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THE

DECEMBER, JANUARY, FEBRUARY, 1985-86

# PREACHER'S MAGAZINE



**MINISTERING TO THE DIVORCED ..... 4**

**CHRISTIAN PREACHING .....12**

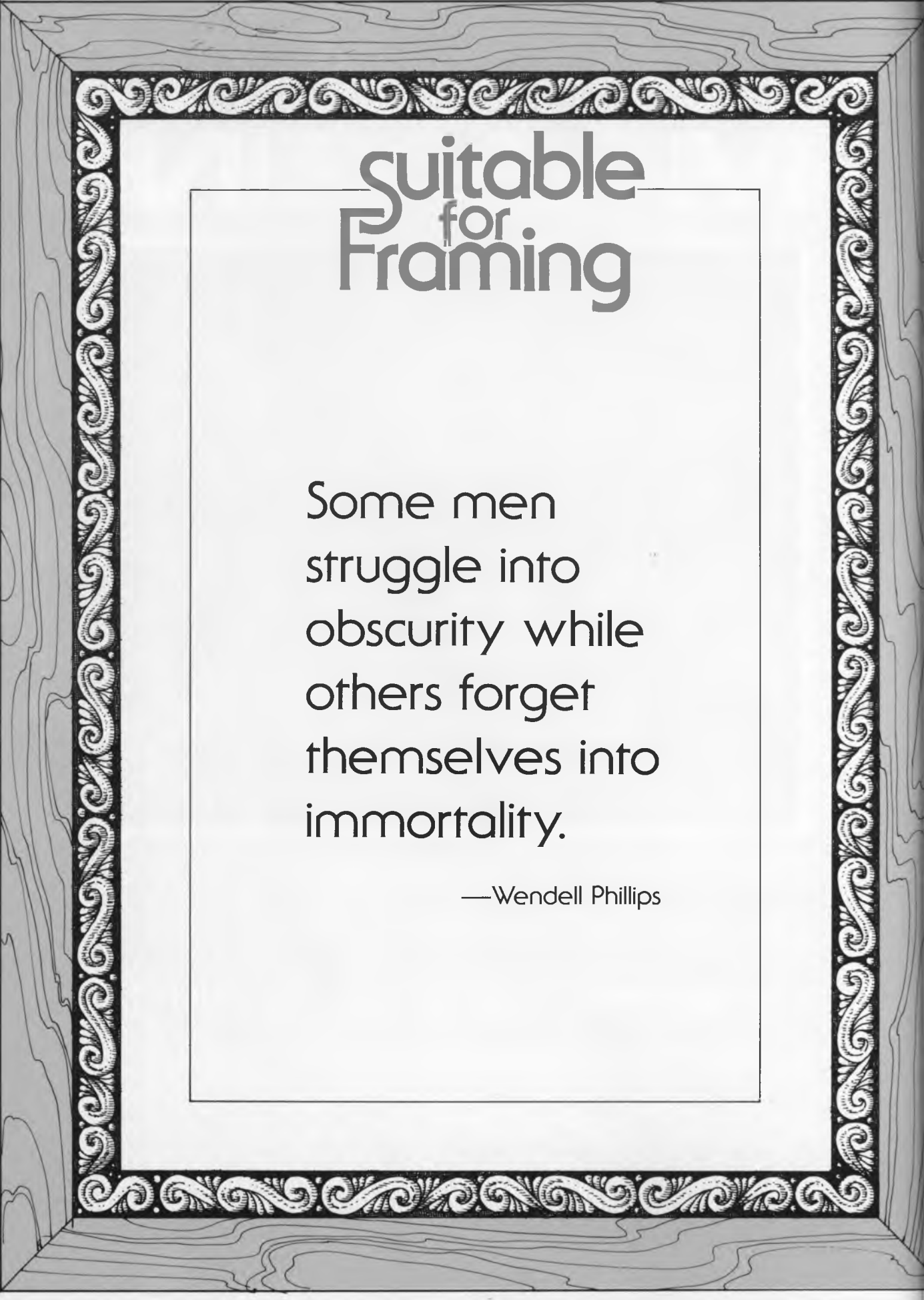
**THE TEACHING MINISTRY OF THE PULPIT...19**

**PASTORAL TRANSITION .....26**

**SPIRITUAL FORMATION.....32**

**THE MUSICIAN AS MINISTER.....36**

**SERMONS FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS ..58**



# suitable for Framing

Some men  
struggle into  
obscurity while  
others forget  
themselves into  
immortality.

—Wendell Phillips



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# THE ARK ROCKER

## NOTES AND COMMENT

One must avoid parochialism in this column, but a report from the *Universal Luau* of One of the Largest Denominations in the Holiness Movement may edify and be useful to all readers of this good journal. Some very commendable events transpired. But other happenings seemed expressly designed for this column.

The "Nuke the Pentecostals" campaign at one point came close to victory on the UL floor. Several argued that nothing short of absolute extermination of the "tongues menace" would do.

It was a delegate from New Jersey who rallied the forces for a milder statement, and he did it with an out-of-order speech. The chair allowed the speech after the question had actually been put, because the man's "simultaneous translation" was running about 15 minutes behind, and he had just gotten the meat of the debate in his own language.

The man's point was that if they destroyed the Pentecostals, at least two untoward things would ensue: It would decimate the National Association of Evangelicals, making it of no use to have so recently joined it, and it would leave us with only ourselves to blame when division and confusion came upon us.

So taken was the UL by the argument of the man from New Jersey that it began spontaneously to sing that grand old chorus, "Makes Me Love [Almost] Everybody." And that closed the issue—for now.

The proposal that the denomination use the *Geneva Bible*, intended as a compromise measure, also failed. Supporters had wooed the right by pointing out that the KJV had come from a bunch of Anglicans (*Prayerbook* sorts) on orders from an ex-Presbyterian king, an absolutist, "Divine Right" sort, who was also a homosexual. This strategy was supposed to have worked because of its similarity to the arguments used by the KJVers to undermine the credibility of other versions, especially the RSV. The GBers discovered how little logic had to do with it.

More serious opposition to the GB came from the

*Amplified Bible* folks. Some of the ABVers walked out, exited, egressed, evacuated, departed when an impolitic Ohioan suggested that *Roget's Thesaurus* is both uninspired and uninspiring, and that he needed a version that sounded less like a sermon.

But the worst blow of all came from the realization that one-third of the delegates did not speak English and therefore preferred no English version at all. Those delegates were left to their own communications problems, and the matter was dropped.

This did perturb some of the KJVers, who had left the floor over a "mifquotation of Firtt Theffalonians v:xxiii-xxiv." They did not want the "iffue" dropped. But, being "good fports," they returned to the fray, thankful, at least, for the "fentiment againft gloffalalia."

The vote against the GB probably killed the Association of Old Bumper Sticker Witnesses. They rose to prominence 10 years back with the slogans "I Found It—I and II" and "Honk Twice if You Love Wesley," and were posed to spearhead the GB campaign with a sticker reading "If You Can Read the GENEVA BIBLE You're as Close as You'll Ever Get." They appealed mostly to folks with big cars.

The vote on a more careful definition of Original Sin in the Articles of Faith created a great deal of tension. No one wanted to admit having had sufficient recent experience with the subject to speak authoritatively. The chair declared "out-of-order" several suggestions from the floor as to who might respond.

One final note (as Peter Jennings says): Some of the Handy-Pac Communion Kits unused at the opening service of the UL were picked up by enterprising youth choirs in attendance and are being sold to help pay for the choirs' next UL trip. Authorities urge us not to purchase them, as the tradition stands four-square against money-raising schemes, and instead urges freewill offerings. (They assure us that the matter of poor taste did not enter their decision.)

*The Ark Rocker*

# IN THIS ISSUE

## FEATURE ARTICLES

### PASTORAL CARE:

- 4 Ministering to Divorced Persons** ..... *Jerry W. McCant*  
The Church should stop stuttering about this issue and find some redemptive words to say.
- 5 Divorce Among Evangelicals: Preventing the Problem** ..... *Harold Ivan Smith*  
Seven things the Church can do to keep husband and wife living under the same roof.
- 10 Counseling Families of Stroke Victims** ..... *Jack D. Anderson*  
Few families of stroke victims know how to help or cope—the pastor can offer hope.

### PREACHING:

- 12 The Unitive Functions of Christian Preaching** ..... *Wesley Tracy*  
The preached word becomes the Living Word. The preacher becomes a little basket in which the Bread is laid.
- 19 The Teaching Ministry of the Pulpit** ..... *Richard J. Bisson*  
The historic method of teaching by preaching still maintains its preeminence.

### CHURCH ADMINISTRATION:

- 22 Facilitating Community: One Congregation's Experience** ..... *Bill Barnes*  
Can what we have in common in Christ outweigh our cultural differences?

### THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY:

- 24 Journey** ..... *L. G. Gordon*  
One man's reflections after 43 years of ministry.
- 26 Pastoral Transition: An Occupational Hazard** ..... *Carl Green*  
The "no-man's land" between pastors is thick with mines that the outgoing pastor can disarm if he will.
- 28 Voted Out!** ..... *Marcus R. Briggs*  
Is there life after The Vote?
- 30 Tread Lightly, Pastor** ..... *Esme James*  
A layperson counsels her new pastor. What is she really saying?

### CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE:

- 32 Spiritual Formation: Christ Formed in Us** ..... *V. James Mannoia*  
The downward path is the way of spiritual formation.

### FINANCE:

- 35 Regular Social Security Checkups May Prevent a Retirement Heartbreak**

### CHURCH MUSIC:

- 36 The Musician as Pastor, Priest, and Prophet** ..... *Keith Schwanz*  
The musician as minister is God's loving hands and arms to needy people.

### WESLEYANA:

- 38 Being Dead, Yet They Speak** ..... *Wayne E. Caldwell*  
Taking a look at the "Evangelists' Hall of Fame."

### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:

- 40 Developing a Healthy Christian Education Program** ..... *John R. Cionca*  
The old trip-them-in-the-hallway trick just won't work any longer.

### MULTIPLYING MINISTRY:

- 43 The Pastor as a Writer** ..... *Stephen A. Bly*  
Most ministers are an "act of literature" about to burst into bloom.

### PASTORAL CLINIC:

- 44 Case Studies for Reflection and Discussion**



#### THE MINISTER'S MATE:

- 46 A New Place to Grow** ..... *Debbie Goodwin*  
Role-playing worship and Christian busyness are hazardous to your soul.

#### EVANGELISM:

- 48 How Evangelistic Work Helps Me to Lose** ..... *James N. Watkins*  
Musings of a traveling evangelist.

#### BIBLICAL STUDIES:

- 50 A Methodological Guide for Interpretive Bible Study** ..... *Frank G. Carver*

#### VISITATION:

- 56 Our Pastor Makes House Calls** ..... *Neil Hightower*  
Visitation may be more than an old-fashioned activity.

#### CHRISTMAS:

- 57 All I Want for Christmas Is a Day by Myself** ..... *J. Grant Swank, Jr.*  
**58 Preaching Program for Advent and Christmas** ..... *Edward F. Cox*

## REGULAR FEATURES

Suitable for Framing.....	Inside Cover	Today's Books for Today's Preacher .....	54
Ark Rocker.....	1	Sermon Outlines.....	61
Preacher's Exchange .....	42	New Testament Word Studies .....	64

# THE PREACHER'S MAGAZINE

Proclaiming Christian Holiness

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should have "superkids." The kids in essence become "the proof of the pudding." In many families, the children come first. When children discover that reality, they can manipulate the family to their priorities and interests. Some parents acquiesce to avoid or reduce conflict.

Much of a couple's conversation focuses on the day-to-day care of the children. By the end of many days, there's too little time or energy to devote to the mate's nourishment, if the kids come first. This is also reinforced by our cultural preoccupation with youth and our fear of aging.

**III. THE CHURCH MUST ENCOURAGE FATHERS TO BE MORE ACTIVE IN PARENTING.** In urban cultures, parenting is too female-oriented; the father's role is often limited to economics. The Word is not silent on the leadership expected of the father. But our nation suffers from a weak father image: where are the models?

In the early years of a child's life, the mother is generally dominant and the father passive. This is negatively reflected in the overwhelming abundance of maternal-oriented families in which the father gives way or the mother assumes power in the absence of strong male leadership. A father's responsibilities toward those who share their last name are too often financial rather than emotional and spiritual. One grown child reported:

He [my father] was busy with what we all believed was the real world. He did not consider the changing of diapers, the preparation of or shopping for food, the reading of a bedtime story, the placing of a Band-Aid, his responsibility. He had, therefore, no intimacy. . . . He was the victim of a time that asked too little of fathers and assumed them incompetent of the simplest fathering tasks that they could have mastered easily and performed enjoyably. . . . Now when I see my father, I often ache to make up to him what he lost, what we both lost while he was locked behind the door of macho behavior, chasing the time-consuming demands of American success.<sup>2</sup>

Some young fathers today are ineffective because of the ineffective role-modeling they observed in their fathers.

The complicated tapestry of emotions that is childhood needs the threads of both male and female if the design is to be strong and clear. We should not forget that the father carries fully 50 percent of the responsibility for the child and his contribution is no less important than that of the sperm to the egg.<sup>3</sup>

**IV. THE CHURCH MUST CAUTIOUSLY USE "THE SUCCESSFUL" FAMILY.** What is the criterion for a successful family? In our quest for the superfamily, we have encouraged cosmetic marriages and families who appear to be one thing at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday morning and another during the week. Isaiah commented, "The images that are carried about are burdensome, a burden for the weary" (46:1, NIV). In essence, the preservation of the image blocks the resolution or recognition of needs. Because we have so identified successful families as spiritual barometers, many cannot confront or admit inadequacies. Such a feeling does not have to be

expressed to be felt. Many parents feel their profession is challenged by rebellious children. How many parents have asked pastors, "Where did I go wrong?"

If 1 Timothy's instructions on children were as rigidly followed as the instructions on the "husband of one wife," we would eliminate many potential church leaders.

- (1) "[An overseer] must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)" (1 Tim. 3:4-5, NIV).
- (2) "A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well" (1 Tim. 3:12, NIV).

There is a tendency to overemphasize "the husband of one wife," which *really* deals with polygamy, but con-

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## Why have we made successful family life a spiritual barometer?

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veniently overlook or ignore the qualifications stated in the above.

To reduce spiritual tension, some pretend the inadequacies (apparent to many in the church) do not exist. Thus we create families for the photo albums that are not unlike Hollywood movie sets: believable on the outside; hollow on the inside.

God has high expectations for the family and grace for those who fail. It must not be forgotten that He entrusted His Son to a family.

The biblical accounts report failures as well as victories in parenting and behavior in the family tree of Jesus. We can find comfort in that reality. The Word reports the reaction of Isaac and Rebecca when their 40-year-old son married Judith and Basemath, "a bitter grief" (Gen. 26:35, NEB).

Later she reported, "If Jacob marries a Hittite woman like those who live here, my life will not be worth living" (Gen. 27:46, NEB).

You do not have to be the Family of the Year or even a perfect family, just a family willing to nourish and care for its members. Some of the failures of today become the raw materials for tomorrow's successes or laurels—a fact demonstrated later in Esau's pilgrimage.

**V. THE CHURCH MUST ENCOURAGE MARITAL AND FAMILY COUNSELING.** Many Christians are afraid to seek counseling; some view it as a contradiction of

their testimony. Some wait until the family is in crisis to seek help. Others see the experience as a game or trade-off. "I'll go to counseling if you will . . ."

Some have stored so many hurts that by the time they seek counseling, the enemy suggests, "It's not worth it!" or "he'll never change!" A few find that divorce is easier emotionally than resolving the problems; some simply give up.

We must encourage people to seek counseling early and without delay. We must support those who bravely seek counseling. We must not insist on two-visit solutions, particularly in light of deeprooted, long-camouflaged problems.

We need more training for church leaders.

Unfortunately, ministerial preparation programs and seminary programs do not include family study despite the church's pro-family status. Most Christians colleges require, if at all, only one survey course in marriage and the family, which generally has more theoretical context than practical value. Leaders such as Dr. James Dobson have demonstrated the capacity of the church to speak concisely and authoritatively in this area. The millions who have read his books or viewed his film series are some indication of the people's hunger for assistance in their family concerns.

To be effective, counseling requires an honest commitment. Under a skilled, compassionate professional, counseling provides a level of undergirding and nourishing for the family through skills essential to their survival in a hostile environment.

In too many cases, one mate refuses to go. The other mate waits for an attitude to change. If the attitude hardens, the conditions deteriorate. More tension is created and/or stockpiled. We must remember that God holds a person responsible for all that he could have done to have saved or enhanced a marriage.

Some are afraid after reading or hearing accounts of repercussions from counseling and sensitivity training. Some are hurt so desperately, yet are still afraid of condemnation or rejection. Some are suspicious of the confidentiality of the counselor. Will he tell?

Others are afraid of the sensitive mirror of counseling. How will I feel if I share those intimate secrets and scars? What if I disarm my arsenal prematurely? The church can do a lot to create a climate conducive to counseling. The church (pastor, Sunday School teachers, leaders) must encourage the invitation and continuation of counseling.

**VI. THE CHURCH MUST TEACH COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS.** In an on-the-go schedule like ours, we communicate poorly or inadequately. Some use the equivalent of a verbal shorthand that encourages misunderstandings:

- "That's not what I said . . ."
- "Well, I heard you!"
- "Well, it's not what I meant!"
- "What am I supposed to be, a mind-reader?"

- "How am I supposed to know you'd take it the wrong way?"

Sound familiar? How many mates complain, "You don't talk to me anymore," or, "You wouldn't understand!"

We are poor listeners. "He never heard a word I said . . ." or "In one ear and out the other!" are expressions too common in our society. More affairs have begun through listening and sharing than through sexual intimacy.

Our dictionaries are thicker than at any time in civilization; yet, we fail to communicate. So many words have emotional connotations from previous hurts. While many factors have influenced the breakdown of communication, our need to talk will not go away. So, we spend billions paying others (psychologists, counselors, pastors, psychiatrists) to listen to us.

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## **More affairs begin through listening and sharing than through promiscuous prowling.**

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Pastors who feel inadequate must know qualified, compassionate professionals with Christian standards and high credentials to whom they can make referrals. Pastors need to be encouraged to seek additional counseling skills through continuing education or graduate courses. Church boards must encourage pastors in this training. We must also make a place in our ministerial training for counseling competencies.

We must explore ways in which the local church can use professionals, perhaps on a part-time basis or as a consultant, or through occasional seminars, retreats, and conferences.

We must "demyth" the fears of marriage and family counseling, particularly among men. A strong pastor and key lay leadership can diffuse this fear. The church must support the couple in their search for answers and growth; we must applaud their courage.

**VII. THE CHURCH MUST ENCOURAGE MATE-BUILDING.** Vacations without the children give the couple time to:

- (1) catch-up;
- (2) nourish;
- (3) renew the wonder of their marriage. Couples must prioritize their commitments to strengthen their marriages. They will be better parents when they are better mates; they will model a more effective style of marriage to their children; they will be better churchmen.

Couples need time away to relax, to rediscover. A lay



retreat provides one excellent resource: as do mini-vacations.

... Most churches tend to eye young, committed Christian couples the same way the lion eyes the fawn. Is it any wonder that the same chapter that spells out the laws of divorce, insists "When a man is newly married, he is not to be drafted into military service or any other public duty; he is to be excused from duty for one year, so that he can stay at home and make his wife happy" (Deut. 24:5, TEV).

The church needs to review and commit this Mosaic declaration to memory. ... Instead of placing unlimited demands on couples, many of whom are too committed to say no, the church should act as a spiritual reservoir, giving practical instruction, support, and counsel to all those beginning the arduous process of growing together.<sup>4</sup>

We must also find ways to share our faith within our families. Charlie Shedd discovered that less than 5 percent of Christian couples pray and read the Bible together. Such a reality leads to spiritual and marital impoverishment.

Different preference in devotional style is one barrier; parenting responsibilities, and finding a time for praying and sharing also frustrate this time. A couple must *make* time to pray for and with each other, if the spiritual dimension of marriage is nourished.

One positive tool is marriage enrichment. Some assume marriage enrichment is a glorified repair shop for troubled marriages or a court of last resort. Rather, it is designed to equip couples who desire fuller, more meaningful marriages.

Marriage enrichment assumes that apart from an individual's personal relationship with God, the second most significant relationship is that between husband and wife. Unappropriated spiritual and emotional resources in all couples can be developed to increase their marital fulfillment.

In marriage enrichment, a couple is encouraged to draw their reservoir of latent skills and gifts to enhance personal competence.

### Conclusion

We must not forget: a marriage cannot be taken for granted but must be nourished. It's easy to say after discovering another couple's problem, "it can't happen to us!" ... but the experience of thousands has been, it can!

Prevention is complicated—with no easy solutions, no one-two-threes—but a commitment to the survival of the family.

Where can we begin?



### NOTES

1. Harold Smith, "Life Beyond the Aisle," *United Evangelical Action* (Fall 1980), 18.
2. Anne Roiphe, "Daddy's Girls," *Vogue* (October 1980), 189.
3. *Ibid.*, 192.
4. Harold Smith, "Life Beyond the Aisle," 18.

## MINISTERING TO DIVORCED

(Continued from page 4)

not know how to minister to one shattered by divorce. Rather than feel awkward in the situation, they simply avoid it.

We can no longer afford to avoid divorced persons and their situations. They are crying to the Church, and they have a right to expect a compassionate response. Each person is different, and there is no one correct way of ministering, but I want to make some general suggestions that might help as the Church attempts to bring healing to divorced persons.

**1. Support them with your presence.** By your very presence they will know you care. You have other duties, and no one expects you to live with the person going through a divorce. The person needs to see you, however, because you may be the only visible symbol he has of a loving God. With emotions benumbed by trauma, he needs some evidence of the continuing love of God.

**2. Reassure, but don't think you must answer all his questions.** He needs to be reassured of your love and acceptance; your presence will tell that you care. He will ask many questions, but he does not necessarily need, want, or expect answers from you. You must allow him to raise the questions and express his anger, but you do not have to be the world's answer book.

**3. Accept the person.** Whether the divorce is right or wrong is not for you to decide. The person may even be the cause of the problem, but you do not need to take sides. Even when the other spouse has clearly admitted adultery, the one who still loves does not want to hear that. The person wants to be reassured that he is still a person with value and worth and that you love and accept him.

**4. Listen to him.** Do not be shocked by what he says. He is angry, feels rejected, and needs to say some things "out loud." More than anything he needs someone to listen. Be prepared to hear some things a thousand times! Just remember he needs to say them. He has a lot on his mind—the past, present, and future.

**5. Allow emotional expression.** We do not have much trouble allowing women to cry, but our society does not like it when men cry. Some men learn to cry again when divorce comes. Let them cry! Nothing will so bring release as a bath of tears. It is for their own benefit, not yours, so let them cry. When they express violent, hostile emotions, accept them without condemnation.

**6. Include them in the church family.** A single parent with his children is still a family. We find it particularly hard to accept this if the single parent is a father. Do not accentuate the awkwardness he already feels by gently and subtly pushing him to the periphery. He should know he is invited to all church and Sunday School class functions. He may need special attention because he feels ostracized.

**7. Encourage couples and families** to include the single parent and children in their lives. One of the greatest shocks for the person going through a divorce is that couples no longer associate with him. Singles just do not "fit" in a couples' world. And the fact that the single parent has children does not seem to help. Of all places,

this should not happen in the Church. Many divorced persons will wander away from the Church for lack of fellowship, a listening ear, and caring companionship. We must not let them go. They are whole persons and need to be accepted for themselves.

**8. Help them restructure their lives.** For a divorced woman, this could mean getting a job for the first time. For either parent, it may mean leaving children at a day-care center. Financial counseling will likely be needed. We should not overlook the possibility of financial and material needs. This may be especially true for a man. Typically, the wife keeps the house if there are children, even in community property states. She will then keep most of the furniture and get child support and sometimes spousal support, leaving the man almost totally without resources.

A young man in just such a condition talked it over with a minister. The minister said, "If your house had burned, we would help you. If your wife or child had a catastrophic illness, we'd be there. But since you lost everything in a divorce, you'll have to do the best you can. We cannot help you."

In the light of Matthew 25, the Church must face its obligation to minister to material as well as spiritual needs. It does not matter why they are in need, we are called to help them.

**9. Be patient with them.** Very few people in the Church seem to know how to care deeply on a sustained basis. It takes a long time to get through a divorce. Six months must pass after filing for the divorce before there is an interlocutory. Then come the final papers declaring the couple divorced. But after that there is still the need to be patient with this person. There are readjustments he never thought about—housing, child custody, living alone, refurnishing a house. There will continue to be days of emotional upheaval—anger, depression, crying. Do not set dates and tell him that by now he has had enough time. One simply cannot say how much time a person needs, because each person is different. He does not need to become dependent on you, but he needs to know you are there. Don't let him down—be there! Be a rock when he is filled with doubt. Believe in him (and tell him so) when he is angry and hostile and unlovable. He will get through this; he will survive. How he gets through it may depend largely on the quality of your ministry.

I am particularly concerned about men in the Church who have been divorced. They face rather unusual problems. In the U.S. the "moving party" is the woman in 80 percent of the cases. In 90 percent of the cases, women are given custody of the children. Dad is told this is "in the best interests of the child." He is given the same verbiage when the courts say Mother needs the house for the kids. Of course, she needs child support for them! Typically, he gets a few discarded pieces of furniture. Mother goes on with all intact while Dad starts life over—and Mother filed for the divorce.

To add to the injustice, our society, as already mentioned, does not allow men to cry. It frightens us if a man cries. Men do not want the children, so the myth goes, and they couldn't handle them anyway; children need to be with their mother. The truth is men do cry, and they do love, and they are gentle. They can nurture their chil-

dren; they can do anything a woman can do except breastfeed a baby. They want their children, and they want to live with them, not "visit" them on weekends. The psychologists know this, but the courts have not caught up. Society knows it but has not acted on its knowledge. A man taking care of his child is said to be "mothering."

The Church can minister to the father who has his children. It can accept him as a legitimate parent, not a baby-sitter or nanny. Accept him and his children as a family—do not pity him and them as a broken, partial family. Visit him and the children in their new home—and don't mention how much the home needs the "feminine" touch. Be sure they are invited into other homes of the Church. Do not rush him off to singles' clubs and other places to meet someone new. He is a whole person without a wife, and he needs to be affirmed. His family needs that acceptance—as they are!

If he does not have custody of the children, be interested and concerned, but try not to embarrass him with too many questions. There are many reasons why children might not be with the father. He has already concluded that you think he is a bad father who has "lost" his children. You need not exacerbate the pain with unnecessary questions. Life will go on and "normalize," but it takes time. Dads are already fighting against a society that does not understand, a court system that is corrupt to the core, and a legal profession that aggravates the situation. Let the Church be a friend.

A young man was divorced. He tried to continue in his church despite the difficulties. In time he drifted away. He asked his pastor, "Why is it, Pastor, that I find more fellowship at the bar than I do in the church?" Before you condemn his being at the bar, remember he went back to the church first. He did not find a welcome there, and he did not find a sympathetic ear.

After a divorce, a young woman and her two sons continued in church. But she complained that she was not welcomed. "I find more compassion among unsaved people at work," she said.

Another divorced and married again but felt, "I would be far more welcomed here if only I had committed adultery and could ask for forgiveness."

Her husband was a minister and worked for his denominational headquarters. He left her for another woman and admitted adultery without question. She returned to her hometown and to her home church. She had fully expected a warm welcome and Christian love. Instead she was ostracized and treated as a leper to be quarantined and avoided. Finally, with broken heart and shattered self-esteem, she left her church for another denomination where she was not known. She is not outside the Kingdom, but her church lost a very precious soul!

It should not be easier for an adulterer or murderer to return to church than a divorced person! I know a minister who has served time in the penitentiary as a convicted murderer who will not admit a divorced person into his church's membership.

God's grace is sufficient to cover every sin. The Church must not forsake those whose spouses have already forsaken them. As Jesus commanded Peter, "Tend My Sheep" (John 21:17, NASB).



# COUNSELING FAMILIES OF STROKE VICTIMS

by Jack D. Anderson

*Chairperson, Communicative Disorders and  
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**W**e take nothing more for granted than our ability to speak and to be understood. The ability to communicate gives us an essential measure of control over our social environment and permits us to influence those in our sphere of living. Loss or damage to that capacity may be devastating socially, psychologically, vocationally, and economically, particularly if it is the result of stroke or brain injury. A common consequence of stroke is a paralysis on one side of the body and an inability, partial or complete, to speak or understand the speech of others. The speech impairment resulting from injury to the dominant side of the brain is called aphasia.

A pastor's role frequently places him in a position of ministering to individuals who suffer from a stroke or other type of brain injury that impairs speech and hearing. The purpose of this article is to describe briefly some of the communicative impairments commonly experienced by stroke victims and to explain some of the bewildering behaviors that sometimes accompany these conditions. Suggestions and helps for the pastor as he ministers to these most needy individuals and their families are also discussed.

The speech and language problems that frequently result from stroke and traumatic brain injury usually fall into one of three broad categories: aphasia, dysphasia, or dysarthria. Simply stated, aphasia is a condition in which the patient is no longer able to express himself verbally. He may not be able to recall familiar words, put words into sentence form, or articulate clearly. He will probably have some difficulty in understanding what others say even though he may have normal hearing acuity. In all likelihood, he will also experience some difficulty in reading and writing.

Dysphasia and dysarthria are conditions in which comprehension of spoken language is usually intact or impaired minimally, but articulate speech is impaired, perhaps to the point of speechlessness.

These three conditions may exist separately or in combination and will vary from very mild to severe impairment. Aphasia and dysphasia are frequently found

in patients who have a paralysis of the right side of the body and occasionally in those with left-sided paralysis. The net effect of these communicative disorders is that they significantly reduce one's personal control over daily life and impair drastically the ability to nurture and sustain a family and interact with friends.

Many stroke patients with aphasia make significant improvement in time; some show little progress. Most exhibit certain behaviors that are perplexing to both family and friends, and perhaps to the patients themselves. They may cry, laugh, or become angry without cause. These labile emotions may be appropriate but greatly exaggerated, or they may be inappropriate. A patient may weep when he should be laughing, or laugh when the occasion calls for tears. This behavior is often disturbing to the aphasia patient and even more upsetting to his family who may incorrectly see the behavior as infantile or as a psychological disturbance. Nothing could be further from the truth. The problem is that the patient's nervous system is simply in a state of instability and lacks its normal capacity for regulating and controlling emotions. This seemingly uninhibited behavior normally improves as the patient gets well physically, but may in some cases persist for years. In all likelihood the attending physician will have discussed this problem with the family. If he has not, then the pastor may want to allay their fears by explaining that these emotional exaggerations will eventually diminish in intensity and probably disappear as the patient becomes stable neurologically. The best approach is to ignore the behavior insofar as possible. Family members and friends must be encouraged to avoid overreacting—their calm and resolve will go far in helping the patient avoid emotional outbursts.

Another distressing consequence of stroke for patient and family alike is the sudden, unexpected profanity that is occasionally uttered by some aphasic patients. I have observed this in the most saintly of saints! It apparently stems from the fact that much of what we

## **Can we do more than simply watch the stroke victim and his family withdraw into social isolation?**

see and hear is stored in our memory systems. The foul, vulgar language most of us have been exposed to at some time or other is, unfortunately, stored along with the beautiful experiences of life. Stroke resulting in aphasia may release inhibitions over these utterances and they come forth uninvited.

It is important to understand that these utterances are nonpropositional in character. That is, they have no symbolic meaning for the speaker. They are simply reflex in nature and may indeed be the only responses the patient is capable of making. From my point of view as a speech pathologist, I believe it is a mistake for family members to impress upon the patient that he should not speak, at least early in the recovery period, if "that is all he can say." A better approach is to explain simply and carefully to listeners and patient that such utterances are obviously beyond his control and will diminish in time as he gains greater control over his thinking and language processes.


A third characteristic of aphasia, and one very important for the family to keep in mind, is that of slowed thought processes. This in no way implies a reduction in intelligence, but means rather that the patient may not be able to respond immediately or coherently to questions or conversation. It takes him a while to process what he hears or sees. His perception of what is said may wax and wane so that he understands only fragments of what he hears. Recovered aphasics tell us that their sensory world seems to rush by like a tumbling brook, and if people would just speak more slowly and in simpler terms, they could understand.

This is not to suggest that if the listener waits long enough or speaks slowly enough, the aphasic person will respond appropriately. The aphasia may be so severe that he cannot respond. What is suggested here is that the speaker refrain from asking too many questions, particularly in the early recovery period. When attempting to converse he should speak a bit more slowly than usual and allow the person a reasonable amount of

time to respond before dashing off the next question. Give him time to process what he is hearing and time to respond if he is able.

Adults with aphasia should be treated as adults, not as children. I have seen too many instances in which aphasic husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, or grandparents were treated as though they were children. A condescending, paternalistic approach may lead to anger on the part of the patient, or to a state of dependency that is difficult to overcome if allowed to persist for any length of time. Either reaction interferes with rehabilitation.

Space does not allow for greater elaboration of the many complex problems associated with the communicative disorder of aphasia. Suffice it to say that it affects a person's entire life-style because it touches the vital areas of speaking and listening. The tendency toward social isolation and withdrawal by the aphasia victim as well as by his family can be largely offset by proper counseling and encouragement.

Contact with a professional speech-language pathologist trained to help such patients to regain as much communicative ability as possible is essential to maximum recovery. The patient and his family will need all the emotional support that can be mustered during the early stages of stroke and particularly during the period of convalescence immediately following his hospital stay. The ministering pastor or staff can offer much-needed support, counseling, and guidance during the periods of difficulty for the family. They may want to suggest that the family request of the physician a referral for consultative services of a qualified speech pathologist. A knowledgeable physician will already have made such a request. If the physician does not know of a qualified person, the family may consult the yellow pages of the phone directory, or write to the American Speech and Hearing Association, 10801 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852, for a list of qualified speech pathologists in their area. 

# The Unitive Functions of Christian Preaching

by Wesley Tracy

An address given at Nazarene Theological Seminary upon the induction of the author as professor of preaching.

I am honored by your trust in me that makes this occasion possible. Let me hasten to say that I am under no illusion that I am the best qualified person in the church to fill the chair of preaching at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Right here on our present faculty there are men who could better assume this position than I. But they have so distinguished themselves in other specialties as to have made themselves indispensable in their present areas of service. Being keenly aware of the contribution of those distinguished men who have preceded me in this office—L. A. Reed, James McGraw, Oscar Reed—does not make the challenge less overwhelming. Yet I realize that it is indeed upon me that the high responsibilities of the preaching chair have been laid. And in the light of the fact that our graduates are most quickly and publicly judged by what they are able to do in the pulpit, it is in order that I should share with you some of my assumptions, and judgments, about preaching.

If what I read is true, some seminaries have so given up on preaching that they no longer offer courses in it nor hire professors to teach it. That sounds remarkably shortsighted to me. I rather think that J. B. Chapman, the speaker at the very first NTS commencement, had a better idea. While studying in the archives I came across his address. Chapman apparently had second thoughts about the typed introduction, so he had handwritten a one-page introduction, which I found attached to the typescript.

In that introduction he pointed out that in the light of the school's mission "we are naturally all thinking about preachers and preaching. We are asking ourselves about the relationship between the *seminary* and *preachers* and *preaching*."

We are gathered here today to continue that quest, the inquiry about the relationship between Nazarene Theological Seminary and *preachers* and *preaching*.

So much needs to be said, but let me share a few ideas around the topic "the Unitive Functions of Christian Preaching."

## I. PREACHING IS A UNIFYING ELEMENT AMONG CHRISTIAN THINKERS

"The crucified and resurrected Christ encounters us in the word of preaching, and never in any other way."<sup>1</sup>

Who said that? Some Bible-thumping, fundamentalist ranter from the swamps of south Arkansas? Jerry Falwell, Oral Roberts? Maybe, the Apostle Swaggart? No, none of these. Would you be surprised to know that it was that crafty old German demythologizer himself, Rudolf Bultmann. Did he mean it? Is he saying what it sounds like he is saying? Hear him further. "The redemptive event is only present in the word of preaching,"<sup>2</sup> he says. "Preaching, therefore . . . is," he adds, "always the word of man and at the same time it is to be understood as God's address."<sup>3</sup>

But listen to your old friend Karl Barth: "Preaching is 'God's own word.' That is to say through the activity of



preaching, God himself speaks."<sup>4</sup> He goes on, "Preaching is the Word of God which he himself hath spoken."<sup>5</sup> "There is nothing more important, more urgent, more helpful, more redemptive . . . more relevant to the real situation than the speaking and the hearing of the Word of God."<sup>6</sup> "When the gospel is preached God speaks."<sup>7</sup>

Other witnesses wait a turn to testify. Hear Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "The proclaimed Word is the Incarnate Christ himself . . . the preached Christ is the historical Christ and the present Christ . . . Therefore the proclaimed word is not a medium for something else, something which lies behind it, but it is the Christ himself walking through his congregation as the Word."<sup>8</sup>

Hear also, Gerhard Ebling: "Proclamation is the Alpha and Omega of the Church's praxis."<sup>9</sup>

And P. T. Forsyth, who in his *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind* repeatedly affirms "with its preaching Christianity stands or falls."<sup>10</sup> He calls preaching the "most distinctive feature of worship" and the "most distinctive institution in Christianity."<sup>11</sup>

Listen to a Swedish Lutheran theology professor, Gustaf Wingren: "Preaching supplies the living Christ with both feet and a mouth: It is the Word that provides the feet on which Christ walks when He makes His approach to us and reaches us . . . Preaching has but one aim, that Christ may come to those who have assembled to listen."<sup>12</sup>

Hear also, Nels Ferre: "Preaching is indispensable as the communication of the Word—the meaning and purpose of God"<sup>13</sup> and Emil Brunner, who says that true preaching is, "in spite of all appearances to the contrary, the most important thing that ever happens upon this earth."<sup>14</sup>

And H. H. Farmer, who declares that our "prime task is to preach the gospel."<sup>15</sup>

Even Paul Tillich, in his sojourn upon the borders of the culture and the church, viewed his theologizing (according to Hanz Zarnt and Albert Truesdale) as an attempt to give preaching a new vocabulary, a new vocabulary that the uninitiated would understand.

Even more witnesses put a hand in the air volunteering to speak. Hear Old Testament scholar John Bright: "The strength of the church lies in the gospel it proclaims—thus in its preaching—today as it always has . . . The church lives let it be repeated, in her preaching—always has, and always will."<sup>16</sup>

Even Martin Marty declares: "The Christian cannot easily get away from verbal witness—The Christian is commanded to preach."<sup>17</sup>

Richard Lischer agrees with his theological forebearers saying in his 1981 book *A Theology of Preaching*: "So identified is Jesus the Word with the word of preaching, that the one proclaimed once again becomes the proclaimer. Insofar as preaching rearticulates the saving themes and offers the life of God in Christ, it is

Jesus himself who is the preacher."<sup>18</sup>

But where did these moderns get such notions? Perhaps from oldsters like Wesley, who preached "plain truth to plain people" taking special care to "preach Christ." For Wesley observed that if the devil could stop one thing of his choice it would be "preaching." Perhaps from Luther, who said, "The soul can do without all things except the Word of God . . . to preach Christ means to feed the soul, to make it righteous to set it free, and to save it, if it believe the preaching."<sup>19</sup> Perhaps they also heard such ideas from the likes of John Calvin, who declared that the mark of a true church is faithful preaching of the Word, which is, in fact, "a perpetual token by which to distinguish the Church."<sup>20</sup> Or from Augustine, that excellent teacher of preachers, who intrepidly called preachers the "tongue of God." Or perhaps these ideas were fostered by persons like Paul, who went on and on about the powerfully wise "foolishness of preaching," or by Jesus of Nazareth, who commissioned us to never stop preaching until we tell the story in "all the world."

But let me bring this to the point I am trying to make: Preaching is a unifying element among Christian thinkers. It is in the preaching arena that so many scholars, theologians, and thinkers come and are joined together. Here they are agreed; here, regardless of their vast differences in other areas, they join in closed rank to assert two truths:

1. Preaching is of indispensable importance and value,  
and

2. Preaching in some way brings together three dimensions of the Word of God. Christ the Living Word in conjunction with the written Word and the preached Word creates an event of the Word that becomes the arena of God's self-disclosure, and Jesus walks again among His congregation, as the Living Word.

Does not the Second Helvetic Confession sound properly orthodox to you? It declares: "The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God." Perhaps, after all, there is no hyperbole here.

Make no mistake; we are not adopting Martin Kahler's edict that the "only real Christ is the preached Christ," for he is telling us that in each sermon a new Word is created, thus severing proclamation from the historical Jesus. No, we want none of that, nor do the witnesses I have already called to testify. It is the historical Living Word who, in conjunction with the written and preached word, acts redemptively.

Preaching is the unifying element among Christian thinkers. That is not to say that all the persons I have quoted have the same theology of preaching. But do they not all say "amen" to these words of Karl Barth? "The church needs to be constantly renewed; it is always being created by the preaching and hearing of the

**"Theology constitutes a science; proclamation constitutes the church."**

word . . . the only thing that counts is to make the Word of God heard."<sup>21</sup>

But preaching is not only the unifying element among Christian thinkers, it is also . . .

## II. A CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Many books I read about preaching have an early chapter in which the author takes a stab at trying to justify the existence of Christian preaching. It seems that there are those about who regard preaching as a sideshow of antiquities, a moldy relic of a Currier and Ives time gone forever. Some say it must be thrown out like leftover hash if the church is ever to be relevant. But I, for one, disagree with those heady cynics like Reginald E. O. White's critic, who described preaching as a "monstrous monologue by a moron to mutes."<sup>22</sup>

It seems, however, that the people who want to do away with preaching are preachers. I do not hear laypersons hoping that preaching will disappear; rather they seem to be hoping that for a change a real preacher will, in fact, appear in their church.

I think I know why some preachers want to see preaching fade away like an old soldier. William Willimon's insight is helpful:

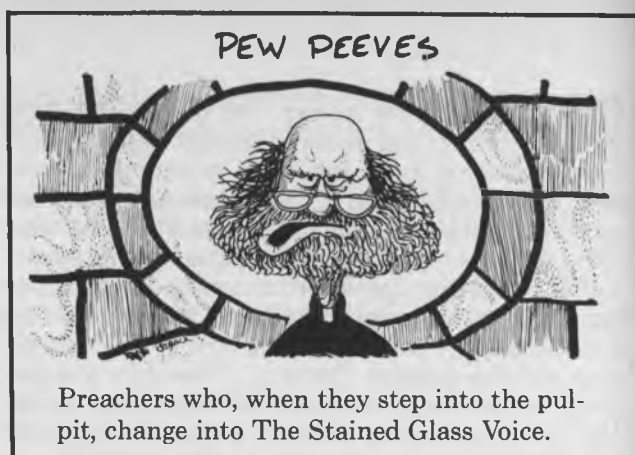
Preaching is threatening because it reveals, as do few other pastoral activities, the innermost parts of who we are and how we personally stand in relation to the gospel we are called to proclaim. It is the very explicitness, the unveiling, the public exposure of preaching that is its power and its threat. Many preachers [thus] devalue preaching, not because it is irrelevant, but because it is difficult.<sup>23</sup>

Willard Jabusch says the same thing in more tolerant tones.

For preaching has a way of revealing our personal weaknesses. We tend to get weary, drained of physical and mental energy; we feel the weight of a weekly obligation. We start to feel guilty about our superficiality, our glib and banal words, our lack of prayer and preparation.

But most of all, in our most honest moments, we know we are really not worthy of such a role in the Christian community. The people in the pews often seem closer to the gospel than the people in the pulpits. We almost envy the janitor and the ushers whose jobs seem so simple or the organist who contributes a wordless skill. But our offering is made of words, our imperfect and fragile words. And even if our last effort seemed to have some merit, we are not at all sure we can do it again this Sunday!

We feel judged by the very words we speak. Our unhealed wounds hurt us even if we can hide them from the people. The real danger is not being puffed up with vanity but instead becoming depressed with



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our faults, our foolishness and our failures (and our alliteration!).

. . . we did not start preaching because we're good, but because Jesus cared enough to call us. And we will continue doing preaching with wonder and delight only if we care about him and his people.<sup>24</sup>

I vigorously disagree with those who want to do away with preaching, whether they are burned-out clerics, caustic critics, or sneering cynics. It is not merely that the Church needs preaching—though need it she does; it is not that it would be foolish and impractical to stop preaching—though foolish and impractical it would be. It is more than that. Not only is preaching wisely practical and truly needful—but you simply cannot have a Christian Church without preaching. You see, preaching is a constitutive element in the church. It is more than a distinctive element—it is a constitutive element—no preaching—no church. Evangelical, Protestant, Wesleyan worship is simply incomplete without preaching. In some religious circles it is true that their service does not really call for proclamation. Some such settings were described in *Time* magazine in these words: "The chilling of the Word' is a major contributor to the evident malaise in many a large Protestant denomination these days, while for Roman Catholics the sermon has never been very important but 'rather a kind of spiritual hors d'oeuvre before the Eucharist.'"<sup>25</sup>

It is an old tension, a tension between two important parts of Christian worship—the tension between the altar and the pulpit. Which is the *constitutive* element of the church—the *sacrament* or the *sermon*?

I believe that the Franciscan preacher Bernadino of Siena was right when he advised his followers, "If of these two things you can do only one—either hear the mass or hear the sermon—you should let the mass go, rather than the sermon. . . . There is less peril for your soul in not hearing the mass than in not hearing the sermon."<sup>26</sup>

Heinrich Ott, I believe, is right when he says in his book *Theology and Preaching*, "Preaching of the gospel

**Ignorance is a frog in the watchdog's mouth that takes away his power to bark.**

is a constitutive function of the church . . . and there is no church without gospel proclamation."<sup>27</sup>

John Calvin believed and taught this as well: "Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard . . . there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists."<sup>28</sup>

"Theology constitutes a science," says Gerhard Ebeling, "proclamation constitutes the church."<sup>29</sup> Perhaps no one has said it more clearly than P. T. Forsyth, who declares that the true sacrament is the Sacrament of the Word.<sup>30</sup> The gift of God's grace, Forsyth explains, "was and is, His work of Gospel. And it is this act that is prolonged in the work of the preacher, and not merely proclaimed."<sup>31</sup> "the Bible, the preacher, and the Church are all made by the same thing—the Gospel,"<sup>32</sup> Forsyth explains:

What I say will not hold good if the chief gift to the world is the Church and its sacraments, instead of the work and its word. Wherever you have the ritual sacraments to the front the preacher is to the rear, if he is there at all. In Catholicism worship is complete without a sermon; and the education of the minister suffers accordingly. So, conversely, if the preacher is belittled the priest is enhanced. If you put back the pulpit, by the same act you put forward the altar. The whole of Christian history is a struggle between the apostle, i.e. the preacher, and the priest. The first Apostles were neither priests nor bishops. They were preachers, missionaries, heralds of the Cross, and agents of the Gospel. The apostolic succession is the evangelical. It is with the preachers of the Word, and not with the priestly operators of the work, or with its episcopal organizers. Our churches are stone pulpits rather than shrines. The sacrament which gives value to all other sacraments is the Sacrament of the living Word.

Forsyth further explains:

We do not partake of Christ's body in the form of any substance, however refined and ethereal. For us the body of Christ means the person of Christ, and the whole person of Christ is gathered into His saving, atoning act. And what we perform is an act of communal reunion with His person in its crucial and complete act. His great act of Redemption renews itself in His Church . . . It is the Great Act of Christ finding itself anew in the act of the Church.

Now this is really what occurs in another aspect in the Sacrament of the Word, in the Church's preaching of the Gospel. To be effective our preaching must be sacramental. It must be an act prolonging the Great Act, mediating it, and conveying it. Its energy and authority is that of the Great Act. The Gospel spoken by man is the energizing of the Gospel achieved by God.<sup>33</sup>

W. E. Sangster, speaking of the centrality of the pulpit,

says: "Not by accident, nor yet by the thrustful egotism of men, was the pulpit given the central place in the Reformed Churches. It is there of design and devotion. It is there by the logic of things. It is there as the *Throne of the Word of God*."<sup>34</sup>

Preaching as the constitutive element of the church makes the pulpit the symbol and throne of the Word of God. Whatever else this says to us, it should say that there must be a definite limit to the number of times the pulpit can be shoved behind a curtain during a worship service to make way for a slide show, or panel discussion, or a film, or a chancel drama or boringly choreographed prancing (such a banal cliché anymore) masquerading as a Christian musical.

And God have mercy on the young genius who glibly tosses the pulpit in the back room corner with the brooms and the wastebasket and last year's Sunday School papers so he (or she) can have the whole platform to himself. There he sits on a tall draftsman's stool, dressed in blue jeans and an open-necked shirt, a guitar in one hand and a microphone in the other into which he whispers cute clichés in a silly attempt to be memorably relevant. Move the throne of the Word of God out for that—never. That is a lot like substituting Pepsi Cola and Fritos for the Communion elements.

Many holiness churches would be helped if someone bolted the central pulpit to the floor so securely that it would take three carpenters with hacksaws to move it.

Christian preaching is the unifying element among Christian thinkers, it is the constitutive element in the church, and further it is:

### III. THE SYNTHESIZING ELEMENT IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Through the centuries, the church has set aside some of her members to be educated to serve the church as leaders in spiritual things. Such theological education is the concern of Nazarene Theological Seminary.

One of our principal tasks is to equip preachers. And among the various disciplines taught here, preaching has a unique role. In the teaching and practice of preaching, all the disciplines are brought together in a unique synthesis. A sermon, among other things, is a confluence of disciplines. As Richard Lischer, in *A Theology of Preaching*, says: "Into the sermon pour exegesis, biblical theology, systematics, dogmatics, symbolics, apologetics, history, comparative religion, practical theology, liturgy, the wisdom of the non-theological disciplines, the experience and personality of the minister."<sup>35</sup>

Through all the disciplines, biblical, confessional, and applied, we are teaching preaching. We are working to avoid sending out the type of preacher that brought so much anguish to Alan of the Isles, a medieval writer of a textbook on preaching. He mourned:

Ignorance characterizes those prelates who . . .

**Some preachers treat the Scripture like a wax nose that can be squeezed, twisted, or turned in any direction.**

coast along in their blindness . . . they persist in foolishness: they are *priests* and *prophets* without reason, *teachers* of what cannot be, *catalogues* of things that are not known.

O vile ignorance! O abominable stupidity! It imposes silence on the prelate, it renders mute the watchdog, it is a frog which placed in the dog's mouth, takes away his power to bark.<sup>36</sup>

It is indeed our aim to produce able preachers, lest this recent prophecy come true: "If Protestantism is found dead, poor preaching will be the dagger in her heart."<sup>37</sup>

All the disciplines serve preaching, and preaching serves all the disciplines. And in a truer sense they all serve the gospel. Nevertheless, it is in the teaching and practice of preaching that the strands from the biblical, confessional, and applied disciplines are braided into a rope—a rope that becomes, by the power of the Spirit, a lifeline.

Let us look more closely at how the various disciplines relate to preaching.

#### A. Biblical Studies and Preaching

It may be to risk flailing away at the obvious to mention the centrality of biblical preaching to this audience. Nevertheless, since "it is as difficult to find ministers who are against biblical preaching as it is to find biblical preaching"<sup>38</sup> let it be said once again that the Bible furnishes foundation and content for Christian preaching. And the Bible must be more than a sort of background Muzak for the preacher's own ideas. To preach from something other than the Bible is to make preaching more foolish than it needs to be.

Biblical studies as a discipline serve preaching in these ways:

1. *It provides the raw material for preaching.* As Karl Barth so often pointed out, you do not find phrases like "by grace are ye saved" in the writings of the philosophers, economists, political theorists, or the literary giants.<sup>39</sup> This is found only in the Bible.

2. *Biblical studies provide the specific content of preaching.* This is the kerygma, the central truths of the Christian faith. To proclaim them is to be kerygmatic; to explain them is *didache*. William Barclay summarizes the kerygma as "the cross and resurrection; the exaltation of Jesus: the Christ event as fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy; man's responsibility to say yes or no to Jesus; Jesus as both Lord and Christ; the necessity of repentance; forgiveness of sins."<sup>40</sup>

These nine points Barclay declares to be non-negotiable. The kerygma is the "announcement without argument of what is surely believed."<sup>41</sup>

3. *Biblical studies provide the preacher with the possibility of hermeneutical integrity.* This is needful, for that tribe of preachers still persists whom Luther accused of treating the Scripture like a wax nose—which can be

twisted, pushed, squeezed, and turned in any direction to suit the preacher's whim. This tribe seems to have taken the Genesis command to multiply and replenish the earth very seriously. Therefore, hermeneutical integrity is no small gift from biblical studies to preaching.

4. *Biblical studies lend the preacher, also, a safe and sure sense of confidence.* When the minister preaches the Bible he knows he preaches the truth. He can preach with the confidence and authority that is absent if he is preaching the *Reader's Digest*, current events, or "pop" psychology.

I do not want to make of the Bible a "paper pope." Nor do I wish to make bibliolators of preachers. We do not preach a book for its own sake. We preach the Living Word revealed in the written Word. Luther said that bibliolators worship the cradle (the book) instead of the Christ child in it.<sup>42</sup> In my judgment, therefore, biblical preaching requires that I make Christ the subject, verb, and object of my sermons.

Biblical studies serve preaching, but preaching also serves biblical studies. It does so, first of all, by giving the Bible a voice. A voice rightly dividing the word of truth, and, as Charles Simeon said, giving to every text "without prejudice or partiality . . . its just meaning, its natural bearing and its legitimate use."<sup>43</sup> As Gustaf Wingren counsels, the expositor is "to provide mouth and lips for the passage itself, so that the Word may advance."<sup>44</sup> Thus, the greatest gift of preaching to the biblical disciplines is the gift of voice, the voice of preachers who grasp the scripture and in turn are grasped by it. They sit humbly under the authority of the Scriptures, instead of trying to stand in judgment on them.<sup>45</sup>

Preaching also serves a policing function for biblical studies. John Stott notes that some biblical scholars get infected with a cynical mood in literary criticism "which suspects every author of having secret purposes or occult meanings which need to be detected and unmasked."<sup>46</sup> When study of the Word of God falls into such a mud hole, Christian preaching must spare it the embarrassment of its attention.

Another way to reveal the relationship between preaching and biblical studies is to submit them to the "Subtraction Test." Take preaching away from exegesis and hermeneutics and you have a product with no market, a warehouse full to the doors and no delivery trucks, sheet music with no voice to sing the song. They become disciplines cut off from their purpose.

Take biblical studies away from preaching and you have a salesman with nothing to sell, a delivery mechanism with nothing to deliver, a speaker with nothing worthwhile to say. Without the Bible, preaching becomes truly superfluous and the Sunday paper really is more meaningful than the Sunday sermon.

**"Technique can only make us orators; if we want to be preachers, theology is what we need."**



## PEW PEEVES



Preachers who insist on praying in King James language: "O Thou almighty God, will Thou visiteth us we beseecheth Thine . . ."

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Biblical studies and preaching really do need each other.

### B. Preaching and Confessional Disciplines

Please allow me to subsume all the various confessional disciplines such as dogmatics, historical theology, apologetics, systematics, and the like under the general rubric theology.

1. Let us first inquire: Does preaching need theology?

Karl Barth thought so. He saw theology (dogmatics) standing like a midwife at the birthing of a sermon. Theology stands in the middle between exposition and application. Since theology's task is to seek pure doctrine, it regulates proclamation to be sure that what is proclaimed is the Word of God as attested to by the creeds. Although it forms a supervisory role, theology, Barth reminds us, is a service discipline. Far from assuming a role of mastery, it offers itself in service to preaching and the church.<sup>47</sup>

Part of this service is to keep tapping the preacher on the shoulder and, in behalf of the church, keep showing him the creedal confessions. "Preaching," Barth says, "must faithfully adhere . . . to the Confession of our faith . . . because we have received it and have heard the Word of Revelation."<sup>48</sup> Random ideas from the preacher's "inner consciousness," his own "schemes or notions," are not the measurement of preaching. Rather, one must have as the "purpose and limit of one's message the Confession of one's church, taking one's stand where the church stands."<sup>49</sup> And this is part of the supervisory role of theology.

Not surprisingly, Heinrich Ott thinks preaching needs theology in much the same way. He calls dogmatics the "conscience of preaching" and declares that "theology exercises a churchly duty of supervision and guardianship."<sup>50</sup> He sees dogmatics as a preachment to preachers, preparing them to preach to the church. John Wesley appointed trustees for every Methodist chapel, not only requiring them to be responsible for the property but also giving them the written charge to see that

sound doctrine was preached within those walls. In like manner, theology serves as a trustee for preaching.

Gerhard Ebling says that such a relationship is needful "because man is by nature a fanatic."<sup>51</sup> Without the regulatory role of theology, churches and preachers show a remarkable affinity for seizing whatever existential fever rages at the moment in religion and blowing it up into a full-blown theological provincialism.

A. L. Halvorson illustrates this need for theological supervision. He says that all you need to do is watch preachers at a convention or a continuing education seminar. Watch them, he says, and you will see a frenetic search for something, anything for next Sunday's sermon. He compares them to frantic shoppers at a close-out sale, harried people looking for a quick and sure, one-minute cure to knotty problems, and to scroungers in the town dump.<sup>52</sup> Those of us who have ever participated in such scrambles know only too well how such hasty homiletics can result in the proclamation of careless Christology, crippled logic, and anthropology so skewed that even Pelagius would turn over in his grave.

The preacher has to filter through many ideas and opinions, all sorts of propaganda, sentimentality, and cultural clutter that try to demand equal time in the pulpit. Part of theology's service to the preacher is to unceremoniously dump such stuff and turn the preacher's attention back to sound biblical doctrine.<sup>53</sup>

Such service is not negative though it aims, in Ebling's words, "to make preaching as hard for the preacher as it has to be."<sup>54</sup> Theology's service is positive as seen in Ernst Fuchs's opinion that "theology exists for the sake of preaching."<sup>55</sup>

So, the theologians say preaching needs theology. But what do the preachers say? Listen to John Stott:

Technique can only make us orators; if we want to be preachers, theology is what we need. If our theology is right, then we have all the basic insights we need into what we ought to be doing, and all the incentives we need to induce us to do it faithfully.<sup>56</sup>

Hear Michael Ramsay, preacher-scholar, once Archbishop of Canterbury.

First the priest is the teacher and preacher, and as such he is the man of theology. He is pledged to be a dedicated student of theology: and his study . . . will be deep in its integrity, not in order that he will be erudite, but in order that he may be simple. It is those whose studies are shallow who are confused and confusing.<sup>57</sup>

But there is another question. Does theology need preaching?

Yes, in much the same way that the biblical disciplines need preaching. Theology without proclamation lacks any truly effective way of carrying out its mission. Without preaching and worship "even Christian theology,"

**We must not see the sanctuary as a large couch and the preacher as a stand-up shrink.**



## PEW PEEVES



Preachers who pound the pulpit incessantly.

Reprinted by permission from *Pew Peeves* compiled by Thom Schulte (Loveland, Colo.: Group Books, 1982).

says A. L. Halvorson, "degenerates into a house-keeping, shop-tending business."<sup>58</sup> Indeed, "theology only has a job to do because of the nature and task of preaching," says Richard Lischer.<sup>59</sup> Heinrich Ott says that theology only finds its life in preaching, that proclamation is the "heart and soul of dogmatics," preaching is the impulsive power for theology. Ott also declares that preaching and theology "are in the last resort a single activity of the Church, two aspects of one and the same thing."<sup>60</sup>

Lischer observes that "in preaching, theology recovers three elements it had at its origin: its kerygmatic impulse, its oral nature, and its character as worship."<sup>61</sup>

Why, then, in the light of such interdependence, is theology so isolated in the American church?

Evangelical churches have rich theological resources in their theologians, yet in many cases the preaching in that same denomination may be theologically undernourished. We have isolated our theologians in schools and libraries—while in Europe the theologians, in many cases, are pastors too—Barth and Emil Brunner are examples. Perhaps we need a plan whereby theologians teach two years and pastor one.

Perhaps that is a bad plan, but something should be done to enhance theology's place in preaching, and even more lacking in some evangelical systems, preaching's place in theology. Perhaps Ott's reminder that theology and preaching share the same "three moments"—the human predicament, proclamation of the act of God in Christ, and the appeal to walk in newness of life<sup>62</sup>—can help us toward that goal.

Preaching and theology also share a mutual critique and correction service. We have already noted the guardian function theology renders to preaching. But preaching also polices theology.

Karl Barth notes that sometimes theologians need to be "recalled from more esoteric intellectualized pursuits to their proper work in the service of the Word of God and the church."<sup>63</sup> Lischer is talking about the same thing when he complains that most theologians "no lon-

ger address the live experience of actual people in the churches or society. Instead they address the current questions of their peers in the professional guild."<sup>64</sup>

He adds that when theology fails to draw its topic from the gospel and life, it loses its power to transform lives. Then it deserves and receives a corrective signal from preaching—assiduous neglect.

Heinrich Ott says that the final test of theology's product is the yardstick of preaching. Preaching is the final "criterion by which the validity of doctrine is to be measured."<sup>65</sup> "Can such a doctrine be preached?" is the key question. "Hence dogmatic teaching will be disclosed as bad dogmatic teaching, if it is shown to be inadequate to the mission of preaching."<sup>66</sup>

William Willimon suggests that theology may go too far in proclaiming "let the world set the agenda" for the church, thus forgetting that God called the meeting. The result of this is loss of identity in favor of involvement. This, Moltmann calls "chameleon theology": adopting the church's faith to blend its secular surroundings.<sup>67</sup> At such a juncture it is the practical common sense duty of preaching to help theology get back on track.

Professor Lischer describes the guardian function of preaching to theology in these words:

When theology becomes preoccupied with the symmetry of its own system, preaching reminds it of the catastrophic core of judgment and grace that called theology into being. When theology loses interest in the Scripture, preaching continues to wrestle with the Word—week in, week out. When theology becomes bogged down in words, the preached word continues to witness, in words, to an historical event . . . when theology produces unpreachable, that is nonevangelical, words about God, preaching marks them REFUSED.<sup>68</sup>

I hope that the foregoing does not put preaching and theology in an adversary relationship, but a helping relationship, for like marriage partners, they should help each other with the common task. One provides the consistent and systematic framework, the other the skilled voice with the word of personal witness.

### C. Preaching and the Applied Disciplines

I can think of no applied discipline here at Nazarene Theological Seminary that does not aid and abet, perhaps I should say "inform," preaching. Religious education assists preaching in its didactic and catechetical tasks. Evangelism, missions, church growth, administration, and music share the same goals as preaching and help energize preaching. Counseling helps preachers understand people and helps preachers preach with sensitivity to the human condition, being careful to understand that counseling and preaching are not the same. We must not view "the sanctuary as a large couch

(Continued on page 62)

**Who would hanker to be a mere millionaire when you could be a little basket in which the bread is laid?**

# THE TEACHING MINISTRY OF THE PULPIT

by Richard J. Bisson  
*Kansas City*

**P**reaching is the heart of all Christianity, and is central to all of its evangelism, theology, and spiritual life. It is a function of worship, an agency for Christian education, and a vehicle for promoting change. It has therefore been long recognized as a powerful force in the shaping of human culture.<sup>1</sup> Preaching is indeed the heart of all Christianity as Skinner states. In fact, from the very inception of Christ's Church, we find the apostle Peter in the Book of Acts "preaching." Although the definition of *preaching* has changed from its early beginnings, it still retains a prominent place in today's church. Karl Barth who often spoke of the importance of the preached Word of God declares:

It is simply a truism [declared Barth in 1928], that there is nothing more important, more urgent, more helpful, more redemptive, and more salutary, there is nothing, from the viewpoint of heaven and earth, more relevant to the real situation than the speaking and the hearing of the Word of God in the originative and regulative power of its truth, in its all-eradicating and all-reconciling earnestness, in the light that it casts not only upon time and time's confusions but also beyond, towards the brightness of eternity, revealing time and eternity through each other and in each other—the Word, the Logos, of the living God.<sup>2</sup>

Critics have stated that preaching has lost its impact on today's society, and its ability to promote change. Some say the average person today resents the authority represented by the preacher. George Sweazey defines this objection by stating, "People today, it is said, resent authority. They find it insufferable for anyone to mount a pulpit to tell others how to think and act."<sup>3</sup> While this may be true for some individuals, it should also be noted that history records many people who followed a

non-Christian cause blindly when its leader taught and preached with authority.

Most of the great movements in the Western World have been fired and sustained by preaching. Think of Demosthenes' Philippics, and Cato's cry, "Carthage must be destroyed!" and the spread of Christianity, the Crusades, the Reformation, the American and French Revolutions, abolition, the labor movement, and anti-Viet Nam protest, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and every political campaign. Churchill did much to destroy the Nazi movement, which was built by public speaking, not because he was a great strategist or administrator, for he was not, but because he was a great orator. It would be strange for the church to decide that its birthright of preaching is outmoded while everyone else is making so much use of it.<sup>4</sup>

The importance of the pulpit cannot be denied even by the most persuasive objectors. As John Stott says, Preaching "is a tradition which cannot lightly be set aside."<sup>5</sup>

As we examine the function of the pulpit as it pertains to the teaching ministry of the church, it is important to have as a presuppositional foundation the belief that preaching with all its functions is important. Without this belief, the concept of the teaching ministry of the pulpit would be largely reduced to a mere abstraction, instead of a heartfelt conviction for its potential impact. Dr. J. B. Chapman shares his conviction for the teaching ministry of the pulpit by stating:

... the historic method of teaching by preaching still retains its preeminence. Truth is not gospel truth until it is presented by Spirit-anointed preachers. Classrooms and lecture halls may teach Bible history and geography and make people wise concerning

philosophical and logical truths. But that gospel which is the power of God unto salvation cannot be read out of a book, lifted from a picture on page or screen, heard on phonographs or radio, but must be preached by living men to living men.<sup>6</sup>

### TEACHING OR PREACHING?

As soon as we speak of the teaching ministry of the pulpit, we are immediately confronted with the question of whether all teaching from the pulpit is indeed preaching. "Is there a difference, then, between preaching and teaching? Certainly the two words are not interchangeable . . ." <sup>7</sup> Or are they? To answer this question, we must examine the use and context of two Greek words found in the New Testament: *kerygma* and *didache*.

In the early Christian environment, *kerygma* was the word closely associated with "public proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ to the non-Christian world."<sup>8</sup> This proclamation was not just the mere telling of facts, it was a persuasive appeal for repentance and salvation. C. H. Dodd, who was instrumental in making the distinction "between the primitive preaching and the primitive teaching of the early church,"<sup>9</sup> states that this kind of preaching always "closes with an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness and of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of 'salvation,' that is, of 'the life of the Age to Come,' to those who enter the elect community."<sup>10</sup> This kind of preaching, then, could be defined loosely in modern terms as a kind of evangelical preaching. From Peter's first sermon found in the Book of Acts to today's modern evangelical sermon, the kerygmatic element of an appeal for salvation and repentance distinguishes it as the fundamental core of preaching. Therefore, the preaching, *kerygma*, can be defined as "an irreducible core of New Testament preaching which may neither be ignored nor diminished lest the Christian message be destroyed."<sup>11</sup>

The other word used in the early Christian Church is *didache*, meaning, "The ministry of teaching . . . by which new believers were instructed in the duties, discipline, and ethos of the Christian community."<sup>12</sup> At first, this might not seem incongruous with preaching, but "Dodd viewed teaching, *didache* in the New Testament as totally different than preaching."<sup>13</sup> C. H. Dodd's contribution is significant in his distinction between the New Testament witness of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (*kerygma*) and the ethical implications and teaching (*didache*) that come as a logical consequence. "Thus, in his concepts, Dodd emphasized a basic and New Testament-authenticated witness, first to the passion details, and then to their implications. He clarified concepts that gave a new wholeness to New Testament interpretation, as had never been done before."<sup>14</sup>

Dodd's analysis, however, confronts the modern preacher with serious limitations. In fact, if Dodd's thesis is carried to its logical conclusion, a "teacher" in the pulpit should not use what is being taught as a means to

exact an appeal for salvation and repentance, if he is to remain true to the biblical model. Conversely, one who is truly "preaching" will attempt to stay as close as possible to the life and passion of Jesus and then close with an appeal. It becomes evident that this distinction, although valid in determining emphasis within the New Testament, is somewhat artificial in practical use in the pulpit. "Serious challenge ought to be made to some of Dodd's assumptions. While the *kerygma* and *didache* can be distinguished as varying emphases within the New Testament, they still remain as facets of one homogeneous ministry. A complete division, into either form or function, is just not totally possible."<sup>15</sup>

The concept of homogeneous ministry is quite evident when we examine the ministry of Paul to the Gentiles. Paul was often confronted with the teachings of polytheism, which he would have to refute with his own teaching of monotheism before he could make an appeal to repentance. However, one could not say that Paul was merely teaching ethical standards. Instead, Paul was proclaiming a "whole" message with the obvious intent of Gentile conversion. Thus, "From this perspective we may affirm that there is always a didactic element implicit within the apostolic evangelical preaching."<sup>16</sup> Within this framework, however, we can say that the opposite is true as well.

We must also affirm that there is always a kerygmatic element implicit within the apostolic teaching to Christians.

Whenever we enter into Christian *didache* we find it naturally rooting back to a foundational *kerygma*. It is just not possible to interpret the meaning of Christian life without reference to the history of redemption.<sup>17</sup>

Are the two words, *teaching* and *preaching*, interchangeable? Perhaps, but not completely. It is possible to teach Christian ethics without presenting the true message of the gospel, but this is not the intent for the use of the pulpit.

The New Testament knows nothing of idealistic ethics without such firm bases. All of its instruction arises from the application of a dynamic gospel and its meaning. Christianity is never, therefore, taught as being (in the sense of its raw existence), as a code of conduct, an attitude of character, or even a moral standard or truth. Christianity is revealed as possessing these things, but as being a way of salvation, a personal relationship with the Son of God as Savior, through faith. Christianity cannot therefore be defined in terms of its ethic alone. If discussion is limited to what Christianity has, or teaches, in isolation from what it essentially is, we have departed from biblical fullness.<sup>18</sup>

Although one may be able to teach without addressing the whole message of the gospel, a minister can never preach without also teaching. "It is his task to clear away the ignorance, prejudice, and uncommitment which blocks the reproduction of the new nature . . ."<sup>19</sup>

## THE AIMS OF PULPIT MINISTRY

"Many a preacher does not know what he is producing in his preaching until he has finished—and even then some are unsure. We must identify our purposes through clarity of aims. Every subject needs boundaries and limits so that unity and strength may be gathered to sweep hearers to new insight and experience within the confines of its exiguity."<sup>20</sup>

The art of teaching from the pulpit should be no different from the art of teaching in the classroom when it comes to the identification of aims and objectives. Without specific aims for pulpit ministry, it is virtually impossible to chart a progressive program of preaching that will meet the various needs in a congregation. Without specific aims a preacher-teacher could easily find himself spending excessive time on subjects that appeal only to his particular strengths. This does little to expand the horizons of spiritual knowledge and growth for the people who listen week after week. What, then, should be the aims of the pulpit? Using Skinner's model, there are four specific aims or objectives the preacher needs to address in the course of his preaching. First, he must inform and enlighten. Second, he must inspire and comfort. Third, he must motivate and appeal. And finally, he must edify and develop.<sup>21</sup>

"The imparting of information is an essential part of preaching. The acceptance of Christ requires a knowledge of who he is, what he said, what he did, and what he does."<sup>22</sup> This knowledge can very often be received only from the pulpit. It then becomes one of the preacher's responsibilities to impart this knowledge to the congregation. His own specialized knowledge can help clarify confusing issues of doctrine, provide historical insight into biblical passages, or even confront heresy within the Christian community. Dr. J. B. Chapman states, "It is of little use for the average preacher to fight heresies directly, for heresies have a way of flourishing on opposition. The preacher's task is to get there first with more than the others can ever bring."<sup>23</sup> Once a basic level of understanding is reached, this can be used as a foundation for further development.

The second aim or objective Skinner suggests the preacher needs to address is the aim of inspiration.

Emotion is life's driving power. Making people feel more deeply about what they already know is an essential goal of preaching. Life depends not only on what people believe, but on how they believe it. The

preacher tries to make people care intensely; he wants them to know joy, pathos, passionate indignation, and burning zeal. He hopes to melt the ice that encrusts cold hearts. Preaching that did not intensify the emotions would be as barren as preaching that did nothing for minds or wills.<sup>24</sup>

Much preaching today leaves people cold. They leave the church feeling as though they attended a lecture. While this may be appropriate for the classroom, it does not seem appropriate for the pulpit. Of course, the other extreme of stirring up shallow emotion is just as lacking. What the preacher must do is find a healthy balance that will leave his listeners not merely informed but inspired at the emotional level to seek ways of applying their knowledge. Skinner says of this aim that "it carries a devotional quality of comfort that uplifts the meaning of the truth declared into the specific relevance for the hearer concerned."<sup>25</sup>

The third aspect Skinner suggests as an aim in preaching is to motivate and appeal. This aim largely means getting the hearers to respond. The goal of any sermon should be to achieve a response to the message that is contained in that sermon. "A sermon is a failure if the person who leaves the church is the same one who entered."<sup>26</sup> This may seem extreme, but even

Christ always emphasized that the words spoken by Him were not empty additions to the store of facts which life daily provides, but that they themselves were "life." They were given to live, to create understanding, to interpret experience, and to stimulate growth. From beginning to end in Scripture, the truth of God is revealed, then related to need, and then used to structure the appeal to the will for moral action.<sup>27</sup>

The final aim Skinner suggests for the preacher is that of edification. The word *edification* simply means to build up. According to Skinner, this is "preaching's highest objective."<sup>28</sup> Within this objective, the preacher aims at directing and guiding his hearers into a more perfect conformity to the image of Christ.

We see that in all of the functions of the pulpit, the teaching element is ever present. It cannot be artificially separated from what could be called "true preaching." Instead, the preaching ministry of the pulpit should encompass the same framework of objective development that traditional education does. The teaching ministry of the pulpit should instruct and bring cognitive awareness. It should inspire to create an effective response.

(Continued on page 53)

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# *Facilitating Community: One Congregation's Experience*

by Bill Barnes

Pastor, Edgehill United Methodist Church  
Nashville

**T**his paper embodies a very humble purpose. The purpose is not to offer a time-tested prescription for achieving unity within a diverse community. Rather, the purpose is to share some on-the-run observations of some things not to do, and a few things that have helped. The paper is about journey, process, trial and error, based especially on the 10-year experience of a congregation in south Nashville. It would be arrogant and untrue to claim that a satisfactory destination has been reached. But it would also be refusing to share in joy and hope not to celebrate some victories. The depth of distrust and diversion created by a sinful and broken history makes glibness and false claims impossible. The time line stretches out before us so very far. Our scars are so deep. What is healed is fragile, in need of constant re-creation and reinforcement, always in danger of becoming the shattered "I told you so." A leader of a minority group in our neighborhood, after we had traveled through a number of

issue struggles together, finally told me: "You know, I respect you. But I don't trust you. I just want you to know that." My response was something like: "You have several hundred years of reasons not to trust me. I can live with respect.

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**"I respect you, but I  
don't trust you."**

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Who knows? Maybe in 10 years we'll be able to talk about trust. Or maybe not."

The time line is long. It is a matter of process, of testing, of self-examination, of more and more open community. But there are signs of trust, even of love, in Christ.

Let me, therefore, venture some observations that may furnish a spring-

board for your own thought and consideration.

1. First, about *worship*. Worship to the church is sort of like the World Series to baseball, the board meeting to General Motors. Leadership in worship reflects authority in the community of faith. Shared and regular participation of minorities is essential, not simply in music, announcements, and litanies, but also in sermons and administration of sacraments.

2. *Small-group life*, which is dynamic and brings together in common faith and work the diversity of the community, is essential to the growth of unity. Our own congregation sees this as so important that a part-time staff person works only in this area.

3. *Pairings* are constantly being made within the congregation, based on certain kinds of depth experiences. Such pairings, sort of like AA, are made around divorce, alcohol, death, various emergencies, terminal illnesses, etc.



Many such pairings are made across educational, racial, economic lines.

4. Use of the *Bible* is very central, especially in small groups, house groups, study groups. Constant relating of biblical material, in contradiction to the steady counterproductive conditioning in our society is necessary. Making clear and prominent the unifying theses of our faith, described in the Bible, has to be done relentlessly. We really do battle with principalities and powers.

Engaging in *missional tasks together* is extremely helpful. The way in which projects are set up, the way decision making processes are established, provides untold opportunities for unity or division. Children's programs, feeding programs, issue projects, and many more types of mission response are examples of what is meant.

6. *The minority agenda* has to be and does remain very prominent. Commitments of personnel and money and other resources have to focus on the minority's agenda and needs. Without well-thought-out communications systems this is impossible. What is being suggested is not the response of paternalism or condescension. It is getting at paying back debts, at just compensation. So often, the voice one chooses to hear is the voice one finally responds to. Many voices are speaking out about what should be done in municipalities with community development funds, about what should be done with church staff and facilities. Clear evidence that the minority voice is amplified and heard is absolutely essential for the growth of the community.

7. *Have fun together.* A social events chairperson is *ex officio* on our Council of Ministries. Growth of community involves more than intensity in mission and work and worship. The variety of these social events is important, too. How folks have fun is as replete with cultural conditioning as is worship.

8. *Staffing patterns.* Does the staffing pattern reflect the full status and dignity and expectation of minority groups? So often sexist and racist residues are most obvious at this point.

9. Encourage *minority* persons to do *things for the majority*, not just vice versa. A black woman had a great idea about noonday worship at her home during Holy Week. The experience was excellent, and most of the folks participating were white.

10. *Celebration of the variety of gifts*, not only in worship, but in arts, crafts, etc. There is a beautiful painting hanging in our worship space. It was done by

a black youth in a nearby housing project who saw a sign that read: "The church building must remain unfinished until all people are housed in dignity." The frame around it is unfinished wood, beautiful, and made by a white farmer.

11. Availability of staff and others to focus on *issues in the minority community* but *outside the local congregation*. There are many examples here that can be cited and discussed. Again we are emphasizing the importance of concrete evidence that the minority agenda is crucial, and not just within the congregation.

12. *Reliance upon the Holy Spirit*, trusting that breakthroughs can and will come. Obviously, this item is pervasive throughout all the rest. But the quest needs to be focused, disciplined, conscious, filled with expectation.

13. *Leadership patterns within the congregation.* What is meant here should be self-evident, among the laity as well as with clergy and other paid staff.

14. *Anticipation about diversity*, not tolerance of diversity. What is meant is the attitude of a child awakening on Christmas morning, filled with some predictabilities and some surprises. People and groups are walking Christmas trees, laden with gifts that can deeply enrich each other's lives. Our experience tells us that diversity is not a matter of entertainment but of enrichment; not something we tolerate, but which we celebrate; not something before which we are spectators, but anticipators.

The reader will think of much that is omitted above. What is said may provoke questions or disagreements or affirmations. If the material does any or all of these things within you, well and good. It is in fact the collection of all these ingredients and more that offers, in the process of much faith-and-obedience time, the joy of experiencing authentic and profound oneness in Christ. In terms of the experience of the world and the church up to now, the odds still don't appear too promising. But community in Christ has little to do with arithmetical probabilities. We push on because of some experiences and premonitions and healing. We push on because of Christ and the Holy Spirit and Pentecost. We push on because we are called by God to be—even us, and even in this world and time—the foreshadowing of a kingdom where God is, and will be, all in all.

From the *Urban Ministries Journal*, the Southeastern Jurisdiction Urban Worker's Network. Used by permission.

## BOARDS AND "GROUP-THINK"

*Invulnerability.* The feeling the group cannot lose and therefore takes extraordinary risks.

*Rationale.* Collectively constructing rationalizations to discount negative feedback or past failures.

*Morality.* Believing unquestioningly in the inherent morality of the group and therefore being noncritical of decisions.

*Stereotyping.* Assuming certain views and prejudices about the "enemy."

*Pressure.* Directing group pressure against any person who expresses doubts and concern.

*Self-censorship.* Talking oneself out of doubts or concerns and refraining from voicing them.

*Unanimity.* Illusion that everyone agrees because no one voices dissent.

*Mindguards.* Protecting each other and leader from adverse feedback and negative consequences of past decisions.

—Marlene Wilson

# JOURNEY

## *Reflections After 43 Years of Ministry*

by L. G. Gordon  
Pennsville, N.J.

Looking back over 43 years of ministry on the Philadelphia District (Nazarene) I am reminded, first of all, of the goodness of God, my Sun and Shield. I've also learned a lot about ministry since 1940. There are some dangers and guidelines that remain and stand out after the faddish and the temporary fade from view. Generalizing is always risky, but as I grow older I do a lot of it, recognizing the risks. Let me share some reflective advice here at the sunset end of the trail.

**1. Your church will become a lot like you.** If you stay put for long, you will surround yourself with people like you. If you are negative and little in spirit, your church will remain small, ingrown, and fussy. If you are optimistic, warm, and confident, your church will become like that. Maybe more than you want to believe, you are the determining factor. Remember the *number* of physical bodies is not the first gauge of whether a church is large or small—its community influence and service ministry is the better gauge. Whether a church sanctuary is “packed” with people or “sparsely settled” as my Scottish dad would say, is not as important as the *spirit of faith* and *optimism* that emanates from that “hard core” of faithful ones, *sparked* in their spirit by the minister's attitude both in and out of the pulpit.

**2. Details and routine can kill you.** You alone decide your daily schedule, your devotions, habits of study, calling, recreation, etc. This factor has tremendous advantage and possibilities but also can become a whirlpool of danger and final disaster. Few other professions offer the latitude afforded the minister at this point. He can come and go as he decides; but without fail his ministry and personal experience will reflect his adjustments here. Because no human person is watching over him and he does not have to punch a time clock, and be governed by the standards that industry imposes upon its employees, should not cause him to use his liberty for license. He is on his honor. Happy indeed is the minister

who has come to regard his task as more than a Sabbath day exercise, but as a full-time calling that must demand of him his time as much, and even more, than that of the doctor, lawyer, banker, or other professional person.

The danger is even greater when the study or office lie within the confines of his home. Many household tasks will present themselves that will rob him of the cream of his time. Interruptions will be greater in number. Fortunate is the minister who has a wife whose sympathies parallel his own in this matter. Many a good ministry has been ruined by too much attention to household tasks. I believe our wives need our help, but not to the extent that we are tied hand and foot. There are exceptions to this rule. Sickness comes and emergencies arise that will require more of the minister's time, but when this is the case he will not be happy until he can once more assume a full-time schedule of ministerial habit.

Most of us live pretty routine lives. Some have the faculty of making everything that comes an excitement, and every day is filled with tingling experiences. But most of our lives are quite routine and ordinary. They can be, nevertheless, fruitful and rich above measure. The great danger is that routine should degenerate into monotony. It is then that we lose the keen perspective of our tasks. Study becomes dull and tedious. Our devotions lack luster. We find ourselves in a rut, we come to loathe our task, and many times, ourselves also.

But an even greater danger comes as a result of this monotony. Like plague follows famine, the minister to whom routine and detail have become monotonous will turn to interests that are in part, or totally unrelated to his calling, that he might find relief. Unless these interests are curbed or disciplined they will swamp him in his own experience and thereby render him unfit for the pastoral office.

When routine and detail become monotonous and tedious, the minister may find himself busy with many things. He even may reach the point where he searches after errands to run to take him away from the routine and detail. These "fill up the time" but bring no fruit to his ministry. Simply to say we are busy is not in itself a credit to us and may indicate a weakness that we are unwilling

that *nothing* else they do is more important *than that they study*. It is my contention that any man who is undisciplined in his study habits is also undisciplined in other respects. This does not mean only the attaining of degrees or the passing of the course of study. It is *more* than that! It means an application of oneself to study that will cause him to be able to feed the flock. This is

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## The smiling face of God, and the peace of His approval, become a rainbow in the midst of routine and detail.

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to face. We say, "We are on the run"—"going right out straight," but where are we going, and where are we running? Is it an errand for the Kingdom, or are we just running from routine and detail?

To escape the tyranny of routine, make a plan, a good plan with goals. Then work that plan. Don't let routine detail keep you from your main course of action.

Don't let the details of your ministry mount up until they discourage you. Whether you use the weekly *stagger* system (no pun intended) of caring for details all in one day, or the *piecemeal* system of caring for a few each day, is not too important. What is important is that you take care of them in some manner. Unanswered letters and even unread mail can be a source of great embarrassment. Unfulfilled assignments can mark your ministry and render it ineffective. *Details are important*—take care of them. Get those church bills to your treasurer at the first opportunity. Don't let them mount up until the church's credit is hurt and you are considered inefficient by your people.

**3. Diversions can be dangerous too.** The minister may find himself overbalanced in secular pursuits, such as hobbies, real estate, sports, entertainment, etc. He can pass the point of the legitimate and start reveling in the illegitimate. Where is that point? It is not too difficult to determine. *It is the place where the interest of the incidental supplants the interest of the major.* When the bulk of our energy is consumed on the unimportant and the important is uncared for, we have gone too far. These pursuits in themselves need not be sinful but become so when our practice of them is perverted by our overindulgence. The greater tragedy is that to derive continued pleasure from these secular pursuits one has to constantly enlarge the field and finds himself getting in deeper all the time. What satisfies today must be increased tomorrow.

**4. A planned schedule is worth your weight in gold.** I have already mentioned this, but I want to emphasize it further. Any schedule can be changed as need demands, but make one anyway. No one pattern will work for all; each must make his own, largely determined by the number of babies there are in the home. They are the greatest schedule wreckers that I know of, with the exception of grandchildren.

**5. Develop disciplined habits of study.** *No one ought to expect the honors of the ministry who is unwilling to harness himself to the discipline of the ministry.* Candidates for their first license must be made to feel

your own safeguard. As we feed our congregations we ourselves are fed.

**6. Capitalize on your interruptions.** I recall an incident in my Reading, Pa., pastorate—I was busy in my study. The telephone rang and news came that one of our Sunday School girls, whose parents do not attend, had been struck and seriously injured by a speeding auto. My information did not come from the parents. This was not an interruption; it was a ministry imperative! I went at once to call on the parents and visit at the hospital. I found a welcome and even grateful reception from the parents; they seemed greatly comforted to know the minister cared enough to leave everything and come to their aid; my prayers for the child cheered them greatly. I decided while I was out to make my other calls and reschedule my study time.

**7. Maintain a fresh, prayed up, vows-fulfilled relationship with God.** The smiling face of God, the peace of His approval, and a sense of partnership with Him become a rainbow in the midst of routine and detail. An hour spent in secret devotions puts harmony into the rest of the day.

As I sit in my study now I am conscious of His abiding presence in wonderful assurance to my heart. There is an inner calm of spirit that is fortifying my soul right now. There is no rancor nor bitterness toward God or any man anywhere. If my days be many or few, it is all right, for "He knoweth the way that I take." The Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory.

I love my church more than life itself. It has given me everything worthwhile in my life. It sought me out as a lad and led me to the foot of the Cross. It nurtured me in spiritual grace by the lives and messages of godly church members and pastors. It afforded me a college to prepare me for my life's work in an atmosphere that strengthened my experience and grounded my faith deeper in those essential fundamentals of Christian experience. It led me to my good wife. It has afforded me a place to preach and serve. It has been a spiritual haven for my children, to lead them into a vital experience in the Lord, to strengthen them amidst great trials and temptations. There have been many battles to fight, human frailties have been evidenced again and again; but withal a wonderful fellowship and blessing in every church. I love my church today, and feel a loyalty to her that could not be broken. With God in our day there is a rainbow in the midst of routine and detail, and a paean of praise in our hearts.



# Pastoral Transition: An Occupational Hazard

by Carl Green

*Pastor, First Church of the Nazarene, Seattle*

**P**astoral change occurs frequently—perhaps too frequently—in the lives of both pastor and congregation. What is the attitude of the pastor in this event? How can he help the congregation cope with an upcoming pastoral change? John the Baptist's relationship to Jesus and his own disciples will help us think about these questions.

John the Baptist was a man at the peak of influence. In every sense of the word he was a success. Some even called him the equal of the prophet Elijah, and in his culture that was big stuff. He had a devoted following. The nucleus of his "congregation" had probably been saved under his ministry, for we know he preached a strong message of repentance. These were the loyalists—the die-hards—and they would rise to his defense at the provocation. On one occasion . . .

Some of John's disciples . . . came . . . and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about [Jesus]—well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him" (*John 3:25-26, NIV*).

Then there were those who followed John the Baptist because they considered him to be a powerful preacher. Some liked his clothes and his rough, independent image. Perhaps others were attracted to his particular brand of health food—locusts and wild honey. Superficial reasons? Yes. But they were still on his bandwagon. John had it made.

However, John the Baptist was also wise. He did not lose his perspective. He remembered that he was a

preacher by God's choice, not his own. Therefore, when the Levites and priests pressured him to claim the role of Messiah . . . to be something he was not, he made it clear: "I am not the Christ. . . . I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord'" (*John 1:20, 23, NIV*). To his overprotective and devoted followers he gave this explanation: "I baptize with water, . . . but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie" (*John 1:26-27, NIV*).

It was because he kept his personal perspectives in order and because he understood his essential relationship both to Jesus and to his "congregation" of followers that John was not threatened when his disciples came to him, upset about the competition offered by Jesus. He understood that it was not competition; it was the will of God. And we see the real "stuff" John the Baptist is made of when he says, "That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less" (*John 3:29-30, NIV*).

John the Baptist plays an active role in transferring the loyalty of his disciples from himself to Jesus. The pastor needs to do this as well. The nature of the pastor's task is such that people identify with him—some more deeply than others. The problem is not that intense loyalties and devotion exist between the pastor and his congregation. To some extent, this is normal. The problem is that the pastor may relish this loyalty too greatly and seek to preserve it. It is so very easy to lose

sight of the fact that we are to call people to Christ and not to ourselves.

One of my fears about ministry is that too often we succeed mostly in gathering a personal following. We do not give enough attention to transferring the loyalty of die-hard followers from ourselves to Christ and His Church. Sometimes we are tempted to entertain a sense of satisfaction when we hear that after we left a former church so-and-so left too, "because they didn't like the new pastor as well." Such attitudes reveal resistance to John's model: "He must become greater; I must become less." If the pastor does not sanctify his own attitudes at this point, he will witness an increased casualty rate during periods of pastoral change.

Also, the pastor must seek to prepare his people for an upcoming pastoral change. We have already noted that John the Baptist had those who followed him for superficial reasons. Certainly every pastor has such persons in his congregation. It is, then, his personal responsibility to take such superficiality and do the work of creating strong, Christ-centered allegiances. If this is to be accomplished, however, it will take a strong commitment to this task.

How would it change the pastor's perspective and procedures if he were to adopt the following code of evaluation: the true strength of my ministry will not be known until six months (or one year) after I leave? I am certain exceptions to this rule exist, but if such a perspective becomes part of the pastor's personal ministerial code, it will demand that he actively prepare his people for pastoral change.

After making public announcement of my resignation from my first church, I began to instruct the people about what I expected of them during the time of pastoral change. During the next five weeks I talked openly and often about my leaving. Following one of the services I was, as usual, greeting the people. A lady who had been converted during my ministry who had never had another pastor said to me on her way out of the service, "Why do you keep talking about your leaving?" I replied, "Because I am leaving. We need to face it and talk about it. We can't deny it. I want to help you understand what your responsibilities are to Christ, His Church, and your new pastor. And I want you to know what I expect of you." We must not be afraid to confront the subject of our leaving. We need to help our people feel free to talk about the changes they will experience and all the attached emotions. Perhaps one of the most helpful things we can do is just talk about it. This is certainly better than denial . . . going on as though nothing has changed and then, all of a sudden, being gone.

I am beginning to believe it is essential that the pastor use the time between the announcement of his resignation and his final Sunday to help his people transfer any unhealthy or excessive dependence on himself to Christ and to reinforce their commitment to the Church.

Some suggestions: Assure your people that the pain of separation is normal. It is also evidence that the church has been establishing strong love relationships and that, while the pain is real, it need not be fatal.

Advise them that you will not be pleased if they leave the church when you leave—that invalidates your work. Use the loyalty they feel to you to encourage a greater loyalty. St. Paul seems to have used this tactic frequently (Phil. 1:27; 2:12-13).

Assure them that there will be adjustments in regard to pastoral change—don't minimize or underestimate these adjustments. Help them anticipate and deal with some of those changes. Express your confidence in them to make those changes. Help them understand it is a test of their Christian maturity (and of your work among them) how successfully they make those adjustments (1 Cor. 2:1-6a).

One of the difficulties or conflicts the parishioner may encounter in a time of pastoral change is the conflict of allegiance. This is especially true if the relationship between pastor and congregation has been a healthy one, for the final weeks will be emotionally "loaded" times. If the pastor and congregation fail to communicate their expectations to one another, attempts to please are often misguided and counterproductive. It might, for example, be interpreted as a lack of loyalty to the present pastor to evidence excitement about the search for another pastor. Or, to wholeheartedly support the new pastor may be understood by some as betrayal.

On the other hand, the pastor has certain emotional conflicts as well. He may feel reluctant to verbally "look forward" to his new task for fear his present congregation will feel rejected and think, "He can't wait to get out of here." I feel certain that such emotional conflicts are not all that uncommon. It is the responsibility of the departing pastor to speak to those conflicts. His openness will erase or greatly minimize such conflict.

The primary loyalty of the congregation must be to Christ and the church. Their loyalty to the pastor must be secondary. If this is not the case, the correction of this imbalance is important. Such activity needs to be intensified at the time of pastoral change. For, if the people begin dissipating after the pastor leaves, it ought to arouse all kinds of danger signals, inspiring reflection and critical evaluation.

If, out of a misguided sense of loyalty, it is suggested that "I don't know if I'll stick around after you leave," we must not be flattered. We ought to be distressed. For if we are greater in their eyes than Christ is, they have misread our mission (or perhaps we have misunderstood it). If our people feel more loyalty to us than to the mission of Christ's Church, we must shout the same words of rebuke and correction to them that John shouted to his loyal but misguided followers: "My joy is complete" when you are solidly grounded in Christ and deeply committed to His Body, the Church—only then can "my joy" be complete. "He must become greater; I must become less!"



# VOTED OUT!

by Marcus R. Briggs  
Annapolis, Md.

Is there life after "the vote"? Yes! Mealtimes keep rolling around even if you're not hungry, and Wednesday and Sundays still come even though you don't know what to preach on or don't even want to preach. Life does continue.

This is not a soapbox for declaring the rightness or wrongness of a particular situation; rather it is a chance to share with other pastors who live with a similar ecclesiastical possibility in which the terms *voted out* and *cancer* bring an equal amount of dread.

To many, it may be the most traumatic experience yet faced in life, and it may take years to sense a total recovery. One's sense of past and present usefulness as well as one's profession, prestige, self-respect, and security are instantly thrown into question. Often this is preceded by months of intense tension and struggle within the church.

Out of such an unusual, inconvenient, and dreaded experience can come many interesting observations of human behavior and godly support. Shock, anger, and grief pour over you like water. Friends, kids, and you, weep, and deep within you cry out, "It isn't fair." And life is *not* fair, but our attitude toward that unfairness is more important to God than our past accomplishments.

The emotional shock will gradually, inevitably, subside, but the anger will last longer. Plans of striking back, bringing out the big guns, and abusing the pulpit are very real temptations. Quitting, self-pity, and agreeing that one is not a very good pastor can bring deep, disturbing questions about one's call, ability, and self-worth.

The intense grief will come all mixed up with the anger. The crying of the children and wife will strike to the heart. Tears will come for the forced tearing of relationships with the innocent and uninvolved people who are hurt because of church politics. The professional comforter becomes the griever. Advice given to others in times of grief suddenly applies personally. Greater empathy with hurting-others becomes a reality. The normal stages of grief are encountered. Disillusionment with the organized church, cynicism, numbness, and a desire to hold life at a "safe" distance are real and forceful emotional reactions.

In the midst of the anger and grief lies the opportunity to live what has been preached. Now the people of the pew will see if the platitudes of the pulpit work in the pulpiter's life. They are watching as never before. What attitudes will they see?

The first and basic attitude must be one of trust. *Crowded to Christ* becomes more than a book title when fleeing to the arms of Christ. Meeting Christ

often in the Word, in prayer, and through friends is essential and will sustain the bleeding pastor.

Diversions are a great help. Enjoying one's family, visiting local attractions you haven't gotten to yet, taking a few days to visit relatives, working on your favorite hobby project, and physical exercise all help to keep life in perspective.

Look for the good that has and will come out of the situation. It may not have been God's will, but He will make something beautiful out of the brokenness and will draw many closer to himself.

Trust God! He has chosen you. He will keep you. Your problem is His problem.

Remember the fruits of your labor, many of which are unknown to others, like the cancer patient you led to Christ, with whom you will rejoice in heaven one day.

Laugh! It is ironically hilarious how serious we pastors can take ourselves. Accept humor as a gift from God; accept it, look for the irony and the funny side of life, and laugh deeply and often between the tears.

Talk! Spend hours with your wife, ventilating anger (not gossip), sharing dreams, joys, and fears. Your need for each other may never have been greater. Delight in each other.

Dream big. You have been released. Avoid at all costs running or moving too quickly, but by all means dream. Don't react. Do be open and free in Christ to the possibility of a calling to a chaplaincy, church planting, missionary service, or even a sabbatical. In all likelihood you will be in another pastorate soon, but don't box God in. Have dreams for God's ministry through you. Remain enthusiastic about Christ's calling.

Effect closure. Be fair in giving time and love to those who are left to carry on. It will be difficult for the new pastor to be welcomed if the old one never effectively said good-bye.

Will to love. Those you are leaving and those who are causing you to leave all need you and your love. You will be angry with some and uncomfortable around some, but love them as He loves us. Be honest, and keep a sweet and gentle spirit.

Learn from it. The humility gained from a "vote out" can be one of God's greatest gifts to you. It is a crash course in life. You will be a better pastor, but more importantly you will be more like the Lord because of it.

Treat your wife like a queen. It's much harder on her than on you or anyone else in the church. If she had been voted out, it would have been harder on you. But the church has hurt the one she loves.

# HOW TO FOLLOW THE GRANDEST PREACHER ON THE DISTRICT AND SURVIVE

by Carlos H. Sparks

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Portland, Tenn.*

**H**e never went far in the ministry after that one pastorate. Some had estimated that his predecessor was the grandest preacher on the district and the new man couldn't handle it.

What he did to force an increase in his own stature made him a very repulsive character. His attitude and actions undermined the laymen's natural inclination to revere him as a man of God. His private warfare isolated him from his people and his peers. He became a darkened page in the history of that church and somehow the community would remember him forever. By and by he entered the secular field and faded from the ministerial scene.

Someone called him a jealous preacher, and it hurts to believe that to be a fairly accurate assessment of the man. Was it the former pastor's fault? Had he hung on, even after he moved to a new charge? No. Someone said of him, "He would have been jealous of a dead predecessor." Indeed the ghosts of pastors past lurked at every turn and haunted all the corners of his diminishing world. He moves to the microphone on the assembly floor and attempts to vindicate his every action and reaction. You have heard him report; unfortunately there is at least one at every district assembly. Listen.

"Bless God we have spent the year getting the books in order. We had to mark off 15 members; for all I know they have been dead for years. We're starting the year out with a clean slate, so you can watch for a good report

next year."

Bounding from the platform, he applauds his action with a hearty "Praise the Lord" and becomes a face in the assembly body. He never saw the people he was addressing; his face was twitching and his eyes bobbing because of the nervous speech he was making. Sickening! Yes, sickening!

What does a new pastor do with his predecessor? The answer is in the material we preach and thankfully most of us have discovered it . . . LOVE HIM! Just plain, honest, straightforward love.

Such a move does not take exception with the fact that the former pastor may have been a poor bookkeeper and may have failed miserably in some other areas too. However, there are a few good things you can say about him if you will. Be a brother by lifting out the complimentary and ignoring the destructive, critical attitude. Hold him up to your people.

"Brother Smith was never much of a preacher," one member might say.

"I'm surprised to hear that; everywhere people have told me that he was a powerful preacher and a real prayer warrior," you counter.

"Brother Smith ignored the sick," they continue.

"Did you know, sister, I heard that he made more personal calls than any other pastor on our district. I should think you would be very proud of him." Besides sprinkling the brush fire, the new pastor can wet the ground where a future hazard may exist.

"I saw Brother Smith at the preachers' meeting. He said that he was covered up with work at his new church but that he always prays for us here."

Can you see the logic? His name is not a dirty word. Don't hesitate to remember him to your people. In turn they will love you for having been concerned about one they greatly admired. Slowly but surely (and do be patient) you will win a solid following. The people will give you their hearts, just as they did the former pastor. You can then rejoice at having helped them and yourself through a difficult adjustment. That's a part of leadership responsibility too.

At homecomings and other such events, use your platform to honor him for some specific quality contribution he made to the church.

"Thanks to the leadership of Brother Smith, we are worshiping in an air-conditioned building today." Not much of a statement, but it helps him and it helps you. Brother Smith will sense that you are a true friend, and wherever he goes he'll tell the world what a grand job you are doing. But more importantly, God's work will move on without those awful clouds of distrust and suspicion that can set a church back 20 years. If you fail in this important phase of leadership, some of the people and perhaps you will never recover. Rightly done, you are on your way to stardom as the grandest preacher on the district, and you won't mind if there happens to be one in just about every church.



Don't sacrifice your family. Don't talk about the ugly aspects of it in front of your children. Do whatever you must to maintain the integrity and closeness of your family. Maybe a trip for her to visit family, or maybe moving the next day is what you must do, but the family is your number one responsibility. The family will be your place of refuge and strength from which you go out to minister for the remaining years of your ministry. As much as you love pastoring, your own family is your number one parish.

Through it all remember "Christ Is Victor." Although one never would have chosen to be voted out, and seldom is it God's choice, nevertheless He is walking, crying, talking, and laughing with you through it all. He

accepts your complaints and compliments, problems and praises. He has entrusted you with a burden that is pressing you to a level of dependency upon Him. He is somehow, through the fire of suffering, making you more like Him, and that is enough! More even than heaven, a Christian's goal is to be like the Master. Praise His name! Christ is Victor!

At this writing it is five weeks since I was "voted out." But the future is His. The grief is overwhelming, but He is over all. The future is more unknown to me than ever, but I know Him better than ever. Yes, He has taken my professional and personal brokenness and made me more like Him, and that's enough for me. Praise His name!



# TREAD LIGHTLY, PASTOR

by Esme James  
*Red Deer, Alta., Canada*

**S**o you are about to become our pastor. Great! I'm looking forward to meeting you. Pastors have always been important in my life.

One of my earliest and most cherished memories is of an elderly minister in our pioneer community. He kept some chickens, and I remember that he butchered a rooster when it attacked me. I was only four years old, but I understood that he loved me.

Since my elementary years I have experienced the loving care of many fine pastors. During my childhood and teen years, even in young adulthood, they had ample reason to correct and advise me. Though their rebukes embarrassed me, I knew they came in love, and I heeded their words. Usually.

I have since worked with my pastors in most of the capacities open to the laity and, in emergencies, I have taken their places in the pulpit. Our fellowship has been rich and full of memories to cherish.

I want to maintain such a loving, supportive relationship with any pastor I have, and I know most of my fellow lay people want the same thing. To that end let me share with you some suggestions from my experience through more than five decades in the church.

Every pastoral change involves some degree of pain in the congregation. If the relationship between the church and the former pastor was poor, everyone is hurting. Especially are the lay leaders troubled because, usually long before the congregation-at-large is aware of any problem, the leaders have been struggling with it. Some may have caused the trouble, but many have been seeking a peaceful settlement. And often the peacemakers are plagued by self-doubt, for it is never easy to live with problem situations without developing problem attitudes.

I remember such a case. A model Christian and church board member was greatly disturbed by trouble between the board and the pastor. As she shared her burden with me she emphasized deep concern that she would keep a good attitude. She knew the danger that exists when love between pastor and people diminishes.

On the other hand, if pastoral relationships have been good, the severing of them hurts. New Christians will hurt most, for some of the strongest bonds we ever know are those forged between a beloved pastor and the people he has led to the Lord, nurtured in faith, and perhaps brought into church membership.

So remember, pastor, there is hurting one way or the other. Give us time to heal and use that time to earn for yourself a place in our affections.

**M**y second suggestion should help you earn that place. In fact, it is more than a suggestion: it's a plea from my heart. Please tread lightly. Especially if you are a young pastor going to your first church—tread lightly.

We lay people do not have the formal training you have, but some of us have a lifetime of experience in church affairs. Respect that experience by getting to know us and the reasons behind our customs before you discard our ways or introduce many new ideas.

If you tread lightly, you will almost certainly find that the longtime members of the church are your strongest allies in ministry. There are exceptions, of course, but most older church members rejoice to see young people, ministers and laity alike, carrying the work in which they have invested their lives.

So, unless a church custom is hurtful in itself, do not be in a hurry to change it. Remember that small degrees of change spread over the months are more acceptable, even enjoyable; but sweeping changes in church management, leadership, or forms of worship—if they are too many and too soon—produce appalling stress.

In their book *How to Survive Being Alive*, Dudley and Welke cite a study begun in the 1930s by Harold G. Wolff and continued by his associate, Dr. Thomas M. Holmes of the University of Washington, and his colleagues. From the study came their widely used Life Change Scale. Thousands of people in many countries have measured their lives by this scale with results that uniformly authenticate its accuracy and prove beyond any serious question that too much change in too short a time produces a stress resulting in illness.

As a guide for using the scale, mean values were assigned to the 43 common life changes listed. An accumulation of 200 points within one year lays one open to illness, and the more stress the more serious will be the illness.

Heading the list at 100 points is the death of a spouse, followed by divorce at 73 points. Even happy changes create stress. Marriage rates 50 points, and outstanding personal achievement, 28. Further down the scale, change in church activities is one of a group of changes rating 19 or 20 points each.

In other words, change in church activities puts a person under stress that is more than 25% of that experienced in divorce and just under 20% of the stress of losing a spouse!

Change itself produces stress, but the stress will be almost unbearable if those changes are made before you have secured your relationships with us. Fearing to be considered uncooperative, troublesome, or carnal,

few of us will protest; we will just silently endure. Then, when some "straw" proves too much for our backs and we can no longer contain our discomfort, there will be trouble, and you will be left wondering what caused the eruption.

Many new pastors, full of enthusiasm and good ideas, are left in a state of bewilderment when this happens. Their first reaction is to label the people as stubborn—or worse—fighting to keep everything as it has always been. But often the people have just been pushed beyond their capacities for handling change. Those capacities, which often diminish with age, differ with each individual and have little to do with anyone's spiritual state.

Let me illustrate. Shortly after arriving at his first church, a young pastor tried to restructure the church board. The people resisted the change. He soon left and was followed by another pastor with the same plan. But the second man fed his ideas to the board for almost a year before he set about making the change. Then all but the two oldest board members happily accepted them.

The board membership had not changed; their spiritual state was not significantly different. But they had been given time to think through the proposed changes, and they were ready to cooperate in good spirit.

This waiting to introduce changes will be difficult, but you can pave the way for change by using the time to establish good communications with us—which is my third suggestion.

I once visited a city church just to hear a certain preacher. The topic of his message was *Communication* and I thought, Well, you surely must be hard up for sermon material. But the ensuing years have brought me to

the solid conviction that good two-way communication between pastor and people stands right beside sound preaching and a strong prayer base as essential components of a healthy church.

A case in point. A church organist was the matriarch of a family whose open home, generous giving, and extensive labors had been key factors in the establishment and growth of a new church. When she had an operation for cancer, the board—out of sincere concern for her good recovery—decided to relieve her of her responsibilities as organist. But no one thought to tell her of the decision or of the reasoning behind it. When she returned to church she simply found someone else taking her place.

Had she asked why, she would have learned of the kindness intended, and she would have appreciated it. But she, too, failed to communicate; she simply tried to live with the feeling that she had been dumped. This came when other church-related pressures were developing, and it was only a short time before the family found another congregation in which to worship. They and the church were the victims of noncommunication.

Equally as bad as no communication is poor communication. I've seen that at work, too.

One church was wrestling with the happy problems of a growing Sunday School population. Classes were meeting in every available space, including the small kitchen, which housed the senior teens—too many of them for its size.

The Christian Life chairman heard secondhand the complaints of the teens and moved to deal with the problem. But his method of communicating was to march into the class and inform them that they would stay in that room whether they liked it or not. You can guess that he alienated both the teacher and the class. That led to even poorer communications and soon others were affected. Fortunately, the chairman resigned and was succeeded by one who knew how to communicate well, so the situation was redeemed.

Good communications are absolutely essential for a congregation to function happily, but they don't just happen. They must be developed. Good communications demand the same ingredients as a good news story—who, what, why, when, where, and how.

Who? Start with your department leaders and your board. Make sure they know what changes you deem necessary and why. Involve them in reaching the decision to change. When you have their agreement (and one very successful pastor-writer has stated that no move should be made until the church board is 100% agreed) then plan with them the when, where, and how of the changes.

But don't let the communications stop there. Be sure each person who will be affected by any change knows exactly what it will be, why it is being made, when it will be instituted, how he fits into the picture, and—if applicable—where he will be situated.

But communication is a two-way street, pastor, and the flow from you to us will be blocked unless we can also talk to you. That demands that you develop good listening abilities and attitudes.

(Continued on page 53)



# SPIRITUAL FORMATION: CHRIST FORMED IN US

by V. James Mannoia

*Professor of Pastoral Ministry, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky.*

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. . . . For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him. . . . But now he has reconciled you . . . if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel (*Col. 1:15, 19, 22-23, NIV*).

Here is both announcement and admonition. The announcement is that there are no limits to God's re-creative power. He has spoken once in the fiat of creation. He continues to speak in His providential rule over the established order. Within this context, the gospel news of hope is born in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of the Godhead in human flesh.

## CHRIST ALIVE IN US

The admonition is to those who have been reconciled in Christ to "continue in the faith, established, firm and not moved from the hope." The *announcement* is that God is alive in us; the *admonition* is that we be alive to God in Christ. The one is the doctrine of reconciliation; the other, the doctrine of formation.

Spiritual formation is the activity of intention by which Christ may be fully formed in us. This means discipline after commitment. It means dying and coming alive at the same time—death to what is flesh, and life to what is spirit. The one is buried; the other is quickened. This is the simultaneous work of the Holy Spirit within the life of the Christian who wills it to be.

The ritual of the Benedictine monk who takes the solemn vow of monastic living portrays beautifully the activity of intention toward spiritual formation. He lies prostrate before the altar where someday his own coffin will be laid. His lips declare the vow that seals his life until his death. Then the joyful voices fill the sanctuary as they sing the message of hope,

Awake, sleeper,  
Rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine upon you.

(*Eph. 5:14, NEB*)

He rises to his feet; the bells of the abbey ring out; the funeral pall falls off; in its place, the robe of the Benedictine Order is placed upon him; he received the kiss of peace; and now he enters the community to live his life in Christ hid with God.

In relating to the above ritual, Maxie Dunnam, who then was editor of the *Upper Room*, compared his own experience. He likened his baptism in a Mississippi creek to being buried with Christ, and coming up out of the water to go out and live Christ in the world. The message is clear; we are first reconciled and sealed in Christ, then we walk in step with Him until He is fully formed in us.

## A THEOLOGY OF FORMATION

The work of reconciliation is begun, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone,



Nazarene

## Update

UPDATE EDITOR, MARK D. MARVIN, PASTORAL MINISTRIES

## THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT

Philippians is a deeply loved treasury of spiritual gems. More ministers probably have Scripture verses underlined in the Book of Philippians than anywhere in the Bible. And there will more than likely be more verses underlined in the fourth chapter than anywhere else in that book. How often have we been inspired and encouraged by reading these wonderful promises. They seem especially helpful to those of us who are in full-time Christian service.

Perhaps no verse challenges our commitment more than the second portion of 4:12, which reads, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation" (NIV). The significance of this is in the fact that its author, Paul, had served the church in so many different ways. He was a missionary who traveled to foreign countries, a church planter who organized

new churches, and an administrator with responsibilities of an overseer. Looking back, he was able to say, with conviction, that regardless of where he was or what he was doing, he was able to serve with contentment because he had found God's secret for happy living.

Do you remember where Paul was when he wrote to his friends in Philippi? In prison! He was being persecuted for his faith. We know that it wasn't pleasant, else he would not have emphasized his plight three different times with the words, "I am in chains."

Yet it should also be noted to whom he was writing these words of comfort. The church at Philippi was born in a jail-break experience. His contentment while in chains there had produced songs and prayers of praise at midnight. The earthquake, the jailer's conversion, and great preaching brought this church into existence. It is difficult to know all that the Philippian Christians had experienced in the intervening years. Paul could surmise that, at best, the Christians would be suffering because of their Christian faith. Therefore, they needed to know that the grace that had sustained him through his hour of trial in the Philippian jail was still supporting and encouraging him in a Roman prison.

A study of the Philippian letter will reveal the secret that is now made known to all of God's servants. As we learn it, it will help us accept our own assignments. Paul's words of comfort are a promise of assurance to us. Once this is understood we, too, shall be able to say, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation."



by General Superintendent  
Jerald D. Johnson

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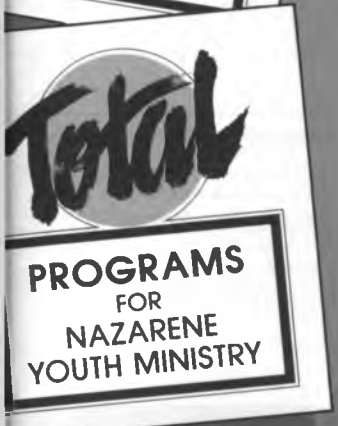
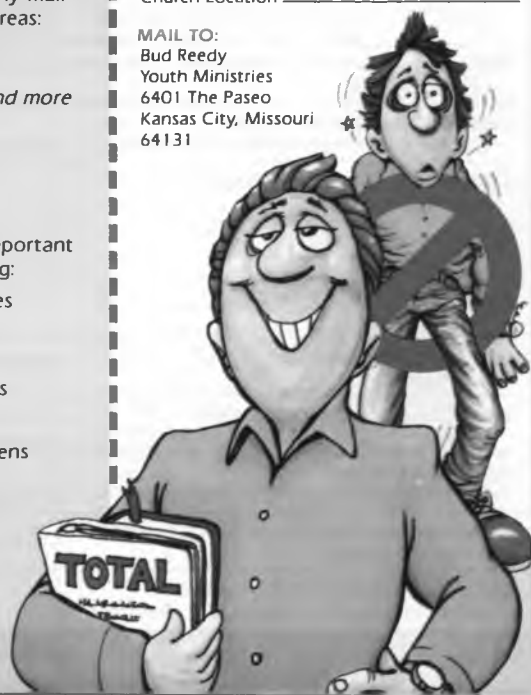
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Those we disciple must be *known by us*—their victories, defeats, questions, values, hopes, fears. Those we disciple must

experience our love and support. We must pray for and with them.

We need to take (or at least send) them into ministry until they are able to help others follow, become like, and reproduce Christ. Studying the Bible and one of our recommended biblical curricula is an essential component of discipling, but knowing, caring, praying, modeling, and supervising are also necessary to bring *maturity and reproduction*.

May many follow you, as you follow Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

—Hal Perkins

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<i>Journal for Disciples</i> Youth Ministries: Larry Leonard, director		•		•	
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(Monthly slates published in the first issue of the "Herald of Holiness" each month)

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Check *Herald of Holiness* (    ); *World Mission* (    ); *Preacher's Magazine* (    );

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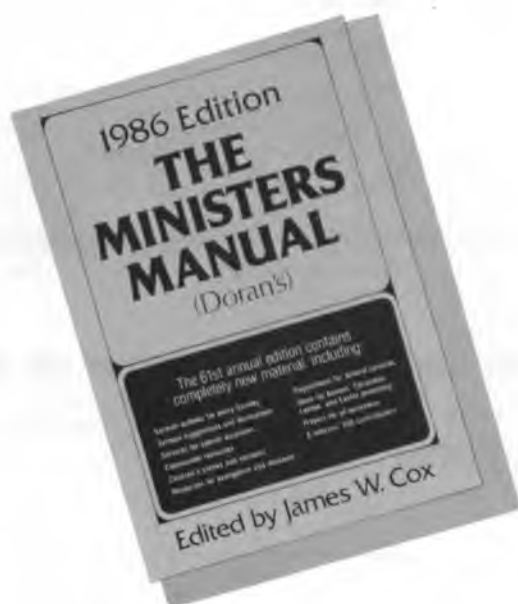
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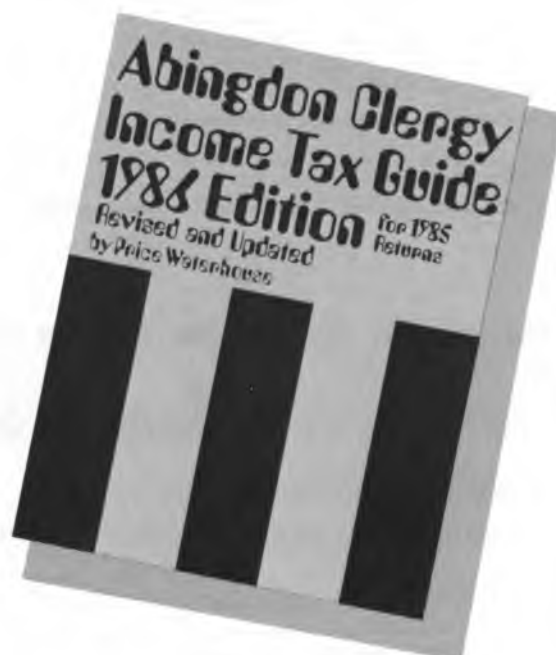
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LEADERSHIP • INSPIRATION • FULFILLMENT • ENRICHMENT

### THE NEW ORDER OF DEACON AND COURSE OF STUDY CHANGES

The Commission on the God-called Ministry reported to the General Assembly in June 1985 and its recommendations were adopted to provide a new order of ministry. There remains the one preaching order, that of *elder*. However, those who are called to lifetime Christian service but not necessarily called to preach may now be ordained as *deacon* in the Church of the Nazarene.

The work of the commission prompted an in-depth review and analysis of the ministerial course of study. Several changes were made as a result. The first two years for the

Local Minister's License is identical for persons intending to be ordained as elder or deacon. There is only one course in year three that is substituted for the deacon. Then in year four the deacon may elect one of three categories in place of the elder's course on "Inductive Preaching" and the elder's reading books on philosophy. Those three categories are: Christian Education, Music Ministries, and Compassionate Ministries.

Some changes were made by merely shifting a course to a different year. But oth-

ers are substantive changes, which include the most current Wesleyan scholarship holiness literature.

All changes will be included in the *Handbook on Ministerial Studies* (formerly the *Handbook on the Ministry*). The release date for the new handbook is January 1986. The changes will not be in effect until the new handbook is released.

A preview of the changes may be obtained on request. You may write to: Pastoral Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131.



### MINISTRY INTERNSHIP

Excitement is growing in response to the new Ministry Internship program. Eight districts are engaged in several stages of development already. Ten more districts are taking the initial steps for implementation.

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1. *District sponsored*—qualified pastors are chosen to be supervisors and new ministers are identified as interns.

2. *A covenant relationship* established by the supervisor and intern with learning goals and ministry projects that are mutually agreed upon.

3. *Regular conferences* at which time the supervisor and intern reflect on the practice of ministry and specifically on at least one "event" the intern wants feedback on.

4. *Keeping a log* on at least one event each week for feedback from the supervisor. A simple form of journaling is used to aid in self-understanding.

5. *Mutual accountability*—which builds trust and vulnerability in the relationship.

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This is a continuing education component of CONET. District superintendents are wanting to facilitate a higher level of effectiveness for the new fledgling minister. Experienced pastors are anxious to extend and multiply their ministry in the life of another just beginning. Then, of course, the pastor having to hold his first board meeting, conduct his first funeral, wedding, communion or baptismal service is ecstatic to find there is someone he can meet with regularly who will give support and guidance.

If Ministry Internship is not yet installed on your district, you may want to contact your district superintendent. Pastoral Ministries gives training to supervisors, orientation to interns, and initiates the coverage process in a special workshop. There is no cost to the district.

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### CONET "HEARTLINE" EXPANDS MINISTRY



Three new regions were added to the "Heartline" network this spring. Usage of this confidential toll-free number immediately increased the average number of calls per month. These calls fall into one of five categories:

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2. Crisis in the parsonage—marriage and/or family difficulties, ministry stress, etc. . . . .22%

3. Consultation needed—church issues, counseling cases, etc. ....15%
4. Referrals needed for others ....10%
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The highest volume of calls comes from the pilot area where the service has been in operation the longest. this seems to suggest

that pastors and other callers are feeling more confident that this is a "safe" resource.

Research is now being conducted in the Northwest, North Central, and South Central regions to prepare for possible hookup of all U.S. regions by the spring of 1986.

Informative brochures about CONET "Heartline" are available upon request from Pastoral Ministries. ☐

## NMSA UPDATE

During the 1985 General Assembly, the Nazarene Multiple Staff Association hosted a luncheon for nearly 150 ministerial staff members and their spouses. New officers elected for the next quadrennium are Daniel C. Vanderpool, associate pastor of Olathe, Kans., College Church, president; Herb McMillan, youth minister at the Bradenton, Fla., church, vice-president; and Maureen Box, minister of education, Covina, Calif., secretary/treasurer.

Regional officers for this quadrennium, elected by mail vote

### CENTRAL REGION

#### NORTH CENTRAL

Michael Pitts (Olathe, Kans.)

(To be appointed)

#### CENTRAL

\*Robert M. Kring (Plymouth, Mich.)

Rex Person (Milford, Mich.)

Jerry Stipp (Indianapolis)

#### SOUTH CENTRAL

Charles Crow (Bethany, Okla.)

Thomas E. McAdory (Richardson, Tex.)

Susie Shellenberger (Bethany, Okla.)

#### EASTERN REGION

##### EASTERN

Jeffrey Lineman (West Grove, Pa.)

Kenneth Lightcap (Collegeville, Pa.)

Roger W. Lynch (Salisbury, Md.)

##### EAST CENTRAL

Stephen R. Ward (Marion, Ohio)

David Wine (North Canton, Ohio)

C. Michael Courtney (Mount Vernon, Ohio)

### SOUTHEAST

\*Ivan Rexroth (Decatur, Ga.)

James R. Laymon (Lexington, Ky.)

Keith A. Showalter (Nashville)

### WESTERN REGION

#### CANADIAN

Jim White (Medicine Hat, Alta.)

#### NORTHWEST

Roger Clay (Aurora, Colo.)

Justin C. Rice (Nampa, Idaho)

Mickey E. Cox (Colorado Springs)

#### SOUTHWEST

Mark W. Pitcher (Pasadena, Calif.)

\*Dan Sweatt (Sacramento, Calif.)

Lane Zachary (Long Beach, Calif.)

NMSA is an association of staff personnel in the Church of the Nazarene, designed to:

- Provide an interchange of information, ideas, trends, and resource material
- Foster an understanding of the true nature and function of staff ministries
- Help implement the policies and programs of the various ministries of the general church
- Assist in the placement of staff personnel

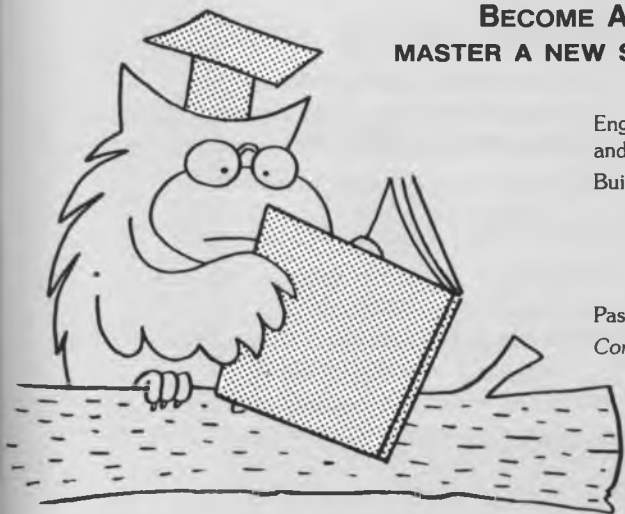
If you would like more information on the association, or if you desire to join, contact Maureen Box, 645 N. Grand, Glendora, CA 91740, phone (818) 963-7637. ☐

\*Area representatives for the region. The three officers and the area representatives make up the executive committee.

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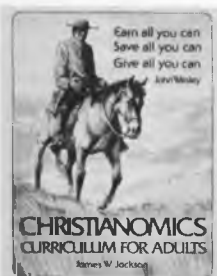
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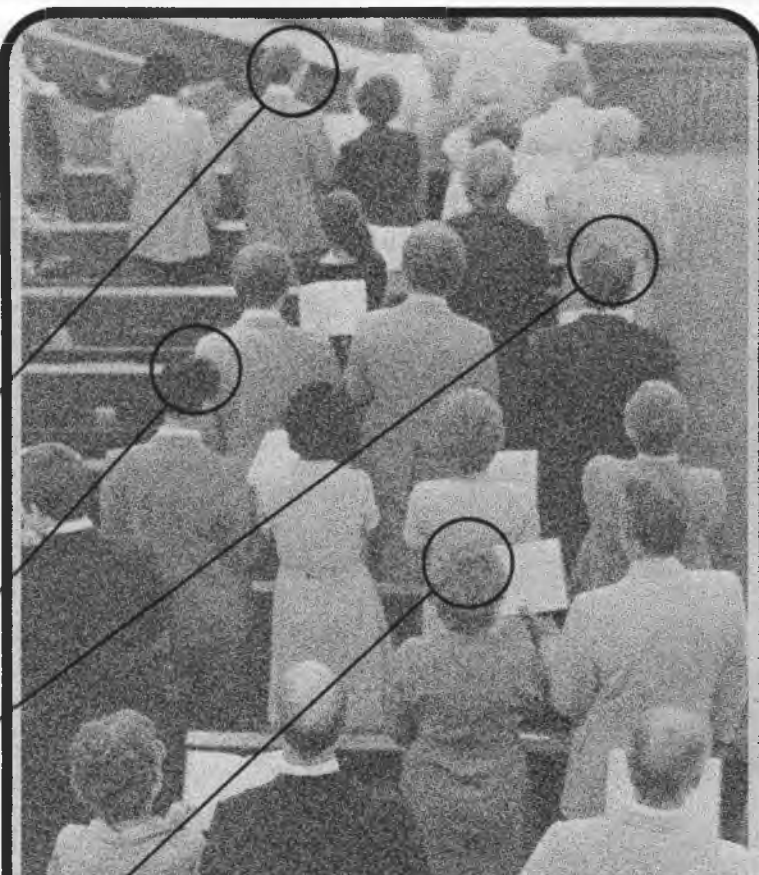
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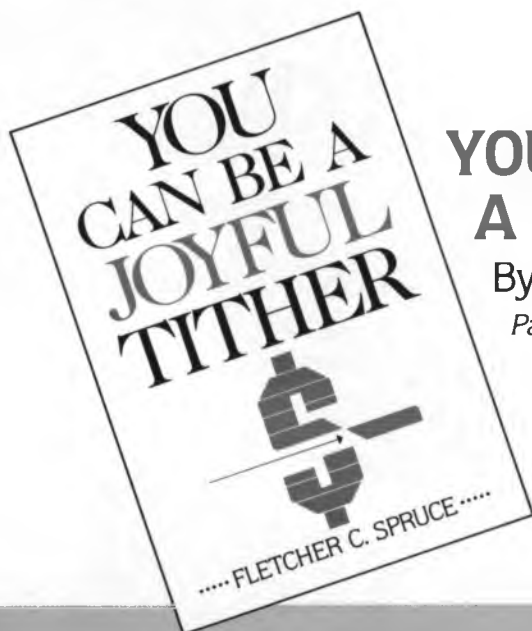
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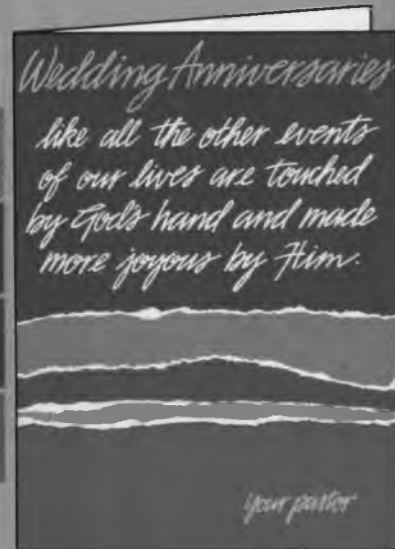
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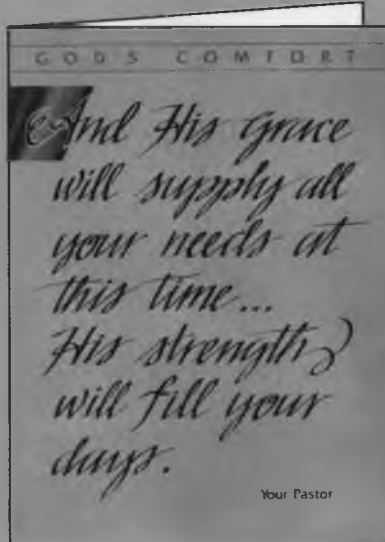
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the new has come!" (2 Cor. 5:17, NIV). The divine act of God's re-creative power in the human heart is but the beginning of a new relationship. The old drops away, and the new robe of sonship is confirmed. A new order by double intention—God's and man's.

The progressive activity of God among us is vividly described by St. Paul in Ephesians 2. He speaks of our deadness in transgressions and sins (vv. 1-2). This was our condition before the gospel of hope came to us. But God "made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions" (v. 5, NIV). He "raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (v. 6, NIV). Here is God's *provision* for our *condition*.

The word for the radical action of God in us is *transformation*. Paul calls it "workmanship" (v. 10, NIV). Transliterated it sounds like this—"POEMA." The miracle of grace that brings us into righteous relationship with God makes us God's "poems." The term speaks of beauty, rhythm, order, symmetry, and simplicity. A new message comes forth in the new life. That which was old and dying now has become new and pregnant with life!

Yet, that is but half the story. To be born is basic and radical. No greater experience can be had than to be transformed by the power of the living God. However, the new life must be sustained. God's will is to quicken us from the dead, and then to sustain us with His life. Here is the forming work of the Holy Spirit. It was for this purpose that He was given. Jesus declared, "The Holy Spirit . . . will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26, NIV). Again He says, "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13, NIV).

Spiritual formation is a gradual aspect of sanctification at work in us through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The inner life of the Christian is activated by the promptings of the voice of the Spirit. He speaks and we respond. Our formation is taking place when the life within

edness and obedience to the law of the Spirit.

So, then, if Christ is to be fully formed in us, we must will it so. This we do by bringing our spiritual condition into consonance with our justification. It is not simply a matter of wanting it to be so; it is an intentional cultivation of practicing the presence of Christ within. It is purposefully focusing upon ourselves as the dwelling place of Christ. This intensity of intention supplicates the Holy Spirit to do His complete work in us as He wills. It will mean conviction of my selfish struggles; correction of my prejudices and wrong attitudes; repentance for my sins of omission and commission; forgiveness of those who hurt and hinder me; submission to the humble way of the cross; cleaning from impurities of the heart that poison the inner life. It will mean walking daily the "every moment" relationship as Wesley expressed it:

We may say, not only,  
Every moment, Lord, I *want*  
The merit of Thy death;  
but, likewise, in the full assurance of faith,  
Every moment, Lord, I *have*  
The merit of Thy death!  
For, by that faith in His life, death, and  
intercession for  
us, renewed from moment to moment, we are  
every whit clean.  
(from "The Repentance of Believers," 1767)

## THE WAY OF FORMATION

In an article titled "The Selfless Way of Christ," Henri Nouwen, noted Belgian priest, identifies the divine way as the downward way. The true Christian vocation, he contends, is one that moves in the direction of "downward mobility." What he is suggesting is that the heart of Christian vocation is not in our roles nor in our accreditation; it is in the essence of personal encounter with Christ himself.

The disciples were being formed as they lived and

### The divine way is the downward way

is responding naturally and willingly to the warmth of God's light upon us.

The mystery of it all is not in the power that is at work in us, but in the miracle of change that comes because we will it be to be so, as the Spirit leads. Jesus reminds us that the Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask than earthly fathers are to give food to their own children. When we ask for the Spirit to work in our inner being, it is the miracle that God himself cannot perform; nevertheless, He is waiting to see it take place in us. God has wrought His miracle of change in us, yet we must bring about the miracle of growth. Our formation in Christ is divine response to our continuing yield-

### Is God himself caught in a hierarchical system?

learned from the Lord as Master in their lives. Just having lived with Him was the all-important dimension of their development, it was not their learning nor their "how-to" training, not even their character—it was living and experiencing the Master in their daily walk with Him.

True ministry to others—a ministry that touches at the roots of living—invariably rests upon the minister's personal and intimate experience with Jesus Christ. When one's ministry and experience of the Presence are not woven into a single whole, but divergent and disparate, the ministry is mere form and quite barren, to say the least.

In 1 John 1:1-4, the writer witnesses to the experi-



ence base of the early followers of our Lord. We cannot "declare" above our own state of grace. And those who are called to "feed" the people will influence them greatly to the level of grace they will seek and experience in their own lives.

The gospel makes a radical claim upon us as witnesses to the message of Christ. This witness is expressed in the form of servanthood. Greatness in the Kingdom is not office, power, or position, but the spirit of serving in humility and love for others in the name of Jesus. This means that our spiritual formation begins with an attitude of allowing Christ to be formed in us: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who . . ." Phil. 2:5-6; see vv. 6-8).

Our present age is of a different mind-set. The pull is upward. In whatever area of life, it seems that the drive direction is always upward toward success. This means more visibility, authority, power, and attention. It appeals to the ego of the unregenerate man. It is thoroughly secular—built into the natural order of things. Rivalry in sports is similarly competitive and is open and acceptably justified. In more professional levels it is just as intense, but pursued more subtly and discreetly. At whatever level, the ultimate goal is to get ahead of the other fellow.

It is a matter of pondering among those who would serve in the name of our Lord. Ambitions are normal stretches of the human heart. We desire to be at our best, and accomplish well what we know is our duty or assignment. The problem is at the point of discernment. The secular bleeds through from the spirit of the age, staining the sacred. And unwittingly, the servant of God is caught in the flow of the "system" of things.

More often than not, this system is already intermingled with the ecclesiastical structure in the name of order and good administration, and the appointed minister is caught in the "line of march." A serious-minded but rather confused layman asked his pastor, with a bit of skepticism in his voice, "Why is it that preachers always find it God's will to move to bigger and better appointments, but never seem to think it is His will to go the other way?" Is it indeed always God's will to move to bigger and better "opportunities" as the secular mind would view it? Is God himself caught in such a hierarchical system? Then what of the selfless way of Christ? Do the Scriptures speak to this issue? And what of our own inner sense in the matter? Does our heart speak to us along the way?

Paul Vitz, professor at New York University, has written a book titled *Psychology as Religion* in which he traces the gradual encroachment of psychology into religion. In the end, he observes, psychology itself, which was meant to explore and understand religion, has assumed the throne, substituting human inquiry for Christian faith. In a similar way the humanistic emphasis on self-fulfillment, personal growth, and realization of potential has seated itself in the place of conscientious,

Christlike servitude. This age, as no age in human history, is no friend to grace "to help us on to God." We war constantly against the enemies of the Spirit, whatever form they take. Upward mobility is the spirit of the age, however it may be legitimized.

Downward mobility is the painful path that enters us into the sufferings of our Lord. It is the self-crucifying way, exemplified in the Lord himself. "Not my will, but thine be done" was His painful prayer in the garden. His path was downward from the heavenlies to the earthly; from power to suffering; from glory to shame; from life to death; from sovereign to servant. The pattern is clear; He moved in the very opposite direction of the flow of the natural order. His was a spiritual order—the antithesis of that natural. But it was only for those who could perceive that this downward direction, the way of the cross, led ultimately to the fullness of life and eternal hope.

Repeatedly our Lord reminds His disciples that losing one's life is to find it in the end. This truth was baffling to them, and to understand it would be painful. Not until after their Model had died and risen again were they willing to confront that truth seriously. It was finally brought home to them through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and the downward path became their way of living.

Does the servant of Christ have any other option but to walk the way that leads down? Did God himself have an option if He was to redeem the world? A God who did not empty himself completely, as He did in the Incarnation, would be but half a God and not only unable to save us but also unworthy of our devotion. This is *kenosis*—the self-emptying of all that impedes reconciliation and complete redemption.

The natural man knows nothing of such a downward walk. It is contrary to his nature. Those who have been quickened by the Spirit of God are indeed alive to the high road that is radically different from the way of the world. Nevertheless, until we recognize the downward way, exemplified in Christ, as the divine way, the way of the cross, the way of Christ for us, we will continue to travel a somewhat middle course.

Without the forming work of the Holy Spirit, the Christian cannot walk the downward way of Christ. The admonition of the apostle Paul to the early Christians at Corinth is strikingly appropriate for us today:

But we know about these things because God has sent his Spirit to tell us, and his Spirit searches out and shows us all of God's deepest secrets . . . And no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit . . . (not the world's spirit) . . . Others just can't take it in. But the spiritual man has insight into everything, and that bothers and baffles the man of the world, who can't understand him at all. . . . But strange as it seems, we Christians actually do have within us a portion of the very thoughts and mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:10-11, 14-16, TLB).



# REGULAR SOCIAL SECURITY CHECKUPS MAY PREVENT A RETIREMENT HEARTBREAK

**J**ust as your body needs periodic physical exams, so the fiscal status of your Social Security earnings record should also be examined on a regular basis. Unfortunately, few people do this until retirement, when some learn of errors, made in earlier years, which can no longer be corrected. Such errors may reduce Social Security benefits permanently—a retirement heartbreak!

## REGULAR CHECKUPS NEEDED

At least every two or three years, a free copy of the "Request for Statement of Earnings" form should be obtained from the Social Security Administration. This form is used to request a report of the Social Security office's record of earnings over your work history that have been subject to Social Security taxes. The report usually gives a year-by-year record of the past three years as well as a grand total for all previous years. You should compare the record you receive carefully with the amounts reported on your SE Forms filed with your annual tax returns, *plus* any wages subject to FICA as reported on W-2 Forms for those years.

## CORRECT THE PROBLEM IMMEDIATELY

Eligibility for future Social Security benefits will depend upon the accuracy of this record. If the Social

Security records do not appear to match yours, you have a limited time to correct the record. You should act quickly, requesting a review of the report.

## A NEW MALADY UNCOVERED


Although the IRS's demand that pastors be issued a Form W-2 "Annual Wage Statement" has created several minor problems, a new major malady has been identified. It can occur if the minister's Form W-2 is incorrectly completed; if the box for Social Security wages paid or the box for Social Security tax withheld are completed incorrectly by the local church treasurer.

Boxes 11 and 13 on the Form W-2 are for FICA taxes and wages subject to FICA only, not Social Security Self-Employment Tax (SECA). These two boxes should be marked zero for the church's ministerial employee. If they are completed differently, the Social Security Administration computer will post the wage amount as wages to your Social Security salary record and will post the amount of tax as FICA taxes paid. Then, when your annual tax return is received, including a form SE showing income subject to self-employment tax, the wages will be posted by their computer again, along with the additional tax paid. This results in double wages and taxes reported, causing a problem when the com-

puter tries to reconcile the information. This problem has already resulted in audits and questions.

You may want to check out past W-2 Forms and review this information with your church treasurer before the next Form W-2 is issued.

In order to check your Social Security record for this possible error, ask your local Social Security office for a form to request a statement of earnings. After you have completed the form and received your report, if you should find any error, it will be to your advantage to try to correct it now rather than allowing it to resurface later.

Additional information may be requested from Pensions and Benefits Services, Church of the Nazarene, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131. Ask for a copy of MEMO: CHURCH MANAGEMENT, No. 6—"Annual Wage Statements for Church Employees." MEMOS Nos. 3 and 7 may also be helpful. 

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[This information is of a general nature. It is not offered as specific legal or "tax advice." Each pastor should evaluate his own situation in consultation with personal, legal, and tax advisors.]

# The Musician as Pastor, Priest, and Prophet

by Keith Schwanz

*Associate Pastor, Rose City Church of the Nazarene, Portland, Oreg.*

**O**pportunities for ministry are ever present for today's church musician. Some are obvious and easily met. Others create challenges. In either case, the call is always the same—the church musician must be primarily a spiritual leader.

The character of the church musician, to a large degree, determines the extent of his spiritual communication. Being a fine musician in a technical sense does not ensure effectiveness in a spiritual sense. Spiritual ministry is not the automatic result of spiritual content; it is the result of a Spirit-filled person assuming the servant's role.

The spiritual qualifications of a church musician form the broad base from which ministry must be built. Getz notes that when Paul "wrote to Timothy and Titus and instructed them regarding certain leaders in the local church, he first and foremost spelled out qualifications—not tasks."<sup>1</sup>

Let's examine who the church musician is in the service of God and His people. To visualize this character we will explore three roles: the musician as a priest, the musician as a prophet, the musician as a pastor.

Some may question the use of "office" titles to describe current ministerial functions. Thomas points out that it does not matter if one is considering "the ministry of the priest or of the prophet, it is clear from the New Testament that there is no class of believers to which spiritual functions belong exclusively as of absolute right and divine appointment."<sup>2</sup> I concur with this statement, yet the functions of a church musician are so similar to that of a priest, a prophet, and a pastor that the use of these terms will enhance our understanding of the musician's role.

These terms possess a holy magnitude in Scripture. Care must be taken to maintain this dignity. The church musician must strive to live up to the fullness of their meaning.

## THE MUSICIAN AS A PRIEST

The Old Testament priests were mediators between God and man. Through sacrifices they represented man to God. Priests are those persons who form a bridge to God. This is man-to-God dynamics.

God instructed Moses to set apart the Levites for

spiritual service (Numbers 8). Out of this existing body of ministerial leadership, God selected Temple musicians (1 Chron. 9:33). So the first ministers of music were qualified by their priesthood (1 Chron. 15:16-22).

The New Testament teaches that Jesus is the Great High Priest (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 5:5-6; 10:21). Jesus was God's best and final Revelation to man (Hebrews 1), a permanent Priest. The need for a special order of priests was eliminated. All believers are a royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) and are to offer sacrifices to the Lord (Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15; Rev. 1:6) through Jesus, the High Priest.

The musician's call to the priesthood comes with his citizenship in the holy nation of God. The New Testament teaches differing functions within the church, but not a differing nature of ministry.

The church musician functions in a priestly fashion as he leads worship. He has the opportunity to build a bridge to God as people gather to honor the Lord. This must be seriously accepted by the church musician in the light of man's great need to enter the presence of the Almighty.

This effort begins in the worship planning sessions. A sensitive spirit will seek God's guidance in these initial stages. With spiritual care, elements of the worship service are selected so that the hour is one grand crescendo of honor to God. This "plan" may be altered as the creative dynamic of the Holy Spirit directs a service, but no service should be without a carefully established framework.

The musician must contribute to the placing of high value on all elements of worship. Some churches live with the perception that the sermon is the main event and everything leading up to it is merely "preliminary." How much more complete and satisfying it is to participate in a service of worship where the music, scripture reading, and prayer are an integral part of the preaching ministry.

The Gospel of John teaches that "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (4:24, NASB). The priest musician, then, leads worship that involves mysteries of God. This does not involve an unknown God. He has been meticulous in His revelation of himself to men. This is a situation of men being un-

able to totally comprehend the living God. Even the seraphim of Isa. 6:2 hid their eyes from the brilliance of His holiness. Men can only sense that He is almighty and bow in humble submission. This is pure worship.

This phenomenon of worship occurred at the dedication of the Temple (2 Chronicles 5). As the Temple musicians praised the Lord, the glory of the Lord filled the house of God. Music, as an intangible art form, facilitates such worship. "The mind of man cannot comprehend the wonders of God; it can only see the occasional flashes of light which shine through the glory holes of life. In the awesome areas of life's mystery music helps man to express the inexpressible."<sup>3</sup>

The tendency seems to be for the minister to allow the prophetic function to eclipse the priestly function. This is, in part at least, because of the mystery that surrounds worship. A balance is necessary for the health of those who follow.

The character of the church musician must be transformed by a total devotion to God. He must be holy, set aside for spiritual service. He must strive to be Christlike as he models the Christian life for other believers. This is accomplished as he worships God, both in public and in private.

### THE MUSICIAN AS A PROPHET

The nature of prophecy is as much the proclamation of divine revelation as it is the reception of revelation. According to 1 Cor. 14:6, Merrill says, "Prophesying does not necessarily involve the reception of revelation. One could be a prophet even if he had not received revelation. Furthermore, a revelation could be different from a prophecy and no doubt often was."<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this article we will define a prophet as one who speaks the revealed Word of God without considering when the revelation was received. This is God-to-man dynamics and complements the priestly function.

Music was not an unknown tool to the Old Testament prophet. There are accounts of prophecies being sung (1 Sam. 10:5; 2 Kings 3:15-19). David set aside musicians to prophesy with musical instruments (1 Chron. 25:1-6). Matthew identified Asaph, the composer of Psalm 78, as a prophet (13:35).

Merrill writes that the "purpose of prophecy in the New Testament church was to persuade believers of the authenticity of their Christian faith (1 Corinthians 14:22) and to convince unbelievers of the credibility of the gospel of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:24, 25)."<sup>5</sup> This observation notes a generalization of those who were considered prophets that is not seen in the Old Testament office. The Early Church elders "were not necessarily prophets in the primary sense," though they were to perform a prophetic ministry, "speaking forth" the Word of God. And primarily "forth-tellers" rather than "fore-tellers." They were, as prophets of old, to "strengthen and encourage" the church (Acts 15:32).<sup>6</sup>

The musician prophet of today can be vigorous in his ministry of the Word. The awakening in this area in the last several years is refreshing. Publishers have produced scripture chorus books, scripture solo literature, and indexes of scripture references in choral anthems and hymns. Power is introduced into the musician's ministry since the "ministry of the Word is intended to bring

God and man face-to-face—God revealing, man responding."<sup>7</sup>

This power is due to the nature of the prophet's ministry. Whereas the priest deals with the mysteries of God, the prophet proclaims the God who is revealed. Whereas the priest looks at God, the prophet looks at man from God's perspective. In our humanistic society, we need the unbiased view of man that God in His righteousness provides.

Too often the church musician lacks integrity because this prophetic function is not taken seriously. Songs are selected that approach spiritual issues in a superficial manner. Forgotten is the concept of being God's mouthpiece. The delivery takes on an air of personal pride instead of a declaration of the Deity. Musicians marvel at the natural beauty of their art but wonder why it alone is unable to change a soul. Only as the church musician is consumed by the awesome prophetic task—God revealed in song texts, God revealed in the delivery, God revealed in beautiful art—will his ministry assume a supernatural quality.

Biblical and theological ignorance will impede the church musician. How can he sing or play with spiritual authority if he is unsure of the validity of his message? "A church musician cannot serve as a minister through the medium of music unless he understands the theological implications of his work. The music chosen and performed will state a theological position whether the artist realizes it or not."<sup>8</sup> Every opportunity for greater spiritual understanding must be treasured by the church musician.

Prophets of today have no reason to claim plenary inspiration. We have no need for postbiblical inspiration. Jesus was God's highest and final Revelation. But we do have continual need for the proclamation of God's Word. The musician is charged with correctly handling the Truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

### THE MUSICIAN AS A PASTOR

A pastor is one who cares for the spiritual needs of the church. The Greek word used in Eph. 4:11 literally means "shepherd." Spiritual nourishment and protection are the responsibility of a pastor. This involves an intimate relationship between the pastor and the people he leads. A priest is taken from among men so he might intimately know their needs and properly represent them to God. The prophet, also, can speak accurately as he perceives where spiritual deficiency exists. The priestly and prophetic functions become pertinent as the leader assumes a pastoral role.

The church musician, first of all, must be a pastor to the other church musicians in the local church. He will know these persons to a greater degree because of the many hours spent on mutual musical projects. In this relationship there will be many opportunities for personal spiritual ministry to occur. One such opportunity may be when the text of a song is beyond the personal experience of the singer. Rather than exchanging songs, the pastor musician can use that opportunity to encourage spiritual growth.

The pastor musician is also in a position to encourage other musicians to be involved in nonmusic ministries. This has several benefits. First, the person is more likely

*(Continued on page 39)*

# BEING DEAD, YET THEY SPEAK

by Wayne E. Caldwell  
*General Editor, The Wesleyan Church*

**S**even men of honest report. Four hundred thirty years of revivalism. Who should be included in the evangelists' "Hall of Fame"?

The nominees:

1. Born in 1505 to Roman Catholic parents, educated at Glasgow University, the first nominee served as a tutor, a pastor, and an evangelist until his death in 1572. Married twice, his preaching was powerful, logical, dialectical, and oratorical. He was fearless, vehement, severe, firm, zealous, shrewd, fierce, dictatorial, consistent, sincere, unselfish, aggressive, tireless, intellectual, and deeply pious.

2. Serving for 56 years as a tutor, a missionary, and an evangelist, our second nominee was fearless, diligent, tireless, scholarly, organized, mild, grave, agreeable, benevolent, sincere, selfless, heroic, mellow, gracious, cheerful, practical, and simple. His preaching was logical, unemotional, graceful, witty, and pure of style. Educated at Oxford University, this man was born in 1703 to Episcopalian parents. He had an unhappy marriage and died in 1791.

3. Also born in 1703, educated at Yale University, the third candidate was a pastor, a missionary, a university president, a teacher, and an evangelist. His parents were Congregationalists. He served for 28 years, had a happy home, and he died in 1758. His preaching was searching, direct, logical yet practical, and analytical. He was modest, accurate, self-critical, intense, passionate, earnest, brilliant, scholarly, intelligent, severe, frank, courageous, neat, careful, and uncompromising.

4. Born in 1714 to Episcopalian parents, educated at Oxford University, our next candidate served as a missionary and open-air evangelist for 35 years with an unhappy home. He died in 1770. He was benevolent, kind, gentle, forgiving, zealous, firm, humble, ingenuous, fervent, bold, tender, modest, courageous, wise, and possessed good sense. His preaching was impassioned, oratorical, eloquent, volcanic, and direct.

5. Married three times, nominee number five served for 54 years as a pastor, educator, and as an evangelist. His preaching was logical, powerful, simple, fervid, and pungent. He was born in 1792, came from an unchurched home, studied law in New York, and died in 1875. He was frank, robust, joyous, energetic, graceful, keen-minded, intelligent, fearless, passionate, prayerful, magnanimous of spirit, tender, earnest, and zealous.

6. Our sixth man was born in 1837 to Congregational parents. He had a happy home. With only a high school education, he served as an evangelist for 34 years and founded educational institutions. He died in 1899. He was

shrewd, zealous, earnest, magnanimous of spirit, a keen observer of people, had good sense, was business-minded, humble, unpretentious, dependent on the Lord, and prayerful. His preaching was biblical, emotional, plain, illustrative, and definite.

7. A keen thinker, robust, fearless, diligent, studious, tireless, energetic, earnest, zealous, humorous, exuberant, courageous, practical, ambitious, and sincere, our last nominee was born to Presbyterian parents in 1862. He was educated at Northwestern University, had a happy home, played baseball, and served for 46 years as a teacher and evangelist. His preaching was dynamic, direct, dramatic, biblical, and imaginative. He died in 1935.

All seven of these great spiritual giants have been inducted into God's everlasting "Hall of Fame," and although many others who had similar credentials could be named, "time would fail me to tell" (Heb. 11:32) of them. All of these, "of whom the world was not worthy" (11:38), "won divine approval" (11:39, Amp.).

Spanning 430 years, from 1505 to 1935, these mighty men of valor and heralds of a passion—then part of the Church Militant, now part of the Church Triumphant—celebrate the triumphs of earth's toil with great joy. Why were they flaming evangelists of fire? Perhaps the answer may be found in the words of the second as he lay dying. He whispered, "Best of all, God is with us."

That each of the seven were possessed with an all-consuming desire to see souls saved, few would question. That each was empowered by the Holy Spirit, there is no doubt. That each was "a human being with a nature such as we have—with feelings, affections and constitution as ourselves" (James 5:17, Amp.), none could seriously deny. What, then, was the secret of their influence?

All seven were fairly well educated in their times, though not entirely educated formally. Three of the men grew to manhood without an earthly father. Five of them knew poverty and real material need. Four of them, in their early years, received the rich heritage of piety and Christian education from their mothers. The sacrifices of blood, sweat, and tears shed for their sons became as incense before the throne of God and must be part of that secret.

One of the most interesting phases in the lives of these men is the manner of their conversions and subsequent lives in the Spirit. In the order of their mention, the first, who lived in the 16th century, was born again and knew it quite early in life. The later years of his ministry were especially characterized by his emphasis on the work and ministry of, and the need for, the Holy Spirit. It could hardly be expected that he would preach a second definite work



## CORRECTION

The "Wesleyana" article in the June/July/August 1985 issue of the *Preacher's Magazine*, titled "John Wesley and Religious Craziness," was attributed to Wayne E. Caldwell, general editor for The Wesleyan Church. Dr. Caldwell called to inform us that it was, in fact, written by Dr. Larry R. Hughes, vice president for academic affairs at Bartlesville Wesleyan College, Bartlesville, Okla. We apologize to Dr. Hughes and to Dr. Caldwell for the error.

of grace and freedom from all sin in this life, yet his life and preaching suggest that such was his own personal experience.

The story of the conversion and teaching on perfect love has been told so often of the second man that scarcely any mention needs to be made of his life in the Spirit from 1738 until his death in 1791.

The third man, known as one of the "Bible Moths," experienced his heart-warming and life-changing conversion in 1735. A definite testimony of perfect love, or entire sanctification, in the Wesleyan sense cannot be found in this man's preaching or writing, but without question he was empowered above and beyond any human ability.

The most unconventional conversion and ministry of the seven was that of the fourth. He spoke of his mystical experience, yet he himself was probably the most unemotional of the seven.

The fifth evangelist, like the second, had a most unusual conversion, which came as a climax to several days' struggle with a deep and intense conviction of sin. His woodland prayer meeting and law office witness were enough to set the joybells ringing in his heart and to set him free, not only from his law career but from sin itself. That he was later filled and empowered with the Spirit there seems to be ample evidence, again without the traditional Wesleyan expression.

At 16, the orphan lad who worked in his uncle's shoe store was buttonholed by a shoe salesman. As he knelt amid the leather shavings of the store, the Lord Jesus Christ became his Savior. He was later sanctified wholly, to which he testified with certainty.

The last of the seven was brought to Christ by the personal witness of a mission worker who approached him while he was with some of his baseball buddies in the city, where they were practicing. After his conversion, his life was dominated by the same exuberance of his baseball days. His life in the Spirit freed him from all hindrances to evangelism around the globe.

John Knox, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Finney, Dwight L. Moody, and Billy Sunday were all convicted, converted, led, filled, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, who set their hearts aflame with revival passion. God honored each of them with fruit, much fruit, and more fruit. He respected their temperaments, their personalities, and their modes of expression. He gave them gifts and entrusted them with skills. They gave Him their minds and hearts, their time, their trust, their talents, their treasure—completely, wholly. This must always be the secret of success! Is it a surprise that "being dead, yet they speak"?

## The Musician as Pastor, Priest, Prophet

(Continued from page 37)

to have a balanced perspective of the life of the church. Second, the person will be refreshed by a variety of situations. Third, general church involvement will increase the sphere of acquaintances. Congregations will follow the priestly and prophetic functions of church musicians more readily if they know who is singing and the experiential truth of his words. A fourth benefit is related to the third. Knowing people and their personal concerns can aid in the selection of songs to be used for spiritual encouragement.

Vocational church musicians also need to be pastors to other staff pastors and traveling Christian artists. Who is a pastor to go to when in need of spiritual care or protection? Often there is no one. Here is a splendid opportunity for ministry, and the church musician must rise to the occasion. This is especially true, it seems, for the traveling artist. The local church musician must lead his congregation in being the family of God for the itinerant artist.

Music provides opportunities for many people to work together. The vocational church musician does very little as an individual effort. He must have a pastor's heart, caring intensely for the people of God, for his own ministry cannot be separated from those with whom he works.

Given the performance nature of music, musicians can easily forget that in the church they function as representatives of God. Their primary task is not organizing choirs, selecting music, and leading rehearsals. These activities are merely means to an end—spiritual leadership. The musician as a priest builds bridges from men to God. The musician as a prophet speaks God's Word to men. The musician as a pastor is God's loving hands and arms to needy people.

## NOTES

1. Gene A. Getz, *Sharpening the Focus of the Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 109.
2. W. H. G. Thomas, "Is the New Testament Minister a Priest?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* (January 1979), 66.
3. Austin C. Lovelace and William C. Rice, *Music and Worship in the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 15.
4. Eugene Merrill, "Who Are Today's True Prophets?" *Christianity Today* (March 12, 1971), 10.
5. *Ibid.*, 10.
6. Getz, *Sharpening the Focus*, 110.
7. Thomas, "Is the New Testament Minister a Priest?" 71.
8. Lovelace and Rice, *Music and Worship*, 219.

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# DEVELOPING A HEALTHY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM

by John R. Cionca

**A**fter 11 years in Christian education, I became a senior pastor. Previously I had been a specialist—holding Christian education positions in three churches, completing three graduate degrees in education, and serving several Christian and public school organizations as a consultant. Suddenly I was a general practitioner in a congregation of 250.

As a minister of Christian education, I had always wondered why senior pastors showed so little interest in Christian education. They wanted a strong Sunday School, but when it came to direct involvement, they seemed conspicuously absent.

Now, after five years on the other side of the fence, I've gained a new perspective. The pastor *is* interested in Christian education—and missions, and counseling, and shepherding, and stewardship, and preaching.

I am still convinced that education is a top priority. After all, with Americans now watching an average of six hours of television a day, I ask myself, How much exposure to the Word do my people receive? Looking at many of their lives, I think of the Lord's words to Hosea: "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge" (4:6, NIV). My 60 minutes of weekly preaching hardly begin to offset the molding capabilities of the world. Any pastor who thinks he can adequately teach and train disciples alone is likely suffering from a malfunctioning diode.

Even though as senior pastor I have many more responsibilities, I cannot neglect the vital ministry of Christian education and expect it to have a significant impact.

## *Resident Chief of Staff*

I have changed the way I see my role in the church. I am no longer a specialist, working with intricate systems and programs. I am not even a general practitioner, treating all the patients myself. I am more like a hospital chief of staff. We pastors are the ones primarily responsible for the welfare of those who come to our institution. We are involved in both preventive and curative medicine. We proclaim what people should and should not do if they want to remain spiritually healthy. We also meet regularly with the hurting, sometimes taking them through a spiritual chemotherapy in an attempt to

arrest growing cancers.

Important as my function might be, however, I am not the only doctor in the house. The size of the task is beyond any one doctor or minister. A well-run hospital has a medical staff with expertise in specialized areas. God has not called me, a pastor, to be the only healer; the Great Physician has called me to be a chief of staff.

Our ministry is multiplied as we recognize and develop the team of gifted people who can teach God's Word. The Lord has given such a team to every church.

2 Tim. 2:2 instructs us to pass our knowledge on to others who are faithful and will join us in the teaching process. We learn from Eph. 4:11-12 that our task is to prepare God's people for the work of ministry. In 1 Corinthians 12 we observe that even that messed-up church had all the spiritual gifts, implying that each local church has everything it needs for building itself spiritually.

Yet because of deadlines, pressures, and expectations, I was finding over 90 percent of my weekly hours given to "things I do" rather than encouraging and helping others who share the ministry of our church.

My sermons, no matter how well developed and delivered, are not enough. Little Johnny needs a memorization program; Mary needs encouragement; Mr. Clark needs a home Bible study. If we want to maximize learning, we must concentrate on what our lay people are doing.

Here are a few lessons I've learned since trying to become the resident chief of staff.

## *Look for the Right People*

What type of person makes a good teacher? I once heard someone say the best worker is always FAT—Faithful, Available, and Teachable.

Working with people, I have become less impressed with background and credentials than with attitudes and performance.

He may be a pipe fitter or an executive, she may be a lawyer or a homemaker, but the faithful, available, teachable person is able to minister to students in a deep way.

Sometimes we are overly concerned that teachers have a good knowledge of the Bible before teaching. A friend of mine

became a Christian when he was 26 years old. Immediately he was encouraged by a pastor to get involved teaching Sunday School. The man began to teach a class of children, and each week he diligently studied the printed teacher's guide to be prepared for his kids. It was not unusual for him to call the pastor's elementary-age daughter to figure out how to pronounce the names of certain Bible personalities or book titles. If you were now to ask my friend, Dr. Donald Orvis, now a seminary vice president and professor, what helped him grow spiritually, he would include at the top of the list his early teaching experience where he was just "one step ahead of the pack" each Sunday.

A knowledge of Scripture is important. Maturity is desirable. But the right attitude and demonstrated faithfulness in small ways are important characteristics. Obviously, some Christians need more encouragement and closer supervision. Nevertheless, "FAT" people grow in Bible knowledge and working with them in ministry is a joy.

#### *Recruit with Class*

If there is an unpardonable sin in teacher recruiting, it's the old trip-them-in-the-hallway trick, where you thrust a Sunday School quarterly into their hands as you pick them up and point them toward the junior department.

We have all learned the hard way that "you get what you pay for." The same principle applies to recruiting. Paint an inadequate picture, tell a prospective worker that the task will not be too hard, and you receive a half-committed teacher.

I've used the following plan in recruiting program leaders, and many of them, in turn, are finding it effective in recruiting teachers.

1. Telephone the prospective worker. "Hello, Mary. I've been looking at our church membership list trying to think of someone who could work well in Sunday School with our sixth grade girls. As I prayed over a number of possibilities, I thought you might be one who could really help our girls. Would it be possible for us to meet this weekend to discuss the responsibilities of the sixth grade worker? If you are like I was a few years ago, perhaps you have some doubts. But I would really like to have an opportunity to chat with you about it, and then allow you enough time to think about it on your own. I have Saturday morning at ten o'clock and Sunday afternoon at four o'clock open on my schedule. Would either of these times be convenient for you?"

2. Share the importance of the program. I walk through the details of the job description and explain the materials. It's also important to stress my availability as a resource to the teacher.

Then, as I prepare to leave, a prayer is appropriate. I encourage the prospect to pray about this opportunity during the week—is this invitation God's call?

3. A follow-up phone call is made five to seven days later to see what questions the person might have and to see if he is interested in observing a few class sessions.

4. If the worker is willing to teach, we set up a time to sign an Annual Appointment to Service, a one-year teaching contract. Materials are explained further, and the new worker is told the time and place of the next department staff meeting.

5. If certain individuals are not able to make the commitment, I try to determine if they would be more comfortable as a substitute teacher or if they have an interest in another area of ministry.

We recruit teachers to serve one year. Shorter terms do not allow workers to assume ownership of the position. Granted, the time is insufficient for training, and it seems unfair to the students. On the other hand, placing someone in a position indefinitely is unfair to the worker. At the end of each yearly appointment, the teachers have three options: (1) turn in their

materials and be finished with their responsibility, (2) sign on for another term of service in the same area of responsibility, or (3) request a change in ministry.

Our experience has been that teachers who have been regularly encouraged have been more happy to renew their commitments year after year.

#### *Communicate Regularly*

A year ago when our church began two morning worship services and two hours of Sunday School, we did a poor job of communicating. Some of the teachers didn't find out which hour they were teaching until the assignments were printed in the church newsletter in July. They hadn't been consulted, and some of them felt taken for granted. We should have called a faculty meeting to present our options, and let the teachers point out any problems or oversights they might see.

This fall we did much better, even though the assignments weren't made until August. We informed the teachers two weeks before making the information public. The teachers were much happier, and so was I.

Program leaders, I've discovered, need a minimum of monthly communication, and perhaps as much as weekly visual contact with their teachers. As a pastor who is not directly involved with supervising the educational staff, the amount of communication I need is somewhat less. Most teachers do not expect the senior pastor to be intimately involved with their classrooms, but any contact I make greatly builds my relationship with them.

No matter what size the congregation, pastors can do a number of things to build bridges to teachers. About three times a year, I ask one of the leaders to take charge of the midweek service so I can sit in on the children's program. I'm not there to speak or critique. I may take part in a balloon relay with the kids, but my primary purpose is to chat with the leaders afterward, to sympathize with them and to affirm them in their important ministry.

I know other pastors who write notes of encouragement annually to each teacher, or who call each teacher once or twice each year, asking them for one class prayer request and one personal prayer request. All these involvements show not only that we are concerned with a good sermon but also that we highly value each worker's teaching ministry.

#### *Train the Staff*

When it comes to auto repair work, I have changed the oil, rotated tires, and given tune-ups. Usually anything more would necessitate a trip to the garage.

This year, however, I performed my first successful brake pad and shoe transplant. The manuals described how to perform this type of operation, but it wasn't until a friend of mine walked me through the procedure with one of my cars that I was brave enough to tackle the other one on my own.

People often will do only what they are comfortable doing. If we want teachers to be good communicators of biblical truth, we need to walk them through the procedure.

Each year we plan some type of teacher training experience. We have taken advantage of programs offered by nearby Christian colleges. One year we spent four consecutive Wednesday nights demonstrating teaching techniques. This year we had a one-night seminar with teachers spending the first two hours in age-level groups—early childhood, childhood, youth, and adult—watching a couple of 30-minute video recordings of sample lessons and evaluating the teacher's performance. Afterward the four groups came together, and I briefly affirmed the importance of teaching and the fact that they were actually the shepherds of their individual classes.

We've discovered our teacher training not only improves

# Case Studies for Reflection and Discussion

## CASE I. Mr. Doormat Seeks Help

"Pastor, I'm such a pushover that my middle name should be 'Doormat.' People walk right over me to get whatever they want. They borrow money and seldom pay me back, they volunteer my house for parties, bum rides from me but never give me a lift when my car breaks down. People make fun of me. My so-called friends make more jokes about me than Johnny Carson does about Tommy Newsome. Even when I am insulted I just smile and try to show a sanctified Christian attitude. But to tell you the truth I'm sick of it—if the meek are supposed to inherit the earth, I'm ready to do some 'inheriting.' Not likely, though, my wife won't even let me cash my own paycheck.

"I'm the biggest dope I know of. Even the church people take advantage of me. I don't like my life, and I don't like me. They say you are a good counselor, pastor. Please change my life. I can't stand it anymore."

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. What is the precise problem in "Mr. Doormat's" life?



2. Evaluate his Christian theology.




3. What scriptures might be brought to bear in counseling this man?



4. What Bible characters could he consider with profit?



5. If you were going to give "Mr. Doormat" a book or two to read, what titles would you give him?



6. Recalling the reading you have done in the field of pastoral counseling, what counseling theory would be most helpful in this case?



7. Dale Galloway, in a book called *The Fine Art of Getting Along with Others* (Revell, 1984), cites these principles (among others) for getting along with difficult people. Which ones would you most likely bring up in your first two or three sessions with "Mr. Doormat"?

- A. When you need to confront, do it immediately.
- B. Accept the reality of unfairness.
- C. Don't lash back.
- D. Stop trying to change the difficult person in your life.
- E. Never surrender leadership to negative feelings.
- F. Take positive action.

8. Here are some informal encouragements "Mr. Doormat" is likely to receive. Which ones would you use? Which would you avoid?

- A. Take up sports.
- B. Tell off your wife and make her like it.
- C. Get a new wardrobe.
- D. You don't need public approval. Once you realize that, you break people's hold over you.
- E. Being "nice to a fault" is not healthy for you or your associates. It is not "spiritual," either.
- F. Passive people usually suffer from certain fears. What are you afraid of, Brother "Doormat"? Rejection? Failure? Poverty? Hurting other people's feelings?
- G. Asserting yourself will make things worse now, but in the long run relationships will be a lot better.

## CASE II. The Long-range Troublemaker

Adolph Barry made so much money he could not afford to tithe. But Pastor Rossendale kept preaching on tithing—more often than Barry thought reasonable. When Mr. and Mrs. Rossendale celebrated their 15th wedding anniversary, Barry presented them with two round-trip airline tickets to Acapulco. Shortly thereafter, thinking he had created a psychological debt, Barry dropped a couple of very strong hints that the pastor should stop pushing the tithing issue. Rossendale could not change his stance or preaching on the matter and kindly told Barry so.

Soon Barry was pushing a "let's-vote-him-out" campaign. Everything Pastor Rossendale did was wrong. Some of Barry's "confidential" one-liners included:

"Our pastor just can't communicate with youth."

"His messages just don't feed the flock."

"He is far too liberal."

"He is far too conservative."

"Grandma Jones was in the hospital for three days and Rossendale didn't show up."

"Mrs. Rossendale brings a new low to the term *preacher's wife*."

"All he ever preaches on is money."

"You know his kid was seen coming out of a movie theater."

Sure enough, a "bad" vote came about. Though Rossendale wasn't voted out, he thought it was time to leave. Three months later he moved to a new church 1,500 miles away. On his first Sunday an afternoon reception was held in honor of the new pastor and his family. Mrs. Rossendale was beaming, smiling for the first time in months. The children were making new friends. Pastor Rossendale was basking in the glow of it all—until he noticed Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Barry moving among the guests energetically socializing and talking to anyone who would listen.

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. If you were Pastor Rossendale (this is a true story) what would you:  
feel?  
think?  
do?



2. Which of the following would be most appropriate? Which is the least appropriate?
- A. Confront Barry privately and ask him to leave.
  - B. Make a public announcement explaining the previous trouble and expose Barry as a devious troublemaker.
  - C. Greet him along with everyone else and act as though nothing unusual was happening.
  - D. Bring Adolph to the front and introduce him as "the best friend a pastor ever had," telling about the anniversary gift and any other "good deeds" he had performed.
  - E. Laugh your head off when you greet the Barrys, thus trivializing his devious efforts.
  - F. Assume that Barry is there because he is sorry for what he did before and wants to make it up to you.
  - G. Say nothing about the former trouble at the reception, but explain everything to the board at the next meeting.
  - H. Say nothing about the former trouble at the reception, and say nothing about it ever, unless someone asks.
  - I. Reconsider the advice Job got from his wife.
  - J. Other: \_\_\_\_\_



# A NEW PLACE TO GROW

by Debbie Goodwin

*Pastor's Wife. Church of the Nazarene, Florissant, Mo.*

Unlike most pastor's wives who marry a man called into ministry, I married an already-pastor. Mark had been at his first church for almost five years when his wife died of cancer. He was suddenly a single parent and a single pastor. Marriage made me a pastor's wife. Not seminary. Not first call. Not any of the early role-fitting experiences most couples share.

Although full-time ministry involvements of my own prepared me for this new role, I soon discovered no other is quite the same. There is heavy responsibility without clear-cut authority. Image pressures interfere. The limelight syndrome threatens. And the very role of pastor's wife dangles in limbo between the salaried pastor and the unpaid volunteer. However, I have also learned that the unique demands and privileges offer growing ground like no other. In my own role-plodding as a new pastor's wife, I have discovered three areas where my growth as a person and as a Christian hinge on accepting the implications of my new growing place.

The first growth lesson had to do with role expectations: not what my church family expected of me, but what I expected of myself.

Just like any new bride, I brought into my marriage

certain role models I wanted to emulate. There was the woman who was known for making everything on her buffet table from scratch. There was the one in demand for speaking at banquets and seminars. There was the one who involved herself in community activities for the purpose of witness and outreach. There was the one whose home came out of *Better Homes and Gardens*. And there were many who could put colors, accessories, and styles together as well as any magazine model. And then there was me!

After some bad juggling experiences in my first years as a pastor's wife, I made an important discovery. Not all of my ideal women did all the ideal things. The gourmet cook wasn't that good one-on-one. The community affairs activist depended on Sarah Lee to do her entertaining. The decorator couldn't speak. Each woman had her strengths. No woman could do everything.

Something else challenged my ideal expectations. None of the women I was holding up as role models was my age. None was a new pastor's wife, either. I had picked women whose years of experience had covered up a lot of mistakes. It was a freeing discovery. I didn't have to give up my ideal or my role models. I just had to put them in perspective. I gave myself the freedom to experiment with goals that fit my personality, my abilities, and my time. They are not set in concrete because I am still in the process of discovering the best goals for me. Success or failure is not determined by one project or one year. Most important of all, they must be the goals that God is pleased with or His strength and wisdom and peace will not be available to me to achieve them.

Another lesson that challenged my growth surfaced when I realized that a pastor's wife has a special kind of X-ray vision. A pastor's wife sees things no one else sees: the visitor who stands awkward and alone; the longtime member, too long neglected; the committee meeting that muddles through with poor planning; the organization that lacks a ministry purpose, the endless list of people who need phone calls and visits and be-



Debbie Goodwin

## Following "role models" or juggling responsibilities will not make the pastor's wife God wants me to be.

friendship. There is always something that needs to be done. Always something that needs to be started. Always a vacancy somewhere. Always!

At first, that information led me to think that if someone has a need, I should meet it; if a ministry needs to be organized, I should start it; if a vacancy needs to be filled, I should fill it. It didn't take me long to see that there are not enough hours in the day to make all the phone calls, prepare all the Bible studies, make all the visits, or organize all the ministries that are worthwhile endeavors. Just because I see that it needs to be done and may have the ability to do it does not mean that I am the one for the task. I not only hurt myself with that kind of superwoman stupidity, I also hurt my family and my church. No church needs a pastor's wife who will do everything. They may let her, while their own servanthood muscles shrivel.

Instead, I am learning that the questions of need and ability are not enough. I must also ask God if I am the one He wants involved in meeting the need by using my abilities. Only God understands the kind of balance that will protect my family. After all, if meeting someone else's need keeps me from meeting the needs of my family, who really wins?

And I must ask Him when He wants me involved. Only God knows when the situation is ripe and ready for harvesting. I can make some good guesses, but the record of my mistakes tells me that guesses aren't good enough.

Sundays were another new experience for me as a pastor's wife and gave me plenty of growing ground. They are pivotal days in my husband's work. The sermon he researched, organized, and rewrote was delivered on Sunday. The time he invested in leaders was most visible (or invisible) on Sunday. The pressure of planning two services was exhausting.

I had my own set of demands. Trying to prepare an early breakfast, getting myself and my new daughter ready for church on time all by myself, trying to get dinner in the oven and the table set so we could have com-

pany after church, all of this while rehearsing a Sunday School lesson in my head. Even when I finally sat down in the worship service, there was no tension-release. It was *my* husband in the pulpit. As a new wife, I was proud of him, but that same pride was also distracting. I heard every mistake and felt every interruption. When the day was over I felt as though I had been on a merry-go-round. I knew God promised a Sabbath rest for His people, but I was beginning to wonder if it included pastors' wives.

It took a study of Deuteronomy to show me that the missing link was worship. Over and over again His commandment convicted me: Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. My procrastination and overinvolvement made Sunday a rat race when I sorely needed the discipline of total mind and heart quiet before God.

In gentle but firm ways, God showed me that without worship I resort to role-playing and Christian busyness. Without worship, I starve my soul and numb my spiritual sensitivities. But most seriously of all, without worship I break His commandment and I sin.

It takes conscious effort and before-Sunday discipline to clear my mind and prepare my heart for worship. However, the extra effort never ceases to pay off. God rewards my full-focused attention with an attitude of rest that could never come from physical sleep. He helps me order my priorities in energy-saving ways. Through worship, I realize that God expects nothing more of me as a pastor's wife than to hear His voice and follow it, to know His Word and do it, to live His way and share it.

Five years as a pastor's wife makes me no expert. My mistakes are numerous. My insecurities show. My ideals overwhelm. However, there is one way in which being a pastor's wife is no different from any other assignment God has given me: it's just a new place to grow. Successfully following role models or creatively juggling responsibility will not make me the pastor's wife God wants me to be. Only growing will. And that has been the most important lesson of all.



# *How Evangelistic Work Helps Me to Lose*

by James N. Watkins

**Y**ears of traveling evangelism have taught us that some things are easily lost because of the nature of the type of ministry and the life-style it imposes.

## **EVANGELISTIC WORK HELPS ME TO LOSE . . .**

### **Compassion**

It's easy to lose touch with the needs and hurts of real, live people when I talk to "crowds," "congregations," "audiences," and "groups." They can easily become merely pawns who need to be moved forward.

The traveling ministry does keep me detached from three-hour board meetings, bus route visitation, staffing problems, and cranking out bulletins. But if I'm not careful, it can detach me from the needs of individuals.

**EVANGELISTIC WORK IS A WAY TO LOSE YOUR . . .**

### **Creativity**

Without the pressure to dig out three messages each week, I sometimes find myself relying on the past. It's much easier to stick with the familiar sermons, illustrations, and preaching style that has always worked. Without a creative challenge I can become stale and dull, not only to others but to myself as well.

**EVANGELISTIC WORK IS A GOOD WAY TO LOSE YOUR . . .**

### **Continuing Education**

It is delightful to be luxuriously entertained, constantly engaged in witty conversation and theological debates at the parsonage, or sharing at churches, schools, service clubs, retirement homes, and con-

ventions. But it can leave little time for personal growth.

Coupled with a loss of creative challenges, there have been times I felt I was standing still in my spiritual and mental development—constantly dependent on past experiences.

**EVANGELISTIC WORK HELPS ME TO LOSE MY . . .**

### **Consciousness**

We become very good at hiding our feelings. After 12 hours of driving, we share in an evening service with smiles and energy. Little do they know the only thing on our minds is a night in our own bed. But we keep wearing a mechanical smile—even when the honorarium barely covers travel expenses.

Our emotional insulation becomes so thick that when we go to

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## **OBSERVATIONS**

Our few years in evangelism have taught us many things.

- Roast beef is the universal "company meal."
- People are hungry for God's good news.

- Make sure the valve is closed when taking the cap off an RV holding tank.
- God always honors His Word.
- Extension cords are always six inches too short.

- Everyone east of Alcatraz is incredibly friendly.
- "Rustic setting" means the camp has no indoor plumbing.

—James N. Watkins 

Europe for services, we don't feel any more excitement than if we went to Cleveland.

#### EVANGELISTIC WORK HELPS ME TO LOSE MY . . .

##### Companionship

There is the obvious problem of the evangelist who must leave his family for meetings. There is also a very real loss of intimacy between couples who travel together but must live in the constant presence of others. Sometimes we find ourselves becoming merely "co-workers," rather than a romantic husband and wife. There is also the lack of close personal friends. We've met so many wonderful people, but we haven't seen them since the last night of the meetings in their town.


#### EVANGELISTIC WORK MAY CAUSE ME TO LOSE MY . . .

##### Calling

Grady Wilson has wisely observed, "The pastorate will drive you into evangelism, and evangelism will drive you into the pastorate." I've had the privilege of serving in both fields, and Rev. Wilson is right.

Evangelism is not the "great escape" for the pastor who has had it with trying to soothe irate board members or filling out denominational reports. Both occupations have their unique problems and pressures. And both have their rewards.

So we humbly submit these thoughts. Evangelism is an exciting field of service. But, like the pastorate, it has its subtle dangers that must be prayerfully avoided. So, if you're a pastor, don't turn in your resignation and buy a motor home without prayerful consideration. If you're one whose ministry is on six wheels, beware of these traps that make you a loser. And if you're considering having Lois and I at your church, please help us with these areas.

We do praise God for His help and presence (even as we sat in a garage for a day and a half with the transmission out of the motor home). And we praise Him for His patience with our humanity! That's another thing we've learned in evangelistic work. He is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us. 

## Something Old Brought Something New

by James M. Bearden

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Oskaloosa, Iowa*

**I**t was late in July and I was drawn into one of those special times with the Lord. It had been a long year for this 41-year-old pastor struggling with 18 years of service. I truly needed a new refilling with His Spirit, and He met my need. It was then I saw the great need for the church to have the same experience.

I had gone to the Lord many times before about revival for the church, but this time it was different. I felt greatly impressed that if the church was to have a renewing, the pastor must first be ready to pay the price. I must do more than urge others to sacrifice. I must do more than stress the importance of prayer. I must have a burning heart and communicate that to my congregation.

It really happened to me! After 18 years of pastoral ministry, I was ready to give more than I had ever

given; I was now ready to go to my church with the dream God had given me. My congregation could tell I was different. My heart began to show, and they began to see what God was doing in me.

I called on the church for seven weeks of intensive prayer and preparation for renewal, meeting from 6 to 8 a.m. every weekday morning at the church. I announced that the church office would be closed every day at noon for a special time of prayer during the noon hour. I started a Saturday morning prayer breakfast for the men and a Sunday 7 a.m. prayer meeting. In addition, we had Saturday nights of prayer that lasted from eight o'clock to midnight, and on Sunday evening, before evening service, we had a six o'clock prayer meeting. Singles, teens, and Prime Timers had their own weekly

*(Continued on page 53)*

## The Care and Feeding of Evangelists

by James N. Watkins

**O**ne of the greatest joys of traveling has been working with gracious pastors. Here's what they have done to bring out the best in us.

1. They sent detailed goals and expectations for the meeting.

2. They sent a "personality profile" of the church. They shared needs of their people.

3. They sent a detailed map for finding the church, camp, or rally.

4. They provided a motel room. This allowed time for prayer, preparation, and restoring "companionship."

5. They stimulated our bodies by playing raquetball and tennis with us.


Evangelists are notoriously overfed and under-exercised.

6. When we had the motor home, they provided electricity and hookups near the church. And they knew where the nearest dump station was.

7. They helped us unload our trunks and cases, but didn't try to help us set up.

8. They let us go to bed early when we had traveled all day.

9. They gave us "feedback" on how we were coming across.

10. And by helping to minimize human limitations, they allowed God to move in a supernatural way. 

# A Methodological Guide for Interpretive Bible Study

by Frank G. Carver

*Point Loma Nazarene College, San Diego, Calif.*

Here is a study guide that Frank Carver gives to ministerial students for development of a paper and a sermon. You probably do not have the library resources his students have, but the process itself is worth reviewing. If getting from exegesis to proclamation is ever a problem for you, reading this outline will be helpful.

Quote the passage from RSV, NASB, or NIV.

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

*Sources:* Introductions and introductory articles in commentaries and Bible dictionaries; Bible atlases; histories of biblical times; personal observation of the biblical text

A. What was the life setting of the document in which the text is found?

1. What is the literary genre of the document (e.g., history, prophecy, drama, songs, apocalyptic, gospel, epistle, etc.)?

2. In what historical setting did the document originate—writer(s), place and date, to whom directed, why written, central theme?

Involved is not only the setting that the tradition obviously reflects (e.g., earthly life of Jesus in the fourth Gospel) but also the question of tradition history—the situation and purposes for the formation and

editing of the document, a process that could conceivably extend for centuries (e.g., Psalms).

B. Where is the text found in the document and what role does it play in the argument or presentation of subject matter? The question is one of the arrangement and flow of content.

## **II. The Re-creative Question: What Did Our Text Mean to Its First Readers?**

A. How does the writer seek to communicate his message?

1. How is the original text best translated (if no Hebrew or Greek is known, compare several English translations and construct a translation that best represents your understanding of what the text is saying)?

*Sources:* Critical Hebrew and Greek texts; manuals on textual criticism; lexicons; grammars, beginning and advanced; modern-language translations, standard and paraphrastic.

a. Make verse-by-verse notes on the lexical and syntactical matters necessary for an accurate translation.

b. If working with Greek, treat the significant variants in the text. If the text is Hebrew, delay this until the detailed exegesis of the language of the text.

c. Write out your translation in correct, idiomatic English.

2. What is the structure and form of the text?

*Sources:* Personal observation on the text; introductions; manuals on structuralism; manuals on form criticism; critical commentaries; pertinent monographs and studies in periodical literature

a. Analyze the structure of the text in its present literary form in the context of the literary structure of the document as a whole. A structure analysis defines in outline form the major elements in the text and document according to function. A definition of function is often also a "form" statement (e.g., 1 Thess. 5:23-24, "a concluding benediction").

b. Describe the (1) form(s) employed by the author in the text, and (2) the setting (*Sitz im Leben*) and intention of the form in the life of the people behind the text to whose faith it bears witness. Oftentimes the form can be identified with one of the genres already isolated by the form critical study of the Scriptures. At other times one can only attempt a personal description or identification of form based on the foregoing structural analysis. The matter of setting and intention of the form(s) employed is often quite problematic, if not impossible, for it attempts to penetrate behind the literary setting in which we have received the text.



c. Define now in the light of *a* and *b* the function of the text as a whole in the structure of the document.

3. The detailed exegesis of the language of the text.

**Sources:** Personal observation of the biblical text; critical commentaries; lexicons and grammars; Bible dictionaries and concordances; biblical theologies and monographs; periodical literature; modern-language translations

*a.* Use the structure of the passage from the preceding structural analysis for your headings and sub-headings and proceed to examine contextually and in sequence the content and function of each of the elements of the passage.

In order to interpret the writer's concepts and the use he makes of them to accomplish his intentions with the text, in the light of the perspectives already achieved, consider such items as:

—variants if working with Hebrew  
—forms and/or literary devices used

—significant concepts (i.e., the meaning of key words and phrases in the light of their cultural and religious backgrounds and biblical-theological contexts).

—syntax (i.e., the significance of the relation of words, phrases, sentences, and the larger units to each other).

When working in the Synoptic

Gospels with a passage that is paralleled in one or both of the other gospels and one wishes to understand the text not only in its specific literary setting (e.g., only in Luke's use) but also in the context of Jesus' own ministry, then the entire exegetical process should be applied to each literary setting. The resultant overlapped understandings of the text in each of its gospel settings with their accompanying comparative detail can be used to reconstruct the meaning and function of the text in the setting of Jesus' ministry, with perhaps some indication as to its use in the life of the Church before the Gospels were written.

*b.* For the most part leave the general summary statements for the next stage in the interpretative process. A comment, however, concluding the discussion of each structural element of the passage indicating its particular function within the text is most helpful.

**B.** What is the writer attempting to accomplish in the passage?

**Source:** Now all the interpretative data collected in the preceding exegesis of the text is utilized for the summary interpretation of the text in its biblical context.

The meaning and significance of the passage is now brought into sharp focus in terms of the writer's intention in its historical, literary, and biblical-theological contexts (i.e., in-

cluded is the theological lifestream, which gives the text its kerygmatic authenticity). The hermeneutical bridge that enables one to bring the text to contemporary application is best found in the intention and theology of the text in the context of the document as a whole.

### III. *The Life Response Question: How Does the Text Apply to Contemporary Life?*

**A.** What do I hear?

1. About my understanding of God (as revealed in Jesus Christ)?

2. About my relationship to God (my faith-grasp of Jesus Christ)?

3. About my manner of life before God in the world?

**B.** What do I proclaim?

1. This should take the form of an expository outline.

2. Each point and subpoint should arise solidly from the text and relate at least by implication to contemporary Christian concerns.

**C.** The most important guide to the understanding and application of a text is the firsthand observation of the text and its *context*. The first and last principle of hermeneutics is the intelligent use of the context! The very nature of Scripture demands that "every man must see for himself or he does not see at all" (Howard J. Kuist).



R. GREEN

## PASTOR AS WRITER

(Continued from page 43)

those around you learning as they struggle to know God better? Famous people aren't necessary. Common, ordinary folks will do just fine.

Write about Bible people from a new perspective. You're a practicing expert on the Bible. Use that gift. The first article I had published was about Joshua and the sun standing still. The article was filled with scientific data from today's knowledge concerning the relationship between earth and sun. The point centered on primitive Joshua who didn't know these things but was a man who knew and trusted a personal, powerful God. I shot it off to a magazine. They rejected it. So, I mailed it to another. Two months later I received my first publishing check in the mail. *HIS* magazine printed the piece. Several others reprinted it, including a French Canadian publication, under the title "Little Did Joshua Know."

### 4. KNOW WHAT NOT TO WRITE.

Don't send sermons. As a rule, they don't sell. The art of speaking and the art of writing differ. Most pastors could write, but it's not the same discipline as preaching. However, sermons can serve as springboards for articles. Most often I get an idea for an article while I'm studying for a sermon. But, I keep in mind an audience that can't know me personally or hear me. A one-time message on a printed page creates a different challenge from an ongoing, give-and-take, personal communication.

I used to have a secretary who typed my transcripts of all sermons. Our congregation liked reading what they heard the Sunday before. But those transcripts were not ready for an editor. I write sermons. I write articles. I try not to confuse the two.

Don't write children's stories for an adult magazine. It's amazing how many good articles are rejected just because they've been sent to the wrong market. A pastor's magazine wouldn't be interested in a devotional for preteens, no matter how excellent.

Back in the early days I was too much in a hurry to investigate a magazine's needs. I rushed off a juvenile fiction story, "There's No Back Door," to adult magazines, one of which never even takes fiction. Later the story was published and reprinted many times in magazines that welcomed that type and that slant.

Also, be careful of offbeat pet theories. Editors look for themes with universal appeal to reach a wide spectrum of their readers.

### 5. KNOW WHERE TO FIND MARKETS.

Personal experience is a starter. What magazines do you read? What kinds of articles do they print? Most have writing guidelines you can ask for. Be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope and then follow the suggested procedure.

There are probably hundreds of Christian magazines and papers you've never heard of. You can discover many of these in the yearly *Writer's Market*, published by Writer's Digest Books. It can also be found in most libraries.

The writers' conferences provide lists of good markets. You could talk to many of the editors in person.

And many writers pass on new market information to those they think will benefit.

### 6. LEARN HOW TO HANDLE REJECTION.

Once in a great while I hear of a writer who seldom receives a rejection. The rest of us cram our files with a barrage of impersonal mimeo notes that say, "This material doesn't meet our present needs." But don't let rejections stop you, for they don't necessarily mean your writing is deficient.

Some magazines don't print anything that doesn't correspond with planned themes. Some only want testimonies. Others may have just accepted an article on the very subject you submitted. Some are just plain overstocked with material. The manuscript has to fit, has to click. Keep sending it if it still sounds good to you after rereading.

In my first year of trial and error, I received an average of 10 rejections for each article. The percentage is much better now because I take the effort to know the needs. A short parable about plants was rejected 13 times in two-and-a-half years. But one day I sold it. The editor sent me a personal note to say this parable was just what he needed.

One magazine's anathema is another's glory. One story I wrote received a rejection from an editor who wanted to know if I was really born again. I assumed he missed the point of the story. I decided to try again. The next editor bought it with the comment, "This is one of the most stunning parables I've ever read."

### 7. LEARN HOW TO HANDLE SUCCESS.

If you've ever sold an article, I suppose you could call yourself a professional. But, one article doesn't make a career. My wife and I both write, which has made an ideal situation for us. When we both sold our first articles, we literally danced on the walls and shouted from the rooftops. We called our friends and relatives. They didn't seem that excited. They'd never heard of the magazines, for one thing. If it isn't *Reader's Digest* or *Guideposts*, most people just nod their heads.

We've learned to relax and keep each success to ourselves, unless asked. Thousands of good articles are written each year (or each month), and very few people remember the authors unless they are famous. This anonymous ministry can be good for the soul. Rejoice when God uses you and give Him the proper credit. Stand in awe that He would choose your work to advance His work.


Let your success spur you on to more writing. Aim for more challenges. Sharpen your skills. Push on with the next stage of your appointed message. Who knows? One day you may find yourself like me—in full-time writing in order to pastor a tiny church that couldn't afford to pay a full salary.

What's in all this for you right now? Money? Perhaps enough to cover your expenses at first. Prestige? The title "author" always looks good after a name. Popularity? Much of my "fan mail" comes from cranks who never sign their names. But, it is worth it for that one responsive chord in a heart and touch?

What you'll find is the deep satisfaction in knowing obedience to your calling and perfecting your communication of God's eternal message.

## TEACHING MINISTRY

(Continued from page 21)

And finally, it should motivate to stimulate a distinct psychomotor response—action. All three of these objectives contribute to the fourth objective of the overall development of Christian character. It should indeed be the preacher's highest aim to guide his hearers into more complete Christlikeness. 

### NOTES

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2. John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 40.
3. George E. Sweazey, *Preaching the Good News* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 7.
4. *Ibid.*, 8.
5. Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 47.
6. James B. Chapman, *The Preaching Ministry* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1947), 18-19.
7. Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 122.
8. Ralph P. Martin, *New Testament Foundations—A Guide for Christian Students* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975), 121.
9. Skinner, *Teaching Ministry*, 82.
10. Martin, *New Testament Foundations*, 121.
11. Skinner, *Teaching Ministry*, 83.
12. Martin, *New Testament Foundations*, 121.
13. Skinner, *Teaching Ministry*, 83.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, 85.
17. *Ibid.*, 86.
18. *Ibid.*, 87.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, 133.
21. *Ibid.*, 133-38.
22. Sweazey, *Preaching the Good News*, 20.
23. Chapman, *Preaching Ministry*, 85.
24. Sweazey, *Preaching the Good News*, 22.
25. Skinner, *Teaching Ministry*, 135.
26. Sweazey, *Preaching the Good News*, 22.
27. Skinner, *Teaching Ministry*, 136.
28. *Ibid.*

## TREAD LIGHTLY, PASTOR


(Continued from page 31)

In John Drakeford's book *The Awesome Power of the Listening Ear*, the first chapter is largely a plea for all of us, but especially ministers, to develop the art of listening. One of the reasons behind his plea is that real listening (as opposed to simply hearing) is recognized among professional counselors as probably the most effective way of helping troubled people.

According to Dr. Drakeford (then professor of psychology and counseling and director of the counseling center at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth) listening is an art that does not come naturally but must be mastered by resolute discipline in the application of good listening techniques. This book teaches those techniques. It is a book that any Christian worker could well read and reread.

Our world generally doesn't know how to listen. We all have been the victims of nonstop talkers with their streams of self-centered litanies that make us want to cry out, "Enough! I have something to say, too!" We are constantly bombarded by the media with opinions, problems, ideas, philosophies, goals, until we can scarcely think clearly. All the while, deep inside we ache for someone to affirm our importance as individuals by really listening to what we think and feel.

Listening is not easy, but it carries its own reward. Those who will learn to listen—gently, strongly, deeply—become the most beloved of friends because they are the most helpful of friends—and/or pastors.

So, while you give us time to heal by treading lightly in the area of change, you can hasten our readiness to accept your changes by developing good communications with us. But you should be prepared for the consequences: we will probably love you to death. 

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## Something Old Brought Something New

(Continued from page 49)

prayer meetings. Unbelievable numbers began to show up for these times of prayer. Need I tell you? Things began to happen!

I emphasized the importance of lengthy times of prayer so that real cleansing and heart searching could take place. Miracles began to happen and lives were changed. Expectancy was the order of the day. Our people were seeing renewal. At regular church services God blessed our people, and many didn't want to leave when services were over.


In the eight week we entered into a Sunday-through-Sunday crusade. The prayer meetings kept happen-

ing, and the blessings kept coming. Our people had learned that there was truly power in prayer. As I write this report, we are now into our tenth week since starting, and the prayer meetings are still going.

The crusade was great, and I loved every minute of it, but real revival started in Oskaloosa, Iowa, when the people started praying. My own life will never be the same because I have learned new spiritual dimensions through prayer.

As I look back to my recent encounter with God, I realize that much of the failure in the past has been because of my own failure to prepare myself. Power for renewal

was there, but we had to pay the price through prayer. I have planned before; I have prayed before; I have scheduled evangelists and singers before; but I now realize that unless the pastor and people "humble themselves and pray" in a committed way, they will not "hear from heaven."

This pastor and church have had revival. I am excited with the idea that it can happen anywhere. But there are no shortcuts. Every pastor and church must decide how badly they want revival. For me, it was a different way—yet it was an old way. Best of all, IT STILL WORKS! 



# TODAY'S BOOKS for TODAY'S PREACHER

## PASTORAL CARE WITH CHILDREN IN CRISIS

By Andrew A. Lester. Westminster Press, 1985, paper, 144 pp., \$9.95  
(BA066-424-5986)

At last, a book has been written that clearly details how a pastor can deal with a significant portion of his congregation, the children! Author Andrew Lester, a pastoral counselor and teacher, concerns himself primarily with dealing with children ages 5-12 who are in some type of crisis. Too often, when there has been a death or divorce in the family, the pastor has either not been aware of children's sufferings or has just not known how to help them.

Dr. Lester defines childhood in terms of a child's communication, awareness, and adaptability. And he describes reasons for some pastors' neglect of children. Not only does he present the great need that children have for their pastor's care, but he also gives many practical methods of working with children during a crisis, using a psychological and biblical basis. He shares how a pastor can lay the groundwork with children without taking another huge chunk of time out of his already too busy schedule. He also gives tips on keeping a "children's crisis kit" in the trunk of the car in order to be prepared at any time to use play, art, writing, or storytelling (as the need of the child and the disposition of the pastor may dictate).

Dr. Lester's reasons for writing this book are: (1) because children have crises; (2) because children deserve pastoral care too; (3) because the pastor can tremendously influence children's spiritual growth; and (4) because few resources have ever been available to help pastors care for the children in their congregations.

This book will help pastors minister to children before and during the crises in their lives, and should give him the opportunity to minister to them *after* a crisis as well.

—Lillian Johnston

## WORD BIBLICAL COMMENTARY: JUDE, 2 PETER

By Richard J. Bauckham. Word Books, 1983, 357 pp., \$19.95  
(BA084-990-2495)

Richard J. Bauckham is a lecturer in the history of Christian thought at the University of Manchester, England. He

and Word Books have rendered a great service to all students in the New Testament, especially pastors and New Testament scholars, in Volume 50 of the *Word Biblical Commentary*, which covers Jude and 2 Peter. Good commentaries on Jude and 2 Peter have been few and far between during the 20th century. Bauckham's work is the most significant commentary in English on these two books since Joseph B. Mayor's work, done in 1907. Most critical scholarship of the 20th century relegated 2 Peter to the lowest possible status among New Testament books and by association Jude was also seen as of little importance. Bauckham's commitment to understanding these books as important contributions to the Word of God has rewarded serious students of Scripture with a very usable commentary.

One of the strengths of this volume is its format by virtue of being a part of the *Word Biblical Commentary* series. Each paragraph of scripture receives a personal translation by the author, a section of the Form/Structure/Setting, a phrase-by-phrase exegesis of the Greek text, an explanatory section of exposition and a bibliography of the technical literature related to the paragraph.

Introductory matters are summarized before each commentary section on each book. However, Bauckham prefers to give the details of his arguments on introductory matters in the commentary section under the pertinent verses rather than in the introductory section. Preachers wanting only material applicable to sermons in the commentary section may find this instructive. Students wanting a detailed summary in the introduction will be frustrated by having to read the details in the commentary section. The Form/Structure/Setting materials and bibliography will be appreciated by those interested in the more technical aspects of contemporary New Testament scholarship.

The exegetical section is based on the Greek text, but all the Greek words and phrases are followed by English translation. The explanatory section will be especially helpful to the working pastor and layperson desiring a non-technical summary of the significance of the passage. These features make the commentary extremely useful regardless of one's technical expertise.

Bauckham's independent judgments

on critical questions resist easy categorization. He rejects the frequent description of these two books as "Early Catholic" with a careful argument that is one of the significant contributions of the book. He also is not comfortable with the traditional designation of Jude and 2 Peter as "general" or "catholic" Epistles. He sees Jude as addressed to a particular Jewish Christian congregation, either in Syria, Asia Minor, or perhaps Egypt, around A.D. 60. He believes that 2 Peter was written from Rome between A.D. 80 and 90 to a church with primarily Hellenistic characteristics. He argues that Jude, the brother of Jesus, was the author of the Epistle bearing his name and that 2 Peter was not written by Peter, but perhaps by someone at Rome who had personally known Peter. Bauckham suggests that this acquaintance wrote 2 Peter as a testament expressing what he believed Peter would have said to the new developments brought on by false teachers.

Bauckham gives considerable attention to the question of literary relationships. He assumes that 2 Peter is dependent upon Jude and illustrates his reasoning by placing the related passages side by side (both Greek and English) in relevant sections of the commentary on 2 Peter. However, he is more concerned to trace the relationship of the Old Testament and Jewish pseudepigrapha with both Jude and 2 Peter and the relationship of 1 Peter, the Paulines, the Gospel traditions and non-canonical early Christian literature with 2 Peter. The result is of special benefit for pastors as well as the scholarly world, for the commentary is replete with references to related passages in the Old and New Testaments and other Jewish and Christian literature. These "cross-references" are made easily available through a Scripture-cited index, an unusual bonus for a commentary. Indexes of ancient authors, modern authors, and major subjects are other benefits of this volume's place in the *Word Biblical Commentary*.

Commentaries are somewhat like "Saul's armor." Some fit, some don't—depending on personal interests, training, and tastes. However, I perceive the *Word Biblical Commentary* to be the best overall English commentary of the 20th century, if remaining volumes live up to the quality of the first four. Richard Bauckham's work on Jude



and 2 Peter is a most worthy part of the series and a volume that I highly recommend to any serious student of the Word.

—Roger L. Hahn  
Bethany, Okla.

### CAESAR AND GOD: CHRISTIAN FAITH AND POLITICAL ACTION

By John Eidsmoe. Crossway Books, 1984, 238 pp., \$7.95

(BA089-107-3132)

When Jesus said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" He gave credence and approval to human government. The problem that rears its head is how can the Christian acknowledge Caesar without compromising the things that are God's and how much, if at all, should the Christian involve himself in the political arena. Since 1976 when an "evangelical Christian" occupied the White House, the American Christian community has been rethinking its role in politics.

*God and Caesar* very ably addresses these very questions. Part 1 lays a foundation as Eidsmoe explores "The Biblical View of Government." In this section he examines in some detail the two authorities, church and state. Both have biblical authority; how can they peacefully coexist? Eidsmoe gives the biblical background and the view from church history. Very practical and well done. Of particular interest and importance is the chapter on the First Amendment—what is originally meant and what it is coming to mean today.

Part 2 looks at "The Biblical View of Our Duty to Government." Covering areas such as taxes, civil disobedience, the military and political participation, all from a biblical perspective, it makes for good sermon material. Both Part 2 and Part 3, which deal with "The Biblical View of the Issues of Government" (abortion, poverty, education, censorship, pornography, etc.), are full of excellent illustrative material to aid in sermon preparation.

Eidsmoe leaves no doubt that he comes at the issues from a conservative point of view. However, he does have a major criticism of the Christian Right: that they give too little attention to the basic question, "What saith the Scriptures?" For the Christian the only authority is the Bible. And that is the purpose of the book—to examine Christian citizenship from the biblical perspective.

Of all the books I have read that deal with the moral/political issues, *God and Caesar* is one of the best. It's a lot of book and information for the price. In *Hamlet* Shakespeare has Horatio say-

ing, "If thou art privy to the country's fate, which happily, foreknowing may avoid, O speak . . ." This Eidsmoe has done and done well.

—Gary Skagerberg

### ASK HIM ANYTHING, GOD CAN HANDLE YOUR HARDEST QUESTIONS

By Lloyd J. Ogilvie. Word Books, 1981, \$5.95 (BA084-992-9822)

The author grapples with some of life's toughest questions—questions that defy easy answers—such as: What is God Like? Is God Really in Control? Where Is God When I Suffer? His scriptural approach articulates the Word in a contemporary way. Ogilvie's challenge is for us to learn to think magnificently about God, for he feels it is only then we can find answers to the anguishing questions of life. He uses Isaiah 40 as the basis for thinking magnificently about God and points out that when we focus our thinking on the magnificence of God in Christ, all our questions will find more than conceptual answers. But truth about God will never satisfy us. It only becomes real as we live it. When we think magnificently about God, we will build our lives on His greatness.

Each chapter is based on a tough question submitted to Ogilvie from people across the country. To the questions most frequently asked, he formulated replies based on listening to the Lord in prayer and by careful research of the Scriptures. This book will stimulate your own thinking and provide you gems by which you may help others with their probing, troubling questions.

—Marion K. Rich

### THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE BIBLE

By Wayne Bradley Robinson. Pilgrim Press, 227 pp., \$9.95

(BA082-980-7063)

One of the continuing problems faced by all ministers is how to get the Bible into the lives of their people in a life-changing reality. A sermon, a Bible study class, even personal and family type devotions can stop far short of life-changing processes. Once the Bible really gets inside a person and changes begin to show outside through the person, then we say transformation is taking place. The Bible must become life-transforming to accomplish its life-giving, life-directing purpose.

Wayne Robinson has developed a concept of small-group Bible study that seeks to bridge the gap between the Bible in the hand and in the head, versus the Bible in the heart, transforming the

life. This book describes his tried and proven process. Four progressive study sequences are given in full seven-step guides. Half of the book is background material for the person leading the Bible study group. The book is very good; and, for me, it became the open door to new possibilities in future ministry.

The study technique described is more readily applicable to narrative scripture sections. The study sequences given (some 121 pages worth) are mostly from the Gospels. The Epistles would be more difficult to approach using this system, but with some adapting the system could be profitable for advanced students of the Bible. I highly recommend this book.

Wayne Bradley Robinson is senior minister of the First Congregational Church of Robbinsdale, Minn. He received the Ph.D. degree from St. Andrews in Scotland. In addition to pastoring, he has taught on the seminary level.

—W. Beecher Kuykendall

### MATURING IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: A PASTOR'S GUIDE

By Neill Q. Hamilton. Geneva Press, 1984, paper, \$10.95 (BA066-424-5153)

After discipleship, what then? This is the critical question skillfully addressed in Hamilton's insightful work. His thesis is that discipleship, which marks the important beginning phase of the believer's journey, is "only a phase of the Christian life rather than a description of the whole" (p. 40). Beyond discipleship is "Transition in Spirit" (chap. 3) to "Maturing in Church and Mission" (chap. 4). "Organization for Maturing" (chap. 5) provides solid help for the pastor in leading the congregation toward maturing spiritual formation.

Hamilton's exposition of "life in the Spirit" is one of the most definitive discussions I have read, coming, as it does, from one who is outside the holiness tradition. His treatment of the "Holy Spirit—The Feminine Side of God" (pp. 96 ff.) is provocative, and yet his analysis of the gift of tongues as languages for the purpose of mission lends weighty support to the Wesleyan position.

The mature Christian is not so much a solitary disciple following Jesus as he is a Spirit-filled member of Christ's community who personifies the loving and servanthood action of Jesus in the world. Spiritual gifts are "mere instruments of love," which alone is "the superlative mark of the Spirit's activity" (p. 117).

—C. S. Cowles



# Our Pastor Makes House Calls

by Neil Hightower

About 20 kilometers south of Grand Forks, S.Dak., beside Interstate Highway 29, is a road sign with an intriguing caption: "Our Doctor Makes House Calls." There was more on the sign, but being preoccupied I was not ready for this cranium-jolter. So I didn't get the rest, and have no way of knowing whether the sign was actually about house-calling doctors or not. Zipping merrily on down the road I drove, feeding the sign-caption into my mental computer bank.

Interestingly, at that period of time I was musing on the subject of how I could help to better equip future pastors. There had flashed upon the screen of my mind an article on pastoral visitation from an old *Preacher's Magazine*, written by Dr. G. B. Williamson when he was general superintendent. What an opportune time for the sign, "Our Doctor Makes House Calls," to flash into my peripheral vision. The points that Dr. Williamson made are still valid. One very telling point was: "Appealing publicity, departmental organization, and wise counseling have their place, but the pastor must not let these marginal duties crowd out time for parish visitation. If he does, they cost more than they are worth."

One of the most often expressed wishes of laymen that I heard during seven years as a district superintendent was: "We wish our pastor visited more. How can we get him to do it?" Discounting some of that as being

from those who were naturally critical of everything, and from those who were so self-centered as to feel the pastor ought to visit them every week, I heard it often enough to tag it as a concerned evaluation by committed laymen.

Pastors are busy persons, and a multiplicity of demands and needs are thrust upon them every week. The kind of society we share today, and the differing human life-patterns from those of yesterday, mean that pastors cannot operate on yesterday's priorities and scheduling. However, the reasons for pastoral calling are still so valid that it ought to hold high-priority in pastoral calendaring.

The reasons for it are not the district assembly report form (or the assembly floor report), or the ego-enhancer effect it can give, but in what it does for persons. (1) It makes people aware of the real humanness of the pastor, by personal interaction (both verbal and nonverbal). (2) It gives the pastor personal insights into family or individual needs. (3) It sensitizes private communication lines so that public communication is more vital and effective. (4) It removes corporate religion from the theoretical and formal to the practical and personal. (5) It makes the preaching menu served in public worship more nutritious and palatable because it has the bridge of personal confidence strengthened by personal contact.

How often a pastor gets into mem-

ber and adherent homes will depend, of course, on the size of the congregation, the style of communication compatible to the community setting, and the life-styles of parishioners. But the crucial decision about priority and programming will be made in the mind of the pastor.

Pastoral visitation ought to have such priority that many administrative details will be released to laymen who are equipped to carry them forward; and they will, if a pastor truly delegates the assignments. Even in very large churches with multistaff personnel, using the shared-ministry concept, the church constituency can be divided into groupings of 75 persons and the visitation oversight of each group periodically rotated. Counseling is a major claim on pastoral time, but here, according to many professional counselors, a pastor can share a great deal of this people-helper work with laymen he trains.

This article may be making a plea for what many consider an old-fashioned pastoral activity. Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker once said: "If a thing is old, it is a sign that it was fit to live. Old families, old customs, old styles survive, because they are fit to survive. The guarantee of continuity is quality."

The activity, however, is scriptural, and it will pay off in long-term dividends—a solid, healthy Body that will last far beyond a pastor's tenure in that Body.

# ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS A DAY BY MYSELF

by J. Grant Swank, Jr.

**T**hat's right. It is Christmas and I have concluded that at the risk of playing Mr. Scrooge, I must make a plea for some time by myself.

You see, thus far this December I have battled with the clerks, the elevator crews, service station attendants (while being honked from behind), and with wrapping paper that wants to crinkle in the wrong places.

I have also done my share of mopping the church basement of water that has seeped in around the walls because of the melting of the snow from last week's blizzard.

I have propped up the sanctuary tree for the umpteenth time, praying solemnly that it will not finally fall till after New Years'.

In addition, I have just realized that I should have ordered another case of white candles for the watch night service. I was banking on the old ones being long enough; however, to my horror, this morning I found nothing but stubs in the rectangular box on the storage closet shelf.

Not only that, but I discovered clots in the grape juice for Communion.

At the start of this brand-new, snow-laden day—just a week from The Big One—my discerning wife sensed that this was to be a special 24. Well, at least a special 6 or 7. For before breakfast was even served, she nudged her way toward me and said, "I think the children and I will go shopping today and leave you alone."

There were no howls of protest. I did not gather up my picket signs. I simply laid myself limp into her remark and, with doelike eyes catching her glance, I smiled. We made connection and it was grand. She knew that what I needed, more than anything else this Christmas, was one day by myself.

Since they left, I have pinched myself to see if in fact I have not died and gone to heaven. Would you believe that for one solid hour I've listened to the kind of music I want to hear? I have drunk a cup of tea, actually knowing what it was that I put past my lips? I have even read completely through this morning's newspaper without once being interrupted to tie a shoe, put on a boot, find a mitten, or wipe a nose.

To celebrate this moment of simplicity, I have turned on the Christmas tree lights (only to find that one string has gone out) and made myself a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich (oh, you can forget the peanut butter; there was none, but I screwed up my imagination and made the best of it—after all it's Christmas).

The only other person I have permitted audience with my soul has been the mailman. Along with the bright cards, he brought me bills from Sears, Texaco, and Montgomery Ward. Yet I will not allow them to ruin my day, so I have tucked them under the TOMORROW clip that rests atop the refrigerator. Perhaps they will get lost in the penuche.

There are the sugar cookies on the kitchen counter, freshly made by my teenaged daughter. And there stare the lemon drops amid the date squares. Also, the gingerbread boys and girls dance across the table. Why is it that a fallen world has such enticing delicacies to tempt the preacher who already tips 10 more pounds on the scales than he oughta?

Nevertheless, this is my time to myself. I will show my *disciplined* self and refrain from the calories. Others say it is dumb, for it is holiday time. But my waist does not know that; for once I start with the lemon drops, I will then progress to the date squares. Next will intrude the chocolate ice cream with thick syrups. And on and on. Maybe I could break down with three Ritz crackers and cheese for protein. Disgusting, isn't it?

Ah, I have spent myself. The hours have passed and I still have yet to break into NO FOREIGN LAND, the biography of a North American Indian. But it has been fun. And the door opening wide to let loose my three, plus wife does good things to my spirit.

To prove my gratitude to my other half, I have slipped an envelope under her dinner plate. To the strains of "Deck the Halls," she will open it after tonight's tofu and there read: "Thank you for some time to myself. It was a most thoughtful Christmas present. Now for New Year's, I give you YOUR day, too. Take it when you wish. Love."

Merry Christmas, one and all!



# PREACHING PROGRAM FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

## SERMON OUTLINES

by Edward F. Cox

*Chaplain, Mount Vernon Nazarene College*

### JESUS—SON OF JOSEPH

**Scripture:** Matt. 13:53-58

**Text:** "Isn't this the carpenter's son? (v. 55, NIV).

**Introduction:** Jesus had to borrow so many things. A newborn baby needs a crib. Jesus borrowed a manger. The host of 5,000 hungry people needs food. Jesus borrowed a lunch. A king entering a city needs a mount. Jesus borrowed a donkey. A crucified man needs a burial place. Jesus borrowed a tomb. And every boy needs a dad. Jesus borrowed a father.

God chose that most special person. He must have been a man of special qualifications. What kind of person was Joseph, whom many never had reason to doubt was actually the father of Jesus?

#### I. He Was Sensitive Enough to Hear God

Four times he received special instructions from God. He was a righteous man and was sensitive to the embarrassment of Mary. These traits seem to have made him especially aware of the possibility of God revealing His will to men in specific situations.

#### II. He Was Strong Enough to Obey God

Each time God revealed His purposes to him, Joseph promptly obeyed. In each instance there was considerable cost, even risk, involved. Long trips, absence from home, personal sacrifice did not deter his full obedience to God's will.

#### III. He Was Steadfast Enough to Serve God

In all he does, Joseph shows himself faithful to his God and the principles of his religion. Luke tells us that after His visit to the Temple, Jesus went down to Nazareth with His par-

ents and was obedient to them. Think of the earthly father God would want Jesus to have as He grew to manhood. What a comment on the character of Joseph that responsibility is.

**Conclusion:** Under the discipline and tutelage of his "borrowed father" the child Jesus learned the rudiments of Jewish religion. There, too, the youthful Jesus learned the carpenter's trade. Joseph appeared suddenly and briefly in sacred history and just as suddenly slipped quietly from our view. However, this fatherly tutor of Jesus may well instruct us in this Christmas season in faithfulness and obedience to God.

### JESUS—SON OF MARY

**Scripture:** Luke 1:26-38; 2:34-35

**Text:** "And a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:35, NIV).

**Introduction:** It is unlikely that a man can understand fully the pain with which a woman gives a child to this world. The birth pangs suffered in the Bethlehem stable, however, were but the beginning for Mary, the mother of Jesus. Although we are aware of the danger of superstitiously worshiping another human being, we may well heed the words of Alexander Whyte, "We must not allow ourselves to entertain a grudge against the mother of our Lord because some enthusiasts for her have given her more than her due." Let us then consider the cost with which this great woman mothered our Lord.

#### I. The Pain of Gossiping Calumny

Nazareth was a small town, and small towns haven't changed much since the first century. A young unmarried woman, discovered to be pregnant would be a natural target for malicious and cruel gossip. Apparently Mary was a devout young

woman so that her piety made her "shame" an even juicier piece of news to pass about. As we recognize the embarrassment she must have suffered, we are even more grateful for those who stood by her, such as Joseph and Elizabeth.

#### II. The Pain of Developing Mystery

When Jesus had lingered to speak with the teachers in the Temple courts, Mary asked, "Son, why have you treated us like this?" It was not her first nor last why. From the coming of the shepherds she had "treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19, NIV). She knew that she loved Jesus better than life itself, but she did not understand Him, nor did it seem possible she ever would. How often she must have lain awake wondering what God was doing in the life of her Son.

#### III. The Pain of Loving Anxiety

Jesus remained at home until He was 30 years of age. Mary grew accustomed to having Him near. Then He left on a perilous venture. Often she received disturbing news. He was out in the world with no certain source of food or shelter. Plots were being made to destroy Him. On one occasion word was sent that her Son was a madman and that she should come and restrain Him (Mark 3:30-35). Jesus, himself, was speaking of impending death. Loving Jesus as she did, Mary was torn with anxiety, dreading the news that she might hear next.

#### IV. The Pain of Enduring Sympathy

What parent has not looked at her sick or hurt child and wished she might assume his pain? Mary was at the crucifixion of her much-loved Son. The hammer blows must have rung louder for her than for any other in

that crowd. She heard the rough oaths of the soldiers, the cruel taunting of the spectators. She felt the nails and the pain as a Roman soldier plunged a spear into her Son's side. Surely she remembered what Simeon had said, "A sword shall pierce your own soul too." That day it did.

**Conclusion:** To deify Mary is to do her and ourselves a profound injustice. She was human, the means by which our God took human flesh and dwelt among us. Through her He is related to us all. Jesus loved and respected her. In His dying words He made arrangements for her care (*John 19:26-27*). We will not surround her with superstitious veneration, but it is fitting that we hold her in honor, knowing that as we honor her, we honor mankind.

## JESUS—SON OF MAN

**Scripture:** John 12:20-34

**Text:** "Who is this 'Son of Man'?" (*v. 34, NIV*).

**Introduction:** Jesus' favorite title for himself was Son of Man. It is found almost 80 times in the Gospels. It identifies Him with humanity, but it does more. It is a title of honor, practically synonymous with Messiah or world conqueror. His listeners were puzzled and well they might be. He who called himself Son of Man was speaking of His death. How could that be? But He is both He who has come and who is to come. He has been lifted up on a throne forever. We cannot understand the Son of Man without seeing this twofold relationship.

### I. Pauper and Provider

Jesus identifies with the street people of every age as He declares, "The Son of Man has no place to lay his head" (*Matt. 8:20, NIV*). And yet His identity is with us all who bring nothing into this world and can take nothing with us when we go. He who had no house nor bed to call His own is still the Provider of an eternal dwelling, for He has promised, "In my Father's house are many rooms . . . I am going there to prepare a place for you" (*John 14:2, NIV*). He who had no rope nor pail to draw from a well, said, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water" (*John 4:10, NIV*).

### II. Seeker and Savior

In one glorious statement He asserts these relationships. "The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (*Luke 19:10, NIV*). He finds us, entering into our daily lives. "The Son of Man came eating and drink-

ing" (*Matt. 11:19, NIV*). He is not satisfied with finding us. It is not enough that He discovers and uncovers our lostness. He also has come to save. The brass serpent uplifted in the wilderness depicted both cause and cure of men's misery. Jesus said, "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life" (*John 3:14-15, NIV*).

### III. Victim and Victor

Man's hopeless involvement in sin is revealed in what he has done to the Son of Man. "The Son of Man will be betrayed" (*Matt. 20:18, NIV*). "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men" (*Luke 24:7, NIV*). "The Son of Man must suffer many things" (*Luke 9:22, NIV*). Man does not have the last word! "The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil" (*Matt. 13:41, NIV*). "For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels" (*Matt. 16:27, NIV*). The One who hung on the Cross shall sit on His glorious throne (*Matt. 19:28*).

**Conclusion:** This Son of Man shows us the worst and the best about ourselves. He has fully involved himself with us. The consequence of our sin has fallen upon Him. All that was coming to us, He has received. But He has recovered for us what God intended for man to be. We see our heritage not as something tragically lost, but now through Him, representative of mankind, graciously available.

## JESUS—SON OF GOD

**Scripture:** Matt. 3:13-17

**Text:** "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (*v. 17, NIV*).

**Introduction:** Jesus said that He was the Son of God (*John 10:36*). His claim is corroborated by numerous testimonies in the Scriptures. We have testimonies by an angel (*Luke 1:35*) and by demons (*Matt. 8:29; Mark 3:11*), by those very near Him (*Matt. 14:33*) and by one who had been indifferent (*Matt. 27:54*). Men whom He called to carry His message preached this conviction (*Matt. 16:16; John 1:34; Acts 9:20*) but so also testified a woman (*John 11:27*). We are impressed by each of these, but by far the most significant witness is God himself, who on two occasions made the statement that today is our text (*Matt. 3:17; 17:5*). These truths stand out.

### I. No Other Son—"This is my Son"

Here is the One, absolutely unique

in history. Isaiah was a great prophet, but so were Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Amos. David was a great king, but so were Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah. Now on the earth was God's great Gift. No one like Him had come before. No other like Him would follow. God does not want us to overlook the significance of this Gift. He says to us, "This is my Son!"

### II. No Other Sacrifice—"whom I love"

Even Almighty God had reached His extremity. Nothing but the most costly of sacrifices would suffice for man's salvation. It was not simply that a noble, celestial being was placed upon the altar. It was One whom God loved, whom He loved as much, and infinitely more, as we could love a son of ours. Paul in Ephesians 1 and in Col. 1:13-14 points out how intimately this love is related to our salvation.

### III. No Other Standard—"with him I am well pleased"

What conduct, what attitude, what total life-style pleases God? We are not left to guess. Jesus Christ is the One who pleases Him. No rejection of God is more final than rejecting the One who pleases Him (*Heb. 10:29*). No acknowledgment is more necessary than of the One whom God has declared pleasing in His sight (*1 John 4:15-16*).

**Conclusion:** Most of us have numerous opportunities to hear preaching. In the Bible we have further opportunity to read the words of prophets and apostles. We value all of these utterances, but nothing is nearly so worthy of our attention as what God spoke at the baptism and at the transfiguration of Jesus.

## THE MANGER SIGN

**Scripture:** Luke 2:8-12

**Text:** "This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger" (*v. 12, NIV*).

**Introduction:** When God wants our attention so that He can give us a special message, He often chooses to accompany the message with a sign. After the little band of shepherds had listened to the most momentous message ever heard by man, they were given such a sign. "This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Those words proved to be significant for them and have continued to be meaningful to all who hear the Christmas tidings.

### I. It Is a Confirming Sign

- A. That God enters human history
- B. That God acts in chosen places
- C. That God works in specific ways

## II. It Is a Convicting Sign

- A. That the poor are excluded from society
- B. That Jesus is crowded from our lives
- C. That God is shut out of our thinking

## III. It Is a Convincing Sign

- A. That in mercy God comes down to us
- B. That in love God calls out to us
- C. That in grace God gives himself to us

**Conclusion:** For several years in Nashville, a large Nativity scene was displayed in a city park. It was at least 150 feet wide with camels, sheep, donkeys, and cattle. Angels, magi, and shepherds all were there, but always the concentration of viewers was at the center. There they gazed upon the Baby in the manger. The manger sign continues to speak.

## TWO DECREES FROM TWO KINGS

**Scripture:** Luke 2:1-20

**Text:** "Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world" (v. 1). "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (v. 11).

**Introduction:** Two decrees from two kings sent Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. Everyone knew the first. It sent thousands traveling to their ancestral homes, for it was issued by the Roman emperor. The second was not widely known. It sent only a few obscure people to Bethlehem. This decree was issued by Almighty God, the King of Kings. Both decrees are part of the Christmas story, but there any similarity ends.

### I. Contrast in Objective

- A. Caesar purposed to get.
- B. God purposed to give.

### II. Contrast in Heralds

- A. Caesar sent agents of Rome.
- B. God sent angels of heaven.

### III. Contrast in Procedure

- A. Caesar sought information.
- B. God sought publication.

### IV. Contrast in Results

- A. Caesar accomplished taxation
- B. God accomplished salvation.

**Conclusion:** The decree of Caesar Augustus is now only an incidental item of history. It does not affect us. We are not moved by it. The decree of the Heavenly King stands forever. It draws men and women everywhere and always to himself.

## THE THREE INVASIONS

(Advent)

**Scripture:** Luke 2:8-14

**Text:** "Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared" (v. 13, NIV).

**Introduction:** In these days we find increasing interest in the possibility that worlds other than our own may be inhabited. Is it possible that some day we might be able to communicate with these distant worlds? Or could our world be invaded from outer space? Actually our world already has had two invasions and another is to follow. It was not by strange creatures the invasions came but it was by . . . well, let me tell you of the three invasions.

### I. The First Invasion— by the Dark Prince

Long ago, longer than any human being can know, there was a rebellion in another world called heaven. The Dark Prince, who instigated and headed the rebellion, was exiled from heaven and invaded earth. He is not normally visible to us, but his influence and power is made known by evil, trouble, pain, and death. His influence alienates men from each other and men from God. It is not difficult for us to see we live in an invaded world.

Job 1:6

2 Pet. 2:4

Jude 6

Matt. 13:19, 38

### II. The Second Invasion— by the Shining Prince

Nearly two millennia ago angelic hosts broke through to our world to announce that earth had been invaded again. There was no thunder of rockets, only the soft beat of angels' wings; no exotic weapons, only a song; no threat of war, but a promise of peace. The Shining Prince was here, born to a peasant woman, even now He was lying in a manger. Strange indeed, but He had come!

Luke 2:4-14

John 3:16

Matt. 2:1-12

John 1:1-14

### III. The Third Invasion— by the Reigning King

Two invasions have come and one remains to come. Before the Shining Prince returned to heaven, He gave a promise that He would be back. Angels repeated and confirmed the promise. He has won the victory. He will not come again to fight the war, but to establish His rule forever. The Shining Prince will come as the Reigning King.

Acts 1:11

Rev. 20—21

2 Pet. 3:18

**Conclusion:** This Advent season reminds us of past and future. It properly celebrates the second invasion, but the message is incomplete without the promise of the third. We who believe Christ are no less assured that the third will come than we are that the second has occurred. When the third has been accomplished the Dark Prince will be banished forever, and his evil influence will trouble no more.

## INTERPRETING A NAME

**Scripture:** Matt. 1:18-23

**Text:** "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, 'God with us' (v. 23, NIV).

**Introduction:** Many of our common names have an original meaning. My own, Edward, means "guardian of a king." My wife's name is Dorothy, which means "gift of God." David has the meaning of "beloved," and Deborah that of "bee." The name we are given has little or nothing to do with our character, but each of us does interpret his name to those about us.

"Immanuel" is an unfamiliar name. Matthew felt it necessary to interpret it, but the life of Jesus interprets the name better than words can ever do.

### I. Immanuel—God with Us, Means God Is on Our Side

- A. A pressing question—How does God feel about us?
- B. A precious answer—"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV).

### II. Immanuel—God with Us, Means God Has Become Man

- A. A troubled question—How can God really understand us?
- B. A treasured answer—"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (Heb. 4:15, NIV).

### III. Immanuel—God with Us, Means God Abides with Us

- A. An anxious question—Where is God now?
- B. An assuring answer—"Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:20, NIV).

**Conclusion:** And so Jesus has interpreted His name to us. We as His followers have the challenge and the privilege of interpreting His name to our world. They are likely to be totally ignorant of the meaning of Immanuel and consequently ignorant of what Christmas really means.



# SERMON OUTLINES



## MINIMESSAGES FROM MALACHI

### I. A Mood Skepticism

**Text:** Mal. 1:2, "Wherein . . .?"

**Introduction:** One of the most pronounced elements in the Book of Malachi is the evident skepticism of the people.

A. A *doubting* of God's love: "Wherein hast thou loved us?" (1:2).

B. A *disputing* God's claim by irreverence toward His name: "Wherein have we despised thy name?" (1:6).

C. A *departure* from God's assertion of wearisomeness: "Wherein have we wearied him?" (2:17).

D. A *denial* of a need to return to God: "Wherein shall we return?" (3:7).

E. A *dodging* the issue of faulty stewardship: "Wherein have we robbed thee?" (3:8).

F. A *denouncing* God's claim by rebellious speech: "What have we spoken so much against thee?" (3:13).

**Conclusion:** How can skepticism be turned to faith? By listening to God's *charges*; by submission to God's *changes*; by accepting God's *love*.

### II. Insult to Divinity

**Text:** "And your eyes shall see, and shall say, The Lord will be magnified . . . (Mal. 1:5).

**Introduction:** There was rank skepticism in Malachi's day; yet there was more. There was actual insult.

A. The insult of *withheld trust*: "I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, 'Wherein . . .?' (1:2).

B. The insult of *withdrawn honor*: "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?" (1:6).

C. The insult of *offering the second best*: "If ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto the governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?" (1:8).

D. The insult of *mercenary attitude*: "Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought" (1:10).

E. The insult of *accepting a "tired of it all" attitude* toward God's will: "Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it . . ." (1:13).

**Conclusion:** This attitude can be changed to "The Lord be magnified."

### III. Mandate to the Ministry

**Text:** "And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you" (Mal. 2:1).

**Introduction:** Even as a preacher has a message for others, so God has a mandate for him. He feeds; he too must be fed. He challenges; he too has a charge.

A. To know that *if he is faulty, he will cause many to stumble*: "Ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law" (2:8).

B. To minister in an *impartial manner*: "Ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law" (2:9).

C. To pass on the *heritage of the fathers*: "Why do we deal treacherously every man . . . by profaning the covenant of the fathers?" (2:10).

D. To *unmask hypocrisy*: "Covering the altar of the Lord with tears . . . [ye] regardeth not the offering any more" (2:13).

E. To give *moral directives*: "Take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously" (2:16).

F. To call attention to *God's judgmental nature*: "Where is the God of judgment?" (2:17).

**Conclusion:** The prophetic role is by no means the total function of the ministry. This element, the "forthtelling" of God's Word is certainly part of it.

### IV. Return to Yesterday

**Text:** Mai. 3:4

**Introduction:** Jeremiah calls, in one place, for the people to, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein" (Jer. 6:16). Malachi makes the same call.

A. A return to *experiencing the Christ of Yesterday* (Mal. 3:1-3): "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the

covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts" (v. 1).

B. A return to *acknowledgment of the ethics of yesterday* (3:5-6): "I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers . . ." (v. 5).

C. A return to a *practice of the stewardship of yesterday* (3:7-12): "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . . and prove me now herewith, said the Lord of hosts . . ." (v. 10).

D. A return to an *understanding of the love of yesterday* (3:13-17): as opposed to a spirit which says, "it is vain to serve God" (v. 14).

E. A return to an *enjoyment of the fellowship of yesterday* (3:16-18): "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it . . ." (v. 16).

**Conclusion:** "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb.13:8).

### V. Forward to Tomorrow

**Text:** "For, behold, the day cometh . . ." (Mal. 4:1).

**Introduction:** Yesterday has its lessons. Tomorrow has its revelations.

A. The day cometh when *wickedness will be reckoned with*: "All the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up . . ." (4:1).

B. The day cometh when *God will heal life's hurts*: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings . . ." (4:2a).

C. The day cometh when *God's people shall greatly prosper*: ". . . and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" (4:2b).

D. The day cometh when *the discordant notes shall cease from the music of the ages*: "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers . . ." (4:6a).

**Conclusion:** "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (4:6b).

—J. Melton Thomas

## Unitive Functions of Preaching

(Continued from page 18)

and the preacher as a stand-up shrink."<sup>69</sup>

Even the nontheological disciplines like psychology, sociology, the arts, communication theory, rhetoric, logic, and cybernetics help preaching. They can render it both intelligible and relevant.

And we have it on St. Augustine's authority that it is all right to recruit the best of these "secular disciplines" for God's service. Augustine taught preachers how to use the insights of Greek oratory in behalf of the gospel. There is biblical precedence for it, he claimed. After all, did not God give Moses permission, lo, a command, to plunder the Egyptians on exodus eve? In that same spirit, he said, Christian preachers are to plunder the heathen, but effective, orators of Greece. Just like the Jews, they were to take only the best, the gold and silver and precious stones. Therefore, the best of even the nontheological disciplines can be "plundered" for the sake of preaching.

Therefore, in a unique sense, every teacher in every class is teaching students what or how to preach. In a unique sense, the discipline of preaching synthesizes all that we teach and study into informed proclamation of the greatest story ever told.

Preaching, then, is the *synthesizing* element in theological education. Preaching is the *unifying* element among Christian thinkers, a *constitutive* element of the Christian church, and the *synthesizing* element in theological education.

It is also the coordinating element in the practice of parish ministry. But I shall not explore that topic today.

It remains to briefly show that

### IV. PREACHING IS A CONJUNCTIVE ELEMENT IN THE DIVINE-HUMAN ENCOUNTER

I believe that there are some things about preaching that cannot be taught. I do not believe you can teach *preaching as witness*. If the speaker has not experienced the power of God's redeeming grace until his heart burns to tell others, you cannot lecture him into the practice of preaching as witness.

Again, you cannot teach a person how to preach with the unction and anointing of the Holy Spirit. You may prescribe some spiritual exercises that might improve the likelihood of it happening, but even this is no guarantee. I mean, there is no multiple-choice question the mastery of which will give a person a grade of A for "anointed preaching." For most of the preachers I know, the unction of the Holy Spirit comes only by grace as a happy surprise—far beyond our demanding it or planning it or manipulating it—all these are futile.

I guess I am saying that I do not believe you can teach a person to preach a sermon that becomes the *conjunctive* agent in the divine-human encounter. But it happens, I know. Somehow our feeble sermon becomes the arena of God's self-disclosure. The preaching act is attended by the Holy Spirit, and the Living Word encounters persons heart to heart. Those persons find themselves *distracted* by Jesus Christ and they can no longer enjoy sin.<sup>70</sup> They turn to God and find deliverance from self-dominion, from the compulsion of evil, from the fear

of forsakenness, from the apathy of the empty life.<sup>71</sup> They are redeemed from both the guilt and power of sin.

No preacher has the power to make this happen. We cannot save anyone; we just tell the story. The divine-human encounter is somehow tied up with God's sovereign grace. He makes His presence known on His own agenda—not ours. But every preacher knows, and trembles at the thought, that he has a conjunctive role in bringing sinners into touch with a Savior and believers into touch with a Sanctifier. When it happens, he stands in awe—even though he expected it might happen.

I can think of no greater experience in preaching than being there when proclamation becomes the conjunctive element in the divine-human encounter. If we could, we would preach sermons every time that would have the result upon people that Ambrose's preaching had upon Augustine: under conviction by way of the preached Word, the written Word, and the Living Word by the agency of Christ's Spirit Augustine cried out:

You have called me, and have cried out, and have shattered my deafness. You have blazed forth with thy light, and have shone upon me, and you have put my blindness to flight! . . . I have tasted You, and I hunger and thirst after You. You have touched me, and I have burned for your peace.<sup>72</sup>

It is a grand enterprise. But let not the preacher think more highly of himself than he ought to think. Let him remember that almost all metaphors in the New Testament that depict the preacher's office show him as a servant under someone else's authority, communicating someone else's word. The preacher is shown as a town crier, an ambassador, an earthen vessel, a steward, a workman, a shepherd, a farm hand (sower), and a *slave*. Barth calls the preacher a mere mouthpiece, therefore "the preacher must be clothed with humility."<sup>73</sup>

I like the way Augustine warned preachers against high-mindedness. After telling them that when the preacher speaks it is Christ who speaks, he reminds them that the preacher himself is but a humble little basket wherein the faithful find the bread. A little basket in which the bread is laid.

Come to think of it, who in the world wants to be

A General Motors executive,

A bank president,

A television star,

A basketball player with a seven-figure salary—who in the world wants to be a millionaire—

When you can be:

a little basket in which the bread is laid  
a little basket in which the bread of life is laid?

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## WELCOME



Raiding the *Herald of Holiness* should probably be forbidden by law. But we did it and got away with it. Our raid of the *Herald* staff brought Mark Marvin to the *Preacher's Magazine*.

Mark had worked on the *Herald* staff for three years. He is an experienced free-lance writer and photographer. He now becomes assistant editor of the *Preacher's Magazine*.

Mark graduated from Mid-America Nazarene College with a B.A. in psychology and attended Nazarene Theological Seminary. Prior to coming to headquarters, he worked as a counselor at a private psychiatric hospital in Johnson County, Kansas.

Born to seminary students and raised in parsonages from Illinois to Texas, he is steeped in the Wesleyan tradition. Not only is he the son of a Nazarene minister; but his paternal grandfather was a Nazarene minister; his great-grandfather was a Nazarene minister, having formerly been a conference president in the Wesleyan Methodist church; and his maternal grandfather is a Wesleyan minister.

Mark and his wife, Shirley (district assembly coordinator for the general secretary's office), are preparing for the ministry and the mission field. They have two children, Cary 3, and Audra, 1½.

Mark, welcome to the editorial team. (There are only two of us, but two can be a team too, true?) Your enthusiasm for Christian journalism will serve our readers well.

—Wesley Tracy



## GOOD-BYE

Nina Beegle is the kind of worker who gets promoted. And sure enough, she did. Fidelity, dedication, and talent have a way of producing promotions. Nina has been made division editor for the Division of Church Growth.

Nina Beegle is the kind of experienced editor that makes her a valuable asset to any Christian editorial enterprise. She has served on the editorial staffs of *Light and Life*, *Edge*, and the *Preacher's Magazine*.

Nina Beegle is the kind of assistant editor that takes a load off of the editor's mind. He knows that whatever problems arise that Nina will find out how to take care of them. She won't rest until she does. That makes the editor rest better.

Nina Beegle is the kind of Christian of whom it has been said, "Just being around her makes you want to be better."

Good-bye and best wishes.

—Wesley Tracy, Editor



# NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

by Ralph Earle

## The Paraclete

The Greek word *paracletos* occurs four times in John's Gospel (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) and once in John's first Epistle (2:1)—and nowhere else in the New Testament. It is distinctively a Johannine concept.

In 1 John 2:1 the term is applied to Jesus Christ. He is our "advocate" (KJV, NASB) with the Father—our defense lawyer in the court of heaven. This is spelled out in the NIV: "one who speaks to the Father in our defense." There seems to be no doubt that these two renderings give the correct meaning here.

But in the Last Discourse of Jesus in John's Gospel (chaps. 14—16), the term is applied to the Holy Spirit. How should it be translated there? This is a more difficult question. Jesus is our Advocate in heaven; that is clear. But what is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our hearts? That is what we wish to investigate.

The noun *paracletos* comes from the verb *paracaleo*. This is compounded of *caleo*, "call," and *para*, "beside." So the noun would literally mean "one called to our side to help us."

In his article on *paracletos* in Kittel-Friedrich's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (5:800-814) Behm writes: "The use as noun, attested in secular Greek from the 4th century B.C. in the sense of a 'person called in to help, summoned to give assistance,' gives us the meaning of 'helper in court'" (p. 801). The Jewish rabbis used it for an advocate before God, which fits 1 John 2:1 perfectly. But for the Gospel, Behm suggests that if we do not choose to use "Paraclete," perhaps the best translation is "supporter" or "helper" (p. 314).

It has always seemed to us that "Helper" was the only adequate translation for *paracletos* in John's Gospel—based on the etymological derivation from the verb *paracaleo*. We were personally pleased when the NASB came out with that rendering. Why, then, do the RSV and NIV have "Counselor"? The answer is that this is the main meaning of *paracletos* in the first century, as indicated, for instance, in Philo.

What does "counselor" mean today? *The American Heritage Dictionary* gives the following definitions: "1. A person who gives counsel. . . . 2. An attorney. . . . 3. A legal adviser. . . . 4. A person supervising children at a summer camp" (p. 303). So it seems to us that "Counselor" could give some breadth to the meaning here. The Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, after noting the technical meaning, "lawyer," says: "In the few places where the word is found in pre-Christian and extra-Christian literature it has for the most part a more general meaning: *one who appears in another's behalf, mediator, intercessor, helper*" (p. 618).

"Comforter" (KJV) is certainly too narrow a translation; it expresses only one phase of the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the Christian. Of course, if we could take "comfort" in its original meaning of "strengthen"—from the Latin *confortare*, "to strengthen"—it would be far more adequate. But today's "comfort" means "console," which is something else. The King James translators were much influenced by the Latin, as we are not. B. F. Westcott writes: "The English rendering 'com-

forter' appears to have been formed directly from the verb 'to comfort,' i.e. to strengthen" (*The Gospel According to St. John*, p. 211). Westcott also says of *paracletos*: "It can properly mean only 'one called to the side of another,' and that with the secondary notion of counseling or supporting or aiding him" (pp. 211-12).

Coming to the conclusion of his treatment of *paracletos*, Westcott observes:

In 1 John ii.1, the sense *advocate* alone suits the argument. . . . In the Gospel again the sense of advocate, counsel, one who pleads, convinces, convicts, in a great controversy, who strengthens on the one hand and defends on the other, . . . is alone adequate (p. 212).

Westcott goes on to say:

Christ as the Advocate pleads the believer's cause with the Father against the accuser Satan (1 John ii.1. . . .). The Holy Spirit as the Advocate pleads the believer's cause against the world, John xvi.8ff.; and also Christ's cause with the believer, John xiv.26, xv.26, xvi.14 (pp. 212-13).

In treating Jesus' presentation of the Holy Spirit as our Paraclete in His Last Discourse (John 14:16), we like to note six functions of the Spirit's ministry to or for us:

1. Personal Companion (14:16-18)
2. Personal Comforter (14:1-3, 18)
3. Personal Counselor (14:26)
4. Personal Co-witness (15:26-27)
5. Personal Convictor (16:7-11)
6. Personal Conductor (16:13) ☞



**Lillenas**  
MUSICCREATIONS

NEW FOR EASTER, 1986



## Tree of Life

—BY MOSIE LISTER—

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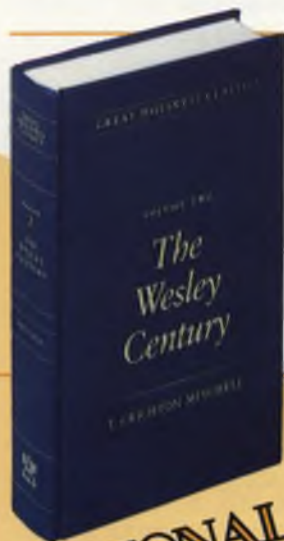
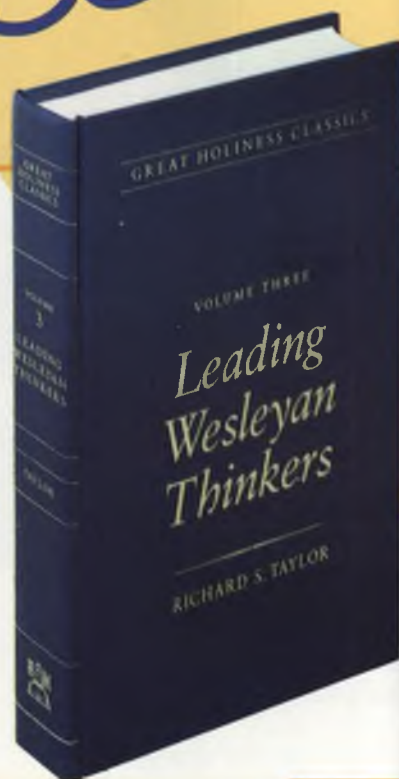
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