BOB & BARBARA. (R) (Dynamics of Spiritual Growth), 155 Longview Ct., St. Marys, OH 45885  
 MEYER, VIRGIL G. 3112 Willow Oaks Dr., Fort Wayne, IN 46807  
 ♦MICKLEY, BOB & IDA MAE. (C) Box 1435, Lamar, CO 81052  
 MILLER, RUTH E. (C) 111 W. 46th St., Reading, PA 19606  
 MILLHUFF, CHUCK. (C) Box 801, Olathe, KS 66061  
 MINK, NELSON G. 1017 Gallatly St., Wenatchee, WA 98801  
 MONTGOMERY, CLYDE. (C) 2517 N. 12th St., Terre Haute, IN 47804  
 MORRIS, CLYDE H. (C) 101 Bryant Lake Rd., Nitro, WV 25143  
 MOULTON, M. KIMBER. 19562 Winward Ln., Huntington Beach, CA 92646  
 ♦MOYER, BRANCE. (C) c/o NPH  
 ♦MULLEN, DeVERNE. (C) 67 Wilstead, Newmarket, Ont., Canada  
 ♦MYERS, HAROLD & MRS. (C) 575 Ferris N.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
 ♦NEFF, LARRY & PATRICIA. (C) 625 N. Water St., Owosso, MI 48867  
 NEUSCHWANGER, ALBERT. c/o NPH  
 NORTON, JOE. Box 143, Hamlin, TX 79520  
 ORIHOO, DALE M. (C) 2936 Leesburg Rd. S.W., Washington Court House, OH 43160  
 OVERTON, WM. D. (C) Family Evangelist & Chalk Artist, 798 Lake Ave., Woodbury Heights, NJ 08097  
 ♦OYLER, CALVIN. (R) Rte. 3, Box 100, Newton, KS 67114  
 OYLER, DON. (R) 144 W. Walnut, Liberal, KS 67901  
 ♦PARADIS, ROBERT J. (R) 405 Chatham St., Lynn, MA 01902  
 ♦PARR, PAUL G. & DOROTHY. (C) Rte. 1, Box 167A, White-town, IN 46075  
 ♦PASSMORE EVANGELISTIC PARTY, THE A. A. (C) c/o NPH\*  
 PECK, W. A. (C) Rte. 2, Box 65A, Malden, MO 63863  
 PERDUE, NELSON. (C) 3732 E. Rte. 245, Cable, OH 43009  
 PFEIFER, DON. (C) P.O. Box 165, Waverly, OH 45690  
 ♦PIERCE, BOYCE & CATHERINE. (C) Rte. 4, Danville, IL 61832  
 PITTEGER, TWYLA. (C) 413 N. Bowman St., Mansfield, OH 44903  
 ♦PITTS, PAUL. (C) 10909 Westgate, Overland Park, KS 66210  
 ♦PORTER, JOHN & PATSY. (C) c/o NPH\*  
 POTTER, LYLE & LOIS. 14362 Bushard St., Sp. No. 133, Westminster, CA 92683  
 POTTS, TROY C. 2952 Cameo, Dallas, TX 75234  
 ♦POWELL, FRANK. (C) Box 5427, Kent, WA 98031  
 PRESSON, DWIGHT. (C) 3632 Barbaggio Dr., St. Louis, MO 63129  
 PRICE, JACK. (C) Box 324, Roseville, IL 61473  
 PRIVETT, CALVIN C. (C) 234 Echo Hill Dr., Rossville, GA 30741  
 ♦QUALLS, PAUL M. (C) 5441 Lake Jessamine Dr., Orlando, FL 32809  
 ♦RAKER, W. C. & MARY. (C) Box 106, Lewiston, IL 61542  
 RAYCROFT, R. N. 4009 Bradley Ave., Rte. 10, Howell, MI 48843  
 READER, GEORGE H. D. Box 396, Chrisman, IL 61924  
 REDD, GARY. (R) Rte. 2, Box 190, Newton, TX 75966 (full-time)  
 REED, DOROTHY. (C) Box 814, Hannibal, MO 63401  
 REEDY, J. C. (C) 449 Bressee Ave., Bourbonnais, IL 60914  
 REYNOLDS, PHIL. (C) 1779 Georgesville Rd., Columbus, OH 43228  
 RICHARDS, LARRY & PHYLLIS (COULTER). (R) 2479 Madison Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46225  
 RICHARDSON, PAUL E. (C) 421 S. Grand Ave., Bourbonnais, IL 60914  
 RICHMOND, RON. (R) 129 Meadow Valley Rd., Ephrata, PA 17522 (full-time)  
 RIDEN, K. R. (C) c/o NPH\*  
 RIST, LEONARD. (C) 3544 Brookgrove Dr., Grove City, OH 43123  
 ROAT, THOMAS. (R) 6040 Walnut, Mount Morris, MI 48458  
 ROBERTS, WADE W. (C) Rte. 3, Box 560, Olive Hill, KY 41164  
 ROBERTSON, JAMES H. (C) 2014 Green Apple Ln., Arlington, TX 76014  
 ROBINSON, TED L. (C) c/o NPH\*  
 RODGERS, CLYDE B. (R) 505 Lester Ave., Nashville, TN 37210 (full-time)  
 ROTHWELL, MEL-THOMAS. (C) 2108 Alexander Ln., Bethany, OK 73008  
 RUSHING, KEN & EDNA. (R) 3621 N.W. 97th St., Miami, FL 33147 (full-time)  
 RUTHERFORD, BOB. (C) Rte. 1, Lynchburg, TN 37352  
 RUTHERFORD, STEPHEN. (R) Box 204, La Vergne, TN 37086 (full-time)  
 SANDERS, RUFUS. (C) 834 Trezevant, Memphis, TN 38108  
 SCARLETT, DON. (C) 7941 Nichols Rd., Windham, OH 44288  
 SCHMELZENBACH, ELMER. 1416 Mary, Oklahoma City, OK 73127  
 SCHOONOVER, MODIE. (C) 1508 Glenview, Adrian, MI 49221  
 SCHRIEBER, GEORGE. (C) 8642 Cherry Ln., P.O. Box 456, Alta Loma, CA 91701  
 SCHULTZ, ERNEST & ELVA. 1241 Lakeshore Dr., Rte. 2, Cleveland, WI 53015  
 SELFIDGE, CARL. (R) Rte. 3, Box 530, Joplin, MO 64801  
 SEXTON, ARNOLD (DOC) & GARNETT. (C) 1116 Highland Ave., Ashland, KY 41101  
 ♦SHARP, CHARLES & FAMILY. (C) Rte. 4, 11147 30th St. S., Vicksburg, MI 49097  
 SHARP, WILMA (GEEDING). (C) 1112 Englewood, Rantoul, IL 61866  
 SHARPLES, J. J. & MRS. (R) 41 James Ave., Yorkton, Saskatchewan, Canada (full-time)  
 SHEA, ALBERT J. 541 N. Park Ave., Aurora, IL 60506  
 ♦SHOMO, PHIL & MIRIAM. (C) 517 Pershing Dr., Anderson, IN 46011  
 SHUMAKE, C. E. (C) P.O. Box 1083, Hendersonville, TN 37075  
 SINGELL, TIM. (R) 14300 Nelson Dr., Mount Vernon, OH 43050 (full-time)  
 ♦SIPES EVANGELISTIC TEAM. (R) Box 16243, Wichita, KS 67216 (full-time)  
 SISK, IVAN. (C) 4327 Moraga Ave., San Diego, CA 92117  
 ♦SLACK, DOUGLAS. (C) 424 Lincoln St., Rising Sun, IN 47040  
 ♦SLATER, GLEN & VERA. (C) 320 S. 22nd St., Independence, KS 67301  
 SMITH, CHARLES HASTINGS. (C) Box 937, Bethany, OK 73008  
 ♦SMITH, DUANE. (C) c/o NPH\*  
 SMITH, FLOYD P. (C) 9907 White Oak Ave., No. 114, Northridge, CA 91325  
 SMITH, HAROLD L. (C) 3711 Germania Rd., Snover, MI 48472  
 ♦SMITH, OTTIS E., JR., & MARGUERITE. (C) 60 Grant St., Tidioute, PA 16351  
 ♦SNIDER, C. W. & VICTORIA. (C) 706 S. 15th St., Vincennes, IN 47591  
 SNOW, DONALD E. 58 Baylis S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49507  
 ♦SPARKS, ASA & MRS. 91 Lester Ave., Nashville, TN 37210  
 SPINKS, ROBERT L. (R) 718 Sequoya Tr., Irving, TX 75060  
 ♦SPRAGUE EVANGELISTIC FAMILY. (C) c/o NPH\*  
 SPROWLS, EARL. (C) 7021 Ranch Rd., Lakeland, FL 33801  
 STAFFORD, DANIEL. (C) Box 11, Bethany, OK 73008  
 ♦STARK, EDDIE & MARGARET. (R) 6906 N.W. 36th St., Bethany, OK 73008  
 STARNES, SAM LEE. (C) 448 S. Prairie, Bradley, IL 60915  
 ♦STEELE, KEN & JUDY. (R) 2501 Massey Rd., Adel, GA 31620  
 STEEN, CURTIS. (C) 6809 N.W. 25th, Bethany, OK 73008  
 STEGAL, DAVID. (R) Rte. 2, Box 139, Yukon, OK 73099 (full-time)  
 STENGER, E. H. (C) 438 W. Judson, Youngstown, OH 44511  
 STEVENSON, GEORGE E. (C) 4021 Pebble Dr. S.E., Roanoke, VA 24014  
 ♦STOCKER, W. G. (C) 1421 14th Ave. N.W., Rochester, MN 55901  
 ♦STONE FAMILY EVANGELISTIC TEAM. (R) 3655 El Morro Rd., Lot 127, Colorado Springs, CO 80910  
 STREET, DAVID. (C) Rte. 1, Ramsey, IN 47166  
 STRICKLAND, RICHARD L. (C) 4723 Cullen Ave., Springfield, OH 45503  
 STUTTS, BILL. (R) Box 187, Buffalo, KS 66717  
 SWANSON, ROBERT L. (C) Box 274, Bethany, OK 73008  
 ♦SWEENEY, ROGER & EULETA. (C) Rte. 1, Sharon Grove, KY 42280  
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# New Training Texts for Local Church Ministries

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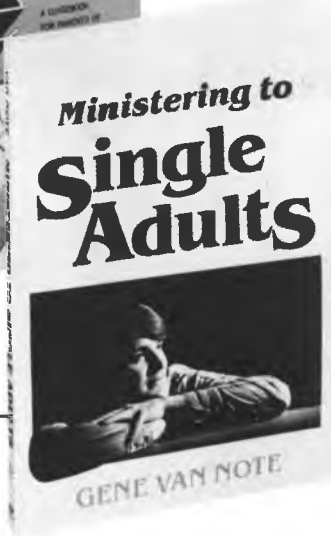


## Ministering to Single Adults

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A study to give guidance to pastors and laymen seeking to minister effectively to the single adults who are so often neglected or ignored in the ministries of the church. CST Unit 401a, *Ministering to Single Adults*

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CST Unit 510a,

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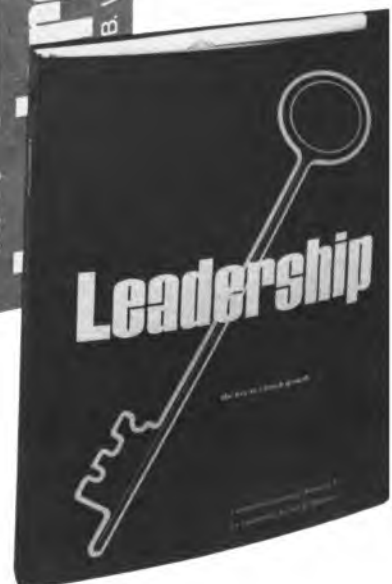
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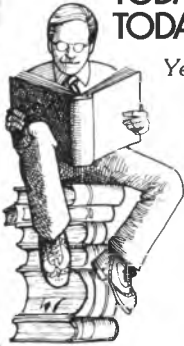
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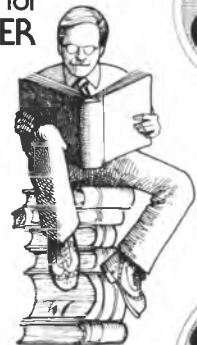
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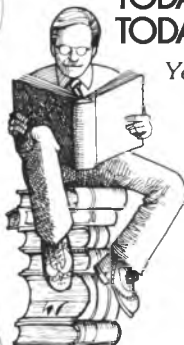
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# TODAY'S BOOKS for TODAY'S PREACHER

Every book reviewed in this column may not agree at all points with evangelical holiness positions. Yet each book contains sufficient useful material to warrant bringing it to our readers' attention.

## Developing Dynamic Stewardship

By Raymond B. Knudsen (Abingdon, 1978; 127 pp., paperback, \$3.95).

Knudsen has given us a very enlightening book on the magnetic effects of stewardship as a total life assignment. His observations and questions shed light on the practical implications of commitment and giving.

He has found a way to write about familiar topics in a fresh, imaginative way that reveals depth, with lightness.

The author also deals with the implication of our gospel. He says, "the task before us is not merely to share, to give modestly . . . it is to be generous, to be gracious, and to be considerate."

For the pastor who thinks only of dollar signs when the word stewardship is mentioned, Knudsen attempts to develop an appreciation for the fact that God has provided us with resources to do His work. "Stewardship is a quality of life . . . which is inseparable from our dedication and responsibilities as Christians."

This book would be a valuable resource for a topical series in the midweek hour or for sermons using Bible characters as the main theme.

—William D. Porter

## Overhearing the Gospel

By Fred B. Craddock (Abingdon, 1978; 140 pp., hard cover, \$6.95).

Craddock's book, with its subtitle "Preaching and Teaching the Faith to Persons Who Have Already Heard," is based upon his



Lyman Beecher Lecture Series at Yale University in 1978.

Craddock's treatment of the subject is thorough, provocative, mind-stretching, and at times controversial.

The book is divided into two parts: the first, dealing with what he would call "the illusion"—that is, that the teller (the preacher or lecturer) thinks the listener (the congregation or class) is able to grasp the story (the sermon or lecture). But the fact is the hearers may not have participated in the truth of what has been presented.

In the second part of the book, "An Attack upon the Illusion," he draws heavily from Kierkegaard and proposes that the preacher or lecturer prepare the message and set the scene as though the hearer or listener were actually "overhearing."

Perhaps a quotation would help: "If the story is the right story and if the teller narrates with insight and empathetic imagination, conscious of but not occupied with the listener, then the one who overhears will hear."

—Bruce T. Taylor

evangelist, and church leader in the Wesleyan movement. In evaluating this contemporary challenge, Billy Graham says, "Everybody should read this book."

Smith is alarmed that many Christian programs, while good in themselves, are taking the place of genuine New Testament evangelism.

One subtle substitute for evangelism is seen in the church that becomes so busy coming and going to meetings it never makes a dent in Satan's armor. There is beauty in meeting together, but it must not be the end.

Genuine evangelism is also brushed aside when the pastor becomes involved in everything except that which he has been called to do: reach the lost and motivate the Christians to become trained, consistent soul winners.

*Real Evangelism* is the finest volume I have read since coming to the Department of Evangelism at Nazarene Headquarters over three years ago.

—Don J. Gibson

## Real Evangelism

By Bailey E. Smith (Broadman, 1978; 168 pp., hardback, \$5.95).

Smith's book, *Real Evangelism* should be read by every pastor,

## Jesus as They Saw Him

By William Barclay (Eerdmans, 1978; 429 pp., paperback, \$4.95).

There are a few select books which capture the imagination and challenge the mind of a minister in an unforgettable measure.



*Jesus as They Saw Him* is one of those special books.

To follow the mind-set of this great expositor of scripture as he surveys the biblical names given Jesus, is to be gripped with an incredible fascination.

As I caught the strategy of Barclay in the first several chapters of the book, I felt I was in the very presence of Christ.

Many of us have found Barclay to be a rich source for our sermon preparation. This book is no exception. The material is arranged to allow for good homiletical treatment.

Barclay does not hesitate to tackle difficult themes such as the unpardonable sin, and the Judgment. His contrasting concepts of the Jewish hope of a Messiah and the true Jesus is most interesting.

I recommend *Jesus as They Saw Him* to every minister as a volume you will read and reread for your personal edification as well as for sermon material.

—C. William Ellwanger

### Through Sorrow into Joy

By Hugh Salisbury (Bethany Fellowship, 1977; 78 pp., paper, \$2.95).

Written from the crucible of sorrow that followed the tragic death of his 12-year-old son, author Hugh Salisbury shares the depth of struggle he and his family endured in coming to terms with death.

"Many, many questions came to our minds," he says, "because we were faced with the greatest enemy of all, Death." No one could be fully prepared for the encounter, but Salisbury found comfort and hope in the scriptural assurances that we can trust God, and that we have a certain promise of the resurrection. When faced with the recurring expression of consolation from people who referred to the "loss" of their son, Salisbury exults, "Nothing is lost when you know where it is—Praise God!"

This book is an excellent reflection of victory through sorrow. It ought to be frequently used as a gift book for families during times of sorrow.

—Jesse C. Middendorf

### The New International Commentary on the New Testament—Revelation

By Robert H. Mounce (Eerdmans, 1977; 397 pp., cloth, \$10.95).

This commentary is an example of sound, sane, evangelical scholarship at its best. It is a particularly notable achievement since its subject is notorious for having been plundered and pulverized by the merchants of sensationalism.

Mounce, whose reputation as an evangelical scholar is already established, begins his commentary with a review of apocalyptic, concluding that if the author was not John the apostle, then we do not know who he was. He follows this with a review of the various approaches to interpretation, drawing from it the principle that while John's predictions were in terms of his own culture, they find their fulfillment in the last days of history.

Regarding the crucial issue of the structure of the book, he holds that the *literary* structure is not to be taken for *historical* structure. The message of the book is the final triumph of God, with the stress on the intensity of the struggle rather than the sequence of it.

The exegesis, which is full and clear, exemplifies these principles. For example, the 144,000 denote the Church in whole, not just in part; the two witnesses symbolize the witnessing Church during the final period of persecution; the seven kings denote Roman power symbolically.

No commentary on Revelation ever has commanded or ever will command universal assent to all its interpretations. However, the Book has suffered from two attitudes: the extravagant claims of superliteralists; and the benign neglect of those too sober to embrace literalism but lacking any convincing alternative.

This book should be read by both groups; and should be closely and carefully studied by every preacher before he opens his mouth on Revelation again. If he has not opened his mouth about Revelation at all of late, this

book may give him the confidence to do so.

I recommend it unreservedly.  
—Alex Deasley

### Evangelical Roots: A Tribute to Wilbur Smith

By Kenneth Kantzer, editor. (Thomas Nelson, 1978; 250 pp., hardback, \$8.95).

This collection of essays by well-known evangelicals was originally planned as a tribute to Wilbur Smith while he still lived. In fact, he selected the authors. But he died in 1976, just short of his 82nd birthday. So the work is a memorial volume to the man who helped shape grass-roots religious thought among fundamentalists and other orthodox believers.

*Evangelical Roots* does Wilbur Smith justice. It carries the themes most dear to him: a bit of evangelical history, much in the way of theological apologetics, and more concerning the defense, use, and message of the Bible.

Harold Lindsell's chapter "Another Battle About the Bible" takes on "higher criticism" and again does what Lindsell does best—knocks the stuffings out of the pretensions of some modern biblical scholarship.

Roger Nicole's fine essay "The Relationship Between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology" is just the ticket for the pastor who is concerned about folks who want to believe without thinking.

The other articles—by Bruce, Kantzer, Packer, and Stott—on biblical authority and inspiration are intellectually and theologically responsible and highly useful to the pastor as background material for sermon and instruction, though they are not, strictly speaking, in line with our own best thinking concerning the Bible.

The title, *Evangelical Roots*, should be taken in a theological-philosophical sense, not the historical. And "evangelical" here means "in the Reformed tradition." Take it from there, and you've bought yourself a very valuable book.

—Paul Merritt Bassett

# BUILDING TRUST AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PASTOR AND PEOPLE

by Jarrell Garsee\*

**T**here are a number of factors which contribute to "building" effective relationships between pastor and people. The list which follows is not exclusive, and there may be other factors, or other functions of these factors. These are the ones, however, which have proven to be significant in my pastorate.

**1. INTER-INTEGRITY.** A pastor must have a basic *trustworthiness*; the congregation must have a basic *trust-willingness*. A pastor whose heart has been cleansed by the Holy Spirit, who exhibits a "spiritual transparency," who exercises a "voluntary vulnerability" without being negative or easily hurt, and who trusts daily (and hourly) in God will be *trustworthy*. A people who have experienced betrayal of trust may have to know a period of healing before they become trust-willing. Earnest prayer and evident patience, mingled with love, forgiveness, and large doses of biblical exposition, can bring a congregation to the point of *trust-willingness*.

**2. INTER-CONTINUITY.** Neither pastor nor people should live in a relationship where their "fingers are crossed" with regard to commitment to one another. A pastor who has never "unpacked psychologically," who is still living either in the *past* or in the *future*, cannot build trust.

Let me expand on this a bit. Within the last year I heard the pastor of a large Nazarene church say the average length of a Nazarene pastorate is three years and one month. Then later I heard the pastor of another large Nazarene church say that many of his people did not entrust him with their problems and deep inner needs until he had been in his present church for nearly five years. It is probably significant that they have both been in their churches more than 10 years.

You do not build trust while "keeping your eye on the main chance" and "waiting for something to open up." In *Get Ready to Grow* (p. 97), Dr. Orjala

quotes noted church-growth expert Lyle Schaller as saying the most significant growth for most churches comes in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth years of the pastor. If we leave after three years and one month, it is little wonder that we "heal the hurts of our people lightly" and never establish the trust which encourages deep communication.

**3. INTER-DEPENDENCE.** People who are trusted are people who have learned to trust. Do you really trust your people? When you give them a responsibility, do you keep looking over their shoulder to make sure they do it "your way"? Your trusting them will make them want to live up to your confidence and they will then be encouraged also to show the same trusting attitude toward others. How many of them have you put in responsible staff positions? How much of your board function is really carried by the people? Pastors must not only be trustworthy, but they must be *trusting*.

Sometimes laymen feel used, manipulated, and expendable instead of vitally necessary, and depended upon. Our emphasis upon statistical success can become a cause of mistrust and miscommunications if our people believe we see them as dollar signs, numbers, or instruments to bring about desirable ends.

Then, too, how much of our own lives is lived in dependence upon our people? Do they see us as self-sufficient, able to handle it without them? Long ago I read the story of a bachelor missionary who labored for years with little success, and then grew ill and unable to care for himself. He was forced to depend on the people to whom he had ministered, and found that "the ones you allow to help you are always the ones you help."

**4. INTER-RELATEDNESS.** The shepherd will "relate" to his people at the point of their deep needs—weeping with those who mourn by a newly dug grave, and rejoicing with those who dedicate their new home to the service of Christ in discipling their children and evangelizing their neighborhood.

Doing fulfilling things together, fellowshiping

\*Jarrell Garsee is pastor of the Boise, Ida., First Church of the Nazarene.

together in the Word and in the Spirit, loving one another in concrete deeds—all of these not only fulfill the law of Christ, but create a strong foundation of trust and dig deep furrows for laying cables of communication.

**5. INTER-COMMUNICATION.** Every church has several different levels of communication: pastor to people formally (in the pulpit), pastor to people informally (in homes and office and by lake), people to pastor formally (“someone’s in need”), people to pastor informally (“share two days of our vacation”), people to people formally (“would you teach a Sunday school class?”), and people to people informally (“How’s your boy doing this year in football?”).

It is vital for the pastor to understand that building the *informal message-ways*, making them warm and effective, is necessary in order for the *formal message-ways* to function well.

Every method must be utilized to build this three-way system of communication—letters, cards, notes, announcements, “Fifteen Minutes with Pastor” before the evening service, published minutes, forums, front page of the midweek bulletin, luncheon dates with the men of the congregation, home-calling, open house at the parsonage, hospital calling, fishing trips with the men, attending Sunday school class parties, substitute teaching in adult Sunday school classes, being “real” in the pulpit and during the pastoral prayer, encouraging feedback on “Friendship and Worship” cards, being accessible, available, and communicative.

I heard something two years ago that both excited me and scared me. It was said that by the time a pastor has been in his church for three years, his church has taken on *his personality*. That is probably especially true in the area of developing mutually effective and beneficial communication.

**6. INTER-ACTION.** This is based on the belief that a member of the “Body of Christ” needs an experience in God’s Word, by the Spirit, of fellowship, at three different levels of involvement: The celebration (whole group), the congregation (Sunday school class), and the cell (home Bible study, CareRing, or discipling class). It is further based upon the belief that trust and communication cannot be idealized between pastor and people until they are mutually involved in ministering to one another, utilizing their gifts and abilities to edify one another.

We have purposely embarked upon a five-year program, which progressively creates new avenues for ministry, with the certainty that one of the side effects will be deepened trust and improved communication.

The first year, we placed every family on our Sunday school roll in a CareRing, trained CareRing leaders, then asked them to meet for fellowship and mutual support no less than once a month. This created an appreciation for one another and for fellowship, which has been continued into the second year by individual Sunday school classes.

It also created a deep desire in some people for more regular, structured Bible study.

So in year two we trained home Bible study leaders, enlisted enrollees, and held 10 studies each week for the year. This in turn created increased desire for more people to be involved in home Bible studies, and a deeper desire on the part of some for more in-depth discipling in the Word. So in year three (which we are entering now) we will double the number of home Bible Studies *and* begin at least two discipling classes during the year. Next year we will add training in personal evangelism, and then in year five, we’ll come full-circle again, to an Undershepherd Ministry where our entire city is divided up geographically into groups of people who minister to one another.

**7. INTER-PENETRATION.** Building trust and communication demands that new people with new spiritual life be brought into our fellowship. For us, this has included a long and meaningful dialogue on our purpose as a church (a great aid to mutual trust and understanding), strenuous efforts to follow up on all visitors and vital community contacts, integration of new people into worship and Sunday school, and small-group emphasis upon prayer (prayer chain, people volunteering to be in prayer for each day of the month), and dependence upon the Holy Spirit for His life poured out in meaningful, life-changing evangelism.

When there is evident growth, fulfillment, joy, excitement, and ministry there will also be a deepening of trust and an openness of communication that is beautiful.

Time fails to elaborate on *Inter-Cession*—coming into God’s presence for each other; *Inter-Vention*—going into the community at the point of deep need; *Inter-Effectiveness*—God getting into the act with surprising joy and power; *Inter-Compassion*—hurting together; and *Inter-Twining*—not being able to separate between the feelings and philosophies of pastor and people. But they *can all happen*—praise God!

He is not quite so lyrical about it, but Donald Gerig, in a *Christianity Today* article (vol. 30, p. 816) entitled “Developing a Climate of Trust,” says: “Finally, one must allow time for trust to develop. It takes time to alter attitudes. The deeper the mistrust, the more important it is to continue patiently to prove oneself trusting and trustworthy.”

“Virtually every success story in church growth has as one of its chief ingredients a climate of trust. When that climate exists, plans can be made, new programs can be attempted, other ideas can be scrapped—all because people trust one another to be doing what is ultimately best for the cause of Christ.”

I’m glad that Jesus’ discourse on “bearing fruit” (John 15) begins to come true when trust and communication between pastor and people becomes deep enough for Christ’s “one mind” to live through them.

# THE PAID STAFF + THE VOLUNTEER STAFF = A TEAM

by James L. Sankey\*

**G**od's call to convey the truth of His Word is more urgent than ever. Those who like Isaiah cry, "Here am I send me," are in strong demand to make disciples through all nations. It is imperative to enlist all the help that is available to fulfill our responsibility as Christians.

The person who has felt the call of God to be a pastor or an associate in any of the "paid ministries" of the church is not the only one responsible for such a divine assignment. Congregations and church boards must be continually reminded of this, especially when they are moving into a multiple staff ministry for the first time. It has been assumed that by the addition of an associate, especially in the field of youth and children, that the volunteer workers may then sit back and relax, because they now have a person being paid "to take care of things."

The Church of the Nazarene recognized this possibility in the early years of multiple staff ministry and included the following paragraph in its *Manual*.

*"There may be those who feel called to prepare themselves for certain vital lay services in the church, either part time or full time. The church recognizes the place of such lay workers, and yet it is basically constituted a voluntary institution, with service to God and others the duty and privilege of all its members according to their abilities. When paid assistance in the local church,*

*whether ministerial or lay, becomes necessary for greater efficiency, it must be such as will not devitalize the spirit of free service by all its members or tax the church's financial resources"* (Church of the Nazarene *Manual*, 1976, pp. 95-96).

When this concept is not communicated clearly to the people of the church, the result usually is frustration and ineffectiveness. An energetic young person who really feels called to staff ministry can quickly become disillusioned if he is assumed to be the only one who can chaperone, teach, drive the bus, lead the music, cook, get out the newsletter, and on and on. Soon his tenure is cut short by "multiple-role schizophrenia."

How do we counteract this trend?

### 1. Role Clarification.

Make a clear identification of responsibilities that are understood between the pastor and staff, the governing boards, and people of the congregation. This may be by job description, portfolio, or other means of role clarification. The best way a staff person can function effectively through a long tenure is to have it understood that he or she is to be an "enabler"—one who assists the volunteer staff person to find fulfillment and success in ministry.

### 2. Participation and Cooperation.

We should show our people that a growing church must have participation and cooperation in regard to the investment of their talents. Objectives and goals

should be arrived at collectively by the staff and the volunteers, based on the expressed needs of the people. Recruiting and enlistment for specific assignments may be done more easily when the purpose is clearly expressed.

### 3. Enabling ministry.

The staff person really becomes the "enabler" when he can help the volunteer know exactly what he is to do. This is best done on a one-to-one basis, but of necessity must sometimes be done in small groups or even in workshop or seminar session. Longevity of service is usually in direct proportion to how well trained and informed the volunteer worker is.

### 4. Communication.

Continually maintain communication between professional staff and volunteer leadership. Regular and frequent conferences or meetings are needed to maintain good accountability and measurement of progress.

### 5. Encouragement.

The "ministry of encouragement" should be a continuing source of reinforcement to help the volunteer worker know that what he is doing is needed and noticed. Notes, telephone calls, personal conversation, meals together, all should be part of an ongoing pattern to motivate a person in his assignment. Award banquets, or services of public recognition for individuals or groups should be a regular part of our planning.

The "paid staff" and the "volunteer staff" can truly become a "multiple staff," and their effectiveness will be multiplied, as they work together as a team.

\*James L. Sankey is minister of Christian education at Nashville First Church of the Nazarene.

# LIVING WATERS

by D. I. Vanderpool

D. I. Vanderpool is a general superintendent emeritus in the Church of the Nazarene. For more than half a century he has served the church in various ways. He has ministered as evangelist, as a pastor for 19 years, and as a district superintendent for 11 years. In all of these assignments he distinguished himself by his powerful preaching. Here is one of his best.

*Scripture: For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring (Isa. 44:3).*

*Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:13).*

*In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:37-39).*

*Text: For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water (Jer. 2:13).*

"They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters." I am thinking of *Living Waters*, of which God is the Fountain or Source. The Holy Spirit is symbolized in the Scriptures in a number of different ways.

**Oil** with its healing, light-giving, friction-removing qualities is a symbol of the Spirit used in the case of Aaron when he was anointed with oil and inducted into the office of high priest, and with David when

he was anointed king of Israel by the prophet Samuel.

**Fire** with its dross-refining, chaff-consuming, chill-removing qualities is another symbol of the Holy Spirit, as in Mai. 3:2-3, where He is pictured as "a refiner's fire," purifying "the sons of Levi"; and also in Acts 2:3, where "cloven tongues like as of fire . . . sat upon each of them."

In the third place I mention **wind** with its strange, powerful, and unpredictable activity. Jesus used wind as a symbol of the activities of the Spirit in the new birth. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). And Acts 2:2 reveals the coming of the Holy Ghost symbolized as the "sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind."

There are other symbols of the Spirit, as in Mal. 3:2, where he is "like **fullers' soap**"; also, in Matt. 3:16—"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a **dove**, and lighting upon him."

## I. SPRINGING WELLS

But I want to place special emphasis upon the scripture lesson in which **water**—living water—life-giving, thirst-quenching, burden-bearing, and crop-producing LIVING WATER symbolized the Holy Spirit in action. You will note there were three different quantities of water to symbolize three different experiences in the realm of the Spirit's dealing with people.

**Springing wells** symbolize the new birth. Jesus had come with His disciples to Jacob's Well. There He sat weary, dust-covered, and thirsty while His disciples went to the city to buy bread. As He thus sat He heard the slow footsteps of a woman from the nearby village coming to draw water from Jacob's Well. She had a coil of rope on her arm and a waterpot on her shoulder. In silence she lowered the waterpot and drew it up full of cool, sparkling water, and was just ready to lift the waterpot to her shoulder for the return trip to the village when Jesus said, "Give me to drink." In utter amazement she said, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

Then the woman answered and said, "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?" Yes, thank God, a Greater than Jacob had arrived, though she did not realize it at the time!

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Then followed a conversation that revealed the dark and disappointing past of the Samaritan woman. She answered Jesus' questions and met His requirements so completely that she left Jacob's Well a changed woman. Old things had passed away. A new life was open to her. She left Jacob's Well with her own *new springing well*. She dashed off to tell others the glad story. This "springing well" experience is the new birth. Do you remember when and where you got your "springing well"? O my brother, if you ever got this well you will remember the place. No spot is more dear than the one where you first met the Savior. How well do I remember when and where I got my springing well!

When conducting a meeting in my early ministry in the state of Missouri, I noted one of the ugliest and most discouraged-looking men I had ever seen. (And I have seen some very tough characters in Missouri. Occasionally they leave Missouri and drift into other states.) This man came every night and sat toward the back. He looked worse each passing night. One night I went to him and asked him if he was a Christian. I really knew he was not, for no man could look like he did and be a Christian. His answer was, "I got religion 14 years ago, but from what you say I must have got the

wrong kind, for I never got anything that made me new or brought me joy." I said, "You certainly got the wrong kind. Come, now, let's go to the altar and get the right kind." He pulled back and said, "No, not tonight." I persuaded him to come for just one prayer. Finally he said, "Well, I'll go for one prayer."

When he got to the altar I think he decided, if there was to be just one prayer, perhaps he should pray that himself. He started to pray. Such confession, such weeping, and deep concern one will scarcely see in a lifetime. He was first on one side of the altar and then on the other. He sat on the first seat a minute and then crawled back to the altar, praying all the time. No one got a chance to offer a word of instruction. Finally, when he slowed down a little, I asked him how he was getting along. He said, "I feel like I'm getting this old-time religion." I said, "Keep praying. You will get through pretty soon." In a few minutes he leaped to his feet and said, "I have found it at last." Then he told of how he had moved from first one state to another to find satisfaction—Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Iowa, and back to Missouri to die without peace. What had he found? He had found peace. He had found his springing well of living water. He was born of the Spirit.

## II. FLOWING RIVERS

Our scripture lesson speaks of *flowing rivers*. Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

We are not left to guess what Jesus meant by the "flowing river" experience. The scripture makes this plain. "This spake he of the Spirit, . . . for the Holy Ghost was not yet given."

The Holy Spirit operating in the heart of the Spirit-filled gives an experience that is different from the springing well of water which the woman of Samaria received. The *springing well* slaked the thirst of the Samaritan woman, while the *flowing river* experience furnished living water in abundance which flowed out to bless others.

A flowing river will furnish an abundance of water which will bear heavy barges, loaded with valuable freight. The same river controlled will furnish water that reaches out across the barren wastes, turning them into great farms, producing abundant crops. Or, if properly harnessed, it will generate electricity, to light, heat, and furnish power for the whole community. Just so, a man filled with the Holy Ghost will bear heavy burdens. He will live a spiritual life that will furnish living waters for the spiritually parched community. He will give light to those that sit in darkness and will radiate a white heat that

warms the cold and shivering sinner and gives fervency to the lukewarm.

The man with the “flowing river” experience will in time change the spiritual climatic condition of the community in which he lives. A sanctified individual—be it preacher, teacher, merchant, farmer, or coal miner—will plant seed thoughts in the minds of those whom he may contact that will pave the way for the oncoming revival.

An evangelist friend of mine, now gone on to heaven, told the story of an old sanctified Dutchman which goes about as follows. He met the Dutchman at a camp meeting. After a day or two of the camp he came to my evangelist friend and requested him to come over and give him a camp meeting. My friend inquired of him, “Are you a pastor? Do you have a church?” But the old man said, “No, no. I just wanted you to come and hold me a camp meeting.” Then my friend told him that he did not have an open date but would let him know if he got a cancellation.

A few weeks went by and my friend had a 10-day meeting canceled. He wrote the old Dutchman and got a quick response saying, “Come on. We will try to be ready.” He told my evangelist friend the railroad station to which he should come.

When he arrived he found a little, dilapidated, almost “ghost town,” and the old Dutchman was not there to meet him. My friend said he thought that he certainly had missed it by coming to that forsaken place. Just then a man touched him on the shoulder and asked, “Are you the evangelist that has come to hold the camp meeting?” When he had assured the fellow that he was the evangelist, the man led him out to a buggy and said, “Come, get in. I’ll take you on out where the camp is to be held.” “What!” my evangelist friend said. “Isn’t this far enough out?” The driver assured him that it was eight miles farther out.

As they rode along my friend inquired of the driver, “Do you know the old Dutchman?” His answer was, “Yes, do you?” My friend answered him that he had only met him at a camp. Then the driver said, “The old Dutchman is sure a queer old duck.” My friend inquired, “Isn’t he a good neighbor? Isn’t he honest?” “Oh, yes,” answered the driver, “but you wait until you get to the top of the hill and you will see why I say he is queer.”

At the top of the hill my evangelist friend saw a board fence a quarter of a mile long. Painted on the board fence were a number of scripture texts: “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God”; “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”; “And holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”; and, “Be filled with the Spirit.” Pointing to the texts the driver said, “See, that is why we say he is odd. It cost the old Dutchman hard-earned money to hire that painted on the fence.” He then pointed to a great barn nearly a

mile away and said, “That is the old Dutchman’s barn. See what he has painted on the roof.” In big, bold letters my friend read the text, “Holiness unto the Lord.” “That’s what makes us say he is odd,” the driver said.

The old Dutchman met them in the barnyard and apologized for not meeting the evangelist himself, but said he had been busy getting ready for the meeting that night. My friend inquired if he had been able to get out some advertising for the camp. The old Dutchman said, “Well, I just told them that I was going to have my camp meeting.” “But,” my friend asked, “When did you tell them?” “Well,” he answered, “I just told them about seven years ago and I have been telling them ever since. I think they will be there.”

When they came to the first service, people by the hundreds were there filling the tent and brush arbor adjoining it. A holy silence was upon the whole place. They sang and prayed. My friend said that, when he arose to preach, “God’s presence was mightily upon the place.” It was not his custom to make an altar call the first night, but feeling impressed to do so he opened the altar and about 30 came kneeling at the altar and about the platform. After an earnest prayer, my evangelist friend went among the seekers inquiring, “What are you seeking?” and the answer always was, “Oh, I want what the old Dutchman has.”

The old Dutchman with the *flowing-river experience* had, in seven years of holy living, favorably affected his whole neighborhood. Though they thought he was *odd*, they wanted the old Dutchman’s kind of religion. Let’s harness ourselves to a task and not quit until it is finished.

### III. FLOODS AND DRY GROUND

*Springing wells* and *flowing rivers* symbolize being born of the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit. But in the scripture lesson you will note a third measure of water mentioned, which symbolizes the Holy Spirit’s activity in still another area. “I will pour *floods* upon the dry ground.” The floods which God says He will pour upon the dry ground symbolize revivals, refreshings, and anointings that He is pleased to give to His Church and to individuals.

The need today among our people is not a new church, but a revival that will renew the old church; a revival that will cause people to clean out the old wells of former years, remove the trash and rubbish that the world has piled in, and let the living waters begin to spring again—a revival that will be like a mighty flood sweeping down a river. It is remarkable what a flood will do when turned loose. It will clean out old stagnated pools, straighten out crooks and bends in the river, cut new channels, and remove old snags and old drifts that may have hindered the river’s flow for many months.



I saw an old hickory tree, not far from our home in Missouri, that a high wind had caused to fall across the creek. Its roots were fastened on one side of the creek and its branches stuck deep in the mud on the other side. It formed a perfect barrier across the creek. Everything that came down the creek lodged against the old hickory. It is amazing what will come down a creek in a period of months—logs, brush, leaves, cornstalks, dead animals, cats, squirrels. After months this old tree, with its attending drift, finally soured and the stench became a menace in the neighborhood. My brother and I decided we would move the old drift and have a clear stream. With our long poles we pried, prodded, and pounded, and did our best to loosen the old hickory, but we only disturbed the atmosphere. It seemed an impossible situation.

I have seen churches where some “old hickory” was lodged across the stream. The high wind that put him down and across the creek was the annual church meeting. He was not elected to a church office. From that night on, everything seemed to lodge against him. The church became divided and its influence was crippled in the community. Everything was at a standstill. The new pastor came and saw the problem. He proceeded to try to pry and prod the old drift loose, but this only made people take sides and the church was divided a little more. As a result, the congregation got a new pastor. This is a stubborn situation that can be solved only by a mighty revival coming like an outpoured flood.

Sitting by our little shack one afternoon we were alarmed by a horseman racing by, crying, “Get to the hills. There’s been a cloudburst in southern Iowa and a six-foot roll of water is coming. Get to the hills.” We never waited for another horseman. We quickly gathered our belongings together, crammed them into a meal sack, and headed for the hills.

The flood came, sweeping everything in front of it. Railroad embankments went out; steel rails were wrapped around huge trees. Backwater from the flood covered the fields and floated barns and houses away. Large fish from the Missouri River came out across the fields, leaving in their wake rippling waves that appeared as if a small canoe had been along.

After about three weeks the flood went down and we went back to investigate the damage. We went to see what happened to the old hickory. We walked along the creek and searched carefully. We could not find the least sign of the old drift that was there. There was not a root or branch to mark the spot. The flood had swept it all away—the drift was gone.

As that cloudburst in southern Iowa released a flood that swept out the old hickory, just so God proposes to open the floodgates and give revivals that will sweep through the church—revivals that will change, transform, and renew until old hindrances,

logs, snags, and drifts are swept away, leaving the church with an unobstructed channel through which the Holy Ghost can operate unhindered.

Individual lives may be much like churches. They may have some stubborn problem for which there seems to be no solution. These individuals need “floods upon the dry ground” in the form of fresh anointings and new outpourings of the Holy Spirit. Their need is not for a new river, but a flood to come down their river. Anointing of the Spirit heals hurts, takes the sting out of insults, and makes one strong for emergencies of life. Many of our people could permanently solve their age-old problems if they would learn the secret of pulling up close to the Lord and waiting for a fresh touch from God. The disciples did just that in Acts 4, when ordered to preach or teach no more in the name of Jesus. With the threat of punishment and imprisonment upon them, the disciples sought God for personal strength to preach boldly and for Him to make bare His arm in their behalf. As they prayed, the place was shaken. The Holy Ghost filled them afresh. Holy boldness and great grace were upon them all, and a multitude were won to Christ. What appeared to be permanent defeat became a glorious victory, all because the disciples got a flood to come down their river. The skies are full of spiritual floods for God’s children who are in spiritual conflict.

I have been misunderstood and misrepresented. I was grieved in my heart. Oh, I loved everybody. I loved God and I believed He sanctified my heart. I prayed, preached, was faithful about my tithe, but I was hurt. It seemed I could not forget what had been said or what had been done. I carried this load for several months. Then one night when the folk were singing “Jesus Breaks Every Fetter,” I felt the moving of the Spirit upon my heart. His blessing rolled over my heart. I thought of the old song,

*Like a mighty sea, like a mighty sea,*

*Comes the love of Jesus, sweeping over me.*

Away into the night that blessing flowed over my soul. When morning came and I walked onto the street, I felt so free, so satisfied that God understood. My shoulders were back. I was a new man. My heart was healed. I had received a flood down my river that gave me victory over every problem. Someone would say, “You were reclaimed or sanctified.” No, I was sanctified before that flood came. I had my rivers of living water—that night He poured floods upon the dry ground.

Why people will forsake *the fountain of living waters* and hew themselves *cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water* is more than I will ever know. There is nothing on earth that is like walking with the Spirit and having Him give *springing wells, flowing rivers, and floods* upon the dry ground.

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# WESLEY'S COVENANT THEOLOGY

by R. Larry Shelton\*

One of the themes which became prominent in the 16th century, particularly among the Zurich Reformers, was the covenant concept. It was more fully developed in the 17th century by Johannes Cocceius, and found its way into England through the "covenant" or "federal" theology of the Puritans. Although Wesley did not stress this idea as a means of assurance, as did the Puritans, he did utilize its basic emphases to express man's dependence on God's grace and as the rationale for the performance of obligations and duties by the believer.<sup>1</sup>

The Puritan covenant theology emphasized salvation through grace rather than works and affirmed two distinct covenants, one of works and one of grace. The covenant of works was made in Paradise before the Fall, and required constant and perfect obedience. Adam, as the representative of all mankind, broke this covenant and mankind has since been prevented by sin from fulfilling its requirements, although many have a "zeal for God." Wesley called this "the righteousness of the law."<sup>2</sup> However, God in His mercy established a new covenant based on Christ's death and resurrection. The requirement for this covenant of grace is belief in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection. This Wesley called "the righteousness of faith."<sup>3</sup>

Although the Puritans went a step farther as a result of their Calvinistic predestinarian view and asserted that man must be enabled by God even to respond to grace, Wesley refused to limit grace to those persons "elected" by God. Instead, he presented his doctrine of prevenient grace which restores a measure of free will and lays upon man the

responsibility to cooperate with God's will for salvation.<sup>4</sup>

In his sermon "The Righteousness of Faith," Wesley articulated the first aspect of his covenant theology, the dependence of the believer on God's grace. Since it is obvious, he says, that the "righteousness of faith" was not accomplished through the older covenant of works, we must now turn to the covenant of grace which God has established through Christ for people of all ages. Through the merits and mediation of his only-begotten Son, God has given the "righteousness of faith" to fallen humanity. What man could not accomplish through his own works under the righteousness of the law, has now been brought to us by the gospel of faith. He notes:

Indeed, strictly speaking, the covenant of grace does not require us to do anything at all, as absolutely and indispensably necessary in order to our justification; but only to *believe* in Him who, for the sake of His Son, and the propitiation which He hath made, "justifieth the ungodly that worketh not, and imputes his faith to him for righteousness. Even so Abraham 'believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness'" (Genesis XV. 6).<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, to depend in any way on the covenant of works is to misunderstand completely the distinctive natures of the two covenants. The first covenant presupposed that those to whom it was given and who were to obey it in perfection were "already holy and happy, created in the image and enjoying the favour of God; and prescribes the condition whereon he may continue therein . . ."<sup>6</sup> Wesley admonishes:

And how foolish are they . . . who seem never to have considered, that the covenant of works was not

\*R. Larry Shelton is the director of the School of Religion, Seattle Pacific University.

given to man when he was "dead in trespasses and sins," but when he was alive to God, when he knew no sin, but was holy as God is holy; who forget that it was never designed for the *recovery* of the favour and life of God once lost, but only for the continuance and increase thereof, till it should be complete in life everlasting.<sup>7</sup>

Those to whom the second covenant was given, the covenant of grace, were "now unholy and un-

**Nonbelievers are not called upon to reform themselves to a point where they can be eligible for forgiveness. Christ accepts them now and as they are!**

happy, fallen short of the glorious image of God, having the wrath of God abiding on him, and hastening, through sin, whereby his soul is dead, to bodily death, and death everlasting . . ."<sup>8</sup> Thus, for the fallen humanity who were incapable of performing the works required of Adam, God offered His grace that mankind could "be restored to the knowledge and the love of God, which is the beginning of life eternal."<sup>9</sup>

As the second thrust of his covenant emphasis, Wesley noted that whereas works were not efficacious for the salvation of the believer, there were obligations and duties which must be performed as a resultant effect of "the righteousness of faith." Until one is reconciled to God, all works are a reflection of sinfulness. Wesley explains:

Knowest thou not, that thou canst do nothing but sin, till thou art reconciled to God? Wherefore, then, dost thou say, "I must do this and this *first*, and then I shall believe"? Nay, but *first believe!* Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the propitiation for thy sins. Let this good foundation first be laid, and then thou shalt do all things well.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, when one enters into a covenant of faith with God, one agrees to take on obligations. These obligations involve obedience to God's commandments as a natural consequence of one's faith

and as a means of assuring growth in moral responsibility and a holy life.

Wesley saw psychological and spiritual value in encouraging his followers to enter into explicit covenants with God. These covenants would serve as explicit reminders of one's covenant obligations. To assist his societies in this exercise, Wesley patterned a covenant service for them in which he followed the covenant formulas of Richard and Joseph Alleine.<sup>11</sup> He had seen much of practical value in the covenant emphasis of his Puritan ancestors, and particularly in Susanna Wesley's own use of the personal covenant. Thus his Puritan heritage had suggested to Wesley a concept which he saw to have great practical value in his own ministry.

It would seem, then, that contemporary Wesleyanism could learn from the covenant theology of early Methodism at the point of the unconditional emphasis on grace. We need to stress continually in our preaching and teaching that nonbelievers are not called upon to reform themselves to a point where they can be eligible for forgiveness. Christ accepts them now and as they are! Furthermore, we need to distinguish between the legalism which attempts to earn salvation on the basis of works of righteousness, or which, more subtly, impresses upon believers the admonition to follow rigorous practices of piety and "standards" which are not called for in Scripture in order to maintain one's acceptability before Christ. The covenant obligations and duties are based on the requirements of love, which is the essence of God's commandments. At this point, we would do well to remember Wesley's compulsion to aid the poor and his active involvement in social reform.

1. Monk, *John Wesley: His Puritan Heritage*, pp. 96-103.

2. John Wesley, *Forty-Four Sermons*, "The Righteousness of Faith," pp. 62-63.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

4. John Wesley, *Works*, VI, 512; VII, 373-74; VIII, 285; IX, 196 ff.

5. John Wesley, *Forty-Four Sermons*, p. 65.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

11. Monk, p. 105.

## PASTORAL PRAYER APPEAL

The pastoral prayer of the morning worship service has great impact on worshipping Christians. In personal conversations, I find pastors have helpful insights about this special prayer. If you have ideas you would like to share about the pastoral prayer, kindly write us a note of 100 or so words sharing your ideas. Items should be signed but it will not be required that names be used in print.

—Neil B. Wiseman, Editor  
6401 The Paseo  
Kansas City, MO 64131

# LONELINESS AND THE PASTOR'S WIFE

by Geraldine Nicholas\*

**W**ho would ever believe the pastor's wife could be lonely? She has so many people around and so many duties demanding her attention. Loneliness is a condition experienced by the uninvolved, the inactive, the isolated, the unneeded— isn't it? How could she ever feel lonely?

Yet she does.

In fact, **there are few more vulnerable to severe attacks of loneliness** than the minister's wife. Of course some pastors' wives are more susceptible than others to loneliness because of their temperament; but all experience it to some degree, and with greater intensity at certain times in life. It is therefore necessary for the pastor's wife to face this destructive emotion, and discover how to cope with it. Inability to do this will result in restlessness, discontent, and depression. As a woman of God she must cling to the truth "that all things work together for good to them that love God," (even her loneliness!), "to them who are the called according to his purpose."

In order to learn to develop effective defenses, **the pastor's wife must consider loneliness as an enemy—a tool of the devil** designed to hurt her Christian influence as well as hinder the ministry of her husband. The devil uses ruthless tactics to impede the work of the Church. We should not be surprised that he attacks the pastor's wife by engulfing her in a blue funk of loneliness.

What causes loneliness for the pastor's wife? There is a certain benefit in objectively considering the causes of one's loneliness. While the pastor's wife may not be able to prevent the attack, recognizing the cause can help.

**Misunderstandings often foster feelings of loneliness** for the pastor's wife. She may feel that either she or her husband has been misunderstood, yet she must quietly carry on with a spirit of love. The lonely hurting within can decay into bitterness if she is not careful. To guard her attitudes and deliberately go about "returning good for evil" is difficult, but healing. There is no help or healing for the individual who encloses herself within a personal prison of self-pity, regardless of the justification for it.

**Separation from loved ones is a common cause of loneliness**, particularly for the young pastor's wife. It is only natural to sense loneliness on special days or at certain seasons when family and friends from former days are far removed. The most positive defense reflex for these times is her own creativity in developing "happy occasions." This is the perfect opportunity for her to develop "her own family traditions."

**A poor self-image can cause loneliness.** The imagination of the pastor's wife can produce all kinds of unreal imperfections which result in feelings of inferiority. No pastor's wife can be a "super-woman." **There is no way she can do everything well.** She must do her best, and then be content with the result, yet always gaining from her experience for "the next time." She may feel inadequate because of such things as her lack of education, or her inability to speak in public. The pastor's wife can help herself by examining her weaknesses and by taking advantage of opportunities for self-improvement. In so doing she will lessen her vulnerability to the onslaught of loneliness caused by a low self-image.

\*Geraldine Nicholas is a Nazarene pastor's wife in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

**Financial limitations and inability to “keep up with parishoners”** can bring on feelings of isolation and loneliness at times. She is human and naturally desires a life-style on the level of the congregation. Only she can act on the solution to her economic problems. If her desires are unrealistic, she must learn to be satisfied with what she has. If her desires are legitimate, then she must communicate them to her husband and together they must discover creative ways of improving the financial state. If it requires work outside the home for a while, then she must act on it.

**The pastor-husband, himself, may be an unwitting contributor to his wife’s loneliness.** A pastor may become so involved and preoccupied with his church work that his homelife sadly suffers. He may transmit a mild disinterest in home activities which are interpreted by his wife and children as a lack of concern. A feeling of emotional alienation develops, and the pastor’s wife is often unable to communicate this inner frustration and loneliness to her husband.

What a victory it is for Satan if he can drive a wedge of alienation between a pastor and his wife. What better way to do it than through creating a conflict between the pastor’s concern for the church, and his love for his own family?

To be an effective pastor is difficult and demanding, and one’s success largely hinges on the measure of commitment to the task. The pastor’s wife, as a significant “team partner,” must share the commitment and resulting sacrifices. She must learn creative ways of “filling the gap” in the homelife. Her husband’s successes are her successes. **If alienation and loneliness are robbing the pastor’s wife of her delight in being “a part of the team,” her husband needs to become aware of it.** She must communicate her feelings to an understanding companion, and he must not dismiss her feelings as absurd or immature.

A pastor’s wife must feel that her husband needs and appreciates her input into “the work.” She must feel that her contribution is of value and that he gains from her ideas. A climate of intimate sharing must be cultivated and maintained.

There is no pastor’s wife who deliberately intends to weaken her influence by entertaining loneliness. So how does she learn to cope with feelings of loneliness as they inevitably invade her private world? How does she develop defense reflexes to combat loneliness?

Once the cause of her loneliness has been faced, common sense often dictates ways of coping. One common denominator in whatever method she uses in coping is the necessity of being open to change. Most coping requires change of some kind. It may mean a change in her thinking patterns. It may require finding a way to articulate her emotional needs to her husband. It may require self-improve-

ment pursuit. It may require better scheduling of time. It may mean a job.

**But the most effective method the pastor’s wife has of coping with loneliness is to hide God’s Word in her heart.**

When attacked by loneliness she needs to meditate day and night on scripture. What power it provides! Here are some verses that have bailed me out of the dungeon of loneliness more than once.

*“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”*

Ps. 46:1

*“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”*

Isa. 40:31

*“Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”*

Isa. 41:10

*“Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.”*

Isa. 48:17

*“We are pressed on every side by troubles, but not crushed and broken. We are perplexed because we don’t know why things happen as they do, but we don’t give up and quit. We are hunted down, but God never abandons us. We get knocked down, but we get up again and keep going.”*

2 Cor. 4:8-10 (TLB)\*

*“Bless the Lord who is my immovable Rock. He gives me strength and skill in battle. He is always kind and loving to me; he is my fortress, my tower of strength and safety, my deliverer. He stands before me as a shield.”*

Ps. 144:1-2 (TLB)

*“But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”*

Job 23:10

There is no way loneliness can be prevented from invading any life. But the pastor’s wife need not fear it, or any other intrusion of Satan, if she learns the tactics of coping:

1. Review the cause (or causes) objectively.
2. Plan strategy for attack (defense reflexes).
3. Purposefully carry through the plan.
4. Trust God to produce good (even through the unpleasant experiences).
5. Expect victory “. . . because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.”
6. Live in the Word.

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# MINISTERS AND LIFE INSURANCE

by Chesley Lewis\*

**M**an's quest for security is eternal; this applies to both the spiritual and material needs of man. While security means different things to different people, there is always one common frame of reference and that is that *all views of security relate to man's needs*. As additional needs are encountered, the more priorities must be established. Yes, if we go back to the days when the Master himself began His earthly ministry, we find that He too was concerned about the total man. I remember on one occasion He took time out to feed 5,000 hungry people. On another, He was concerned about the young children. One of His last acts from the Cross was to provide for the care of His mother.

There was a strong emphasis in the Early Church on man's responsibilities to his own household. The aging apostle Paul, in writing to young Timothy, said: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8). Certainly his words are more weighty than any I might use. Paul recognized this need and was helping Timothy arrange his priorities. It's not too difficult for you and me to *recognize* our needs. Sometimes it is extremely difficult for us to place those needs in the right priority.

Man's search for security, then, is really man's attempt to provide for his needs, and after having laid what I believe to be a scriptural and proper

basis for the responsibility that you and I have in caring for the needs of those who are dependent upon us, let me proceed now to share some things that I think will be of help and interest to you.

One of the great responsibilities that you face is the protection of your life value to those dependent upon you. For example, an individual 35 years old, who brings in \$10,000 a year with a life expectancy of, say, 70 years, has another 30 to 35 years of anticipated earning power of \$10,000 per year, or at least \$350,000 in future earnings or economic value to his family. The tragedy is that this economic value, this potential for earnings, can be lost to those dependent upon him through any one of three things. These are: (1) living too long; (2) dying too soon; or (3) loss of earning power through accident or sickness. The only vehicle which satisfactorily solves all three of these contingencies is that vehicle called life insurance.

Here is the real miracle of life insurance. A life insurance policy is just a time-yellowed piece of paper with columns of figures and legal phrases, until it is baptized with a widow's tears. Then it is a modern miracle—an Aladdin's lamp: It is food, clothing, shelter, education, peace of mind, comfort, undying love and affection.

It is the sincerest love letter ever written. It quiets the crying of a hungry baby. It eases the aching heart of a bereaved widow. It is a comforting whisper in the dark, silent hours of the night.

It is a college education for the children—a chance for a career instead of the need for a job. It is

\*Chesley Lewis owns an insurance agency in Fort Worth, and is secretary of the Board of Pensions, Church of the Nazarene.

a father's parental blessing to children on their wedding day. It is the function of a father's hopes and plans for his family's future. *It is the premium we pay for the privilege of living after death.*

If estimates are at all correct, it appears that for nearly nine-tenths of American families today, the substantial part of that which is left at the time of the breadwinner's death consists of the proceeds of a life insurance policy. Nothing is more uncertain than life—nothing is more certain than life insurance. Some have said that life insurance is gambling, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Failure of the head of the family to insure his life against a sudden loss of his economic value through death or disability amounts to gambling with the greatest of life's values. And the gamble is particularly bad in that, in case of loss, the dependent's family—and not the former head of the household—must suffer the consequences.

I heard recently of a minister who, when called upon by a professional life insurance representative, stated, "I don't believe in life insurance." The agent asked, "Why, may I ask, do you *not* believe in life insurance?" The minister replied, "The Lord is going to take care of me." The life insurance agent said, "Who do you think sent me out here to talk to you?"

The real truth is that many who "do not believe in life insurance" expect that their dependents, who are their responsibility, will be cared for through some miracle of time or generosity on the part of others.

I'm not going to tell you that life insurance solves

every financial need of an individual. Many people ask if life insurance is a good investment. I would answer, yes and no. No, it is not a good investment if you are looking for a large profit in a short period of time. But it is a tremendously wise investment when you think of it in terms of protecting the estate that you already have created, or in terms of creating an estate that you would not have otherwise. An investment, yes, in that it *protects the life value* of the insured individual in his or her relation to those dependent upon them.

Life insurance enables people to do for themselves, and for others, what they would never be able to do otherwise. A small premium investment in a sizable life insurance policy frees the balance of the family's income to meet immediate needs, knowing full well that an estate has been created at the signing of his name on an application and the payment of the first premium.

Life insurance also provides a means of sharing with others, through charitable contributions, amounts of a significant size that would not otherwise be possible. This could be a means of making a gift to the church that probably could not be provided by any other means. A gift that is certain, complete, easy to make, and a very personal contribution on the part of the giver.

All of us are involved in life insurance. Insurance for life. The ministry is dedicated to point out to man the rewards of life after death. The life insurance industry is dedicated to complement this ministry by helping to provide for the needs of those left behind when an individual dies.

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## PREACHER'S EXCHANGE

**WANTED:** 14-volume set of *Works of John Wesley; Hebrews* by H. Orton Wiley. Glenn L. Kell, Box 388, Grafton, ND 58237.

**WANTED:** District minutes for the first Indiana assembly, through 1930. Rev. Claude D. Wilson, 4444 W. St. Rd. 46, Bloomington, IN 47401 (812-876-1653).

**WANTED:** One copy of *What About Horoscopes?* by Bayly. Leo Guffnett, 305 W. Virginia, Anadarko, OK 73005.

**WANTED:** Complete set of *Pulpit Commentaries*; complete set of *Standard Bible Encyclopedias*; complete set of *Linski's New Testament Commentaries*. E. L. Bean, 1029 Hillcrest Dr., Eden, NC 27288.

**WANTED:** Church of the Nazarene *Manuals*, 1908 and 1919. Duane B. Kaufman, Rte. 3, Box 99, Marseilles, IL 61341.

**WANTED:** Nazarene *Manuals* for 1907, 1908, and 1932. Also desire

manuals from other groups that merged with the Church of the Nazarene. Larry Stover, 2212 N. Vermilion, Danville, IL 61832.

**WANTED:** One complete set of the works of George Watson and a set of the complete *Works of John Wesley*. Ronald J. Wells, 407 12th St., St. Maries, ID 83861.

**WANTED:** Volume 6 of *Adam Clarke's Commentary*, Romans to Revelation. David MacDonald, P.O. Box 213, Fredericktown, OH 43019.



# TUNE-UP TIME

by Lee Ellingson\*

**A**n evangelist should check up on his ministry from time to time. In the rigors of traveling thousands of miles, preaching hundreds of sermons, meeting countless number of new people, and counseling scores of seekers at an altar each year, there is a danger of stagnation.

Aside from the personal spiritual life of the evangelist, which is of utmost importance, there are other factors of which he should be aware in order to achieve a balanced and growing ministry. Some that I have become keenly aware of are these:

### **1. An Awareness of the Total Program of the Church.**

This includes not only the denomination of which the evangelist is a member, but of other denominations as well. I am constantly endeavoring to keep abreast of the news and happenings of sister holiness denominations.

I also need to be aware of the programs and workings of those groups which might not be considered "holiness denominations." Though I may not be in theological agreement with these groups, I can learn much from their methods which can be effectively employed in my own evangelistic ministry.

### **2. An Awareness of My Place in the Church as an Evangelist.**

I must realize that God "gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." My job is not to usurp the position or authority of the pastor in his church. Rather, I should complement his ministry. If the pastor and evangelist are both preaching Bible holi-

ness, then the preaching of the one will back up and give credibility to the preaching of the other. The evangelist will not go into a church and tear apart the work of the pastor, but will help the pastor advance the kingdom of God in his church.

While the evangelist is realizing his place in working alongside the pastor, he must also realize the distinctiveness of his ministry. His ministry is to be evangelistic, not pastoral. While there will be an element of instruction in the preaching of the evangelist, his main job is to stir the hearts of the hearers to action. He will put in the gospel plow, and plow straight, deep furrows which will result in a definite harvest. While not all victories are won at the altar, the evangelist must not rationalize the lack of seekers and results at the altar, using that to excuse laziness or ineffectiveness in preaching.

### **3. An Awareness of My Continuing Effectiveness in Promoting Real Revival.**

Does my evangelistic ministry still reach people as it did in past days? Are the sermons still being preached under a fresh anointing, or is there a staleness—a professionalism—about my preaching? A vital part of my continuing effectiveness will require taking a look at the sermons being preached, and methods being used. Some meetings will require urgent warnings; other a "healing" type of ministry. I must keep open to the direction of the Holy Spirit in these matters.

No matter what approach is used; no matter what sermon is preached, the object of my ministry is to expose sin and lift up Christ as the sanctifying Savior. May God help all who travel from church to church to be successful in bringing revival to the local church, and thereby to the community, and to our nation.

\*Lee Ellingson, evangelist, Kansas City, Mo.

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## SERMON CRAFT

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by C. Neil Strait

### The Boundary of Love

In 1 John 2:15-17, we have the simple command: "Do not love the world . . ." (NIV).<sup>1</sup> It comes immediately after the admonition in the previous paragraphs to love others. It stands out as a reminder to us that love needs boundaries.

The "love of the world" is, first, a problem of "attention." Whatever gets our attention, eventually gets us—our time, our involvement, our affections. So the decline begins when the world has our attention.

The "love of the world" is, secondly, a problem of "affection." Affection follows so closely on the heels of attention. Verse 15 summarizes that "if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (NIV). It is another way of saying his affections are elsewhere.

The "love of the world" is, finally, a problem of "attainment." Verse 17 advises us that "the world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever" (NIV). If the "love of the world" persists in our life, we need to know that that which has our affection will soon pass away. The caution, then, is to invest life in the eternal.

### God's Love

The Epistle of 1 John has much to tell us about God's love. Here are some principles of the Father's love found in the book.

God's love is, first, proclaimed in the Word. 1 John 4:8 states, "God is love." It is only a summary statement of many that could be found throughout the Word.

God's love is, secondly, proved at the Cross. "This is love; not that

we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10, NIV).

God's love is, thirdly, perfected in the believer. "No one has ever seen God; but if we love each other, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us" (1 John 4:12, NIV). Other verses to support this thought would be 1 John 4:13-17; 5:2-5.

### Boasting in the Lord

The Apostle Paul allows one reason for boasting—in 1 Cor. 1:31 he writes: "If anyone is going to boast, let him boast only of what the Lord has done" (TLB).<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the first chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul lists reasons for our boasting.

Paul's first reason for boasting is in v. 4: "I can never stop thanking God for all the wonderful gifts he has given you, now that you are Christ's" (TLB). He summarizes this thought in v. 5 by saying: "He has enriched your whole life" (TLB).

The second reason is found in v. 8, where Paul writes: ". . . he guarantees right up to the end that you will be counted free from all sin and guilt on that day when he returns" (TLB).

The third reason is in v. 9: "He is the one who invited you into this wonderful friendship with his Son" (TLB).

The fourth reason is in v. 30, where the apostle writes about our being made "acceptable to God."

These reasons give us cause to "boast only of what the Lord has done" (1:31, TLB).

### The Power of Sin

Prov. 5:3-4 (TEV)<sup>3</sup> gives an insight into the power of sin.

While the two verses are part of a paragraph warning against adultery, three facts regarding sin present themselves.

One, the "*appeal of sin*." Verse 3 reads: "The lips of another man's wife may be as sweet as honey and her kisses smooth as olive oil" (TEV). Sin first appeals to the flesh and to the lower instincts.

Two, the "*accomplishment of sin*." A part of v. 4 reads: "But when it is all over she leaves you nothing" (TEV). This is a summary of sin's accomplishments—nothing.

Three, the "*aftereffects of sin*." The remainder of v. 4 simply states, "She leaves you nothing but bitterness and pain" (TEV). Sin always registers itself in life, to use an expression from E. Stanley Jones, and what it registers is not good.

If you need a concluding word to wrap it together, it would be in v. 5. Its summary is: "She will take you down to the land of the dead" (TEV). That's not a very good advertisement for sin.

### What Is Your Ministry?

E. Stanley Jones, in his autobiography *A Song of Ascents*, poses a question that is good for every pastor to ask now and then: "Is yours a ministry of 'good views or good news'?"

May we ever be mindful that laymen never lack for views—even good views! What they need, most desperately, is some good news!

1. From the *Holy Bible, New International Version*, © 1978 by the New York International Bible Society. Used by permission.

2. From *The Living Bible*, © 1971 by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Ill. Used by permission.

3. From the *Good News Bible—Old Testament* © American Bible Society, 1976. Used by permission.



## SERMON OUTLINES

### THE SPLENDOR OF THE LORD

Text: Revelation 1:4-7.

#### INTRODUCTION:

The Author of the Book of Revelation was the Lord himself; John was merely His scribe. The book was written to comfort the Lord's servants (vv. 1, 11). The book is primarily an unveiling of the Lord himself.

- I. A THREEFOLD DESCRIPTION OF HIS PERSON (v. 4)
  - A. "Who is"
  - B. "Who was"
  - C. "Who is to come"
- II. A THREEFOLD DESCRIPTION OF HIS POSITION (v. 5a)
  - A. The Faithful Witness
  - B. The First Begotten of the Dead
  - C. The Prince of the kings of the earth
- III. A THREEFOLD DESCRIPTION OF HIS PURPOSE (vv. 5a-6)
  - A. To love us
  - B. To loose us from sin
  - C. To make us a kingdom of priests
- IV. A THREEFOLD DESCRIPTION OF HIS PAROUSIA (SECOND COMING) (v. 7)
  - A. The Attendants: "He cometh with clouds" (cf. Jude 14)
  - B. The Attention: "Every eye shall see Him"
  - C. The Attitudes.
    1. All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him
    2. "Even so, Amen." There are those who look for, long for, and love His appearing.

#### CONCLUSION:

What is your attitude to the Lord of Glory?

—Gerald Heasley, *pastor*  
Birmingham, England

### STRENGTH TO LIVE LIFE'S DAYS

Text: "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16).

**Introduction:** When Moses was near death, he promised the tribe of Asher, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deut. 33:25). Many Christians since then have taken that promise to sustain them through the days of their lives. In this passage—one of the most important prayers recorded in Scripture—Paul asks God to give these Christians strength to live life's days.

#### I. The Record of Paul's Prayer (vv. 14-19)

- A. Paul asks God to give them strength to live life's days (vv. 16-17).
  1. Notice the petition for strength (v. 16).
  2. Notice the purpose of strength (v. 17).

B. Paul asks God to give them power to know Christ's love (vv. 18-19).

1. His love is known to the spiritually minded, "which passeth knowledge."
2. His love is known in the church's fellowship, "with all saints."
3. His love is known by its infinite expanse, "breadth, length, depth, height."

C. Paul asks God to give them fullness to enjoy God's blessing (v. 19).

1. Salvation is free in justification.
2. Salvation is full in entire sanctification.
3. Salvation is final in glorification.

#### II. The Reservoir of God's Power (vv. 20-21)

- A. He is able, "according to the power."
- B. If we are available, "that worketh in us."

**Conclusion:** When the wells of life seem to run dry, God's full reservoir of grace holds the strength we need to meet the demands of life victoriously.

—Merrill S. Williams, *pastor*, North Church  
of the Nazarene, Texarkana, Tex.

### THE DESPISED INHERITANCE

Reading: Heb. 11:32—12:17

Text: Gen. 25:35. "Esau despised his birthright."

#### INTRODUCTION:

This encounter between two brothers is familiar. The illustration is so like what happens every day. We take for granted what is ours by inherent right, place little value on that for which others sacrifice life and limb. Our Christian brethren in the East would give much for Western freedom which we take for granted—We are in danger of losing our birthright by default.

This same tendency was in the Early Church. After listing the greats in c. 11, the writer emphasizes the need to "enter into the rest of faith."

It is apparent that this reminder was necessary, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." To us it might read, "You have not yet faced godless persecution."

#### I. The Inheritance Provided for Us

We are inheriting what Christ has provided. "Jesus [is] the author and finisher of our faith." "Consider Him who suffered thus lest you be weary in well doing."

A. The Divine Involvement. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (1 Cor. 5:19). Our age is squandering what has been provided.

B. The Human Responsibility. "Now are we the sons of God" (1 John 3:2). Not illegitimate children with no rights of inheritance, but full-born sons.

#### II. The Inheritance Is Precious

"Ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20).

A. Our inclusion into the family of God is a precious and rare privilege. Parents know what it feels like to have ungrateful offspring. How the heart of God must feel! We

have a precious promise of richness and fullness in Christ.

B. The privilege of sonship can be realized only as we yield ourselves fully to God.

### III. The Inheritance Is in Peril

God will not withdraw the privilege of sonship—but we may forfeit that by our conduct. “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God.”

A. There is the added possibility that bitterness will possess us. “A root of bitterness.” What an expressive phrase! Something deep-seated and growing as a destructive force.

B. Illustration of one to whom this has happened. His influence for evil is accentuated.

C. But we can remember the beatitude: “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you . . .”

### CONCLUSION:

Esau described as a profane person.

Born with the privileged birthright.

Born with potential for blessing.

Despising his inheritance for a meal of porridge.

When he should have inherited the blessing, he was rejected.

Remember our inheritance in Christ. Beware of relying on material resources. Let us fear lest a promise being left us, we, through “unbelief,” fail to enter in. The New Testament Church had nothing yet possessed all things. Do we have all things but possess nothing?

—Hugh Rae, Manchester, England

## HEAVEN AND RICHES

Text: Matt. 19:16-30

### Introduction:

1. Rich young ruler seeks way of life.
2. Turns back at cost of surrender.
3. Jesus comments on difficulty of rich to be saved.
4. Illustrates “eye of needle and camel.”
5. How easily we dismiss this—but it applies to us.

### I. Riches Themselves Not Evil

- A. Intrinsically neither good nor bad—its use determines morality.
- B. Hermits live in poverty under guise of holiness.
- C. Good Christian stewardship teaches: industriousness, carefulness, thrift. Christian philosophy teaches proper gain of wealth. Christian countries prosper.
- D. Rich men *can* be saved—Zacchaeus, Joseph of Arimathea
- E. There are attending dangers.

### II. Love of Money Root of All Evil

- A. Not money, but the *love of*
- B. Parable of seed and sower—cares and riches of world choked some
- C. The perils are:
  1. Encourages false dependence—eliminates need of God.
  2. Shackles a man to the world—makes it difficult to “die.”
  3. Tends to selfishness—enough is always “a little more.”
- D. Jesus got to the heart of the problem:
  1. This man shackled to riches.
  2. Loved money more than God.
  3. Claimed to keep law, but overlooked love of neighbor and needs of others.
- E. How many problems could we solve if we got

down to money (such as church strength on finances)?

### III. You Needn't Have Money to Suffer Its Perils

- A. We can love money and not possess it—obsessed with work to exclusion of God.
  1. Money can possess us.
  2. If we cannot gain it, we can covet things to the exclusion of devotion to God.
- B. Much is revealed by our attitudes toward money:
  1. Reveals our faith and devotion.
  2. We need to know the blessedness of possessing nothing.
  3. Recognition of God as owner—and ourselves as stewards.
- C. Are we faithful in little?
  1. The man with one talent failed.
  2. Rich brothers succeeded.

### IV. Build Your Treasures in Heaven

- A. Safeguards the soul—where your treasure is, there is your heart.
- B. God's rewards are spiritual.
- C. Spiritual treasure endures forever.

### Conclusion:

1. Our use of goods determines good or evil.
2. We practice sacrificial giving that our hearts might not become entwined with wealth.
3. We grow in love to God as we give to Him.

—Paul N. Vail, *pastor*, Church of the Nazarene, Lynn, Mass.

## FOUR KINDS OF SOIL

Text: Luke 8:4-15 (The Parable of the Sower)

### I. ROADSIDE HEARERS (not saved)

- A. Beaten down by
  1. Routine of Christianity
  2. Repetition of gospel message
  3. Ritual of “churchianity”
- B. Birds of hell pick the seed of the soul

### II. ROCKY BEARERS (saved, but only for a while)

- A. Beaming, bubbly at the outset
- B. Barren in the end
- C. Backslidden, for only surface roots
  1. Lacking moisture
  2. Losing the faith

### III. WRESTLING HEARERS (“they go forth . . . and are choked”)

- A. Busyness (“cares”)
- B. Bank accounts (“riches”)
- C. Baubles (“pleasures”)
- D. Barren finally (“they produce nothing”)

### IV. RELIABLE DISCIPLES

- A. Believing in-depth (“good ground,” v. 8)
- B. Blossoming forth (“spring up,” v. 8)
- C. Bearing fruit (100 times more than sown, v. 8)

### V. WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE?

The Reliable Disciples Have the Right:

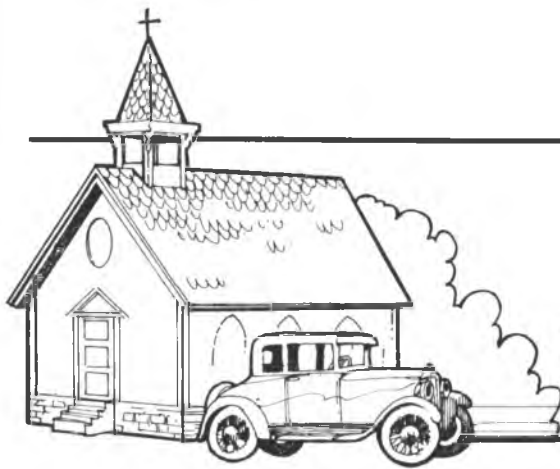
- A. “Push” (motives)

They have “an honest and good heart” (v. 15)
- B. Perseverance

“They . . . having heard the word, *keep it*” (v. 15)
- C. Patience

They bring forth fruit steadily and surely (v. 15).

—J. Grant Swank, Jr.



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In the "Preacher's Magazine"

# 50 Years Ago

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### Old-time Religion

Pretty soon a man will not be able to get a hearing on threadbare "Fundamentalism" any more than he will on routine "Modernism." Then every preacher must have something positive and definite to say. When the wind ceases to blow, the props become a menace. Now, as almost never before, the preacher who has really thought his problems through and has come out with a definite, positive message of salvation is going to get a hearing and is going to be a power in his church and in his community. Sickly, sentimental lectures on current topics have had their day. The hour for the virile preacher of a saving gospel has struck and will strike more plainly as time goes on. It will almost come to the place where it is real preaching or none at all. This is the time for preachers of full salvation to come into their own, not on an argumentative basis, but on the sane, clean-cut Pentecostal basis. This is the time for "old-time religion" churches to build larger auditoriums and enlarge their Sunday school facilities and to go in for a genuine soul-saving and character-building program. The modernistic pulpit is, indeed, losing its power. But sin is still sin and the Holy Spirit is still here to reprove sinners, and convicted sinners still long for the assurance that the message of the Cross brings to them.

—J. B. Chapman, January, 1928

### Personal Devotions

Probably there is no greater source of weakness in the modern church than at the point of personal devotion. Society is now so organized, the strain for a livelihood is such, the rush and demands of the age are so extreme, that no time or disposition is left for devotion. The family altar is almost past history and public devotion is without much seriousness and individual devotion is neglected.

The preacher will find this task of spirit culture no easier than other people. There will be many things to interfere and keep him from it. But the preacher who would succeed should have as the most inviolable part of his daily program a period

for personal devotion. It need not always be a long extended period, but it should be a regular daily period. At this time, when he reads the Bible, he should largely forget the sermon and the needs of other people and of the church, and read for personal application and help. When he prays he should give attention to personal needs and to personal communion and fellowship with God. This should be a time of real spiritual feeding, culture, and strengthening. There is a time to prepare the sermon, and a time to pray for others, but there must also be a time for personal devotion.

—E. P. Ellyson, February, 1928

### The Homiletic Habit of Mind

Henry Ward Beecher, in one of his lectures to us students, told us to cultivate the "Homiletic Habit of Mind." He told us . . . that whatever he did, whether he studied or read or prayed or played; whether he made pastoral visits, or rode on ferryboats, or streetcars, or railroad trains; whether he conversed with strangers or wrote for the press or addressed audiences; everywhere and always he was instinctively gathering truth and illustrations for his pulpit. Everything he heard or saw or felt was a rivulet or brook flowing into his millpond; and whenever he wanted to grind out a sermon on grist, he just pulled the slide and let the grain into the hopper, lifted the gate and let the floods flow. He was an omnivorous reader, and he studied . . . with a keenly observant vision. He told us students that we never could preach effectively unless we kept our intellectual pond full.

—A. M. Hills, February, 1928

### Speaking the Truth in Love

When a preacher's heart is literally bursting with warm, compassionate love for men, he can say almost anything without giving offense. It is not enough to simply say, "I love you," before beginning a tirade of reproof and correction, but if there really is love, much love, overflowing love, the preacher's reproofs and corrections will bear fruit.

—J. B. Chapman, July, 1929

# WESLEY—

## A Man of Many Books

by Donald Metz\*

Wesley called himself a man of one book—*homo unius libri*. As he declared, he desired to know one thing—the way to heaven. He was convinced he had found the celestial road map to heaven in the Bible. Therefore he made the Bible the focal point of preaching and of authority in doctrine.

On occasion some have used Wesley's single-minded devotion to biblical truth as an excuse for neglecting study and general reading. To use Wesley's emphasis on biblical authority as an excuse to neglect extrabiblical study is to completely misrepresent him. For while Wesley was a man of one book in matters of doctrinal statement or practical Christian experience, he was an unceasing reader in a wide range of writing.

Wesley's concern for reading finds expression in three areas—his own personal study habits, his curricular guidelines for the school he founded at Kingswood, and his recommendations to his lay preachers.

Martin Schmidt, in his excellent two-volume work entitled *John Wesley*, writes that Wesley had a "keen interest in multifarious subjects, including physics, medicine, and foreign languages (living and dead)." V. H. H. Green's careful presentation of *The Young Mr. Wesley* contains an impressive list of Wesley's reading between 1725 and 1734. The list, compiled from Wesley's diaries, is not regarded as exhaustive. Yet the wide range of titles is remarkable.

Included in the list are works from classical literature, such as the *Epistles* of Horace, Virgil's *Aeneid*, the writings of Cicero and Plutarch. Wesley knew well the literary figures of his own land, including John Dryden, John Milton, Jonathan Swift, and William Shakespeare. He read Hailey's exposition of physics entitled *On Magnetism and Gravity*. Other source books included Robert Boyle's *On Chemistry*, and Isaac Newton's *Opticks*. Current history and ancient history paraded before his restless and searching mind. Great devotional classics from Augustine, Law and a Kempis contributed to his pas-

sion for piety. Above all, Wesley knew well the biblical and theological writings of his time.

Wesley, with his remorseless dedication to detail, reviewed every phase of the curriculum of the school he founded at Kingswood. The curriculum is amazing in that boys between 6 and 12 were required to study Latin, Hebrew, Greek, and French, in addition to their mother tongue. Such classics as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, William Law's *Christian Perfection*, and Thomas a Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* were required reading.

Wesley's use of lay preachers was innovative and somewhat dangerous. He regarded an exclusive concern for Bible study, without regard to man's social situation, as rank enthusiasm. He desired his lay preachers to devote up to five hours a day in diligent research and reading. If a preacher objected by saying he had no taste for reading, Wesley simply answered that he must "either contract it or return to his trade."

Wesley was indeed a man of one Book—and a man of many books.

\*Donald Metz is vice-president of Mid-America Nazarene College, Olathe, Kans.

## Preparing to Preach from Eph. 3:14-19

(Continued from page 31)

(1.1) Indication of motive (3:14a): "For this reason." Earlier in the Epistle, Paul's meditation on the blessings of God in Christ (1:3-14) led him naturally to prayer (1:15-23). The pattern now continues as his description of the life-giving deed and reconciling purpose of God in Christ (2:1-22) motivate him to prayer. He begins at 3:1 (cf. v. 14) but senses the need first to give an account of his apostolic ministry. This parenthesis (3:2-13) explains why his personal history is identified with his message to "you Gentiles" (3:1) for whom he is about to pray.

(1.2) Description of mode (3:14b-15): "I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name." Paul is praying with and for the Gentiles. Although kneeling as a stance for prayer is indicated occasionally in the Old and New Testaments,<sup>12</sup> standing for prayer<sup>13</sup> was more frequent among the variety of forms characterizing Israelite worship. Kneeling was a common practice in the culture and worship life of the ancient world and characterized the Gentile world in Paul's day (cf. Mark 15:19). Here by assuming or endorsing an originally pagan form of worship Paul is giving vivid testimony to the unification of Jews, Gentiles, and the whole world (cf. 1:10, 22-23; Phil. 3:10-11).<sup>14</sup> This crouching position signified deep earnestness and utter humiliation before God (cf. Luke 22:41; Matt. 26:39).

"Father" is best understood in a cosmic sense. "Every family" includes all the created world, men and things and all the accompanying systems, structures, and institutions. All "derives its name," its existence and meaning, from the Father. The unity of all that is guaranteed by the unwavering love-direction, care, and dominion exerted over the entire universe by the one God, the Father.<sup>15</sup>

Paul begins his prayer with the contrast between the lowliness of his own position and the exalted role of the Father. He expresses his utter identification with humanity and his complete confidence in God. His attitude corresponds to and defines the nature of prayer.

(2) The prayer itself (3:16-19). These verses are strictly intercessory as Paul utilized Trinitarian theological elements to express his passionate concern for the manifestation of God's very essence in the inner lives of his readers. The prayer can be viewed as one basic petition expanded in two interpretative movements.

(2.1) The principle petition (3:16): "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man." Paul prays that God will give not only "out of" (NIV) but "according to" His inexhaustible glory, for He gives without limit. God's glory, "the

showing forth of His very nature,"<sup>16</sup> climaxes the presuppositions of Paul's prayer, being preceded in 3:14-55 by God's stable love ("Father") and His universal power ("every family").<sup>17</sup> God's glory, his radiating love and power, is the source and measure of His gift and of His giving.

The prayer "to be strengthened with power through His Spirit" is for that invigoration of the Spirit of God by which one is enabled to grasp the fullness of the wisdom of God in Christ (3:18-19; cf. 1 Cor. 2:9-16). There is a similar linkage of Spirit, wisdom, knowledge, and power in the prayer of 1:17-19, a linkage characteristic of the Wisdom literature.

The "inner man" here, as in Rom. 7:22 and 2 Cor. 4:16, may refer to "the deep seat of the personality, where the Spirit seeks to have His dwelling and so transform the whole life of man."<sup>18</sup> But Barth, in the light of 2:20-21; 3:17; 4:13-16; and 6:10, takes the preposition *eis* ("in") in its first and literal sense of "into" or "toward" and translates the phrase "to grow toward the Inner Man"<sup>19</sup> that is, Jesus Christ himself as the essence of man's humanity. Decisive is the intimate meeting with Jesus Christ who comes from outside man, and who through the Holy Spirit in man acts in the power of God, making man strong. When man, through the strength supplied by the Spirit, grows toward Jesus Christ who is his very life, he will live as true man.<sup>20</sup> To this end Paul prays for and thus encourages his readers.

(2.2) The first interpretative expansion of the petition (3:17-18). As Paul continues in the language of prayer the "how" and the "why" of his basic petition is brought into clearer focus.

(2.2.1) Definition (3:17a): "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." Since in grammatical construction and function "so that . . . may dwell" parallels "to be strengthened" (aorist infinitives) and "through [*dia*] faith" is the instrumental parallel to "through [*dia*] His Spirit" it is more likely that the latter clause interprets the former than that a new petition is added. The strengthening of the Spirit and the indwelling of Christ are identical in Christian experience. (Cf. Romans 8:9 f.) Christ is both the goal (v. 16) and the source (v. 17) of the Christian's strength.

Faith, here conceived as the gift of the Spirit (2:8-9), speaks of "a covenant relationship . . . in which one partner trusts and is faithful to the other without trying to absorb him."<sup>21</sup> Christ and the Christian remain distinct in personality. From man's side, faith in the historic and risen Christ is the instrumental "how" (cf. Gal. 2:20) of His indwelling of the heart through the Spirit indicates His Lordship over the totality of man's identity and existence viewed from the perspective of his vitality, intelligence, will, and decision. Included also may be the hidden quality of a Christian's existence, for it is



not always apparent to those who look on, that Christ is in full control of the Christian.<sup>22</sup> The Christ of the Cross is a hidden as well as a manifest Christ.

(2.2.2) Hortatory digression (3:17b): “being rooted and grounded in love.” The difficulty of linking this clause syntactically with either what precedes or follows makes it possible that the perfect participles function as imperatives, “stand firm on the root and foundation of love.”<sup>23</sup> In a brief digression from petition, Paul would be exhorting his readers to the full realization of their relationship to the love of God which has already supremely qualified their Christian existence. But it may be best, as the *New American Standard Bible* has it, to take the clause of a qualifying part of the concern expressed in 3:18.<sup>24</sup>

(2.2.3) Purpose (3:18): “that you . . . may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth.” This purpose of the petition stated in 3:16 and defined in 3:17a has in mind the vastness of the manifold wisdom of God,<sup>25</sup> the comprehension of the incomprehensible. The prayer indicates that to know the full dimensions of the mystery of God (3:4 ff.) requires a strength that only God can give. Too, it is a task that can be worked out only within the mutually enriching fellowship of the Body, “with all the saints.”

The wisdom of God is not something merely intellectual, but as the context indicates (3:17b, 19), its life focus is in the love of God opened up to men in Jesus Christ. The comprehension or grasping involves the spiritual strength of insight, insight that is to weave its way into the total fabric of life.

(2.3) The second interpretative expansion of the petition (3:19). Paul’s prayer language unfolds in another restatement of the definition and purpose of his basic petition (3:16).

(2.3.1) Definition (3:19a): “and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge.” Paul now interprets 3:16b with “a seemingly absurd combination of opposites.”<sup>26</sup> It is man’s knowledge (1 Cor. 12:13; Isa. 35:8-9) which is not adequate to fully understand “the love of Christ,” it has to be known above all in experience, in being loved and in loving, all in the midst of “sorrows and joys, trials and sufferings, in ways too deep for the mind of man to fathom.”<sup>27</sup>

(2.3.2) Purpose (3:19b): “that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God.” The “why” of Paul’s prayer has now reached its fullest expression. In the background may be the “filling of the hands” of the Old Testament priest with the authority to perform his holy office. As a result of knowing “the love of Christ,” the saints are a sanctuary filled with God’s glory and thus able to radiate His presence in a world. In mind is both a presently experienced

divine fullness and an experience progressively expanding: “We are filled to capacity, but the capacity is constantly being enlarged.”<sup>28</sup> Barth attempts to capture the qualitative and dynamic character of the “filling” and “fulness” of God with the translation, “May you become so perfect as to attain to the full perfection of God.”<sup>29</sup>

(3) *Concluding doxology* (3:20-21). Following a liturgical pattern, probably borrowed from an early Christian hymn, Paul moves from intercession to praise.

(3.1) Description of power (3:20): “Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.” The apostle’s confidence and praise is in the effective (“able”) and limitless (“beyond”) power of God. It is a power the saints already know through the working of the Holy Spirit (3:16b; cf. 1:19) within them. This description leads Paul to a concluding . . .

(3.2) Ascription of honor (3:21): “to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.” The distinctive feature of this part of the doxology is the two ways in which glory is ascribed to God. As in the confessional summary of 4:4-6, Paul starts from the Church as the actual place of God’s praise, the sphere where God’s purpose is worked out on earth. Then Christ Jesus is mentioned as the basis of that praise, for it is in Christ that God’s mystery (3:4-11) has been revealed for the benefit of the whole world. It is only the glorification of God “in Christ Jesus” that allows the existence and manifestation of God’s glory “in the church.”<sup>30</sup>

2. What is the Writer Attempting to Accomplish in the Passage?

Paul’s prayer in 3:14-21 is a climactic point in the great public prayer which is Ephesians. Through the atmosphere of praise, for the edification of his readers, the apostle is presenting a vivid witness to the comprehending—all purposes of God in the Christ of the Cross, who as the Risen Lord is alive in the Church, powerfully at work. The prayer itself (3:16-19), appropriately introduced (3:14-15) and fittingly concluded (3:20-21), asks for the fullness of God manifested in Jesus Christ to be known in full dimension through the effective operation of the Holy Spirit in the total person—the mind, heart, and living of the Christian.

The prayer is specifically for the power of the Holy Spirit transforming the Christian into the likeness of Christ. This happens as he by faith allows Christ unqualifiedly to be his life in source and substance. “Why” this “how” of the indwelling of Christ becomes the “what” of the Spirit’s strengthening lies in the fact that the humanly incomprehensible love of Christ to sinful and alienated men saturates

the experience of the Christian. In this way the Christian is to “be filled up to all the fulness of God.” Paul prays for a filling that is both decisive (“filled up”) and open-ended (“the fulness of God”).

### III

#### The Life-Response Question: How Does Our Text Apply to Contemporary Life

##### 1. What Do I Hear?

The full meaning of God for His universe belongs to me in Jesus Christ as my life is open in faith to Him. Through the purposive working of the Holy Spirit in me, I can know His limitless love which human intelligence cannot fully grasp. It is this love of Christ penetrating every nook and cranny of my thinking, willing, and acting that constitutes my being “filled up to all the fulness of God.” This is my privilege, my prayer.

##### 2. What Do I Proclaim?—A sermon: A Prayer for Perfection

*Introduction:* Paul goes to prayer

For the right reason (3:14a)

In the proper manner (3:14b-15)

*The Prayer for Perfection Is a Prayer for Spiritual Strength* (3:16)

(1) Resting on the glory of God: “according to the riches of His glory”

(2) Depending on the Spirit's power: “strengthened with power through His Spirit”

(3) Aiming at the Perfect Man: “in the inner man”

*The Prayer for Perfection Is a Prayer for a Possessed Life* (3:17-18)

(1) By the risen Christ through the Spirit: “so that Christ may dwell in your hearts”

(2) Through faith in the historic Christ: “dwell . . . through faith”

(3) Enabling through love spiritual understanding: “that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth”

*The Prayer for Perfection Is a Prayer for an Intimate Knowledge* (3:20-21)

(1) Consisting of the love of Christ: “to know the love of Christ”

(2) Penetrating all of life: “which surpasses knowledge”

(3) Attaining to the full perfection of God: “that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God”

*Conclusion:* Paul exults with a doxology

In praise of the power of God (3:20)

In praise of the glory of God (3:21)

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1. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture is from the *New American Standard Bible*, © The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975. Used by permission.
2. See the previous study on Thessalonians, parts I.1 and II.1. in the *Preacher's Magazine*, 54, 3 (March, April, May, 1979), pp. 49f.
3. Francis Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (London: The Tyndale Press, 1963), pp. 13, 33.
4. Markus Barth, *Ephesians, The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1974), p. 58.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6, 51.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 55f.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 377, 451, 525.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 368, 377. See his suggested analyses.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 5f.
12. 1 Kings 8:54; 1 Chron. 29:20; Dan. 6:10; Luke 22:41; Acts 6:20; 9:40; 20:36; 21:5.
13. 1 Kings 8:22; Luke 18:11, 13; Matt. 6:5.
14. Barth, p. 378. Cf. Gal. 4:12; 1 Cor. 9:12.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 380. For the background of the terms employed in vv. 14-15 and the interpretative alternatives, see Barth's more detailed discussions, pp. 367f. and 377-84.
16. Foulkes, p. 48.
17. Barth, pp. 368f.
18. Foulkes, p. 103.
19. Barth, p. 367.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 368, 388-393.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 370.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, p. 372.
24. Foulkes, p. 104, and NIV.
25. Barth, p. 397. He sees here a dependence on the Wisdom tradition. Cf. 3:19 and Rom. 11:33.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 373.
27. Foulkes, p. 105.
28. W. E. McCumber, *Holiness in the Prayers of St. Paul* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1955), p. 66.
29. Barth, p. 367.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 376.



"Cleared out in two minutes. Just couldn't wait to start applying my sermon to their lives."

## Hints, Helps, Tips, Ideas

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## God's Will for the Family

(Continued from page 25)

(RSV). This is an interesting illustration of how the Ten Commandments still apply in the Christian era, but have to be adapted and are adapted to fit the new situation. There is nothing hidebound or legalistic about their application though this principle is unchanged.

### B. The Duties of Parents to Children (6:4)

If children have a duty to their parents, parents have a duty to their children. As Bruce expresses it: "If children must obey their parents, parents should deserve their children's obedience."<sup>20</sup> This parental obligation has two sides. On the negative side it consists of avoiding conduct likely to provoke the child and lead to exasperation. The precise conduct likely to have this effect Paul does not define. "Perhaps it was an unbending demand for obedience in matters, in which the child could see no purpose at all; or treating an older child as if still an infant; or it may be inconsistency, so that the same action by a child may one day be greeted with amusement and another day by angry condemnation."<sup>21</sup> The parallel command in Col. 3:21 reads: "Do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged" (RSV). Moule observes that this indicates that "the new life in Christ transforms relationships on the 'ordinary' levels, as well as conquering the spectacular vices. . . . The sensitive understanding of children, with the realization that they might become discouraged and lose heart is a striking feature of this new chapter in social history."<sup>22</sup>

Parents also have a positive duty to their children, namely, to train them in the "discipline and instruction of the Lord" (v. 4b, RSV). How sharp a distinction is to be made between these is uncertain. It is possible that "discipline" may refer to the Christian rule of life and "instruction" to Christian teaching. The general meaning is plain.

1. From the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyrighted 1946, 1952, © 1971, 1973. Used by permission.

2. Bishop Lightfoot paraphrases the verse as follows: "In Christ ye are all sons, all free. Every barrier is swept away. No special claims, no special disabilities exist in Him, none can exist. The conventional distinctions of religious caste or of social rank, even the natural distinction of sex, are banished hence. One heart beats in all: one mind guides all: one life is lived by all. Ye are all 'one man,' for ye are members of Christ." J. B. Lightfoot: *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Macmillan, 1869), ad loc.

3. T. E. Jessop: *The Christian Morality* (London: The Epworth Press, 1960), p. 59.

4. C. F. D. Moule: *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, the Cambridge Greek Testament* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1968), p. 12.

5. F. F. Bruce comments on verse 10: "The veil is not a sign of the woman's submission to her husband's authority nor even of her social dignity and immunity from molestation; it is a sign of her authority. In the synagogue service a woman could play no significant part: her presence would not even suffice to make up the requisite quorum of ten (all ten must be males). In Christ she received equality of status with man: she might pray or prophesy at meetings of the church, and her veil was a sign of this new authority. Its ordinary social significance was thus transcended. As man in public worship manifests his authority by leaving his head unveiled, so woman manifests hers by wearing a veil. (1 and 2 Corinthians. *New Century Bible* [London: Oliphants, 1971], p. 106. Dr. Bruce's exegesis of the entire passage should be consulted.)

6. George Eldon Ladd: *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), pp. 527-28.

7. On this question, see F. F. Bruce: *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 309-10.

8. Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 527-28.

9. J. J. von Allmen: *Pauline Teaching on Marriage* (London: The Faith Press, 1963), p. 36.

10. See C. L. Mitton: *Ephesians (New Century Bible)* (London: Oliphants, 1976), p. 195.

11. C. A. Anderson Scott: *New Testament Ethics* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1948), pp. 127-28. Von Allmen points out that Paul never uses the verb "obey" (*hupakouo*) to denote the duty of a wife to her husband; that verb is reserved for the relation of children and parents, and slaves and masters (Eph. 6:1, 5. See von Allmen, *Pauline Teaching*, p. 45).

12. Bruce: *1 and 2 Corinthians (New Century Bible)*, p. 103.

13. Paul evidently has Gen. 2:21-23 in mind, as a comparison with 1 Cor. 11:3 suggests. His use of the Old Testament in both Eph. 5:23 and 1 Cor. 11:3 is illustrative rather than probative, in keeping with contemporary Rabbinic fashion; i.e., there is nothing in the fact that woman was made from man to prove that she should be subject to him; and Paul might equally have quoted Gen. 1:27 to show that they are equal. But given the submission of wife to husband as a fact of life, Gen. 2:21-23 can be used as an illustration of it; and this is what Paul does. For a discussion of Paul's use of the Old Testament, see R. N. Longenecker: *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), c. 4.

14. Some of Mitton's words, in my judgment, describe Paul's situation well. "He recognizes that the marriage relationship has been transformed for real Christians. . . . But Paul seems to have been aware of another responsibility besides that of explaining to Christians the radical change which Christ brings into all human relationships, including marriage. As a wise pastor he had to try to see to it that the new freedom and status to the Christian woman within her own home and marriage relationship was not so practised as to create dangerous misunderstandings and resentments among pagan neighbors. . . . In the ancient world a man's right to expect obedience from his wife was so universally conceded that a movement which seemed to countenance and approve a wife's insubordination towards her husband would rouse many prejudices. Such behavior on the part of Christian women would have prevented their neighbors from hearing sympathetically the message of the gospel. Paul said of himself that he was ready to endure any deprivation rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:12), and for this reason, if no other, he asked wives not to provoke antagonism to the gospel by insubordination to their husbands. In a similar way Paul asked Christian women to continue to wear the veil in Corinth, lest their abandonment of it should lead to their being mistaken for women of loose moral character and to the Christian faith which they represented being understood as a society which permitted sexual license" (C. L. Mitton, *Ephesians (New Century Bible)*, 197-98).

It is this situation which dictates the form in which Paul's teaching is cast. Walther Gunther's words express the matter well. "Though the New Testament essentially looks on marriage from the man's standpoint the Greek and the Old Testament traditions are so transcended that the man's special rights fall away, and throughout the New Testament the shared life of husband and wife stands in the foreground (1 Corinthians 7:3, Ephesians 5:21-33, Colossians 3:18f)" (Art. "Marriage, NT," in Colin Brown, ed. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977], 2:579).

15. Arguments for the subordination of wives to husbands as a permanent feature of marriage or creation ordinance overlook the fact that Paul evaluates marriage not only in terms of creation but also in terms of eschatology. From this perspective, marriage is one of those institutions which, as belonging to the present scheme of things, is passing away (1 Cor. 7:31) and in the world to come will have no place (Matt. 22:30). Those "in Christ" already share in the world to come, and some of the features of temporal existence which are inconsistent with it have no reality for them. This appears to be the implication of Gal. 3:28.

16. F. F. Bruce comments: "On the remarkable injunction to 'grow up into the head,' Mgr. R. A. Knox pointed out that a baby's head is very large in relation to his body, and that his body, as it develops, is really growing up more and more into a due proportion with the head. Whether this sort of analogy was in Paul's mind or not, it serves as a pleasing illustration of his teaching here" *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1961), p. 89.

17. The Greek word translated "respect" is "fear," but the context shows that "respect" is its sense here. Cf. Von Allmen, *Pauline Teaching*, p. 38, note 11.

18. Mitton, *Ephesians (New Century Bible)*, 210. The point holds good even apart from Mitton's theory that Ephesians is much later than Colossians, hence the difference in situation. The more general character of Ephesians is all that is needed to explain the difference.

19. F. F. Bruce takes "in the Lord" as exegetical of "parents" (i.e., "your parents who are in the Lord") rather than "obey" ("obey as in the Lord your parents"). But this does not affect the conclusion. Bruce writes: "He has a Christian family in view ('in the Lord'), and does not contemplate the situation where parental orders might be contrary to the law of Christ. In the last resort, the law of Christ must take precedence" (121).

20. *Ephesians*, p. 122.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Moule, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 129.

## Christ's Role in God's Saving Work

(Continued from page 9)

is needed to unravel it. Mystery as employed here means something which has long been kept secret but now has been revealed. Theodore Wedel in the *Interpreter's Bible* likens it to a military "top secret." The individual soldier receives specific orders from the command post to pursue the enemy in a certain manner but he does not understand why. After the battle is won, all is clarified to him through the ensuing events. However, it is incomprehensible to the soldier who has not been initiated into its purpose. Barclay illustrates this fact by referring to the puzzlement of the person who attends a Communion service for the first time without any knowledge of Christianity. Indeed, all would be mystery to him. Traditionally, for Christians "mystery" means "an open secret," or as John Mackay calls it "God's unveiled mystery."

Across the centuries of their existence the Hebrews sought to know the will of God for themselves, but it remained a mystery. The reason did not rest with any reticence on the part of God but rather with the dullness and irresponsibility of the people of God. Some of the Hebrews glimpsed it, as the writer of the Book of Hebrews in chapter 11 declares. Now through Christ, however, what was mystery is "an open secret." To be sure, the mystery will prevail for the unbelieving Jew until he comes to Christ. Speaking of the difference between the old and new dispensations, Paul tells the Corinthians that the truth about God's redemption is "veiled" to the Jew because he has not come to Christ. "Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds; but when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed" (2 Cor. 3:15-16).

What is the substance of the mystery? Essentially it is the will of God. This Paul tells us in 1:9: "The mystery which is his will." But what is contained in that will? We have already expressed the broad aspects of it; that is, "To reunite all things in heaven and in earth unto himself through Jesus Christ." Unity is on the heart of God. Into a divided world where men live in strife, where Jew and Gentile are hopelessly separated, God sent His Son to bring about a new order of peace. Into divided hearts, where sin rules unabated, God sent His Son to rule as Lord. Barclay writes, "Every man is a walking civil war. Within him there is the tension, the division, the battle between right and wrong, between good and evil, between passion and reason, between the instincts and the will."<sup>5</sup> For Paul, therefore, this amazing act of God of investing himself in Christ in the affairs of humankind for purposes of reuniting them to himself and to one another is the mystery, the open secret.

In a special way, however, the mystery includes

the incorporation of the Gentiles into the Body of Christ, the place of unity and the instrument of unity. In 3:4-6, Paul writes: "When you read this you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that is, how the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." Paul goes on to report that God called him to minister specifically to the Gentiles because of this breaking open of the mystery through Christ. "To me . . . this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things" (3:8-9).

Apparently, for Paul there are only three races of people: Jews, Gentiles, and Christians. His conviction is that the two racial divisions of Jews and Gentiles must be abolished and in their place there must be created "one people"—Christians. The Gentiles, the "far off" ones, the people outside the family of Israel are to become united with the Jews, the "near" ones, thus making "one new man" or "one body," the Church of Jesus Christ (cf. 2:13-22; Isa. 57:19). And the evidence of that unity is peace, given by the Prince of Peace (2:15, 17).

### Conclusion

What a sentence Paul drops on us in Eph. 1:9-10! It puts us in touch with the central thesis of his thought. Every other proposition in the Ephesian letter, and for that matter in all his letters, arises out of this fundamental premise. The Eternal God is remarkably at work in Christ, unto the redemption of mankind.

1. Christ is the actualization in history of the purpose of God to unite all things unto himself.

2. Christ therefore controls and gives meaning to all of human history.

3. Christ is the medium through whom God has exposed His mind and His heart.

4. All the mystery of what God is about has been unveiled through the life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Christ. The mystery "hidden in God for ages" is now "an open secret."

The bottom line is that the unity which God intends for His world is revealed in Christ and effected through Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection proclaimed and actualized through the Church, Christ's body, the extension of His Incarnation.

1. From the *Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, copyrighted 1946, 1952, © 1971, 1973.

2. Frank Beare, "Ephesians" (Exegesis), *Interpreter's Bible*, Ed., George Butterick, et al; Vol. X (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), p. 620.

3. St. Paul's *Epistle to the Ephesians: A Revised Text and Translation with Exposition and Notes*, (London: Macmillan Co., 1903), p. 30.

4. William Barclay, *Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, 2nd edition, "The Daily Study Bible" (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 96.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

## The Holy Spirit in Ephesians

(Continued from page 29)

sive quality, which is not generated by the Holy Spirit but rather which *is* the Spirit, would fill the spiritual capacities of the believers. Only He can strengthen us within and without.

In the *Beacon Bible Commentary* volume on Ephesians (p. 195), Willard Taylor counsels:

The phrase **to be strengthened** is an aorist infinitive (*kratoiothenai*), suggesting crisis or punctiliar action. Paul seems to be speaking of that second experience of the Christian in which . . . [the Spirit] cleanses and empowers the heart. This is no surface work. It happens **in the inner man**, in "the true and enduring self."

In other words, the real, spiritual person, at the core of his being, is energized by the Holy Spirit. This crisis results in a moment-by-moment "life in the Spirit" in which love abounds.

Note the glorious results of being "filled to . . . all the fullness of God" (3:19, NIV): (1) Christ dwells in their hearts through faith; (2) They are rooted in love; (3) They grasp the dimensions of Christ's love; and (4) They experience Christ's love which surpasses knowledge.

### Unity of the Spirit

In 4:3-4 we find the sixth and seventh comments on the Holy Spirit: "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called" (NIV).

The apostle Paul grasped the issue of unity versus diversity in all of life and in the Church as well as or better than anyone in the Early Church. He realized both the obvious value and the potential weakness of each. In these verses he emphasizes the basis of unity—the Holy Spirit.

A Trinitarian focus is seen here too, however. The Son and the Father are mentioned in the verses (6-16) which immediately follow. And in them he suggests that legitimate individuality and diversity issue eventually in real and wonderful unity. The "body" of Christ is mature, healthy, and active.

The primary reference in vv. 3 and 4 is to the Holy Spirit. If human, Christian spirit is involved (as a few commentators suggest), the source of the unity is still God's Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit.

In 4:30 we hear frequently quoted words: "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (NIV).

### Grieve Not the Spirit

Just as in 1:13, Paul reminds the readers that Spirit-filled Christians are sealed by the Holy Spirit

until their final redemption. He nevertheless warns that the Spirit can be grieved.

The context for this command is a list of sins, especially in the realms of communication. The first word "and" is *kai* in Greek. It connects this thought with the previous ones. Inferred here is the thought that the Holy Spirit can be affected by or has a "feeling" response to sinful or evil language. We can grieve Him by improper conduct.

There is no direct suggestion that any one act of sin would break the "seal" or cause the Holy Spirit to depart. There are, however, several Old and New Testament references (Isa. 63:10; Mark 3:28-30; Acts 5:3-10) which suggest that what we say is important to the Holy Spirit, and that sinful speech can have dire consequences.

The "new man" who is holy and righteous (4:24) is exhorted "not to be grieving" (a present tense imperative) the Holy Spirit. Do not grieve Him at all and especially not repeatedly, Paul is saying. What we utter affects others, ourselves, and the Holy Spirit.

### Filled with the Spirit

The ninth reference to the Spirit in Ephesians is 5:18: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit" (NIV).

While one is endeavoring to discern, understand, and do the will of God (5:15-17), genuine, spiritual exhilaration is not to be traded for inebriation or "getting high" on alcohol. The latter was a familiar part of much of Hellenistic culture and even some religious persuasions, such as the mystery religions. Spirit-filled persons, however, need not turn to substitutes in order to be joyful.

The verb "filled" is a present passive imperative and is better translated "be continually filled" with the Spirit. In the *BBC* (p. 235), Willard Taylor states:

The verbs in the present tense which appear in 19-21 suggest that Paul is not here calling his readers to the crisis of being sanctified wholly, but rather to the subsequent life in which the Holy Spirit fills us moment by moment, having already been "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (1:13, NASB; cf. 4:30).

Paul further spells out the different effects which are prompted by the two contrasted conditions—drunkenness and being Spirit-filled. One causes "debauchery," *asotia*; the other causes good communication. Singing and joyful music from the heart will express thanks to God for all things in Jesus' name (5:19-20).

### The Sword of the Spirit

In the midst of his list of the panoply or "full armor" of God, Paul orders: "Take the helmet of

salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (6:17, NIV).

The words in the Greek text, *ho estin rhema*, are translated "which is the word" in English. At first glance it appears that "which" refers to *pneuma* since both are neuter gender, and some commentators defend that conclusion.<sup>3</sup> A majority of scholars insist, however, that "which" and "word" refer to either "the sword," *makaira* in Greek, or the sword wielded by the Spirit. The latter seems preferable in that *ho*, the neuter relative pronoun, may point back in a general way to a fact rather than to a specific word as its antecedent.

So Paul is not calling the Holy Spirit *rhema*. Rather, he is using *rhema* to indicate God's communication through the Spirit to man. Sometimes the message remains oral, and yet often it is written down. We call the latter Scripture, the Bible, or God's Word. Other occurrences of *rhema* in this sense are Eph. 5:26 and Matt. 4:4. The same meaning without the term *rhema* can be noted in 2 Pet. 1:21. In the Fourth Gospel, John employs the Greek term *Logos* or "Word" to refer to Jesus. *Rhema*, however, is not generally used to refer either to Jesus or the Holy Spirit per se.

Paul's figure here is that, similar to the way in which a Roman soldier threatened his enemy with his short but sharp sword, the believer who is mounting an offensive against Satan in a spiritual battle uses God's spoken and written Word with the Spirit's help to overcome his spiritual enemy. Jesus' action in Matt. 4:1-11 and parallels is a classic example.

The sword is the only offensive weapon listed in the panoply; all the others are defensive. God has produced his *rhema* through His Holy Spirit and it provides the penetrating, cutting edge for the active Christian soldier.

### Pray in the Spirit

In the next verse (6:18) Paul's final comment regarding the Holy Spirit is found: "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints" (NIV).

The phrase "in the Spirit" occurred earlier in 2:22 and 3:5. It corresponds to the frequently used Pauline formula "in Christ." It differs, however, from the phrase "in the Spirit" which is repeated in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the last book in the New Testament.<sup>4</sup> There it refers to the special spiritual

consciousness which allowed John to see visions of the future, from his own time to the end of time.<sup>5</sup> Here in Ephesians, Paul uses the phrase to qualify growth into spiritual unity (2:22), revelation of the "mystery" (3:5), and ideal and consistent prayer (6:18). To do something "in the Spirit" means to be directed by the Holy Spirit.

Paul was a "prayer warrior." He began and ended projects with prayer. Here he urges his spiritual children to open themselves to the inspiring and intercessory presence of the Holy Spirit. He is grieved by improper speech (4:30), but He can help us to know *what* and *how* to speak to God in prayer (Romans 8:26-27).

Perhaps Paul had the "babbling" or "empty words," *battalogia*, of misdirected and gabby Gentiles in mind (Matt. 6:7) when he wrote these words in v. 18. For he applies the same principle—Spirit-directed speech—to prayers regarding his preaching and teaching (6:19-20). His prime point in 6:18 is that Spirit-filled believers who pray often about all kinds of things should be Spirit-led. If this is not one of the actual elements of the panoply, it is at least the framework in which all of the spiritual armor is to be used.

This inductive study of the verses in Ephesians in which the Holy Spirit is mentioned reveals that He is our: spiritual Seal (1:13; 4:40), Pledge of final redemption (1:14), Access to the Father (2:18), Unifier of Christ's body—the Church (2:22; 4:3-4), Revealer of God's salvation plan (3:5), spiritual Strengtheners and Power (3:16), Inspirer of wholesome and holy communication (4:30; 5:18; 6:17-18), and Intercessor in prayer (6:18). This tells us much about who He is and what He does.

It is quite true that Paul says other things about the Holy Spirit in his other epistles, as do other New Testament writers and Jesus. However, this picture of the Spirit which appeared so selective at the outset of this study now looks fuller. The symmetry and balance which beautifully describe God's Holy Spirit are more evident. It is the prayer of this writer that this portrait of the Holy Spirit will help us to more carefully listen to what He is telling us about himself today. May we see Him more clearly, know Him more fully, and share Him more effectively.

1. From *The Holy Bible, New International Version*, © 1978 by the New York International Bible Society.

2. He uses it also in 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5.

3. Goodspeed, Olshausen, Goden, and others.

4. Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10.

5. Cf. M. Tenney's *Interpreting Revelation*, pp. 32-33.

Fame is vapor. Popularity an accident. Riches take wings. Only one thing endures, and that is character.

Horace Greeley



# OLD TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES



by Charles Isbell

## Malachi 1:6—2:9

(against priests)

### "despise" (1:6)

Hebrew *bzh* is better "disgrace" (which results from contempt). The same word occurs twice in verse 6 and again in verse 7 with the same meaning.

### "defiled" (1:7)

The word is *meḡo'āl*, an adjective formed from the root *g'l*, "to pollute" or to render cultically unclean or unfit to be offered to a deity.

### "governor" (1:8)

A *pehah* was a Persian overlord, not a Jewish official.

### 1:9

The words "with such a gift" are not in the Hebrew text, which is very difficult to translate. It is simplest to follow the NASB or RSV here with awareness that both are only guesses as to the original text, part of which appears to be missing from the MT.

### 1:10

This verse too is difficult. However, a simple rendition of the MT yields good sense. "Who indeed among you will shut the doors [of the Temple] so that you will not kindle my altar in vain!" In short, it would be better to close down the sanctuary than to continue the shame of such shallow and disgraceful worship.

### "you are profaning it" (1:12)

The antecedent of "it" is the "name" of Yahweh mentioned in the previous verse. Together the two verses argue that Yahweh fares better among heathen worshipers than among His own. But verse 11 also asserts that *any* sincere worship, no matter where offered or by whom, really magnifies Yahweh. With this, compare Paul's argument in Rom. 2:9-10.

### "How tiresome it is" (1:13)

The Hebrew expression,

*mattlā'āh*, is an unusual compound of two words. Hebrew *mah* means "what" or "how," but is an interrogative—what? how? The noun *tlā'āh* is a very strong word used to describe something odious, offensive, and repulsive. For example, in Exod. 18:8, what God had done to Egypt in the course of freeing Israel from slavery is described as *tlā'āh* (see also Num. 20:14 and Neh. 9:32). Here the word describes the revulsion felt by priests of the Lord at the act of worship which He had ordained. The NEB translates, "how irksome."

### "disdainfully sniff" (1:13)

The root *nph* here signifies an act of total insult. In verse 8, a gift too paltry for the human Persian official was considered plenty good enough for Yahweh. Here some offerings for Yahweh are derived from robbery. Others (animals) are chosen for Yahweh because they are too deformed or unhealthy to be sold or used in any other way.

### 2:2

The name (=reputation) of Yahweh was well known and feared (= respected) among other nations (1:14). If Yahweh's own ministers refused Him the honor and respect He received elsewhere, they would reap His cursings rather than blessings.

### "offspring" (2:3)

Hebrew *zera'* may have two meanings. Perhaps the children of the priests are meant here, in which case the content of the rebuke is plain enough. On the other hand, *zera'* may mean "seed" in the sense of agricultural produce. The meaning would then be that the revenues due the priests from farmers throughout the country would be greatly reduced. The LXX reads, "I will break your arm," appar-

ently assuming *zerōa'* for *zera'*.

### "refuse" (2:3)

The Hebrew word does not mean "refuse" (NASB) or "dung" (KJV, RSV) or "vomit" (NASB marginal note). Rather, *peresh* means the entrails of a sacrificed animal. Throughout Leviticus, the entrails (*peresh*) are to be taken to a place "outside the camp" and destroyed. The meaning of Mal. 2:3 is that in response to the sneering, sniffing, insults of the priests, Yahweh will smear their faces with the entrails of dead animals. Then the publicly humiliated priests would "be taken away with it" (the *peresh* which was to be destroyed).

### 2:5-7

God's original relationship with Levitical priests had been intended to be life and peace which priests would reap as the fruit of their reverence for and service to Yahweh. Verses 6 and 7 are a powerful statement describing what ministry is all about. The minister (priest) himself/herself was characterized by truth, righteousness, walk with God, and peace. As a result, people were converted and turned away from iniquity through his ministry and in his function as "messenger of Yahweh" he was sought out as one having access to knowledge of the truest kind.

### 2:8-9

These verses describe sad actuality. What the ministers *were* is placed in sharp contrast to what they *should have been*. There are three products of their backsliding: they harmed others; they corrupted a covenant which was peaceful, righteous, and holy; they lost credibility and respect from their people. Notice the equation. Once the priests lost respect for Yahweh, the people lost respect for their priests.



# NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

by Ralph Earle

## Matt. 15:34—16:18

### Little Fish (15:34)

In all three Synoptic accounts of the feeding of the 5,000 the Greek word for "fish" is the general one, *ichthys*. Also it is stated each time that there were "two fish." John also says that there were two, but he uses an entirely different word for fish, one that no other New Testament writer uses.

In Matthew 15 we read about the feeding of the 4,000. Here we find that it is "little fishes." The Greek word is *ichthydion*, found also in Mark 8:7 (the only other place where the feeding of the 4,000 is recorded).

The King James Version has an odd inconsistency. In Matthew 15:34 it says "little fishes," but in Mark 8:7 has "small fishes," though the Greek is exactly the same. This is the kind of inconsistency in parallel passages that has been carefully avoided in the *New International Version*, which has "small fish" in both places. Incidentally, today the preferred plural of "fish" is not "fishes" but "fish."

### Seven Baskets (15:37)

In all four accounts of the feeding of the 5,000 we are told that the disciples filled 12 baskets with the fragments that were left over (Matt. 14:20; Mark 6:43; Luke 9:17; John 6:13). But in all three accounts of the feeding of the 4,000 we are told that there were seven baskets.

Furthermore the Greek word for "basket" used every time in

connection with the feeding of the 5,000 is *kophinos*, whereas it is always *spyris* in connection with the feeding of the 4,000. All these details show the care with which the Gospel writers distinguished the two miraculous feedings.

### Rock or Stone? (16:18)

Much has been made of the idea that "Peter" means "rock." So in this verse Jesus declares that He will build His church on Peter.

The Greek is similar, to be sure. "Peter" is *petros* in Greek; "rock" is *petra*. Are these synonymous in meaning?

The standard classical Greek lexicon is *A Greek-English Lexicon* by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, revised and enlarged by Henry Stuart Jones, and published in 1940. In this monumental work the first definition of *petros* is "stone" and the second is "boulder" (p. 1398). For *petra*, Liddell-Scott-Jones says: "rock; frequently of cliffs, ledges, etc. by the sea . . . rocky peak or ridge . . . mass of rock or boulder" (p. 1397).

Joseph Henry Thayer, in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, gives the definition of *petra* as "a rock, ledge, cliff," then "a rock, large stone." Under the metaphorical use, for "a man like a rock, by reason of his firmness and strength of soul," Thayer says: "Some interpreters regard the distinction (generally observed in classic Greek . . .) between *petra*, the massive living rock, and *petros*, a

detached but large fragment, as important for the correct understanding of this passage; others explain the different genders here as due first to the personal and then to the material reference" (p. 507). It must be admitted that in his discussion of *Petros*, which follows, Thayer seems to favor the latter idea.

George Abbott-Smith, in *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, follows the distinction found in classical Greek. He says of *petra*: "a mass of rock as distinct from *petros* a detached stone or boulder."

In his book on Peter, Oscar Cullman takes issue with the Protestant Reformers in their identification of the "rock" as Peter's faith or confession, not his person. In his rather lengthy articles on *petra* and *Petros* in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, he states this position strongly. After saying, "Rightly understood, Christ alone is the *petra*," he goes on to assert: "*Petros* himself is this *petra*, not just his faith or his confession" (6:99). He even goes so far as to say of Jesus: "He appoints Peter, the impulsive enthusiastic, but not persevering man in the circle, to be the foundation of His ecclesia" (6:108).

This does not seem to us to go very well with the incident recorded in Gal. 2:11-21. Peter showed himself there to be just a stone, and a rolling one at that. We prefer to stay with the Reformers.



# CLERGY QUIZ

- The *Pulpit Commentary* was edited by:
  - Adam Clarke and Richard Watson
  - H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell
  - Ralph Earle and Chaim Potok
  - C. H. Dodd and Eldon Ladd
- Which of the following were famous Scottish preachers?
  - Hugh Blair
  - John Knox
  - Peter Marshall
  - All of the above
  - "B" and "C" but not "A"
- According to tradition Claudia Procula:
  - Gave birth to Philip the evangelist
  - Was a wife of Herod Antipas
  - Was married to Pontius Pilate
  - Was also known as Asenath
- The oratorical device by which the speaker opens and closes a clause or sentence with the same word is known as:
  - Catachresis
  - Anaphora
  - Metonomia
  - Epanalepsis
- The overarching theme of Ephesians is:
  - Unity or oneness
  - Heaven
  - Ecclesiastical organization
  - Predestination
- Markus Barth believes that *Ephesians* was written by:
  - Onesimus
  - Apollo
  - Paul
  - Tychicus
- Which of these words for various kinds of wrongdoing in the Old Testament indicates a raging hostility toward God and is a very common word for "sinner"?
  - Chatta
  - Hamartia
  - Rasha
  - Abar
- Which of the following poems about death and destiny was written by William Cullen Bryant?
  - Thanatopsis
  - Crossing the Bar
  - Invictus
  - L'Envoi
  - Elegy Written in a Country Church-yard
- A region whose name means "land of all tribes" which Paul visited on his first missionary journey was:
  - Pontus
  - Pamphylia
  - Paphos
  - Pisidia
- Kyrios means:
  - Noon meal
  - A parable
  - The church
  - Lord or master
- The woman who was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I, and who married her uncle and then lived with her brother and who heard Paul's defense speech of Acts 25 and 26 was:
  - Bernice
  - Candace
  - Salome
  - Mariamne
- The idea that redeemed Christians are God's work of art, or His poem, comes from:
  - Eph. 2:10
  - Eph. 3:4
  - Eph. 4:10
  - Eph. 1:10-13
- According to Ephesians the Holy Spirit is our:
  - Spiritual Seal
  - Intercessor in prayer
  - Pledge of final redemption
  - Access to the Father
  - All of the above
  - All of the above except "B"
- Which of the following is not a renowned church historian?
  - Eusebius
  - John L. Mosheim
  - Philip Schaff
  - Kenneth S. Latourette
  - E. F. Harrison
- The Muratorian Canon:
  - was a manuscript of canonical New Testament books dating back to the second century.
  - was named after L. A. Muratori, a well-known librarian.
  - omitted Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and 3 John.
  - All of the above.

## Answers

1-B; 2-D; 3-C; 4-D; 5-A; 6-C; 7-C; 8-A; 9-A; 10-D; 11-A; 12-A; 13-E; 14-E; 15-D.

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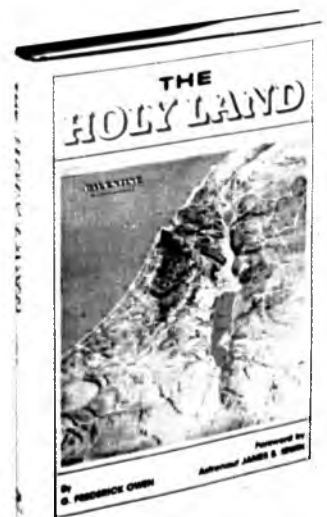
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